

A GARDEN AND A GARDENER, FOUR RIVERS AND TWO TREES

IN THE BEGINNING (GENESIS, PART 1) · GENESIS 2:4-15 · JANUARY 22, 2023 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." (Genesis 1:3)

The *Toledot* Structure of Genesis

- Ten *toledot* in Genesis:
- The story of God's work with generations and peoples

God Creates a Garden (2:8-10)

- God is not only a craftsman but a gardener or farmer
- God brings forth beauty and diversity in creation

God Creates a Gardener (2:7-8, 15)

- God the gardener creates humanity as sub-gardeners
- Humanity is rooted in creation

God's Garden and the Four Rivers (2:10-14)

- The one river
- The four rivers

God's Garden and the Two Trees (2:9)

- The garden with many trees
- The two trees in the middle of the garden

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What aspects of the world speak to you most powerfully about the creativity and power of God?
2. This weekend we continue our preaching series, "In the Beginning," drawn from Genesis

- 1-3. This week we look at the account of creation in Genesis 2:4-15. Begin your study in prayer by asking God to speak to you through His Word, and then, whether you're on your own or with a group, read that text aloud.
3. Verse 4 is part of a structural pattern in Genesis that speaks of generations (called *toledot* from the Hebrew word for "generations") and found also in Genesis 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2. What function does this structure serve and how might it tell us something about God's ordering of human life and history?
4. The Genesis 1 account offers us a big picture look at creation "from above" and the Genesis 2 account offers us a closer look at creation "from below." What is the significance of the garden of Eden here? Why might it matter that God creates a garden?
5. We will explore the creation of humanity in future weeks but take just a moment to reflect on the intimate involvement of God in the creation of human life in 2:7. What stands out to you about this?
6. Why is it significant that the first human life serves a function of gardener or caretaker of the garden on God's behalf (2:8, 15)?
7. The Garden is a beautiful place filled with trees and nurtured by a river. Read Revelation 22:1-5, which echoes Genesis 2. Why might it be significant that the Bible begins and ends with a garden?
8. The two trees in the middle of the garden are important now but also for the future story coming in Genesis 3. Take some time to reflect and discuss what the purpose and significance of these two trees are within God's garden?
9. What is one thing God is revealing to you through this study? If you're on your own, write that down, pray over it, and share it with someone this week. If you are with a small group, share your answers with one another before closing in prayer.

DIG DEEPER:

- Memorize Genesis 2:7 or 2:8-9
- Draw, ink, or paint the account of creation in Genesis 2:4-15. As you do that, thank and praise God for His creation of the world and of you. When you finish, consider sharing your prayer reflections and/or artistry with a friend.
- Watch the Bible Project's video, "Tree of Life": [/bibleproject.com/explore/video/tree-of-life/](https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/tree-of-life/).
- Read one of the following:
 - Norman Wirzba, *This Sacred Life: Humanity's Place in a Wounded World*
 - James Stump, editor, *Four Views on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design*