Creation and the Garden: Very Good

Bible Stories Anthology — Genesis 1–2

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> **Romans 15:4** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Why These Stories Were Written — Romans 15:4

Paul had just quoted a thousand-year-old psalm and applied it to Christ (Romans 15:3, quoting Psalm 69:9), and then he explained why he could: *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*. **Written aforetime** — the scriptures that already stood before this present age of grace opened at Pentecost: the record God gave through Moses, the prophets and the writings, along with the Gospel accounts of Christ's earthly ministry, which belong to that same time before Pentecost. (When Paul wrote these words, the scriptures he had in hand were the Hebrew scriptures; the Gospels had not yet been written down.) **Written for our learning** — "learning" is the Greek word for *teaching*, the very word rendered "doctrine" in 2 Timothy 3:16. These are not quaint tales; they are doctrine in narrative form. Adam, Ruth and David never knew us, but God did, and He had their lives recorded with us in mind — written *for* us, though not all of it written *to* us, which is why we read Israel's history as our instruction and not as our marching orders. **Through patience and comfort of the scriptures** — "patience" is literally *remaining under*, the staying power we gain from watching men and women stay under a load; "comfort" is a *calling alongside*, the strength God brings when He meets them there, which is why Paul calls Him "the God of patience and consolation" in the very next verse. **That we might have hope** — not a wish, but confident expectation: the return of Jesus Christ and everlasting life with Him. That is why these accounts exist, and it is how they should be read.

Before Anything Went Wrong

Most people know the Bible's story of what went *wrong* — the serpent, the fruit, the fall. Far fewer stop to look carefully at what came before it. Yet if we want to know what God is restoring, we have to know what He first made.

Before there was sin, sickness, fear or death, there was a world God Himself called **"very good."** There was a man and a woman made in God's own image and standing in open fellowship with Him. There was work, and it was a joy. There was rest, and God rested first. There was marriage, and God performed the first one. There was a garden with a river, gold in the ground, and a tree of life in the middle of it.

Everything the rest of the Bible promises — a new creation, the image of God restored, rest for the people of God, a bride for the Son, a river and a tree of life in a city where there is no more death — is here first, in the first two chapters of the Book. The Bible ends where it began. To understand where God is taking us, we start where He started.

The Setting

When. "In the beginning." Adding up the ages scripture gives in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 and the chronology that follows, this series understands creation to have taken place roughly six thousand years ago.

Who wrote it. The first five books of the Bible are called the books of Moses; Jesus Himself spoke of what Moses "wrote" (John 5:46-47). Genesis 1–2 records what no human saw. Only God could have given it.

Two accounts, one story. Genesis 1:1–2:3 is the account of the whole creation, told in seven days. Genesis 2:4 begins a new section — **"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth"** — and zooms in on day six: the forming of the man, the planting of the garden, the command, the naming of the animals and the making of the woman. They are not two conflicting stories. The first is the wide view, the second the close-up.

Six days — and a seventh. Each day is marked by "the evening and the morning" and a number. When God later gave Israel the Sabbath, He based it on this very week: **"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day"** (Exodus 20:11). This series reads the days as ordinary days and the seventh day as part of the story, not an afterthought.

The first administration. The Bible describes the ways God has dealt with people over time as a series of *administrations*. The Garden of Eden is the first. Like each one after it, it opens with God's spoken word to man (Genesis 2:16-17).

The Story, Told Faithfully

In the Beginning God

> **Genesis 1:1** *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*
> **Genesis 1:2** *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

"In the beginning God." The Bible does not argue for God. It opens by announcing Him. Before anything else was, God was.

"Created." The Hebrew word is *bara*. In the Bible only God is ever the subject of this verb. People make and build; only God creates. It appears three times in Genesis 1: for the heavens and earth (1:1), for the first living creatures (1:21), and for man (1:27) — three distinct new beginnings.

"The heaven and the earth." A figure called a **merism**: two opposite ends are named to mean everything in between. "Heaven and earth" means the whole universe.

"Without form, and void." The Hebrew is *tohu va-bohu* — a rhyming pair meaning formless and empty. Verse 2 describes the raw material before God shaped and filled it. As this series understands it, verse 1 and verse 2 belong to the first day of the creation week, not to some earlier ruined world. Exodus 20:11 puts "heaven and earth" and everything in them inside the six days. Isaiah gives God's own purpose in it all: He **"created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited"** (Isaiah 45:18). God had a home in mind from the start.

"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The word translated "moved," *rachaph*, is used elsewhere of an eagle hovering over her young (Deuteronomy 32:11). Over the dark, empty deep, God's power was already present, ready to act.

Let There Be Light

> **Genesis 1:3** *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*
> **Genesis 1:4** *And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*

> **Genesis 1:5** *And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.*

"And God said." Ten times in Genesis 1 we read "And God said." Each time, what God said came to be. The psalmist put it this way: **"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast"** (Psalm 33:6, 9). And **"through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God"** (Hebrews 11:3).

"Let there be light: and there was light." Light came on the first day — three days before the sun. God is not dependent on the sun for light; He made light first, and later gave the sun and moon the task of ruling the day and the night. At the end of the Bible, the holy city **"had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it"** (Revelation 21:23).

"God saw the light, that it was good." The first of seven times God looks at His work and calls it good.

"The evening and the morning were the first day." The Hebrew day began at evening, and still does in Jewish practice. Even the order of the words was a sign: out of darkness, God brings the morning.

The Firmament

> **Genesis 1:6** *And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.*
>
> **Genesis 1:7** *And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.*
>
> **Genesis 1:8** *And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.*

"Firmament." The Hebrew *raqia* comes from a verb meaning to beat out or spread out, like metal hammered thin. It is the open expanse God stretched out — the sky, where the birds fly (1:20) and, further up, where the sun, moon and stars were set (1:17).

Notice something: on the second day, God does not say "it was good." Day two is the only day without it. Day three says it twice. Scripture is exact even in what it leaves out, and Bible students have long noted that the work of dividing the waters is not finished until the dry land appears on day three — and then God calls it good.

Dry Land and Every Green Thing

> **Genesis 1:9** *And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.*
>
> **Genesis 1:10** *And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.*
>
> **Genesis 1:11** *And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.*
>
> **Genesis 1:12** *And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*
>
> **Genesis 1:13** *And the evening and the morning were the third day.*

"Let the dry land appear." The waters were gathered into their place, and the land appeared. The psalmist marvelled at it: God set **"a bound that they may not pass over"** (Psalm 104:9).

“After his kind.” Ten times in this chapter we read “after his kind” or “after their kind.” Each living thing was made to reproduce its own kind. Grass, herbs and fruit trees came ready-made, with seed in them, able to carry life forward from the very first day they grew.

Lights for Signs and Seasons

> **Genesis 1:14** *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:*
>
> **Genesis 1:15** *And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.*
>
> **Genesis 1:16** *And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.*
>
> **Genesis 1:17** *And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,*
>
> **Genesis 1:18** *And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.*
>
> **Genesis 1:19** *And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*

“Let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.” The sun, moon and stars were given four jobs. They mark **days** and **years**. They mark the **seasons** — the Hebrew word *mo’adim* means appointed times, the very word later used for Israel’s feasts. And they were for **signs**. In the pages of scripture, God’s signs in the heavens range from the star that led the wise men to Bethlehem (Matthew 2:2) to the signs “in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars” that Jesus said would come before His return (Luke 21:25).

“He made the stars also.” Five words in Hebrew. The billions of galaxies — told almost in passing. **“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork”** (Psalm 19:1).

Creatures of Sea, Sky and Land

> **Genesis 1:20** *And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.*
>
> **Genesis 1:21** *And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*
>
> **Genesis 1:22** *And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.*
>
> **Genesis 1:23** *And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.*
>
> **Genesis 1:24** *And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.*
>
> **Genesis 1:25** *And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*

“God created great whales.” Here is the second use of *bara*: the beginning of animal life — creatures with breath and blood. The Hebrew word translated “whales,” *tannin*, covers great sea creatures of every kind.

“God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply.” The first blessing in the Bible was spoken over fish and birds. God loves life, and wants His world full of it.

“Living creature.” The Hebrew is *nephesh chayyah*, “living soul.” The same phrase is used of man in Genesis 2:7. Animals and men alike are living souls — breathing, living bodies.

Let Us Make Man

> **Genesis 1:26** *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*
>
> **Genesis 1:27** *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*
>
> **Genesis 1:28** *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

“Let us make man.” Everything up to now was spoken into being with “Let there be.” Now God pauses, as it were, and speaks with deliberation. The “us” has been read many ways. As this series understands it, God is speaking with those present with Him — the angels who **“shouted for joy”** when He laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4-7) — while He alone does the creating: verse 27 immediately says **“God created man”** in *his* own image, singular.

“In our image, after our likeness.” Man was not only a living soul like the animals. He was made in the image of God. **“God is a Spirit”** (John 4:24). As this series understands it, the image of God in Adam was spirit — the ability to know God and have fellowship with Him directly. Scripture later speaks of the whole man as **“spirit and soul and body”** (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Genesis 2:7 gives us the body (the dust) and the soul (the breath of life); Genesis 1:27 gives us the image of God.

“Male and female created he them.” Both the man and the woman bear God’s image. Neither is more “in the image of God” than the other.

“Have dominion.” God gave man rule over the earth and every living thing on it — a stewardship, not a licence to destroy. The psalmist was astonished: **“What is man, that thou art mindful of him?… Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands”** (Psalm 8:4, 6).

Very Good

> **Genesis 1:29** *And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.*
>
> **Genesis 1:30** *And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.*
>
> **Genesis 1:31** *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

“To you it shall be for meat.” “Meat” in the King James means food. In the beginning, man and beast alike ate plants. Permission to eat meat came only after the Flood (Genesis 9:3). As this series understands it, there was no death in God’s creation until sin entered: **“by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin”** (Romans 5:12).

“Behold, it was very good.” Six times God saw that it was good. The seventh time, looking at everything He had made, with man in it, it was *very* good — in Hebrew, *tov me’od*, exceedingly good. Nothing was broken. Nothing was missing.

The Seventh Day

> **Genesis 2:1** *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.*
>
> **Genesis 2:2** *And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.*
>
> **Genesis 2:3** *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

“God ended his work… and he rested.” The Hebrew word *shabath*, from which we get “Sabbath,” means to stop or cease. God was not tired: **“the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary”** (Isaiah 40:28). He rested because the work was finished.

“God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.” The first thing in the Bible God made holy was not a place or a person but a *day* — a time set apart. Notice also that the seventh day has no “evening and morning.” The book of Hebrews draws on this very verse, and speaks of a rest of God that is still open to His people: **“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God”** (Hebrews 4:9), and **“we which have believed do enter into rest”** (Hebrews 4:3).

Dust and Breath

> **Genesis 2:4** *These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,*
>
> **Genesis 2:5** *And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.*
>
> **Genesis 2:6** *But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.*
>
> **Genesis 2:7** *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

“These are the generations.” The Hebrew word *toledot* marks the main sections of Genesis — the generations of Adam, of Noah, of Shem, of Terah, and so on. It introduces what came *from* something. What follows is what came of the heavens and the earth: man and his story.

“The LORD God.” Chapter 1 uses “God” (*Elohim*), the Creator. From 2:4 the name becomes **“the LORD God”** — *Yahweh Elohim*, God in covenant relationship with man. The Creator of the universe is also the One who stoops down to form a man and walk with him.

“There went up a mist from the earth.” Before any rain and before man tilled the ground, the earth was watered from below. As this series understands it, the world before the Flood was a rich, well-watered place quite unlike today’s.

“The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground.” The word *yatsar*, “formed,” is the word for a potter shaping clay (Jeremiah 18:6). And there is a play on words here. The man is *adam*, and the ground is *adamah*. He is the earthling, taken from the earth.

“And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” The animals were spoken into being in groups. The man was personally shaped and personally breathed into by God. Body from the dust; life from God’s breath; and, as Genesis 1:27 has already told us, the image of God. Paul refers to this verse directly: **“The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit”** (1 Corinthians 15:45).

A Garden Eastward in Eden

> **Genesis 2:8** *And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.*
>
> **Genesis 2:9** *And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*
>
> **Genesis 2:10** *And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.*
>
> **Genesis 2:11** *The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;*
>
> **Genesis 2:12** *And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.*
>
> **Genesis 2:13** *And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.*
>
> **Genesis 2:14** *And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.*

“A garden eastward in Eden.” Eden means “delight” or “pleasure.” The garden was *in* Eden, a place within a wider land. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, “garden” became *paradeisos*, from a Persian word for an enclosed royal park — our word “paradise.”

“Every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food.” God did not only make things useful. He made them beautiful.

“The tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” Two trees stand at the centre of the story. One gave life. The other would test whether man would trust God’s word. The tree of life will appear again in the last chapter of the Bible, **“in the midst of the street”** of the holy city, **“for the healing of the nations”** (Revelation 22:2).

“A river went out of Eden to water the garden.” One river, parting into four heads. Two of the names we still know: **Hiddekel** (the Tigris) and **Euphrates**. The Pison and Gihon are unknown today. The world was reshaped by the Flood, so the rivers we now call Tigris and Euphrates may carry the old names rather than the old courses. The Bible’s last chapter shows another river: **“a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God”** (Revelation 22:1).

“The gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.” Gold, bdellium (a fragrant resin, or perhaps pearl), and onyx. God put treasure in the ground for man to find. Gold and onyx would later adorn the tabernacle and the high priest’s garments (Exodus 28:9-12).

To Dress It and to Keep It

> **Genesis 2:15** *And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*

> **Genesis 2:16** *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:*
>
> **Genesis 2:17** *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

"To dress it and to keep it." Work is not part of the curse. Adam had a job before the Fall. The Hebrew words are *abad*, to serve or work, and *shamar*, to guard or keep. After the Fall, the ground would fight back and work would become toil (Genesis 3:17-19). But in the beginning, work was a gift.

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." God's first words to man were generous: *freely eat*. Only one tree was forbidden. And God gave the reason with the command: **"in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."** In Hebrew this is literally *dying thou shalt die* — the story of the Fall that follows shows how that word came true.

This spoken command opened the first administration. Man was free, and trusted, and warned.

A Help Meet for Him

> **Genesis 2:18** *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*
>
> **Genesis 2:19** *And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.*
>
> **Genesis 2:20** *And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.*

"It is not good that the man should be alone." After seven "goods," here is the first "not good" in the Bible. Nothing was wrong with Adam; something was *missing*.

"An help meet for him." The Hebrew is *ezer kenegdo*, *a help corresponding to him*, or *a help as his counterpart*. "Help" is not a lesser word. The same word *ezer* is used of God Himself: **"our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield"** (Psalm 33:20). "Meet" is old English for "suitable."

"Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast… and brought them unto Adam." The Hebrew verb can equally be read "had formed" — the animals were already made on day six, before Adam, and God now brought them to him. There is no contradiction with chapter 1.

"Adam gave names to all cattle." Naming, in the East, showed understanding and authority. Adam studied every creature and named it — the first science lesson. And as he did, he saw that each one had a partner, and he had none. God let Adam feel the need before He met it.

Bone of My Bones

> **Genesis 2:21** *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;*
>
> **Genesis 2:22** *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.*
>
> **Genesis 2:23** *And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

> **Genesis 2:24** *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*
>
> **Genesis 2:25** *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

"A deep sleep." The first surgery in history was performed under anaesthesia by God Himself.

"He took one of his ribs." The Hebrew word *tsela* elsewhere means a "side" — the side of the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:12) and of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:20). The woman was taken from the man's side: not from his head to rule over him, nor from his feet to be trodden down, as an old saying goes, but from beside him, to stand with him.

"Made he a woman." The word translated "made" is *banah*, to build. God built the woman — the only person in the Bible described that way.

"And brought her unto the man." God Himself gave away the bride. The first wedding was performed by God.

"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." Adam's first recorded words are a burst of joy — some read them as the first poem in the Bible. "Bone of my bones" became a Hebrew expression for the closest kinship (Genesis 29:14; 2 Samuel 5:1).

"She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Another word play: man is *ish*, woman is *ishshah*.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Jesus quoted this very verse, putting it together with Genesis 1:27, when asked about divorce: **"Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female… What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"** (Matthew 19:4-6). Marriage was God's design from the beginning — one man and one woman, joined by God.

"They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." Nothing hidden, nothing to fear — between them, and between them and God. The next chapter begins with a serpent. But here, at the end of Genesis 2, everything was as God meant it to be.

Where the Story Leads

To the Messiah

"The figure of him that was to come." Paul calls Adam **"the figure of him that was to come"** (Romans 5:14). The first Adam was made a living soul; the Lord Jesus Christ, the last Adam, was made a quickening — life-giving — spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45). What the first Adam lost, the last Adam regained.

The image of God. Adam was made in God's image. Christ **"is the image of God"** (2 Corinthians 4:4), **"the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature"** (Colossians 1:15). In Him we see what man was made to be.

A bride from His side. As this series understands it, the making of the woman from the side of the sleeping Adam foreshadows the church, the body of Christ. Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 and then says, **"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church"** (Ephesians 5:32). Through Christ's death, His resurrection and His ascension to God's right hand, God has built a people to be joined to Him.

To the Grace Administration

A new creation. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" — a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). The God who began with "Let there be light" does the same work in believers: **"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts"** (2 Corinthians 4:6).

The image renewed. Believers have **"put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him"** (Colossians 3:10).

Entering God's rest. God finished His work and rested. Christ finished His work and sat down at God's right hand (Hebrews 10:12). Believers enter that rest by believing, not by working for it (Hebrews 4:3, 10).

Holy spirit given. What Adam had and lost — spirit from God — is given again to every believer in this administration as the gift of holy spirit (Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:13-14).

To the Topic of God's Original Design

- **Work is good.** It was given before the Fall.
- **Rest is holy.** God set a day apart before there was any law.
- **Marriage is God's idea.** He designed it, and He officiated the first one.
- **People matter.** Every man and woman bears the mark of being made in God's image.
- **Creation is a trust.** Dominion means caring for what belongs to God.
- **God is generous.** "Freely eat" came before "thou shalt not."

The Main Takeaway

In the beginning God created a very good world, made man and woman in His own image to know Him, to work, to rest, to love one another and to rule His creation — and everything the Bible later promises in Christ is God restoring and completing what He intended from the very first page.

- **God was there before anything else.**
- **God's word creates.** What He says comes to pass.
- **Man was made in the image of God** — for fellowship with Him.
- **Work, rest and marriage are gifts from before the Fall.**
- **God is good, and so was everything He made.**
- **The end of the Bible returns to the beginning:** light, a river, a tree of life, a bride, and God with His people.

For Our Learning — The People

- **God.** The Creator, *Elohim* in Genesis 1; *the LORD God*, *Yahweh Elohim*, in Genesis 2, the God who forms, breathes into, plants, commands, brings and blesses.
- **Adam.** The first man, formed from the dust and made a living soul, created in God's image; named every creature; the figure of Christ to come.

- **The woman.** Built by God from Adam's side, a help corresponding to him, bearing God's image with him. She is named Eve after the Fall (Genesis 3:20).

For Our Learning — Customs and Orientalisms

- **The day began at evening.** "The evening and the morning" — Hebrew reckoning, still used for Sabbath and feasts.
- **Gardens in the East.** A walled garden with water and fruit trees was a mark of royalty and luxury; "paradise" comes from a Persian word for such a park.
- **Naming.** To name something showed understanding of it and authority over it.
- **"Bone of my bones."** An expression of the closest kinship.
- **Leaving father and mother.** In the East, a bride usually joined her husband's family household. God's word gives the husband the duty to *leave* and *cleave* — a new household comes first.
- **Treasure in the land.** Gold, bdellium and onyx were highly prized; onyx stones later bore the names of Israel's tribes on the high priest's shoulders.

For Our Learning — Figures of Speech

A figure of speech is a deliberate departure from the plain, ordinary way of saying something, used by God to add emphasis and feeling. These are the ones in this story:

- **Merism** — two opposites named to mean the whole. "The heaven and the earth" (1:1): everything that exists.
- **Anaphora** — the same words repeated at the start of successive sentences. "And God said" ten times in Genesis 1: God's word behind everything.
- **Polysyndeton** — "many ands." Nearly every verse in Genesis 1 begins with "And," joining the works together and giving each one weight.
- **Repetition** — "The evening and the morning," "after his kind," "it was good": the orderly rhythm of God's work.
- **Anthropopatheia** — describing God in human terms: God "saw," "rested," "formed," "breathed." God is spirit; He speaks in language we can grasp.
- **Paronomasia** — a play on similar-sounding words. *Adam* from the *adamah* (2:7); *ish* and *ishshah*, man and woman (2:23).
- **Polyptoton** — the same word repeated in different forms. *Dying thou shalt die* (2:17), rendered "thou shalt surely die": certain death.

What the Bible Actually Says

- **God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested the seventh** (Exodus 20:11).
- **Light came on the first day; the sun on the fourth.**
- **Every living thing reproduces "after his kind."**
- **Man and woman were both made in God's image.**

- **In the beginning, man and animals ate plants.** Meat came after the Flood.
- **God called everything He had made "very good."**
- **God rested because His work was finished, not because He was tired.**
- **Man was formed from the dust and became a living soul when God breathed into him.**
- **Adam was given work in the garden before the Fall.**
- **Only one tree was forbidden;** every other tree was freely given.
- **The woman was made from Adam's side** and brought to him by God.
- **Marriage was designed by God** — Jesus quoted Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 together.
- **The Bible never calls the fruit an apple** — and in Genesis 2, nothing had yet gone wrong.

God's Will and Intent

- **God wants a home for His people** — He formed the earth to be inhabited.
- **God wants fellowship with man** — He made him in His image and spoke with him.
- **God wants man to flourish** — to work, rest, love and rule well.
- **God gives generously** and warns clearly.
- **God designed marriage** as the joining of one man and one woman.
- **God intends to restore everything** — a new creation, the image renewed, the tree of life, and God dwelling with His people.