

Adams good world - applications

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[0 : 00] It's been too long, but I thought this evening I'm going to recap and ask some questions. So my recap is this. Chapter 1 in a quick overview.

We started, you remember, with the world, the earth being *tohu and bohu*, formless and unpopulated.

And God puts that right in one, two, three, four, five, six stages by dividing light from dark, let there be light.

And dividing the waters above from the waters below by putting a *rakia* between them. And the light-bearing objects are in the *rakia* and the birds are on the face of the *rakia*.

So this is water, and there's waters above. And then he divides this way and forms the dry land I could have.

[1 : 19] And fills the dry land with vegetation. So we, in a sense, have spaces that are produced by a process of separation.

And then, these spaces... Oh, go back. The spaces are filled.

So let's take a yellow... You can see all this, can't you? Yes, I thought I'd just check whether I was just mumbling on to myself. The sun rules the day, and the moon rules the night, and God also made the stars.

And then, in this day five, we get the birds, and we get the fish.

And then, in day six, we get animals. That is to say, domestic animals, wild animals, and creeping things.

[2 : 36] That's a spider or something like that. And they live in this place that God has already filled with vegetation.

And the... Notice that day three had got two stages to it. The separation and the filling with green. And day six has got two stages to it also.

The animals and people. So let's put people here. No, I don't want that color. So we should really have them big to show how important they are, because the male and female, in God's image, male and female, and they're to rule over all of this.

So you should really sort of have a... some sort of bracket to show that they're ruling over all this.

And in the final day, we have rest, a day of rest, and various other things as well.

But for the space of simplicity, it's a day of rest. And I don't know. Can you remember the slogan from last evening?

[3 : 59] Could you remember that?

It was a bright image. And it was a right rule.

And it was a... It was a blessed rest. That's a reasonable... Quick summary.

Just trying to see the wood for the trees. So that was chapter one. And I'll stop and ask if there are any questions that anybody would like to ask or any observations about that. Okay, let's recap what we looked at this morning.

I don't think I can recap it so neatly. Let's... Somewhere there's a way of moving bits. That's not it.

[5 : 21] So let's have Eden, which we think is a high area.

And the reason we think that is because rivers flow out of it. And... So there's a river that flows out of Eden, a river that waters Eden.

And it goes in four directions, you remember. So I don't know how to diagram that geographically. But there are four... Four rivers that flow out.

That's in chapter two, verses 10 to 14. And... So there's the mountain. And in that mountain area, God puts a garden.

So let's try and isolate a garden. So that part of it, shall we say, is the garden. What does God put in the garden, please?

[6 : 34] Trees. And what are we told about these trees? Yeah, they're good to eat.

Let's try and generate some fruit, shall we? So good to eat. And also, there's something else about the trees too. Pleasing to the eye.

That's very interesting, isn't it? Because it's not just functionally good. It's actually, there's something beautiful. Pleasing. It's the whole... This whole idea of beauty is there right at the beginning.

And there's two trees there in particular. So let's do two particular trees. I'll do one in green and one in yellow.

Two trees in particular. This is in verse nine. Tree of life, which we assume was one of the ones that they were allowed to eat.

[7 : 37] And another tree, which was the... Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So I've done that one in yellow. Now, I missed out the first bit.

That this is a dry area. And in order to make it fruitful, you can't rely on the rain. You can't rely on a natural irrigation process.

You need a human being to do it. And so God created man, Adam, from the Adamah, the ground. So let's get the man in there. And the particular thing that he is... It's related to is his ability to water things.

Let's give him a watering can. Is that what a watering can looks like? So he can irrigate.

[8 : 44] He can bring water into this dry place. Does that look a bit like a watering can? Right. Let's go to verses 15 to 17.

And can we... Can you tell me the particular words that hang over this entire scene? While you're doing that, I'll see if I can generate a speech bubble.

What does God say they can and can't do? Yep.

Yep. So they need all the trees, but, there's one but, not the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. evil. Now, Steve Swain here, because he was asking this morning, does this mean that God had invented evil at this point?

[10 : 00] good. And I don't think that is necessarily the case. We know that there is an evil creature, because it's going to pop up in chapter 3.

But it seems to me that the knowledge of good and evil doesn't necessarily mean that God has invented evil. What he does is say he's invented structures, things that fit, things that don't fit, boundaries that there are that you shouldn't cross.

And the existence of those boundaries and structures means that the possibility now exists of crossing the boundaries or going against the structures, which is what evil is.

But that's not the same thing as inventing evil, is it? The very existence of the structures and the boundaries means that the idea of crossing the boundaries of the possibility is there, but it doesn't mean anybody has to do it.

And I think what this tree is is with respect to these boundaries and fitting in with things that God is saying, I tell you what the boundaries are, I tell you how things fit together, and if you, and what you're not to do is snatch at this tree in which you start determining for yourself which boundaries you will and will not cross and which things fit together in which ways.

[11 : 30] That's what I think is going on with that tree. Something like that. We then have the animals brought to the man.

So the animals are described in two different lists. One list is the beasts of the field. I'm not going to try and draw a gazelle because it took me quite a while to draw a gazelle.

So beasts of the field and the birds of the air. That's in verse 19. And the man names them. And the list now includes the livestock, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.

So we've now included in this the things like cows. it's supposed to be a cow. So livestock, beasts of the field, birds of the air.

And when he's seen all these, what do we still lack? Yes, a helper for this poor chap.

[12 : 55] He's all on his own. He's just a solitary one. It's not good for the man to be alone. poor man. I didn't expect him to do all that on his own. He's got nobody to encourage him, nobody to point out to him.

It'd be a lot cleverer if he took the water from that stream and put it there instead of going all the way over to that stream. Nobody to point out that the other watering can is behind the one. Look behind it, it's there. All those sorts of things that somebody could help him to do. None of the animals can do that. So the man is put to sleep.

Let's see if I can move him. He's put to sleep. Shall we get rid of the watering can because that's just a bit of a distraction?

And out of a side of the man is brought to him this gorgeous creature. No, probably darker color. She's going to be purple.

[13:57] No, that won't work either. This gorgeous creature here. Woman.

And he's so impressed. He writes the first poem that's ever written. This is now bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.

And he says, because she was taken out of him, they fit together so perfectly, so delightfully. So now we've got one plus one. We've got the possibility for this beautiful uniting.

The man will leave his father and mother, be united to his wife, and the two will become flesh. flesh. And this is the state which can be replicated down through the generations.

There we are, sort of family. Okay, that was in a very quick nutshell what we have here. Let me, can you remember the thought that went with the gold and the onyx and the resin?

[15:20] Can you remember the thought that went with that? Temple. Now, it is possible to push this in a couple of stages. Now, I think that that stuff is in Havila, is that right?

Yeah, so we've got to assume that Havila isn't too far away. But if we think of this, so I'm thinking of this here, this garden, as being like a temple.

And the temple is the place where God meets man, where human beings, sort of heaven come down to earth. And just to play with this thought, here's a mountain, and outside here is the rest of the world.

And I wonder if we could think of this as being a sort of headquarters. Now, we had an invasion. We had two invasions this morning. We had an invasion of Italian people and we had an invasion of Swiss people.

But they haven't yet colonized our entire church, but they're working on it. How about thinking of this as a sort of invasion headquarters, that the plan is to take this garden and to till it and grow it and expand it.

[16:49] It's just a thought. If you were an Israelite reading this, you might well think, here I am entering a promised land, sort of land flowing with milk and honey, and it's a land where we're going to start off, no doubt we'll have a headquarters, and we're going to expand and fill this land.

You could almost take the point that this is like Eden all over again, that God's purpose is to have a headquarters in touch with him and expand it so that the whole earth is filled with his glory.

It's an interesting thought. I don't think I could categorically prove it from here, but there are hints. This is like a temple, so I'm thinking, no, that won't do as a colour.

I'm thinking that it's sort of in touch with God. This is the place where God walks in the cool of the evening, and I'm pondering whether the idea of the garden isn't that it should expand.

There are going to be guardians around the garden. I don't know whether they're there already, perhaps they're not. So these are going to be, ah, can I draw them, these guys?

[18:17] I can't even remember how I drew them last time. Somebody rescue me. What am I thinking of for these cherubim?

Yeah, well, they're going to be there guarding the way back into that. Who's supposed to be guarding it at the moment? who's keeping it at the moment?

Adam. Yeah, and you'd think his job would be perhaps to keep evil out of this garden because it's like a holy place, sort of like God's beginning headquarters on earth.

But he doesn't do a very good job because Satan comes in and sort of invades it himself, doesn't he? But I'm getting ahead of myself on the story. The cherubim, what a strange drawing of a cherubim that is.

Can I rescue it? Probably not. Let's give him a beard. There we are. The cherubim with a flaming sword, it says, doesn't it? They end up guarding the way back in.

[19:25] The cherubim are often in the presence of God guarding the way to his holiness. So there's a little bit of a thought there on what else might be going on with this garden on the mountain with the river flowing out of it.

Any other place where you get rivers flowing from holy places? Jerusalem, there is a stream, no, there is a river, the streams of which make glad the city of God.

And in the new Jerusalem, in Ezekiel, without looking it up, anybody know anything about a river there? Yeah, there's a river that flows from the throne actually, and it's a peculiar river because it gets very deep very, very quickly, and it flows out like this and has all sorts of wonderful effects as it goes out.

That's the river that comes from the temple in Ezekiel. I just wonder if there's a little hint of that sort of thing going on here in embryo in the garden. Anyway, if it is in embryo, it doesn't get a chance to develop very far because as we know it all goes wrong.

But I thought we could spend, let's spend 15 minutes thinking about the picture that we've got is of what God intended, and I would say intends, for human beings in this world.

[20 : 57] God's world. So, the earth, the land, the garden. He intends something for that.

The whole business of work and what I would call the human project, what does God intend for people to do? What could you work from that passage that if things hadn't gone wrong, what would Adam be doing now, if you put it that way, what sort of things would he be doing? What does it tell us about man and woman and marriage? Because it does tell us things about man and about woman. And also the thing with the trees tells us, I think, some quite profound things about the nature of walking with God, the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So I think there are things under these headings which can be drawn out from what we were talking about. I'm going to suggest that you move your chair around so that you're with four or five other people and have a think about those. And I would say if there's a group of four or five over there, can you think about the aim of the earth and the land and the garden? And if there's a group of four or five around here or a couple of groups, think about work and the human project. And if there's four or five in that area, think about man and woman. And if there's four and a five in that area, think about walking with God. And if you can't think about that, you can think about any of the others or you could just talk to yourselves for about 10 minutes. Shall we do that? Okay.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Well, I'm not really sure if this is what you were looking for, but to be industrious, to improve the world, to subdue it, to create, to do good and just generally improve the lot of humanity and glorify God.

Ah, right. Interesting. Okay. This sort of ties in with this one as well, doesn't it? Improve, develop, but not just for the sake of economy.

[23 : 44] What was the last thing you said? For the good of humanity. No, you said one after that. Oh, for the glory of God, sorry. Yeah, you said the glory of God. Yeah, you said the glory of God. I can't wait. I think that's a really important point.

So, the effect, there's the mountain with the garden. It's not just improving, developing, making more bucks, but it's doing it in relation to God.

So, it's doing it for his glory. I think that's a really important thing. So, it is possible to be a gardener for the glory of God and not to say, oh, I wish I was making mega bucks or I wish I was an evangelist, but to be a gardener for the glory of God is a good thing.

Yeah. I'll stop there. Did you want to add anything else? Any other good insights from around there?

What about this one? So, I've tried to do this fairly quickly. Work and the whole human project.

Anybody discuss that one? All right. Can we go back over there to Mark or Chris?

[25 : 04] We discussed that work is good from Genesis chapter 2. People tend to think of work, Genesis 3, by the sweat of the brow and it's negative, but actually God gives work in chapter 2.

So, we should think positively about work. And that also there's a sense of man using his mind, making things.

So, God doesn't leave us, tell us what to do. He has to think about mining and using the land. So, it's sort of human ingenuity really.

Yeah. And Chris made a comment that actually sleep is there in chapter 2 and actually sleep is good after a good day's work. One sleeps and finds satisfaction in that.

Is this the sleep after which you find a new wife? I guess so, yeah. This has a double bonus really.

[26 : 09] A double bonus, okay. Yeah, sleep and wife. But thank you. That's really, really good points there. This, the thing, I mean what he's told to do, or what we set up in terms of him watering stuff, isn't it?

Him as a, doing irrigation and tending and keeping the garden. But I think you've got to extend it. It goes on from there. He can be thoughtful.

He can be responsible. He can be, he and she can be creative. And to work not only in the area of functionality and usefulness like the fruit is good to eat, but also in the area of beauty and aesthetics, because God says that the trees were good to look at.

So the whole thing about being creative and making beautiful things, I think is, is implied in that.

So again, if you are a painter and you are painting beautiful things for the glory of God, that's a good thing to do.

[27 : 23] So we have some professional photographers and photographing things and capturing the beauty of creation and of people is a good thing to do.

You made clothes, didn't you, Bill? Or part of, part of the clothing industry. And to, to give care and attention to clothing, that's whatever it needs to be elegant, dignified, eye-catching, is a good thing to do.

It's part of this extension of the garden into the world for the glory of God. So I think that's, that's a good point to, to think about.

Okay, we'll move swiftly on. I mean, there's lots to be said about that, but we will move swiftly on. Did anybody discuss, or anything else that anybody wanted to say on that subject? I would like to share a verse.

Please do. It was a verse that Cathy and I found together, which is Isaiah 40 verse 28.

[28 : 34] And it says, do you not know, have you not heard, the Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

So, you know, in a way. Yeah, yeah. Thank you. Yeah. It says he does not grow weary, doesn't it? And he gives his strength to the weary. Yes, that's good. I wanted to share, sorry, thanks. I wanted to share, when I went to Ebenezer once on a conference for Christians at Work, one of the things that John said was that God wants man to work, and it is good for man to work.

And that sort of changed my work life, really. Basically. That's good. That's good, yes. Yeah.

Like somebody was saying, we haven't, there's more to it than this because work becomes not just good, but also a bit vexatious. But underneath that, it's good.

[29 : 50] And you could actually feed that back into economic theory and say, is it right for the government to tolerate it when there are lots of unemployed people? I mean, if there were to be lots of unemployed people.

Because not only is it an economic thing, it is actually contrary to this business of the image of God. It's not good for people to be doing nothing. So just, yeah.

If you see what I mean. Yeah. Thank you. Shall we do the man and woman bit? Did anybody discuss that? So does it, does it, does it, I mean I realised when we started discussing, I should have enlarged it really into chapter one as well, but I, anyway, what did you come up with?

Well the main thought was I think that women taken out of the man means that when they come together, they fit together perfectly or should do. Mm-hmm. Um, so, um, what it shows is that homosexuality, homosexual relations, doesn't fit.

Yeah. Whereas man and woman does. Yeah. Um, one thing, a question that was raised was that, why is it that man has to leave his father and mother and doesn't say that of the woman?

[31 : 10] So does it mean the mother and law comes as well? Well, I was, probably generations of, uh, of couples asking exactly the same question.

Yeah. It, it does, yeah, I, I don't know the answer to that question, but. Mm-hmm. Yeah, thank you. So the, the fitting together, the, the, the, the fact that, that, that, that something that was originally in some sense already joined is then separated. Then, for this reason they come together and cleave together and are one flesh.

So there's a rightness to that fitting. Yeah. Thank you very much. I think David might contribute something on, on, on, on image, uh, as to male and female.

Yeah, we, we went back into chapter one just to the summary of God making man is that he made them male and female in his image. So God's image is, is in both.

[32 : 14] And there's perhaps the sense that the image is not complete without both. Yeah. So it, it, it makes you realize there's actually quite a bit of thinking to be doing on this, but, uh, the, the image, it does say male and female.

God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him male and female. He created them. So maleness does not adequately reflect the image of God.

Neither does feel maleness adequately reflect the image of God. There's something that males cannot image about God, but it's only when you've got male and female that you have, uh, the image of God.

So again, that, that's sort of pointing out the importance of the two different sexes. They're not interchangeable. They are equally valuable, but they're not interchangeable.

Yeah. Yeah. Man leaving is not that new headship. Oh, that's a good thought. Yes. Yeah. Just say that again, Ray, if you would.

[33 : 22] Oh, sorry. I wasn't looking. Yeah. The point about man leaving and not the woman was it starts a new headship within a family, which is, and God the Father is the head in a sense, that they're co-equal in a, yeah, it's one way of looking at it.

Thank you. That's an interesting thought. Good. Okay. Anybody think about the nature of walking with God as, uh, perhaps given an example with the, uh, trees?

Did anybody think about that? Oh, right. Um, how did you mean the example with the trees? Well, the trees set up a certain relationship between God and the man.

And I wondered if you might have discussed how that applies to us, what sort of relationship it sets up and so on. Or not. Well, we, we talked about, um, the boundaries that God had set up for man.

Okay. And that they, um, they were, they were there. So that the boundary, um, the fact that, which is what you said, that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil may just be that now that there are boundaries, they are not to be crossed.

[34 : 52] Yeah. But, um, we were, we actually were talking about God walking with man, the nature of walking walking with God.

We were talking about, um, the fact that because God made man, that man was actually made of different stuff to God.

And although there was a relationship between God and man, it wasn't, um, man was still alone. So it wasn't absolutely complete and perfect. And so that's why woman had to be created, who was made of the same stuff as man.

Hmm. And we also said that, um, actually, um, people say that, um, when Christ comes, that there will, we will all, it will be just like going back to the Garden of Eden because everything will be perfect.

[36 : 01] But in fact, it will be even better than the Garden of Eden because we, um, are able to relate to God through Christ who was a human person.

Hmm. And the human person, man and woman are human and made of the same stuff. Hmm. But so is Christ.

Christ is made of the same stuff as us, but is also made of the same stuff as God. So we can relate through him to God in a more complete way than he could at the beginning, maybe.

So profound theology. Yeah. That's fantastic. That's brilliant. Yes. I, I dare not comment after that.

No marrying and giving in marriage in heaven. I think it says, doesn't it? Because we, yeah, like the angels, but I don't think that it's not quite the same thing as saying male and female.

[37 : 06] The man, maleness and femaleness will, will beware with us, but not, but, but, but apparently, uh, there's male and femaleness, which is not just to do with reproduction.

I mean, there won't be reproduction in heaven, so we understand, but there will be male and femaleness. So that's an interesting conundrum, isn't it? But I, I liked what, uh, what we're saying here about, I mean, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

Uh, because, uh, you made him a little lower than the angels and crowned him with glory and honor. Uh, yeah, what is man? So man, I'm taking male and female, uh, in, in a way we're dust.

Because if you were to, uh, put us in a, um, uh, put us in a bonfire, we, you'd, you'd end up with just dust. You wouldn't be able to distinguish it from anything else, I don't think.

We, we are dust, but we're also made in the image of God, isn't it? We're made a little lower than the angels. What is, you know, amazing creatures we are. We don't always realize it, do we?

[38 : 19] We're partly of this earth, but we're partly, uh, of the image of the almighty one. Let's stop there. Um, thank you very much for your thoughts. It just shows how we've just scratched the surface, but I hope we've scratched it in a, in a helpful way.

We're going to sing. Is that okay, Roger? Is that okay?