

# The Story of Eden and the World – Gen 1-3, Rev 22

## The Gospel Age of Hope - #2

**Introduction** – The Bible is a book that tells the story of God and His creation. Like bookends, it begins and ends with a picture of a Garden. The story begins with three basic concepts which come to us over and over again throughout the Bible: Creation, Fall, and Redemption. Going to the beginning of the Bible, we learn why the writers said what they said in the way they said it. We also find out why we need a Savior of the world (1 John 4:14).

**A Garden and a Man** (Gen 1:26-28, 2:8-9) – When God created the heavens and the earth (in six days), everything He made was good. One of the very good things He made was a garden near the top of a mountain in the eastern portion of a land called Eden. Having created Adam (man), God placed him in the garden to tend and cultivate it. It was in this place that Adam met with God and it was here Adam worked, worshipping God and tending to the land God had given him. Made in God's image, Adam learned how to be a creator, taking things of creation and fashioning them for useful and glorious purposes.

**A Man and a Woman** (Gen 2:15-25) – As man worked (tend) and guarded (keep) the garden, God declared that it was not good for Adam to do so alone. While naming the animals, it became clear that there was no suitable helper for Adam among the creatures, and so God put Adam into a deep death-like sleep, took a rib from his side, and fashioned a woman, Eve, from that rib. Now together, in a family and from that a society, a culture, Adam and Eve would fulfill the cultural mandate to take dominion of the earth. Man was the image-bearer and was able to self-consciously do his works to the glory of God without any hesitation, with complete obedience and joy in serving His Creator.

**A Tree, a Serpent, and a Great Fall** (Gen 3) – The task of dominion began in the garden but it was not to end there. Adam and Eve were to extend the blessings of Paradise throughout the whole world. But Eve was deceived by the serpent and Adam failed to guard and protect the sanctuary. Thus, he plunged the entire race into sin and death (Rom 5:12). When God came to Adam in the cool of the day, He found Adam and Eve hiding because they knew they were naked. It was as though the glory-covering had been removed (Rom 3:23) and God had to provide a covering for them from animal skins. Man was banished from the garden and forbidden from entering again. The earth, which was planned to become God's Garden/Temple/City instead became a wilderness of thorns, sweat, pain, and death (Gen 3:16-19).

**A New Humanity** (Gen 3:15) – From the moment of the curse upon Adam and Eve, God pronounced a greater curse upon the Tempter, declaring that the Redeemer would come and crush the Serpent's head (1 John 3:8). The immediate plan was to undo the damage brought upon creation by the first Adam by means of the second Adam (1 Cor 15:22, Rom 5:15-19). What is important to see is not a plan to save individuals out of a cursed end for creation, but a plan to redeem, recreate, and reconstitute a New Humanity that would do what God had always intended for Man to do – here. Where is this story going?

**A New Creation** (John 20:22) – God had breathed upon Adam the breath (spirit) of life, and Jesus prophesied the same to His people, pointing to Pentecost. This new, eternal, life sets us free from the curse (Rom 8:2) and ultimately results in the restoration of the entire creation (Rom 8:19-21). In Christ, we are the new creation (2 Cor 5:17), restored in His image (Eph 4:24, Col 3:10), and clothed again with glory (Rom 8:29-30). This eternal life is secure because our standing is in Christ who can never fail, "...the redemptive revelation of God had to be as comprehensive as the sweep of sin. Redemption must, in the nature of the case, be for the whole world. This does not mean that it must save every individual sinner in the world. It does mean, however, that the created universe which has been created as a unit must also be saved as a unit." – C. Van Til.

**Definitive-Progressive** – But we do not yet see a saved world, so what's up? Again, let the scriptures teach us. We *have been* saved (2 Tim 1:9), we *are being* saved now (Phil 2:12-13), and we *will be* saved (1 Pet 1:9). This is the same regarding our sanctification: we *have been* remade in God's image (Eph 4:24), we *are being* remade into His image (2 Cor 3:18), and we *will be* perfectly remade in His image (Phil 3:20-21). What we see is that salvation was definitively completed in the finished work of Jesus Christ; and it is being applied progressively during this age, personally and corporately (individually and over all creation). It will reach its final fulfillment and glory at the end of history when Christ returns. It was a wrongful pursuit of the knowledge of good and evil that brought mankind into ruin; and it is the work of Christ that makes it possible for the garden-dominion to be accomplished – "*For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea*" (Isaiah 11:9).

**Pictures and Promises of Eden** (Isaiah 51:3, Ezek 36:33-36) – The language of salvation and the promise of Christ's coming are wrapped in Eden-restoration language. Beyond specific passages mentioning Eden, the scriptures are full of the Paradise-restoration theme. And this story culminates with a New Humanity in a New Jerusalem fulfilling God's purpose to rule and subdue and take dominion of the whole world (Rev 22:1-5). Paradise will be restored.

**In the Middle of the Story** – We find ourselves in the middle of this story, not at the beginning and, most likely, far from the end. Knowing the theme of the story, the end, and the Author, changes the way we perceive (and, by God's grace, live in) the middle.