

The Written Account of the Heavens and the Earth

2:4 to 4:26

As I mentioned in the introduction, Moses edited and compiled eleven family documents. The major structural word for **Genesis** is *toldot*, which means **the written account of**, or *this is what became of these men and their descendants*. The noun is often translated *generations, histories or descendants*. After the section on the creation of the world from 1:1 to 2:3, we have the second *toldot*, **the written account of the heavens and the earth**. **So what this second family document tells us, is what became of the heavens and the earth that God created. And what became of the heavens and the earth was that they were cursed through disobedience. Therefore, sin began to spread rapidly within the human race with devastating results.**

When you read these chapters you may notice some big differences compared to the first chapter. Gone is the tight symmetry and recurring formulas. Gone, too, is the prose style with its almost poetic quality. Instead, we find a narrative style that is down to earth, almost folksy. Mankind becomes the focus of the story, where in the first chapter he was the climax. In this section the name of **Elohim**, changes with few exceptions. When man falls and experiences his greatest need, **God** draws closer to him as **the LORD of redemption**. *He would promise a Kinsman Redeemer (3:15b), and as a result, man would not get what he deserved; he would get mercy.*

You will also notice that the universal, panoramic view of the first chapter is replaced by the description of a specific garden. Instead of detailing the creation of the universe and everything in it, this chapter tells us of the loving construction of the garden of Eden, including rivers and trees. The grand universal scene of the first chapter is replaced with a smaller stage, where an important drama is about to be played out.

The tempo also slows down. The first chapter took us through the first six days of creation very rapidly. Now the pace slows dramatically in **Chapter 2**, and even more in **Chapter 3** as the author relates the intimate details of the conversation between Eve and the serpent. It is obvious that the details of their conversation, and the events that are about to follow, are of great interest to the author. In fact, we may conclude that **God** is more concerned that we learn from the tragic human choices made in the garden of Eden than **He** is that we understand the details of how **He** created the universe. How we respond to the crisis of temptation is of utmost importance to **Him**.⁴⁰