

Adam and Eve

READ GENESIS 2:4–24

*The man said,
“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh.”*

GENESIS 2:23

In the second creation story in the Bible, written much earlier than Genesis 1:1–2:4, God is pictured as shaping a man from the soil of the ground. Adam’s name probably comes from the Hebrew word *adamah*, which means “earth.” God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Genesis 2:7), but God did not simply breathe air into the man; God shared divine life with him. In this telling of the story, the author shows how special human beings are. Every person is sacred, because every person lives in the breath of God.

God creates a garden, usually translated as “paradise.” God gives the man trees with every kind of fruit to cultivate and take care of. The only thing that is forbidden is the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree is “of the knowledge of good and evil,” but this does not mean that it helps people know everything or helps them tell the difference between good

and evil. God has already given the man the ability to do this. What “the knowledge of good and evil” seems to mean here is the power *to decide* what is good and what is evil.

The man is alone, and God sees that he is incomplete. God puts the man to sleep, and from his rib God creates a woman to be his partner. The woman is not inferior to the man. Adam recognizes the woman as “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” He names her Eve, meaning “the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20). The author notes that this creates the foundation for marriage, where the husband and the wife will leave their families to create the most intimate relationship with one another.

Creation is now complete, with the man and the woman living naked but unashamed—a sign of their intimacy and harmony—in the world that God has given them to nurture and to grow in.

CCC, 369–79: Man and woman