

The Garden of Eden / THE NEW JERUSALEM

The Bible opens up with God creating the heaven and the earth. It tells a very quick and short version of

creation in Genesis 1:1 and the re-creation or restoration of the earth after the fall of Lucifer in Genesis 1:2a. We see that in Genesis 1:3-5, God tells us that there was, and still is, a definite separation between Light (God) and darkness (Lucifer- satan and his forces of darkness).

That was the first thing God had done. Between verses 1 and 2, we know through other scriptures in the Bible, that Lucifer rebelled against God. Lucifer, after he rebelled against God, came down to this earth and perverted it so much so that it became “without form” and was “void” (empty from having life). God sent His Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:2b) and removed Lucifer and his forces of darkness off of this earth. The first thing God did was detail for us that separation from Himself (Light) and “darkness” – Lucifer and the forces of darkness.

As mentioned, we see this in Genesis 1:3-5. The rest of Genesis 1:6-Genesis 2:6, gives us a brief overview of how God restored this earth. This is very important for us to read and grasp. However, I would like us to go to Genesis 2:7-17.

I believe there is much that we can see as we study and review this section of scripture. First we see in Genesis 2:7-9 another aspect of the re-creation of man. In verses 7 and 8 we are told that God formed man out of the dust of the ground. We know that God then “*breathed*” into man the “*breath of life*” (Genesis 2:7) and man became a “*living soul*.” He was in the “*image and likeness*” of God. (Genesis 1:27) God then placed Man in the “Garden.”

In Genesis 2:9, we read of two “trees.” There was the “*tree of life*” AND the “*tree of good and evil*.” The only thing God told man not to do, was to not eat of the “*tree of good and evil*.” Man was never told that he could not eat of the “tree of life.”

The fruit of that tree was readily available to him. He could partake of that tree whenever He desired because He had eternal life - a total, unhindered relationship with His God. That was God’s love in action. However, as mentioned, the only thing God told man **not to do** was to eat of the “tree of good and evil.”

We must understand that God did not create man to be a puppet. He always allowed man to have a choice. It would totally be man's own will to either obey or disobey His God. He told Adam very clearly, however, not to eat of the "tree of good and evil" because if he did he would surely die.

Adam may not have known what death was. He never saw it or experienced anything dying in the Garden. God simply told him not to eat of that tree or there would be consequences. That should have been it. If he disobeyed and did eat from that tree, he would surely die.

Isn't that just like us, today. The very things that we are told not to do are many times the things that seem to attract us the most. Instead of simply obeying and moving on, we have a tendency to just "hang around" the things that we are told not to do. Even if we are told the reason. We may not totally fully understand the reason but will we simply listen and obey God or not? That is the question.

Obviously, Adam did not listen. He was told by God, personally, to not eat of that one particular tree. Adam obviously told Eve that they should not eat from that tree for she knew this as she was speaking with the serpent. She actually told the serpent that God said that they would surely "die" if they ate of that fruit. (Genesis 3:3) However, the problem was that instead of staying away from that tree, they always seemed to have "hung around" that tree. Hmmm.....

We know the account and we know what took place. The end result was that the man and the women were sent out of the Garden and an angel holding a "flaming sword" was placed at the entrance so that they could not go back in. They were banished from the Garden never to go back in and they were separated from God.... until.... We will go back to this a little later.

Right now, I would like to mention something else that we see in the Garden of Eden. The "Garden" was the place where God communed with Adam and Eve. In Genesis 2:10 we read, *"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads."* There was one river that flowed into the Garden but then it split into four rivers that flowed out of the Garden.

This river, as the scriptures tell us, separated into four headwaters (four rivers), sending out life-giving waters throughout the land. (Gen 2:10-14) In this way, God prepared a means of sustenance and life forms, plant or animal, and for all nations and all peoples before they were even in existence.

The names of those rivers are given to us in Genesis 2:11-13. They are the "Pison," which means "increase;" the "Gihon" which means "bursting forth;" The Hiddekel" which means "rapid;" and the "Euphrates" which means "to break forth" and also it means "fruitfulness."

This "river" that we see flowing into the Garden represented the Holy Spirit who was in the Garden along with Jesus who was the Word of God that we saw when God simply spoke this Word to the Man by telling him one rule – do not eat of the "tree of good and evil." We must understand that God - the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit – are all found in that "Garden."

The Father planned and made the Garden for the purpose of placing man in it. Man was to dwell in it and to have fellowship with God. The Son, Jesus, was that "Tree of Life." The river that flowed in the Garden was the Holy Spirit. God loved His creation so much that He also "planted" a "tree of good and evil." Yes, because of God's great love, man was always given a choice-obey or disobey. All man had to do was simply trust God and not eat of that "tree."

As previously mentioned, the "river" that split into those four other rivers represented the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this flow of the "four rivers" which is the Holy Spirit, who is God, is flowing out into this world and is pouring forth the attributes of God throughout this earth – both back then and today. Today even in a greater way because of Jesus Christ and all of the believers of Jesus that are in this world.

If we just think of that, we can see God in all of His glory from the very beginning of time. When God created the "Garden" for man, He was there in all of His glory – the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Jesus was the Word that gave life to man. There was also "living water," the Holy Spirit, that was given to all creation to sustain them for life.

In John 4:13-14 Jesus tells us about this "living water." He said to the woman who was at the well, *"Everyone who drinks of this water [regular water drawn daily from a well] will be thirsty*

again, ***but*** whoever drinks of ***the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.***

Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit who would come and dwell within every true believer in Jesus. Those believers in Jesus would be the true children of God.

In John 7:38-39 we hear Jesus say, *“He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, from within him will flow rivers of living water.”* ³⁹*But he said this about the Spirit, which those believing in him were to receive. For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus wasn’t yet glorified.”* This is totally fulfilled in the New Testament when Jesus “breathed” the Holy Spirit into His disciples after His resurrection (John20:22) and to all believers, today.

Jesus was saying that the Father’s plan of salvation in which He established, even before man was placed in the Garden, was slowly but surely being unfolded to this world which was now lost in sin. Jesus came to free us from the bondage of a sinful life and change us into someone who would be even greater than Adam and Eve – we would become children of the Most High God. We would become just as Jesus is because of what He did for us!!!

As mentioned, this river that flows out of God’s realm to “water the earth” back in Genesis and now today to the believer, is the Holy Spirit. We see this spoken of in Isaiah 11:2 as it tells us, *“And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD...”*

As we read this scripture, we notice that the Holy Spirit has what seems to be 7 attributes. However, if we look carefully we see that they they are “grouped together” into four main aspects of the Holy Spirit. These are the four “aspects” that would be within Jesus when He came to this earth. However, they will now be in every “born again” child of God. God, through Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit, has now imparted these same attributes to every child of God. Will we walk in them? That is the question. Let’s take a quick look at them.

The first one we read of is the **“Spirit of the LORD (Yahweh).”** Jesus is God. Jesus was God and walked in His Spirit as He lived and walked on this earth. We are now, through Jesus, God’s representative here on this earth. We have been given that same Holy Spirit to live and dwell within us because we have been “born again” into being children of God through Jesus.

We have been given the “**Spirit** of WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING,” the “**Spirit** of COUNSEL and MIGHT” and the “**Spirit** of KNOWLEDGE and FEAR of the Lord” just as Jesus had when He walked this earth. We now have the ability to walk **humbly** and **meekly** in all of these characteristics of Jesus.

Why? Jesus tell us that “*the meek shall inherit the earth.*” Why? For the Kingdom of God. We can now live as children of God upon this earth. Will that be easy? No. Look at Jesus. Was His life easy? He died because He loved those in this world. Are we willing to do the same?

The really good news is found in the last few chapters of our Bible. We can see what the true believers in Jesus can look forward to. As we look into that future that Revelation presents to us, we must also go back to Genesis and see what Man had, but lost. Only then can we get a good understanding of what the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit has and will do for the true believer in Jesus who is now a child of the Living God.

Through the New Testament we see that Man has been restored back into relationship with God through Jesus. In Revelation 19 we see the culmination of God’s ultimate plan – the marriage between the Lamb of God, Jesus, and His bride, the Body of Christ. Relationship has not just been restored but we are also in a true **covenant** relationship – we are one with God through Jesus Christ. Now, we are betrothed to Jesus but soon we will be as one with Him. The marriage will be consummated and we will be His “Bride.”

That relationship is forever and ever and ever. The “Bride” is arrayed in fine, clean, white linen (the robe of righteousness). We are clothed with apparel that is so much better than Adam and Eve could ever have imagined. In Revelation 19:9 we are told, “*And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*” God is telling us this!!!

But wait... it gets better. We will see our “Bridegroom” coming to meet His “Bride.” It tells us in Revelation 19:11-13,16, “*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his*

name is called The Word of God... And he has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

But wait... it gets even better. We read in Revelation 20:1-2, *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."* This New Jerusalem is where all the true believers, as His Bride, will one day live with Jesus, our Bridegroom, forever!!!

But wait... it gets even better than that. In Revelation 22:1-5, we read of what that New Jerusalem will look like as it tells us, *"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."*

There is a **"tree of life"** found in the New Jerusalem. That "tree" represents the abundance of life that we will enjoy in that New Jerusalem. It is a vast tree which has "twelve fruits" that grow from it. We will enjoy "true, abundant life" forever, when we are with our God.

There is also a "river of water" that flows in this New Jerusalem. This refers to the never ending flow of that living water of the Holy Spirit that will be flowing in that New Jerusalem. In other words, it will be even better than what there was in the Garden at the very beginning.

Revelation 22:1–2 refers to it as *"the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb."* The apostle John, in his vision of the New Jerusalem, describes the river as flowing *"down the middle of the great street of the city."* He tells us that this is the water of the Spirit of God that will give healing to those who live in that city – forever. It tells us that the healing is made available for "all seasons." Eternal Life and eternal health will be available for "all seasons," which in Jewish literature means – forever!!!

The “water of life” referred to in Revelation 22:1-2, comes out of the very Throne of God. This tells us that eternal life flows from God and it will be poured onto all His people. And...in that river is total healing; there is salvation; it is life and life more abundant!!!

“Water” symbolically represents the nurturing and sustaining of eternal life in Scripture. Isaiah refers to “*drawing water*” from the “*wells of salvation*” with joy (Isaiah 12:3). Jesus encouraged the Samaritan woman at the well to take from Him the water of life (the Holy Spirit) so that she would never thirst again spiritually (John 4:13–14). Those who believe in Him, Jesus goes on to say in John 7:38, will have streams of living water (the Holy Spirit) flowing out from them.

“Water” is known to be needed for life to continue to exist. Just as physical water is necessary to sustain physical life on earth, “living water” from Jesus and the Holy Spirit is necessary to sustain eternal life with our God. Jesus is the Bread of Life (John 6:35) and the Holy Spirit is the source of “living water.” They both give life, eternal life, to God’s people, forever. Jesus is that “bread” that we partake of to have new life. The Holy Spirit is the “water” of life that keeps us sustained in that new life.

In the Garden, we saw the “tree of life” which represented and signified Jesus. He is the one who gave life to Adam and Eve. The rivers of water in the Garden represented the Holy Spirit who was the water that will sustain us in this life. It is both Jesus, who truly gives us new life, and it is the Holy Spirit who sustains and waters our new life, eternal life, now as children of God on this earth and then when we are in heaven, and ultimately, in the New Jerusalem.

The “tree of life” will be in the midst of New Jerusalem. It represents that God’s people will enjoy eternal life with God, forever. This access and this healing is available to all people, not just a select group. It is available to anyone and everyone. They simply need to believe and accept Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord to receive it all.

Revelation 22:4 is simply staggering if we let the words sink into our hearts. It tells us that we **will see the Father’s face!!!** His Name will be placed upon our foreheads. They are His and He is theirs. The hope of God’s people is finally realized: **seeing God face to face.**

Today, we sing songs of longing for that time when we can see God's face. God's people are pictured in the scriptures as His priests, worshiping and serving God in His presence. We will see His face. His name will be on their foreheads. This expresses the fulfillment of the covenant between God and his people. "*God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*" (Revelation 21:3)

As we discussed, the Bible begins with an earthly Eden and an earthly river and ends with a Heavenly paradise and a Heavenly river. God always had a plan of salvation and redemption for His prized creation, Man. He knew they would fall. But... He had a plan of redemption already in place... the Son of God, Jesus. Man was always given a choice. We saw what happened when man listened to the devil.

Will we listen to God and accept His way of redemption, of salvation and of new life, that is available now through Jesus. There is still time for the unsaved. Just make sure that all of you who may be reading this short essay know and have made your decision to accept Jesus as your personal Savior and Lord.

In the beginning of the Bible we read of a "Garden" that had a "tree of life" and the four rivers that flowed out with the "water of life." In the last chapter of the Bible, we read of a "tree of life" and a "river of life" now flowing from the throne of God. It is the final page of Scripture, and we again see God's heart for nations and peoples. His love is available for all nations and all people to be healed - healed from their sin and to live in the salvation of their God!!!