

**Biblical Interpretation – Genesis 2**  
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Genesis 2 expands on the details of man's creation. It is not a separate creation event, but merely a more in-depth treatment of Day Six. However, the creation order changes, making impossible a literal interpretation of both passages.

### **Day Seven**

Genesis 2:1-3

*Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. <sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.*

With the seventh day, God gives man the pattern for his seven day week. Although young-earth creationists will dispute it, the seventh day does not follow the pattern of the first six. The first six said, "evening and morning" for each day, providing a beginning and an ending to each time period. However, there is no such phrase here. As such many old earth believers contend that we are still in Day Seven, and God is still resting from His creative work. This lends support to the days of creation being longer than 24 hours, since the seventh day has so far lasted at least 6,000 years.

### **Man's Creation Up Close**

*<sup>4</sup> 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.*

This opening statement says the following is a historical account of creation. It should be taken as an expansion of the original in chapter one.

*<sup>5</sup> 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; <sup>6</sup> but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.*

Many young-earth proponents have argued that rain did not start until the Flood of Noah. Others recently, such as Ken Ham and his Answers In Genesis partners, have backed off of this, instead recognizing the possibility of rain before Noah.

*<sup>7</sup> 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 being. <sup>8</sup> The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.*

If one takes a literal interpretation, then this verse contradicts the order of creation given in Genesis One. According to versus 7-8, man was created, and this was BEFORE any plants or herbs were growing (verse 5-6). Remember, this section is a unit, and must be examined together (5-9).

This apparent reversal in order gives support to the old-earth position. Obviously, the order of the creation was not significant; otherwise this would have matched the order of Genesis 1. For the overlapping days used in an old-earth interpretation, this loose order of events fits well with our old-earth belief.

*<sup>9</sup> And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

In this order of events, God planted a garden. The text does not say, but was the rest of the earth barren? It would appear to be so, as this garden was made for man, and there was only one man. However, we know from the fossil record that the entire world was inhabited with plants long before Adam was created.

### **Rivers of the Garden of Eden**

*<sup>10</sup> Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup> And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and the onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is Hiddekel (Tigris); it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.*

Some have pointed out, that in Noah's Flood event, these rivers were changed, and are no longer recognizable...even though there are a Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This could have happened, even in a local Flood, so there is no problem with us not being able to find these rivers today as they were thousands of years ago.

### **Tree of Good and Evil**

*<sup>15</sup> Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

Genesis 2:17 is God's direct instructions to Adam. God told Adam...

*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.*

Using a common, literal interpretation, when Adam ate the fruit, he should have died physically that day. Did Adam die the same day he ate the fruit? No, he did not. There are only two possibilities. First, God lied to Adam. We know that God cannot lie, so this is not the case. The only possible alternative left is that God did not mean physical death, but spiritual. When Adam ate the fruit, he sinned, which caused separation between him and God, or spiritual death. Based on this verse, it is conclusive that the Fall of Man did not bring physical death into the world.

In a literal interpretation, this conflicts with Genesis 1:29, where Adam was given “all” plants for food. Obviously, he was not given all, because he could not partake of this tree. The difference may be that in Genesis 1:29, it says seed-bearing trees...maybe this tree’s apples did not have seeds???

### **Creation of Animals**

<sup>18</sup> *And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”*

<sup>19</sup> *Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.* <sup>20</sup> *So Adam*

*gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.*

In this accounting of Day Six, the land animals are created AFTER Adam was created. This makes it impossible to use a literal interpretation method. Both Scriptures are accurate, in that animals and man were both created close together on Day Six (which, to God, lasted probably upwards of 300 million years).

The first mammals were created about 300 million years ago. Throughout the time of the dinosaurs, they were small and insignificant. It is not until after the demise of the dinosaurs that mammals began to flourish.

The best interpretation of the apparent conflict in the creation order is with the old-earth theory of overlapping days and events, or Creation Overlap. God apparently made some specialized helper animals for Adam, after He created man. By accepting Creation Overlap, there is no problem in interpreting these apparently contradictory passages.

### **Creation of Woman**

<sup>21</sup> *And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.* <sup>22</sup> *Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.* <sup>23</sup> *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.”* <sup>24</sup> *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.* <sup>25</sup> *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

This section creates no problems for the old-earth believer. God created woman to be man's helper.

### **Conclusion**

There is no problems interpreting the events of Genesis Chapter Two, and reaching an old-earth conclusion.