

## Genesis Chapter 2

### The heavens and God's Throne

Before we move into the garden of Eden, I think it will be helpful to add one more element to the picture we have of the earth and the heavens from Genesis 1.

The authors of scripture consistently place God's abode in the heavens, although there is a understanding that God's spirit is present everywhere.

Look again at Psalm 104, v3

3     you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,

Isaiah 66    Thus says the Lord:

1 Heaven is my throne

and the earth is my footstool;

what is the house that you would build for me,

and what is my resting place?

Do any other passages or stories come to mind that refer to God's throne or temple in the heavens?

Ezekiel 1.22 Over the heads of the living creatures there was something like a firmament, shining like crystal, spread out above their heads. 23 Under the firmament their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another; and each of the creatures had two wings covering its body. 24 When they moved, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of mighty waters, like the thunder of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army; when they stopped, they let down their wings. 25 And there came a voice from above the firmament over their heads; when they stopped, they let down their wings.

26 And above the firmament over their heads there was something like a throne, in appearance like sapphire.

Genesis 28:12 And Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it...

16 Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!” 17 And he was afraid, and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

Acts 7.55 But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

Connected to this are the sense that mountains reach up into the heavens. Mountains are frequently (not always) associated with meeting with God:

- Sinai: Moses met with God to receive the law
- Hermon: Elijah met with God
- Zion: the place of the temple
- Tabor: the mount of transfiguration

It appears in the Exodus song after the Hebrews pass through the sea on dry land, long before they arrived in the promised land.

Exodus 15:17

You brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your own possession, the place, O Lord, that you made your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established.

18 The Lord will reign forever and ever.”

Psalm 48:1

1 Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God. His holy mountain.

Psalm 68:16

16 Why do you look with envy, O many-peaked mountain, at the mount that God desired for his abode, where the Lord will reside forever?

Psalm 99:9

9 Extol the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain;

for the Lord our God is holy.

### Genesis 2:4 - 14

When we turn to Genesis chapter 2, we are not told that Eden is a mountain. However, people usually treat it this way since it is the source of four main rivers of civilization.

Eden is a place of peace, abundance, harmony, and God is present. The vision of Eden gets repeated in combination with a mountain throughout scripture. It is a place where God would come and reside with people.

### Isaiah 2:3

3 Many peoples shall come and say,  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”  
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,  
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

### Isaiah 11:9 cf 65

9 They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.

### Isaiah 25:6

6 On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,  
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.  
7 And he will destroy on this mountain  
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,  
the covering that is spread over all nations;  
8 he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,  
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the Lord has spoken.

9 It will be said on that day,

“See, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.  
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;  
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

Ezekiel is clearly connects the river of Eden, the temple on the mountain, and the a renewal of creation that is coming.

Ezekiel 40.2 He brought me, in visions of God, to the land of Israel, and set me down upon a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south

...

47.1 Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple; there, water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. 2 Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and the water was coming out on the south side.

3 Going on eastward with a cord in his hand, the man measured one thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. 4 Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, “Mortal, have you seen this?”

Then he led me back along the bank of the river. 7 As I came back, I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on the one side and on the other. 8 He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh. 9 Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes. 10 People will stand fishing beside the sea from En-gedi to En-eglaim; it will be a place for the spreading of nets; its fish will be of a great many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. 11 But its swamps

and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. 12 On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

Both Isaiah and Ezekiel’s visions appear again in Revelation chapter 21 and 22.

### Genesis 2:15-25

The first marriage is a lovely drama.

The animals are paraded before the human. Taking up the calling to have dominion, Adam continues on the work of God, by naming.

When the last animal has passed by, no companion has been found for the human, who is alone.

This is the first time God says, “It is not good...”

God does make a second kind of human by beginning again with soil or another animal. God takes the human and from that human makes two.

The first human words in scripture is the song-like response of the Ish (man) to meeting the Isha (woman).

23 Then the human said,  
“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one shall be called Isha,  
for out of Ish this one was taken.”  
Therefore an ish... clings to his isha.

Note: The name Eve first appears in Genesis 3:20