

The Early Earth



SABBATH—OCTOBER 14

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 2.

MEMORY VERSE: “So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed” (Genesis 2:1, NIV).

MOSES WROTE ABOUT HOW ALL OF CREATION CAME INTO BEING.

Genesis 1 answers the question, How did it all begin? Genesis 2 explains why we are what we are. Without the information in Genesis 2, the test of loyalty to God and the Fall¹ of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 probably would not make much sense.

Adam and Eve living in the Garden of Eden adds to the great story of Creation. Genesis 2 introduces us to the social side of people and gives us a better understanding of the history and geography of the world.

Genesis 2 also deals with the Sabbath, work, home, and marriage. Given to the human race before the Fall, these four things lie at the basis of human life and happiness. We are a long way from Eden but Eden still presents a model (example) of principles,² because we are close to Eden being restored.³ What messages are found in Genesis 2 about the world before the Fall? These messages are important to us who have known only life after the Fall.

This week, we will study Eden as a foretaste of heaven.

¹the Fall—when Adam and Eve first sinned.

²principles—basic rules of good behavior.

³restored—being made as it was before sin.

SUNDAY—OCTOBER 15**THE SABBATH (Genesis 2:1-3)**

Last week, we saw a series in the Creation story: from darkness to light, from only water to earth and water, to an atmosphere, to vegetation,⁴ and so forth. The series ends with the creation of humans. After all these things were created, we read in Genesis 2:1: “So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed” (NIRV). God’s work of creation was a finished work. This idea is suggested in Genesis 2:2, 3, where both verses say that God “rested” from His work. Was God tired? Or did He rest because His work was completed?

Read Genesis 2:2, 3 to answer the following questions:

1. Is there anything in these verses that suggest Creation kept going after the sixth day? What does your answer suggest?
2. The Sabbath stands for Creation. So, how do these verses already suggest the true meaning of the Sabbath for all people?

The verb⁵ for “rested” comes from the word *Sabbath*. This proves that Genesis 2:2, 3 is talking about the Sabbath. (Read Exodus 20:8-11). Just as six real days came before the Sabbath, the Sabbath also is a twenty-

four-hour day.

Notice that the first thing God declared holy was time, the seventh day. Not a hill, not a river, not a shrine, but a section (part) of time itself was the first thing in God’s new creation. He “set [it] apart” on purpose. Setting the Sabbath apart is another way of saying it is “to be made holy.” So, we see the Sabbath as something special for everyone. It is not limited by place or geography. The Sabbath can reach every person no matter where he or she lives.

Next time you welcome the Sabbath, remember that you are keeping a day that goes back to the first week of Creation. How does being connected with your beginnings by the Sabbath make you feel?

OCTOBER 2006						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

The Sabbath stands for Creation. Sabbath goes all the way back to Creation.

⁴vegetation—trees, grass, herbs, et cetera.

⁵verb—a word that shows action.

MONDAY—OCTOBER 16***NEPHESH HAYYAH* (Genesis 2:7)**

In Genesis 2, the scene changes from the Creation of the world to a local garden. This is not a second and different Creation story. Instead, Genesis 2 is an addition to Genesis 1. Humans are at the top of the pyramid in Genesis 1. In Genesis 2 they become the center of a circle. The spotlight falls on the human race.



Genesis 2 is all about Adam and Eve.

It was not until the fifth day that God created “living creatures [living things]” from the Hebrew *nephesh hayyah*. *Hayyah* here means “life,” and *nephesh* means “creature.” The same words appears in Genesis 2:7.

What wording in Genesis 2:7 seems most to have been trans-

lated from *nephesh hayyah*?

Most people are surprised to learn that the *nephesh hayyah* is often translated “living soul” (Genesis 2:7) in the creation of man and woman. *Nephesh hayyah* is used to describe fish, birds, and creeping things. But man and woman were not the same as these things. Man and woman were made in the “image of God” (Genesis 1:27). In a physical way, man and woman were tied to other life on earth. So, we see that the same as other life on earth, we need certain physical things to stay alive.

How does this use of the word *nephesh* in Genesis 2:7 (often translated “soul”) help us understand why the soul is not immortal?⁶ (Ezekiel 18:4; Matthew 10:28.)

The Bible uses the word *nephesh* to suggest many ideas (“person,” “self,” “life,” or “being”). But in the Old Testament, *nephesh* never means the popular idea that a spirit can be separated from the body. A spirit being separate from the body is a pagan⁷ Greek idea that has influenced almost all religions today.

List the common false ideas that arise from believing in an immortal soul. Why should a person who understands the truth about the soul be thankful that he or she understands this truth? What does this truth protect you from?

⁶not immortal—unable to live forever. No human is immortal.

⁷pagan—a person who worships idols, nature, or false gods.

TUESDAY—OCTOBER 17**THE GARDEN HOME
(Genesis 2:8-17)**

Genesis 2:10-14 shows that Eden was a special place. Several of the names listed in Genesis 2:11-14 are used to name post-Flood places and rivers. But, the Flood changed the surface features of our planet so much that knowledge of pre-Flood geography is impossible.

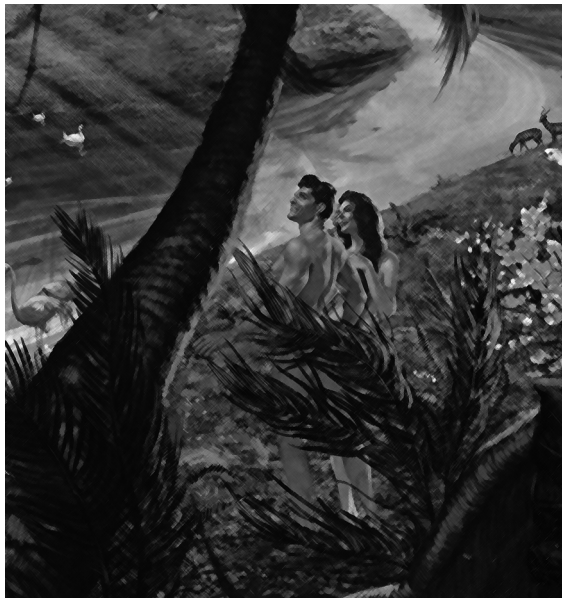
What elements (things) mentioned in Genesis 2:8-17 show that Eden home was a perfect place? (Study carefully how well God planned the place for Adam and Eve’s mental and spiritual needs.)

Today, the earth has been spoiled (stained) by 6,000 years of sin. But we can see examples of what the original beauty must have been like. Many examples remain. These examples speak to us of God’s wonderful creative power (Job 12:7-9; Romans 1:19, 20). It is hard to imagine what paradise⁸ (Eden) must have been like.

What is the nearest thing to paradise you have ever seen? What made it the same as paradise? How is this place almost the same as Eden?

Read Genesis 2:15. How interesting that Adam, with everything he

could possibly need, had to work in the Garden. The Hebrew word translated “dress” is a common word meaning to “work” or to “serve.” So, even before the Fall, people were not supposed to be lazy. This alone should help us get rid of the idea that work itself is bad.



Adam and Eve worked in the Garden. God always meant for work to be good.

We are a long way from Eden. But what useful things could you do now to make your place more like Eden for yourself and those around you?

WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 18**THE WOMAN (Genesis 2:18-25)**

Here is Adam, in a garden paradise. He has the right to rule the animals. Everything is for him to use

⁸paradise—a beautiful, peaceful place almost the same as heaven or the Garden of Eden.

except for one tree (Genesis 2:16, 17). But, still God has more for him.

What was God's purpose in giving Eve to Adam? Genesis 2:18, 20.

The woman was to be a “help meet (mate) for him” (the Hebrew suggests a “helper over against him,” “a help equal to him,” “his counterpart”⁹). The Genesis story puts value on woman as an equal, a partner, a helper.

The human race is not complete without the woman. Together, the man and the woman share God's image and likeness.

How do Genesis 1:27, 28 show the important part the woman was to have in life on earth?

Eve was to be Adam's friend, partner, wife, and co-worker in having control over nature. But she was to be so much more, too (Genesis 2:24).

What made Eve's creation special from that of all other living things? Genesis 2:21, 22.

THURSDAY—OCTOBER 19

**EVE BECOMES ADAM'S WIFE
(Genesis 2:23, 24).**

Adam was so thrilled with Eve that he showed his happiness in poetry. Genesis 2:23 is the first poem in the Bible. The creation of Eve and her

marriage to Adam were a great blessing. One man and one woman were to form the foundation (basis) of the home. Home is where all human life was to begin and continue (Genesis 1:28).

What common things happen now that make it hard for the home to be the blessing God wants it to be?

What steps in marriage are listed in God's words? In what order are these steps to follow? Genesis 2:24.

Genesis 2:24 explains God's ideal for marriage. When the time comes to leave his parents, man's first earthly loyalty is to be to his wife. She is to have the most important place in his affections (love). In God's order, the union of bodies between husband and wife is to follow their marriage. But the Bible order “leave . . . cleave [unite] . . . and they shall be one flesh” has been turned upside down by sin.

What kind of close relationship between husband and wife does the Bible support long after the Fall? First Corinthians 7:2-5; Ephesians 5:21-29; Hebrews 13:4. What principles do you find in these verses that show what marriage was to be before the Fall? If you are married, what can you do to better show these principles in your home?

⁹counterpart—the same as.

FRIDAY—OCTOBER 20

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 46–51; *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, comments on Genesis 2.

“The home of our first parents was to be a pattern (example) for other homes. Their children were to go forth to take over the earth. The home was made beautiful by the hand of God Himself. But it was not a beautiful, expensive palace. . . . God placed Adam in a garden. . . . In the surroundings of the holy pair was a lesson for all time. The lesson is that true happiness is found, not in pride and wealthy living. Instead, happiness is found in fellowshiping with God through His created works. . . . Pride and ambition are never satisfied. But those who are truly wise will find great pleasure in enjoying the things



We are happy when we are learning about God through what He has created.

that God has given to all.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 49, 50.

“Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam. This shows that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be treated as a slave. Instead, Eve was to stand by Adam’s side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self. This should show the close union and the affectionate (loving) tie that should exist (continue) in this relation (marriage).”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❶ How are we to understand the words in Genesis 1:27, 28 about the man and woman subduing (working) and dominating (controlling) the earth? What did that mean before sin? What does it mean after sin?
- ❷ How does your society treat women? What useful things can you do to help women who are being mistreated? What can and should your local church be doing that it is not doing now?

Are there some marriages in trouble in your church? What can you do to help support those going through this painful problem?