

Commentary Highlights

Genesis 2:4-25

NAC	New American Commentary
PTW	Preaching the Word
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
GIG	Gleanings in Genesis
CAL	Genesis: Calvin's Commentary
SOG	The Story of God Bible Commentary
BKW	Genesis by Bruce K Waltke
KUR	Genesis by Abraham Kuruvilla
REC	Reformed Expository Commentary

****The views presented in these commentary excerpts may not reflect the general understanding of these passages as expressed by Faith Bible Church, but are presented to help us better understand the Scriptures and how various scholars have interpreted them****

Genesis 2:4

(NAC) – Similar to chapter one, 2:4 begins with the affirmation that God was the initiator and creator of everything. Uniquely, this is the first place in Scripture where we read the covenant name of God, Yahweh. Some have cited the usage of Yahweh and Elohim as proof of a redactor, yet the use of two names has a greater theological implication. Elohim generally points to the majestic and omnipotent nature of God (His “bigness”), while Yahweh points to the relational and covenantal nature of God (His “closeness”).

(BST) – “In Genesis 2:4 the formula serves as a link between the panoramic vistas of chapter 1, and the more intimate homely style of the man in the Garden in chapter 2...Our focus of interest is no longer the cosmic perspective of the One who made the stars. It is the intimacy of fellowship with the One who calls the man by his name.”

(PTW) – The only place in chapters 2-4 where Yahweh is not used to refer to God is in Genesis 3:2-5 “when the serpent and Eve consciously avoid the personal name of God as she is lured toward sin.”

(PTW) – The name used for God “Yahweh-Elohim” combines his omniscient nature with his relationality.

(SOG) – In the name of Eden we see the provision of God. “Eden, whose very name means abundance or luxury, indicates that God provides all of humanity’s needs and more.”

Genesis 2:5

(MJK) – Some suggest that there is a misalignment with the order of Genesis 1 where plants are created before mankind and Genesis 2:5 which seems to suggest that plants came

after the creation of man. A solution to this comes when we realize that the word for shrub (עֵץ) and plant (צֶמַח) in Genesis 2 are not the same as was used Genesis 1. In conjunction with this, the phrase “of the field” (הַשָּׂדֶה) tagged on to each term in Genesis 2:5 points to the fact that the author is referring to the cultivation of agriculture (i.e. farming). Therefore, the author is not saying that there were no plants on the earth at the time of the creation of man, but rather he is saying that there was no organized cultivation of plants.

(CAL) – When Moses writes that God had yet to send rain to the earth we are reminded of the power and provision of God. “It is God who opens and shuts the heavens, and that rain and drought are in his hand.”

Genesis 2:6

(PTW) – “The ESV’s marginal reading, “spring” is to be preferred over “mist” and is the rendering of the ancient Septuagint and Vulgate as well as most older translations. Thus the picture here is of subterranean springs rising up from the ground and watering the arid earth.”

Genesis 2:7

(NAC) – The picture painted of God in verse seven is highly anthropomorphic as he reaches down and sculpts mankind with his own two hands. The word used for “formed” (יָצַק) is often associated in the Hebrew with a potter molding clay. It is also unique that the Hebrew word for man (*adam*) is closely associated with the Hebrew word for ground (*adama*), suggesting that man was uniquely equipped to work the ground since he was made from it. The fact that God breathed life into man shows God’s intimate relation with mankind along with man’s priority in the creation account.

(BST) – “The man is of the ground. There is an earthiness to our human nature...Human life is of the dust. It cannot itself break into immortality.”

(BST) – In referring to God’s forming of Adam “God, so to speak, gets his hands dirty to bring us to life. This implies God’s authority: he shapes me and I am inescapably his creature. It also implies that my body, and what I do to my body, are not unimportant.”

(PTW) – “The term “formed” indicates that the act of creation was by careful design...Man is no afterthought, but rather the intentional product of the infinite mind that designed the atom and cosmos. Infinite intention was focused on the creation of man.”

(BST) – By using the phrase “living soul,” the author is not trying to get into a discussion on the nature of human life. This phrase is simply used to refer to a “living being.”

Genesis 2:8

(NAC) – God is said to have planted a garden “in” Eden, so the Garden itself is not Eden but in the geographical area named Eden. The word Eden refers to an abundance of flowing

waters, which is also communicated by the presence of the four rivers. In ancient eastern myths a garden was often where gods would dwell, but here God does not dwell in the garden instead it is where he meets with mankind.

(CAL) – “God, then, planted Paradise in a place that he had especially embellished with every variety of delights, with abundant fruits, and with all other most excellent gifts. It is called a garden on account of the elegance of its situation and the beauty of its form.”

(PTW) – “The designation “in Eden, in the east” is from the perspective of Moses, in Sinai. So the garden was most probably in the area of Mesopotamia in modern Iraq.”

(PTW) – When verse 8 says, “there he put the man whom he had formed” the verb “put” “carries the nuance of rest and suggests a connection to God’s Sabbath rest. His tending the garden and caring for it was an act of rest.”

Genesis 2:9

(PTW) – “Life was at the center of the garden, and eating fruit from the tree of life would result in continued life. Adam was not tempted to partake of the tree of life because he had life...The temptation to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was an act of moral autonomy—deciding what is right without reference to God’s revealed will...Moral autonomy brings death.”

Genesis 2:10-14

(NAC) – In naming the Tigris and the Euphrates, one might assume that the origin of Eden is in modern day Eastern Turkey. The problem comes in identifying the rivers Pishon and Gihon, which there are no historical clues to which rivers these names are referring to. Some have claimed that the region of Havilah mentions coordinates with one of the seven nations of Cush in modern day Ethiopia, but this identification seems to be misplaced.

(BST) – “In 2:10-14, water is a principle of life, of growth, of refreshment. Water is needed for life to develop. And in Eden there is plenty of water!”

(CAL) – “Not only was there an abundant supply of food, but with it was added sweetness for the gratification of the palate and beauty to feast the eyes.”

(CAL) – God planted the tree of life in the middle of the Garden so “that it might be a symbol and memorial of the life he had received from God...He intended, therefore, that man, as often as he tasted the fruit of that tree, should remember from where he received his life, so that he might acknowledge that he lives not by his own power, but by the kindness of God alone, and that life is not an intrinsic good but proceeds from God.”

(CAL) – God planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the center of the Garden and prohibited man from eating it so “that he might not seek to be wiser than became him or trust his own understanding...by abstaining from the tree of the knowledge of good and

evil—namely, that Adam might not, in attempting one thing or another, rely upon his own prudence but rather, cleaving to God alone, become wise only by his obedience.”

Genesis 2:15

(NAC) – The Hebrew verb used in v. 15 “put” comes from the causative form of the verb for “rest.” Thusly it might be translated that “God took the man and caused him to rest in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” The point being that God had prepared the garden for man specifically where “he can enjoy the divine presence.”

(NAC) – “The word translated “work” is the common one for tilling the soil or for other labor; it also speaks of “service” to another and is often used of worship. The verb and its noun derivative “service” frequently describe Levitical duties in tabernacle and temple worship.” Here there is a literary tie to the role of the tabernacle seen later in the Pentateuch.

(SOG) – Work is not a product of the Fall but is actually and intrinsic good created by God. The curse given to man because of their sin is what made work toilsome and difficult. It is also interesting that the word (שָׁמַר) can also mean to guard. If this was the intended meaning, God is telling Adam to guard the garden against anything that would cause its destruction (i.e. sin).

(CAL) – “From this it follows that men were created to work, and not to be inactive and indolent. This labor truly was pleasant and full of delight, entirely free from all trouble and weariness. So nothing is more contrary to the order of nature than to spend all one’s life in eating, drinking, and sleeping.”

Genesis 2:16

(NAC) – “The instruction of the Lord is given as a positive expression of God’s goodness rather than a harsh restriction. The Hebrew clause is headed by “from any/every tree of the garden,” evidencing God’s broad provision...This strong affirmation indicates that the provision of God for the first couple is plentiful and to be enjoyed liberally by them.”

(BST) – God’s command to Adam that he may eat freely of any of the fruit of the trees (except one) “probably means, “You may eat to the full”...The one restrictive command of verse 17 is the only boundary within which there is freedom.”

Genesis 2:17

(NAC) – “Freedom has no meaning without prohibition; the boundary for Adam is but one tree.” Of the created order only man is given a prohibition, showing that only man has the potential for crossing moral boundaries. It is a grace of God that He told Adam what He required and the penalty for disobeying God’s word.

(BST) – The phrase “good and evil” might be a merism that is used to refer to all knowledge, “the sort of knowledge which God has.”

(CAL) – In addressing the question of whether or not Adam was going to live in the garden forever Calvin suggests, “His earthly life truly would have been temporal; yet he would have passed into heaven without death and without injury.”

Genesis 2:18

(NAC) – Man’s isolation is noted from God’s perspective, we are not told whether or not man felt isolated. The point of the passage is to reflect on man’s relational nature. Man was meant to be in not only a vertical relationship with God, but a horizontal relationship with other humans.

(NAC) – There is no sense derived from the word (helper) linguistically or from the context of the garden narrative that the woman is a lesser person because her role differs. In any case of the biblical model, the “helper” is an indispensable “partner” required to achieve the divine commission...The woman makes it possible for the man to achieve the blessing that he otherwise could not do “alone.””

(PTW) – “The six joyous refrains (“And God saw that it was good”), capped by the satisfied perfection of the seventh refrain (“and it was very good”), leaves the first-time reader unprepared for the “not good” of this section.”

(PTW) – The term helper is not derogatory in any way. God is often called a helper in the OT (see Ex 18:4; Dt 33:7; 1Sm 7:12, Ps 20:2)

Genesis 2:19-20

(NAC) – The living creatures of the earth are once again said to have been made out of the ground (with no breathe of God like mankind), but the woman is the first living creature made from another living creature. “God creates the man first and derives the woman from the man to insure that she is his equal in substance and to maintain the unity of the human family.”

(PTW) – “Whereas before God had been the namer of creation, conferring the names “Day” and “Night” and “Earth” as an indication of his sovereignty over creation, now Adam performed the sovereign naming function...As Adam fulfilled his kingly responsibility of interpreting the animals for what they were and giving them appropriate names, his differentiating power became acute. He saw there was none that corresponded to him. In the process he also realized that many of the animals had a social companionship that he lacked...It is reasonable to surmise that the man began to ache for a corresponding other.”

Genesis 2:21-22

(NAC) – “The woman was taken from the man’s side to show that she was of the same substance as the man and to underscore the unity of the human family, having one source.” Similar to man’s creation, God takes a small fragment of material from Adam and

“fashions/creates” the woman. The same creativity and purpose God used in making Adam, He used in creating Eve.

(CAL) – In this way Adam was taught to recognize himself in his wife, as in a mirror, and Eve, in her turn, to submit herself willingly to her husband, as being taken out of him...Adam did not take a wife to himself at his own will but received her as offered and appropriated to him by God.”

(PTW) – “Adam was not created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) but out of the dust of the earth, and neither was Eve made *ex nihilo*. She was made out of the same stuff as the man.”

Genesis 2:23

(NAC) – This is the first recorded speech of mankind in all of Scripture. “Adam’s response centers on the sameness that he and the woman share as opposed to the creatures.” Out of his sure joy and surprise at seeing the woman, Adam response with a poem highlighting their sameness.

(PTW) – “Adam’s explosive astonishment, “That at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” voiced the traditional kinship formula of Israel. Whereas English speaks of “blood” relationships, Hebrew speaks of “flesh and bone.”

Genesis 2:24

(NAC) – Jesus uses this verse as the basis of his teaching on marriage. “As a model for marriage this passage involves three factors: a leaving, a uniting, and public declaration.” As the common tradition was for a woman to leave her household and move in with her husband’s family, “leave” in regard for the husband is metaphorical.

(BST) – ““Leaves” points to the establishment of a new family unit. Not only must the emotional and psychological security within a marriage require an emotional as well as physical separation from father and mother, but the new marriage is established in a publicly known way.”

(BST) – ““Clings” points to the committed faithfulness that one promises to the other; that whatever the future holds, the couple intend to face it as a pair”

Genesis 2:25

(NAC) – This is a transitional verse linking the content of chapter two to the story of chapter three. The phrase “felt no shame” can refer to the fact that this was the first couple’s normal condition in the garden.

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