

# Eve

*The First Woman*

## She will forever be remembered as the mother of the human race

**H**er name in Hebrew means “source of life.” She was the first, the original woman, the mother of all humankind. As such, Eve will always be among the most prominent female figures in the Bible. The Book of Genesis includes two accounts of her creation—in the first, simpler version in Chapter 1, male and female are created simultaneously: “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” In the second, more familiar account in Chapter 2, man is formed from the dust of the earth and woman is created from the rib of man. Some biblical scholars argue that even in this second account, the original man—*adam*, a non-gender-specific designation in Hebrew best translated as “humankind”—only becomes masculine after the rib has been removed and the second human has taken shape, again suggesting a simultaneous formation of the two genders as we know them. In any case, there follows the famous tale of the wily serpent—“more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made”—who

approaches Eve and talks her into eating the fruit of the tree in the middle of the Garden of Eden, where the first couple has been living in blissful union with God. God had told them that they would die if they were to eat the fruit or even touch the tree, but the serpent tells them, truthfully as it turns out, “You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Eve eats and quickly persuades Adam to partake as well. And indeed their eyes are opened—they suddenly become aware of their nakedness and quickly fashion clothing from fig leaves to cover themselves. God confronts the couple with their transgression and the buck-passing begins. First Adam blames Eve, and then Eve blames the serpent. God’s condemnation is swift: The snake is condemned to slither on its belly (presumably before God’s judgment, the snake had limbs), Eve is destined to suffer increased pain in childbirth and to be ruled over by her husband, and Adam is forced to toil endlessly to bring forth crops from unforgiving soil. Then the couple is driven



*This one shall be called Woman,  
for out of Man this one was taken.*

**GENESIS 2:23**

For their act of disobedience, Adam and Eve were  
banned forever from the Garden of Eden.

from the garden, away from paradise and away from  
their lives of happy but ignorant innocence.

For some Christians, the story presents human-  
ity's "original sin," the primal act of disobedience  
that could only be redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus  
many years later. In this view, the serpent is often  
seen as Satan and Eve as the first person to succumb  
to his temptations. Others see the tale as the biblical  
explanation for human consciousness, for our move  
from childlike innocence to full personhood, capable  
of moral reasoning and hence subject to God's judg-  
ment. In this interpretation, Eve is a vital figure in  
humanity's spiritual development.

The Bible is largely silent about the rest of Eve's  
life. We know she had two sons: Cain, a farmer, then  
Abel, a shepherd. And we know that Cain, jealous of  
his brother's standing with God, killed Abel and was  
condemned by God to "be a fugitive and a wanderer  
on the earth." We can only imagine Eve's pain at  
these events, but with one son killed and a second  
a fugitive, she is blessed with a third named Seth,  
whose descendants would include Noah and the rest  
of humankind.



