

Bible Basics Conference 2012: “Genesis 1-12”

Part 3

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Place	Catfort
Date	11.11.2012
Duration	00:31:18
Online version	https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/hc004/bible-basics-conference-2012-genesis-1-12

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[00:00:01] Well, good morning. I will turn to Genesis chapter 2. Just so that we refresh our memories of what we are about to look at, we will read a few verses. Genesis chapter 2 and verse 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. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. And there went up a mist from the earth and water to the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, breathed [00:01:06] into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden each wood in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And we'll just drop down to verse 15. And the Lord God took man and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded of man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it. For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. It is my job to say a few words on these verses [00:02:09] in the second chapter of Genesis. The second chapter of Genesis is a unique chapter in the whole of the Old Testament, as it is the only chapter in which we have mankind without sin. And I've divided this chapter into four basic comments that one wants to make. First of all, the name of God. Secondly, men or man from the dust, the garden and the rivers and the two trees.

I hope that in these four headings we will help each other to learn something from this chapter. It is important that each one of us here has in our hands the Word of God. As was already [00:03:10] mentioned by Brother Hu, most of us are very familiar in the UK with the Authorised Version. The Authorised Version is, of course, a direct translation from the original Hebrew and Greek. Mr. Darby himself speaks on the Authorised Version of its beauty and he says he grew up on it. However, there is other translations and we favour Mr. Darby's own translation. But what is important, if we are going to look into these verses, is that we have in our hand a translation that we can stand on and we can say with authority, this is the Word of God. We live in a day when [00:04:02] there are many paraphrases which gives the thought of man and when we look at things such as the names of God, they do not altogether work. So in chapter 1 and 2 we find that the name God is mentioned 35 times. But you will have noticed that when I began reading in chapter 2 and verse 4, it says the Lord God or

Jehovah. We may ask ourselves the question, why does it differ? Now if you were to be a critical theologian, you would suggest this proves that the opening chapter was not written by the same person. But we can be convinced that Moses wrote the opening chapter of Genesis and [00:05:03] the remainder of the book. In chapter 1 we find the mention of God 35 times. But in chapter 2, the name the Lord God, Jehovah, is mentioned 11 times. And the question is, is why? Why is it changed from one to the other? The word God, the name God, we had it mentioned would speak of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The unapproachable, the incomprehensible, we cannot understand God. He is all-powerful. But we see in creation, he is the one that made the universe. When we come to [00:06:01] the Lord God, we see there something of God acting in his grace towards mankind. So when we are introduced to the Lord God, it is Jehovah, the one who has a relationship with mankind. And I think we have examples of this. And the first one that I will give you is in Genesis chapter 7. I hope I'm not encroaching on anyone else's ground. But in Genesis chapter 7 and verse 16 we read, And they that came, came male and female of all flesh. And God has commanded the hymn. God had commanded Noah. And Jehovah shut them in. So in that verse we clearly see that God, [00:07:03] the one who is all-powerful, is the one that is about to bring judgment upon this world. And yet that same one, the same God, but here mentioned as Jehovah, is the one that shuts the door. The one who has a relationship with mankind shuts the door. God in his government was about to destroy the human race. God commanded him. The Lord in his relationship with Noah, the Lord shut him in. And then there is other references to this same idea. And I put one Samuel 17 verse 46. We will just [00:08:02] look at that one which is a very interesting one where we read of the, This day will Jehovah deliver thee into my hands, and I will smite thee, take thy head from thee, and will give thy carcass to the camp of the Philistines. This is of course David speaking to Goliath. And all the earth shall know that Israel has a God. Universally they will know there is a God, an all-powerful God. But all the congregation shall know that Jehovah saves. And so when it's a question of that which is affecting the world, it is God. When we are talking about that which would be in relation to his people, we are introduced to Jehovah. And here in this chapter [00:09:04] we are introduced to the Jehovah, the one who is about to enter into a relationship with mankind. Now we did read the verses that the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.

In 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 23 we read that man is body, soul, and spirit. Or we could use the, I think the correct order, spirit, soul, and body. This is true of the Lord Jesus when he [00:10:02] was here. The verse in Luke 22 verse 19 the Lord Jesus says, take ye, this is my body. And I think that we would all without any question believe that when the Lord Jesus was here he had a body. But in John chapter 12 verse 27 the Lord Jesus speaks of his soul. So we are absolutely confident that the Lord Jesus had a body and he also had a soul. But also in John chapter 11 verse 23 the Lord Jesus speaks about his spirit. And so where we have a body, soul, and a spirit, the Lord Jesus [00:11:04] stepping into manhood, sin apart, had a body and a soul and a spirit. Now when we come to the ourselves here, every one of us has a body. We can see that. I don't think there's anybody going to dispute that one statement. They may dispute other things that I say but we won't dispute the fact that we all have a body. But we all have a soul. And I would suggest that the soul would be the feelings, the emotions, the desires that we have. And we see this to a measure in animals. Now animals if we read in first chapter of Genesis verse 21 are called living creatures in our [00:12:09] authorized version. But if we read in the New Translation we find that they are called living souls. And actually if you look up the word in the Strong's Concordance you will find that it is the same word used in chapter 1 verse 21 as used in chapter 2 verse 7. And so animals have a soul.

Fish, Leviticus chapter 11 are also said to have to be living souls. But then we have a spirit.

[00:13:07] And this is the distinction between the animal kingdom and the human kingdom or the mankind.

The verse in Job 32 says, but there is a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Only a man has a spirit and a soul. Now the spirit is the intellect, reasoning power which we can have fellowship with God. So we can say in a simple way that [00:14:04] with our spirits we are conscious of God. We can have a relationship with God. With our souls we have self-consciousness. And with our bodies we have world consciousness. Now our spirits enable us to have fellowship with God and God with man. God's desire was that there would be that link between himself and with mankind. And hence he says let us make man in our image. And so man is a unique being in that it is only of man that God breathed into him the breath of life and man [00:15:10] became a living soul. And that soul will live for eternity because that soul will live as long as the breath of God lives. And so any idea of annihilation is completely removed from the very first pages of our Bible. Our soul will last as long as the breath of God does. But when sin entered into this world that link of fellowship was broken. We see that man was on the earth in chapter 1 and there was no nothing there to bar communion between himself and God. But when sin [00:16:09] entered in that communion was broken. That fellowship was cut. In verse 17 that we read it says very simply for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Now you might not agree with me I'm going to say this. Some have used this verse and said it means a Hebrewism dying thou shalt die. And so they say that Adam having sinned he died eventually. We know that it took 950 years for Adam to die. But you know it says in the day that thou eatest [00:17:06] thereof thou shalt certainly die. And I think that if we use the days in verse 1 as a literal day why not use the day in verse 2 as a literal day. And I'm going to suggest that when Adam took of the fruit of the tree he died spiritually. That link that existed between him and God was cut. And from that moment onwards man is at a distance from God. But the wonderful thing is is that God in his grace and in his kindness had provided everything for mankind. And when we come to the question of the rivers first of all and again I don't want to crouch on further speakers. I think [00:18:02] we have to be careful looking at these rivers to try and find them in the world today. Because in the Noah's Ark when the fountains of the great deep were broken up the contours of the land would have changed completely. And so what we are left with is a statement of four rivers that we don't know where they were. We may suggest that Moses writing this after the flood after the the change had taken place could relate back to rivers which then existed. And two of the rivers that are mentioned here are mentioned elsewhere in the scriptures. But I think overall we can say that the contours of the land were changed. But I want to suggest that these rivers would speak to us of God's blessing. God here planted a garden. And you know in chapter 1 God said let the earth bring [00:19:07] forth and it brought forth. But here God planted. And to my mind that needs an energy. There needs some thought. God had prepared this garden. And the garden it faced east. And here's the importance of the scriptures that we can rely on. It faced east. Why does God tell us it faced east? It doesn't say it faced west. I want to suggest to you that God is always looking towards the east. Because in chapter 1 we find it's not the morning and the evening but the evening and the morning. The tabernacle is pitched and it is facing towards the east. And in the last chapter of the Old Testament we read the Son of Righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings. God is always [00:20:02] looking towards the coming of his beloved Son. And so he is looking towards the east where the sun will rise. So not only is God planted that garden for our blessing. Every resource, the source of all our blessing comes from God. There was that prepared for mankind. In John chapter 7 38 we read the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a river of living water. What a wonderful thing that in this garden there was ample supply for the people. And that river departed into four heads. Four's the number which speak of universal, the four wings of the earth. How that the gospel has gone out to [00:21:06] whosoever will. How that we as believers on the Lord Jesus Christ can enjoy the presence of the

Holy Spirit with us. How that we also can have the Word of God which again is spoken of as water. The provision that God has made for you and me is absolutely incredible. That verse in Psalm 46, we'll refer to that in a minute. Now we come to the trees. You will notice as we read through the opening chapters of Genesis that there are things in Genesis which are also in the book of Revelation. The rivers that we spoke of in the first and that's last portion. In Revelation we [00:22:11] read of a river. Of the tree of life we find that is seen in Revelation. In Revelation 2 verse 7 in relation to the church at Ephesus, the overcomer is to be given to take of the tree of life. In the very last chapter we read of the tree of life. But the tree of knowledge and good and evil is not in Revelation. We need to ask ourselves the question why? Why is it that God in his wisdom should record in that final chapter of the Bible the tree of life but not the tree of knowledge [00:23:05] and good and evil? I want to suggest very simple that the tree of life would speak to us of the sovereign act of God. God in his sovereign love to mankind provides a tree of life. And you will notice that in the opening chapter, chapter 2, 1 and 2, there is no bar to the tree of life. The bar to the tree of life comes in after sin. I also want to suggest that the tree of knowledge would speak of man in his responsibility before God. So we find the tree of life speaks of sovereignty.

[00:24:07] The tree of knowledge of good and evil speaks of man in responsibility before God. I think we just mentioned that. Man, having taken of the tree of life, failed. And if we look at man under responsibility before God, we find nothing but failure. It doesn't matter if we look under any of the dispensations. If we look at man under conscience, we see failure. If we look at man under government, we see failure. Under promise and the law, we find that man failed. So man taken [00:25:03] up under responsibility would lead to absolute failure. John 1, verse 17, we read, the law by Moses, grace and truth came by Christ Jesus. What I would simply suggest is that the law would speak of man under responsibility. We said that under responsibility, man has failed. The verse in Romans, what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God send in his own son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and force him, condemn sin in the flesh. And so when the Lord Jesus came, this is God's answer. The coming into the world of the Lord Jesus Christ, by his death on the cross, he has closed forever that order of man. What I'm trying to say is that man after the [00:26:09] flesh, man under responsibility failed. But when the Lord Jesus came into this world, he took up the cause of man. And in his death upon the cross, finished that old man. Man under responsibility is finished with. And so we can say with John 10, verse 10, the Lord Jesus could say, I am come, that they might have life. In complete contrast to what man sought to achieve through their own responsibility, it is in John 10, we have this reference to the Lord Jesus giving life. Now, you will notice in the Old Testament, there are many, many references to the Lord Jesus coming [00:27:04] and speaking of his death. But I don't think in the Old Testament, we get references to the Lord Jesus as bringing life. Because in the Old Testament, it is man under responsibility. And under responsibility, there is death. But when the Lord Jesus comes, he could say, I am come, that they might have life. And again, in John 5, it says, he that hath the Son hath life.

Now, I need to go back. Right. Does ever God desire that there should be a people with him?

We've seen in the second chapter of Genesis that God had desired that he would have a man that they [00:28:06] could commune with. And there was a time when God could speak to man. But when sin entered into this world, that communion was broken. In the 25th of Exodus, God speaks to Moses and saying, I want you to build the tabernacle. And I think it's verse eight, it says, there I will dwell with you. God was about to dwell with man. But God could only dwell with man in Exodus 25, because of the fact of the Passover had taken place. We need the death of Christ before there can be God dwelling with mankind. So God could dwell in the tabernacle. In the temple, God could dwell

as well. And the [00:29:03] verses there in, I think it's first Kings chapter eight, we read of the presence of God being seen in the temple. God can dwell as well in the temple that Ezra wrote, built. In the absolute sense of the word, God dwelled on this earth in the person of the Lord Jesus. The disciples said, we have beheld his glory. We contemplated him. He tabernacled amongst us. At this present moment, God is, there is a habitation of God through the spirit, which is in each one of us. But this verse here would speak of a future day, a millennial day, when God will dwell in the midst of her, in the midst of redeemed Israel, God will dwell. And further on, we read in the 21st of Revelation, [00:30:06] that God will dwell with us in the eternal state. And so God will fulfil his desire that sin coming into this world has not robbed eternally anything from God, because God has sent his son, the Lord Jesus. And that which should have been seen in the garden of Eden, that which should have been there, the dwelling place of God, God being able to have communion with mankind, interrupted because of sin. When we come to the end of our Bibles, we find that there is a time coming when God will be able to dwell with mankind. And it is all due to the fact of the coming into the scene of the Lord Jesus. [00:31:02] So we find that the answer that God has is the Lord Jesus Christ.