

Imagining The Garden Of Eden (Part One)

Using Imagination in Bible Study

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Given 17-Apr-10; Sermon #988

To begin today I want to read a paragraph to you for your consideration.

Poking the embers of the dying fire with a stick, Rally bunched the coals together into a small pile and added a handful of dried brush and a few broken twigs. A thin tendril of smoke curled upward for a moment before flame bloomed from the small pile. He spent the next minute or two feeding it larger pieces of kindling, then set a few more substantial branches on the merrily crackling blaze. He'd have coffee brewing in no time—and he'd need it. It was going to be a long, busy day.

Now, most of you, hearing this paragraph, probably have a picture in your mind of a cowboy, who has just rolled out of his blankets, squatting over a campfire, warming his hands, and waiting for the water to boil in his coffeepot.

Others may not have associated the name "Rally" with a cowboy, and instead, pictured a man camping in the wilderness—just a man—maybe a modern man, preparing for a long day of hunting, fishing, or hiking.

Yet others may have thought this was an interior scene—a fireplace in a rustic cabin, without electricity and other modern conveniences; he was getting ready to work out in the fields.

Now, from what was written, from what you heard, each of these mental pictures is a possibility. It would fit in any one of these situations.

Now, what each of you have done in listening to this story, is to employ your imagination. To define imagination, it is, "The act or power of forming a

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mental image of something not present to the senses, or never before wholly perceived in reality." I know that is a mouthful. Obviously, this was a dictionary type of definition.

To put it more simply, it is the ability of the human mind to picture something, that it cannot see, or is not present within the situation, just as we do not have a man, his fire, his brewing coffee here in this room right now. It was just an imagined scene.

More than that, though, more than just to picture something in our minds that we cannot see right now, is the ability to conceive or picture things or ideas that may have never existed at all. For instance, if I say the name, "Sherlock Holmes," then immediately a picture comes to mind of your particular concept of this person. Or, you may be thinking of the old Sherlock Holmes movies with Basil Rathbone, and you think of him, the rat-catcher. Maybe you have seen the PBS versions with Jeremy Brett, or the movie with Rupert Everett recently; or most of us now think of Robert Downey Jr. who made a very interesting Sherlock Holmes movie.

But, when it comes down to it, you are imagining a man who never really existed. Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character, created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in about 1887 or so, when the first Sherlock Holmes serial came out.

Imagination is humanity's mental creative ability. A man or woman using their imagination has been the source of countless inventions, artworks, literature, music, scientific discovery, and just about everything else that man has thought of.

A lot of our current products we take for granted was first thought of by someone who at some point had to figure out the wheel, the pulley, the incline, the screw, the nail, etc. At some point somebody had to imagine these things. The hammer, or any sort of tool. Carpeting. That was somebody's imagination at one time. "These rushes are not very nice, why do not we weave something to put on the floor, and make it permanent even."

So they figured out a way to do that. The loom also had to be invented too. And so forth.

But one can imagine just about anything. You can use your imagination to great benefit, or for great harm to any or all. You can imagine a device that would help doctors to look inside the human body in order to help them with physical difficulties. Or, you could also come up with a machine that would detonate killing millions of people [good and evil].

That is the difference between using your imagination for good purposes, or evil ones. In each case, when you boil it all down, the inventor of such things had to have a mental picture in his mind, first of all, of what he wanted to produce, and then what it do, and how he would make it work.

Imagination is a gift of God. Elihu, in Job 32:8 says that the spirit in man gives understanding. So, imagination is part of that understanding. It is part of what God put into Adam as the spirit in man which has come down to each one of us, as the ability to think and reason. Paul says in I Corinthians 2: 11 that man's spirit enables him to understand earthly things. That, indeed, is what our imagination allows us to do. It allows us to understand earthly things.

Many of you have the ability to understand or to take geometric shapes and turn them in your mind. That is a good thing if you are an engineer, thinking about the structure, and be able to turn it around in your mind to see how it works from all angles.

Then there are people like Mozart who had a very vivid musical imagination who could "hear" the entire orchestra playing in his head, of the music he created, even though it had not been performed yet. He was able to do all of that mentally. There are other folks who are able to conceptualize a great work of art in their head, and then be able to take their concept, and put it on paper, or canvas, or whatever medium of their choosing—even marble if they choose to sculpt it.

It is an amazing thing that God has given us. Imagination: The power of creativity. We can even imagine things that do not exist in nature. Before we talked about Sherlock Holmes, at least we understand what men are like. But some folks have been able to imagine things that do not exist at all, such as griffins—part lion, part bird; or sphinxes with the head of a woman, body of

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a lion, whatever else it is. Although these are pieces taken from nature, and put together after a fashion, it is something that does not exist. It is the same thing with stories about fairies, ogres, and leprechauns—things that do not really exist. And, that all comes out of the imagination of man.

As far as we know, only mankind has this ability among all the physical creations of God. No ape, or parrot, or dolphin has ever conceived of a concerto. Parrots might have mimicked a very small portion of one. They cannot sculpt, paint, write poems, create a gable, or even a tool. They talk about the monkeys who use rocks to break or crack things, or to use a stick to get termites out of a log. But, those are just things that they find in nature. They did not design them and create their tools. They just picked up something near at hand and used it.

That is not creation. That is not being able to take a mental image, design something, and make it into something useful. Only mankind can do that. Only man has the power from God to devise new things—to create previously unknown works from the resources at hand.

So imagination is part of man's rationality, and creativity—his intellect, and his artistry. It is part of what we have been given by God through the spirit in man.

God expects us to use our imaginations. It is not something that He gave us that is bad. It is something that is good and useful. How do I know this? The Bible—God did not give us a picture book! God did not give us some holographic conception of His way, so that we could look at it and see what He meant. Instead, He gave us words in print on paper, not just words through the air. He gave us a book. And when you have a book, you must read it. This book is full of information and concepts of personality profiles of individuals of situations that have come along through history; what He does by giving us this information in words is He makes us imagine these things. He makes us filter it through our minds, and picture people, and situations—cause and effect—we have to actually make mental images of these things.

The Bible contains hundreds if not more of detailed stories that we have to picture in our mind's eye to fully appreciate. If we do not picture them, we are missing something.

The Psalmist tells us in Psalm 119:97 that he meditates on God's words, particularly His law, all the day. Do you think he is only saying, "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." The Psalmist is not just saying the words. That is meaningless chanting or grunting. It would not do anything for us just to have it memorized.

What he did in meditating on God's law all the day was think about it use—how it is used. He thought about situations that have come up in life, and how it would apply. He had to think about, "If a person was coming through the door, in the middle of the night, and my door was locked, but he had broken through, and if I shot him with an arrow, or threw my knife at him, would I be guilty of murder?"

Now, as I was saying all that, were you thinking of a man crashing through the door, with another man inside throwing a knife, or shooting an arrow at him? You probably were. You may not have made a mental note of it, but I would guess you were. That is the sort of thing when one meditates upon the law of God. You not only are thinking about how the law is written, but you are also thinking about how it applies to situations. And when you think about applications, you are thinking about mental images, situations, way in which this law would be applied in life. So you are using your imagination, even in terms of law. Not in terms of just some cute story, but of actual law.

So it takes imagination to figure out how His laws apply in various situations. You might have supposed it was only just thinking about something, considering thus and such, but it is the active use of your imagination. And God has not only provided us with historic accounts, but He has also provided us with fictional stories—parables. They are for us to understand so that we can imagine these situations that He provides in all their color, and contemplate their meaning, and extract spiritual lessons from them. And with the addition of the Holy Spirit, we not only understand what is going on, we understand what He truly meant, because He used the stories

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to hide things from the unconverted, but when you have the Spirit of God you have the key to understanding what He was really talking about.

So imagination linked up with God's spirit is a powerful tool for studying the Bible.

Now if I were to go to Luke 15, and read you the parable of the prodigal son, you would imagine the entire story in your mind—the one son asking for his inheritance, the father giving it to him, him going away and wasting it, and carousing and doing all the things that he did, and then ending up with the pigs, and wishing he were back home as a lowly servant for his father, and so on. You are thinking about this, and filling in the details a bit as it goes. For Jesus in telling us the parable, does not tell us everything. He does not give us exasperating details such as, "He walked down this road for 2 miles, and turned right and took this other road, and ended up in this city, and then he stayed in this woman's boarding house," and on, and on. But our minds do this for us. We see him walking down a road to another city. We see him carousing—I will not ask what you are thinking of—and then we see his last dime as he spends it in fear of what will he do now; then he is impoverished, and he is scrounging around in the hog feed hoping to get a few pods to eat. You see this in your mind's eye. God put these stories in there to do exactly that. That is part of our meditation.

When we meditate, we need to be employing our imagination. For it brings out the story more fully, and it helps us to remember it. We get those mental images in there that our own minds create, and we associate them with certain passages of scripture, and sometimes that even helps us in our memorization of things. For we associate the picture with the words.

The New King James Version that I normally use while I am giving a sermon uses the word "imagination" only twice in the entire Bible. It uses it only once in each testament. They are found in Genesis 6:5, which in the great flood series I went over, "The imagination of the thoughts of their hearts were only evil continually," and also in Luke 1:51 where Mary is praising God for choosing her to be the mother of Christ, talking about scattering the proud for the imaginations of their hearts. But in both of these cases imagination is used in a negative sense. These were imaginations that were not good.

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However, in the Old Testament the underlying Hebrew word that is used is "kha'sab," used about 124 times with a variety of meanings. So they only translated it as "imagination" only once in the Old Testament, but it is used 123 more times in slightly different ways. And it implies the thinking process as a whole in whatever form. So it could be thinking about, considering, or meditating; judging since when you think, you make judgments and discernments; and when you think, you also plan, so it is planning; and it could also be devising, or inventing because you do all that sort of thing when you think.

Let us look at some examples. Turn to Malachi 3. This is an interesting one.

Malachi 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name.

There it is—the same word translated imagine, or imagination, in Genesis 6:5 is "meditate," here.

Here is another interesting occasion where it is used. Turn to Isaiah 53. This is the Suffering Servant chapter.

Isaiah 53:4 Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

Here it is the word "esteemed." It could have been "judged." It could have been "considered." It is the faculty of mind in which we think about things, make an accounting, and figure out things, making a conclusion. So, the same word that underlies the word imagination in Genesis 6:5 is translated here as esteemed.

Turn to II Chronicles 2. This is the "Preparing to Build the Temple," chapter. Here, Solomon is receiving a letter of negotiation from Hiram regarding work on the temple.

II Chronicles 2:12-14 And now I have sent a skillful man, endowed with understanding, Hiram my master craftsman (the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre), skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, purple and blue, fine linen and crimson, and to make any engraving and to accomplish any plan which may be given to him, with your skillful men and with the skillful men of my lord David your father.

Now, guess which word, here, is kha'sab? It is the word "plan,"—"to accomplish any plan that may be given to him." Here, he has the ability to think through and organize, and therefore bring something about—a finished product. This is another part of the thinking process, which, of course, he would have to employ his imagination to do.

Turn to Exodus 31. This passage is about Bezalel who was given the wisdom from God to organize all the work of making the various portions of the tabernacle.

Exodus 31:1-4 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze,

"Kha'sab," is found in our word, "to design."

I have gone through these so that you could see the whole scope of this Hebrew word that it is not just the whole process, but it could be only parts of it, most of which would need the employment of the imagination. And so, the imagination in Genesis 6:5 is not a bad translation at all.

Now there are three Greek New Testament words that could be translated as "imagination." Of course, the New King James Version only translates it once, in Luke 1:51. These words are "agizmos," "dialogizmos," and

"dianoia." These are not really important for us to know. All of them essentially mean "thought," "reasoning," "idea," or "meditation." You can see that there is a correlation with the Hebrew word kha'sab.

Let us see a little about these in context right quick. Turn to Romans 2. This one is agizmos. This passage is part of Paul's parenthetical statement as he is talking about law.

Romans 2:14-15 For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them.

The English word derived from the Greek is the word "thoughts."

Please turn to Luke 2. This time we are going to look at dialogizmos.

Luke 2:34-35 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Here again, we have translated it "thoughts." Imaginations would have worked just fine, too.

One more, turn to I John 5. This is one of the "we know" statements found in I John. This is the Greek word, "dianoia."

I John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Here it is translated as "an understanding." "Imagination," itself, would not have worked near as well here—"And has given us an imagination that we

know Him." But, it is a possibility. It has interesting possibilities if you would think of it that way. But, He has given us an imagination in order for us to get to know Him better. We have to employ our imagination. And obviously, our imagination is part of our understanding mechanism.

It seems clear to me while going through these that both testaments treat imagination as a normal part of human thought. It is there. Obviously, men have made a very bad use of it, and often it gets Him into trouble—his imagination, that is, running wild, leading to terrible things because He allows them to go too far, beyond the bounds that God has set upon it.

But, when it comes down to it, imagination is a neutral ability. It can be corrupted just like anything else God has given to mankind. Once we have it, we can either do good with it, or evil with it. So, your imagination is something we have to take control of, and use them for the best purposes.

Now, this has been my introduction. It has been a long introduction, I know, but I wanted to set this foundation to establish the source—God—and the necessity of using one's imagination—the creative ability to form images in the mind.

My real purpose is to get us to start doing this while studying God's word; employing that portion of the human mind in our understanding, and studying of God's word. Because I believe that imagination is an indispensable tool for extracting a fuller understanding of any text in the Bible, but especially those more narrative sections of the Bible where something is being taught to us through a story, or eye witness accounts.

Now, to this end, I want to concentrate my imagination in explaining, and helping to expand upon the events in the Garden of Eden. This is a very basic text to do this with.

Now, this is going to be a series. There is no way you can employ your imagination on this section of the Bible without multiple sermons because there is so much there! The Creation, the Garden of Eden, and the Pre-Flood World have always fascinated me. There is something about that time that just gets me going. I think it might be because I have a very active and colorful imagination, always have. I enjoy history. It has always been a

favorite subject in school. I love the Bible, obviously, or I would not be doing what I do. And I also like a good mystery.

And this beginning portion of the Bible starting in Genesis 2 is a mystery; well, it can be a mystery. There is so little written about those 1650 years before the Flood, that it just begs to be filled out the creative use of our imagination. And of course, when I say that, I mean it to be carefully hedged in by what the Bible tells us, because I would not want to go way out and talk about things that the Bible does not support. And also, to a lesser extent, hedged in by what secular history and archeology can tell us. I do not intend to get into very much of that because there is not much at all to discuss. They seem as baffled as anyone else in this part of the Bible, and in fact most secular historians and archeologists consider this portion of the Bible to be a myth.

This is a tantalizing part of man's history because there is just so little written about it.

This is also a very foundational period of time in all history. As you know, Genesis has that name because it is a book of beginnings. This is the name given to it by the Hebrews—"In the Beginning." That is, indeed, what it tells us—all about the beginnings of mankind, of God's way, and all sorts of other beginnings.

What is written in it often lays the foundation for how a subject should be treated throughout the Bible. I have mentioned this to you before. This is, ***The Law of First Mentions***. When something is mentioned for the first time in the Bible, it sets the stage for how it should be understood throughout the Bible; that other understandings of it are offshoots from the original understanding.

There is one that I used a few years ago, the sermons I gave on work, is the word, "work," because in Genesis 2:2 is the first use of the word "work." As a matter of fact, it is not only the first use, it is also the second use—mentioned twice in one verse. And then within the first three, it is mentioned yet a third time. So, obviously, in these verses work is mentioned three times. And not only that, the word "work" is used all three times in expression of God's activity in this passage.

And so, what we see from the principle is that, in the first mention of the word "work," God is doing work, making work a very Godly and noble enterprise, it also suggests that those who are going to be Gods, who want to be in God's family, are also going to have to work in order to fulfill the goals that they have. So work becomes a very central feature of Christianity. For this world's Christians to have removed it from their docket is sacrilege, because they will not accomplish what needs to be done without working at it. God shows that to us right there (Genesis 2) just how necessary work is. He created the world, but He did not do it by fiat. God worked. Maybe that is misleading—though God created it all from nothing, it took work for Him to do it all.

Now, another example is the first use of the word "blood." This word's first mention is found in Genesis 4, at the time when Cain killed Abel. We all know the phrase, "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground." From this, several meanings just pop out immediately. Obviously, there is the sanctity of life, which is in the blood. It was so bad, it was crying out to God, because the sanctity had been broken.

Obviously, in its context where it is found, there is a connection with spilled blood and death, as well as sin and sacrifice. What has those men been doing? They had made a sacrifice. And, God's acceptance of Abel's, and the rejection of Cain's was the cause of the murder. Cain was jealous and angry with his brother, "Mr. Goody Two-shoes," "Am I my brother's keeper?" and that sort of thing.

There is also the fact that the blood of the saints is precious to God as Abel (as far as we know) was the first saint. He was one who walked with God. He obeyed God and did what He commanded, and did it properly; he got killed for it.

Of course, there is also in this idea, of God's deep concern for justice. Even that the blood had a "voice," is a very strong metaphor emphasizing the heinous nature of murder. All kinds of things pop out at this first mention.

And of course, you cannot get away from the fact that ultimately all of these meanings that come out about blood here sets the stage for the Great Blood Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is already pointing in that direction in Genesis 4.

So, first mentions are very important. And when you are talking about Genesis there are a lot of first mentions.

For instance, it is in Genesis where God is revealed as Creator. And He is soon also revealed as Provider, Ruler, Savior, and other things.

We also meet Satan in Genesis 3 as the serpent. In this chapter we also learn his fundamental methods of deceit upon all mankind.

We can read about "The Way of Cain." On the other hand, we can also read about "Walking with God." Enoch walked with God.

We learn in Genesis 6 through 8 that God punishes for sin, but He also saves a remnant so He can start all over. That is a very interesting first mention there.

Both Babylon and Jerusalem make their first appearances in the book of Genesis. So you have the contrast of The City of Chaos and Confusion, versus The City of Peace. Who else is first mentioned in Genesis but Abraham, and his family through whom would come Messiah, who was already mentioned in chapter 3 within the first prophecy—verse 15 where the seed of the woman coming and bruising the head of the Serpent—the first prophecy of Messiah.

So, there are lots and lots of firsts in Genesis. So, I think it would be helpful to go through these early chapters. The whole series is only going to go through chapters 2 and 3. We will not get through all of that in the next half hour.

I want to really emphasize the use of your imagination to highlight and expand on these fundamental concepts as we go through them. The reason is because God recorded these events with a paucity of words—the stories are very concise, yet precise, and very descriptive. It just aches for more

information, supplied through various things throughout the Bible, and very vivid imagination to get a fuller understanding. So, we are going to use our curiosity and try to think deeply and meditate a bit on what goes on in these chapters.

Genesis 2:4-6 This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

Here is where we start. Since my primary subject is the Garden of Eden and what happened in it—the events that took place within the walls of the garden. This gives us a running start to it, without bogging us down in the details of Creation Week. If I wanted to do that, I would go back to Genesis 1 because it is all contained there—the first day, this; the second day, that; the third day, something else. He gives us a very orderly pattern of what went on in the Creation Week. I do not want to go into that. We are just talking about the Garden of Eden in this series. And this is the introduction to that.

Now, critical scholars—those who are very secular—criticizing the Bible rather than trying to learn from it—have concluded incorrectly that chapter 2 is a second, competing contradictory account of creation. What they say is that chapter 2, beginning in verse 4, is an account written by somebody else (other than Moses), added later to the text because the editor could not decide which was the true account. There is this one account that talks about God creating in seven days, while there is this other account that talks about only one section of it. And so, this editor, being a dope, could not figure it out. Both were supposedly holy, so he put them both in there.

They also say that chapter 2 was written by a "Jaho-ist," or a "Jehova-ist" meaning using the term "YHWH" as his name for God, while the person who wrote the first chapter was an "Elo-ist," who used Elohim instead. And so, you have two different streams of information—one emphasizing God as Elohim, and the other as YHWH.

This description is the beginning of the Documentary Hypothesis, and it is an example of scholarly imagination run amok. Even so, it and its descendants are the prevailing view among Bible scholars today. They actually believe this rot.

And to this hypothesis about there being an Elo-ist, and a Jaho-ist, they have also added a priestly author, and a Deuteronomist. And so, you will see in their text little marks denoting the various opinions, (J) for the Jaho-ist, and an (E) for the Elo-ist, and a (P) for the Priestly One, and a (D) for the Deuteronomist. So, this is often found by the acronym JEPD theory.

Now, outside of these scholar's minds, which seem to be huge empty caverns, there is no proof whatsoever of this hodgepodge collation of manuscripts. It is entirely built upon their own studies and deductions. There is no manuscript that they could find—a Hebrew manuscript that has just the Elo-ist versions in it, or a priestly version, or a Deuteronomist version, or a Jaho-ist version. Every copy of the Bible they have that contains Genesis, has the book of Genesis intact with all the "parts" there.

What they have done is taken a critical pen to the text of the Bible, and said, "Ah Ha! This one is different from the last one. There must be something going on here!" And then they put on their Sherlock Holmes cap and they deduce what they think is plausible.

Well, it is quite improbable, because tradition has it, and it is quite a unanimous view that Moses wrote both these books himself. That there may have been some editing done later, by Samuel, and Ezra, but that was only to update various things so that the readers of their time would understand—especially place names of locations, such as during the journey of Jacob going away from the family headed for Haran getting away from Esau, he came to the place called Dan, where he had the dream. Okay, regardless which story, Dan was also known as Laish. It was renamed after Israel took the land.

Okay, in Genesis 28:19 Bethel was named by Jacob, although the earlier name was Luz. And so we have a place where an editor when through there adding little helps to clarify for the reader things such as this.

So that is the Documentary Hypothesis. There is a mountain of evidence within the Bible to show that this thing is all wet. In fact, the truth is the exact opposite. There is substantial unity of the texts. The Bible is the creation by one author, God. And Genesis is written by one author, Moses.

Just to give you one proof of this evidence within the Bible regarding the unity of the texts, turn to Matthew 19. This is Christ talking about marriage.

Matthew 19:3-6 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Did you notice what Christ did there? In verse 4 He takes an extract from Genesis 1:27, which is the supposed Elo-ist version. But in verse 5, He quotes the whole of Genesis 2:24 from the Jao-ist version. And therefore, He puts His stamp of approval on both. Obviously, it is not one or the other, but both—both are divinely inspired. And both came from God through the pen of Moses.

All this dithering of who wrote what manuscript is just foolish vanity if we recognize Jesus' authority, and His quotations of both of them here in the same breath as it were. The two accounts, then, are not contradictory, but complementary. They both talk about the same subject, but from different angles.

Now, this is another first. What I am talking about here, there are two accounts, is another one of these firsts that we have to understand about the way the Bible is constructed. There are frequent doubling, or tripling, or even quadrupling and more of accounts of various events in the Bible. God will have written Genesis 1 the overall view, and then He has chapter 2

written, a more specific account. These are written from different perspectives, that help us by filling in details, or they emphasize different elements of the teaching.

Now this occurs a lot in Genesis, but really it is a lot in the whole Bible. In Genesis 7, if you remember by Great Flood Series, we went through Genesis 7, and I showed that in that chapter Moses describes the flood coming in four or five different ways, that this Flood truly occurred, it lasted for this long, and it covered the entire earth, and it killed every living thing that breaths air off the face of the earth, including all humanity. He just pounds it in until we get it, coming whichever way works best for us.

In Genesis 9 when He establishes the Covenant of the Rainbow with mankind, it is described in at least three different ways, so that we will understand that God means what He says when He said that He would not destroy mankind ever again by a flood of water.

God makes multiples promises to Abraham, and they are all the same, except for a little difference here, or a little detail there. But He promises him essentially the same thing each time.

The book of Deuteronomy, itself, is a repetition of material that is found in the other four books, with a little bit added of its own. That is why it is called "Deuteronomy," because it is a second telling of the law. If you read Judges 4 and 5, you will find that one is a narrative of Israel's battles against Sisera and Hazor, while the other is the poetic version of the same thing. But they are the same thing—talking about the same incident in history.

I and II Chronicles is to a great extent a repeat of I and II Kings. The prophets write down multiple prophecies against the same nations. If you go through Isaiah, you will find He prophesies against Assyria, Babylon, Moab, etc., while if you go to Jeremiah he has the same sort of information; go into Ezekiel, and He says the same things; they all repeat, and repeat throughout, adding some detail, but they are basically repetitions in many ways.

Of course, there are four accounts of the life of Jesus Christ. We call them gospels. They are four different viewpoints of the same things. But, one man will emphasize something, while another man will emphasize something

else. And then the apostle John wrote his gospel quite a bit later, and added things, and filled in details that the others did not.

The book of Revelation is the New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament book of Daniel. And many of Daniel's prophecies are explained in the book of Revelation using different or similar symbols.

So, Genesis 2 is not a separate account of creation, but rather a magnification, or an elucidation—a detailed view of some of the events that happened in Creation Week that did not pattern of Genesis 1. Remember that I said that there was a way that God was recounting what He did in the Creation Week—on the first day, this; on the second day, that; and the third day; something else. He was giving us an overview of all the things that happened.

But Genesis 2 is different. Think of them, not in terms of an account, but rather as maps. Genesis 1 is a map of the entire world in all its glory—macro view where you can see the whole thing. Genesis 2 is like only one continent on that same map. We have gone from looking at it from way up here, to looking at it closer down here.

What this close in view does, what any close in view would do, is that it makes certain features more distinct and recognizable. If you were looking at the earth from a satellite, you would see things—land masses, the oceans, cloud bands, but you would not see anything distinctly. But if you came down and were right over the top of something, you would see mountains; getting closer you would see the trees, and people; moving autos; rivers and streams.

This is the same circumstance you find in the differences between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. We are taking a slice out of The Creation Week, and looking at it more closely. We could even call it a flash-back, to use the movie making term, where you go back and look at something in more detail.

Genesis 2 is a flashback to the sixth day of Creation Week. That is also why I used the example of a continent up above. There are seven continents,

right? We just went from looking at the whole world, to just looking at one of them. Here we have seven days of creation, and now we are down to examining one of them, the sixth day.

Going back to Genesis 2:4.

Genesis 2:4 This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

Now the New King James Version word, "history," here, is the King James Version, "generations," of the heavens and the earth. This word "history," or "generations," is "toledoth" (Strong's Concordance number 8435 if you wish to look it up later), and it can variously mean things like descent, history, genealogy, account, record, or story. And so, in the King James Version they took it literally as being the descent, or genealogy of the heavens and the earth. In more modern bibles, they tend to use history, account, record, or story.

Believe it or not, this phrase, "This is the history of," "These are the generations of," occurs ten times in the book of Genesis. What this does is that it basically splits up the book of Genesis into sections. Here, we find, "This is the history of the heavens and the earth," runs from Genesis 2:4 through 4:26, all the way through and including the story of Cain and Abel. And then it goes to the generations of Adam in Genesis 5:1 through 6:8. And then there are the generations of Noah in Genesis 6:9 through 9:29. And then the generations of the sons of Noah are after that. And then the specific generations of the sons of Shem are after them; and then the generations of Terah, the father of Abraham. And that one runs a long way—that entire story is found in Genesis 11:27 through 25:11. That is about 14 chapters or so.

And after this, there are the generations of Ishmael, then the generations of Isaac, the generations of Esau, and the generations of Jacob, which run from Genesis 37:2 all the way to Genesis 50:26, the end of the book.

So, we can see here, that except for the creation account, Genesis 1:1 through 2:3, the entire book of Genesis is chopped up by this phrase as a headliner, "These are the generations of..."

Each one of these passages, by the way—all these different segments through the book of Genesis, deal not with the creation of what is mentioned first, not about the creation of the heavens and the earth, necessarily, but with the subsequent developments that happened. The generations of Terah does not talk about Terah very much at all. It talks about what developed from Terah—the lead-in to Abraham, and what Abraham did, and the relationship between him and God.

The generations of Isaac speaks about Isaac's life and what happened while he was on the scene. This is the same with Jacob—it is the history of Jacob and his sons.

So, that is basically what this word means. The modern translations are much better, that it is the history of, or the account of what started with this. So the "toledoth" of the heavens and the earth is not an explanation of their creation, except in passing, but rather a discussion of what came afterward—what it was that developed from that thing—what came next. We can also talk about it in terms of what happened as a result thereof.

Notice that in Genesis 1:1 God creates the heavens and the earth. And then, this is repeated in Genesis 2:4, this is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created. And then, it says, "in the day that the Lord God made the earth, and the heavens." Ah Ha! There is something different here. He did not word it this way just to vary the rendition. No, this is a clue. This switch of order is a verbal clue that brings us down out of the vast reaches of space and colossal cosmic power, on to terra firma. It is like saying, "We were out there in the heavens, and we saw God create the sun, the moon, and the stars, the whole galaxy, and we saw Him hovering over the face of the deep, and we saw Him divide the waters, we saw Him put the lights up, and all these things. And we saw His vast colossal power!"

Okay, now come down to the earth. And we are going to see Him working on the earth. So we go again from a macro view of things, to a micro view. From really big, to more detailed and smaller.

Just a word about the divine name of God found here in this verse. "Lord God." Remember I mentioned up above about the Jao-ists, and the Elo-ists. In all of Genesis 1 through Genesis 2:3, it was Elohim. It was God did this, and that, and so on. Now, starting in verse 4, we have the term "Lord God," which is YHWH Elohim. In Hebrew, this formation actually is quite rare in the Bible. But, here in chapters two and three it is used 20 times. It must be important.

Elsewhere in the Bible, it is only used in Exodus 9:30; II Samuel 7:22, 25; I Chronicles 17:16-17; II Chronicles 4:41-42; Psalm 50:1; and Psalm 84:8, 11. That is it. These are the only times in the remainder of the Old Testament that this YHWH Elohim combination was used. And for what it is worth, in Psalm 50:1, it is Elohim YHWH. But, they included it in this listing because of what it means.

Our English bibles show Lord God being used a lot more often than it is in the Hebrew. But, it is not this form of YHWH Elohim. This is one of the drawbacks of translation. You cannot see the different forms that were used, necessarily. YHWH Elohim is used only in these places mentioned above.

It is not used here by chance.

Elohim comes from a root word meaning, "to fear." It comes from a verbal noun that means, "to fear." This implies not only One who is to be feared and exalted, but it means, "The Greatest One who is to be feared and exalted." As we have known for many years, now, this is in the plural form, making it very intensive, and implying fullness and multiplicity of powers. So it is not only a person to be feared and exalted, but this is One who has a great deal of power who can come at you from a lot of different angles; as well as suggesting more than one. But, the way that Hebrew is set up, plurals where singulars would be expected, is impressing upon you the superlative,

something greater. It is very similar to the Hebrew "holy of holies," or "song of songs." The thing is intensified. In this case, it is intensified by the use of the plural.

So, Elohim, then, is the Great God who is so powerful that He brought all things into existence by speaking a few words. That is what is being impressed upon us in chapter one. This greatest of all-powerful beings just made this, and this, and that, and all this other.

Now, YHWH as we find in Exodus 3, "I AM WHO I AM." This means that not only that He has, and He will always exist, but that He cannot be defined except by Himself. There is no way to compare Him with anything. So, He is who He is! We cannot say that He is like this man, or this thing, but only that He is who He is! That is His name! "I AM this!" So, He cannot be defined except by Himself. He is utterly unique in the whole of the universe. He is the One and the Only.

But, it also implies that He is a person. I AM. He is a personal being. He is not a blob out there in the universe somewhere that does not have any connection with mankind. He is a person like we are persons—different, but like us. Indefinable in terms of what we are, but still, there are connections between Himself and man—He made us in His image!

So, He is not remote, or abstract. He is personal. We come to find in this book that He is the God of Israel, and the God of mankind. He has chosen to show Himself as the God of mankind right here in this verse. So, He can be known by us personally.

Notice the difference. In chapter one we saw Him as this all-powerful Being who made the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them. In chapter two, we see Him still as that all-powerful Being who made everything, but now His is a personal God.

So, what did Moses do in changing from chapter 1 to chapter 2? He essentially did the same thing that he did in going from macro view to micro view. He went from a great remote abstract powerful God to the same God, yet the One that we can relate to.

Imagining the Garden of Eden (Part One) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh
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So, what did He do? He brought Himself down to our understanding through Moses. Is that not neat? Genesis 2 is not contradictory, and not written by somebody who had a whole different view of things, but was written by the same man who is trying to bring us down from one view to another one, and see how they apply to us personally.

Together they suggest that the Great God of Creation is also the personal God of each one of us. He is the God of salvation, the God of Providence, the God of Law and Justice, and He would later be seen in this name, and be attached to the fact that He is also the God of the Covenant—that He is such a One who will willingly make agreements with mankind in order to bring them into His family.

So we a shift, here, just in these first few verses from universal, to local, as well as a shift from a remote God of awesome power and authority to a God who is near and personally providing for mankind.

That is all for today. This was only meant to be an introduction. There will be more next time.