

Eve



Why is Eve important?

For many Christians, the beginning of Genesis can be a difficult read. Even within this room there may be a range of opinions about what it really means, whether the creation narratives are true in an historical sense, whether Adam and Eve were real people. Regardless of this, Eve remains an important figure for women since her story is woven through the rest of Scripture. This story has caused women to be seen as more sinful than men, lesser than men (as if created as a second thought), weaker than men. This is reflected in 1 Timothy:

1 Timothy 2:13-14

For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

Initial Questions

How many creation accounts are there in Genesis?

Have you thought much about Eve and Adam?

Genesis 1:26-28

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

²⁷So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Do you think it's strange that God says "let *us* make humankind in our image, according to our likeness"?

What do you think of verse 27?

What do you think of verse 28?

Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-24

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; ⁶but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— ⁷then the Lord God formed man [*or a man*] from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. ⁸And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had

formed. ⁹Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁵The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

¹⁸Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” ¹⁹So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken.”

²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

What do you think of verse 7 where the NRSV reads man instead of a man?

Nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible is *tzela* translated as rib: everywhere else it is translated as side. What would it mean for a woman to be created out of a whole side, rather than a small bone, a rib?

Look at v24 – does it remain normative that a man would leave his household to join his wife?

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

⁸They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰He said, “I heard

the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate.” ¹⁴ The Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to the man he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’

cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰ The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹ And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.

²² Then the Lord God said, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— ²³ therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was

taken. ²⁴He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

The serpent addresses Eve about a conversation God had with Adam, that she is seemingly absent for – why do you think this is? When was God’s command given and why would she remember it?

Compare 3:1-3 with 2:15-17. Are the two accounts the same? Do you think Eve is stating something true that we do not have written down? Could she be doing theology: interpreting the conversation with God?

Where is Adam during this episode? Knowing what we know about the word *adam*, is God really calling the man in v9, or both of them – and is it just Adam that responds?

FINALLY

Look back to 1:28 – how could humanity follow God’s very first command to “fill the whole earth” if they had not been cast out of the Garden? Could Eve’s actions have actually been the route through which God’s will was done? Does this remind you of any of the other Matriarchs in Genesis?