

Genesis Chapter 2 Summary - John Karmelich

As I thought about Chapter 2, my first thought was, "God created the world in Chapter 1, what's on His agenda for this chapter?" In essence, details about how God intended man to live before sin! I'd argue God wants us to know Chapter 2 creation details, to understand His original intent for our world before sin entered it, to show His ideal! Think of it as a loving parent who wants the best for their children, so God wanted to create a great world to live in. As most parents know, children desire to explore options and rebel against their parents. We usually learn over time what parents want is the best option! That's the story of mankind in a nutshell. The reason we get the details about life before sin began (Chapter 3) is to grasp what God intended for us! Many Jewish and Christian scholars argue the world will change back to how it was before Adam and Eve rebelled against Him one day!

This leads us to the Jewish concept of the Sabbath. If you think about it, there's nothing logical about a seven-day week! Why not 5 or 10 days? My view is God is God and He could have made the world in seven seconds or seven billion years. I'd argue God specifically chose 7 literal days: to set up a pattern He wants us to emulate this in the sense that one day out of seven be designed to rest. Realize He didn't rest because He was tired! God just set a pattern as described as one of the 10 Commandments that we should take one day to enjoy a relationship with Him and spend time growing in that relationship. Then realize God created us to have a relationship with Him as well as other believers.

With that said, time for a few words on the Jewish Sabbath. I'd argue Saturday is it, assuming they did not mess up over the millenniums! I'd argue Sundays are for Christians to contemplate our new life as believers since God Himself took the full price for our sins on Himself! Of course, it still means we're called to live in obedience, not to earn His love but to be a good witness for Him! That's the ideal. Of course, we mess up and confess our sins! Realize that all of the 10 Commandments are repeated in the New Testament except Sabbath worship! Consider all the Jewish background believers who taught the Gospel to non-Jewish converts. The New Testament has no requirements for a non-Jewish Christian to observe the Sabbath! Jesus seemed to do most of His miracles on a Sabbath, to make the point He is in charge of how the Sabbath is to be enjoyed as sin forgiven people!

I'm getting into all of this because the first few verses of Chapter 2 emphasize how God rests on the 7th day. God didn't kick back on a couch, watch sports and say He's tired! It just means the creation as we know it, was created. When Jesus was on the cross, His last words were "It is finished" referring to the once and for all payment for sin and that statement had nothing to do with God doing more things with creation in mind. Obviously, there are miracles that changed things, but the underlying point is what is considered God's 7th day is in sense is, "I'm finished creating the world as I intended it to be".

OK then that covers the first three verses. Twenty-one to go. From here (in effect) to the final verse of Genesis is an account of mankind from the first created being, with mainly a focus on His plan to make a nation to the time the Israelites first entered Egypt! Since we don't read of sin entering the world until Chapter 3, this chapter gives us a glimpse of what God wants us to know about the world prior to when sin entering it! It's not an extension of the six days of creation as read in Chapter 1, but specific details about the creation with an emphasis on the beginning of people being the main focus of His creation!

In fact, Verse 4 states "these are the generations... that were created"! Again, the intent is to tell us the story of humans ruling over the world from the first one till the time of the Egypt years. Obviously, it's

not meant to be a complete science or history book on everything that happened from Point A to Point B, but specific events that key upon those God called and their interactions with those who reject God.

From Verses 5 to 9 are specific details on God's creation. Think in terms of appreciating what God did make so we can appreciate it more once we live in that environment permanently. To understand all of this we need to understand a little about ancient Hebrew ways of describing things. That's why Chapter One gives us the first six days of creation and Chapter 2 goes back to fill in details. It was the way that ancient writers often told stories. There is nothing contradictory of the details in this paragraph to what was told in Chapter 1. Part of the issue is to understand this correctly. First understand that the garden of Eden was not a "backyard" size parcel but probably a large portion of land. God didn't make a bunch of tools for Adam and say, "get busy taking care of this place!" Remember before the flood there was a water vapor above the earth and lots of water underneath it. There was no rain yet! The way the ground was watered was think of ground with a very high (near the surface) water table so plants grew without any significant maintenance. I suspect all that Adam had to do was eat what was planted as to enjoy all that was made!

The text makes a strong point that the way man was created was God breathed life in his nostrils. Yes, I believe animals also have an instinctual understanding of life. The difference is God created us with a better understanding of life and we can comprehend His existence over and above just survival!

I am also fascinated that Chapter 2 says God created Eden "in the east". I thought, east of what? What we must grasp is God considers the land of Israel to be His! It means God speaks of the world with the land of Israel as it's center! Eden existed (most likely) in the Mesopotamia Valley which today is what we associate with Iran and Iraq. This was before the flood, so the weather was different. Remember in the flood a water vapor came down from the sky (a few chapters from now)! It affected how the world existed. Consider that tropical vegetation is found in the ice under the north and south pole! The water for the trees before the flood came from the highwater level, below the surface so rain wasn't needed!

The chapter emphasizes two kinds of trees. (Don't know how many kinds in total). One was the tree of life which many scholars argued was necessary for Adam to maintain his life and good health. We get that because near the end of Revelation it describes twelve trees "for the healing of the nations". Yes, it is a guess, but it fits the scenario. Then there is the "bad tree" the one God forbade Adam and Eve from eating translated "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil". Did God know they'd mess up? Yes, as I said earlier, think of a parent who wants the best for their children. Children naturally rebel and it leads to their willing desire to either live in rebellion to their parents or realize God was right and it is time to live as He desires!

Then in Verses 10-14 we get a description of the water flowing out of Eden and it becomes four rivers. I wonder if Adam explored all of this. Two of the rivers exist today (Tigris and Euphrates) but today is after the flood, so we can't say for sure it's the same since the source is different. The four rivers we get mentioned in these verses state they flow east, south, and southeast. The reason I believe God included this was that gold and minerals were in those rivers shows us the great world that God made for us that we'll see when He creates a new heaven and earth (as told in the book of Revelation)!

Verse 15 to 17 is God's instructions not to eat of the bad tree and I'll discuss that more in Chapter 3. I'd like to spend a few moments on the rest of the chapter now:

Next God called Adam to name all the animals before Eve was born. The joke is God did it this way to avoid any debates over names! The point is God wanted Adam to realize other animals were male and

female and he didn't have a mate. The joke is Adam was put to sleep single and he woke up married. I pondered why was Eve formed from Adam and not out of the dust of the ground? I suspect it's to show that God wanted to show men and women are meant to be connected. A cute joke is God took Eve out of Adam's side to realize she's to be close to his heart and he can protect her!

I know I'm running a little long. The only other command God gives in this chapter besides not to eat of the "bad tree" but in effect repeated the command for men and women to marry and multiply. God didn't intend for Eden and the world to just be for Adam and Eve!

So what are we to take from this? One is an appreciation of the world God created for us and I believe He'll make again one day for us. Another is the reminder that God desires a relationship with Him and other people. That's why we were created in the first place. OK hope you enjoyed reading this!

On the same page as this study is a more detailed study I wrote many years back. You are welcome to email me if you want or join my list to the get the latest lesson. Thanks for reading. John