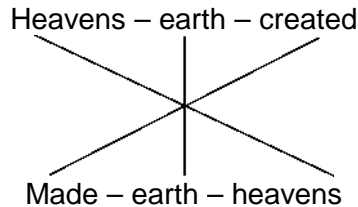


The creation of the heavens and the earth - the sequel

• Internal headings

A new major section in the book of Genesis begins by saying ‘These are the sequel of the heavens and the earth when they were created; in the time when Yahweh God made the earth and the heavens’. It will be noticed that this sentence says the same things twice; and that the order is reversed.



This style of saying the same thing twice is an ancient form of internal heading. The section begins at the beginning of verse 4, not (as in the paragraphing of some Bibles) at Genesis 2:4b.

The word ‘generations’ or (as I translate it) ‘sequel’ or ‘descendants’ is an important word. It refers to the ‘product’ or ‘offspring’ of something. This section of Genesis deals with the things that issue forth from the creation. So now in Genesis 2:4 to 4:26 we have what immediately follows, what arises from, the heavens and the earth.

There are ten places in the book of Genesis ^{□1} where we have the word ‘descendants’ or ‘sequel’ used as an internal heading. It is like the chapter heading of a modern book. The book of Genesis has a preface and then is followed by ten major sections. The word itself means ‘what comes after’ or ‘something that is generated by something else’. What comes after the heading refers to the next stage. The ‘generation’ of heavens and earth is about what emerges from them. The story of Abraham is called ‘The Descendants of Terah’.

^{□1} Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2

• Narrowing down

The creation of Man – more detail

1. God’s world designed for humankind

There was a narrowing down in Genesis 1:2 after Genesis 1:1. The story moved from ‘heavens and earth’ to earth alone. Now there is a further ‘narrowing down’. First we had the whole cosmos^{□1}. Then we had the earth^{□2}. Now Genesis 2:4–25 shows a narrower perspective and comes to deal in fuller details with humankind. It was told in summary in Genesis 1:26–27; now the story of the creation of man and woman is told in fuller detail.

^{□1} 1:1
^{□2} 1:2–2:3

2. The human person has two elements - the physical body and an inner personality

Two main points stand out in these verses. (1) God’s world was designed for humankind. Consider Genesis 2:5– 6. Originally the earth was unsuitable for men and women. These verses are like Genesis 1:2 in showing that the world had to be specially prepared for humankind. Verse 5 shows the world was unsuitable for the human race because there was no vegetation, no rain, no cultivation. Verse 6 shows how God prepared the world for men and women. He began by sending some kind of flood to irrigate the earth and make it possible to be farmed.

(2) The next thing that stands out is that the human person consists of two elements. We have a physical, material side to our nature. And we have an inner personality. Consider Genesis 2:7. The man was made of the physical elements of the earth. Humankind has a relationship with the physical environment. We also have something in common with the animals. Because we are made in the image of God, we have something in common with God also.

• *Soul, not a technical term here refers to the whole man*

• *Soul & Spirit where distinguished are aspects of the whole human personality*

• *The stress is not on two parts but the living whole*

• *The body*

The human person consists of two elements. There is something physical and something not physical, breathed into us by God. This 'personality' or 'breath of God' is sometimes (but rarely) called the 'soul' in the Bible. For example in Matthew 10:28 we have this kind of language. But it must be noticed that here in Genesis 2:7 the 'soul' or 'living being' is the whole man, not a part of him. (The language of the Bible is not 'jargon' or technical vocabulary. The word 'soul' in the Bible is used in many different ways. It can even mean a dead person or a corpse, as in Numbers 19:11 which refers to the 'dead body of any soul', that is, '...of any person'! 'Soul' is not a technical term in the Bible.) Without using particular technical words the entire Bible teaches that man consists of body and personality^{□1}. The teaching comes in complete sentences not in particular technical words. Two elements go to make up the person. Paul says that 'he' desires to depart and be with Christ but that 'he' is likely to remain 'in the body'^{□2}. Part of us comes from an earthly father and part of us comes from a heavenly creator, the 'father of spirits'^{□3}. The Bible occasionally draws a distinction between soul and spirit^{□4}, but these are not 'parts' of man. They are different aspects of the whole human personality.

Mark 12:33 speaks of 'heart... understanding ... soul . . . strength' but these are not four parts of a human being. Nor are there three parts of a human being in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Genesis 2:7 is clear. There are two 'ingredients' in the human person. Most of the time they are tightly integrated. In death, body and personality separate. In having 'breath of life', a living personality from God, man becomes a unified living being, a living person. But the stress is not on the two parts but on the animate living whole. It is not Christian to set body and soul in antithesis. The gospel is not against the body. The ultimate hope for the Christian is the resurrection of the body.

Genesis 2:7 is a definitive passage with regard to the nature of man. We cannot use 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12 to overthrow Genesis 2:7.

There are certain things we need to remember about the body. The body is not evil in itself. Yet it is affected by sin and it is not yet redeemed^{□1}. The body is used by sin, but we are risen with Christ, and so the body is stripped of its power to 'enslave' us to sin. We are to put our bodies at the disposal of God^{□2}. One day our bodies will be raised by Jesus. While we are alive we stress the unity of our person, not its parts. At death the person disintegrates into parts. Meanwhile we 'glorify God in our bodies'^{□3}.

□1 see Ecclesiastes 12:7; Matthew 10:28; 26:41; 27:50; Luke 8:55; Acts 2:26, 27, 31; Romans 7:22–23, 24, 25; 8:10, 13; 12:1–2; 1 Corinthians 4:16; 5:5; 7:34; 9:27; 13:3; 2 Corinthians 5:1–8; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 12:2, 3; Ephesians 2:3; James 2:26 and elsewhere

□2 Phil 1:22

□3 Hebrews 12:9

□4 1 Thess. 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12 are sometimes quoted

□1 Romans 8:23

□2 Romans 6:15–23; 12:1–2

□3 1 Corinthians 6:19–20



slices.org.uk

Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible* (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below

Slices for the Nations	Slices for Sponsors	Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world where resources are scarce and unaffordable In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available free of charge Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the Slices web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those in more prosperous circumstances who can afford to contribute to the development of this material and its distribution with a small monthly donation The same material as Slices for the Nations Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the Slices web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who wish to sample the material or dip into it from time to time, a proportion of the PTTB series is available free of charge Slices for Everyone (as a download) or Slice of the Week (attached to a weekly email) The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive Slices for the Nations

To subscribe please contact: slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at www.slices.org.uk
 Details of the availability of *Preaching Through The Bible* books and how they may be purchased can be found on www.ibtr.org.uk