

# 3. The Garden (2:4-25)

## I. Introduction

### A. Structure

2:4–4:26 is the first account (תולדות *toledot*): the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. It comprises two main sections: the Garden of Eden (2:4–3:24) and a genealogy of Adam with narrative insertions (4:1-26).

1. Heading (2:4)
2. The Garden (2:5–3:24)
  - a. God establishes humanity in the garden (2:5-25)
    - i. Initial State (2:5-6)
    - ii. Yahweh God makes the man and his home (2:7-17)
      1. Yahweh God makes man and the garden (2:7-9)
      2. Interlude about the four rivers (2:10-14)
      3. Yahweh God commissions man (2:15-17)
    - iii. Yahweh God makes the woman (2:18-25)
  - b. Expulsion from the Garden (3:1-24)
3. The Descendants of Adam (4:1-26)

### B. Relationship between the two Creation Accounts

1. Change of name for God:

- 1:1–2:3 exclusively אֱלֹהִים *Elohim*, “God” 35×
- 2:4–3:24 exclusively יהוה אֱלֹהִים *Yhwh Elohim*, “the LORD God” 20×; only other use in Gen 1-11 is “Yhwh, the God of Shem” (9:26). Yhwh, “the LORD,” is the personal name of God, revealed to Moses at the Burning Bush (Exod 3:14-15).<sup>1</sup>
- 4:1-26 יהוה *Yhwh* “the LORD” 10×; *Elohim* 1× (4:25).

Documentary Hypothesis: change of source: P (Priestly 1:1–2:3) to J (Yahwist 2:4-4:25).

2. Change of focus: from cosmos (God) to earth (Yhwh God), as indicated by title (2:4):

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהַבְרָאָם בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם	These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Yhwh God made earth and heaven.
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1. In the Second Temple period, Jews considered God’s name *Yhwh* too sacred to pronounce (the “ineffable tetragrammaton,” unutterable four-letter word), so would say *Adonai*, “my Lord,” reflected in translations: LXX κύριος, Vg *Dominus*, both meaning “Lord.” When the Masoretic scribes later added vowels to the consonantal text, they added the vowels of Adonai to the consonants Yhwh: יְהוָה, but this was still always said as *Adonai*. When Western Christians learnt Hebrew in the 16th century, they translated this as Jehovah, not realizing it was a never-uttered mongrel word comprising the consonants of one word and the vowels of another. Since KJV it has been customary to set LORD in small-caps when it renders Yhwh. Yahweh is the currently-accepted likely approximation of the name.

Chiasm: the heavens and the earth : created (*bara*) / made (*asah*) : earth and heavens.

3. Did all the events of 2:4-25 happen on Day 6?

- Yes: attempt to harmonize the two accounts.
  - Young Earth Creationists: God created everything fully-formed, i.e. with appearance of age.
  - Hugh Ross: proves “day” must be more than 24 hours since so much happened on that day.
- No: read as separate but complementary accounts.

Conclusion: the accounts are complementary, not contradictory.

## II. Yahweh God makes man and his home (2:5-17)

### A. Initial State (2:5-6)

<p>וְכֹל־שִׁיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יִהְיֶה בְּאֶרֶץ          וְכֹל־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יֵצְמַח          כִּי לֹא־הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ          וְאָדָם אֵין לְעֹבֵד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה:          וְאָדָם יַעֲלֶה מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־כָּל־פְּנֵי־הָאֲדָמָה:</p>	<p><sup>5</sup> <sup>5</sup> 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> <sup>6</sup> and a mist was going up from the land and was watering          the whole face of the ground—</p>
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Like the creation account, 2:4-25 begins with a statement of the initial state (off the story-line), given as a two-fold negative condition and a two-fold explanation (5):

1. Two negative statements:
  - a. there was not yet any “bush of the field (שִׁיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה)” in the land/earth (הָאֲרֶץ *ha-arets*): probably wilderness scrub, inedible to humans.
  - b. no “small plant of the field (עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה)” had yet sprouted: probably edible cultivated plants.
2. Two-fold explanation:
  - a. Yahweh God had not made it rain.
  - b. “there was no man (אָדָם *adam*) to work (עָבַד *abad*) the ground (הָאֲדָמָה *ha-adamah*),” perhaps implying no one to dig irrigation ditches.

Each of these lacks will be reversed because of human sin:

1. The Lord first sends rain in the days of the Flood (7:4).
2. Mankind is driven out of the garden to work the ground (3:23) to eat “the plants of the field (עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה)” (3:18).

Water (6): despite the absence of rain and of a earth-working human, the land was watered: a spring (ESV mg) would rise from the land (*ha-arets*) and water the ground (*ha-adamah*).

### B. Yahweh God makes man and the Garden (2:7-17)

The story-line commences (7-9).

#### 1. Man and the Garden (2:7-9)

In chapter 1, God created (בָּרָא *bara*) man after his own kind. Here we are given the flip side: he formed (יָצַר *yatsar*) the man (הָאָדָם *ha-adam*) from the dust of the ground (הָאֲדָמָה *ha-adamah*), as a potter forms a pot from clay; he is an earthling from the earth, a human from the humus. The human is thus a

mixture of heavenly and earthly.

The garden (גן *gan*) is an enclosure (from the verb גָּנַן *ganan* “shield”). This was the original paradise (Vg *paradisus* < LXX παράδεισος < Heb. פַּרְדֵּיִם *pardes* < Old Persian *pardesu* < Avestan *pairidaeza* [*pairi* “around” + *daēza* “wall”]). The garden is located in Eden (עֵדֵן *eden* “delight”). The garden completes, and is the focal point of, the differentiation of space:

earth (אֶרֶץ *eret*) → ground (אֲדָמָה *adamah*) → Eden (עֵדֵן *eden*) → garden (גן *gan*)

This is God’s garden, his sanctuary, his earthly dwelling place. It is the most special place on earth. This is the “mountain of God” (Ezek 28:14,16), the cosmic mountain, the meeting place of heaven and earth.

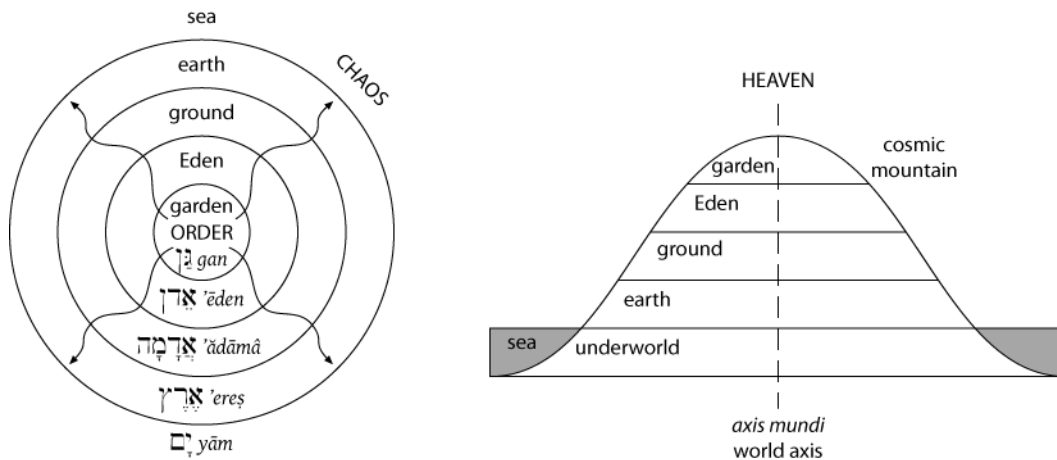


Fig. 3-1: Eden the world center

In chapter 1 we were told where the other creatures were to live: the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and the animals on the dry land, but we were not told where the human was to live. The human is to live in God’s garden. Though the man’s origin was the dust of the ground (*adamah*), his destiny was the garden, where God put him (8).

In this garden, God caused trees to sprout. It was God’s intent that the human eat not of the “bush of the field (שִׁיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה)” nor of the “small plant of the field (עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה v. 5),” but of the trees of the garden (עֵץ־הַגָּן). Here in the garden the man was to eat of the bounty of God’s provision.

## 2. The Four Rivers (2:10-14)

Narrative interlude (off story-line): from Eden flows a river, dividing into four: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, Euphrates. The first two are unknown, but suggestions have been offered: Blue and White Nile; now-dried-up rivers in Arabia.

This scene reinforces the status of the garden as God’s sanctuary. The river that flows from Eden is the river of life, flowing from the sanctuary. It divides into four (the number of universality) to fructify the earth.

Throughout Scripture, the river of life flows from the sanctuary bearing living water (ἕδωρ ζῶν) to bring life to desert places (Ezek 47:1-12; John 4:10-15; 7:38; Rev 22:1-2).

Where was Eden?

“in the east” (מִקְדָּם) is probably with respect to the Land, Israel. The most frequent suggestions are Upper or Lower Mesopotamia.

### 3. God’s Commission to Man (2:15-17)

#### a) Rest

God deposited (וַיַּנְחֵהוּ, lit. “caused him to rest”; different word than v. 8) the man in his sanctuary. He took him from where he did not belong (outside the garden) and settled him where he did belong. Mankind belongs in God’s sanctuary.

#### b) Assignment

Though the man was given rest in the garden, God gave him two priestly assignments:

1. Work (עָבַד *abad*): can also mean serve, worship.
2. Guard/keep (שָׁמַר *shamar*).

Most assume “it” is the garden (but “it” is feminine, “garden” is masculine). God has done all the work: he planted the garden, made the trees sprout, and gives them as food to the man, who only has to take and eat.

God will later commission Israel with these same two verbs:

- Israel: to serve Yhwh and keep his commandments.
- Levites: given to priests to keep their duty (שָׁמַר the מִשְׁמֶרֶת *shamar the mishmeret*) and serve the ritual service (עָבַד the עֲבֹדָה *abad the abodah*); each clan had a different duty associated with the tabernacle.
- Priests: to guard (שָׁמַר) their priesthood, and to serve the ritual service (עָבַד the עֲבֹדָה) of the tabernacle: the cultus.

So, the man is to serve Yhwh and keep the commandment given in 16-17. He is both priest (2:15) and ruler (1:28), both vice-gerent and vice-regent.

Unfortunately, a male-headship model of “provide and protect,” “cultivate and guard” has been built on these two verbs.

#### c) Commandment

Adam is to eat abundantly of every tree that God has provided, but is forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:16-17). He was put on probation to test his obedience. Presumably if he passed the test he would be brought into completion and sanctification, cf. the seventh day. God wanted Adam to obey him out of “pure delight in obedience...choosing for the sake of personal attachment to God alone” (Vos 1948, 31).

## C. Creation of the Woman (2:18-25)

### 1. The Problem & Solution (18)

For the first time, something is not good (לֹא־טוֹב) in God’s creation (2:18). God determines to make a “helper matching him” (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ).

- Helper (עֵזֶר *ezer*): usually used of divine help; not a second-class term.
- Corresponding to him (כְּנֶגְדּוֹ *kenegdo*): a match when one is brought face to face (נֶגֶד *neged*).

### 2. Finding the Helper (19-23)

Two stages:

- naming the animals (19-20): emphasizes the man's difference from the animals
- building of woman (21-22)
- Deep sleep (תַּרְדֵּמָה *tardemah*): a supernaturally-induced state that renders the sleeper a non-participant (Abraham 15:12; Saul 1 Sam 26:12). Walton: a dream state.
- Rib (צֵלַע *tsela*): elsewhere this always means a side, where such sides are in pairs; most often for things associated with the tabernacle or temple. So, “one of his ribs”<sup>2</sup> should be “one of his two sides,” i.e. a half. Until this point “the man” has been generic (male+female).
- Built (בָּנָה *banah*): appropriate verb for צֵלַע *tsela*. Yhwh God built the half-side into a woman.

וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם <sup>23</sup> <sup>23</sup> Then the man said,  
 זֹאת הַפֶּעַם עָצָם מֵעַצְמִי וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי  
 לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לִקְחָהּ זֹאת:  
 “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.”

עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזֹב אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ  
 וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד: <sup>24</sup> <sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and  
 hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

וַיְהִיו שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יִתְבַּשְׂשׁוּ: <sup>25</sup> <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not  
 ashamed.

The man's response:

- Poetry.
- This time (זֹאת הַפֶּעַם): as opposed to each time an animal has come face-to-face with him.
- Bone of my bones: recognizes she is fully part of him.
- Woman...Man: this is not a conventional naming formula (“Then the man called her name...”). Instead, he acknowledges what society (יִקְרָא “be called” is impersonal 3rd person singular) will call them: Woman (אִשָּׁה *ishah*) and Man (אִישׁ *ish*), male and female counterparts of each other.

Etiology (Therefore...)

- New social unit: a man leaves his parents and establishes a new social unit.
- Leave (עָזַב *azab*)...hold fast (דָּבַק *dabaq*): covenantal terms.
- Become one flesh: the human, divided in half into Man and Woman, is reunited into one flesh.

2. LXX πλευρά “side”; Vg costa “rib”; hence earliest English translations “rib” (Wycliffe 1395, Coverdale 1535, Geneva Bible 1587, KJV). The tide is turning: “part of the man's side” (NET, NIV mg); Walton.