

**Studies in Biblical Eschatology**  
**The New Heavens and the New Earth**  
**March 11, 2001 (Message #16)**

**Introduction**

We come to the end. We have looked at the resurrection of the body, the judgment, and now we get the consummation of God's redemptive purposes in Christ. We come to the end, which will have no end, the eternal state, the New Heavens and the New Earth.

Let us turn to that place in our Bibles which expounds for us the glories of paradise, Genesis! Yes Genesis! You cannot understand God's consummative act of redemption in the New Paradise, unless you begin with the first Paradise, Gen. 2.

**I. The Garden of God: Paradise Created (Gen. 2:8-25)**

- A. Yahweh God planted a garden (8)
  - 1. The word "paradise" comes from a Greek word, *paradeisoj*, meaning "garden" or "park, orchard with fruit trees."<sup>1</sup>
  - 2. "Eden" actually means "delight."<sup>2</sup>
- B. This Paradise of Delight was glorious
  - 1. trees pleasing to the sight/good for food

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<sup>1</sup>Moulton and Milligan, The Vocabulary of the NT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1930), 482.

<sup>2</sup>Willem A. Van Gemeren, ed. New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), III. 329-331.

- a good gift from God, which would be turned into sensual temptation from the devil
2. the tree of life and the implied union with his God (3:8)  
 “The tree of life stands in the midst of the garden. The garden is the ‘garden of God,’ not in the first instance an abode for man as such, but specifically a place of reception of man into fellowship with God in God’s own dwelling place.” (Vos)<sup>3</sup>
  3. the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
  4. The rivers - surrounded, fullness  
 God’s bounty (Psa. 65:9-13)  
 God’s life (Psa. 36:8-9; 45:4-5)  
 Physical life comes from and is sustained by God, and so it is true of spiritual life (Psa. 1:3)
  5. Man’s abode and place of labor
  6. Man’s luxuriant liberty (16)
  7. Man’s harmony with his environment
  8. Man’s blessed union with his wife

“Man’s life in this garden included labor, but at the same time it had the character of ideal happiness. In more than one respect, this is reminiscent of the classical golden age; familiarity with God, free use of the fruits of the garden, mastery over the animals, harmonious union of the primitive couple, moral innocence that is signified by the absence of shame, and the absence of death, which will only come into the world as a result of sin.” (Leon-Dufour)<sup>4</sup>

## II. The Fall of Man: Paradise Lost (Gen. 3:1-7)

- A. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
  1. The probation tree (G. Vos)  
 One prohibition in the environment of paradisaical plenty (2:16-17)
  2. Why the probation? It seems that two fundamental issues were at stake
    - (1) God’s authority and Lordship over Adam and Even

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<sup>3</sup>Geerhardus Vos, Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 27.

<sup>4</sup>Xavier Leon-Dufour, ed. Dictionary of Biblical Theology (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967), 357.

“The effect of this special probationary prohibition was to confront man head-on simply and solely with God’s absolute authority and thus to face him inescapably with the demand for a clear-cut confession of his sovereign Lord. And in this way the test of man’s covenantal loyalty was brought to its decisive issue.”<sup>5</sup>

(2) The corollary issue was an obedient faith  
Would they believe the Word of the Lord or would they believe the lie of Satan. It comes down to faith and the obedience of faith.

3. The Significance of the Tree  
God was not completely prohibiting Adam from the knowledge of good and evil. It was a matter of maturity in this knowledge (as the term denotes in its other OT references). The probation was how he would attain such knowledge - through obedience (and thus choosing good) or disobedience (and thus choosing evil). Vos says, “Would man make his choice for the sake of God and God alone.”<sup>6</sup>

- B. Man’s act of autonomous, rebellious unbelief
1. Man attain the knowledge, through evil, and know he finds himself naked and ashamed.
  2. His fall now radically affects his relationship with himself (3:7) his God (3:8), his wife (3:12) and his environment (3:17-19).
- C. Man is exiled from Paradise (3:22-24)
1. Man has become like Us - Man’s ability to distinguish between good and evil, morally autonomous
  2. the possibility of immortality in this condition - God in His grace does not allow them access to the tree
  3. Exile and judgment  
Although there is an element of grace in the Lord’s denied access to the tree of life, the exile also has overtones of judgment.

“Driven from his native homeland, the holy and blessed land, into a world profane and cursed, man is in exile on the face of the earth. His historical existence is a wandering east of Eden, a diaspora. Until the restoration of all things, the earth has taken on the character of a wilderness, lying outside the holy land of promise. It is a realm under the shadow of death. . . In the hour that God drove man into exile it was indicated that any future return to God’s dwelling-place and the tree of life must involve

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<sup>5</sup>Meredith G. Kline, Kingdom Prologue (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000), 105.

<sup>6</sup>Vos, Biblical Theology, 32.

a passage through the flaming sword of God's judgment, with which the new guardians of His sanctuary were armed."<sup>7</sup>

- D. Paradise Lost
  - 1. not only is the couple exiled under Divine judgment, but another change takes place.
  - 2. the earth itself, the land, is now cursed by virtue of their sin Gen. 3:17

"But sin has brought a true curse upon the earth, which makes it bring forth brambles and thorns. It is a place of trial, where man suffers until he finally returns to the ground from which he had been drawn."<sup>8</sup>

### III. The Promise of Redemption: Paradise Anticipated

- A. The Promise to Abraham  
Gen. 12:1-3; 15:7-21; 17:8
- B. Moses and the Promised Land  
Ex. 6:4; Deut. 8:7; 15:4
- C. Joshua and the Conquest  
Josh. 11:23; settlement, Josh. 13ff.  
"Israel becomes enthusiastic over the land, for God has not deceived His people. 'It is a good, a very good country,' which contrasts with the aridity and the monotony of the desert: it is the earthy paradise found again."<sup>9</sup>
- D. Israel's Golden Age  
1 Kgs. 8:56
- E. Paradise slips away once again
  - 1. Covenantal curses: Lev. 26:32-39; Deut. 28:63
  - 2. The Crises: Assyrian and Babylonian
  - 3. The Punishment: Exile from the Land
- F. The Prophets and Promise
  - 1. Renewed earth promises abound as a part of redemption and restoration.
  - 2. Specifically, restored Eden promises: Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 36:33-35
- G. "This can't be paradise, can it?" The restoration

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<sup>7</sup>Kline, Kingdom Prologue, 137.

<sup>8</sup>Leon-Dufour, Dictionary of Biblical Theology, 106.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

Ezra 3:10-13

Although the land promises find some degree of fulfillment, yet because of sin, rebellion and judgment, inhabiting the land never reaches an Edenic state. Death and the curse stand in the way.

It is at this point that the need for redemption becomes apparent, not only for the people, but for the renewal of a cursed earth.

#### H. Fulfillment and Yet a Higher Expectation

What we have in the OT itself is the definite perspective that fulfillment occurred.

1. Josh. 21:43-45

“The view of a completed conquest and settlement in the land which God had given must also be seen against the background of the patriarchal stories which first mention the oath made to the forefathers. These patriarchs could not call any part of the land that God promised them their own except a grave or two in which to bury their beloved dead. Compared to that, how rich the fulfillment of the promise now appeared!<sup>10</sup>

2. The missing piece - The Patriarchs never received the promise nor possessed the inheritance. There is something in their non-inheritance that was unsettling. The very fact displays some kind of higher expectation on their part.

Fairbairn, 333-335

3. The higher expectation  
Heb. 11:9-10, 13-16

“The earthly Canaan was neither designed by God, nor from the first was it understood by His people to be the ultimate and proper inheritance which they were to occupy; things having been spoken and hoped for concerning it which plainly could not be realized within the bounds of Canaan.

The occupation of the earthly Canaan by the natural seed of Abraham was a type, and no more than a type, of this occupation by a redeemed church of her destined inheritance of glory.”

#### IV. Redemption Accomplished: Paradise Regained

##### A. Christ: the Last Adam, the Head of the New Creation

1. The first Adam was given dominion over the first paradise and brought ruination.

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<sup>10</sup>Marten Woudstra, The Book of Joshua, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 314.

- 2. Christ as the Last Adam, in His great work of redemption, not only redeems His people, He also redeems this earth from the curse.  
Eph. 1:9-10  
Col. 1:19-20
  - B. The already and not yet of Paradise regained  
Rom. 8:18-25
  - C. Entrance into Paradise is the Saints' reward  
Rev. 2:7; 22:14
- V. Redemption Consummated: Paradise Forever
- A. The New Earth is Paradise  
Rev. 2:7; 22:14
  - B. Eden, but only better!  
Rev. 21-22
  - C. Fulfillment of Covenant with Abraham  
Rom. 4:8  
  
OPR, Land, 143-144
- VI. Implications of the New Earth
- A. Implications regarding an earthly Millennium and the Land Promises
  - B. Implications regarding our stewardship of this present world  
Hoekema, 54, 286-287
  - C. Our expectations for the eternal state

**Studies in Biblical Eschatology**  
**The New Heavens and the New Earth (Part 2)**  
**March 18, 2001 (Message #17)**

**Introduction**

- I. **The Garden of God: Paradise Created (Gen. 2:8-25)**
  - A. Yahweh God planted a garden (8)  
Delightful garden, Paradise
  - B. This Paradise of Delight was glorious  
Abundant, luxuriant provision  
the tree of life and the implied union with his God (3:8)

- The rivers - surrounded, fullness
  - Physical life comes from and is sustained by God, and so it is true of spiritual life (Psa. 1:3)
  - Man's harmony with his environment
  - Man's blessed harmony with his wife
  - The Paradise of God, the place of ideal happiness

## II. **The Fall of Man: Paradise Lost (Gen. 3:1-7)**

- A. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (The probation tree (G. Vos)
  - Two fundamental issues were at stake
  - (1) God's authority and Lordship over Adam and Even
  - (2) The corrolary issue was an obedient faith
  
- B. Man's act of autonomous, rebellious unbelief
  - His fall now radically affects his relationship with himself (3:7) his God (3:8), his wife (3:12) and his environment (3:17-19).
  
- C. Man is exiled from Paradise (3:22-24)
 

"Driven from his native homeland, the holy and blessed land, into a world profane and cursed, man is in exile on the face of the earth. His historical existence is a wandering east of Eden, a disapora. Until the restoration of all things, the earth has taken on the character of a wilderness, lying outside the holy land of promise. It is a realm under the shadow of death. . . In the hour that God drove man into exile it ws indicated that any future return to God's dwelling-place and the tree of life must involve a passage through the flaming sword of God's judgment, with which the new guardians of His sanctuary were armed." Meredith Kline
  
- D. Paradise Lost
  - the earth itself, the land, is now cursed by virtue of their sin

## III. **The Promise of Redemption: Paradise Anticipated**

- A. The Promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:7-21; 17:8)
  
- B. Moses and the Promised Land (Ex. 6:4; Deut. 8:7; 15:4)
  
- C. Joshua and the Conquest (Josh. 11:23; settlement, Josh. 13ff)
  - "Israel becomes enthusiastic over the land, for God has not deceived His people. 'It is a good, a very good country,' which contrasts with the aridity and the monotony of the desert: it is the earthy paradise found again." Leon-Dufour
  
- D. Israel's Golden Age (rest, peace and full possession of the land, 1 Kgs. 8:56)
  
- E. Paradise slips away once again
  - 1. Covenantal curses: Lev. 26:32-39; Deut. 28:63

2. The Crises: Assyrian and Babylonian
3. The Punishment: Exile from the Land of Promise (like our first parents)

F. The Prophets and Promise

1. Renewed earth promises abound as a part of redemption and restoration.
2. Specifically, restored Eden promises: Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 36:33-35

G. “This can’t be paradise, can it?” The restoration (Ezra 3:10-13)  
 Although the land promises find some degree of fulfillment, yet because of sin, rebellion and judgment, inhabiting the land never reaches an Edenic state. Death and the curse stand in the way.  
 It is at this point that the need for redemption becomes apparent, not only for the people, but for the renewal of a cursed earth.

\*\*There is something inherent in the way the Land promises unfold and find fulfillment which should give us pause.

H. Fulfillment and Yet a Higher Expectation

What we have in the OT itself is the definite perspective that fulfillment occurred.

1. Josh. 21:43-45

“The view of a completed conquest and settlement in the land which God had given must also be seen against the background of the patriarchal stories which first mention the oath made to the forefathers. These patriarchs could not call any part of the land that God promised them their own except a grave or two in which to bury their beloved dead. Compared to that, how rich the fulfillment of the promise now appeared!  
 Marten Woudstra

2. The missing piece - The Patriarchs never received the promise nor possessed the inheritance. There is something in their non-inheritance that was unsettling. The very fact displays some kind of higher expectation on their part.

3. The higher expectation  
 Heb. 11:9-10, 13-16

“The earthly Canaan was neither designed by God, nor from the first was it understood by His people to be the ultimate and proper inheritance which they were to occupy; things having been spoken and hoped for concerning it which plainly could not be realized within the bounds of Canaan.

The occupation of the earthly Canaan by the natural seed of Abraham was a type, and no more than a type, of this occupation by a redeemed church of her destined inheritance of glory.” Fairbairn



#### **IV. Redemption Accomplished: Paradise Regained**

–the higher expectation is fulfilled in the Person and work of Christ.

- A. Christ: the Last Adam, the Head of the New Creation
  - 1. The first Adam was given dominion over the first paradise and brought ruination.
  - 2. Christ as the Last Adam, in His great work of redemption, not only redeems His people, He also redeems this earth from the curse.  
Eph. 1:9-10  
Col. 1:19-20
- B. The already and not yet of Paradise regained  
Rom. 8:18-25
  - 1. this present time is marked by suffering, the future time will be marked by glory.
  - 2. even the creation itself eagerly awaits the future revelation of the glory (the focus on the change that takes place in us)
  - 3. creation was subjected to futility (emptiness, due to the fall and curse). It is seen as laboring under our sin.(Isa. 24:5-6).
  - 4. the creation itself will experience redemption, liberation, from the bonds of the curse and sin, and even now is undergoing labor pains, eagerly anticipating this redemption!
  - 5. the redemption of the earth is connected with the redemption of our bodies.
  - 6. the pattern clearly fits the already and the not yet.

“According to Scripture the present world will neither continue forever nor will be destroyed and replaced by a totally new one. Instead it will be cleansed of sin and re-created, reborn, renewed, made whole.” Herman Bavinck

The renewal of the earth is the restoration of paradise itself.

- C. Entrance into Paradise is the Saints' reward  
This hope of a renewed earth, a restored paradise becomes the hope for the saints' eternal reward.  
Rev. 2:7; 22:14

#### **V. Redemption Consummated: Paradise Forever**

- A. The New Earth is Paradise, the Garden of God  
Rev. 2:7; 22:14
- B. It is Eden, but only better! It is heaven!
  - 1. Rev. 21:1-5  
a New Heaven and a New Earth (the regenerated, renewed creation)

it is a kainoj heaven and earth (used also in 2 Pet. 3:13, used in 2 Cor. 5:17)

this new earth is the earth that has been liberated (Rom. 8)  
certainly it is cleansed with fire (2 Pet. 3), but it is analogous to our resurrection bodies. Same, just glorified, purged from sin, etc.  
Bavinck, 157

the first heaven and earth passed away (2 Cor. 5:17). All of the futility, the deterioration, the corruption, the curse (see v. 4)  
no sea - often pictured as the origin of evil, chaos;  
The holy city, the New Jerusalem, wonderful picture of the people of God (verse 10ff)  
Now God dwells among men (as in Eden!) Fulfilled by Jesus Christ, consummated in the New Earth  
Reversal of the curse!  
Rev. 21:22 - Schilder, 62

2. Rev. 22:1-5, 14  
the river of the water of life coming from the throne of God (Ezek. 47-48, Eden)  
the tree of life! (22:14)  
healing for the nations (peace)  
No curse  
God's immediate dwelling place  
No more night (darkness, chaos, sin)  
Beale, a latter day Eden and a New Jerusalem, permanent fellowship with God.

- C. Fulfillment of Covenant with Abraham  
Rom. 4:13  
Gal. 3:29 - Matt. 5:5

The New Earth super-fulfills, fulfills beyond, the Land promises to Abraham and his seed (us, ala Gal. 3)

OPR, Land, 143-144

## VI. Implications of the New Earth

- A. Implications regarding an earthly Millennium and the Land Promises  
The New Earth makes it clear that no earthly Millennium is necessary to fulfill the covenant land promises, as dispensationalists claim.

First of all, the land promises narrowly considered, found fulfillment under the conquest and settlement of Joshua and the Golden Age of David and Solomon.

Secondly, the land promises, more broadly considered, find fulfillment in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ as the Seed of Abraham, and His redeeming work not just of Palestine, but of the whole earth.

- B. Implications regarding our stewardship of this present world  
Hoekema, 286-287
- C. Our expectations for the eternal state  
Bavinck, 155
  - 1. there will be wonderful points of discontinuity. things too wonderful for us to even imagine.
  - 2. there will also be wonderful points of continuity.

CS Lewis, The Last Battle, 167-168; 170-171