

# THE FIRST GARDEN AND ITS PURPOSE: EDEN, MAN'S IDEAL PLACE OR HOME GENESIS 02:08–14

## *Introduction : Garden of Eden*

Picture the scene: man had just been created. The LORD God Himself had just formed man from the dust of the ground, and had breathed the very breath of God into the nostrils of man (Gen 2:7). Man stood there upon earth for the very first time in human history, stood there in the midst of all the lush green of the forest and the radiant reds, oranges, yellows, blues, purples, whites and all the other colours of the flowers and bushes that displayed their wild beauty. God now had...

- the universe which He had planned and purposed
- the man whom He had planned and purposed
- the perfection — the perfect man and the perfect universe — which He had planned and purposed

But something else was needed. Man needed a residence, a home, a place to live. This passage of Scripture describes the place where man had his beginnings upon earth, the place where man was to live. It covers the features which God designed for man's residence or home. The place is called *The Garden of Eden*, the most beautiful and bountiful paradise man could ever imagine. Eden was man's paradise, his utopia.

Note that God's glorious goodness is seen in His design of the Garden. The features of the Garden clearly show that God cares deeply for man — for man's welfare, provision, security, joy, and happiness. The Garden shows that God designed the ideal place for man's residence or home. This passage covers *The First Garden and Its Purpose: Eden, Man's Ideal Place or Home*.

- I. A real place, a Garden planted by God (v. 8).
- II. Eden met man's need for a home: a very special place to live (v. 8).
- III. Eden met man's need for beauty and food and for spiritual surroundings (v. 9).
- IV. Eden met man's need to live forever: the tree of life (v. 9).
- V. Eden met man's need to exercise his free will — his ability to choose: the tree of knowing good and evil (v. 9).
- VI. Eden met man's need for water and irrigation (v. 10).

## **I. *Genesis 02:08 The Garden of Eden***

The Garden of Eden was a real place, a real Garden planted by God Himself. However, the reality of the Garden has been denied by some persons.

=> *Secular man* considers the Garden of Eden to be a fictitious story, just a fairy tale or fable. He thinks the Garden is just the Biblical author's imagination of how man first

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began his life upon earth. Secular man says that the Biblical author simply pictures man beginning his life in a perfect environment and later failing and beginning to corrupt the earth.

=> *Religious man* often looks upon the Garden of Eden as a symbol or type of the ideal environment or ideal earth. He thinks that the Garden is the dream of the ideal earth and environment toward which man should work. Religious man often says that the task of man is to strive to make the earth a Garden of Eden, the utopian paradise for which man dreams.

But note: this is not what this passage says, nowhere close to what it says. This passage clearly teaches that the Garden of Eden was a real, historical place — a real, historical Garden created by God Himself. How can we say this so confidently, so positively? Because of three clear facts.

1. The specific direction of the Garden is given: the Garden was planted in the East, in the land of Eden. When Moses wrote this, he was leading Israel in the wilderness wanderings throughout the great Arabian desert. East of the Arabian desert would point toward the Arab nations of the Middle East, specifically toward the great fertile plains of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Note: the direction being pointed to is not a fictitious or symbolic land. It is a specific direction and a well known land.

2. The general location of the Garden is given (vv. 10-14). Real lands are mentioned: Havilah, Ethiopia and Assyria. Real rivers are also given: Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel or the Tigris and the Euphrates. Apparently, the Garden was someplace close to where the Tigris and Euphrates join. This would place the Garden in what is known today as southern Iraq.

The point to note is this: the Garden of Eden — man's paradise — lay toward the East and was located around four rivers that flowed through lands or countries well known to the people of that day. There is nothing fictitious or imaginary about the direction or location of the Garden of Eden. It was a real, historical place, a real, historical Garden.

3. Note a third fact as well. The very context of this section of Scripture points toward the Garden being historical. What is being discussed in this section of Genesis is creation, the beginnings of the universe and of man upon earth. If the earth and the universe are real and man is real — if the account of creation is accurate — then the Garden of Eden, man's paradise upon earth, must be a real, historical place. Part of man's beginnings upon earth is bound to include a discussion of his first environment and home. This is only logical; this is only to be expected.

***Thought 1.*** Why is it important to stress that the Garden of Eden was a real, historical place?

- 1) If the Garden was a fictitious place, then it means that the fall of man is a fable. Why? Because the fall of man took place in the Garden of Eden. Therefore, if the Garden is unreal, then it means there is no such thing as sin, as man being lost in sin and separated from God. If the Garden of Eden never existed — not really — then man falling into sin never took place.
- 2) If the Garden is just a symbol or type of paradise — of the ideal environment or ideal earth — then redemption through Christ is not necessary. Man does not need God nor Christ to save him and his world. Man is perfectly capable of creating the perfect environment himself. All man has to do is work and work for the ideal earth, and eventually he will bring paradise and utopia to earth — all by his own energy, efforts, works, and goodness.

*Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.*

*Isa 43:27 Your first father sinned; those I sent to teach you rebelled against me.*

*Rom 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

*Eph 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

*Titus 3:5-7 Not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

## **II. Genesis 02:08 Man's Need for a Home: A Special Place to Live**

The Garden of Eden met man's need for a home, his need for a very special place to live. Man needs a place that he can call home, a place...

- where he can be centrally located
- where he can experience the closest and most intimate love, caring, sharing, communication and relationships
- where he can be employed and fulfil his duties and responsibilities and make his contribution to society
- where he can give birth to and rear a family
- where he can feel settled and secure, quiet and at peace
- where he can settle down at night and relax, rest, sleep and revive his strength for the next day's duties

God knew man's need, that man needed a place where he could be centrally located, a place that he could call home. Therefore, God met man's need: God created the Garden of Eden, the most beautiful paradise imaginable; then He took man and put him into the Garden. Note two facts.

1. The word *garden* (gan) means a place that is enclosed, protected and sheltered. It even has the idea of being covered, of being perfectly protected (He., ganan) (*Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 43). The word *Eden* (edhen) means a place of delight, of pleasure, of bliss. Eden means a paradise.

The point is this: the Garden of Eden was different from the rest of the earth. The earth was perfect with a perfect and unthreatening environment, and it overflowed with an abundance of beauty and fruit. But the idea of Scripture is that the Garden of Eden far exceeded the earth in beauty and provision. The Garden gave man a place — some land, some acreage — where he could live and establish a home and community; a place that was enclosed, protected and sheltered from the elements of nature and of the weather; a place that provided the covering — the perfect home and provision — that man needed. The Garden of Eden was a paradise for man.

2. God took man and put man into the Garden. As stated above, the Garden differed from the rest of the earth. From the beginning, man knew the difference between the Garden and the rest of the land outside. Man knew that God had blessed and cared for him in a most excellent way: God had given him a place that far exceeded the rest of the earth. As Mathew Henry points out: God did not put man in a palace made of silver and gold, nor in a house made of ivory, but in the most beautiful and artful place of all: nature — a Garden furnished and adorned by God Himself. (*Mathew Henry's Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 15.)

**Thought 1.** Man often blames his shortcomings and failures upon his environment. But note how man began his life upon earth: in a perfect environment, in a paradise upon earth. God was as good to man as He could be: He gave man a perfect nature and a perfect environment so that man could have an abundance of life, a life that far exceeded anything for which man could ask. But as we shall see in Chapter Three of Genesis, man still fell into sin. He still came short and failed. Man cannot — not the first man nor any other man — use his environment as an excuse to sin, fail or come short. Environment, of course, has an influence upon every one of us; but a person is basically responsible for his own behaviour and actions. Adam — the first man upon earth, the father of us all — clearly illustrates this. We would all fail and come short even if we had a perfect environment and world. Our problem with failure and sin is not a bad environment; our problem is the heart: the desire and craving to do what we want and to have what we want no matter what effect our behaviour has upon the earth and others. We are without excuse.

**Rom 1:20** *For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

**Rom 3:23** *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

**Titus 3:3** *At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.*

**1 John 1:8** *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

**Job 14:4** *Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!*

**Prov 20:6** *Many claim to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?*

**Prov 20:9** *Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin"?*

**Prov 30:2** *Surely I am only a brute, not a man; I do not have human understanding.*

**Isa 64:6** *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*

**Thought 2.** The environment of Eden shows what God's will is for the environment of the earth. God wants us to protect and look after the environment, not to destroy it. But think about what we do: all the pollution, garbage, junk and nuclear waste; all the devastating effects pollution has upon the rivers, lakes, seas, sky, air and lands of the earth. And why? Because of the selfishness (personal and economic selfishness), extravagance and sin of the human heart.

### **III. Gen. 02:09 Man's Need for Beauty, Food and Spiritual Surroundings**

The Garden of Eden met man's need for beauty and food and for spiritual surroundings. God caused *every tree* (kol ets) — all kinds of trees — to grow within the Garden. The idea is an enormous number and all manner of trees "pleasant to the sight and good for food." The Garden was apparently a huge forest of trees, shrubs and vegetation. It was furnished both to provide for Adam's *need* and *pleasure*. The beauty and provision of the Garden met to some degree the three basic needs of man.

1. The Garden provided *beauty, discovery and encounter* for man. Every tree, bush, shrub, flower and plant imaginable was there: each with its own height and width, leaf and bark, colour and fragrance. The Garden's beauty and immense size gave man the very provision he needed to meet his mental, emotional and aesthetic needs.
2. The Garden provided *food and shelter* for man. Every species of vegetation, fruit, berry and nut was there — everything to satisfy the taste and nourishment of man.
3. The Garden provided *spiritual surroundings, a spiritual environment*. The Garden's beauty and provision was bound to give man a sense of awe and worship — to stir praise and thanksgiving from man. No surroundings and no environment can fully meet man's need for worship. Only God can fully meet man's spiritual need. But the Garden was so beautiful and so conducive to worship that it was bound to pull and stir man to worship God. (See notes Gen 2:15-17 for God's full provision in meeting man's needs. Also see note, Col 2:9-10.)



**Thought 1.** Most people seek the fullness of life from three things:

=> the possessions of the earth

=> the pleasures of the earth

=> the power of the earth

People seek to get what they want from their surroundings and environment. But the earth and the things of the earth cannot meet man's basic need. As important as the earth and the physical are, man's basic need is much deeper than what appears on the surface — much deeper than the physical and material. Man is spirit; consequently, his basic need is spiritual (see notes, Gen 1:26; 2:15-17; Eph 1:3. The Ephesian note will aid greatly in understanding the importance of the spiritual vs. the material world.)

**Thought 2.** God makes an unusual promise to man. God will see to it that any person has sufficient food, shelter and clothing. *But*, there is a condition. The person has to "seek...first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Mt. 6:33; see 6:24-34).

**Thought 3.** When one receives an abundance, three results should immediately follow.

=> God should be acknowledged.

=> God should be praised.

=> The abundance should be shared.

#### **IV. Genesis 02:09 Man's Need for Eternal Life — Tree of Life**

The Garden of Eden met man's need to live forever. How? God planted a fruit tree within the Garden and gave it the power of everlasting life. What is this tree? Here are all the Scripture verses that refer to it:

**Gen 2:9** *The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

**Gen 3:22** *And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."*

**Rev 2:7** *Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*

**Rev 22:2** *Down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*

**Rev 22:14** *"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city."*

**Eze 47:12** *Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the*

*water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”*

Here are the facts given about the tree:

- => The tree is named “the tree of life.” It sat in the middle of the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:9).
- => If Adam, the first man upon earth, had eaten of the tree, he would have lived forever. Apparently, he had never eaten of the tree when he was in the Garden (Gen 3:22).
- => Ezekiel the prophet predicted this about the tree of life: when Christ returned, there would be trees growing that would continually provide — never cease to provide — food and medicine for the citizens of His kingdom (Eze 47:12).
- => The overcomers in the great tribulation will be given the right to the tree of life (Rev 2:7).
- => The tree of life will be in the New Jerusalem, the capital of the new heavens and earth. The tree of life will sit in the middle of the main street of the capital and grow on both banks of the major river that flows through the capital. Note that this verse, just as Ezekiel's, refers to the tree of life being many trees — a type or species of tree — and not just one tree (Rev 22:2).

Now, what is the tree of life? On the basis of the facts revealed in Scripture, the tree is a real tree that bears life-giving fruit, fruit that gives a person everlasting life, that keeps a person from ever dying. But note this: the tree of life exists only in a perfect world, only where perfection exists...

- only in the perfection of the Garden of Eden
- only in the New Jerusalem, the capital of the new heavens and earth (see note, Rev 22:1-5.)

When God planted *the tree of life* in the Garden of Eden, the tree was to keep Adam from dying. Adam was to eat of its fruit and live forever. But, as shall be seen, Adam never ate of the tree of life. He chose to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. The result was catastrophic: man was expelled from the Garden and not allowed to eat the fruit of the tree of life (see notes, Gen 3:22-24).

The point to see in the present passage is this: God planted the tree of life right in the midst of the Garden, in the most prominent and conspicuous spot where it would always be easily seen. It was planted right where Adam would always be reminded that he had to eat of the tree in order to live forever. God gave man every opportunity imaginable...

- *to choose* life over death
- *to choose* God's presence over alienation
- *to choose* eternity with God over separation from God
- *to choose* peace over division
- *to choose* obedience over disobedience and rebellion
- *to choose* freedom over enslavement and bondage

- *to choose* righteousness over unrighteousness
- *to choose* good over evil
- *to choose* purpose over uselessness
- *to choose* fulfilment over emptiness
- *to choose* perfection over corruption
- *to choose* God over self and Satan

**Deu 30:15** *See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.*

**Deu 30:19** *This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.*

**Thought 1.** God loves man — all of us. He showed Adam His love by providing the tree of life — the very possibility of living forever. God shows us His love by providing eternal life through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**John 3:16** *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

**John 3:36** *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”*

**John 6:40** *“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

**Rom 5:8** *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**2 Tim 1:10** *But it [God’s purpose] has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

**1 John 5:11-12** *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

## **V. *Genesis 02:09 Man’s Need to Exercise his Free Will; Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil***

The Garden of Eden met man’s need to exercise his free will, his ability to choose. God planted a second fruit tree in the Garden. Several facts are also given about this tree.

- a. It was in the centre of the Garden (Gen 3:3).
- b. It was *good* for food and *pleasant* to the eyes (Gen 3:6).
- c. It was the only tree from which Adam and Eve were instructed not to eat. God used the tree for man to exercise his freedom of choice, his spiritual drive and ability (See *Creation of Man; Spirit*, Gen 1:26).



=> Man was to choose God by obeying Him (see note, Gen 2:16; see 2:16-17; 3:2-3).

=> If man chose to disobey God by eating of the tree's fruit, man would know evil — what it is to be disobedient. He would experience evil personally and die, that is, be separated from God spiritually, physically and eternally.

- d. It was one of the two trees chosen to exercise man's choice between life and death (separation from God). Adam, the first man — the forefather of the human race — did just what we do: he chose to go his own way, to do his own thing — to disobey God. He rejected the tree of life and ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (See notes, Gen 2:16-17; 3:1-6; see 3:8-9; Heb 9:27.)

Several things need to be said at this point about both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Are the trees figurative or literal? To hold that they are literal is neither naive nor magical.

1. Something — some object, some act — had to be chosen for man to exercise his ability or choice *for God* and for life with Him. Note this: man was within nature, within the most beautiful Garden of the world. The Garden had the most excellent trees of the world, and the trees bore the most luscious fruit in the world. One of man's basic needs and drives was to satisfy his hunger with the luscious fruit so richly provided. What better way for man to exercise his ability or choice for God than through the flesh, than to have a commandment involving the fruit needed to meet his physical need for food?

In fact, forbidding fruit within such an environment as the Garden of Eden would be *the very thing* for God to do — the natural, expected thing.

2. No tree, within itself, has the power to give life or death. No tree or fruit has such inherent power. Any fruit that has such power would have such power only because God gave it life-producing qualities, chemicals or juices. We all know this.

Scripture says this is exactly what God did: God gave life producing qualities to the tree of life and death producing, corruptible qualities to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Note three significant points about this fact:

=> First, this is exactly what Scripture says. It is the *literal statement* of the account of Genesis.

=> Second, God is God — Elohim, Almighty God, the God of all might and power (see *God, Elohim*, Gen 1:1). God can decree such power to any food He wishes.

=> Third, as stated in point one, any person is hard pressed to choose a better method for man to exercise his choice for God and eternity, hard pressed to choose a better method when man is within a garden such as the Garden of Eden.

3. Now having said the above, there is one other possibility about the life and death qualities of the trees. It is possible that the trees and their fruit were the objects

(vehicle, method, manner) chosen for man to exercise his spiritual choice to live with God or apart from God. It is possible that God's Word decreed life or death for man — based upon man's choice. It is possible that the trees possessed no qualities or chemicals or juices to give life or death, that they were only the objects used for man to exercise his freedom to choose to obey God. God, His Word, decreed that to eat of the tree of life gave life; to eat of the other tree brought death. The trees were only the things used to bring about what God had already said. The power of life and death rested in what God had decreed and man chose to do, not in the trees themselves. (See note 3 and *Nature of Man; Meaning of Sin*, Gen 2:16-17.)

**Deu 30:15** *"See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction."*

**Deu 30:19** *This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.*

**Josh 24:15** *"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve,...But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."*

**1 Kng 18:21** *Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him."*

## **VI. Genesis 02:10–14 Man's Need for Water and Irrigation**

The Garden of Eden met man's need for water and irrigation. God caused a river to flow through Eden, apparently a great river. It was large enough to irrigate the whole Garden and to break out into four major rivers. The purpose for listing the four rivers and several of the surrounding lands was...

- to show that the Garden of Eden had been a real Garden
- to show that the first man, Adam, was a real person
- to show that the account of Genesis is not only accurate, but it is truth
- to show the truth of how God created man and placed man in the Garden and the truth of what happened to man

Note the facts given:

### ***The Rivers***

### ***The Facts***

Pison	It flowed through the land of Havilah, the Havilah that is known for its gold, bdellium (a valuable gem), and the onyx stone.
Gihon	It flowed through the land of Ethiopia.
Hiddekel or Tigris	It flowed along the east side of Assyria.
Euphrates	It flowed from the highlands of Armenia down into the Persian Gulf. It was known as "the great river," the most important river in Western Asia.

Now, where was the Garden of Eden located? Note that two of the rivers are known today, the Tigris and the Euphrates, but two are not known. Most likely, the catastrophic flood in Noah's day rearranged the earth's geography and eliminated the two unknown rivers. But note this as well: the flood was so catastrophic that it most likely rearranged the beds and channels of the Tigris and Euphrates. To think otherwise would be unrealistic, for the devastation and rearrangement of the geography of the earth's surface by torrential rains and severe floods are too well known today. Therefore, it is impossible to say just where the Garden of Eden was located. The closest that we can say with accuracy is that it was someplace in the lands that surround the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, lands that actually cover several nations of the world such as Armenia, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. H.C. Leupold thinks that it may have been in the Armenian highlands; others think that it may have been in southern Iraq (see NIV, Gen 2:8).

Now, back to the major thrust of this point: God caused a great river to flow through Eden, a river that separated into four other rivers as it flowed out of Eden. This shows the glorious goodness and care of God. God made every provision for man, even to seeing that man had water to drink and an irrigation system to water the growth of the Garden.

**Thought 1.** God makes two great promises to man today.

- 1) God will provide all the necessities of life for man if man will first seek Him and His righteousness.

**Mat 6:33** *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

- 2) God has provided a living water that gives man eternal life, a living water that is found in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**John 4:14** *"But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

**John 6:35** *Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."*

**John 7:38-39** *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

**Rev 21:6** *He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life."*

**Rev 22:17** *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

*Isa 12:3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

*Isa 58:11 The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.*

*Zec 13:1 "On that day a fountain will be opened...to cleanse them from sin and impurity." ■*

## GENESIS 02: 10 ADAM VS. CHRIST

### GETHSEMANE VS. THE GARDEN OF EDEN

#### THE CROSS VS. THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

*A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. **Genesis 02:10***

There is a strong contrast between the *first Adam* in his Garden of Eden and the *second Adam*, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His Garden of Gethsemane. (The idea for the contrast was stirred by James Montgomery Boice. (Montgomery Boice. *Genesis*, Vol. 1, p. 104f). Remember that our Lord was facing the critical decision of the cross in the Garden of Gethsemane.

#### *The First Adam in His Garden of Eden*

**\*\* *The Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His Garden of Gethsemane***

Adam was in a perfect Garden within a perfect world (Gen 1:1; 2:8-9).

**\*\* *Christ was in a barren, desert-like garden in an imperfect world (Gen 3:17-18; Rom 8:19-22).***

Adam was in a Garden of beauty and joy (Gen 2:8-10).

**\*\* *Christ was in a place of heaviness and sorrow (Mt. 26:37).***

Adam was seeking to fulfill his own desires and cravings (Gen 2:17; 3:6).

**\*\* *Christ was seeking to do the will of God (Mt. 26:39; Heb 10:7-10).***

Adam disobeyed God and sinned and brought death to the human race (Gen 2:17; 3:1f; Rom 5:12).

**\*\* *Christ obeyed God and died for man and brought life to the human race (Jn. 3:16; Rom 5:8; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18).***

There is also a strong contrast between the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of the cross. (The idea for this contrast was stirred by Arthur Pink. *Gleanings in Genesis*, p. 27f.)

***The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil***

**\*\* *The Tree of the Cross***

The tree was planted by God (Gen 2:8-9).

**\*\* *The tree of the cross was made by man (Jn. 19:15-16).***

The tree was pleasant to the eyes (Gen 3:6).

**\*\* *The tree of the cross was a repulsive, cursed tree (Gal 3:13).***

Man was commanded to turn away from this tree (Gen 2:17).

**\*\* *Man is commanded to come near this tree (Jn. 12:32).***

Eating of its fruit resulted in death (Gen 2:17; 3:If; Ro.5:12).

**\*\* *Eating of this fruit — of Christ Himself — results in life (Jn. 6:53-54; see Jn. 6:51,58). □***



# THE FIRST CHARGE OR COVENANT: MAN'S PURPOSE UPON THE EARTH

## GENESIS 02: 15–17

### *Introduction*

Above all other verses in the creation account, these verses show why God created man. Very simply stated, God wants to live with a being who chooses — freely chooses — to live with Him. God wants to live with a being who has the ability to choose to live with Him and who *will choose* to live with Him. God wants to live with a being who has freedom of choice, a being...

- who will choose to know God, to know the goodness and grace of God
- who will choose to serve God
- who will choose to live with God: to love, worship and fellowship with God

God does not want to coerce man; God does not want man to be a robot that has been run off an assembly line and programmed to serve and worship God. God wants man to have freedom of choice, the ability to choose to live either with God or apart from God.

This is clearly seen by looking at the nature of man revealed in these verses.

- => Man is seen *to be highly intelligent and physically strong*. He is made responsible for thinking, planning and cultivating the Garden (v. 15).
  - => Man is seen *to have the ability to communicate* with others. God is seen talking and sharing with him (vv. 16-17).
  - => Man is seen *to have the ability to will and to choose*. He possesses freedom of will (vv. 16-17).
  - => Man is seen *to have needs and drives* that have to be met both by his environment and by God. His environment has to provide work, food and beauty for him. God has to provide instructions, directions, love, worship, fellowship and purpose, meaning and significance for him (vv. 15-17).
  - => Man is seen *to be a spiritual being* who requires spiritual direction and godly fellowship for his life (vv. 15-17).
  - => Man is seen *to be a being who is very capable of responding* to others, of loving and of expressing appreciation to others. God is here interacting with him (vv. 15-17).
  - => Man is seen *to have been a being of perfection and of immortality*, a being who was morally perfect, physically perfect and spiritually perfect. Man was originally a being who was not corrupted and did not die and had never been separated from God.
  - => Man is seen *to be a being who has desires and urges* that push him toward that which appeals to the flesh and which looks attractive and beneficial. The trees in the Garden and the prohibition governing the tree of the knowledge of good and evil show this (vv. 16-17).
-

=> Man is seen *to be a being of curiosity* — a being who has the drive to know more and more, even if the knowledge leads to evil (see the development of war weapons) (v. 17).

Much is revealed about the nature of man in these three brief verses, and much more could be added to the list above. But enough has been given to make the point: God has created man with freedom of choice. God wants to live with persons who choose to live with Him. God does not want persons with Him who do not want to be with Him. God wants to share His grace and goodness with those who want to experience His grace and goodness. This is the discussion of this informative passage of Scripture. These verses cover *The First Charge or Covenant: Man's Purpose Upon Earth*.

I. To know the goodness and grace of God (v. 15).

II. To serve God by working and taking care of the Garden (or world) (v. 15).

III. To choose life with God: love, worship and fellowship (vv. 16-17).

### GENESIS 02: 15–17 COVENANT

A covenant is a specific agreement between two or more persons. There are three types of covenants seen in the Bible.

1. An agreement between two or more persons who freely agree to the terms of the contract or covenant (Gen 21:32).
2. An agreement imposed by a superior party demanding obedience from the weaker party (Eze 17:13-14). This is also seen when God demands obedience from man by issuing certain commandments (Gen 2:16-17; Jos 23:16).
3. An unconditional agreement or promise — what might be called a covenant of mercy or grace — whereby God obligates Himself to help or to reconcile sinful man (Deu 7:6-8; Psa 89:3-4; see Gen 3:15).

The word covenant is used about 253 times in the Old Testament and twenty times in the New Testament. Many of these are used in reference to the ark of the covenant that sat in the holy of holies, the inner sanctuary of the Jewish tabernacle which was the worship centre of Israel.

H. C. Leupold says that covenants made by God...

- “[Are] the most solemn and binding form of...promise,
- “[Are] given for man's double assurance and because of man's carnal weakness...
- “[Are] not to be put on a parallel with human covenants in which two contracting parties meet on the same level and make mutual pledges...
- “Emanate [come] from God... He makes them, He fixes the terms and the conditions, He in sovereign freedom binds Himself” (H. C. Leupold. *Genesis*, Vol. 1, p. 336.)

Scholars differ as to the actual number of covenants in the Bible. However, Scripture discusses at least nine covenants or promises and charges.

=> The covenant of Eden whereby God meets man's most basic needs (Gen 2:15-17).

=> The covenant with Adam whereby God promises redemption (Gen 3:15).

=> The covenant with Noah whereby God preserves the human race (Gen 9:8-17).

=> The covenant with Abraham whereby God begins a new race (the Jewish race) to be the chosen line of God's people (Gen 12:1-3; 15:9-21; 17:1-27).

=> The covenant with Moses whereby God promises that Israel can be His chosen people (Exo 19:5-6).

=> The covenant with God's priestly servants whereby God promises to establish an everlasting priesthood (Num 25:12-13; Mal 2:4-5; Eze 44:15).

=> The covenant with Israel whereby God promises to gather Israel back to the promised land (from being scattered all over the earth) (Deu 30:1-3).

=> The covenant with David whereby God promises to send the Messiah through David's family. The Messiah was to be "the Son of David" (2 Sam 7:16; 23:5).

=> The covenant with believers whereby God reconciles man to Himself through Christ (Jer 31:31-34; see Heb 8:6-13, esp. 8. See Isa 42:6; 49:8; 2 Cor 3:6-18; Heb 7:22; 8:6-13.) □

## ***I. Genesis 02:15 To Know the Goodness and Grace of God***

Man's purpose is to know the goodness and grace of God. Why did God create man? Why does man exist? What is the purpose of life? As stated, man's purpose is to know the goodness and grace of God. God wants to share the riches of His goodness and grace with man — the overflowing riches of His goodness and grace. This is clearly seen in what God did for the first man, Adam.

God made a paradise — the Garden of Eden — for man. The Garden was the most perfect paradise imaginable. Remember: the earth was perfect, but God wanted a place that would be very, very special for man — a place of unmatched splendour, beauty, provision, fellowship and perfection. The Garden of Eden far exceeded the outside world. Adam could compare the two, for he had lived in the outside world for some time. Just how long is unknown, but he had been there and walked about (Gen 2:8, 15).

But note what happened (v. 15): God took Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden. He had been outside the Garden, but God wanted him within its boundaries. God wanted Adam to know and experience paradise, the great gift of God, the glorious goodness and grace of God.

The point is this: God created the most glorious home imaginable for man, paradise itself, the Garden of Eden. Man already had a perfect earth, but a perfect earth could not hold nor adequately show the infinite goodness and grace of God. Therefore, God created

paradise itself — a place where man could behold all the splendour, beauty, provision, fellowship and perfection of God's goodness and grace.

**Thought 1.** God's purpose for man has not been defeated despite the sin of Adam. God will not allow His purpose to be defeated, not ever — not by anything nor by anyone. Everything that was lost by Adam's sin has been regained by Christ. How? By Christ's death. Remember: God's purpose for creating man is to show man the riches of His goodness and grace. No greater love could ever be shown than for God to give His Son to die for the sins of man. This is exactly what happened in the death of Christ. The summit of goodness and grace is seen in this: God gave His Son to bear the condemnation, punishment and judgment for man's sin. When a man believes that *Christ died for him*, God takes that man's belief and counts it as the death of Christ. God counts the man as having died with Christ. The man's punishment has therefore been paid: he has died with Christ. Consequently, he is freed from sin: he stands perfect and acceptable to God. By Christ — by faith in Christ — man is freed from sin; man is able to be restored to perfection and righteousness.

*Eph 2:4-7 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

*Gen 15:6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

*Gal 3:6 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

*1 Pet 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

But how about paradise? How can a perfect earth and a perfect paradise be restored? By the promise and power of God. God has promised to recreate a new heavens and a new earth, to create a paradise throughout the whole universe for man. The day is coming when God will show the riches of His goodness and grace beyond anything we can ask or think. When? In the glorious day of redemption and of eternity.

*Eph 2:7 In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

*Rom 8:18-22 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

**2 Pet 3:10-13** *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives. As you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

**Thought 2.** Note that God put Adam in the Garden. The greatest thing in all the world is to be called and placed by God. No matter where it is, the place God chooses for us is the best place to be.

## II. **Genesis 02:15 To Serve God and Take Care of the Garden**

Man's purpose is to serve God by working and taking care of the Garden — the paradise in which he lives. God had given Adam the Garden — the most perfect, beautiful and bountiful paradise imaginable — and God expected Adam to work and keep up the Garden. Note three significant facts.

1. Man was to look after the Garden. He was to *dress* (abhadh) it. The word means to work, till, cultivate, dress and serve the Garden. Man was also to *keep* (shamar) the Garden. This word means to watch over, to guard, to keep, to look after, to take care of. The point is this: man was made responsible — personally responsible — for the Garden of Eden. The Garden was paradise: it was the most perfect, beautiful and bountiful place imaginable, but it had to be looked after and cared for. This duty was placed upon man. Man was...

- to till and cultivate the land
- to dress the orchards, shrubs and flowers
- to feed and provide for himself
- to keep the growth under control
- to look after and care for the animals

Simply stated, man was to keep paradise as paradise. God had created the Garden, the most perfect, beautiful and bountiful paradise imaginable; it was up to man to keep the Garden perfect, beautiful and bountiful.

2. Man was created to be a responsible person and an active, working person. Man was not made to be irresponsible nor to be inactive, idle, slothful, complacent or lazy. He was made to work and to work hard.

**Gen 1:28** *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

**Rom 12:11** *Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.*



**Col 3:22-24** *Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

**2 Thes 3:10** *For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."*

**Exo 23:25** *Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.*

**Prov 24:30-31** *I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins.*

**Eccl 10:18** *Through laziness, the rafters sag; because of idle hands, the house leaks.*

3. Man was created to have a strong sense of purpose and of self-worth. Man is a mental and emotional creature. Man needs strong purpose in life, to feel that he is worthwhile, that what he does matters and is significant and counts for something. Man also needs strong self-image, to feel that he is somebody, a person who matters to other people. Both purpose and self-image come — to a great degree — from the work that a man does. If a man's work is significant, then he has a reason for getting up in the morning and living, and he feels worthwhile and has a strong purpose and self-image. This is the way God made man. This is the reason God charged man to work and to look after the Garden and the world. Man needs to think, plan, discover, work and do something profitable. From such mammoth responsibility, man's sense of purpose and self-worth are somewhat met. (Note: mental and emotional needs — purpose and self-worth — are only partially met by the physical world and responsibility within it. The most satisfying sense of purpose and self-worth comes from having one's spiritual needs met. This is discussed in the next note, Gen 2:16-17.)

**Thought 1.** Paradise has been lost and the earth has been corrupted. Adam's sin and fall destroyed both. But Jesus Christ has promised to restore both. He has promised...

- to recreate a new heavens and earth, a perfect universe.
- to create the most perfect, beautiful and bountiful paradise imaginable — a city that will glisten with all the jewels and glory of God Himself — a city that will be the summit of perfection and provision — a city that will be the very city of God and Christ — a city that will serve as the capital of the universe, and be named the City of God, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem.

The point is this: every person should make sure he is acceptable to God, that he is to be a citizen of the new heavens and earth, of the coming paradise of God (see outline and notes, Rev 21:1-22:5).

**2 Pet 3:10-13** *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives. As you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

**Rev 21:1-5** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

**Isa 34:4** *All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shrivelled figs from the fig tree.*

**Isa 65:17** *"See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."*

**Isa 66:22** *"As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the Lord, "so will your name and descendants endure."*

**Thought 2.** Paradise has been lost, and the earth has been corrupted, but the earth has not been destroyed. We still have our minds and bodies and we still have the earth upon which to live. Therefore, the charge of God still stands: man's purpose upon earth is still the same. We are to look after and take care of the earth. We are to cultivate it and keep it, watching ever so closely over its welfare. The earth — its soil, air, water and growth — is to be preserved and protected, both for succeeding generations and for God.

**Gen 1:28** *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

**Col 3:23-24** *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

**1 Cor 4:2** *Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.*

*1 Cor 15:58* Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

*1 Pet 4:10* Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

*Isa 1:19* If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land.

### III. *Genesis 02:16–17 Choosing to Live with God*

Man's purpose is to choose to live with God — to love, worship and fellowship with Him. Why did God create man? Why did God put man upon earth and not immediately into heaven? These two verses show us: God wants a being who chooses — freely chooses — to live with Him. God wants a creature with freedom of choice, a creature who *wills* to live with Him — who wills to love, worship and fellowship with Him *supremely*. Note three significant points.

1. There was the great incentive for man to choose life with God. Man was given every tree in the Garden except one. Man had everything:
  - => a home in paradise
  - => perfection: he was sinless
  - => all the trees and food of paradise
  - => the tree of life, of immortality (Gen 2:9)
  - => the love, presence and fellowship of God

Man had the attraction, the appeal, the pull of all this. Man had the attraction and the right to *all the fruit* in the Garden. There was *only one fruit* he could not touch — only one fruit among *all the fruit*. There was no excuse for man ever choosing any fruit — or anything — over God. Man had the greatest incentive in all the world for choosing God. By choosing God, man had everything: every tree — all of the abundance and benefits of paradise itself.

*Heb 2:3* How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.

2. There was the great choice — the great test — that had to be made. It involved one simple prohibition. How was God going to *arrange* for man to exercise his freedom of choice, his will? How was God going to test man's choice — his love and loyalty — for God? Man had to be tested to show that he loved God above all else, that he wanted to live with God. The test was essential; otherwise, man would be nothing more than a robot. Note three significant facts.
  - a. There had to be something for man to choose other than God. If a man was to make a choice for God, the opportunity to turn away from God had to be present. Something — some object, some act — had to be chosen for man to exercise his ability or choice

*for God* and for life with Him. Note this: man was within nature, within the most beautiful Garden of the world. The Garden had the most excellent trees of the world, and the trees bore the most luscious fruit in the world. One of man's basic needs and drives was to satisfy his hunger with the luscious fruit so richly provided. What better way for man to exercise his ability or choice for God than through the flesh, than to have a commandment involving the fruit needed to meet his physical need for food?

In fact, forbidding fruit within such an environment as the Garden of Eden would be the very thing for God to do — the natural, expected thing.

- b. God gave man a choice, a very simple and easy choice. God set *only one* restriction, and that one restriction was *only upon one* tree. Adam could eat from every tree in the Garden except one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Note: the command in the Hebrew is in the strongest language possible: *you must not, absolutely must not, eat of the tree.*
- c. God gave man this choice for a very specific reason: man is a spiritual being. Man was created with a need for God. Every thinking and honest person knows this, knows it down deep within his heart. But man not only needs God, man has the ability to live with God. Man can have his need met; man can seek after and come to know God. It is a matter of choice: man has to choose to live with God. The decision is up to man.

This is the reason God gave Adam this command. Adam needed God's Word — needed God to speak with him — needed God to fellowship and interact with him. Man needed God's Word, needed God to tell him in simple terms what to do and what not to do. It is in seeking after and in obeying God that man interacts and fellowships with God. This is clearly seen in Adam.

God simply said, "You may eat from every tree in the garden, but you may not eat from this one tree" (Gen 2:16-17). God spoke, set the course for man's life. Adam was to simply do what God said. Adam was to choose the life God had laid out for him.

- => Obeying meant choosing life with God forever; disobeying meant choosing death, separation from God forever (Gen 2:17; see *Death*, Heb 9:27; see Jn. 3:18).
- => Obeying meant choosing fellowship with God; disobeying meant separating oneself from God.
- => Obeying meant choosing to serve God; disobeying meant choosing to serve self and Satan.
- => Obeying meant choosing to acknowledge God; disobeying meant rebelling against and ignoring God.
- => Obeying meant choosing to honour God; disobeying meant dishonouring God.

**Thought 1.** Adam had to choose; he had to make a decision. The tree was there. If he left the *forbidden* fruit alone, he would be obeying God and choosing to live with God. If he ate the fruit, he would be disobeying God and choosing to walk his own way in life.

The same is true with us. We have to choose; we have to make a decision. Jesus Christ, God's Son, has come to earth. He is there. If we ignore, neglect, deny or rebel against Him, we disobey God and choose to live without God. If we receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we obey God and choose to live with God.

**John 1:12** *"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."*

**John 3:16** *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

**1 John 3:23** *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*

**Deu 30:19** *"This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."*

**Josh 24:15** *"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."*

**Psa 31:14** *But I trust in you, LORD; I say, "You are my God."*

**Thought 2.** Man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes out of the mouth of God. Life — true fellowship, worship and service — with God is found by living in the Word of God and letting the Word live itself out in us.

**Mat 4:4** *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

**2 Tim 3:16-17** *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

**1 John 1:3** *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

**Psa 119:30** *I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws.*

3. There was the result of disobedience: death. The Hebrew literally says, "Dying, you shall die." If man disobeys God — fails to choose life with God — he dies. Death is sure, absolute, certain. It cannot be stopped.

In the Bible death means separation — separation from God. (See *Death*, Gen 2:17.) If a man chooses to live without God, then he will not live with God. He will die — be separated, cut off from God. This is exactly what Adam chose. He turned away from God — away from God's Word — and turned to his own will and way in life. He did his own thing. As a result, he died.



**Mat 7:22-23** *“Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers!”*

**Thought 1.** Note that death is to be feared by those who choose not to live with God. God warns man time and again.

**Heb 9:27** *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,*

**Mat 7:23** *“Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers!”*

**Mat 8:12** *“But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

**Mat 13:41** *“The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.”*

**Mat 22:13** *“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”*

**Mat 24:51** *“He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

**Mat 25:46** *“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”*

**Mark 9:43, 45, 47** *“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out... It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”*

**John 3:36** *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.”*

**Rom 2:8** *But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.*

**1 Cor 3:17** *If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.*

**2 Th 1:9** *They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.*

**2 Pet 2:9** *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

**2 Pet 3:7** *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

**Jude 1:13** *They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.*

**Rev 20:15** *If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

**Rev 21:8** *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death. ■*

### GENESIS 02:16–17 NATURE OF MAN; MEANING OF SIN

There are at least six more significant facts that need to be looked at in this brief passage.

1. Adam's nature. Adam had been created *innocent*, with an innocent human nature. He did not know evil. He had never tasted or experienced evil; therefore, the pull and taste of evil from experience was not within him. Adam had no idea what evil would taste or feel like. He was innocent, perfectly innocent; therefore, he did not know the difference between good and evil.

The point is this: God created Adam with the ability, the power, the capacity not to sin. True, Adam had the power to sin, but he also had the power not to sin.

But if Adam chose to sin, he would then know good and evil; he would lose the power not to sin. How? By sinning. By sinning he would become a sinful being. He could never again be innocent or perfect. He would be a being who had fallen below what God wanted, a being with a fallen human nature — a nature that is corruptible and that dies (see *Perishable — Imperishable*, Mt. 6:19; note, 1 Cor 15:50; *Sin, Death, Corruption*, 2 Pet 1:4).

2. Adam's moral nature. Adam was given a choice. He had free choice, freedom of will. He was a *free being*. But more than this, Adam was a free *moral being*. His morality is seen in the decision he had to make. If he obeyed God, he was moral and just; if he disobeyed God, he was immoral and unjust.
3. The nature of sin, morality and justice. Morality and justice are essentially obeying God. Sin — immorality and injustice — is essentially disobeying God.
4. Man's need for God's Word. Man needs God's Word, desperately needs it. Living by God's Word is the only way man can ever live abundantly and eternally. This is the reason God had to give man (Adam) His Word, His commandment. This is clearly seen by noting the difference between animals and man. Animals are soulish beings (see *Soul, Nephesh*, Gen 1:20). They are not given God's Word to live by. They are not spiritual beings. They are not immortal nor do they have the choice — drive and ability — to live with God. Animals do not have the capacity to love, worship or fellowship with God. They act only as the physical — their flesh, mind and urges — dictate. They desire only this world and are driven to live

and act only for this world. Therefore, they never know anything but this world.

But not so man. God made man a spiritual being, that is...

- a being who is *immortal*
- a being with the choice — the need, drive and ability — to choose life with God, both now and eternally (see *Creation of Man, Spirit*, Gen 1:26).

God meets man's spiritual need by giving man God's Word: "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:16-17). By this Word from God, man exercises his ability to choose to live with God. He keeps his spirit alive by obeying and doing what God says. In doing what God says, man lives with God — loves, worships and fellowships with Him. Consequently, God gives man life, both now and eternally.

5. God's great love and care for man is shown in these verses.
  - a. Man was placed in the most beautiful surrounding and environment imaginable. The surroundings clearly showed man just how good it was to live in fellowship with God, and the beautiful surroundings attracted and pulled man to God (v. 15).
  - b. Man had every need met by God through his environment and the commandment (the Word of God) given him (vv. 15-17).
  - c. Man was given every tree in the Garden. Only one tree was withheld (vv. 16-17).
  - d. Man was clearly told the consequences of his behaviour. The warning of death was given if he rejected God (v. 17).
  - e. Man was given a magnificent opportunity to respond, to love and show appreciation to God (v. 16-17). He could have chosen God, chosen to live with God and to love, worship and fellowship with God.
6. What God did for man. Up to this point, three significant steps have been taken with man since his creation.
  - a. Man was created a spiritual being; that is, he was created in the image and likeness of God. This means at least two things:
    - => Man has the need and drive for immortality.
    - => Man has the need and ability (choice) to live with God — to love, worship and fellowship with God.
  - b. Man was placed in an environment that met his needs. To varying degrees his environment met his physical, mental and spiritual needs.
  - c. Man was given God's Word to live by. God's Word was the course man was to follow throughout his life. In obeying God's Word, man was to exercise and keep his spirit alive and active. The vehicle chosen for God's Word and commandment was that which was most natural to man — his environment — the fruit from one of the trees for which he was responsible. □

## GENESIS 02:17 DEATH

*“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” **Genesis 02:17***

The basic meaning of death is *separation*. Death does not mean what some people think: ceasing to exist. Death never means extinction, annihilation, non-existence or inactivity.

The Bible speaks of three deaths.

1. Physical death: the *separation* of a man's spirit or life from the body. This is what men commonly call death. It is when a person ceases to exist on this earth and is buried (1 Cor 15:21-22; Heb 9:27).

*1 Cor 15:21-22* For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

*Heb 9:27* Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

2. Spiritual death: the *separation* of man's spirit from God while he is still living and walking upon earth. This death is the *natural state* of a man on earth without Christ. Man is seen as still in his sins and *dead* to God (Eph 2:1; 4:18; 1 Jn. 5:12).  
Spiritual death speaks of a person who is dead while he still lives (1 Tim 5:6). He is a natural man living in this present world, but he is said to be dead to the Lord Jesus Christ and to God and to spiritual matters.

- a. A person who wastes his life in riotous living is spiritually dead.

*Luke 15:32* “But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

- b. A person who has not partaken of Christ — allowed Christ to live within him — is spiritually dead.

*John 6:53-55* Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.”

- c. A person who does not have the Spirit of Christ is said to be spiritually dead.

*Rom 8:9* You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

- d. A person who lives in sin is said to be spiritually dead.

*Eph 2:1* As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

**Col 2:13** *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.*

**Eph 4:18-19** *“They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.” Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

- f. A person who sleeps in sin is spiritually dead.

**Eph 5:14** *This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*

- g. A person who lives in sinful pleasure is spiritually dead, dead while he lives.

**1 Tim 5:6** *But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.*

- h. A person who does not have the Son of God is spiritually dead.

**1 John 5:12** *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

- i. A person who does great religious works but does the wrong works is spiritually dead.

**Rev 3:1** *“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.*

3. Eternal death: the *separation* of man from God's presence forever. This is the second death, an eternal state of being *dead to God* (1 Cor 6:9-10; 2 Th 1:9). It is spiritual death, separation from God, that is prolonged beyond the death of the body. It is called the “second death” or eternal death.

**Rom 8:6** *The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

**2 Th 1:7-9** *And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.*

**Rev 20:15** *If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. □*