

A Commentary on the Second Chapter of Genesis

(Our second creation story)

Back by popular demand one maybe two people are begging on their hands and knees, that I say more about the book of Genesis. Without further adieu, I will exegete, explain Genesis chapter two. A little housekeeping here, why does the first creation story creep, extend four plus verses into chapter two, the second creation story?

Jerry, here is a fish tale you might enjoy. When the Bible was first written there were no verses, no paragraphs just one long sheet of parchment skins. Over the years monks were assigned the task of dividing the scripts into periods and paragraphs.

Now for the fish tale. I was told by reliable sources the monks would perform these tasks on asses while riding from one community to another. I imagine the ride over rough roads would cause the monk's pen to slightly be ajar; thus, not all the punctuations are in their proper places.

Brueggemann also warns that it is not correct to divide the garden narrative of chapter two from the disobedience narrative of chapter three, for they are a dramatic drama depending upon one another. Once again Walter is right and I see him hovering over me shaking his finger at me. Walter also informs all that the Old Testament does not assume such a "Fall," nor is Genesis interested in such a pessimistic view.

Chapter two, written by "J" the Yahwist, sees chapter two as a narrative and not a doctrine. Unlike the church who prefers the telling of creation with day one, day two I prefer the telling of the second creation story told by "J".

Do not let two creation stories get in your way of enjoying both of the creation stories.

A CREATION STORY TOLD BY THE YAHWIST “J” FAMILY

Genesis 2:4b-7

I love the second creation story over the first. Why? Because the second interpretation of creating written between 960-950 BCE, was the first written. The Yahwists were our first theologians, believed politics was a vehicle for covenant, uses pictorial language, disliked rituals, interested in human nature, and best of all they used PRIMITIVE IMAGINATION. They were thinkers.

I am reminded of Rodin’s great statue, “The Thinker.” This low-browed naked man with his closed fist pressed against his lips yet having dignity. We people, especially in the church. lack imagination.

Just think of the imagination here, man is formed out of the dust of the ground. A stream mysteriously rises and waters the earth. This mist, this ground water rises assisting with creation. This lifeless terrace took on a new life.

God begins to work, not with word, but with thousands of actions. God came and still comes to us today not as a Heavenly Speaker but as a Divine Worker. Adam was created from the dust of the ground which later he tills depending upon the ground for nourishment and where finally he will rest. What a glorious imagination of truth.

This breath of life filling us with the light of the creator doesn’t happen with other creatures, only humanity.

Genesis 2:8-9

A habitat for man

We see the garden as an utter act of graciousness. We might prefer a garden without dangerous trees, but that kind of garden is not what we have to work with.

In our garden are trees for shade, beauty, nourishment and of course we have our no, no's our taboos. With our trees lurks a mystery.

In the midst of our garden stands the Tree of Life and we also have a Tree of Knowledge, good and evil. Do we have one tree or two? I have no answer,

All I can say is that trees offer us rest and shade and at the same time trees establish boundaries.

Genesis 2:10-14 Rivers divide four

I had the fortune of growing up near the Illinois River. I would spend hours sitting on her banks fishing for carp and watching the barges go up and down the river carrying their cargo. The river was life for many people and wildlife. I do not believe the Illinois River appeared in the Bible, it should have.

We are about to discuss the plot of our drama, and we should not skip over it lightly. Our four rivers turn the garden of Eden into an island surrounded by rivers on all four sides. Yep, I bet that was one hell of a fishing place.

The four rivers are:

PISHON pure gold and fine perfume is found here

GIHON

TIGRIS

EUPHRATES

Our last two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates are where Abraham and Sarah were asked to leave from. Genesis 12

Our best bet is the author of the second story was placing the garden of Eden near Armenia.

Genesis 2:15-17

Then God placed man in this great fishing harbor, land and trees and told him to care for it. The gift of living in this garden came with responsibilities. We have a vocation to work the land. In the Hebrew “to till” means to serve. We are being called to be both a laborer and a protector. It seems like today we are still complaining about the work we have been called to do.

Now we garden dwellers continue complaining. A big part of creation becomes COVENANT. For our own well-being, our Creator structures a “covenant of life,” laws if you prefer. We need laws in order to have an orderly society. Without structure, we have no life.

Genesis 2:18-23

We now have a problem in the garden. Our fisherman is tired of cleaning fish and eating alone. Our divine evolution of creation needs some minor repairs. So, God goes back to the dust and created birds and other life. Then God permitted man to be a part of creation and man was given the task of naming all the birds and other wildlife. Naming brings an orderliness to our world.

Because of Adam meaning “mankind” he puts our tired, lonely fisherman, orchard worker in a deep sleep. When the bearded, smelly man awoke he saw a woman for the first time. God offered man a partner and solves his problem of loneliness

When our man sees the woman, he bursts into speech for the first time. He sings of her daily “this at last is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.” Adam calls her woman, “eve” and life between the two has been smooth sailing ever since.

Genesis 2:24-25 moral of the story

Our last verses in chapter two lead our chapter into an etiology, an explanation for sexuality. Sexuality comes from God and leads to living together away from the parents. And most important of all, they were naked and not embarrassed. However, that changes later in Genesis, like so much more has changed.

So goes my interpretation. How do you see Genesis two?

Sincerely;

Dennis L. Siebert