



## Eden: God's Delight

BACKYARD  
PILGRIM

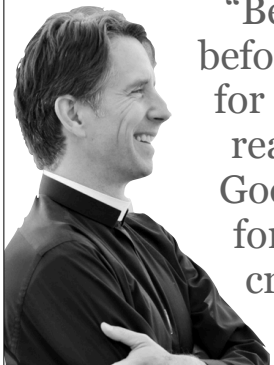
Genesis 2:4-25  
May 21, 2023 | Tyler Williams

## Approaching Eden



- Begins a two-part story with Genesis 3, and part of a larger story that culminates with the flood account in Genesis 11.
- More *intimate* and *immanent* than Genesis 1.

## Approaching Eden



“Before we are sent on any mission, before we try to accomplish something for God, we must first remember our reason for being: God wanted kids. God put us here for delight, for love, for human flourishing and care for creation” (Matt Canlis, *Backyard Pilgrim*, 41).

## Approaching Eden



- Introduction (2:4).
- The Earth, the Earthling, and the Garden (2:5-17).
- The Building of the Woman (2:18-25).

## Approaching Eden



- A. These are the generations of the **heavens**
- B. and the **earth**
- C. when they were **created**;
- C. In the day Yahweh Elohim **created**
- B. the **earth** and
- A. the **heavens...**” (2:4).

## The Earth



- Initial Negative Situation (2:5-6).
- No rain on the earth.
- No human/earthling [*adam* אדם] to serve/cultivate the ground [*adamah* אדמה] (2:5).

## The Earthling



“The LORD God formed the earthling [*ha’adam* האדם] from the dust of the earth [*ha’adamah* האדמה]” (2:7).

- “Shape or form” (*yatsar* יצר) – portrays Yahweh as a potter (2:7, 19).
- *The Adam/Human* – not a proper name.

## The Earthling



“... and he breathed into his nostrils a living breath; and the earthling became a living being” (2:7).

- “Living being” (*nephesh chaya* נפש חיה) – The human is animated by God, like all living creatures (Gen 1:20, 24, 30; 2:7, 19; 9:15, 16).

## The Garden



“And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the earthling whom he had formed” (2:8).

- “Eden” (ֵדֵן) – “abundance,” “delight.”
- A well-watered mountaintop oasis symbolic of where God dwells (Isa 51:3; Ezek 28:13-14; 31:9, 16, 18; 36:35, Rev 21:10; 22:1-2).

## The Garden



“In the middle of the garden were the tree of life...” (2:9).

- Emphasizes life is conditional on God.
- Found again in the new heavens and new earth (Rev 22:2, 14, 19; 2:7).

## The Garden



“... and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (2:9; cf. 2:17; 3:5, 22).

- Not omniscience (see Gen 3:22), but discerning and discriminating wisdom; something lacking in children (Deut 1:39; Isa 7:15-16), the elderly (2Sam 19:35), and inexperienced (1Kgs 3:9).

## Put in the Garden



“The LORD God... put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (2:15).

- “To work/cultivate/serve” (עבד) and “to keep/care” (שמר).
- Both words suggest a type of divine service.

## Put in the Garden



“You are free to eat from any tree in the garden...” (2:16).

- The first command is one of freedom; freedom to eat of any tree in the garden (but one).

## Put in the Garden



“... but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die” (2:17).

- In contrast to all the freedoms, God puts one restriction. Gives us the capacity for obedience.
- “You will certainly die” = under a death sentence; doomed to die (not “spiritual” death).

## The Building of the Woman



“The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone...’” (2:18).

- Initial negative situation; *emphatically* negative in the Hebrew.
- Underscores our need for community; the “being-with-ness” of humanity.

## The Building of the Woman



“I will make a helper suitable for him” (2:18).

- Suitable counterpart/helper (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ).
- Someone who comes to the aid of or provides a service for someone.
- Most often used of God as a helper of Israel.

## The Building of the Woman



“So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal...” (2:19).

- Like the human, the animals are shaped from the ground and called “living beings,” yet they fail to meet his need.

## The Building of the Woman



“He brought them to the human to see what he would name them; and whatever the human called each living creature, that was its name” (2:19).

- God was actively inviting the human’s creativity and giving him authority as an image bearer to name the animals.

## The Building of the Woman



“And the LORD God built up the side that he had taken from the human for the purpose of building a woman” (2:21).

- The making of the woman is unique.
- The woman was built directly from the side of the human, not just using the same base materials like all the others.

## The Building of the Woman



“This at last is bone of my bones / and flesh of my flesh. / This one shall be called ‘woman’ / for out of the human this one was taken” (2:23).

- A passive exclamation, not a naming (see 3:20 for the naming; *after* the fall).

## The Building of the Woman



“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh” (2:24).

- Emphasizes the fulfillment that the suitable counterpart effects.

## The Building of the Woman



“The human and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (2:25).

- Naked without shame — in light of Israel’s view of nakedness, this statement underscores the pristine state of the relationships between God, woman, and man.

## Conclusions



- The goal of humanity was *outside* of the garden of Eden (2:5; 1:28-30).
- Eden was like a greenhouse or nursery where the humans were to mature before taking up their God-given purpose as his image bearers.

## Conclusions



“The fact that God, rather than the human creature, planted the garden suggests that the garden was not intended to be the dwelling place of humans. After all, the garden of Eden is the garden of God. Humans were created to till the ground and in this manner bring life to the sterile desert. This is their destiny, and the earth outside the garden will be their dwelling. But just as children must remain in the house of their parents until they reach maturity so also the human creature is placed temporarily in the garden of God” (Ronald Simkins, *Creator & Creation*, 180).

## Conclusions



- While their goal was always outside Eden, God placed them in Eden to delight in their relationship with God and one another...  
And to grow and mature into their calling as image bearers.

## Conclusions



- We are created for community with God and one another, to delight in God and in his good creation, and to love and flourish as his children.