



The Book of Genesis

The Garden of Eden

Interpreting the Text:

1. The story of the Garden of Eden differs pretty significantly between Genesis chapter 1 and Genesis chapter 2. What are some key differences? How might one or the other change the way you think about later events in the Bible, especially notions about “the fall of man”?
2. The serpent becomes an important symbol of that which is counter to God’s desires. How does the description of the serpent represent a foil to God in this story? How do we see serpents in later parts of the Bible?
3. In the end, should we understand the decision to eat from the tree to be a good thing or a bad thing? What does the author here seem to think about this?

Applying the Text:

1. In what ways is Genesis 2’s depiction of gender relations between Adam and Eve different from that of Genesis 1? How might favoring one or the other affect the way we understand gender today?
2. Dr. Collins notes the deterioration in Adam and Eve’s quality of life after their disobedience. What might this story continue to teach us about obedience, consequences, and God’s desire for us?
3. What does this creation story teach about human’s relationship to animals and the created earth? How might this affect our choices in daily life?