

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #12

Genesis 2:8-17

THE LORD GOD ORIGINALLY CREATED A WONDERFUL ENVIRONMENT FOR MAN TO ENJOY, LIVE AND WORK AND HE PLACED MAN IN HIS ENVIRONMENT AND GAVE HIM ONLY ONE RESTRICTION.

ACTION #1 – The LORD God planted His garden. **2:8a**

The word “plant” indicates that God established or set up His garden and assigned it a fixed residency (Gesenius, p. 547). The particular place where this garden was located was “toward the east in Eden.” The Hebrew word “Eden” speaks of a place that is delightful and pleasurable (Ibid., p. 609). The preposition “in” indicates that this garden was not in its entirety Eden, but that it was located in Eden. That fact that it was “toward the east” indicates that Eden was located to the east of where man was originally created and east of where Israel is presently located.

We learn from other Scriptures that Eden was a wonderful place of delight which featured wonderful prosperity (Isaiah 51:3); beautiful exotic trees (Ezekiel 31:9, 16); and a wonderful supply of water (Genesis 2:10).

This garden was Divine horticulture, an amazing place that would bring pleasure and delight not only to man, but to the LORD God.

ACTION #2 - The LORD God placed man in His garden. **2:8b**

The word “place” indicates that it was the LORD God who set man in His garden (Ibid., p. 370). Man did not just stumble on God’s garden and decide to live there. He was placed there by God. Again, Moses stresses that it was the LORD God who formed man, a word that means that the LORD God is the One who artistically planned, designed and created man (Ibid., p. 361).

In reading verse 8, we are struck with two realities:

- 1) The LORD God made this garden;
- 2) The LORD God made man and put him in His garden.

What this means is that the garden and the man are dependent on the LORD God for their very existence. This also means that He is the One who has total Sovereign right over this creation for it is all His.

ACTION #3 - The LORD God produced distinct features in His garden. **2:9-14**

(Feature #1) - The LORD God’s garden featured trees. **2:9**

Four specific types of trees were found:

Tree Type #1 - Trees that were beautiful to see. **2:9a**

God caused trees to grow that were “pleasing to the sight.” He made certain trees just to look at as a thing of beauty. This point reveals that God does have an artistic nature.

Tree Type #2 - Trees that were good for food. **2:9b**

Not only did trees have beauty, but they also had use. God produced a variety of fruit trees for man to eat (1:1 1-12) and He placed those trees in His garden. Certainly the language implies that fruit could be eaten, which demonstrates that these trees were in fact literal.

It is significant to point out that many trees were in this garden from which man could select food and only one will be forbidden. In other words, man’s motive for rebellion cannot be because God had not provided enough to keep him from rebellion. In fact, just the opposite is true; God supplied abundant blessings and provisions for man and gave Him only one prohibition.

Tree Type #3 - Tree of Life. **2:9c**

The “Tree of Life” was located in the middle of the garden. The privilege of being able to eat from this tree is the privilege of being able to partake of a very unique tree that seems to suggest a very intimate relationship and fellowship with the LORD God.

Apparently, partaking of this tree means that one lives forever in the partaking state. For example, had Adam and Eve partaken of this tree after they fell into sin, they would have lived forever in their lost state (Genesis 3 :22). When this tree again appears, it will be in the New Jerusalem and its fruit will be enjoyed by all who are in an eternally saved state (Revelation 22:2-3, 14). God’s eternal paradise for believers will feature the Tree of Life (Revelation 2:7).

Tree Type #4 - Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. **2:9d**

In sharp contrast to the life tree, here is one that could be called a death tree because partaking of it produces death (Genesis 2:17).

The word “knowledge” is one that speaks of knowledge that comes through experiencing and understanding something. The word “evil” refers to things God classifies as wicked and bad, things hurtful and sad.

Man certainly had the ability to experience and understand good for the entire creative work of God was something “very good” (Genesis 1:31). The trees that were in the garden were “good” (**Genesis 2:9**).

The concept of having “no knowledge of good and evil” is a Biblical concept of being innocent of anything that would prohibit and prevent God’s blessings (Deuteronomy 1:39; Isaiah 7:15-16). What this means is that everything in God’s garden were blessings to be enjoyed and there was only one thing that could rob man of his innocence and there was only one tree that could open him up to a World of evil.

Now of course one question is, why would the LORD God put this tree in His garden, when it can do so much damage, which He knew it would do? One answer to this question is that the type of righteousness that can live with God forever is a righteousness that has been tested with some form of evil lure and found to be pure. God's righteousness is not a robotic righteousness, but a righteousness that is a real righteousness, which may be tested to be real. This tree offered such a test to man. Had man passed the test he could have lived forever in perfect harmony with the Glorious God.

(Feature #2) - The LORD God's garden featured a River. **2:10-14**

A very large river flowed out of Eden and became the beginning of four major rivers.

River #1 - The Pishon (Pish own) River. **2:11-12** (Little is known about this river.)

The name of this river means water poured forth and overflowed. The land of Havilah was a land of great wealth located northeast of Egypt (Genesis 25:18).

River #2 - The Gihon (Gi cone) River. **2:13** (Little is known about this river.)

The name means to "burst forth" and this river was a major river of the Cush region, which many take to mean Ethiopia.

River #3 - The Tigris River. **2:14** (Much is known about this river.)

The word "Hiddekel" is the ancient name for the Tigris River, which flowed toward the east of Assyria.

River #4 - The Euphrates River. **2:14b** (Much is known about this river.)

This river was a critical boundary to Israel's promised land (Genesis 15:18; Deut. 1:7-8).

All of these great rivers had their beginning existence in Eden.

There have been many attempts (some bizarre) to discover the precise location of Eden based on this data. The best guess is probably at the head of the Persian Gulf, the place where present day Iraq, Kuwait and Iran all meet together. This is where the Tigris and Euphrates begin and the other two rivers may in fact break off these two and wind and circle into Persian and Ethiopian lands.

ACTION #4 - The LORD God connects man to His garden. **2:15-17**

(Way #1) - The LORD God made the garden man's home. **2:15a**

The word "put" means God caused man to sit down quietly in Eden, as his **resting** place.

(Way #2) - The LORD God made the garden man's work. **2:15b**

The word "cultivate" emphasizes it was man's job to be the gardener of God's garden and the word "keep" emphasizes it was man's job to be the guardian of God's garden.

This work was not fatiguing because that was part of the curse (Genesis 3:17-18). This work would have been satisfying because it was in the context of God's blessings.

(Way #3) - The LORD God made the garden man's test. **2:16**

The test was based on two commands:

Command #1 - Man may eat of every tree in the garden. **2:16**

The Hebrew text indicates man could eat to his heart's content of every type of tree in the garden.

Command #2 - Man may not eat of one tree in the garden. **2:17**

Only one restriction was given.

One sees the insanity of choosing to forfeit all of God's blessings in God's garden for something that would demand death.

The same insanity still exists today for there are those who will forfeit a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ and choose eternal death.

There are three key gardens in Scripture - First garden which was Eden; Final garden which will be in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22), and the Garden of Gethsemane in which Jesus agreed with the Father to go to the cross. We have all been to the first garden in that we all sinned with Adam. In order to get to the final garden, we must go to Jesus Christ who was in Gethsemane. Have you been to Him? Will you go there by faith today?