

Two Gardens
Pt 1 - Eden
Genesis 3:1-7
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7/27/14

Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I. Introduction and Background:

We often commemorate the momentous, historical events that have taken place at various locations around the world – some events so impactful they have shaped the course of world history, affecting the lives and destiny of millions of people throughout the world. For example, from the history of WWII alone, several come to mind such as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that catapulted America into WWII as a decisive force that would shape the world for years thereafter. After that, we had the D-Day invasion by America and its allies – an event that would mark the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany. Likewise, the dropping of the first atomic bombs which led to Japan’s surrender, again changing the course of history. And of course there are many other equally momentous events before and after WWII that likewise have shaped the course of history. Most of us vividly remember the 9/11 terrorist bombings of the twin towers in NYC, another life changing event.

So we remember occasions such as these in commemorative ceremonies due to their significant impact upon the lives and destinies of so many people. But the impact from such events is limited in that it is only experienced by us in each of our respective lifetimes. Granted, the impact of some events may extend well beyond 1 or 2 generations; however, each of us individually only feel their effects during our respective lifetimes. But compared to eternity, our life span here on earth is nothing more than a mere vapor, a microscopic dot on the timeline of eternity. When I think of the vastness of eternity compared to our short lifetimes here on earth, my mind often recalls the last verse from one of my favorite hymns, “Amazing Grace.” With reference to the everlasting life that true believer’s will enjoy in heaven, we sing, “When we've been there <in heaven> ten thousand years bright shining as the sun. We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we've first begun.” That states the truth that after 10,000 years in heaven, I won’t have used up any of eternity. It won’t be 10,000 years shorter at that point for there is no end. Eternity is forever!

And so with that perspective, this morning I want to talk to you about 2 momentous historical events that took place in 2 different locations that have shaped the course of the eternal destiny of everyone who ever lived from every generation – a destiny that each individual without exception shall experience, not just during a brief lifetime here on earth but forever and ever.

That makes our consideration of these events far more important than all the other historical events we might celebrate or commemorate in remembrance of them. Today I want to begin a 2 part series which I've titled, "Two Gardens" in reference to 2 eternally momentous events that took place in those gardens. I'm speaking of that which took place (1st) in the Garden of Eden – and that will be our primary focus this morning. And next week I will major on that which began to take place in another garden, the Garden of Gethsemane. Events began there which led up to the death and subsequent resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now to further emphasize the importance of what took place in these 2 gardens, not only has it impacted on my eternal destiny, your eternal destiny, and the destiny of everyone who has ever lived, but your understanding of the vital significance of what took place in these 2 gardens ultimately gives evidence as to just what impact these events have had on your own eternal destiny. There are only 2 outcomes – eternal life with God in heaven's glory or else the misery of hell and eternal separation from God. And the revelation of God-given faith opens that necessary understanding to the hearts and minds of all who shall go to heaven. "*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Rom. 10:17) so consider with me what God's word has to say about what took place in these 2 gardens.

- II. Garden of Eden: First, the Garden of Eden. What happened there? The fall of all mankind. It's been said that to be wrong on the fall is to be wrong on it all. And there is some truth in that. (For those who are interested in studying this subject further, I recommend an excellent Bible Study paper written by our returning pastor that is available on our Reign of Grace website, an article I used extensively in preparing today's message. It's titled "What happened in the Garden of Eden?" And that will be our focus today – that eternally momentous event that took place in this 1st garden – the fall of all mankind.
 - A. In Genesis 1 we read how the triune God created the first man, Adam, in His own image. And in Genesis 2 we read how God put Adam in the garden. Look at that with me beginning in Genesis 2:15 where we read, "***And the LORD God took the man, <Adam> and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.***" (Or literally, "dying, thou shalt die."). God created Adam and then put him in a paradise, the Garden of Eden, and then gave him only this 1 command to obey in this covenant of works He made with Adam. In the verses that follow we read how God thought it was not good for man to be alone so He created Eve to be his wife.
 - B. The Bible tells us that God created Adam and Eve in His own image. That means that Adam and Eve possessed all the communicable qualities of the character of God. God has communicable attributes and incommunicable attributes. That simply means there are some qualities which God can pass or transfer to others and some which He cannot.

For example, God is holy and He created Adam as holy. On the other hand, God is uniquely immutable. He changes not. He is the Creator, not a created creature for He is eternal, meaning He has no beginning and no end. But Adam was created. He had a beginning, and being a creature, he could never be immutable. Creation by definition means change has taken place. Adam and Eve were created in God's image as perfectly holy people who were without sin, holy in their character and conduct. But as created beings, they were not immutably holy. They were sinless. Adam was the first man, and a better man than any of his descendants would ever be. He was the crown of God's creation. And unlike you and me and the rest of Adam's posterity, He wasn't born in sin, with a sinful nature, naturally allied with Satan, and naturally an enemy of God, as the scripture declares to be true of all the rest of us. Adam was the best created representative we could ever hope to have.

- C. God entered into this covenant of works with Adam, the first man. God appointed Adam as the representative and federal head of the entire human family. And so when Adam disobeyed he did so as the representative of all mankind. We read how that affected us all in Romans 5:12: ***"Wherefore, as by one man <Adam> sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"*** We weren't there personally, but we sinned in him, our representative. Adam stood as a responsible, rational creature. The terms of this covenant were very simple – obey God and live; disobey God and die.
- D. God gave Adam both a promise and a threat. God promised Adam eternal, spiritual life as long as Adam would obey the commandment of God perfectly. And God added the threat of death should Adam sinfully disobey. We know that Adam was created with spiritual life because thereby, he had fellowship with and communed directly with God. But the difference between the spiritual life Adam had in his original state and the spiritual life given redeemed man is that Adam's original spiritual life was mutable – he could lose it and he did. The redeemed (those Christ recovered from the fall) have the spiritual life that was purchased for them by the everlasting blood and righteousness of another Representative, Jesus Christ. Their spiritual life is eternal and can never be lost. Adam being a creature was subject to change and, therefore, liable to fall. This is the nature of a creature. Only God is immutable! Satan orchestrated the fall as we will see, but all according to God's eternal purpose and plan as we read in Eph. 1:11, He ***"...worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."*** Scripture teaches us that the chief design behind all that God does is for His own glory. Likewise, God purposed the fall of mankind in Adam for His own glory (and the highest manifestation of it) in the redemption of fallen mankind by saving His elect through another Representative, the 2nd or last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- E. So in the Garden of Eden, God put Adam to the test. The objective test of the covenant of works centered on the ***"tree of the knowledge of good and evil."*** This tree represented God's standard of good and evil along with His sovereign authority and right to set that standard.

It is God, not man, who determines what is right and what is wrong. So the welfare of the whole of humanity depended upon Adam's continued obedience because Adam represented the whole of humanity, as we've seen already from Romans 5:12. It is important to recognize that this covenant of works was never intended to be a covenant of salvation or redemption. There was no provision in this covenant for mercy or grace. There was no remedy for disobedience and no way of recovery in this covenant. Disobedience meant swift and certain death with no hope of salvation to be found in this covenant.

- F. Adam fell when he broke the covenant of works by eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam actually fell before he ate the fruit when in his mind he had determined to disobey God. His eating the fruit was simply the result of his having made a judgment and coming to a conclusion based on Satan's lie. This is very, very important if we are to understand the fall of man and recognize within ourselves the reality of it as evidenced by our own fallen, depraved, sinful human nature and tendencies.
- G. Satan first began tempting Eve by challenging God's authority, God's truth, God's promise, and God's threat. Look at that with me in our text, beginning in Genesis 3:1, ***"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"² And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:³ But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.⁴ And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:⁵ For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.⁶ And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.⁷ And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."***
- H. As the narrative continues God showed them their fig-leaf aprons would not suffice as He made them coats of skin by killing an animal, typifying the necessary shedding of the blood of the One whose sacrificial death alone would take away their guilt and shame and redeem them from the fall. From the very beginning, God began to point them to the remedy that would begin to be realized in a 2nd garden.
- I. Here in Genesis 3:4, contrary to God's command, Satan's message to Adam and Eve was ***"Ye shall not surely die."*** God had set the standard of good and evil. He had told Adam and Eve that it was evil to eat of the fruit of that tree. He had told them that if they ate of it, they would die. But Satan told them it was not evil to eat of the fruit of that tree. He told them it was good and that they would not die. In essence Satan was saying that God is not the only one who can say what is good and evil, who can set the standard of judgment in these matters.

Satan in essence told Adam and Eve that they could set their own standard of good and evil when he told them, **"then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."** This phrase does not mean that Adam and Eve did not know the difference between good and evil before the fall. Adam was an intelligent, rational creature, made in the very image of God. Many believe he was the most intelligent human being ever as he was the first man, created without the contamination of sin. God did not create Adam (nor enter into the covenant with him) as an ignorant, irrational, immature child. Adam knew full well what he was doing.

- J. And consider the phrase, **"ye shall be as gods."** In believing Satan's lie, Adam wasn't thinking He could take God's place and become a god. He knew full well that he didn't create the world. He knew that his power was limited, but in eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, he sought to be **"as gods"** in the sense that he could aspire to be independent from God and set his own standard of right and wrong, good and evil, of saved and lost. This describes the problem with all of fallen, sinful humanity by nature.
- K. Adam and Eve listened to Satan's lie, and Adam made a judgment, a conscious decision, based on Satan's lie. Adam did not believe God's threat or God's promise. He did not believe God. He believed Satan's message – **"ye shall not surely die."** Adam fell when he took sides with Satan against God. He sought to set his own standard of good and evil. In essence, Adam sought to set his own standard as to the basis for being saved (continuing in life) and being lost (perishing). Satan, in the form of the serpent, spoke peace to Adam and Eve in opposition to God's testimony. The moment Adam sinned, he became guilty, defiled, totally depraved, and spiritually dead. I was in a discussion with Mark and others a few weeks back and I like how he described the effects of the fall on Adam. (1) Adam immediately died spiritually. (2) His physical death became a future certainty, and (3) eternal death was no longer avoidable by anything he could do or refrain from doing – by his works. He had broken the covenant of works God had entered into with him and he and all he represented suffered the sure and certain consequences of that.
- L. Now this proves that immorality is not the core issue of sin. Immorality is certainly sinful, but it is just an effect of a greater, deeper, more fundamental problem. Sin is essentially unbelief of God. Unbelief is what causes man to declare his independence from God and seek to set his own standard of good and evil, of saved and lost. Adam and Eve were the only human beings on earth at that time. They had no neighbors so they could not sin against the second table of the Ten Commandments given to Moses which has to do with perfect love to our neighbors. It forbids adultery, murder, lying, stealing, and covetousness. Adam could not have committed any of these sins on which religion typically majors because there was no one around to commit them with. There were no drugs or alcohol, no pornography. Before the fall, Adam and Eve were righteous and holy, spiritually alive with free, unfettered access and fellowship with God.

M. Adam sinned in unbelief of God, and his sin resulted in a two-fold death (a future physical death, and an immediate spiritual death). By that one sin Adam brought both himself and Eve into a state whereby they were now alienated from God, enemies of God, and allied with Satan under his influence and power, the powers of darkness. Now they were guilty and defiled. And remember, they still had no neighbors. So they were still moral in all these areas I mentioned before. What was the first thing they did after the fall? They did not get drunk or perform some perverted act of gross immorality. They did not seek to murder each other. No, they realized their own nakedness and sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves (**Gen. 3:7**). This doesn't mean that they were unaware of their nakedness before the fall. They knew they were naked, but their nakedness before the fall brought no shame because they had no sin to make them ashamed. Before the fall, they were pure and holy. After the fall they both immediately realized they now were exposed to God's just wrath due unto their disobedience – their sin. The sewing of fig leaf aprons represents fallen man's natural, sinful inclination to cover himself or shield himself from the wrath of God by his or her own efforts.

This is sinful and sadly just what most religions promote – even the majority of those who call themselves Christians. But since Adam's fall, eternal life became unattainable by anything that proceeds from the fallen sinner. This is the reason God reveals plainly in Romans 3:20 that **"Therefore by the deeds of the law <by any obedience or compliance you might render> there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. 3:20)**. None will be accepted into God's presence, cleared of their guilt and declared righteous by any efforts they make – not by their believing, not by their church-going, not by their sincere interest in the things of God. No! Fallen man needs a Savior who would come and begin to suffer in another garden on His way to accomplishing for them what none of us can do for ourselves.

- N. As Genesis 3 continues, we learn of some of the other ramifications of Adam's sin – how it brought a curse upon all of future mankind by ushering in not only physical death, but many drudgeries of life, including the necessity of laboring by the sweat of our brow for our sustenance. God tells Eve that because of their sin, women would be cursed so as to painfully labor in giving birth to children. But most significantly, Adam plunged himself and the whole human race into spiritual death and darkness. And every human since then has proceeded to prove it.
- O. And the greatest evidence of that – of our fallen, spiritually dead state with which we all began our physical lives here on earth – is the unbelief of God that causes us (just like Adam and Eve) to seek to set our own standard of saved and lost, which in turn causes us to speak a false peace to ourselves and to others contrary to God's testimony. There are many who are more moral than others and many who are sincerely religious. Yet like Adam and Eve, our first, natural religious inclination is to presume we can be saved by something done by or through us – a work of our hand, akin to sewing fig leaf aprons for ourselves. – presuming we can be saved because we believe, or because we are sincere, or because of something other than (or in addition to) the doing and dying of Jesus Christ in our place – and that alone.

As Paul wrote to the Galatians, **“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,...”** (Gal. 6:14a). We were ruined by the fall. That’s why we need redemption (to have been bought back) by the only One who can and has redeemed those who are saved.

- P. Our fallen nature is manifested by our tendency to likewise fall for Satan’s lie just as did Adam and Eve. We have numerous warnings in the Epistles to beware of false teachings and one such warning is accompanied by an admonition to beware of the same subtlety used by Satan in deceiving Eve. Now we should take that seriously because unlike us, Adam and Eve were not born as sinners with a natural predisposition to sin prior to the fall. Yet even Eve was deceived by Satan’s subtlety. So how much more vulnerable are we then to likewise being fooled?
- Q. Look at this warning found in 2 Corinthians 11, where Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth, in verse 3, **“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled <or deceived> Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.** <“Simplicity” there means the singularity or the singleness of salvation by Christ – all of salvation fully accomplished by Him alone, without any contribution from the sinner> **“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him <or better translated ‘with me’>.”** What defines “another <counterfeit> Jesus,” “another spirit,” “another gospel?” It’s any notion that diverts you away from **“the simplicity that is in Christ,”** – from believing salvation is single-handedly accomplished by Christ.
- R. Now remember again these two aspects of Satan’s deception in the garden. First, though Adam and Eve were informed by God that they would die if they disobeyed Him by eating of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” Satan told them that it wasn’t necessary to abide by God’s standard. In fact, he told them that they could be as gods, in essence, set their own standard for good and evil. Secondly, Satan informed them that, contrary to God’s assertion of the certain consequence of death for failing to meet this standard that in fact, they really would not die.
- S. Religion’s Promotion of Satan’s Lie: That is exactly what the vast majority of mainstream religion tells its hearers today. Cloaked with the language of Scripture taken out of context, much of organized religion ignorantly tells us:
- (1) That we set the standard for salvation – that it is up to us as we’re told that salvation is ultimately conditioned on something that proceeds from us, the sinners; and...
 - (2) That, spiritually speaking, we’re okay – we shall not die eternally as long as we meet the prescribed condition(s) of our particular religious denomination, contrary to and independent of God’s standard of perfect righteousness.

Religion tells us to buy into Satan's deceptive lie in the garden when it tells us, "God has done His part – now the rest is up to you." We're taught that we can be in control, that the crowning, determining event upon which our final destiny hinges is our response, our acceptance – in other words, that salvation is conditioned on us. Different religions and denominations disagree or vary the emphasis upon just what conditions or requirements the sinner must meet. Oftentimes the self-righteous aspect of such teaching is obscured by the seemingly humble assertions that credit God the Holy Spirit with enabling us to meet the necessary conditions for our own salvation. Many, (including myself in years past), are deceived by this, failing to see that the Holy Spirit would never promote anything that would rival the work of Christ as God's provision to fully meet all of the conditions necessary for salvation. That would be "another spirit" Paul is warning us about.

Whether the emphasis is on your act of faith, repentance, some degree of obedience or "holy living," perseverance, or some combination of these, do not be fooled – most of religion promotes Satan's lie by telling us that in the exercise of our "free wills," we can meet the conditions for our own salvation and ultimately, we are in control. In falling for this, lost sinners unwittingly declare their autonomy and independence from God, rejecting His way and seeking their own because it seems right to them. (Quote Prov. 16:25).

- T. So we see our fallen nature even in our religious tendencies. But we also see it in those who are not religious. I have some non-religious acquaintances that question the very existence of God by reasoning that if there really was a God, He wouldn't allow terrible tragedies to take place – starvation of children in 3rd world countries, natural disasters, disease, pain and suffering, death, genocide, etc. They reason if there was a God, he wouldn't allow these bad and undesirable things to afflict good, innocent people – especially innocent children. And here is the problem with that kind of thinking: It's unbelief of what God says is true of us all. We know that some people have better morals, more commendable traits of character than others. So, we naturally think that there is good in all of us. But we don't set the standard of goodness for acceptance before a holy God. The sovereign God of this universe does. We would agree that a loving God would not allow bad things to happen to innocent people – but the premise is flawed because according to God there are no innocent people since the fall of man in Adam. And apart from God's grace, we just will not bow to what God says about us – that **"...there is none that doeth good, no not one!"** (Romans 3:12b). We don't like to think of ourselves in such a negative light and so we're prone to choose not to.
- U. God tells us we all will be judged in righteousness (Acts 17:31) – that's the perfect satisfaction to God's holy justice that only the God-man, Jesus Christ, could accomplish (and has accomplished) for those He saves by His perfect, sinless obedience, even unto the death of the cross. As we read in Romans 10:4, **"Christ is the end of the law <the fulfillment of it> for righteousness to everyone that believeth."**

To not see the universal deservedness of God's wrath against all of sinful mankind is to not understand what took place in either of these 2 gardens. There are no innocent people for when Adam sinned we all sinned – his sin was imputed or charged to all whom He represented – all of mankind.

- V. The proof of that is given to us in Romans 5:14 by the fact that physical death awaits us all. There it is pointed out how because of Adam's universal representation of all mankind, even infants die physically, those who never sinned after the similitude of Adam (meaning in the same willful, intentional way that Adam sinned). God speaks and reasons through His Word to men and women who have the capacity to reason. I believe that is why the Bible has little to say regarding the salvation of those who die in infancy or the mentally impaired. But based on King David's remarks following the death of his own child, I personally believe the death of an infant or a mentally impaired person is an indication they were one of God's elect, redeemed by the blood of Christ, one to whom God has imputed Christ's righteousness. But we do have an abundance of scripture from which we can conclude with certainty that all who inhabit heaven's glory will do so based solely upon (1) God having charged or imputed all their sins (including their original sin in Adam) to Christ that He might bear the just penalty due them in their place and (2) based on having the entire merit of what Christ accomplished for them – His righteousness, freely imputed to them. It will not be because of their innocence. That was lost in the fall.

- III. Closing: Well as I said at the outset, your understanding of the vital significance of what happened in these 2 gardens ultimately gives evidence of the impact these momentous events have had on your own eternal destiny. Consider those who persist in doubting even the existence of God, perhaps because of the tragic circumstances God allows – even ordains. They don't see the depth of their own sinfulness and consequent deservedness of God's wrath – that which can only be removed by Christ having endured it for them by His suffering and death. That mindset certainly mirrors Adam's sin of unbelief.

Consider those who persist in their indifference or just figure things will all work out somehow for them in the end. They too reflect their fallen nature in unbelief of God's promises and threats. Their tendency is to focus exclusively on this little sliver we call a lifetime on earth and ignore the eternal significance of what took place in the Garden of Eden that made necessary the glorious accomplishment for all who are saved that would begin to take place in the Garden of Gethsemane.

And finally, what about the self-righteous religionists who persists in insisting that salvation is conditioned at least in some way (or to some degree) on something they do – their faith, their decision for Jesus, their acceptance of Him – rather than exclusively on that which Christ single-handedly accomplished to save His people? They don't really understand that since the fall of Adam, eternal life was no longer a possibility by works of man.

Adam sinned and the covenant of works was broken as was inevitable for a created, mutable being and was inevitable in light of God's eternal purpose and chief design to receive all glory in the saving recovery of His people from the fall by Jesus Christ, that He might have all the preeminence.

Well, until you see what it takes for a holy God to accept and have fellowship with sinful creatures such as us, you can't really appreciate the extent and impact of what took place there in the Garden of Eden. Thank goodness there is another Representative who entered into another garden – the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus Christ (called the last Adam in the Bible) began His soul suffering as a Substitute for a multitude of sinners chosen out of Adam's fallen race. As we're told in I Corinthians 15:21-22, ***"For since by man <that's the fall of Adam> came death, by man <the God-man, the last Adam, Jesus Christ> came also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all <all he represented> die, even so in Christ shall all <all He represented> be made alive."*** We can conclude then from God's Word that sinners are saved in precisely the same manner in which they were lost – THROUGH THE ACT OF A SUBSTITUTE AND REPRESENTATIVE.

As Adam, by his one transgression, brought guilt to all who were connected with him, so Christ, by His act of righteousness (His sinless life and substitutionary death) brings justification and life to all who are connected with Him. This is why we insist that to deny the doctrine of the total depravity of man resulting from the fall, and to promote universal notions that suggest Christ died for all (even those who perish) is to deny the Gospel of salvation and final glory based solely on the righteousness of Christ – His doing and dying, nothing we do. If you believe Christ died for all, then by your way of thinking clearly there is something other than (or in addition to) Christ that is presumed to be making the real difference in your eternal salvation. But God won't share His glory! We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we were made sinners by the fall and consequently, are born into this world, spiritually dead in trespasses and sin. And we proceed to prove our sinful nature by sinning. We need a suitable, sinless Substitute – a Redeemer to recover us.

In the Garden of Eden the devil first triumphed over our nature in the fall of man as he conquered the 1st Adam and in him (our representative) made captive the whole human race, including God's elect found among them. Christ, as the elect's Substitute, Surety and Representative, began in the Garden of Gethsemane to give the final deadly blow to sin and Satan. In that garden Christ entered for the recovery of those He came to save. Next week, we'll consider further how that eternal plan of redemption came to fruition in time, as the final stage of Christ's glorious work of redemption began in that 2nd garden – the Garden of Gethsemane. We would do well to be sure we understand from God's Word the momentous eternal impact resulting from what took place in these "Two Gardens."

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself – the Bible.

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