



for Youth



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God Creates All Creatures

Read Genesis 1; 2:10–14. When God created Adam and Eve, they were perfect. He placed them in paradise—the beautiful Garden of Eden. Watered by four rivers, it was a lush, beautiful home filled with flowers and trees covered in delicious fruit.

When they disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit, they deserved to suffer a life of misery, loss, and sorrow followed by never-ending pain and suffering in hell. Instead, God loved them and chose to save them. He promised a Savior who would crush the serpent's (Satan's) head and free us from the eternal suffering we deserve by having Jesus take our place and suffer and die on the cross for our sins.

Adam and Eve's sin shattered more than their relationship with God. It poisoned their relationship with each other. Selfishness and distrust filled their hearts as Adam blamed Eve for his sin. Eve now had a sinful desire to run their marriage instead of being an equal companion and helper to Adam.

But one more loss happened with their fall. Adam and Eve lost their rule over the earth. The first way this loss showed itself was a curse that God put on the ground. No longer would the land work the way God had originally designed it to work. Driven out of the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had to work hard to grow food from the ground from which the Lord had formed their bodies. Compared to Eden, their new home was like a wilderness. Instead of having abundant food hanging on every tree, they found that the ground grew weeds, thorns, and thistles much more easily than it grew food. Ever since, we have had to fight to control those weeds. If left to themselves, they would spread and choke out and kill our food.

The climate and weather were also affected. Large stretches of land became dry desert and waterless wilderness. Without water, families couldn't thrive. Other areas suffered a drought as the rains stopped falling and rivers and lakes dried up, causing extreme shortages of food, also known as famine. Whenever we face a lack of water or drought conditions, we are reminded that our lives are impossible without the mercy of God, our Creator. You'll read more of these experiences in the coming weeks. And you'll also read about God's greatest love when He sent His own dear Son, Jesus Christ, to die and rise again. He did this to assure us of eternal life when He returns to judge all people and restore His shattered creation.

This week, you will take a look at some other Bible passages about water that help us understand how bad our lives are without God.

God's Promised Land

READ DEUTERONOMY 11:1–17

When God brought Israel—the nation He raised up from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—out of Egypt, He led them through a dry, scary wilderness. Moses described it in Deuteronomy 8:

[The Lord your God] led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock.

(DEUTERONOMY 8:15)

Did you notice the phrase “thirsty ground”? Can you picture the deep cracks like open mouths panting for water? There is no way the people of Israel should have survived ten days in the wilderness. But God preserved them and their flocks and herds for forty years! The Lord led them to springs and oases. When there was no water for miles and miles around, He brought them water out of a rock. Read how that is described in Psalm 105: “He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it flowed through the desert like a river” (Psalm 105:41).

Look at what life is like in our world. Isn't it like the wilderness where Israel lived for forty years? It is filled with doubt, insecurity, jealousy, envy, and hatred. People are thirsty to be loved, and accepted, and to have true friends. Where can we find true love and peace? We can look to our family and friends, but the only place we can find true, lasting love is from Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God who came into this wilderness to show us God's love, take our sins away, and give the new life He won for all of us on the cross.

Just as God was with Israel during their forty-year stay in the wilderness, He will be with us all the years we will live in this world. He satisfies our thirst with the people He brings into our lives—especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. But more than anything, He satisfies our spiritual thirst with His precious Word, the water of our Baptism, and the body and blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ, in Holy Communion.

In Deuteronomy, Moses recorded his last goodbye sermons to Israel. As the twelve tribes of Israel camped on the shore of the Jordan River with their backs to the wilderness, Moses pointed across the river to the land God had promised their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Notice how much his description of the Promised Land reminds us of the way he described the well-watered Garden of Eden in Genesis 2:

But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, a land that the LORD your God cares for. The eyes of the LORD your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. And He will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full. (DEUTERONOMY 11:11–15)

Remember, it was never God’s plan for Israel to live in the wilderness for good. He was leading His people through the wilderness to the Promised Land. It is also not His purpose for us to spend eternity living this life on the cursed earth. He is guiding us through this wilderness to our promised land—the new heavens and the new earth, which Jesus will restore when He returns to raise and make all of us believers perfect forever on Judgment Day. Then we will live in a paradise even better than the Garden of Eden. It is a land “that the LORD our God cares for” (Deuteronomy 11:12), a land in which we will live with Him and have the chance to walk, talk, eat, and drink with Him forever.

