

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Genesis 2:15-25

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, September 8, 2013
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The ***International Bible Lesson*** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, September 8, 2013**, is from **Genesis 2:15-25**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* (formerly, *Bible Lesson Forum*) below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further** discuss the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the *International Bible Lesson Commentary* website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught and in *The Oklahoman* newspaper.

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Genesis 2:15-25

(Genesis 2:15) The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

When God created Adam, God gave Adam a beautiful and good garden in the midst of His creation. God also gave Adam the responsibility “to till” the garden (to sow seeds and reap food in perfect conditions) and “to keep” the garden (maintain the good and beautiful condition of the garden). For Adam, caring for the garden of Eden would be a joy-filled labor of love. He would use his God-given mental and physical abilities, and he would find happiness in their use. The garden would be a place where he could grow mentally, physically, and spiritually. For example, over time he could learn how to till the garden and produce a variety of good foods. He could learn more about God and himself in communication with God.

(Genesis 2:16) And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden;

God created people in the image of God, which included the image of the Son of God (see John 1 and John 17:5, 24). God has the ability to make moral choices and God gave people the ability to make moral choices too. When God gave a command to Adam, God respected Adam’s ability to choose or not choose to love, trust, and obey God – to do right or wrong. By giving Adam a good and reasonable command, God enabled Adam to live as a person who could freely make moral choices and choose the consequences of his moral choices. Adam could exercise all of his attributes as a person created in the image of God.

(Genesis 2:17) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

God withheld from Adam only one thing, one tree in the garden. God made only one law for Adam to obey or disobey as a person free to make ethical or moral choices. God told Adam the consequences if he ate of the forbidden tree. Though Adam did not know good and evil by personal experience or all that death would mean, Adam did know that it was good to obey God, the Creator of all. He did know that he would experience punishment if he disobeyed God; he would die. “The good” was obeying God. “The evil” was disobeying God. Adam did know these truths intellectually, but not experientially. “The good” was trusting God, that God would do what He said, that God meant what He said, that God always spoke the truth. “The evil” was not trusting God completely and disobeying God. Adam knew “good” by experience, and “good” was all he knew by experience. If Adam disobeyed God, he would know “evil” by experience. Adam could choose to keep good in the garden or he could choose to bring evil into the garden. Adam made the choice to disobey God, and he suffered the consequences as God promised he would.

(Genesis 2:18) Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.”

God was not alone, because God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit communicated with each other, loved each other, and worked together before and after God created all that exists. God wanted Adam to have someone like himself as a companion so he would not be alone. God is infinite, and people are finite. God is all knowing and everywhere present, but people can never be equal to God (all knowing and everywhere present). People need other finite beings like themselves to communicate with, to love, to grow and learn with, and to work together with. God wanted Adam to have a helper and partner like himself. The Father, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit are helpers and partners in the perfect sense, as Jesus demonstrated, and as Jesus said the Holy Spirit would demonstrate after Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His followers. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit worked together in the creation and redemption of human beings. God wanted people to experience this same joy of living and working together with others similar to themselves.

(Genesis 2:19) So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

Though God had already made plants and animals (see Genesis 1), God wanted to teach Adam about what it meant to be creative and create so Adam would also be creative and create. God took the ground, the dust of the ground, to make animals and birds so Adam could watch the process of creation. Later, God would make a

woman for Adam out of the dust of the ground. God did not name the animals. God wanted to help Adam develop his imagination and reasoning ability. God wanted Adam to discover that he needed someone more like himself in order to have a real helper and partner. So, even though cows and horses may have existed outside the garden, it was easy for God to sculpt a cow and a horse and other animals from the ground and bring life to them for Adam to think about and give names to using his imagination and reasoning ability.

(Genesis 2:20) The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

God was not experimenting to learn something, for God knows everything that can be known. God was helping Adam to discover truths about the world in which he lived; these truths and the names he gave the animals were a foundation for his developing powers of reason and the ability to rule wisely over God's creation. God may have taken "years" or "a long time" helping Adam develop his mind and understanding. God is so great that He could also do in a day what would take us thousands of years to do. Based on all Adam learned about these animals, Adam concluded that none were equal to him in the image of God or fit to be his helper and partner.

(Genesis 2:21) So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

God did not want Adam to experience pain. God created Adam with the ability to experience pain, but pain would not come to Adam until after he disobeyed God. God performed a medical operation on Adam; therefore, we know that operations to heal are part of our ability as people created in the image of God. Furthermore, operations to heal people are permitted by God. We may rightly conclude that God explained to Adam what He would do, and Adam felt no fear or anxiety, because Adam did not have these painful emotions until after he failed to trust God and sinned against God.

(Genesis 2:22) And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

In my opinion, God allowed Adam to watch Him create the woman out of Adam's rib and the dust of the ground. Adam would learn from watching God create the animals, the birds, and the woman, what it meant for him and the woman to be created from the dust of the ground. He would see where he had traits in common with and different from the animals, the birds, and the woman. Adam would know that part of himself was within the woman as created by God. Because God taught Adam about what God was doing, Adam could exclaim that the woman was bone of his bones and her flesh was like his (from the ground).

(Genesis 2:23) Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.”

When God brought the finished and living woman to Adam, perhaps after God explained how He blew the breath of life into both Adam and the woman, Adam declared what he knew intellectually to be true, the woman was bone of his bones. Adam also expressed the emotion of appreciation at least, if not love, to God and to the woman who had come from a part of him and would be his partner. Just as Adam named the animals, so he would name the woman, Eve.

(Genesis 2:24) Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Based on the creation of men and women, both created in the image of God, they can be partners. The Bible (both the Old Testament and the New Testament) gives the reason for men and women to be husband and wife. On the basis of natural law, we know how God created men and women to be one flesh and how as husband and wife they would conceive and bear children in their image and in the image of God.

(Genesis 2:25) And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

God created Adam and Eve, man and woman, as husband and wife to be able to stand before each other as partners and be unashamed. Just as the animals and birds need no clothes other than the clothes God gave them, so in the garden of Eden Adam and Eve only needed their skin covering as the clothes God gave them. They did not know shame or the emotion of feeling ashamed because they did not know evil by experience. They did not need to know evil by experience in order to stand good and perfect before God, each other, and the animals and birds. They did not want any other clothes until after they sinned against God.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. If Adam could talk to God and have God’s help, why do you think Adam was alone (even though Adam did not feel the pain of loneliness) and needed a helper and partner?
2. Why do you think God first brought animals to Adam before God brought a woman to Adam?
3. Why do you think God wanted Adam to name all of the animals and birds rather than just name them Himself and tell Adam their names?

4. Do you think God allowed Adam to stay asleep when God created the woman from Adam's rib, or do you think God woke Adam so Adam could watch God create the woman from Adam's rib?

5. What kind of clothing did God give the animals, the birds, and Adam and Eve when God created them? How did they feel about the clothes they wore?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.
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