

# Genesis: The Creation of Man, part 1

## Genesis 2:4-25

**MPS** God created man as His steward on earth and blessed Him to thrive for His glory.

**OBJ** Every person can understand how God created all things to thrive for glory by four creational distinctives.

### READ Genesis 2:4-25

*These are the generations*

*of the heavens and the earth when they were created,  
in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.*

*5When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, 6and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— 7then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. 8And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

*10A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. 11The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. 13The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. 14And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.*

*15The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

*18Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” 19Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23Then the man said,*

*“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was taken out of Man.”*

*24Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. **Genesis 2:4-25***

### INTRO

There is much that we learn in Genesis 2, but maybe no chapter more fully addresses the question of Provenance more completely than this chapter. Here we learn of God's created intention for mankind by the way in which He created us.

**God created man as His steward on earth and blessed Him to thrive for His glory.**

### 2:4

*These are the generations*

*of the heavens and the earth when they were created,  
in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.*



**Creation is complete at the end of Genesis 2:3.** Then, the first of ten key headings occurs, “*These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created*”. These headings in Genesis set forth a new section that tells what comes forth. With this heading verse 4 turns our attention to look forward toward that which comes through creation. Then the author reverses the order, “*in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens*”. [This order reversal shifts the reader’s focus from the whole of creation to look more intently at what has taken place within creation.](#)

**Another important shift occurs here as well.** God is no longer only Elohim, the transcendent, all-powerful Creator. Now He is here called Yahweh Elohim. Yahweh is the covenant name for God, the One who is “with” and “for” His people. The God of the Bible is the transcendent, all-powerful Elohim and the relational YHWH who is near to His people.

[Creation demonstrates the grand majesty and sovereign power of God as Creator. And, it introduces His personal nearness as Covenant maker.](#)

**TRANS** [And what is God turning our attention to as He directs us to look more deeply with in creation?](#) We see the brilliant glory of God’s handiwork but now with greater focus on the earth. We see man’s beginning, as in how man was made and why we are here. We see how the world was created to work when the world was created.

**OBJ** [Four creational distinctives reveal how God created all things to thrive for His glory.](#)

### **Distinctive #1. The Adam of Creation** 2:5-7

*When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, <sup>6</sup> and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— <sup>7</sup> then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

**Though formed, the earth remained a barren place, wilderness-like.** On Day 6 God created man, both male and female, as His regents on the earth to rule. The state of the earth was in place but not yet fully functioning because man had not begun to fulfill his role. No plants were yet growing because God had sent no rain and man had not yet worked the ground. Here we see God’s purpose for the relationship between man and the earth. One author comments, “The role of human beings is to serve the land, turning it into that which can support life, and God’s role, to provide the rain.” These two roles of humanity and of God, argues Hiebert, are “the most fundamental facts of existence, the absence of which signify the state of the world before creation.”<sup>1</sup> [God’s design for operations on the earth was to work with His creation, man.](#)

**TRANS** Genesis 1:27 showed us the WHAT, *image and likeness*, and now we see the HOW, *formed* and *breathed*. Two descriptors of God’s work reveal His purpose for man.

#### **Created Intention – *formed* – God’s steward by design**

This first descriptor, *formed*, reveals God’s created intention for man. God designed man uniquely to serve His purpose in creation. Formed means God has given man responsibility to steward the garden for His glory.<sup>2</sup> [God’s created intention for man to serve as His steward is revealed as he is \*formed\* for God’s purpose by design.](#)

#### **Created inspiration – *breathed* – partnership with God by being**

The second descriptor, *breathed*, further reveals the uniqueness of man. God created man with an inspiration of His own being when He breathed life into Him. Commenting on *breathed*, Allen Ross states, “This breath brings more than animation to the man of earth (2:7); it brings spiritual understanding (Job 32:8) and a functioning conscience (Prov 20:27). In short, we

<sup>1</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, [Genesis: A Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 84.

<sup>2</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, [The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 158. Hamilton writes, “To “be raised from the dust” means to be elevated to royal office, to rise above poverty, to find life. Here man is formed from dust to be in control of a garden. Thus, the emphasis on the dust in Gen. 2:7, far from disagreeing with ch. 1, affirms ch. 1’s view of man’s regality. He is raised from the dust to reign.”



may conclude that moral capacity is granted to human beings by virtue of this inbreathing.”<sup>3</sup> [God's created inspiration for man to serve as His steward is revealed as he is breathed to life for partnership with God by His own being.](#)

A new name for God, the Creator is now the Covenant-making God. A creature for relationship with God, created in His image and likeness, formed by specific design to fulfill God's purpose by His created intention, and breathed to life for created inspiration by His own being. God created man for a special relationship with Him and for the stewardship of His creation. [God's divine purpose and glory begins with His highest creation, man, to show his place and priority in creation.](#)

**We are created for God.** The way we live in this world should bear a distinct glory to God, for His glory and purpose in this world. As long as anything or any one else receives glory from your life, you live counter to the purpose for which you were created. When you live counter to God's design and purpose for your life, you forsake the fulfillment and meaning you were designed to thrive in, and for which we all long.

[God created man by His design FOR Him and to serve as His steward in creation.](#)

### **Distinctive #2: The Abundance of Provision 2:8-14**

*And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup>And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

*<sup>10</sup>A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup>And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup>The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup>And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.*

**God planted the first garden.** This garden was in Eden, but not the whole of Eden. And this garden was the first place of worship, the first temple where people met with God. The first picture of God that we have interacting with man is here. [God made a place of abundant provision for him, pleasant to the sight and good for food, and placed man in the midst of it to meet with him there.](#)

**The garden was a central focus of Eden.** There were two specific trees in the garden as well, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden and became four rivers, the Pishon, the Gihon, the Tigris and the Euphrates. Two of these rivers we can still trace today and two we do not know their exact location. The two trees will be central to the story in Genesis 3, but for now they are positioned as central in the garden of God's provision. The rivers flow from the garden and spread out. All along each is a description of incredible beauty and worth, of gold and precious stones. The overarching description is that all the beauty and goodness, pleasure and provision is not limited to the garden but envelopes the whole earth.<sup>4</sup> [The glory of Eden's garden held a central focus but was only an origin of the culminating glory of the whole earth.](#)

[God created abundant provision and pleasure for man to live by trust in Him.](#)

### **Distinctive #3: The Authority for Service 2:15-17**

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

<sup>3</sup> Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 123.

<sup>4</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, [The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17](#), *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 167–168. Hamilton writes, "These verses should be seen as an extension of v. 9, the two component parts of the garden being trees (v. 9) and rivers (vv. 10–14). The critical consensus is that these five verses are secondary and that, although the reference is to real rivers, two of which are well known, still the section is based on the mythical concept of the four world rivers—Tigris, Euphrates, Nile, and Indus—which surround the entire earth."



**God authorizes man to serve His purposes in the world.** When God created man, He placed him in the garden as His regent to rule. God's intention was not what we typically think of as "rule". We typically think of rule in terms of power. But God's idea of rule is production. This production would come as man works and keeps the land. [God authorized man for service to work and keep the earth that he might maximize production for good and glory.](#)

**TRANS** Authority for service begins with a **Commission to Cultivate**.

**God authorizes man by a commission to cultivate for more good and glory.** One part of the word for work means "to worship, obey (God)"<sup>5</sup> And alongside work is to keep, which means "exercising great care over."<sup>6</sup> Work is a creational commission upon our lives, a primary purpose God placed us on the earth. And through our work He intended that we would maximize and multiply His glory and good upon the earth. Inherent in our work is HOW we go about WHAT we do because of WHO we do it for. [We were created to cultivate, work, for more glory as an act of worshiping God that the whole earth might enjoy His goodness.](#)

**TRANS** There is a second aspect that goes with our commission. Authority for service includes a **Command to Trust**.

**God commands man with a prohibition in the garden.** Any tree in the garden can be eaten from, except one. There is one tree among all the others that should never be eaten from, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They are never to eat of this tree because when they do they will surely die. "In the garden God gives to Adam ample permission (any tree) but only a single prohibition."<sup>7</sup> The meaning of this command has been widely debated, but one commentator helps simplify and clarify what takes place here when he states, "the emphasis falls on the prohibition rather than the properties of the tree. It is shown to us as forbidden. It is idle to ask what it might mean in itself; this was Eve's error. As it stood, prohibited, it presented the alternative to discipleship: to be self-made, wresting one's knowledge, satisfactions and values from the created world in defiance of the Creator (cf. 3:6). In all this the tree plays its part in the opportunity it offers, rather than the qualities it possesses; like a door whose name announces only what lies beyond it."<sup>8</sup> It wasn't about the tree. It was always about God's command, and man trusting in His Word. Another author also helps us clarify when he states, "There is no magic in Eden."<sup>9</sup> God's command was never about the poison of one fruit versus the sweetness of another, but rather the posture of the heart toward God to listen, trust and obey. [God's prohibition was never about denying man any goodness but commanding trust in His provision through all of His work.](#)

**Mas was created for work.** Work is a gift of God, not a punishment for sin.<sup>10</sup> Work is a creational command, the function on the earth for which we were created, inherent to the core of our being. [Work glorifies God and provides good for us.](#)

**Sometimes we hear that our work, what we do, is not our identity.** While that holds an "angle" of truth, it has more untruth inherent within it. You are valuable as a person because you are created in God's image and likeness. So, the full measure of your worth or value is not comprised in your work. But work, vocation, is as essential to our identity as the image in which we are created. So, WHAT you do is not as much the issue as THAT you do, and that what you do brings God glory and good to others.<sup>11</sup> [The first truth we learn about God is that He worked. Vocation is the principle way we pursue God's commission to cultivate.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, "[1553 עָבַד](#)," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 639.

<sup>6</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 939.

<sup>7</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 172.

<sup>8</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 68.

<sup>9</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 171.

<sup>10</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 87.

<sup>11</sup> This is not to say those who cannot "DO" are of no value. Absolutely not. The Scriptures clearly teach that one does not lose value in God's eyes, and subsequently should not be de-valued in our eyes, because of the loss of ability. But of course, we must not forget either that it never removes the responsibility for one to do whatever he can in the whatever condition he finds himself.



**God's command shows us where the problem arises.** The problem arises NOT in that fact that we work, but that we place our trust in our work, or through our work we place our trust in self, to measure our success and assign value by it. The problem is that we begin to trust in ourselves BECAUSE OF or BY our work. And THIS is the very issue God addresses by the prohibition of His command.

The best way to understand the prohibition of God's command rests in two **stains from sin** that God guards us from. The first sin-stain is pride, finding all our worth and sufficiency in self through our work. When we believe our work provides all we need, we no longer need God. And this cannot glorify Him nor produce good for others. The second sin-stain is laziness from self-pity, not wanting to work. Pride leads us to steal glory by trusting in self. Self-pity steals glory by dismissing work as not worth it. [Nothing makes work more of a toilsome grind than when we labor for some glory other than God's.](#)

When a man prides himself by finding worth only in his work, it never completely satisfies so he kills himself from overwork. When a man self-pities to excuse his work because he's lazy, he's left unfulfilled and loathes others' accomplishments. This is why Paul warns against idleness (2 Thes 3:6-12), and even states that when a man won't work, he shouldn't (eat) feel goodness in himself. Work is hard NOT because it is work, but because we are sinful, as Genesis 3 will show us. [God created work as a glorious joy. Sin makes work a burdensome grind.](#)

Glory through work is a principle purpose of man's function on the earth for which God created us. Work does not establish our worth in God's eyes, but it does demonstrate God's created intention placed upon us as we pursue His commission in obedience to His command for His glory. Whatever we do we are to work heartily for the Lord, and not for man. (Col 3:23) [ALL our work is to be done in full dependence and trust in God.](#)

[God endued man with His authority to cultivate the earth for more glory by obedience to His command.](#)

**CLOSE** God planted a garden, placed man within and met with him in this place of abundant provision and pleasure. And the glory of this garden spread out throughout the whole earth. [What does this tell us about God, about His will and created intention for man?](#)

God formed and breathed life into us, then commissioned and commanded us to work for more glory and good, and all as we trust fully in Him for our needs. [Is your life cultivating glory for God in the earth by your work? Are you trusting God with and through your work, or is your work causing you to trust more in self?](#)

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Eph 2:10*

[Christian, is God receiving the glory by the way you are living your life?](#)

[God created man as His steward on earth and blessed Him to thrive for His glory.](#)

