

## I. REVIEW

- A. The last few weeks, we have been working through themes and topics related to Genesis 1. According to 2 Peter 3, we neglect Genesis 1 to our peril. In that passage Peter tells us that the deliberate forgetting of what God did in the beginning is one of the factors that leads to a scoffing spirit concerning the Second Coming. The last few weeks we have been asking God to use the truths of Genesis 1 to drive us to a deeper place of watchfulness as we eagerly await the arrival of our blessed hope – Jesus’ return. God had the power to create the heavens and the earth the first time, and God entered into a covenant with the creation. Therefore, God has the power and is committed to repairing the created order when Jesus returns.
- B. Two weeks ago we focused our attention on the concept and nature of “seed” as it is defined in Genesis 1. We discussed a number of principles related to this concept and then explored how it gives us insight into a number of Bible passages that relate to God’s plan of redemption. 1) Seed and life are inextricably bound together; 2) seed when planted grows over time and eventually becomes a mature organism; 3) contained in seed is the potential to reproduce and multiply life of like kind; 4) God enjoys processes and watching things grow over time; 5) the development and multiplication of seed occurs through God’s word of blessing.
- C. When we accept the gospel, God’s word is planted in us like a seed. We become new creatures in Christ. Our conception begins when we receive the gospel. In this age, the Spirit is growing and maturing us over time. We are being transformed from glory to glory on the inside. However, our redemption is not complete until the Second Coming, when we receive our resurrected bodies. Though we are conceived by the gospel and Spirit as new creatures in this age, we will be born from the womb of this age in the resurrection at Jesus’ return, when we will receive new bodies. When Jesus returns, He will pour out the blessing of the Spirit in full measure unto our bodily redemption. At the Second Coming, Jesus’ resurrected life will be instantly multiplied and reproduced according to like kind as multitudes of resurrected sons and daughters come up from the grave.

*Romans 8:10-11,18-23 (ESV)*

***10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you (at the Second Coming).... <sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God (born from the womb of this age in the resurrection). <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God (the first-fruits of the restoration of all things in the first resurrection, cf. Rev. 20:6, Ac. 3:21). <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.***

1 John 3:1-3 (NIV)

***<sup>1</sup> How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup> Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him (God reproducing the resurrected Christ according to His kind), for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.***

D. In Acts 3:21, the apostle Peter tells us that the restoration of all things will commence at the Second Coming of Jesus. What is going to be restored? Tonight we are going to look more closely at the Garden of Eden before the Fall. This will give us insight into our inheritance in the age to come, when that which was lost will be restored, recovered, and made new. One of Paul's main prayers for the churches under his care was that they would grow in their understanding of that which we put our hope in: the age to come and Jesus' kingdom on the earth. He prayed this because he knew that God uses a deepening understanding of our coming inheritance to motivate us to live of wholehearted obedience to Jesus. A clearer picture of the nature of our inheritance motivates us to live lives that Jesus counts worthy of inclusion in the age to come. No mind can conceive how glorious the age to come and Jesus' kingdom will be. But God gives us glimpses as we study the Scriptures with hunger and diligence and as we walk in the Spirit.

Acts 3:21 (NIV)

***He (Jesus) must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything (NKJV-"until the times of restoration of all things"), as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.***

Luke 20:34-35 (NIV)

***<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. <sup>35</sup> But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, <sup>36</sup> and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.***

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 (NIV)

***<sup>9</sup> However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" — <sup>10</sup> but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.***

Ephesians 1:16-18 (ESV)

***<sup>16</sup> I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, <sup>18</sup> having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you...***

## II. THE TOPOGRAPHY OF EDEN

- A. In Genesis 2, we learn that “Eden” was made up of at least three distinct but interrelated areas: 1) the *region* of Eden; 2) the Garden of Eden; and 3) the mountain of Eden. In Genesis 2 it is not explicitly stated that there was a mountain called Eden. However, we can infer from Genesis 2 that there was some sort of elevated terrain to the west of the Garden also called Eden, from which water flowed downward into the Garden. Other parts of Scripture do explicitly make clear that there was a very special and holy mountain in Eden.

*Genesis 2:8-10 (NIV)*

***8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden (Garden of Eden) in the east , in Eden (the region in which the Garden was planted); and there (in the Garden of Eden) he put the man he had formed. 9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10 A river ( downward movement from higher elevation) watering the garden flowed from Eden (Eden also a high place to the west of the Garden, a mountain); from there it was separated into four headwaters.***

- B. Ezekiel 28 states explicitly that there was a mountain in Eden. This was called the “holy mountain of God.” Near or on this mountain were stones of fire. Satan walked among these stones before he was expelled from the mountain. I am sure it was a mountain of unimaginable beauty and splendor, full of God’s fire, light, and glory. I believe this mountain was where God’s earthly throne was located.

*Ezekiel 28:11-19 (ESV)*

***11 Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me: 12 “Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre (anti-Christ – king over Tyre and ten other nations in the last days – possessed by Satan and under Satan’s control, cf. Is. 13-22, Ezek. 25-30, Dan. 7, Rev. 12-13; to speak to one is to speak to the other), and say to him, Thus says the Lord God: “You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. 14 You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. 16 In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you (ESV alternative “banished you”), O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you. 18 By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you. 19 All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever”*(cf. Rev. 19-20).**

C. God had a nice mountain top view of the Garden. Sometimes I just love watching my children play in the living room while I sit on my recliner – my “throne.” Watching them brings me great joy (most of the time). From this mountain, God would have enjoyed watching His children Adam and Eve tend, care for, and receive the enjoyments of the Garden. But He couldn’t stay up on the mountain too long. His desire for closeness to His image bearers brought Him down the mountain for regular walks with His children.

*Genesis 3:8 (NIV)*

***8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day...***

D. Was this mountain taken up into the heavens sometime after the Fall? Perhaps. This might be a logical inference from Revelation 21.

*Revelation 21:10-11 (ESV)*

***10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.***

E. A friend of mine shared with me once his view that the tabernacle and the Jerusalem temple were built according to a pattern that similarly existed in Eden. This makes sense to me in light of the three-fold structure of the tabernacle and temple, and the three-fold structure of the Garden. In the temple, you had three main sections: the outer courts, the holy place, and the holy of holies, where God sat enthroned between the cherubim and seraphim. In Eden, you had the broader region of Eden, the Garden of Eden, and the mountain of Eden, where God’s throne was located. Both the temple and the Garden had an eastward orientation in their design. Also, both were the place where God’s fiery and glorious presence was visible, accessible, and manifest in a special way.

*Exodus 25:21-22 (NIV)*

***21 Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you. 22 There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.***

*2 Samuel 6:1-2 (ESV)*

***David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. 2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim* (NIV – “who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark”).**

*2 Chronicles 7:1-3 (NIV)*

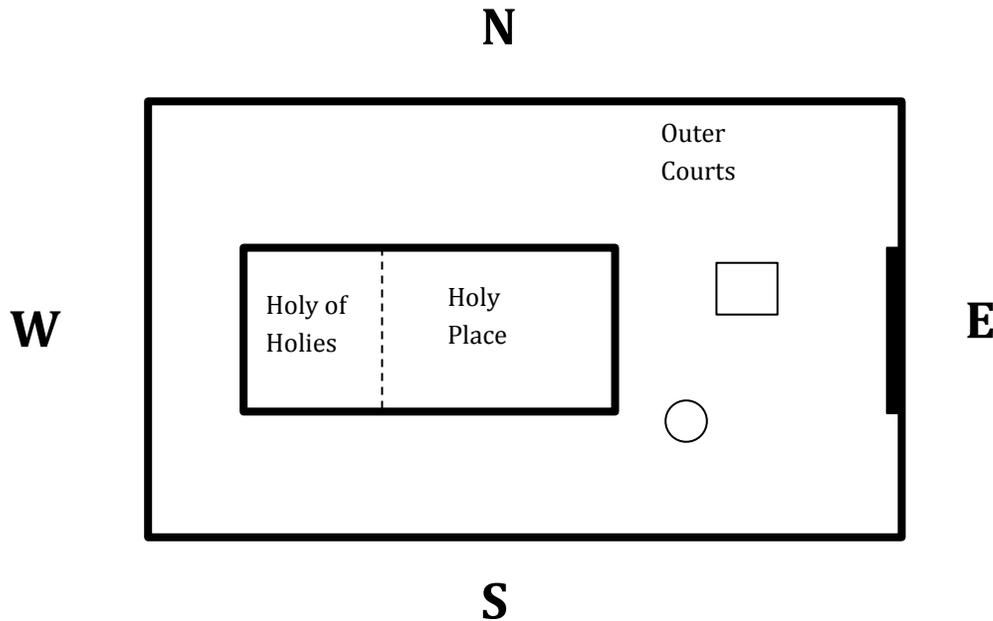
***When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. 2 The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it. 3 When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt***

**on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD.**

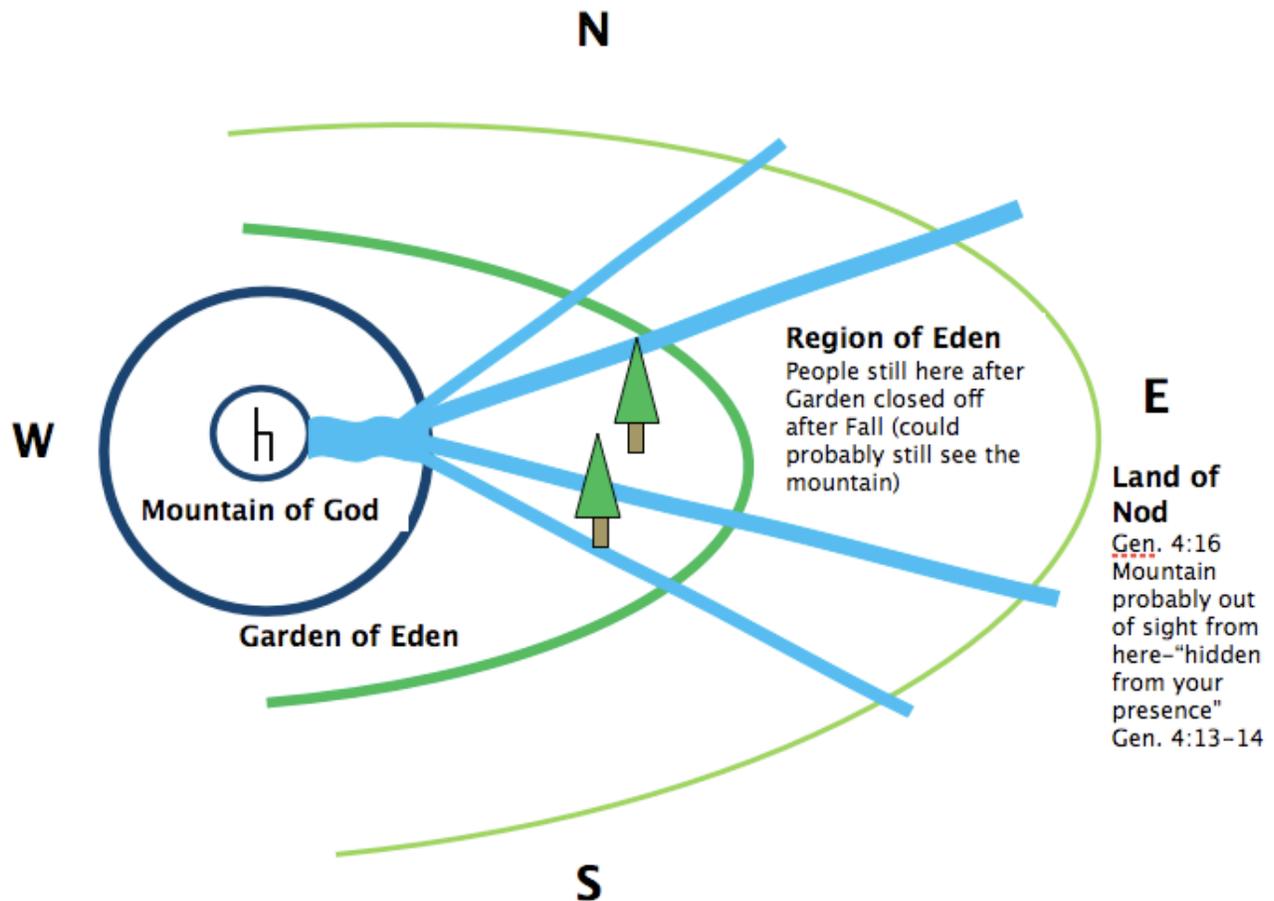
Genesis 4:13-14 (NIV)

**<sup>13</sup> Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. <sup>14</sup> Today you are driving me from the land (the region of Eden), and I will be hidden from your presence (the Garden complex of Eden where the mountain of God could be seen); I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”**

**Diagram 1**



**Diagram 2: The Edenic Temple Complex**



**III. THE TREE OF LIFE**

- A. God loves to garden. When He made the Garden of Eden, He planted all kinds of trees and vegetation. These trees were extravagantly beautiful, a sight to behold, pleasing to the eyes. And these trees were not just beautiful but fruitful. They produced fruit that was good for food and enjoyable to the taste. God could have created us in a way that did not involve the intake of food. Why do you think He created us this way?

*Genesis 2:8-9a (ESV)*

***<sup>8</sup> And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup> And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight (NIV "pleasing to the eye") and good for food.***

- B. In Scriptures, trees are often used to portray a kingdom. This should not surprise us because the kingdom of God on the earth before the Fall was a Garden. God plants and uproots the kingdoms of the earth like plants and trees.

Daniel 4:13-15,24-26 (NIV)

<sup>13</sup> ***"In the visions I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. <sup>14</sup> He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. <sup>15</sup> But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field...<sup>24</sup> "This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: <sup>25</sup> You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes. <sup>26</sup> The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you (uprooted tree=kingdom destroyed; stump=kingdom humbled and disciplined, but to be restored)when you acknowledge that Heaven rules (cf. Israel in Zech. 12; Israel humbled, but restored when they repent and acknowledge Jesus as Lord).***

Isaiah 11:1-3 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>***A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse (i.e. the Davidic dynasty humbled and disciplined through exile from Jerusalem, but to be restored in the Messiah; cf. Davidic Covenant 2 Sam. 7; the Davidic dynasty would be humbled, but never torn from David's line as it was from Saul's); from his roots a Branch (the Messiah) will bear fruit (the Messianic Seed reproduced according to like kind in the resurrection; fruits of righteousness and justice, etc., cf. Is.42:4) . <sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD— <sup>3</sup> and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.***

Isaiah 27:6 (NIV)

***In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit (under the Messiah's leadership).***

Luke 13:18-19 (NIV)

<sup>18</sup> ***Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? <sup>19</sup> It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air (the citizens of the kingdom) perched in its branches (the citizens finding rest, provision, enjoyment, and sustenance in that kingdom)."***

Jeremiah 1:9-10 (NIV)

<sup>9</sup> ***Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. <sup>10</sup> See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."***

C. Two trees were of particular significance in the Garden: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This week we are just going to look at the tree of life. We will talk more about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil when we get to the Fall and Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden.

*Genesis 2:9b (ESV)*

**The tree of life was in the midst of the garden** (NIV – “In the middle of the garden”), **and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

- D. When we think about these trees, we probably should not think about Charlie Brown’s Christmas tree. These were probably majestically beautiful trees. God seems to have strategically situated these trees in the center point of the Garden. I imagine them being visible to angels and human beings from long distances and from all directions. It seems to me that God was trying to communicate something to the created order through the strategic placement of these trees. What do you think He might have been trying to say?
- E. When Adam and Eve ate fruit from the tree of life, their bodies were regenerated. As long as they did not disobey God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they were permitted access to the tree of life. Without eating the fruit of this tree, their bodies would have not continued regenerating themselves. In other words, Adam and Eve’s bodies would have started to slowly deteriorate over time. After the Fall, God did not want human beings to live forever in a sinful state of being. This would have meant no end to sin unto the perpetual desecration and depravity of the earth. So He blocked the way to the tree of life.

*Genesis 3:22-24 (NIV)*

**22 And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”** **23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.** **24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.**

- F. Why do you think God tied the regeneration of life to the eating of fruit?

#### IV. THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

- A. As we talked about earlier, when Jesus returns, He is going to *restore* all things (Ac. 3:21). God is longing for the Garden Paradise to be reestablished on the earth. He wants to walk with us again in the cool of the day. I long for the day when we walk with Jesus through the Garden.
- B. From a number of Scriptures we learn that the topographical layout of the Messiah’s coming kingdom will follow the pattern of the Edenic Temple Complex. There will once again be a holy mountain where God’s glory and presence are experienced in a special way. From this mountain in Jerusalem Jesus will govern, rule, and train the nations of the earth in righteousness. On this mountain we will feast with Jesus and celebrate the overcoming of death and what He did for our salvation. From the His throne and temple on the mountain of God, a river will flow toward the east. There will also be a tree of life. We will once again be able to eat from the tree of life, and our bodies will perpetually regenerate. We will never die.

*Isaiah 2:3-5 (NIV)*

**3 Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.”** **The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.** **4 He will judge between**

***the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. <sup>5</sup>Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.***

Isaiah 25:6-9 (NIV)

***<sup>6</sup> On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. <sup>7</sup> On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; <sup>8</sup> he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. <sup>9</sup> In that day they will say, “Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.”***

Isaiah 4:2-6 (NIV)

***<sup>2</sup> In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. <sup>3</sup> Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. <sup>5</sup> Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. <sup>6</sup> It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.***

Daniel 2:35, 44-45 (NIV)

***<sup>35</sup> Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth...<sup>44</sup> “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. <sup>45</sup> This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.***

Ezekiel 47:1-12 (NIV)

***<sup>1</sup> The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. <sup>2</sup> He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was flowing from the south side. <sup>3</sup> As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. <sup>4</sup> He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. <sup>5</sup> He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. <sup>6</sup> He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?” Then he led***

**me back to the bank of the river. <sup>7</sup> When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. <sup>8</sup> He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah (the Jordan Valley), where it enters the Sea (the Dead Sea). When it empties into the Sea (the Dead Sea), the water there becomes fresh. <sup>9</sup> Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. <sup>10</sup> Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Great Sea (Mediterranean). <sup>11</sup> But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. <sup>12</sup> Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”**

Revelation 21:5,9-11,22-27 (NIV)

**<sup>5</sup> He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”... <sup>9</sup> One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. <sup>11</sup> It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal...<sup>22</sup> I did not see a temple (Gk. “naos”- the inner sanctuary; in reference to the temple denotes only the Holy Place or Holy of Holies, not the whole temple complex) in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (the Father and the Lamb dwell the Holy Place and Holy of Holies within the Temple, cf. Heb. 9:8). <sup>23</sup> The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. <sup>25</sup> On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. <sup>27</sup> Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.**

Revelation 22:1-6 (NIV)

**<sup>1</sup> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life (cf. Ezek. 47), as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. <sup>6</sup> The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”**

## V. CONCLUSION

- A. Have you ever wondered why Abraham was always living near trees, stopping near trees, praying near trees, and planting trees? Have you ever wondered why God seems to have liked encountering and making promises to Abraham near trees?

*Genesis 12:6-7 (NIV)*

***6 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring (seed) I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.***

*Genesis 14:13 (NIV)*

***One who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre...***

*Genesis 18:1(NIV)*

***The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.***

*Genesis 21:33 (NIV)*

***Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God.***

- B. I'm sure there were some real practical reasons that Abraham liked trees. He was a nomad and he liked resting in the shade. But that wasn't the only thing going on (in Genesis 18:1, Abraham sat in the shade of his tent, not in that of the nearby trees!). Abraham planted a tree in Beersheba as an act of faith. This was an expression of his faith and hope in God's promise that one day he would literally inherit the land God had promised him – the renewed Garden or the kingdom of God. Most trees if they are not cut down have a longer lifespan than a normal human lifespan. I believe Abraham was making a bold statement of faith: "though I am a stranger in this land now, and though all of these other peoples around me think it belongs to them, this is my land because God has promised it to me. He *will* raise me from the dead and I will inherit the Garden. I will plant this tree as a sign of my hope that God will once again give me access to the tree of life in the age to come. Though this tree may outlast me now, I will live to see it again."
- C. In Scripture Abraham is heralded as the supreme example of faith. God wants us to follow Abraham's example and set our hope fully in the Garden that He is going to plant once again when Jesus returns. Are we living for the things of this age? Are we spending all of our time and energy eating from the false pleasures of sin, pride, and selfishness? Or are we living for the pleasures of the tree of life that will again be ours in the age to come if we overcome to the end?

*Revelation 2:7 (NIV)*

***He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.***