

## Genesis, Part 3

We have seen the first six days of restoration of the damaged (*tohuw wa bohuw*) earth and the creation of life including man and woman. We will now look at some of that in more detail. But first, God rests.

**Gen 2:1** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

He did not rest because He was tired from all that weeks worth of work. He rested as one well-pleased with the manifestations of his own Glory. The word is *shabath* from which we get “sabbath”. It means to cease or stop some action. It might be better rendered, “On the seventh day, He ceased from all his work that he had done.”

### Numbers

The number 6 is associated with man. It was on the sixth day that he was created. The number 7 typically signifies completion or perfection, especially of God. The number 6 is one shy of that and signifies imperfection or incompleteness. More specifically, it refers to the imperfection of man and the sin and weakness he has. We will see that Adam went on to eat the forbidden fruit in the garden and broke the connection between God and man. Man’s weakness is why number 6 is called the “number of man”.

In the Book of Joshua, the Israelites are told to march around the city once a day for six days with seven priests each carrying a trumpet. On the seventh day the Israelites marched around Jericho seven times with seven priests blowing the trumpets so the city walls would fall. God commanded the Israelites to march for six days to demonstrate their imperfect ability to defeat Jericho. God destroyed the city on the seventh day so that He alone would receive the glory.

Man was created on the sixth day and subsequently fell because of sin. When Jesus was crucified the seventh day of the celebration of Passover was the Sabbath in keeping with the fourth commandment. This meant that all judicial punishments were settled by the sixth day of Passover week. So, Pontius Pilate and Herod both reviewed Jesus on the fifth day and into the early morning hours of the sixth day, then He was nailed to the cross. Just as man was created in six days, Jesus restored the connection between God and man on the sixth day of Passover making a way for us to find salvation through His redeeming blood.

In the Book of Revelation, the number 7 is used more than fifty times in a variety of contexts: there are seven letters to seven churches in Asia Minor and seven spirits before God's throne (Rev 1:4), seven golden lampstands (Rev 1:12), seven stars in Christ's right hand (Rev 1:16), seven seals of God's judgment (Rev 5:1), seven angels with seven trumpets (Rev 8:2), etc. If the number 7 again represents completeness or totality: the seven churches represent the completeness of the body of Christ, the seven seals on the scroll represent the fullness of God's punishment of sinful earth, and so on. And, of course, the book of Revelation itself, with all its 7s, is the capstone of God's Word to man. With the book of Revelation, the Word was complete (Rev 22:18).

In all, the number 7 is used in the Bible more than seven hundred times. But sometimes, a 7 is just a 7, and we must be cautious about attaching symbolic meanings to any text, especially when Scripture is not explicit about such meanings.

### **The Sabbath**

The sabbath "rest" should be seen as a day in which we cease the activities of the other six days of the week and appreciate what we have. We tend to use the English word "rest" to indicate some ceasing of human physical exertion that depletes the body of energy and "resting" to restore our vigor. That is the definition in the physical sense, but the Scriptures often use the word differently. While the meaning of resting is ceasing one activity, "resting" should be seen as ceasing from one's own works and "resting" through faith in God. We stop relying exclusively on our physical doing and instead "rest" in the promises of God. This does not suggest we

just kick back on our recliner and enjoy a cold glass of sweet tea all day. We do live in a fallen world where we must deal with the “thorns and thistles” of this cursed earth to survive, but if we focus on our human efforts alone, we only make things more difficult. We need to “faith-rest”— trust in God to see us through those “thorns and thistles” of life.

The Sabbath was a thinking day when you didn't work physically but sat somewhere, rested, and thought. The Hebrew verb *shabath* means to rest, to relax, and to have tranquility, and tranquility is the definition that best captures the meaning of its use in this context. On the seventh day of the earth's restoration, everything had been provided for man, and God rested in the sense that nothing else could be provided for man in grace. God was not tired. The Sabbath is a memorial to the grace of God: He has provided everything and there is nothing left to provide. We are to “faith-rest” in that truth.

The Sabbath of Israel (Ex 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15; Lev 23:3; Isa 58:11-14) was instituted as the fourth commandment in the Decalogue. This occurred every Saturday as the last day of the week. The Jews were permitted to work for six days, but on the seventh day, they had to stop all work. The very change of pace was not only beneficial to them physically and mentally, but it had the ultimate benefit to them in the spiritual realm because it was a reminder of grace, that you could do nothing for salvation and nothing for blessing. It is all the provision of God.

### **The Sabbatical Year**

The Sabbatical Year of Israel (Ex 23:10-11; Lev 25:3-4, 26:33-37) occurred every seven years when they were supposed to stop work. If they had been functioning properly under grace, then this was really a year's vacation in which they didn't have to work and the land was allowed to rest. The Jews were to depend on God's provision for one year. The failure of the Jews to observe the Sabbatical year ultimately resulted in discipline for Israel. The Southern Kingdom had accumulated 490 years in which they had not observed even one Sabbatical year as a nation. Over that period of 490 years, they had accumulated seventy lost Sabbatical years. God, in His great sense of humor, told the Southern Kingdom in 586 B.C. that since they had missed seventy Sabbatical years, He would give them those seventy years, but it would be in exiled slavery to allow the land its

promised rest. Therefore, their discipline lasted for seventy years. ( Lev 26:33-36; 2 Chron 36:20-21 cf. Dan 9:2 and Jer 25:11-12, 29:10.)

### **The Year of Jubilee**

The Year of Jubilee (Lev 25:8ff) could be called a super Sabbatical year. After forty-nine years (in which there were seven Sabbatical years), the fiftieth year was called the Year of Jubilee and was a Sabbath year, also. During the Year of Jubilee, all the real estate in the land reverted to its original owners, all the businesses reverted to their original owners; everything reverted to how it was in year one. All slaves were to be freed, and whatever was their portion of land allotted to them by tribe and by the system was given back to them. So no matter what you ever owned, it was always on a lease basis, and you were never to keep any of it past the Year of Jubilee. Of course, the Jews violated this.

The purpose was a reminder of grace. After you've been a successful businessman for 49 years, it's very difficult to orient to grace. So in the fiftieth year, it was all taken away, and you started all over again. This Year taught that, under grace, you can't earn, deserve, or work for it.

### **The Sabbath is set aside in the Church Age.**

The sabbath under the Law was only a “shadow” of the sabbath that would come during the Church Age. For the Church, Sabbath observance is a matter of conscience. You are free to observe it or not.

**Col 2:16** Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.  
<sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

The memorial to grace in the Church Age is not Saturday but Sunday, the first day of the week. Though no passage explicitly states such, the first day of the week was observed by early Christians and remains traditionally observed by most denominations to this day.

**1 Cor 16:2** On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper

**Act 20:7** On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread ...

### **The Eighth Day**

And then we have this passage in Leviticus.

**Lev 23:36** For seven days you shall present food offerings to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the Lord. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work.

The context of this passage is the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles, a feast day given to Israel by the Lord for them to observe. The Feast of Tabernacles was a reminder to the Israelites of God coming and dwelling with them in the wilderness when Israel lived in tents. In His redeeming mercy, God graciously came and dwelt with His people, and He became like His people. The Israelites lived in tents, so God lived in a tent called the Tabernacle. This was all a prefiguration of the incarnation. The Apostle John tells us, “The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us” (John 1:14). The purpose of the incarnation was to restore the lost presence of God to His chosen people. For this to occur, the incarnation was necessary; but – and this should be carefully noted – reconciliation was only possible through the sin-removing, substitutionary death of Jesus. For God to dwell with His people, their sins need to be atoned for and His wrath needs to be satisfied. This is what Christ accomplished in His death. The incarnation made this possible. Interestingly, as Augustine noted, Jesus finished this necessary work and then rested in the tomb on the Old Covenant Sabbath. Then, on the first day of the week (the eighth day), He rose and His presence was forever guaranteed to believers.

The eighth day symbolizes sanctification. According to the Law, all children were in the uncleanness of their birth (original sin) until the eighth day. Then they received circumcision and thenceforward were recognized as holy, having the seal of the covenant or purification of God upon them (Lev 12:2-3).

The young of beasts used for sacrifices were ceremonially unclean before their eighth day and unfit to be offered as sacrifices. But on the eighth day and thenceforward they were accounted clean (Lev 22:27).

Persons unclean through leprosy or any issue such as accidental defilement by the dead, all had to abide for seven days in uncleanness. On the eighth day, they were accounted clean (Lev 14:8-10; 15:13-14; Num 6:9-10)

The Tabernacle, the altar, and all the vessels of the ministry, together with the priests, went through seven days of purification. On the eighth day, they were declared clean for service (Ezek 43:26-27).

It was on the "first day of the week" that Jesus rose from the dead (Matt 28:1). The day of Pentecost is calculated to have fallen upon the first day of the week.

The ages from Adam to the end of the Millennium are calculated to be a total of 7,000 years long – seven days.

**2 Peter 3:8** But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Millennium is the last 1,000 years (Rev 20:6). What follows that seventh "day" millennium is eternity – the "eighth day". At the close of the Millennium is the final judgment which introduces a still more glorious state, eternity, described as "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21 and 22), symbolically seen as the eighth day. Then everything on earth and in heaven will be consecrated.

While the number 8 represents new beginnings. It was the "beginning" after all sins had finally been judged on the Cross. But this is not truly a sabbath for our age. In the Church Age we do not have a Saturday Sabbath, nor is the fact that we meet on Sunday make it our sabbath. Our sabbath is a moment-by-moment sabbath, 24/7/365 – every-day-of-the-week sabbath. We are to live our lives faith-resting in the promises of God. This is called "walking in the Spirit" in Galatians 5:16. Its manifestation in the believer's life is seen as the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) which is the actual

lifestyle Christ lived when he walked on earth as a man. It is our “reasonable service” in the NKJV and our “spiritual worship” in the ESV as seen in Romans 12.

**Rom 12:1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the “renewal” of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

As a believer, we are called to advance in knowledge and “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” so that we might exercise our spiritual lives in faith and service to God. To accomplish this “reasonable service” or “spiritual worship” we are required to experience a complete “renewal” of our thinking, and the Greek means a renovation, a complete change of mind, through which we “may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” We need to replace all the error we have accumulated over our lifetimes in which we live our lives, and replace it with the truth from God – Bible doctrine! Only when we know what is right and how to acquire what is right can we live what is right. This rejecting what is wrong and embracing what is right is the purest form of repentance. THAT calls for lots of Bible study, testing, and spiritual growth.

### **The Creation of Man and Woman**

**Gen 2:4** These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. <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> and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— <sup>7</sup> then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

What we see here is a retelling of what we saw earlier in Chapter 1 but in more detail. It begins with an introduction, “These are the generations ...”. Some translations say, “This is the history of the heavens and the earth

when they were created.” It traces the account of (or what became of) the heavens and the earth when they were created.

The word translated as “created” is *barah* which means to make something out of nothing and speaks of the original creation. The word “day” is *yom* which refers to a literal day or a period of time which is likely the intended meaning here. The word “made” in verse 4 is *asah* which means to make something after a pattern. “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day (time) that the Lord God *re-made* the earth and the heavens *after a pattern*.”

What follows and through verse 25 is a more detailed account of what was previously stated in chapter 1 when God created man and woman on the sixth day. Verse 5 begins by telling us “at that time” when man was created “no bush of the field” (wild plants) or “plant of the field” (cultivated plants) had yet sprung up. This was because God had not then caused rain to fall and there was no man “to work the ground”. Having been created on the third day, this plant life existed but was not yet growing. Though lacking rain there was a “mist” that rose from the ground and “was watering the whole face of the ground”. “Mist” is the Akkadian term for flood or a flow of subterranean water. The Arabic parallel is “fog” which is the origin of the translation “mist”. We might call this “a heavy dew”. Since plants were created for food for man there was no need for development until man was created. God withheld the rains but sustained what He had previously created until He created man.

“Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (v. 7). “Formed is *yatsar* which means to make (create) something from existing materials, in this case, the “dust from the ground”. It implies something resembling the work of an artist such as a potter. Man was made by divine plan but he was also made from the earth. He is “earthy” despite subsequent dreams of being like God. The Hebrew word for “man” is *adam* from which we get the first man’s name, Adam. That Hebrew word is related to the word for ground, *’adamah*.



And God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature”. This should probably be taken literally. God breathed and His breath represented the “breath of life”. That “form” of a man, Adam, became a “living creature”. That word “breath” is *neshamah* and means breath or spirit and is sometimes translated as “soul”. It is that which makes the inanimate pile of man-shaped “clay” into a living being capable of all thinking and emotions associated with a human being. That “life” comes from God and enables mankind to have fellowship with God.

**Gen 2:8** And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup> And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Mankind was placed in a perfect setting. The text does not indicate that the entire primeval earth was a paradise. The word garden (*gan*) signifies a place protected by a fence or wall. The garden provided the arena for man’s test of obedience. Verse 8 says the garden was “in the east”. The garden was located “eastward” with respect to Israel. Though Israel did not exist at the time of creation or when this history was later recorded by Moses, it is, in God’s mind, the center of the earth. The garden was in a plain (*‘eden*) at the confluence of four rivers (2:8, 10–14).

**Gen 2:10** A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup> And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates

Two of the rivers can be identified—the Hiddekel (Tigris) and the Perat (Euphrates). The Pishon and Gihon are likely two of the other Mesopotamian rivers which flow into the Tigris and Euphrates or simply two rivers that no longer exist as a result of the flood. These four rivers joined to

flow through the garden as one river. The author seems to be describing the geography of ancient Sumer just north of the Persian Gulf in what is present-day Iraq. Ancient pagan legend spoke of a “paradise” north of the Persian Gulf on its western end.

**Gen 2:15** The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <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.”

The description of the lavish garden (v. 8) and the trees (v. 9) and river in it (v. 10) leads up to the commandment: man could enjoy it all but he must not eat from the one forbidden tree (v. 17). Among those trees in the garden was one that produced life (the tree of life) and another that produced knowledge (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), or at least, eating from them did. This “knowledge” was experiential. “Good and evil,” a merism for the things that protect life and that destroy life that would be experienced if the forbidden fruit were eaten (v. 17). The potential for catastrophe was great, if they, in self-confident pride (hubris), overstepped their bounds and attempted to manipulate life. The Tree of Life, on the other hand, was apparently a means of preserving and promoting life for Adam and Eve in their blissful state. These trees were in the middle of the garden, apparently close to each other; they provided the basis for the testing to come.

God put (*sim*) man in the garden (2:8; 2:15). God assigned man work to do. He was to cultivate (*’abhad*) and to keep it (*shamar*) (2:15). The plants, flowers, and trees of Eden required cultivation from the hand of man, and would have degenerated without his attention. Work is a gift of God and not a punishment for sin. Even before the fall, man had duties to perform for God. Elsewhere in Scripture, the word describes the activities only of the priests. As priest and guardian of the garden, Adam should have driven out the Serpent, instead the Serpent drove him out.

Because the garden was an abode of innocence, it was suitable for sinless man. There, man had access to the Tree of Life, but continued access was

contingent upon his faithfulness. Only the name of this special tree hints at its purpose. Partaking of the Tree of Life imparted to the partaker the possibility of physical immortality.

A single prohibition provided man with an opportunity to function as a free moral agent, to choose for or against God. The prohibition was specific and emphatic. Of one designated tree, God ordered, "You shall not eat" (2:17). The prohibition was light, for concerning all the other trees in the garden God had said, "You may eat freely" (2:16). The prohibition was accompanied by a warning, "In the day you eat of the forbidden tree you shall surely die!" God never intended for man to die, and he is now on probation. Man has free will, and with privilege comes responsibility. Man is given just one test: "Do not eat from THAT tree!"

The phrase "you shall surely die" can be literally translated from the Hebrew biblical text as "dying you shall die." In the Hebrew phrase, we find the imperfect form of the Hebrew verb (you shall die) with the infinitive absolute form of the same verb (dying). This presence of the infinitive absolute intensifies the meaning of the imperfect verb, hence the usual translation of "you shall *surely* die". This grammatical construction is quite common in the Old Testament, not just with this verb but others also, and does indicate (or intensify) the certainty of the action.

God gave Adam (and the woman) two forms of life. One was physical life, and that life was intended to be eternal because they could eat from the Tree of Life. The other life was spiritual so they could have fellowship with God. The construct of Genesis 2:17 and the phrase, "dying you shall surely die," suggests two deaths: a spiritual death and a physical death. The Hebrew wording of Genesis 2:17 allows for a time lapse between the instantaneous spiritual death on that sad day of disobedience and the later physical death which certainly did happen just as God said, but for Adam, it was 930 years later. As Scripture consistently teaches, both kinds of death (spiritual and physical) are the consequence of Adam's disobedience.

**Rom 5:12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned.

As a result, man is born spiritually dead and facing physical death. Spiritually dead, he is separated from God, and he is spiritually dead because he is born with the imputation of Adam's sin. All men (and women) are counted as having sinned. The only relief from that sentence is the new birth. Children who die not having reached the "age of accountability" where they can make a free will decision to accept the free offer of salvation through faith in Christ cannot be held accountable for the original sin. This is depicted in the death of David's infant child by the affair with Bathsheba when David makes the statement, "But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me" (2 Sam 12:23).

**Gen 2:19** Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

"Out of the ground" God "formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens." "Formed" is *yatsar* to make something out of already existing material. Like Adam's physical body was earthly (formed, *yatsar*), so also were the animals "formed out of the ground".

Adam was given the task of naming all these creatures. The job must have been overwhelming because God decided he needed a "helper" (*'ezer*). The Hebrew word does not connote inferiority. She was not to be man's servant. This word "helper" is elsewhere used of God himself. He is man's ultimate Helper

### **Ishshah**

God observed that it was not good for the man to be alone (2:18). This should not be taken to mean that God intends for every person to marry. Other Scriptures indicate that there are times when it would be better for a man or a woman to remain single. God's observation was that it was not good for Adam's personality for him to remain alone. He needed companionship. Furthermore, God's program demanded that Adam have a

mate. From the beginning, God looked forward to the propagation of the race, the generation of the chosen people, and the coming of the Promised Seed.

**Gen 2:21** So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said, “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.”

Woman was taken from the side of Adam. She was not taken from his head to be his superior or from his foot to be his inferior but from his side to be equal with him – to be alongside him. She is to be the other half of Adam. Some say “the better half,” but that does not seem to be Scriptural, merely an observed reality of life.

The word for woman in Hebrew is similar to the word for man. Man is *ish*, and woman is *ishshah*. She is the other half of man and answers to him. God created Adam first and the woman to follow. God made man physically stronger and to be the aggressor. The woman is to be the responder. God does not say the woman is to love her husband, she is to respond to him.

The summary account of the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis 1 gives the impression that man and woman were created simultaneously. Genesis 2 makes clear that an interval separated the two events. The woman was the last of God’s creative works. She was the crown of the creation. She made her appearance only after everything was in the highest state of readiness for her reception: a home, provision for her maintenance, a husband who longed for her coming, who appreciated her worth. God literally built (*banah*) the woman. This term is used nowhere else in the creation narrative. The verb is frequently used in the Old Testament for completing an unfinished structure. Man was incomplete without his mate. Woman is one with man for she came from him. She had a claim upon man for protection and affection.

The woman was created to be the perfect supplement to Adam's incompleteness physically, intellectually, and socially. Man's need and woman's power to satisfy that need laid the foundation for the divine institution of marriage.

The excitement of Adam upon viewing his bride is clearly indicated in the Hebrew text. Adam did not need to be instructed by divine revelation regarding the true nature of his bride: "She is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh" (2:23). He thereby accepted her as an equal, as one to be loved and cherished. But this is more than an affirmation of kinship with the woman. A study of similar expressions in the Old Testament (Gen 29:14; Judg 9:2) suggests that this is also a declaration of loyalty. Adam thus composed the first marriage vows in which he declared his fidelity to this mate regardless of the circumstances.

**Gen 2:24** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

So strong is the marriage bond that it supersedes the ties between parents and children. He who would marry must leave (*'azabh*) father and mother—physically, psychologically, and economically. The Hebrew verb suggests the termination of a loyalty. He must thereafter cleave (*dabhaq*) to his wife. The word elsewhere is used to describe a covenantal commitment to God (Deut 10:20). Thus by using this word, it is suggesting that marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman. The lives of husband and wife are woven together in marriage—they become one flesh. Their union is celebrated and reaffirmed in sexual intercourse. Christ (Matt 19:5) explained this verse as teaching the indissoluble character of marriage.

**Gen 2:25** And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The intimacy and innocence of the first marriage are beautifully set forth in the words, "The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed" (2:25).