

*Grounds of Faith Café* “Genesis” (Subtitled: Is there a snake in your Garden too?) Further subtitled: Lessons from the Garden! Generation X to Z seeking Connection: (D 104-105): An interactive Scriptural study that explores God’s Redemptive action from the beginning of time in a casual café style setting. We will pray, read scripture, and jointly explore provided studies in groups of four or five. Learn about God’s design for His Creation, His intent for man’s participation, Satan’s deception, man’s disruptive actions and God’s plan to redeem it all. You will find strengthened connections and new Christian friendships in the *Grounds of Faith Café* as we study God’s good news for us. Please bring a Bible, a welcoming heart, an open mind, and a receptive spirit.



Facilitators: Lee Smith and others

### **Genesis Lesson 2 (2:4 – 4:1; particularly 2:4 - 24): Some Summary Thoughts**

2:4b: “...in the day that the LORD God made the **earth and the heaven**”: Focus: God (“*Elohim*”) from 1:1, who in chapter one was pictured in the broader cosmic depiction as the royal monarch enthroned over the universe and who “*created the heavens and the earth*” (1:1; 2:4a), now is depicted as the LORD (*YHVH – Yahweh*) God (*Elohim*) who is centering His creative activities on the earth. Whereas the first chapter portrayed mankind’s creation in God’s *image and likeness* with a commission or mandate to “rule” or have dominion (defined in terms of stewardship, not abusive power) over the animal kingdom, chapter two expands the creation account to present us with a developing “paradox.”

Dr. Everett Ferguson describes the “paradox of human nature” as having: “greatness and wretchedness, majesty and misery. In Genesis 1:26-27, mankind – male and female – is made in the image of God and appointed lord of creation. This is the greatness of human beings. According to Genesis 2:7, the first man was made from the dust of the earth with all the weakness of clay and, as the story unfolds, subject to temptation, sin, sickness, and death. This is the wretchedness of the human condition. For all the greatness, human life is derivative, dependent on the Creator for everything. And so, there is revealed the paradox of dominion and dependence.” (Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, p. 137).

Viewed in their totality, chapters 2 & 3 address the most fundamental issues of human life. Who is God? What does it mean to be human? What is/should be the nature of the Divine – human relationship (and, parenthetically, man’s other relationships to creation and to each other)? Why is our world the way it is? In all of these questions, one critical point stands out: God is fully and intimately involved in His created world. Because of that, the vision presented is first and foremost “relational” – a relational, harmonious whole wherein all parts support and sustain the relational design. “Activities,” as important as they are, do not assume prime importance; rather, they are subordinate to and always supportive of the “relationship.”

Three relationships assume major importance. Human (inferior/subordinate) – God (superior); human (superior/“ruler”) – earth/created elements (inferior/subordinate); human (equal) – human (equal) or more specifically: male (equal) – female (equal). **TRUST** (faith) is the glue that holds the relationships together.

Meaningful life for mankind: Chapter one centered “meaning” in being created in God’s image, i.e., being made with the character traits of God – intellectual, rational, moral, and spiritual qualities – and the commission from God to man to serve responsibly and caringly. Humans, not merely created matter but divine representatives, have their roles/responsibilities expanded in chapter two. Boundaries are added in 3 dimensions: (1) vocation – 2:15, Adam is to “work and keep the garden;” (2) permission – 2:16, Adam has free run of the garden; (3) prohibition – Adam is not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, i.e., Adam is to refrain from doing that which will harm him/them. Most significantly, humans now have community (2:23-25), companionship. “Fellowship,” an intimate communal relationship built on trust, has always been God’s ultimate goal. “Obedience,” desired & required by God, is simply a tool or activity to move created beings toward the end goal.

Next week we will move into chapter three. Conflict, a built-in assumption of the universe, arises. And, we learn in Genesis 2-3 that conflict is the result of human rebellion. “Human questioning of divine intent and motive propels the world into disorder, alienation, and struggle. Disharmony supplants harmony; disunity replaces unity. The declared blessings pronounced by God withdraw in the face of curse... The position of humans in the created order is now fraught with uncertainty and anxiety. With the expulsion from the garden [and particularly from the presence of God], the narrative is thrown into suspense.” (Marrs, pp. 53-54)