

Genesis 2:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew:... This passage continues the detailed account of Eden, human creation, and God's design for human flourishing. Genesis 2 complements chapter 1 by providing intimate details about human origins, the garden setting, marriage institution, and humanity's vocation as priest-kings in God's sanctuary-garden.

The narrative emphasizes God's personal involvement, careful preparation of human habitation, clear communication of covenant requirements, and provision for human needs including work, rest, relationship, and worship. The garden of Eden represents perfect environment where heaven and earth intersect, God dwells with humanity, and everything needed for life and blessing exists.

Key theological themes include human dignity as divine image-bearers, work as divine calling (not curse), marriage as covenant partnership, moral freedom with accountability, and the necessity of obedience for blessing. The detailed geography and placement of Eden in historical space-time (rivers, lands) presents this as real history, not mythology. These foundational truths establish the pattern for understanding humanity's purpose, relationships, and destiny throughout Scripture.

Historical Context

Genesis 2 provides a detailed account of human creation and Eden's establishment, using different literary style than chapter 1. Ancient Near Eastern parallels include the Sumerian Paradise myth and the Gilgamesh Epic's plant of life, but Genesis transforms these motifs within strict monotheism. The garden sanctuary with its rivers, trees, and divine presence parallels ancient temple theology where gods dwelt in sacred spaces.

The geographical references (Pishon, Gihon, Hiddekel/Tigris, Euphrates) ground the narrative in historical space-time rather than mythological timelessness. While the exact location of Eden remains debated, the inclusion of identifiable rivers presents this as real geography, not allegory. The Mesopotamian setting connects to humanity's ancient origins in that region, confirmed by archaeology.

Ancient audiences would have recognized marriage's divine institution as countercultural, elevating women beyond their typical status as property. The intimate account of woman's creation from man's side presented revolutionary equality and partnership. The garden-temple imagery established patterns for Israel's tabernacle and temple, where God would again dwell with His people in sacred space requiring holiness and obedience.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| וְכָל | שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה | הַשָּׂדֶה | טָרֵם | יְהוָה | הָאֲרֶץ | וְכָל |
| H3605 | And every plant | of the field | before | H1961 | it was in the earth | H3605 |
| | H7880 | H7704 | H2962 | | H776 | |
| וְכָל | הַשָּׂדֶה | טָרֵם | יִצְמַח | כִּי | לֹא | הִמָּט יר |
| and every herb | of the field | before | it grew | for | had not | caused it to rain |
| H6212 | H7704 | H2962 | H6779 | H3588 | H3808 | H4305 |
| יְהוָה | עַל | הָאֲרֶץ | אִישׁ | אֵין | | |
| the LORD | God | it was in the earth | a man | and there was not | | |
| H3068 | H430 | H5921 | H776 | H120 | H369 | |
| לְעֹבֵד | אֶת | הָאֲדָמָה: | | | | |
| to till | H853 | the ground | | | | |
| H5647 | | H127 | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 3:23 (References God): Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

Hebrews 6:7 (References God): For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

Job 5:10 (Parallel theme): Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:

Genesis 4:12 (Parallel theme): When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

Genesis 4:2 (Parallel theme): And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Psalms 135:7 (Parallel theme): He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.

Psalms 104:14 (Parallel theme): He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

Jeremiah 14:22 (References God): Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things.

Matthew 5:45 (Parallel theme): That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.