

In this tutorial, we take a look at early creation stories. We're going to focus for a little bit, on the second creation story in Genesis, which begins in Genesis 2:4. Most scholars today recognize that Genesis 2 starts a second creation story, that's very different from the story that occurs at Genesis 1:1 through 2:3. You'll notice that the language is different. The first creation story is quite magisterial, it has this nice repetitive language, and there was morning and there was evening, and so forth. And God is somewhat detached in the first creation story, God just says it and it comes into being. But in the second story, we have a God who takes a walk in the evening, in the garden, who molds Adam with his hands, and so forth. So it's a much more anthropomorphic or human-like God. But really, creation stories have in common, that they all want to explain common questions. Where did I come from? What about civilization and technology? Where did they come from? We'll be taking a look at this creation story of Adam and Eve in just a minute. Where did evil come? Why do bad things in the world happen? So, creation stories provide both a basis for the religion itself, and an interpretive framework to understand practitioners experience. So, they, in an effect, inaugurate that tradition of religious belief, but they also give contemporary readers and, really people from any time period, an interpretive framework through which to understand their lives.

So, let's take of a look at the Genesis 2:4, and following story, about Adam and Eve. So, the story provides the overall context of history happening within the created order. We are assured that humankind comes from God, and that humanity has a divine purpose. The story of the fall, with the serpent and Eve, eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, also explains suffering. Well, Adam and Eve sinned, and therefore we have pain and childbirth. Therefore, Adam has to work by the sweat of his brow, they're kicked out of the garden, they have to work for a living, and so forth. Many scholars today, believe that what this parable is really about, is the transition from a hunter-gatherer society, to an agricultural civilization. So, the story really tells us where civilization came from. So, we can look back on this story to explain any suffering that we might be undergoing today, and we can say that it's really all ultimately a product of the fall of Adam and Eve. And, of course, this story is important both for Jewish and Christian theology, and we also have a version of it in Islam.

Thank you for watching this tutorial on early creation stories. Creation stories have in common the attempt to answer certain basic questions, like, where did I come from? Creation stories also answer questions of a general nature, like, asking where civilization comes from, and where technology comes from. Creation stories provide a beginning to a religious tradition, as well as an interpretive framework within which practitioners can view their lives. The creation stories present in the Hebrew scriptures, tell us many things about the origin of civilization, technology, agriculture, and also tell us how sin came into the world. We could say that creation stories address ultimate questions. That is, questions that aim not at a particular understanding, but at a universal one. That is to say, what is the nature of the universe, rather than, what is the nature of a horse. Of course, if we were horses,

we probably would think that, what is the nature of a horse, is a universal question.