

Early Old Testament History 1- Study Notes for Unit 2 Test

Introduction: Chapter 1 gave us an overview of creation. Chapter 2 gives us details of the beginning of man, woman and marriage. It describes the first home of man and woman, the Garden of Eden. Chapter 3 tells how mankind fell into sin and brought a curse on the world. But we also hear the first promise of a Savior.

Notes on Genesis 2, 3:

The first three verses of chapter 2 actually belong with the creation hymn in chapter 1. Remember that chapter divisions were not put in by the original writers but by editors many centuries later. It would have been better to start chapter 2 with verse 4.

2:1 - vast array [NASB: hosts] - This may refer to the countless stars in the heavens, or to all created things.

2:2 - he rested - In the sense that he ceased activity and was still. God does not get tired, because he has infinite strength. But there is a value in stopping activity and being still at times.

2:3 - blessed the seventh day and made it holy - This is the basis for the Sabbath law among the Ten Commandments (Sabbath means rest) - Exodus 20:8-11. Sabbatarians believe the Sabbath commandment is an eternal commandment of God which was and is to be observed in the time of the patriarchs (creation to Moses), the time of the Mosaic Law (from Moses to Christ) and in the present Christian age.

However there is no record of any of the patriarchs observing the Sabbath. The command is given to the Israelites only when they are nearing Sinai during the exodus, and it seems new and strange to them there - Exodus 16:13-27. The Levites of Nehemiah's time said God made the Sabbath known to Israel at Sinai - Nehemiah 9:13, 14.

Remember that although Moses is writing about things that happened at creation, he is writing after the time Israel received the law at Sinai.

Christians are not to be judged by Old Testament laws such as the food restrictions and Israelite holy days and Sabbaths - Colossians 2:16-17; compare 2 Corinthians 3:3-11. Biblically speaking, the Sabbath law was given only to Israel as a sign of God's special covenant with them - Exodus 31:16. If any day is special to Christians, it is not the seventh-day Sabbath of the Jews but the first day of the week, the day Christ arose - compare Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2.

2:4 - This is the account of... - [KJV: These are the generations of...] - This is the first of ten sections of the book of Genesis beginning with this phrase (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2). This first account is the history of the creation itself.

LORD - In the Hebrew, *YHWH* or *Yahweh* (KJV: *Jehovah*). In this section, unlike the previous account, God's personal name is used.

In many English translations *Yahweh* is translated LORD and written in capitals to show that *Yahweh* is in the original. In those same translations, where you see "Lord" (capital and lower case), the Hebrew word is not *Yahweh*, but another Hebrew word which means "Lord."

2:5 - no shrub of the field...plant of the field - This is talking only about cultivated plants, not about the earth's vegetation in general.

God had not sent rain - Some believe there never was rain until the flood of Noah, but possibly there was

after man came on the scene and began to work the land.

2:7 - formed man - This is the same creation described in chapter 1, but with more detail.

from the dust - And that is where we return after this life - Ecclesiastes 12:7.

2:8 - garden in the east, in Eden - On the modern map this is believed to be near the meeting of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Southern Iraq just above the Persian Gulf.

2:9 - Made all kinds of trees grow - If this is talking about trees all over the earth, this account is not chronological, for vegetation was created before man - Genesis 1:11, 12. But more likely this is a special creation of trees in the Garden of Eden.

tree of life - God intended for man and woman to live forever. But they threw this away by their sin. Christ gives it back. We later see the tree of life in the Paradise of God in heaven, Revelation 2:7; 22:2.

tree of the knowledge of good and evil - Which gave a level of moral knowledge for which humans were not yet ready.

Why did God place a tree in reach of Adam and Eve which could potentially bring loss to them? Because free moral choice is necessary for a real person made in God's image, and there cannot be free moral choice unless a genuine choice exists.

It is also important to remember that God did not leave the man and woman unprotected. He left his dependable word giving clear direction and warning. We still have that word to protect us today. No one gets in moral trouble who trusts and obeys God.

2:11-13 - Pishon and Gihon are unknown. The rivers are probably still there and known by different names today.

2:14 - Tigris and Euphrates are still well known. They join just above the Persian Gulf. The Euphrates is so large and famous that in scripture it is sometimes simply called "the River."

2:15 - to work it - Mankind had work to do even before the fall, but it was not the painful, toilsome work we have now. Man and woman, in God's image, cannot be happy without being productive. Many people today would be much happier if they threw themselves into energetic work and found something to work for.

take care of it - God places the land in our trust and we are to take care of it properly, not exploit the life out of it or trash it up. The extremes of some environmentalists are no excuse for the rest of us to ignore legitimate environmental concerns and treat God's creation irresponsibly.

2:16 - free to eat from any tree - God gave man and woman so much to enjoy that one wonders why they could not be content without eating of the forbidden tree.

2:17 - when you eat of it [NASB: in the day that you eat from it] you will surely die - Actually Adam and Eve lived many years after eating the fruit. God may mean, "You will become mortal, capable of dying." They did begin dying that day. Or God may have extended mercy to them and modified his sentence.

2:18 - not good for man to be alone - Man was created to be a social creature, to enjoy love and fellowship and friendship, and to work together with someone else.

Even God is not alone; there are three in the Divinity - Genesis 1:26; 3:22; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14. God worked together with the Son and the Spirit in creation.

helper - The woman was made to work together with man, not against him nor he against her. In the redeemed creation man and woman are on the same team, loving, respecting and helping each other.

2:20 - gave names - God delegated this work to Adam because Adam had been given rule over the earth.

2:23 - bone of my bones...flesh of my flesh - The same kind as myself, not one of the animals different from me.

shall be called "woman" - The Hebrew word for woman is *ishshah*; the word for man is *ish*.

2:24 - leave his father and mother - At marriage we form a new family unit. Wise parents love their children and in-laws but do not interfere in the internal affairs of their children's families. Wise couples love their parents but set some boundaries around their own family life and are not tied unduly to their parents.

become one flesh - Unite sexually. Compare Matthew 19:3-9. From this Genesis passage we learn that from creation God intended for one man and one woman to be united in marriage until death parts them. In teaching against divorce, Jesus appeals to this Genesis account as he restores God's original ideal for marriage. This language also excludes polygamy from God's ideal.

2:25 - felt no shame - At this point no sin or guilt had entered God's creation. But now man's obedience to God was about to be tested.

3:1 - serpent - Satan, God's angel-enemy, entered the form of the snake in order to approach the humans God had made.

said to the woman - Satan craftily bypasses the man and addresses the woman. Satan ignores the fact that Eve belongs to Adam and that Adam should have been addressed in anything pertaining to his wife. Satan still sometimes bypasses the husband to subvert families spiritually and morally - 2 Timothy 3:6.

Did God really say... - Satan was too smart to directly contradict God at first. He merely questioned in order to sow doubt and confusion.

You must not eat from any tree - Satan also subtly changes God's statement.

3:4 - You shall not surely die - Having introduced doubt and confusion, Satan is now bold enough to directly contradict God.

3:5 - God knows...you will become like God - Satan insinuates that God is holding out on Adam and Eve and does not want them to discover the wonderful leap they could make, becoming gods themselves!

Behind all the other temptations Satan offers is the temptation to become independent of God, to become our own gods.

We believe Satan was once a good angel but fell because he wanted to be god rather than humbling himself before the true God. Compare Isaiah 14:12-15 - "I will make myself like the Most High." And Ezekiel 28:9 - "I am a god." Isaiah 14 refers to the king of Babylon who fell by pride. Ezekiel 28 is about the king of Tyre who fell likewise. Both passages may have a secondary, spiritual reference to the fall of Satan. From scripture we know angels have fallen - 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6. We also know Satan fell through pride - 1 Timothy 3:6.

Pride goes before destruction - Proverbs 16:18. The proud cannot come near God or work together with him - James 4:6-8. Rebellion and pride are the root problem of our fallen humanity. Selfish pride is

behind all other sin. All of us wrestle with this as we try to serve God.

A proud, independent spirit is also behind much unbelief. Many people disbelieve, not because they have intellectual problems with faith, but because it is convenient to have God out of the way so they can do their own thing without being accountable. We are not as objective in our thinking as we suppose we are.

3:6 - Satan tempts Eve through the same three avenues that he always uses, "the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does..." [KJV: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life] - 1 John 2:16. Satan used the same three avenues on Jesus - Matthew 4:1-11.

1) Eve saw that the fruit...was good for food - craving.

2) It was also pleasing to the eye - lust of the eye.

3) It was desirable for gaining wisdom - pride.

took some and ate it...gave some to her husband - Even as Satan had bypassed Adam when he dealt with Eve, Eve did not consult with her husband before doing what she did. She took the lead instead of letting Adam exercise his God-given leadership.

When talking about male and female roles thousands of years later, Paul remembers how Eve ran ahead of her husband in the fall - 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

3:7 - eyes...opened - Satan had not told them the whole truth. They did understand some things and had a sense of shame, but instead of becoming like gods, they were now under judgment from the true God.

made coverings - Ever since sin has been in the world, people have had to hide all kinds of things.

3:8 - God...walking in the garden in the cool of the day - The impression is that this is something God regularly did as he enjoyed his creation and his fellowship with the people he had made.

Obviously God did not appear to Adam and Eve in the fullness of his glory, which they could not have survived (Exodus 33:20; 1 Timothy 6:16), but appeared in some limited form which they could perceive.

3:9 - Where are you? Always before, Adam and Eve had joyfully welcomed time with God.

I hid - Always before there had been enjoyable fellowship and no fear. Now man's guilt drives him to hide from God. Still today, when we start moving into sin, we start distancing ourselves from God.

3:11 - Have you eaten... - Notice that God, unlike Satan, starts with the man. Man is responsible for his wife.

3:12 - The woman you put here with me - Adam blames Eve rather than taking responsibility for his action. Compare Aaron's excuse to Moses - Exodus 32:22-24. We never improve our lives or grow spiritually until we stop blaming our parents, other people, our circumstances, and everything else for our failures.

3:13 - The serpent deceived me - People are still saying, like Flip Wilson, "The devil made me do it." The devil suggests evil, but he cannot make us do anything until we choose to cooperate.

3:14 - crawl on your belly - Apparently the snake moved differently before the curse.

3:15 - enmity between you and the woman...between your offspring and hers - This is fulfilled on a physical level in the ongoing hatred between humans and snakes. It is fulfilled spiritually in the conflict between Satan and God's followers, and particularly between Satan and Christ, offspring of woman.

he will crush your head - This is the first Messianic prophecy. Satan struck Christ's heel figuratively by causing his suffering on the cross. Christ crushed Satan's head at the same time by redeeming mankind from Satan's control.

If woman brought the fall, it is also true that woman is the means for the Savior coming into the world.

3:16 - pains in childbearing - But Paul assures women that they will be saved "if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety" - 1 Timothy 2:15.

Because Eve went ahead of Adam during the temptation, God now underlines her submission to her husband:

Your desire will be for your husband - This may refer to sexual desire. Woman wants to be independent but at the same time needs the man sexually. Or it may mean that she needs his protection and companionship.

He will rule over you - This certainly reconfirms God's intention that man should lead. But it may also mean that as part of woman's punishment, man will often rule over her oppressively. In all these sentences, God is describing what it will be like in a fallen, imperfect world.

3:17-19 - cursed is the ground - The whole creation came under bondage because of man's sin - Romans 8:19-22.

painful toil...sweat will be necessary in order to eat and stay alive. It seems that God at least partly alleviated this curse on the ground after the flood - Genesis 8:21.

to dust you will return - Adam and Eve would not live forever as God had originally intended. Our bodies return to the dust but our spirits to God - Ecclesiastes 12:7. And because of what Jesus has done, we have hope again of resurrection and eternal life.

3:20 - Eve - from a Hebrew word meaning "living" or "life."

3:21 - made garments of skin - This compassionate act of God shows that in spite of their sin, God loved the people he had made and was sorry for what had happened to them. We may hate the sins people do, but if we are like God, we will not enjoy their suffering.

3:22 - become like one of us - Apparently a reference to the three Persons in the God-Head.

Must not be allowed - Since man is now a fallen creature, he can do greater damage if he lives forever. Also he has forfeited his right to live. The judgments of God are certain and are not to be played around with.

3:24 - cherubim - A type of angels. Cherubim are often pictured as guarding the throne of God. *Cherubim* is the plural of *cherub*.

Results of the fall:

1. Man lost his perfect fellowship with God.

Isaiah 59:1-2 - Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Human relationships have also been damaged by sin.

2. Man now has a fallen, sinful nature and the world is full of sin.
3. Death and suffering have come into the world.

Romans 5:12 - Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--

4. Man's rule or dominion over the earth has been betrayed into Satan's hands.

Luke 4:6-7 - And he [Satan] said to him [Jesus], "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

Christ came into the world to destroy what Satan has done - 1 John 3:8. Christ is called the "second Adam," the beginning of the new creation - 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 47-49. We are being made like him.

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