

Life In God's Garden

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My last presentation asked you to take a new look at God's Garden in Genesis. Most Christians are not used to looking at the Garden in Genesis as a revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God's Garden ⇔ God's Garden

Genesis
"created"

Revelation
"made-new"

- God the Gardener created a son to garden.
- God determined Good and Evil to teach his son by example.
- Prohibition against the Tree of Knowledge, like the other dietary laws, was temporary.
- Tree of Knowledge was made for Adam and Eve when they matured.

Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (Heb. 5:13-14)

2 Beyond
creation
science

I believe that traditional Christian theology has misread, and therefore misunderstood the original garden in Genesis, just as traditional Christian theology has misread and misunderstood the Garden at the end of Revelation. Preterism gives us a helpful hint that begs us to ask a new question. If the Garden at the end of the Bible is all about the gospel, then could it be that the original Garden is where the gospel story begins? The Gardens are related.

What do we find in Genesis? The story of God's Garden portrays a scene where God the gardener created a son to be a gardener like him, reflecting his divine image and likeness. Adam the son was supposed to grow up in God's house (the garden was God's temple). The story shows us how it was God who knew what was "very good" (good) and what was "not good" (evil). God was raising his son, training him by example, so that Adam would, in due time, be prepared to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree was a part of God's "very good" creation. God even told them in Genesis 1 that "every tree" would be theirs for food, so the prohibition of the tree of knowledge in the middle of the garden was temporary, just like all of the other dietary laws in the OT. God made that tree for Adam and Eve when they matured.

We might compare the original situation to Hebrews 5:13-14: "Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." The knowledge of good and evil is a positive attribute in Scripture.

Garden Grace

- What do good parents give their Children?
- Did Adam have to earn his place in God's Garden?
- Did Adam have to pay for gold, precious stones, food, water, animals, or a bride-price dowry for Eve?
- Adam's sin was rebellion against his own experience of what God was doing in his life.

The story of God's Garden is the story of God training his children in the way of righteousness. The Garden scene is not one of a distant, vindictive Father God who withholds his grace, affection, and care from Adam, depending on whether or not Adam obeyed or disobeyed his word. Modern Christians tend to think of the Garden scene that way, but that makes God out to be a very dysfunctional Father in the beginning.

The details of the story show us just the opposite. The story records God working in Adam's life. God bestowed free grace after free grace upon Adam, even before he gave the command, because God loved his son. God gave Adam life by grace. God gave Adam a place to live in the Garden by grace. There was free access to gold and precious stones. There was free food and the rivers watered the garden at no cost to Adam. God set out to complete Adam because he loved him and knew that he needed a suitable helpmeet. So God made Eve for him, requiring Adam to pay no bride-price dowry, nor promise 7 years of labor in exchange for her hand in marriage. Pure Grace. Genesis 2 gives us this long string of things that God is doing for Adam purely out of the love he has for his son.

That is the character of God's Garden because it is a revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel makes children of God today by grace, just as Adam was made alive by grace. God gives grace after grace to his children, just as he gave grace after grace to Adam, and the gospel, according to Jesus, warns of one thing that will not be forgiven - blasphemy of the Holy Spirit - just as Adam was given one command that led to death. In fact, Adam's disobedience was rebellion against his own experience of what God was doing in his life. The gospel calls God's children to live by faith in God's Word, unto obedience and good works, just as Adam was called to live by faith in God's Word and work in the garden.

New Testament Garden Teaching

A tree is recognized by its fruit. (Matt. 12:33)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5:22 cf. Rom. 7:4; 11: 17-21; John 15:1-17 etc.)

- Drawn from the created order in Gen. 2

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. (Psalm 1:3)

Significant details in the NT are drawn from the created order in Gen. 2. “A tree is recognized by its fruit.” (Matt. 12:33) The imagery is Edenic. In fact, the NT references the good works that believers are called to manifest as fruit – fruit of the Spirit (Rom. 7:4; Gal. 5:22 etc.). Can you see the garden image? These good works are what we were created to do, as gardeners, and they cause men to glorify our gardening Father in heaven. Imagine yourself as a fruit tree, planted by waters with luscious fruit hanging on you. That is what you are called to be. In fact, you don’t have to imagine it, though that helps. You can read about it in the very first Psalm “He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.” Psalm 1:3. Isn’t it interesting how the Psalms begin with Garden and Edenic imagery just like Genesis? That is no coincidence.

New Testament Garden Teaching

- Based on the created order in Gen. 2

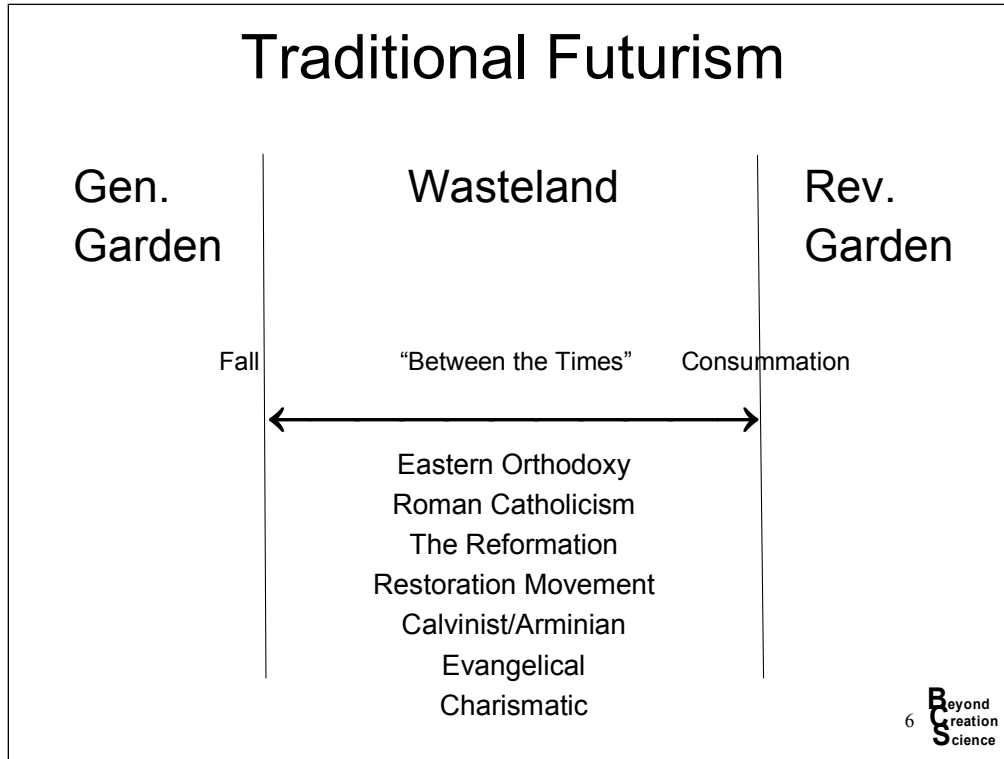
Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. (Matt. 19:8)

“For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the Church. (Eph. 5:31-32)

- Creation, Fall, Redemption.
- Paradise Lost, Paradise Restored.
- The original Garden is the first revelation of the Gospel.

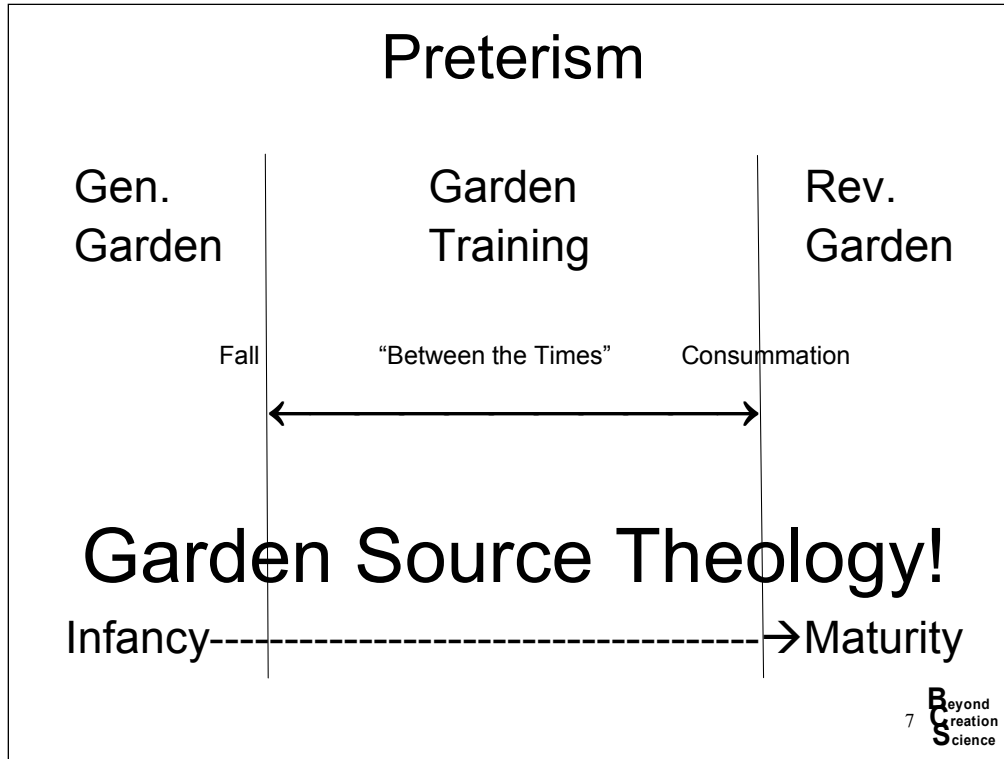


I personally think Christians should have begun to think in terms of the gospel as originating in Genesis 2 a long time ago. Do you realize that Jesus based his teaching on the original created order? “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning” Matt. 19:8. Jesus based his teaching upon the created order, the way it was “in the beginning.” He made a distinction between the Law of Moses and the pre-fall condition and aligned his teaching with the created order. That illustrates to us again how the New Covenant is a restoration of the original Garden scene that was lost because of disobedience. Paul did the same thing as Jesus by citing Genesis 2 as the basis for his teaching on marriage in Eph. 5:21-33. The Bible tells the story of creation, fall, redemption. God redeems or “makes new” the original “very good” creation. Paradise Lost becomes paradise Restored. The two Gardens are essentially the same; or we could say that the Garden in Rev. is the Gen garden “all grown up.”



Why isn't it easy for us to see the gospel in the Garden? The obstacle we face is that traditional Christian theology, formed in the context of futurism, sees the Garden in both Genesis and Revelation as something foreign to our experience. We are living, in that phrase I used yesterday, "between the times." We are cut off from our origin in Genesis, but still waiting upon our arrival to that garden-city in Revelation. Traditional theology teaches that we live in the Waste Land between Garden and Garden. Every traditional paradigm of theology is formed within this context. Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Reformation, Restoration Movement, Calvinistic or Arminian, Evangelical, and Charismatic theology are all formed in that waste land context. I know of no Christian view that has been thought out from a deep recognition that the Garden, both in Genesis in Revelation, is all about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What is the result of taking waste land theology and adding preterism on top? Nothing works! I will be honest with you. None of those traditional, waste land theologies work for me anymore in light of the Garden story. We now live on the other side of that line called "consummation," and it wasn't anything like those traditional theologies were expecting. Everyone who becomes a preterist has to stretch their theology to cover a whole new area of the Bible that futurist theology was never designed to cover. What happens? Various groups of preterists do their best to pull and stretch their old theology to cover at least the new understanding of the Garden in Revelation. So far, very few have tried to stretch preterism the other direction to cover the Garden in Genesis which makes the problem even worse.



As preterism grows, I think we are going to see theology done in terms of both Garden stories at the ends combined with the middle of the story. Do you see why it is important for us to re-examine the Garden story once preterism shows us that the Garden at the end of the Bible is all about the gospel of Jesus Christ? It won't work to start your theology after the fall if we now live beyond the consummation. But now we have a new place to start – right at the beginning, where the Bible starts. To understand life in God's Garden after the consummation, we need to understand life in God's Garden before the fall. We have to go back to the beginning in order to see the future in which we live. There is a payoff to this. The beautiful thing is that once you understand what the Garden is all about, then you can live in that context indefinitely. Call it garden-source theology.

So I want to do a little experiment. Let's think through what the Bible looks like if we think of it as one big unified story. You know, a family story. God had children at the beginning, and at the end of the story we see the revealing of the sons of God (Rom. 8:18-25). Beginning to end it is all about the Father raising his children from infancy to maturity. BTW, CBV of resurrection is a family view of the consummation. God saves his true family all at once, not just individuals at various times and places.

The Temptation

“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3:5)

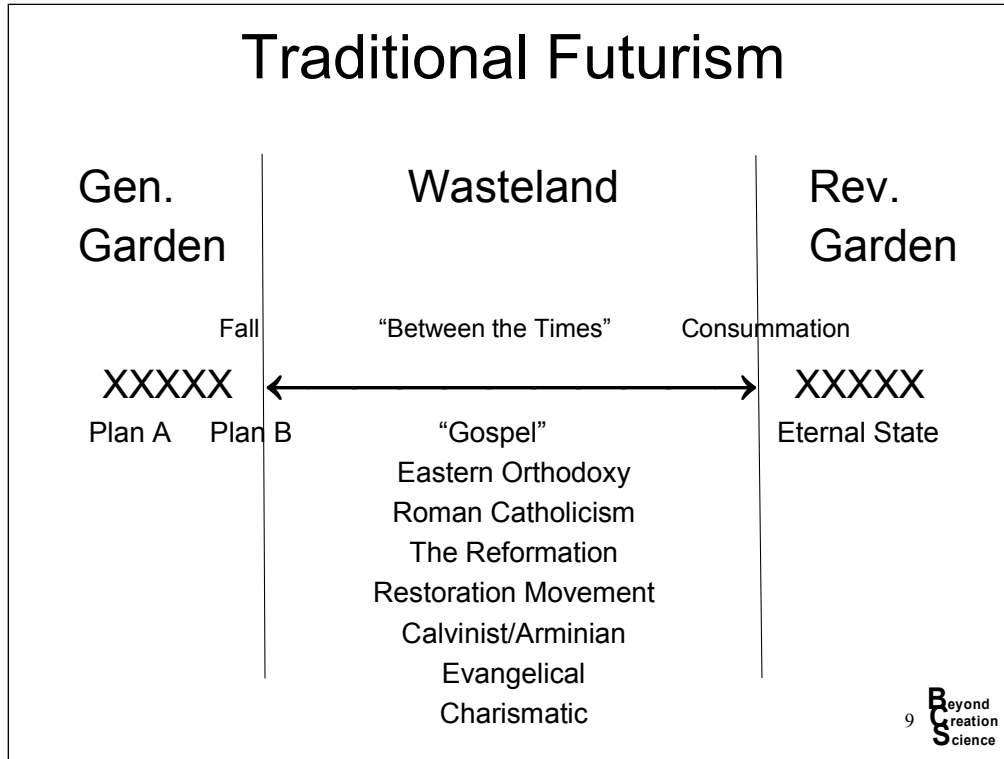
- The temptation was taking a shortcut to glory
- Satan tempted them with something they already had!

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen. 1:27)

Let's pick up the story in Genesis. Back in the Garden God gave Adam "the command" [singular] to avoid "the sin" [singular]. Notice what the serpent said during the temptation. He said "you will not surely die" and "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3:4-5). In this Garden, with all the food that they could care to eat, after all the grace God poured out on them, Eve and then Adam break God's one command. What was the essence of that sin? Disobedience, right? What was the psychology of that sin? They committed that sin because they lacked faith in God to provide all good things for them on his terms. They decided that they were not going to wait on God, but would decide good and evil on their own.

Now, if I'm telling the story right, then what really happened at the temptation and fall? Firstly, the fall was really all about Adam and Eve taking a shortcut, right? I think they knew God had made that tree for them and was saving that tree **for** them in his time. They were to tend the whole Garden, which included the tree of knowledge. Did God just put it there in the middle of the garden to bait them forever and ever? That is a strange view if this is a family story. I think God had a purpose for that tree from the very beginning. The serpent, said that God was keeping that tree **from** them. He wore down their faith in God which led to their disobedience. Fundamentally, this is a story about faith.

Secondly, and a lot of people miss this, Satan tempted them with something they already had! Gen 1:27 says that they were created "in God's image." They were already God's children which means they were already, in some sense, "like God."



It is very common to say that the original garden story is all over at this point and God is done with that way of going about things. We are told that God takes this whole pattern we see here at the beginning crumples it up and throws it away and initiates something totally different. You should see shades of dispensationalism in that method of reading the story. This view is a lot like how dispensationalists believe that God “changed” his plan when the Jews fell by rejecting Christ as their king. Dispensationalism says that started something completely different at that point. Traditional theologies have a similar view of the fall – God quits doing one thing and starts something completely different. Similar change at the consummation.

Or some would say that God played this whole ruse in the Garden just to show once and for all that it never works for God to tell his children to obey him. So we are told, “See when you pass a rule all that happens is people break it. The problems in this world are caused by rules. We have to get rid of law!”

Now, for those of you who are parents and are raising or have raised children, does that idea make any sense to you? What would you do next in the story as a father? If you were a good father you would mete out the punishment you promised right? But then, you would keep doing what you set out to do; you would keep training your children to mature in discipline, patience, and self-control. Isn’t that the end goal of rules – the development of character? The more character your children learn, the fewer rules you need to give them. Good parents always use rules with the end goal of developing character. That was what God had in mind with his command, for God is a good Father.

Or consider the gardener image of God. Do you think God would give up as a gardener right away when confronted with this problem in his house? Good gardeners don’t give up that easy. I remember back when I did a lot of gardening we had a summer hailstorm. It stripped leaves from the plants, broke stems, and made the plants look just terrible. Driving through my neighborhood the next day, I saw a few of my neighbors pulling their plants out of their gardens. They thought the season was over because the hail had trashed the plants so badly. I thought, “what are they doing?” It was only late June or early July. Good gardeners don’t give up like that. We kept watering, weeding, and cultivating. Our plants sprang out with new leaves, new buds in a couple of weeks. We had a good harvest despite the storm. Do you think God just gave up training his children after the fall?

The Fall of Cain

Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it. (Gen. 4:6-7)

- Exactly what Cain should have learned from the story of his parents.
- Murder of Abel is the Fall of Cain.
- God's judgment: Cast out from the "presence." (Gen. 4:14)

I don't think that is what the story tells us. Notice in Gen. 4 that we have another temptation. What did God say to Cain? "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." (Gen. 4:6-7). That is exactly what Cain should have learned from the story of his parents. Sin was crouching at his door, the imagery is of a snake coiled up on the doorstep, and desired to have Cain, just like the serpent and sin desired to have Adam and Eve. Cain was supposed to master it just as Adam and Eve were supposed to master it. The story of God's Garden is continuing into Genesis 4.

How did Cain do in his temptation? He fell when he murdered his brother. God curses him and banishes him from the presence of the Lord (4:14), paralleling what happened in Gen. 3. Note that Cain was in God's presence before his fall. Even though God had removed Adam's family from the tree of life, God went with them out of the Garden. How could a gracious Father completely abandon his children? We tend to overlook this, but they were all in the presence of the Lord even after they were driven from God's Garden and the tree of life. Keep that in mind.

The Fall of the Sons of God

The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. (Gen. 6:2)

- Intermarriage with idolatry corrupted the nation.
- Foreign women were “forbidden fruit.”
- God’s judgment: Destruction by waters of the flood. (Gen. 6:11-8:18)

The story of God and his family goes on. What we see, if we read the story carefully, is that Garden pattern of temptation repeats itself in God’s family throughout the rest of Genesis. The sons of God face a temptation in Genesis 6, “The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful [pleasing to the eyes], and they married any of them they chose.” Israel knew that intermarriage with idolatry corrupted the nation. That led to the downfall of Solomon’s kingdom. Foreign women who did not convert to Jehovah were forbidden fruit for Israel. This fall of the sons of God initiates God’s covenant judgment in the days of Noah, Noah being the only righteous Son of God left.

The Fall of Noah

- New (covenant) world because of the pleasing sacrifice.
- New garden scene.

Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. (Gen. 9:20)

- New temptation: aged wine not fresh fruit.
- No absolute command: Noah had character.
- Drunkenness is the Fall of Noah as he becomes “naked” in his tent.
- Sin enters Noah’s household.
- Who judges?

After the flood there is a new covenant world. Noah received a new covenant because of the pleasing aroma of his godly sacrifice – picturing Christ. Yet, where do we find Noah after the flood, in this new world? “Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard.” (9:20) Do you see how we are back in a Garden in this new covenant world? Noah is growing grapes. He makes wine. Noah has his own temptation in his own garden, but this time his temptation is not raw fruit, but aged wine. Wine takes maturity to produce. You don’t eat it fresh, like fruit from a tree, because it takes time. In other words, righteous Noah was a “partial-grownup” in the wider story. Children don’t have the patience to make wine. They like fresh grapes. In fact, Noah is given no absolute command like Adam was in the first garden because Noah is no longer a child in the Lord as was Adam. Noah had character. You can imagine Noah like an adolescent who has developed some discipline and maturity in his life. He withstood the temptation of foreign women we saw in Gen. 6. But righteous Noah is not mature enough to handle his wine. What happens when you give alcohol to a minor unsupervised? Well, Noah shows us what happens. Noah became “naked” in his tent (similar to the nakedness of Adam and Eve after the fall) and causes sin to enter his household.

There is an important difference between what the story says about the fall of Adam, Cain, the sons of God and the fall of Noah and his son, Ham. God judged Adam and Eve, Cain, and the sons of God directly, but who judged Ham? Noah pronounced the curse on Ham. Do you see the change in maturity? God is gradually giving authority and dominion to his faithful children as they mature, for Noah is given authority to judge murder in this new world. God’s children, represented by Noah are still lacking, but they are growing up.

The Fall of Abraham

- Born in Haran (wilderness), placed in promised land (garden).
- God poured out grace on Abraham (like Adam).

Abraham had become very wealthy in livestock and silver and gold.
(Gen. 13:2)

- Tempted by his wife.

So she said to Abraham “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her.” Abraham agreed to what Sarai said. (Gen. 16:2)

- Abraham was tempted by what God had ***already*** promised Him!

Next let us move on to the story of Abraham. God called to Abraham while he is in Haran (the wilderness). Then God takes Abraham to the promised land (the garden). Following the pattern, we could say that Abraham was taken from the dust of the earth, made alive to God in the wilderness, and then put in God’s Garden. God was taking care of Abraham everywhere he went. “Abraham had become very wealthy in livestock and silver and gold.” (13:2) Note the gold link back to Adam in the garden; the last time gold was mentioned in Genesis was in the Garden in Gen. 2. God is blessing Abraham with grace after grace and had promised him descendants. But Abraham faces a temptation in his Garden. What was Abraham’s temptation? Amazingly, it involved something that God had already promised to him in God’s time – children. This should look familiar to you. Abraham was tempted by his wife, So she said to Abraham “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her.” Abraham agreed to what Sarai said (Gen. 16:2). Sarah brought about Abraham’s fall, just like Eve brought about Adam’s fall.

Notice that the root of Abraham’s temptation was, again, related to something that God had already promised to him in God’s time. What was Abraham’s sin? He took a shortcut to something God was going to provide in due time, just like Adam and Eve took a shortcut to the tree of knowledge which God was going to provide for them when they were ready. It’s the same kind of faithless sin. Abraham lacked faith in God’s word.

The Fall of Abraham

- Immediately after Abraham's fall God initiated the circumcision covenant by sacrifice.
- Later faced 2nd temptation on Moriah regarding his "one and only" son.
- Abraham perseveres and sets the example for all of God's children to come.
- Abraham matured in his faith.

What happens next in the story? Immediately, God initiated the circumcision covenant by sacrifice after Abraham's fall, just as God had given Adam and Eve covenant promises and had provided skins for them through sacrifice after their fall.

There is more to Abraham's story, for he undergoes a second temptation later. God told him to take his son, his "only son Isaac whom Abraham loved" and sacrifice him on Mount Moriah. This time, however, Abraham obeys God by faith and, as it were, receives Isaac back from the dead. Abraham matured in his faith and sets the example for all of God's children to come.

We could also talk about the Garden themes in the lives of Isaac and Jacob, but things come to a conclusion in Genesis with Joseph.

The Perfection of Joseph

- Nothing bad recorded about Joseph.
- Only one in Genesis “in whom is the Spirit of God.” (Gen. 41:37)
- Faces temptation (Potiphar’s Wife).
- Masters sin as the “perfect” son of God.
- Ascends to the right hand of the king.
- Was given a woman to be his wife (exactly what was involved in his temptation). (Gen. 41:45)

There is absolutely nothing bad recorded about Joseph's life. The difference is what is missing in the story of Joseph as compared to all who came before him. Also, Joseph is the only one in the entire book of Genesis whom we are told has "the Spirit of God in him" (Gen. 41:38). Joseph is loved by the father. Joseph is rejected by his brothers. Joseph goes to prepare a place for his brothers in Egypt (by God's providence). Here, Joseph faces his own temptation with Potiphar's wife. Joseph resists temptation, masters sin by exercising dominion over it and does not fall. What happens a little while after Joseph resisted temptation? Shortly thereafter, Joseph is raised, we might say he ascended, to the right hand of the King and ruled over that entire world. And the story tells us that Joseph was given a woman (exactly what was involved in his temptation) by the King to be his wife. Joseph recognized temptation to adultery as evil, and marriage as good.

Joseph provides food which is very important if we remember that the original curse on Adam was that Adam would have to work by the sweat of his brow for food. For whom does Joseph provide food? He saves not only his brothers (Hebrews), but also the Egyptians and the other nations, too (Gentiles). Joseph "buys back" the entire land for the king. Of course, many have pointed out how Joseph is a clear type of Christ. I would go further. In light of preterism, we should understand that the Joseph story is a consummation to Genesis. We have an overview in miniature of the entire Bible inside of Genesis.

Israel as Adam

- Born as a nation in the wilderness (Sinai), placed in promised land (garden).
- God poured out grace on Israel (free food and water like Adam, etc).
- Tested "...where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees..." (Ex. 15:27)

And the little ones that you said would be taken captive, your children who do not yet know good from bad – they will enter the land. I will give it to them and they will possess it. (Deut. 1:39)

- Israel broke the covenant.
- Cast out of the promised land (garden).

Where does the book of Exodus begin? We start the whole story again with God's people living in the Goshen Garden, the best land of Egypt. God forms them as a new nation in the wilderness at Sinai (as Adam was formed in the wilderness) they are placed into the promised land (Garden like Eden). God provided for their every need in the wilderness, free food and water like Adam. Note the place Israel was tested after the Red Sea crossing – "... where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees..." Grace upon grace upon grace, yet what did they do in the face of temptation? They fell and did not enter the land.

If you remember the original image of the immaturity of Adam and Eve when they were first placed in the garden – naked and no shame, like newborn babies – you'll see another parallel to the Exodus story. Notice how Moses tells us that those whom God put in the land (Garden) were immature children. "And the little ones that you said would be taken captive, your children who do not yet know good from bad – they will enter the land. I will give it to them and they will possess it." (Deut. 1:39) So if we pay attention to the story, we should know exactly what is coming next, right. God blessed Israel with grace after grace after grace (BTW milk and honey matches the water and fruit of Eden), yet what happened to Israel in the land? They committed idolatry/apostasy, broke God's covenant, and were cast out of the Garden. The story of Adam and Eve is recapitulated with Israel.

New Exile

- God's presence goes with his faithful people, just as his presence went with Adam and Eve.
- Nebuchadnezzar takes articles of gold from God's temple – Daniel and his three friends. (Dan. 1)
- They face the temptation of beautiful food (Nebuchadnezzar's table.)
- Refuse to eat the forbidden food.
- Ascend to the right hand of the throne of Babylon.

Yet even in this wilderness exile, God goes with his people, just like he went with his children when they were cast out of the Garden. The story of Daniel and his three friends shows us that. In fact, Babylon becomes a new temple in which God's holy priests, the articles of gold Nebuchadnezzar carried from Jerusalem, serve God in this new place. Daniel 1 opens with the story of temptation in this new Garden. Daniel and his friends were served the beautiful food at the table of the king. How do they do in their temptation? They refuse to eat the forbidden food, right? And so God raises them to the right hand of the throne of Babylon, making them, as it were, lord over Nebuchadnezzar's table. The time of Daniel is a remarkable time when God uses the faithful obedience of Daniel and his three friends to convert Nebuchadnezzar to the true faith.

Jesus as Israel/Adam

Out of Egypt I called my son. (Matt. 2:14)

- Jesus went from Egypt (wilderness) to promised land (garden).
- Baptized on the other side of the Jordan (wilderness) and ministered in the promised land (garden).
- Faced his temptation.

These stories set the scene for the coming of Jesus. Jesus is the new Israel. “Out of Egypt I called my son” (Matt. 2:14). Jesus went from the Egypt (wilderness) to the promised land (Garden). In fact, he was baptized into his ministry on the other side of the Jordan and then entered the land to tend God’s Garden. What happens to Jesus immediately after he was baptized? The temptation.

Temptation Comparison/Contrast

Adam and Eve

- In the garden
- With food all around
- Tempted with fruit (food)
- Called to live by faith in God's Word

Jesus

- In the wilderness
- While hungry
- Tempted with bread (food)
- Resisted by faith in God's Word

"It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matt. 4:4)

Now I want you to compare these parallels and contrasts between the temptation of Jesus and the original temptation in Genesis 3.

- 1) Adam and Eve were tempted in the Garden – Jesus was tempted in the wilderness.
- 2) Adam and Eve were tempted while having food all around them, any tree except one was theirs for food – Jesus was hungry, fasted 40 days and 40 nights (Matt. 4:2)
- 3) Adam and Eve were tempted with fruit of the tree (food) – Jesus was tempted with bread (food) – “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread” (4:2).
- 4) Adam and Eve were called to live by faith in God's word because this was a gospel story. Jesus responded to Satan's temptation by saying “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Jesus is modeling faith and doing exactly what Adam and Eve should have done back in the garden.

Temptation Comparison/Contrast

“You will not surely die” (Gen. 3:5)

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: He will command his angels concerning you and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” (Matt. 4:5-6)

- Satan (mis)quotes God’s Word.
- Jesus would die (in more ways than one).
- Jesus responds using his wisdom, knowledge, and discernment.

“It is also written ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” (Matt. 4:7)

5) “Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ‘If you are the Son of God,’ he said, ‘throw yourself down. For it is written: He will command his angels concerning you and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’ What is satan doing? He is (mis)quoting Scripture in response to Jesus stand on God’s Word. Notice how Satan is telling Jesus the same thing he told Eve. “You shall not surely die!” That was a lie. Jesus was going to die in more ways than one. Jesus responds to satan using his wisdom, knowledge and discernment to reveal the fact that satan’s use of God’s Word was an evil use, not a good use. “It is also written ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” You see it is not enough to have God’s Word. Satan can quote God’s Word. Any fool can quote God’s Word. Scripture must be interpreted with wisdom in the light of true knowledge of good and evil.

Temptation Comparison/Contrast

“... the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye...” (Gen. 3:6)

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kings of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” (Matt. 4:8-9)

- Tempted with something “pleasing to the eyes.”
- Jesus was tempted with something that God had **already** promised him – the nations. (Ps. 2:8 – I will make the nations your inheritance)
- Jesus refused to take the (false) shortcut!
- God Gave Jesus the exact thing which the Devil used to tempt him!

6) Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kings of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” The devil tempted Jesus with something that was pleasing to the eyes just like Gen. 3 – he **showed** him all the nations.

7) The nations show us another parallel back to Genesis 3. Remember that I said that Adam and Eve were tempted with something they already had (you will be like God)? They were children of God and bore the image of God; they were already like God in some sense. Also, I have suggested that Adam and Eve were tempted to eat from the tree of knowledge that God made for them, the tree that was going to be theirs in God’s time. Guess what. The nations already belonged to Christ as his inheritance from God the Father, and the nations would be given to Christ in God’s time. Then Jesus responded, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” That was what Adam was supposed to do! Jesus succeeded by remaining faithful to God and refusing to take the (false) shortcut.

8) God later gave Jesus exactly the thing with which Satan tempted him because he had made the nations **for** his Son (Ps. 2:8) as an inheritance. The nations, just like the tree of knowledge, were not inherently evil.

The Maturity of Jesus Christ

- Jesus waited for God's good gift in God's time.
- The story follows the pattern from the original garden.

Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.
(Heb. 5:8)

Jesus resisted the temptation by obediently waiting on God's good gifts for him to be given in God's time. God made them for his Son when his son manifested the maturity of perfection, knowing good and evil. "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered." Heb. 5:8. Jesus learned obedience. The NT story follows the pattern of the original Garden.

Jesus had perfect faith through his temptation and becomes our example for living in God's Garden. The temptation pattern in Gen. 3 is at the heart of what it means to live the gospel according to the NT.

The Gospel Garden

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ...

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry “Abba, Father.” (Rom. 8:9, 12-15).

- The children grow up to recognize the Father they have always had from the beginning!

Consider these texts in light of the original Garden scene. Paul writes: “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ... Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” Does any of this look familiar to you? “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry “Abba, Father.” (Rom. 8:9, 12-15). Paul is talking about children growing up so that they can fully recognize the Father they have always had from the beginning.

The Gospel Garden

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death. Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights who does not change like shifting shadows.” (James 1:13-17)

- James gives instruction on how to handle temptation and master sin.
- Don’t rebel against the experience of God’s gifts in your life!

Or consider the teaching of James and see if this looks familiar: “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death. **Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers.** Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights who does not change like shifting shadows.” (James 1:13-17) Pay attention to the gifts of God in your life! Trust in God and live by faith and obey God’s Word. That is exactly what Adam and Eve should have done in the Garden. That is what we are to do in God’s Garden. The original Garden teaches us the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What we need to learn from the story of God’s Garden is that God made a world that involved temptation to sin from the very beginning. In God’s wisdom and sovereignty, this is the “very good” world he made. The Garden needed tending before the fall. God made his children in such an environment that they must learn to be like their gardening Father in heaven. If this is true before the fall, then it is also true after the consummation.

Gospel Gardening

- The Father set the example in Genesis.
- What is really messed up in this world?
- How do you make a better world in the future?
- What is our job in God's world?
- How does God do his work?

The key to the future is going back to
God's Garden at the beginning!

Why do you think God sent Adam and Eve out of his Garden after their sin? Have you ever asked yourself that question? The text says God removed them from the tree of life, but I think the picture is much larger than that single detail. God kicked them out of the garden to show them how to be good gardeners. They were to learn by their Father's example. They were to imitate him and learn to kick sin out of their garden, just as God kicked sin out of his Garden. Why did he teach them that? Because he knew something about this world. You cannot have life in a garden within a faithless environment that multiplies sin.

What is really messed up with this world? What creates most of the suffering, heartache, pain, and distress in our world? The vast majority of things in this world that screws people up and destroys lives are related, one way or another, to faithless sin. How do you make a better world in the future? The easy answer is you root out sin. God the gardener has rooted out sin in us by the blood of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. Now he calls us to work with him as gardeners in his world. And do you know what? The more successful we are, using the garden tools of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the better our world will be in the future.

When we understand the Garden story with wisdom, the detail first revealed in God's Garden explains why the solutions our culture proposes to the problems around us are not working. The only solution is the gospel. You can't make a garden in a faithless environment dominated by sin. Few people are talking about sin as the root problem we face today. Another problem is that many who do talk about it don't even know what sin truly is. Virtually no one is thinking on how to cultivate the kind of faith in God that casts sin out of the Garden. And we wonder why the world around us looks so messed up! We have been cut off from what the story of God's Garden teaches us.

When you look around today, what do you see? I see God's Garden. But it is a Garden that has many weeds and nasty pests that are wreaking havoc on God's trees. Self-centered, lazy Christians are talking about a lot of things today, but they aren't talking about the first job God gave to his people – tending God's Garden. What this world needs is not more preterists. We don't even need more Christians. What this world needs is more gardeners who have learned to live like the master gardener. Find your place in the garden that God placed you. Look around. Do you see those weeds? Pull them out. Do you see a bug infestation? Go to war against them. Work the ground around the plants. Open up and let the light come in. Guide the living water to flow and bring life to the parched ground. Learn to love the good and hate the evil – just as God loves good and hates evil.

You are a child of God by God's pure grace. God has poured out his gifts on you in ways that you cannot fully comprehend. He has given you a Garden task to do with Him in his Garden. Now live by faith in him and continue to obey his Word. Do the work he has prepared for you with discipline, wisdom, and maturity. Understand what to do about the future by going back to God's Garden at the beginning. Now it is time to get busy. Get down on your knees and put your fingers in the dirt, because that is how God does it. Just look at Jesus.