

Love & Marriage: a profound mystery  
Read Genesis 2.4-25

## ‘CHRIST IN GENESIS’: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS & SETTING THE CONTEXT

1/ As we stated in our [last lesson](#), we just want to be sure to keep our focus attuned to the theme of this whole course as we make our way throughout this summary/survey study of Genesis. Our theme focus is: CHRIST IN GENESIS. And so, we are looking for ‘CHRIST-markers’ that are clearly revealed and defined by the New Testament Scriptures.

2/ There are numerous ‘CHRIST-markers’ in our lesson passage – but we will have time only to identify them as we go through the narrative. However, we will give more attention to the narrative scene of Yahweh-Elohim’s creation of the Woman and bringing her to the Man. Why? Because Paul reveals in **Ephesians 5.22-33** that when God first introduced love and marriage into His ‘very good’ creation, it was intended to be an enduring physical symbol of His loving, covenantal relationship with His Bride, His married people. Paul concludes that whole section on love and marriage with: **“This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”**

3/ But, there will other ‘CHRIST-markers’ also. So, let’s get started...

### I / vv 4-6 / ‘Toledot’ ‘These are the generations...’

1/ I’m going to introduce you to this Hebrew word even though you may never use it again. But we will be coming back to it at least ten times as we make our way through Genesis. This word *toledot* [tohl-daw] is translated **‘These are the generations...’** It can also be translated: **‘These are the descendants’** or as the NKJV has it, **‘This is the history of...’** That’s what a *toledot* is – it is a brief summary historical account of the subject of the *toledot*.

2/ As you read through Genesis, you will discover that the book is neatly and intentionally written as a collection of ten of these *toledot*. The *toledot* was not so much the story of the ‘father’ who is named first, but of the ‘generations,’ ‘seed,’ or descendants who would come after him.

3/ I’m going to list them for you here:

1. **ch 2.4-4.26** / Heaven and Earth
2. **ch 5.1-6.8** / Adam
3. **ch 6.9-9.29** / Noah
4. **ch 10.1-11.19** / Noah’s sons: Shem, Ham, Japheth
5. **ch 11.10-26** / Shem
6. **ch 11.27-25.11** / Terah [father of Abram]
7. **ch 25.12-18** / Ishmael [shortest of all the *toledot*] see ‘CHRIST-connection’ in Galatians 4.21-5.1
8. **ch 25.19-35.29** / Isaac
9. **ch 36.1-37.1** / Esau
10. **ch 37.2-50.26** / Jacob [told in the story of his son, Joseph]

4/ v 4 / But, we’re here in the first *toledot* of Genesis: **These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God [Yahweh-Elohim] made the earth and the heavens.** So the narrator is going to ‘zoom in’ and tell us what took place in this ‘very good’ creation that God had completed in the six days of creation described in **ch 1.1-2.3**. **The narrative of this chapter would have taken place on the sixth day, ch 1.24-31.**

5/ vv 5-6 / I confess I don’t know exactly what to make of what creation days these conditions refer to. It may mean: [1] when the Earth first appeared out of the gathered Seas, it would have been ‘dry earth’ and barren until God commanded the vegetation to sprout, spring up, and grow – all on the same creation Day 3 [**ch 1.9-13**]; or [2] the vegetation that was growing was ‘in the wild’ – there was no orderly cultivation of it. WHY? Because two things were lacking: **“...for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground.”** So, even though God had created everything ‘very

**good,**’ still it was lacking in orderly cultivation. So here is what the LORD God does to establish an earthly, domestic Kingdom under His sovereignty.

6/ We will watch Yahweh-Elohim work in numerous roles: as King over His Kingdom [**Psalm 103.19**], “...as a potter who stoops down and fashions a delicate object (2.7), as a horticulturist who plants a garden (2.8), as a sculptor who fashions a woman from a rib of the man (2.21-22), as a person [*dare we say* ‘companion/friend’ (*dsp*)] who walks in the garden (3.8), and as a judge who conducts a hearing and renders judgment (3.9-19).” Sidney Greidanus, Preaching Christ From Genesis.

## II / vv 7 / ‘...the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground...’

1/ God’s plan was to create and establish a universe of creations and creatures who would obey His will and fulfill His purposes and pleasures [see **Revelation 4.11**]. He has already brought forth the sky, earth, seas, vegetation, heavenly luminaries and stars, living creatures in the seas, in the skies, and on the earth. But, what there is NOT is a creature who will rule over it all under His sovereign dominion, as His representative ruler on earth. A ruler over His creation who will subdue it, govern it, cultivate it, and steward it all the ways He wants it to be used ... and return all the fruits from the earth back to Him with love, worship, praise, and thanksgiving. **The LORD God made the Man to fulfill this creation mandate.**

2/ v 7 / ‘...then the LORD God formed the man [*adam*] of dust from the ground [*adamah*] and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.’ Again, this is what it means to be created in the image of God [we call it ‘*Imago Dei*’]. **Go back and re-read ch 1.26-27.** We are created and infused with God’s breath – our human soul is in the ‘image and likeness’ of God’s own Being with individual will, self-awareness, and intellect ... giving us the ability to relate to God, to know God, to fellowship with God. This distinguishes us from the lower creatures of the animal kingdom.

3/ We see ‘CHRIST-markers’ here from several perspectives:

- The image of God in which humans have been created is preeminently the image of Christ / **Colossians 3.10-11**.
- Thus, the Man [*adam*] has a dual relationship: he is ‘formed’ or ‘built’ out of the dust of the ‘ground’ [*adamah*]; yet at the same time, he has been in-breathed and in-fused with the ‘breath of life’ in the ‘image and likeness of God.’
- The first man Adam serves as a type of Christ [**Romans 5.12-21; 1 Corinthians 15.20-28**]. Primarily here, as we shall see, Adam stands in the place of the whole human race who will come from him and after him – a ‘federal head.’ Whatever Adam does and will do – the whole human race will do in him. There have been only two federal heads: Adam and Christ.
- Christ’s human genealogy goes all the way back to Adam [**Luke 3.38**]. This places Him as the Head of His new race of redeemed Mankind [**Ephesians 2.15**].

## III / vv 8-14 / “And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden ... and there He put the man...”

1/ v 8 / This ‘garden’ is a spot the LORD God selected to establish a cultivated estate or plantation which will serve as a model to be duplicated all over the earth. As it is promised in **Isaiah 11.9**, “...for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” ... so this ‘garden in Eden’ was to be the prototype of the man’s dominion over the earth and subduing it for the glory of God, the Creator. ***Of course, we all know that the First Adam/Man failed and was consequently driven out of this Paradise – but for the time it remained after its creation, that was the ideal for God’s creation and a model for God’s Kingdom on earth. Hold onto that thought because we’re going to see where this Paradise is now and where it’s going to be in the New Creation.***

2/ After the fall into sin, Eden will become only a distant, longing memory [**Isaiah 51.3; Joel 2.3**].

3/ It will come to be known as ‘Paradise’ [from the Persian language meaning an enclosed cultivated park].

- This **Paradise** belongs to Christ, as He promised the repentant criminal who was crucified beside Him [**Luke 23.43**].

- It was in Paradise that Paul received his visions and conversed with Christ [ **2 Corinthians 12.1-10**].
- And, Jesus Christ promised the church in Ephesus in His letters in the Revelation: **“To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” [Revelation 2.7].**

4/ v 9 / We will follow up that promise in Revelation by going back to our lesson text in **Genesis 2.9**. The ‘tree of life’ that shows up in the New Creation [**Revelation 2.7; 22.2, 14**] is first planted here in Eden, the garden of God. ***This ‘tree of life’ especially is a major connecting link between the original creation and the New Creation. And this ‘tree of life’ can be none other than Jesus Christ Himself.***

5/ When we get to the end of chapter 3, when Adam and Eve are driven out of the Garden of Eden – Paradise Lost – God will post flaming cherubim, NOT to keep the ‘tree of life’ from them [or us], BUT ‘to guard the way to the tree of life’ [**ch 3.24**].

- The significance of that statement is that: the only way to grant sinners access to the tree of life so we can live forever is for Someone else to come and ‘overcome’ the tests and temptations that Adam failed in.
- That ‘Tree of Life’ is CHRIST! The ‘Tree of Life’ in the New Creation bears its fruit continually, perpetually, and **“The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” [ch 22.2].**
- That healing is the healing of sin as Peter tells us in **1 Peter 2.24: “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.”** Jesus Christ died on the ‘tree of death’ so He could be in Himself the ‘Tree of Life’ and restore eternal life to us forever ... in Himself!

6/ This **Paradise** becomes the testing ground or laboratory for Man’s obedience to God, his Creator. God provided every sort, kind, and variety to trees to spring up in **Eden/Paradise**. Every one of them was beautiful to look at, delicious to taste, and nutritious to eat.

7/ Two distinctive trees were placed **‘in the midst of the garden’**: **‘the tree of life...and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.’** The text seems to imply that if Adam had eaten of the ‘tree of life,’ it would have given him immortality – deathlessness. **This seems to be confirmed in ch 3.22.** The ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ is just that: if Adam ate of its fruit, he would become knowledgeable of evil. In his original creation state, Adam knew only good – he was innocent [ignorant] of experiential evil. These two trees would test the direction and exercise of Adam’s desires – the love of his heart.

8/ **vv 10-14** / But before we get to that temptation/test covenant – our text gives us another connection to the New Creation. **“A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.”** Since this river flowed through Eden to keep it watered, and then flowed out of it, it served as the ‘river of the water of life’ for the Paradise garden. Along with the dews and the vapors that came up from the earth and from the waters of life that flowed through Paradise, there was sufficient and adequate ‘water of life’ to sustain all the vegetation that grew in it – as well as any and all humans who might live and work in the Paradise in the service of their Creator. By the way, we have reason to believe that the geographical location of the original Garden of Eden was at least somewhere in the vicinity of the present-day Euphrates and Tigris rivers [keeping in mind that much of the earth’s topography was changed and re-arranged during the Great Flood].

9/ Repeatedly, Jesus Christ declared Himself to be the **‘I AM’ Rivers of Living Water [John 7.37-38; Revelation 21.6; 22.1-2, 17].**

#### **IV / vv 15-17 / “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it”**

1/ v 15 / We should just note here that human labor and work is NOT the effect of the curse – only the futility of our labors. But labor and work is an essential stipulation of the creation mandate. The LORD God had planted and established this Paradise garden. The man could not have asked for anything more than God had provided for him. He needed nothing more or in addition to fulfill everything God had mandated and commissioned him to fulfill. **Go back and re-read this Kingdom mandate God charged them with in ch 1.26-28.**

2/ vv 16-17 / So here are the stipulations of this covenant the LORD God imposed upon Adam:

Work this Paradise garden I have provided for you – keep it for My pleasure and glory

Look at ALL these beautiful, delicious, and nutritious trees I have provided for you and made to spring up – ***you may surely eat of every tree of the garden!***

3/ There is one prohibition – and only one: out of every tree in this Paradise, and there are many ... there is only one tree of which Adam may not eat – **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. NOTE: This tree in itself is not evil, nor is its fruit necessarily physically poisonous. It's just that this distinctive tree is placed there and clearly marked to serve as a test of Adam's obedience to God. ***“Adam, you see this tree? Do not eat its fruit! This is the only tree in this garden of which you may not eat. Do not eat this tree's fruit! Because if you disobey Me and eat this tree's fruit – you shall surely die!”***

4/ We all know the rest of this sad story. That will be the subject of our next lesson...

**V / vv 18-25 / “And they shall become one flesh...” “This mystery is profound, and I am saying it refers to Christ and the church” (Ephesians 5.32)**

1/ So now, we come to this beautiful passage of Eve's creation from Adam's rib [or side].

2/ God had just tasked Adam with naming all the creatures. But the LORD God had already said **“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”** And then, there was another acknowledgement after Adam had named all the creatures that no one of them was compatible with his human nature – the only creature that would be a suitable counterpart to him would be another human being like him, but different to make up for what he lacked.

3/ So the LORD God created the Woman!

4/ Over the years, I have used the following narrative in my Marriage Ceremony:

Marriage is a high and holy occasion, when two hearts and two lives are bound together by the faithful ties of love and promise. Marriage is a heart contract. It is the sweetest of all love letters, written with the ink of your tenderest affections, sealed with the bonds of your promises, and preserved in your hearts forever, treasured and guarded there as among the most prized of all your possessions. Now, we should rejoice in the glad knowledge that marriage is a part of God's plan for us. God saw in the Garden of Eden that it was not good for the man to be alone. So, God made a Helper for him. The Man needed the Woman. And, the Woman was perfectly suited to the needs of the Man. The Bible says, ***“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.”*** And there, among the beautiful flowers of Paradise, while they were serenaded by the songs of the birds which the LORD God Himself had created, Almighty God Himself married the first woman to the first man in purity, innocence, and righteousness. Adam's heart leaped toward her with instant recognition of love, as he said, ***“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘Woman,’ because she was taken out of Man.”*** And the very way God did that teaches us how we should marry. ***“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cling inseparably to his wife, and the two of them shall become one flesh.”***

5/ What Paul reveals in **Ephesians 5.32** is that when God created the Woman, gave her to the man, and ordained the human institution of love and marriage, it served [at least] two purposes: [1] it sanctified the sexual union of husband and wife [‘one flesh’] for pleasure and procreation / **1 Corinthians 6.13b-17**; [2] but more, the blessed union God gave husband and wife is the same union He enjoys with His people! When the LORD God married Adam and Eve to one another, He wanted them to understand that He was also marrying them to Himself in the same kind of relationship! And that is also the ways Christ loves us, gave Himself for us and to us, and brings us into union and unity with Himself – His spirit and body!

6/ God intended for that ‘mystery’ to be proclaimed from the beginning – and Christ fulfills it with us!

7/ **And we are anticipating the joyous and final celebration! (John 2.1-11 / Revelation 19.1-11).**