

Introduction to Chapter 10

Since Adam had disobeyed the Lord by eating of the forbidden fruit, God cursed the ground (Gen 2:16–17; Gen 3:6, 17–19). He made it dry and unfruitful by withholding his blessing.¹ Thus, the toil behind the preparation of every meal reminded Adam and Eve of their guilt.² Creation fell into disarray, becoming nature without masters, existing in rebellion and despair.³ In a great reversal, the ground from which Adam had been created would resist his efforts and eventually swallow him into itself.⁴

After the Lord completed his pronouncements of judgment, Adam named his wife as both a sign of his new rule over her and a re-inauguration of their covenant of marriage (Gen 3:20).⁵ In calling her “Eve”—which means “the mother of all the living”—Adam spoke in faith that God’s promise of progeny would come to pass (Gen 3:15).⁶ Despite the Lord’s pronouncement of death, Adam named his wife in terms of life.⁷

Finally, God clothed the couple with leather tunics (Gen 3:21). This signified that he was not disinheriting them but would graciously reinstate his covenant with humanity.⁸ Clothing also provided protection from the thorns and thistles which awaited Adam and Eve as they cultivated the ground which the Lord had cursed.

Access to the Tree of Life

1) Gen 3:22: Here the Lord spoke to himself, observing, “The human has become like one of us, knowing good and evil.” Thus, what the serpent had promised was partially fulfilled (Gen 3:1–5).⁹ However, the snake had hidden the result of their disobedience:¹⁰ the inevitability of death (Gen 3:19).¹¹ Nevertheless, Adam did not die until reaching 930 years of age (Gen 5:5).¹² That Adam might “send forth his hand and take from the tree of life” implies that he could have chosen to eat fruit from that tree but did not do so (Gen 2:8–9, 15–17).¹³

a) Read Gen 3:22. Why were Adam and Eve in such a precarious position?

¹ Walton, *Genesis*, 229.

² Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 82.

³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 134.

⁴ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 95.

⁵ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 72.

⁶ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 205–7.

⁷ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 216.

⁸ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 150.

⁹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 85.

¹⁰ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 208.

¹¹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 75.

¹² Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 73.

¹³ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 85.

Driven Out

b) Gen 3:23–24: The creation epic concludes with these verses.¹⁴ Eden abounded with symbols of the life-giving presence of God: trees, gold, rivers, and jewels (Gen 2:8–14).¹⁵ Yet suddenly Moses amplified the preeminence of the tree of life. Unrecognized by us until now, the whole story has really been about this tree.¹⁶

Although sin greatly impacts each of us, the Old Testament (OT) emphasizes the effect of our transgressions upon the Lord (e.g., Lev 1–7). Sin defiles and dishonors God’s holy presence (Gen 20:6; Gen 39:7–9, Exod 10:16). Therefore, the most despicable aspect of human wrongdoing is not what it does to us but to the Lord.¹⁷ For a holy God to remain present among people, sacrifices had to remove the defilement resulting from sin.¹⁸ Consequently, a significant percentage of the Pentateuch consists of sacrificial legislation.¹⁹

Lest Adam “stretch out” (*shalakh*) his hand to take from the tree of life,²⁰ the Lord made a preemptive strike against any further attempt of his to become like God and “sent him out” (*shalakh*).²¹ According to Gen 2:15, the Lord placed Adam in the garden “to cultivate (*avadh*) and keep (*shamar*) it.”²² However, God exiled him from Eden “to work (*avadh*) the ground from which he was taken” (Gen 2:7), and “a flaming sword turned this way and that to preserve (*shamar*) the way of the tree of life.”²³

The former priests of Eden had become intruders (Gen 2:18–23).²⁴ They did not leave of their own will, nor were they gently escorted away.²⁵ Instead, God abruptly drove (*garash*) Adam and Eve out of the only home they had ever known.²⁶ No longer would people automatically enjoy a personal relationship with their creator (Gen 3:8).²⁷

Since the antidote to death grew in the center of the garden (Gen 3:9), God enforced the threatened penalty by cutting off access to it (Gen 2:16–17). Thus, he made death inevitable.²⁸ However, even worse than the end of their physical lives (Gen 3:19),²⁹ Adam and Eve suffered the loss of the pure fellowship they had enjoyed with God.³⁰ Similarly, those who undergo the divorce of their parents miss the availability of both parents far more than being deprived of their former home.³¹

¹⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 141.

¹⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 74.

¹⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 141.

¹⁷ Walton, *Genesis*, 231.

¹⁸ Richard E. Averbeck, “Offerings and Sacrifices,” *EDBT*, 574–81, 574.

¹⁹ Gary A. Anderson, “Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offerings,” *ABD* 5:870–86, 871.

²⁰ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “חָלַךְ” (*shalakh*), *BDB*, 1018–9, 1018, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/1018/mode/2up>.

²¹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 85.

²² Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “עָבַד” (*avadh*) and “שָׁמַר” (*shamar*), *BDB*, 712, 1036, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/712/mode/2up>; <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/1036/mode/2up>.

²³ Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, 110.

²⁴ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 137.

²⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 210.

²⁶ Holladay, “שָׁלַךְ” (*shalakh*), *CHALOT*, 372.

²⁷ Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 132.

²⁸ Walton, *Genesis*, 230.

²⁹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 90.

³⁰ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 208.

³¹ Walton, *Genesis*, 231.

Israel's people regarded expulsion from their wilderness camp as a living death, resulting in gestures of mourning (Lev 13:45–46). Rejection by God evoked the same reaction (1 Sam 15:26–31, 34–35).³² In fact, the paramount focus of the rest of the OT concerns how to regain access to the presence of the Lord.³³ Adam lost the responsibility to guard the garden temple, a task which God transferred to the cherubim.³⁴ Ironically, they kept Adam out.³⁵ Reminiscent of the entrance to the garden on the east side of Eden, both the tabernacle and Israel's temple were constructed with their access points to the east.³⁶

Cherubim do not resemble the chubby babies with wings we often picture. Instead, they functioned as sentinels of death (Ezek 10:2).³⁷ In the Akkadian Vision of the Netherworld, the concubine who accompanied the ruler of the dead “was provided with the head of a *kurību*.”³⁸ Some Hebrew scholars believe this word linguistically precedes the Hebrew term.³⁹ This type of angel resembles a winged lion with four faces (Ezek 10:9–14). Cherubim traditionally guarded Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) sacred spaces.⁴⁰

The OT mentions them over ninety times, usually in the context of guarding the Lord's holy presence (2 Kgs 19:15; Ezek 10:3–5).⁴¹ After Israel constructed the tabernacle, the Levites fulfilled a similar role. They stationed themselves as guards to strike down any unauthorized person who encroached upon God's sanctuary (Num 1:50–54).⁴²

Representations of cherubim were stationed around the Most Holy Place, where God's presence dwelt (Exod 25:18–22; 1 Kgs 6:23–28). They were also carved into the doors and the walls of the Holy Place of the temple (1 Kgs 6:29). Significantly, the lampstand which symbolized the tree of life stood in the Holy Place (Exod 40:17–25; 1 Kgs 7:48–49).⁴³ Statues of cherubim often flanked the thrones of ANE rulers.⁴⁴ One Phoenician king's sarcophagus features them surrounding his throne.⁴⁵

After Jesus withstood the serpent's temptations, “angels came and ministered to him” (Matt 4:11; Luke 22:40–43).⁴⁶ Due to Adam's sin, he experienced a starkly different relationship with the angels. “The flame of a sword turning this way and that” blocked any attempt to return to eat from the tree of life.⁴⁷ Such a weapon would bring death (Num 22:22–23, 31–33).⁴⁸

³² Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 90.

³³ Walton, *Genesis*, 231.

³⁴ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 70.

³⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 85–6.

³⁶ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 74.

³⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 144.

³⁸E. A. Speiser, trans., “A Vision of the Nether World,” in *ANET*, rev., 109,

https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n133/mode/2up. Note that this spelling differs from the older edition available online.

³⁹Stephen F. Noll, “כְּרִיב” (*kerub*), *NIDOTTE*, 2:717–8, 717.

⁴⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 85–6.

⁴¹ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:24.

⁴² Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 210.

⁴³ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 70–1.

⁴⁴ Walton, *Genesis*, 230.

⁴⁵Ancient History Encyclopedia Ltd., “Sarcophagus of Ahiem (Illustration),” <http://www.ancient.eu/image/174/>.

⁴⁶ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 172.

⁴⁷ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 137

⁴⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 86.

By learning the mysteries of good and evil, Adam and Eve lost the paradise they had received (Gen 3:7–13). Consequently, all of us have been born outside of Eden, with our natural inclinations and thoughts confirming our status as outsiders.⁴⁹ The gate remains shut.⁵⁰

Read Gen 3:23–24. Why were Adam and Eve evicted from Eden? What roles do cherubim fulfill? How do we remain shut out of Eden?

Seeking Death but Not Finding It

2) **Rev 9:1–6:** This passage concerns a future event. Thinking about this vision, do you think Adam and Eve’s exile (Gen 3:17–24) was a punishment or an act of grace? Why?

Our Certificate of Debt

3) **Col 2:13–14:** In this letter, Paul drew a sharp contrast between his readers’ unbelieving past and their new life in Christ.⁵¹ He asserted that they had been morally and spiritually dead due to their trespasses and sins.⁵² The phrase “un-circumcision of your flesh” reflects the Jewish view of gentiles as people outside of God’s covenant (Gen 17:12–14). Just like Adam, the Colossians were once alienated from God due to their sinful nature, which manifested itself in deliberate disobedience.⁵³

As a result of union with Christ in his death, the physical un-circumcision of believing gentiles signifies neither spiritual death nor future condemnation. God gave us a spiritual circumcision,⁵⁴ one “not made with hands” (Deut 30:6; Col 2:11). Therefore, he has made us alive with the life Jesus received when he rose from the dead (Rom 6:1–11; 1 Cor 15:12–21).⁵⁵

Note that Paul switched from “you” to “us,” saying, “He made you alive together with him, forgiving for us all our sins.” Thus, Paul included Jews who placed their faith in Christ in the same category as gentiles.⁵⁶ All people need God’s forgiving grace, for everyone commits willful disobedience.⁵⁷ When encountering the law of God, its author does not grade on a curve: 99.99% obedience counts as failure worthy of a death sentence (Gal 3:10–11).⁵⁸

However, Christ gives us a clean slate, wiping out the “certificate (*cheirographon*) of death.” In the Greco-Roman era, this consisted of a promissory note penned in one’s own

⁴⁹ Walton, *Genesis*, 232.

⁵⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 144.

⁵¹ O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 121.

⁵² Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 108.

⁵³ O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 121–2.

⁵⁴ Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 150.

⁵⁵ O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 123.

⁵⁶ Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 151.

⁵⁷ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 108.

⁵⁸ Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 151.

handwriting as a proof of indebtedness.⁵⁹ Although the word used here occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, it appears frequently in Jewish literature.⁶⁰

The term describes a heavenly record of people’s misdeeds, as depicted in this text (ca. 100 BC–70 AD):⁶¹

“Then I looked, and I saw him with a scroll in his hand. He began to unroll it...I found that all my sins which I had done were written in it, those which I had done from my youth until this day. They were all written upon that scroll of mine without there being a false word in them. If I did not go to visit a sick man or a widow, I found it written down as a shortcoming upon my manuscript. If I did not visit an orphan, it was found written down as a shortcoming on my scroll. A day on which I did not fast (or) pray in the time of prayer I found written down as a failing upon my scroll...so that I threw myself upon my face and prayed before the Lord Almighty, ‘May thy mercy reach me and may thou wipe out my scroll because Thy mercy hath come to be in every place and hath filled every place.’”⁶²

According to the Mishnah, “[With God] all is given against a pledge and the net is cast over all living. The shop stands open and the shopkeeper gives credit and the account book lies open and the hand writes” (m. Avot 3:20).⁶³ Paul used a similar metaphor in Philemon 19.⁶⁴ Jesus took that certificate of debt, blotted out the record against us as if it were a papyrus note of financial obligation,⁶⁵ and nailed it to the tree (Gal 3:13–14, a quotation of Deut 21:23). Paul likely alluded to the act of Pontius Pilate, who affixed the charges against Jesus to his cross (John 19:19–22).⁶⁶

God has forgiven all our sins and utterly removed any sign of our indebtedness, for the tense of “having removed it” (*airō*) indicates permanent abolition (Mic 7:18–19).⁶⁷ King David made this analogy, “According to how far [it is] from the east to the west, he (God) has made our sins far from us” (Ps 103:12). A person can travel to the northern or the southern ends of the earth, but one can never reach the end of the east or west.

As a result, any attempt to atone for our own sins through ritual or penance remains feebly inept and prevents us from receiving salvation (Gal 5:2–4).⁶⁸ No longer do we live in bondage. Those who place their trust completely in Christ’s sacrifice to blot out our sins are free.⁶⁹

⁵⁹Eduard Lohse, “χειρόγραφον” (*cheirographon*), *NIDOTTE*, 9:435–6.

⁶⁰Danker, et al., “χειρόγραφον” (*cheirographon*), *BDAG*, 1083.

⁶¹Ben Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 158.

⁶²James H. Charlesworth, ed., “The Apocalypse of Zephaniah,” in *OTP, Vol. 1* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 7.1–8, <http://web.archive.org/web/20100330084339/http://userpages.burgoyne.com/bdespain/progress/progzeph.htm>.

⁶³Student, Gil (ed.), “Ethics of the Fathers: Mishnah Tractate Avot,” <http://www.angelfire.com/mt/talmud/avot.html#chap3>.

⁶⁴Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 158.

⁶⁵O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 126.

⁶⁶Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 158.

⁶⁷O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 126. Per NA²⁸, the verb is in the perfect tense. This indicates a past act with consequences extending through the present time into the future.

⁶⁸Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, 150.

⁶⁹Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 110.

Read Col 2:13–14. What has Jesus done for us? How should we respond to what he has accomplished? What do any attempts to atone for our sins or earn our salvation reveal about where we have placed our trust? Why can't such faith save us?

Delivered from this Body of Death

4) Rom 7:14–25: An enormous debate rages in modern New Testament scholarship over the identity of the speaker (“I”) in these verses.⁷⁰ The bulk of the evidence supports that “I” refers to an unbeliever who is still “in the flesh,”⁷¹ participating in the sinful orientation of Adam (Gen 3:6, 17; Rom 5:12–21; Rom 7:5–6).⁷² Paul’s contention in Phil 3 indicates that did not speak about his own life here.⁷³ Therefore, the experience of the person in this passage does not apply to believers, as the passages book-ending this one attest (Rom 6:1–18; Rom 8:1–13).⁷⁴

Instead, the apostle adopted the argument of an observant Jew without the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 2:17–29; Gal 5:16–24).⁷⁵ This rhetorical device—in which one employs the claim of an imaginary opponent—appears frequently in Greco-Roman literature. The great orator Quintilian (35–100 AD) wrote about this type of rhetoric, which he called “impersonation”:⁷⁶ “By this means we display the inner thoughts of our adversaries as though they were talking with themselves (but we shall only carry conviction if we represent them as uttering what they may reasonably be supposed to have had in their minds); or without sacrifice of credibility we may introduce conversations between ourselves and others, or of others among themselves, and put words of advice, reproach, complaint, praise or pity into the mouths of appropriate persons.”⁷⁷

Significant parallels occur between this passage and the Greek translation of Isa 49:24–50:2.⁷⁸ Israel’s behavior brought shame upon God even while the nation remained in exile (Isa 52:5). That dishonor continued in Paul’s day.⁷⁹ As the apostle noted in Rom 7:6, those without the Spirit can grasp only the letter of the law, yet the letter without the Spirit kills (2 Cor 3:4–6).⁸⁰ The rhetorical and theological importance of the phrase “sold under sin” intensifies the desperation of the speaker. It depicts his plight as not only an internal torment but also as a marker of his status before God.⁸¹

⁷⁰John K. Goodrich, “Sold Under Sin: Echoes of Exile in Romans 7:14–25,” *NTS* 59, no. 4 (October 2013): 476–95, 476, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/new-testament-studies/article/sold-under-sin-echoes-of-exile-in-romans-714-25/2D0E378062E63B1D425654FCDA9308B9>.

⁷¹Douglas Moo J., *The Epistle to the Romans*, 237.

⁷²Stephen Westerholm, *Understanding Paul: The Early Christian Worldview of the Letter to the Romans*, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 115.

⁷³John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: B & H, 1999), 55.

⁷⁴Goodrich, “Sold under Sin: Echoes of Exile in Romans 7:14–25,” 490.

⁷⁵Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God*, 124.

⁷⁶Witherington and Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 179–80.

⁷⁷Quintilian, *Institutes*, 9.2.29–30, <https://archive.org/stream/institutioorator03quinuoft#page/390/mode/2up>.

⁷⁸Goodrich, “Sold under Sin: Echoes of Exile in Romans 7:14–25,” 477.

⁷⁹Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 607–94, 613.

⁸⁰Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1:356.

⁸¹Goodrich, “Sold under Sin: Echoes of Exile in Romans 7:14–25,” 477.

Christians continue to be influenced by sin, and we will never completely overcome its influence in this life (2 Tim 2:19–22).⁸² However, “sold” (*pipraskō*) refers to being taken into slavery (Matt 18:25). Furthermore, Paul earlier used the phrase “under sin” to describe the condition of all those without Christ (Rom 3:9).⁸³ Although many non-Christians genuinely strive to do right (Rom 2:14–15), the unbroken power of sin prevents them from succeeding.⁸⁴

a) Read Rom 7:14–25. What evidence do we have that Paul was not referring to a struggle he experienced as a believer? How does this understanding undercut any attempts to excuse our sin? Why can’t those who do not have the power of the Holy Spirit within them keep the law? When will our struggle against sin reach its end?

Set Free from Sin’s Dominion

b) Rom 8:1–14: Earlier in this letter, Paul wrote, “All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.” Therefore, we can already live righteously in newness of life (Rom 6:1–7).⁸⁵ The Spirit within us has stripped sin of its power, freeing us from the dominion it exercises over all those who are still “in the flesh.”⁸⁶ Since the Mosaic law is spiritual, we can grasp its meaning and obey it only by the aid of the Spirit who inspired it (1 Cor 2:14–16).⁸⁷

Romans 6–8 elucidates the difference between someone struggling hopelessly against sin and a person who has embraced the once-for-all-time work of Christ. Those in Christ cannot continue to live in a pattern of sinning (1 John 3:1–10). Freedom from condemnation, living by the Spirit, and future participation in the resurrection remain distinct aspects of salvation, yet they inseparably intertwine (Phil 3:7–21; Tit 3:11–14).⁸⁸

This ability to obey fulfills the Old Testament promise of a new covenant in Deut 30:6, Jer 31:31–34, and Ezek 36:25–27. As we internalize God’s commands in our hearts, we must consciously choose to live for God and resist any sinful impulses.⁸⁹ Since the Lord rescued us from slavery to sin and death—making us slaves of righteousness—we must avoid the tendency to pursue moral transformation by our own power (Rom 6:16–23).⁹⁰

When encountering God’s Word, those living by the Spirit do not regard the Lord’s commands as the unwanted imposition of obligations which we must obey. Instead, they provide an opportunity to react joyfully to what God has done for us. Therefore, godly behavior follows as a natural response to our relationship with the Lord.⁹¹ Tensions with desires of the flesh remain. Yet, as we live with sensitivity to the leading and power of the Spirit, he enables us to overcome sinful impulses (Gal 5:13–26). The definition of what constitutes sin becomes more

⁸² Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 454.

⁸³ Moo, *Romans*, 236.

⁸⁴ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 459.

⁸⁵ Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God*, 130.

⁸⁶ Schreiner, *Paul Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology*, 258.

⁸⁷ Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1:356.

⁸⁸ Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God*, 125–6.

⁸⁹ Schreiner, *Paul Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology*, 258.

⁹⁰ Goodrich, “Sold under Sin: Echoes of Exile in Romans 7:14–25,” 495, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/new-testament-studies/article/sold-under-sin-echoes-of-exile-in-romans-714-25/2D0E378062E63B1D425654FCDA9308B9>.

⁹¹ Westerholm, *Understanding Paul: The Early Christian Worldview of the Letter to the Romans*, 123–4.

refined as we mature in faith to include thoughts, attitudes, and motives, rather than merely actions. Regrettably, we shall not completely overcome those sins until we live in the presence of Christ (1 John 3:2–3).

Read Rom 8:1–14. What does the Holy Spirit do in us as we fight against temptation and sin? Why can we see God’s commands as a joyful opportunity? Knowing that Christ has paid the penalty for all your sin, how do we react when you fail?

Passed from Death into Life

5) John 5:24–27: Whenever Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you,” he called his audience to listen closely. He was about to say something of utmost importance:⁹² a proclamation coming from the one wielding the authority to make it.⁹³ In John 5:21, Christ stated, “The Son gives life to those whom he wishes.” Here he asserted, “The one who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and does not enter into judgment.” The group of people whom Christ chooses completely overlaps with those who receive eternal life (John 6:37–40; Eph 1:3–13).⁹⁴

In this case, Jesus’s “word” (*logos*) consists of his entire message.⁹⁵ Since the Father’s word and Christ’s are the same, to embrace one means to accept the other (John 14:6–11).⁹⁶ One cannot believe what the Father says and reject the Son (John 8:42; John 16:23–32; 1 John 5:1).⁹⁷

However, the one who hears and believes experiences eternal salvation. Those who belong to Christ have already crossed over from the realm of condemnation and death into life (Col 1:13–14).⁹⁸ Likewise, God’s judgment begins here and now (John 3:16–18).⁹⁹ Believers leave the courtroom acquitted to participate in the resurrection life (Col 2:13–14).¹⁰⁰ As a result, we can live without fear of judgment at the last day, for Christ guarantees our eternal security (John 10:27–30;¹⁰¹ Rev 20:11–15).¹⁰²

In this passage, Jesus began to distinguish between what already is and what has not yet occurred.¹⁰³ By emphatically stating that the raising of the dead “has come and now is,” he pronounced the rousing of the spiritually dead from their slumber.¹⁰⁴ To “hear” (*akouō*) in this

⁹² Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 148.

⁹³ Osborne, *Matthew*, 182.

⁹⁴ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 255–6.

⁹⁵ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 279–80.

⁹⁶ Burge, *John*, 178.

⁹⁷ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 280.

⁹⁸ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 76.

⁹⁹ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 280.

¹⁰⁰ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 256.

¹⁰¹Note that per Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd. Ed, 197–8, there are serious text critical problems with translating John 10:29 as, “My Father, who has given them to me is greater than all.” Since the United Bible Society Committee has given the italicized portion a “D” in terms of the likelihood that it represents John’s original words, this verse must not be used to claim that Jesus has been subordinate to the Father throughout eternity.

¹⁰² Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 280.

¹⁰³ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 256.

¹⁰⁴ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 76–7.

instance means “to give careful attention to,” “listen to,” or “heed.”¹⁰⁵ Those who accept the message of Christ foreshadow the resurrection of their bodies by the awakening of their souls (1 Cor 15:20–23, 50–55; 2 Cor 5:1–10; 1 Thess 4:13–18). The one in whom life always existed imparts his own life to his people (John 1:1–4).¹⁰⁶

Consequently, the final verdict upon every member of the human race rests in the hands of Christ alone.¹⁰⁷ Jesus performs the work which the Old Testament attributes to God (Gen 2:7; Ps 16:8–11; Gen 18:25; Judg 11:27).¹⁰⁸ Christ qualifies to judge all people not only because he is human but also because the Son of Man “has been given dominion, and honor, and royal authority, for all people and nations and languages shall pay him reverence; his dominion [is] an everlasting dominion” (Dan 7:13–14; Phil 2:5–11).¹⁰⁹

a) Read John 5:24–27. Who is included among the people of God? In what ways do we already experience eternal life? Why is Jesus the one who gives life to those who believe and who judges those who refuse to accept him?

A Second Resurrection

b) John 5:28–29: Despite the benefits of eternal life which we currently enjoy (John 5:24), the best is yet to come. According to the Son of Man, “The hour shall come when all those in their graves shall hear his voice, and the ones who did good things shall come out into resurrection of life.”¹¹⁰ Contrary to the surface appearance of Christ’s pronouncement, this does not comprise salvation by works. Soon after this, Jesus attested, “This is the work of God: that you should believe in that one he has sent” (John 6:29).¹¹¹

The Lord raises to life the spiritually dead who heed the call of God and place their faith in Christ for their salvation even while they remain here on earth (Eph 2:1–10). They shall experience a second resurrection after physical death, when Christ ushers in his kingdom in all its glory (Job 19:25–27; 1 Cor 15:42–58; 1 Thess 4:13–18).¹¹² On the other hand, those who have done evil shall rise only to suffer condemnation (Matt 25:31–46; Luke 11:31–32).¹¹³ When the day of judgment arrives, Jesus shall reveal the decision each person has made (1 Tim 5:24–25; Heb 9:27–28; Rev 20:11–15).¹¹⁴

Read John 5:28–29. Consider the contrasting fates of those who belong to Christ and those who reject his authority over them. What motivation does this give to us who believe?

¹⁰⁵ Danker et al., “ἀκούω” (*akouō*), *BDAG*, 38.

¹⁰⁶ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 256–7.

¹⁰⁷ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 283.

¹⁰⁸ Burge, *John*, 178.

¹⁰⁹ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 257.

¹¹⁰ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 77.

¹¹¹ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 258.

¹¹² Beasley-Murray, *John*, 77.

¹¹³ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 285.

¹¹⁴ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 77.

Christ's Resurrected Body

6) Luke 24:31, 35–44: This passage describes two post-resurrection appearances of Christ. What abilities did Jesus exhibit to his disciples? How did he describe himself?

Dead in Adam but Alive in Christ

7) 1 Cor 15:20–23: In this passage, Paul presented an extremely concise story of redemption: by rising from the dead, Jesus vanquished death, the archetypal effect of sin (Gen 3:19; Rom 5:12–21).¹¹⁵ To ensure no one missed his point, the apostle utilized perfect double parallelism, demonstrating that Christ's resurrection makes the raising of those who die in Christ inevitable.¹¹⁶

Paul employed the metaphor of first fruits to depict the similarity and difference between Adam and Jesus (Lev 23:9–14; Rom 8:29; Col 1:18). As the two people who represent humanity, we find our identity and our destiny in one or the other.¹¹⁷ The first Adam caused death to enter the human world.¹¹⁸ He represents all his descendants (Rom 5:12–14). Sin has disseminated throughout the earth,¹¹⁹ resulting in death for all, for we share Adam's sinfulness (Rom 3:9–18, 23).¹²⁰

Only those of us in Christ find our identity and destiny in Jesus. We await the ultimate restoration of our resurrected bodies (John 5:28–29, 1 Thess 4:13–18). Christ's redeeming work shall continue until he has destroyed the reign of sin and death (1 Cor 3:10–15).¹²¹

Read 1 Cor 15:20–23. What does it mean to be “in Adam” versus “in Christ?” How have you experienced those conditions?

Perishable Flesh and Blood

8) 1 Cor 15:50: Paul began this verse with an emphatic, “I say this, brothers [and sisters],”¹²² followed by two parallel statements for additional stress.¹²³ He wrote, “Flesh (*sarx*) and blood

¹¹⁵ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 763.

¹¹⁶ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 830.

¹¹⁷ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 762–3.

¹¹⁸ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 304.

¹¹⁹ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 298.

¹²⁰ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 832.

¹²¹ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 763–4.

¹²² Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 828. Note that the masculine plural in Greek can refer either to men or to a mixed group of men and women.

¹²³ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 883.

(*haima*) is not able to inherit the kingdom of God, nor [is] the perishable able to inherit the imperishable.” In this case, “flesh and blood” refers to our physical substance.¹²⁴ This phrase is particularly apropos given our fleeting, frail lives,¹²⁵ which are ill-suited for our future existence due to their tendency to death and decay (Isa 40:7–8).¹²⁶

During the Old Testament era, God’s people focused upon gaining the promised land (Exod 12:23–27; Deut 6:3; Isa 40:1–11). However, Jesus preached that his followers would expand from inhabiting primarily Israel to the ends of the earth (Matt 28:16–20; Luke 24:45–47; Acts 1:1–11). Only then shall the Lord complete the restoration of the conditions of Eden through the resurrection and renewal of all creation into a new heaven and a new earth (Gen 2:8–14; Matt 24:14; Rev 5:6–10; Rom 8:19–23; Rev 21:1–3).¹²⁷

a) Read 1 Cor 15:50. Why can’t flesh and blood inherit the kingdom of God? How far shall the Lord’s realm extend?

We Shall Be Changed

b) 1 Cor 15:51–52: In these verses, Paul described how God shall overcome the seemingly insurmountable difficulty inherent with our physicality (1 Cor 15:50).¹²⁸ New Testament authors used the word “mystery” (*mystērion*) to refer to something compelling which God hid in the past but now discloses (1 Cor 4:1; Eph 6:19).¹²⁹ Yet, such secrets remain unknowable apart from divine revelation (Eph 3:1–5; Col 1:25–27).¹³⁰

Paul announced, “All shall not fall asleep in death,¹³¹ but all shall be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.” The apostle assumed that some of the recipients of his letter would still live when Christ returned.¹³² In fact, Paul expected Jesus to come back during his lifetime (1 Thess 4:13–18).¹³³ However, for believers who die prior to Christ’s return, death is no more harmful or long-lasting than sleep.¹³⁴

This passage does not provide a contrast between the corpses of believers and their reanimated bodies. Instead, the emphasis falls upon the difference between our present earthly forms and the glorified bodies like Christ’s which we shall receive at our resurrection (Luke 24:31, 35–44; John 5:28–29; Heb 11:35, 39–40; Heb 12:22–23).¹³⁵ “In a moment” (*atomōs*) refers to a unit of time so small that it cannot be further divided.¹³⁶ “The twinkling (*ripē*) of an eye” alludes to the rapidity of casting a glance.¹³⁷ Therefore, Jesus shall instantly transform those

¹²⁴Eduard Schweizer, “σάρξ” (*sarx*), *NIDOTTE* 7:98–151, 128–9.

¹²⁵Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 828.

¹²⁶Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 885.

¹²⁷Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 828–9.

¹²⁸Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 829.

¹²⁹Verbrugge, “μυστηριον” (*mystērion*), *TDNTWA*, 379.

¹³⁰Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 829.

¹³¹Danker et al., “κοιμαῶ” (*koimaō*), *BDAG*, 551.

¹³²Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 310.

¹³³Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed. 885–6.

¹³⁴Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 310.

¹³⁵Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 888.

¹³⁶Danker et al., “ἄτομος” (*atomos*), *BDAG*, 149.

¹³⁷Danker et al., “ῥιπή” (*ripē*), *BDAG*, 906.

who have died and those who remain alive when he returns (Isa 29:5–6; Mal 3:1–2; Luke 21:34–36).¹³⁸

Musicians played trumpets to announce the coronation of kings (2 Sam 15:10; 1 Ki 1:39), to rally and to communicate with military forces (Judg 3:26–29), to celebrate the laying of the foundation stone of the rebuilt temple (Ezra 3:10–11),¹³⁹ to summon the tribes of Israel to gather together, to break camp, and “to be to you a memorial (*zikaron*) before your God” on appointed feast days (Num 10:1–10).¹⁴⁰ Israel’s prophets and Jesus recognized the blowing of a trumpet as a sign of the arrival of the end of this age (Joel 2:1; Zech 9:14–17; Isa 27:12–13; Matt 24:30–31).¹⁴¹ The metaphor of putting on new garments to describe the change which shall overtake us and the entire creation likely originates from Ps 102:25–28.¹⁴²

Read 1 Cor 15:51–52. What will happen when Christ returns? How is each of the Old Testament uses of a trumpet appropriate to that event?

Victory over Death

c) 1 Cor 15:53–55: Jewish people in Paul’s era would have recognized the concept of being clothed with immortality. According to a Jewish apocryphal book called 1 Enoch (ca. first century BC–first century AD):

“The righteous and elect shall be saved on that day, and they shall never thence forward see the face of the sinners and unrighteous. And the Lord of Spirits will abide over them, and with the Son of Man [Dan 7:13–14] shall they eat and lie down and rise up forever and ever. And the righteous and elect shall have risen from the earth and ceased to be of downcast countenance. And they shall have been clothed with garments of glory, and these shall be the garments of life from the Lord of Spirits: and your garments shall not grow old, nor your glory pass away before the Lord of Spirits.”¹⁴³

Similarly, in 2 Enoch 22:8–10, the Lord told the angel Michael to remove Enoch’s earthly apparel and clothe him with garments of God’s glory. This transfigured Enoch into the appearance of one of the Lord’s “glorious ones.”¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 830.

¹³⁹ Victor H. Matthews, “Music and Musical Instruments: Music in the Bible,” *ABD* 4:930–4, 931–3.

¹⁴⁰ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “זִכָּרוֹן” (*zikaron*), *BDB*, 272, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/272/mode/2up>.

¹⁴¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 886–7.

¹⁴² Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 831.

¹⁴³ R. H. Charles, trans., “Book of Enoch,” in *APOT* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 62:13–6, 125,

<https://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n239/mode/2up>.

¹⁴⁴ W. R. Morfill, trans., *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch (2 Enoch)* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1896), 22:8–9, 28, <https://archive.org/stream/bookofsecretsofe00morf#page/28/mode/2up>.

Thus, to “be clothed imperishable” means to be remade into the likeness of Christ,¹⁴⁵ receiving the same inheritance which God gave to him (Rom 8:28–30; Gal 3:26–29; Phil 3:20–21).¹⁴⁶ The second Adam shall irrevocably demolish the fetters of decay and death affixed by the first Adam (Rom 5:12–21; Rom 8:18–23; 1 Cor 15:35–49).¹⁴⁷

This passage contains the only prophecy not yet fulfilled which Paul cites in his letters. In 1 Cor 15:54–55, the apostle appeared to fuse the Greek translations of Isa 25:8 and Hos 13:14 and to substitute “victory” (*nikē*) for “penalty” (*dike*) in the latter verse.¹⁴⁸ Thus, he converted these two Old Testament (OT) passages into a taunt of death.¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, a 3rd century AD compilation of four versions of the Greek OT indicates that some translations of Hos 13:14 closely resemble what Paul wrote.¹⁵⁰ He may have utilized one of those, rather than taking liberty with the Hebrew text.

Due to Jesus’s resurrection, he has forever vanquished the alien, destructive power of death. It “was swallowed up in victory.” In Christ, death has more than met its match (John 5:24–29; Acts 2:22–36; Rom 8:1–11).¹⁵¹ Jesus has already set the end in motion. Although we live in the “now” rather than in the “not yet,” ultimately death remains powerless over believers.¹⁵² Paul closed this chapter by saying, “Therefore, my beloved brothers [and sisters], be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor 15:58).¹⁵³

As C. S. Lewis preached:

“The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor’s glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it...It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal...it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.”¹⁵⁴

Read 1 Cor 15:53–55. How does the promise of victory over death equip you with the hope and courage to carry on in the face of difficulties? Why does the way we treat others matter?

¹⁴⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 888.

¹⁴⁶ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 832.

¹⁴⁷ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 888.

¹⁴⁸ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 310.

¹⁴⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 888.

¹⁵⁰ Origen, *Hexapla*, (ed. Frederick Field; Oxford: Clarendon, 1875), 2: 962 (Hos 13:14), <https://archive.org/stream/origenhexapla02unknuoft#page/962/mode/2up>.

¹⁵¹ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 833.

¹⁵² Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 890.

¹⁵³ In Koine Greek, the masculine plural term “brothers” can apply to either men or a group of mixed gender.

¹⁵⁴ C. S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory,” *Theology*, November 1941; 8 June 1942, *The Weight of Glory*, Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, [Http://www.verber.com/mark/xian/weight-of-glory.pdf](http://www.verber.com/mark/xian/weight-of-glory.pdf).

The New Holy City

9) Rev 21:10–11: Most of the book of Revelation consists of the apostle John’s vision of the end of this age and the inauguration of the age to come. In the final two chapters, he depicted the restoration of the conditions of Eden. This renewal shall include the restoration of perfect fellowship between God and his people (Gen 3:6–12; Rev 21:6–7; Rev 22:3–5).¹⁵⁵ The first paradise covered only a small portion of the earth (Gen 2:8–14). However, the future garden temple shall encompass all the new creation (Rev 21:1–5).¹⁵⁶

John wrote, “And he carried me in the Spirit to a mountain great and high.” Appropriately, this sentence resembles the Greek translation of Ezek 43:5 and of Ezek 40:1–2. In fact, Ezek 40–48 concerns the end-time temple. Other important texts which describe the new Jerusalem upon a high mountain include Isa 2:2–3; Isa 4:4–5; Isa 25:6–9; and Mic 4:1–2.¹⁵⁷ Significantly, Ezek 28:14 calls Eden “the holy mountain of God.”¹⁵⁸

Throughout Jewish theological history, mountains have held a prominent place. The Lord first appeared to Moses at “the mountain of God” (Exod 3:1–2). Later, Moses received the Ten Commandments and the book of the covenant on Mount Sinai (Exod 19:20; Exod 20–24).¹⁵⁹ Just before his death, Moses viewed all the promised land from Mount Nebo (Deut 34:1–3). Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah (2 Chron 3:1).

The book of 1 Enoch (2nd century BC–1st century AD) reports that the angel Michael said, “This high mountain which thou hast seen, whose summit is like the throne of God, is his throne, where the Holy Great One, the Lord of Glory, the Eternal King, will sit, when he shall come down to visit the earth with goodness.”¹⁶⁰

According to John, “And he (the angel) showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down from the heaven of God.” That event will inaugurate the age to come, an eternity of blessing.¹⁶¹ A close parallel to this prophecy occurs in an apocryphal text,¹⁶² which appears to have been written during the same era as Revelation.¹⁶³ Concerning the Son of Man, it says, “But he shall stand on the top of Mount Zion. And Zion will come and be made manifest to all people, prepared and built, as you saw the mountain carved out without hands” (4 Ezra 13:35–36, RSV).

The author of Hebrews wrote that Abraham had been “expectantly waiting for...the city whose architect and builder [is] God” (Heb 10:11). As believers, we too seek that city (Heb 13:14). Jewish people of John’s era also had this expectation:

“And so when ye return to the Lord ye shall obtain mercy, and he shall bring you into his sanctuary, and he shall give you peace...And the saints shall rest in Eden, and in the new Jerusalem shall the righteous rejoice, and it shall be unto the glory of God forever. And no longer

¹⁵⁵Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 379.

¹⁵⁶G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1106.

¹⁵⁷G. K. Beale and Sean M. McDonough, “Revelation,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1151.

¹⁵⁸Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1065.

¹⁵⁹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 389.

¹⁶⁰Charles, trans., “Book of Enoch,” 25.3, 53, <https://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n167/mode/2up>.

¹⁶¹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 390.

¹⁶²David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 1153.

¹⁶³Michael E. Stone and Matthias Henze, *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: Translations, Introductions, and Notes* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2013), 1,

[Http://www.augsburgfortress.org/media/downloads/9780800699680Intro.pdf](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/media/downloads/9780800699680Intro.pdf). An alternate name for 4 Ezra is 2 Esdras.

shall Jerusalem endure desolation, nor Israel be led captive; for the Lord shall be in the midst of it [living amongst men], and the Holy One of Israel shall reign over it.”¹⁶⁴

Even John’s Greco-Roman readers would have been familiar with this concept. The fourth century BC philosopher Plato recorded this conversation regarding the ideal city:¹⁶⁵ “I understand,” he said; “you mean the city whose establishment we have described, the city whose home is in the ideal; for I think that it can be found nowhere on earth.” “Well,” said I, “perhaps there is a pattern of it laid up in heaven for him who wishes to contemplate it and so beholding to constitute himself its citizen.”¹⁶⁶

The new Jerusalem shall descend with a shimmering radiance, reflecting the glorious habitation of the Lord (Isa 60:1–3).¹⁶⁷ Elsewhere in Revelation, John described God as “like jasper” (Rev 4:3).¹⁶⁸ In the first Jerusalem, God limited his presence to the temple, where a barrier prevented full access to him (Exod 25:21–22; Exod 26:21–34; 1 Ki 8:6–13; Heb 9:1–10). However, this shall not occur in the new Jerusalem (Heb 9:11–28; Heb 10:19–25). When the Lord’s people enter that city, God will envelop us in his dazzling presence (Rev 21:22–27).¹⁶⁹

a) Read Rev 21:10–11. How does the depiction here hint at a return to the conditions of Eden? What hope does this give you?

A Return to Paradise

b) Rev 22:1–5, 20: The beginning of Rev 22 continues John’s vision of a return to the conditions of Eden (Gen 1:26–31; Gen 2:8–15).¹⁷⁰ The apostle’s original audience understood this association of the age to come with paradise. According to the apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas (80–120 AD), “In the last days [the Son] made a second creation; and the Lord says, ‘See, I make the last things as the first.’”¹⁷¹

John wrote, “And [the angel] showed to me a river of living water, shining like crystal.” Several Old Testament passages feature this same imagery, such as Gen 2:10; Joel 3:16–18; Zech 14:8; and Ezek 47:1–9. This purifying living water symbolizes eternal life (Jer 2:13; Rev 22:17),¹⁷² for it shall be “coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

¹⁶⁴R. H. Charles, trans., “The Testament of Dan,” in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, vol. 2 (APOT; Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 130–1, <https://archive.org/stream/testamentsoftwel08char#page/130/mode/2up>.

¹⁶⁵Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1153.

¹⁶⁶Plato, *Republic* (vol. 5 and 6 of *Plato in Twelve Volumes*; trans. Paul Shorey; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 413–7, <https://archive.org/stream/republicshorey02platuoft#page/414/mode/2up>.

¹⁶⁷Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 390.

¹⁶⁸Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1153–4.

¹⁶⁹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1066.

¹⁷⁰Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 398.

¹⁷¹Kirsopp Lake, trans., “Epistle of Barnabas,” in *Apostolic Fathers* (LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912), 6:13, 361–3, <https://archive.org/stream/theapostolicfath00unknuoft#page/360/mode/2up>.

¹⁷²Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1103–4.

Just as the vision of Ezek 40–48 depicts God dwelling among his people,¹⁷³ the living water may also serve as a symbol for the Holy Spirit (John 7:37–39).¹⁷⁴ This harmonizes with the Christian confession from the Council of Toledo in 589 AD. Theologians attending that meeting added the nuance that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son to the Nicene Creed (cf. John 14:26; John 16:7, 13–15). Continued insistence that the Son also sent the Spirit divided the Western Church from Eastern Orthodoxy in 1054.¹⁷⁵ That rift remains to this day.

Since the new Jerusalem does not contain a temple (Rev 21:22), the throne of God serves as the river’s origin.¹⁷⁶ Due to Christ’s death on our behalf, he now shares the place of greatest honor with the Father (Rev 5:8–14).¹⁷⁷ That the Father and the Son share a single throne points to their unity and joint sovereignty (Ps 110:1; Rev 3:21).¹⁷⁸

Our understanding of the placement of the river in relation to the main street of the new Jerusalem depends upon whether “in the middle of its street” belongs at the end of v. 1 or at the beginning of v. 2 (Rev 22:1–2).¹⁷⁹ If the river comes from the throne in the middle of the street, we have a situation like that in Ezekiel, where God’s people must ford the river and the trees grow on both sides (Ezek 47:3–4, 12; Isa 35:6–9).¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, if we read this passage as, “In the middle of its street on either side of the river was the tree of life,” then the street and river would run parallel to each other.¹⁸¹

Just at the river flowing from God’s presence in Ezekiel’s vision caused the trees to bear fruit, so it does in Revelation.¹⁸² The community of Essenes in Qumran had a similar depiction: “[For Thou didst set] a plantation of cypress, pine, and cedar for thy glory, trees of life beside a mysterious fountain hidden among the trees by the water, and they put out a shoot of the everlasting plant. But before they did so, they took root and sent out their roots to the watercourse that its stem might be open to the living waters and be one with the everlasting spring.”¹⁸³

Since the word “paradise” (*paradeisos*) actually meant a garden,¹⁸⁴ one would expect the new Jerusalem to resemble a park full of rivers and fruitful trees (Rev 21:1–2).¹⁸⁵ While Ezek 47:12 denotes “all kinds of trees,” John appears to refer to a single tree (Rev 2:7).¹⁸⁶ However, “a tree of life” likely means a group of trees, especially since one tree cannot grow on both sides of a river.¹⁸⁷ Using a singular to depict many trees occurs regularly in Scripture, such as in Gen 1:11–12 and in Lev 26:20.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷³Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 110–1.

¹⁷⁴Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 398.

¹⁷⁵Philip Schaff, “*The Controversy on the Procession of the Holy Spirit*,” in *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1910), 4:476–89, 476, 481, 484, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/hcc4.i.xi.ii.html>.

¹⁷⁶Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1177.

¹⁷⁷Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 398–9.

¹⁷⁸Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1177.

¹⁷⁹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 399. Ancient Greek manuscripts do not contain punctuation.

¹⁸⁰Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1104.

¹⁸¹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 399.

¹⁸²Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1106–7.

¹⁸³Vermes, trans., *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, 4th Ed*, 1QH18, 334, https://archive.org/stream/pdfy-Uy_BZ_QGsaLiJ4Zs/The%20Dead%20Sea%20Scrolls%20%5BComplete%20English%20Translation%5D#page/n331/mode/2up.

¹⁸⁴Joachim Jeremias, “*παράδεισος*” (*paradeisos*), *TDNT* 5:765–73, 765.

¹⁸⁵Craig S. Keener, *Revelation* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 500.

¹⁸⁶Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1177.

¹⁸⁷Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1106.

¹⁸⁸Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1177.

In keeping with the escalation in the scope and grandeur of the new creation, the one tree in Eden shall become many trees of the same kind.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps the designation of only one tree placed emphasis upon faith in Christ being the only source of eternal life (John 6:27–29; John 14:6).¹⁹⁰ Early Christian artists frequently merged the cross and the tree of life into one symbol.¹⁹¹

Greco-Roman descriptions of the afterlife also included pure water and fruit trees.¹⁹² The first century BC author designated as Pseudo-Plato wrote, “So, then, all whom a good daimon [a lesser deity] inspired in life go to reside in a place of the pious, where the ungrudging seasons teem with fruits of every kind, where fountains of pure water flow, and where all kinds of meadows bloom with flowers.”¹⁹³

John wrote that these trees would be “producing twelve crops, each month yielding its fruit, and the leaves of the tree [are] for the healing of the people-groups.” As in Ezek 47:12, the new creation shall abound with plentiful crops (Amos 9:13–15).¹⁹⁴ Christians and polytheists associated miraculous fruitfulness with the new age.¹⁹⁵

In the fanciful *A True Story* (second century AD), Lucian described his visit to the Isle of the Blessed. He wrote, “The country abounds in flowers and plants of all kinds, cultivated and otherwise. The grape-vines yield twelve vintages a year, bearing every month; the pomegranates, apples and other fruit-trees were said to bear thirteen times a year, for in one month...they bear twice.”¹⁹⁶

This depiction confirms the figurative nature of the eternal realities in John’s vision, for the phases of the moon determine the length of a month. However, according to the apostle, neither the sun nor the moon shall exist in the new creation (Rev 21:23; Rev 22:5).¹⁹⁷ The number twelve held tremendous significance in the Bible, and especially in Revelation (Rev 7:5–8; Rev 12:1–2; Rev 21:12–16, 21). As with the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, the number twelve symbolized that God would fulfill his promise to redeem his people.¹⁹⁸

One apocryphal author lamented the sin of Adam (Gen 3:17–19), noting, “a paradise shall be revealed, whose fruit remains unspoiled and in which are abundance and healing, but we shall not enter it, because we have lived in unseemly places” (2 Esd 7:123–124). Eating from one tree brought death and exile (Gen 3:22–23). In contrast, partaking of another shall deliver life and a return to paradise.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, this healing fruit symbolizes our redemption in Christ (Col 1:3–12), which shall come into all its fullness when he returns (Rev 2:7).²⁰⁰

Note the close parallels between the visions of Ezekiel, the apostle John, and 1 Enoch: “And from thence I went to another place of the earth, and he showed me a mountain range of fire which burnt day and night. And I went beyond it and saw seven magnificent mountains all differing each from the other, and the stones (thereof) were magnificent and beautiful...And the

¹⁸⁹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1106.

¹⁹⁰Keener, *Revelation*, 500.

¹⁹¹Johannes Schneider, “ξύλον: (*xulon*), *NIDOTTE*, 5:37–41, 40–1.

¹⁹²Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1176.

¹⁹³Pseudo-Plato, *Axiochus*, trans. Jackson P. Hershbell (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 371C, 47.

¹⁹⁴Keener, *Revelation*, 500.

¹⁹⁵Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1178.

¹⁹⁶Lucian, “A True Story,” in *Works, Vol. 1* (trans. A. M. Harmon; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), 311, 315, <https://archive.org/stream/lucianha01luciuoft#page/314/mode/2up>.

¹⁹⁷Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1108.

¹⁹⁸Ryken et al., “Twelve” in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 900–1.

¹⁹⁹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 399.

²⁰⁰Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1108.

seventh mountain was in the midst of these, and it excelled them in height, resembling the seat of a throne: and fragrant trees encircled the throne. And amongst them a tree such as I had never yet smelt, neither was any amongst them nor were others like it: it had a fragrance beyond all fragrance, and its leaves and blooms and wood wither not for ever: and its fruit is beautiful, and its fruit resembles the dates of a palm.

“Then I said, ‘How beautiful is this tree, and fragrant, and its leaves are fair, and its blooms very delightful in appearance.’ Then answered Michael, one of the holy and honored angels who was with me and was their leader. And he said unto me...’This high mountain which thou hast seen, whose summit is like the throne of God, is his throne, where the Holy Great One, the Lord of Glory, the Eternal King, will sit, when he shall come down to visit the earth with goodness. And as for this fragrant tree no mortal is permitted to touch it till the great judgment, when he shall take vengeance on all and bring (everything) to its consummation forever. It shall then be given to the righteous and holy. Its fruit shall be for food to the elect: it shall be transplanted to the holy place, to the temple of the Lord, the Eternal King.

“‘Then shall they rejoice with joy and be glad, and into the holy place shall they enter; and its fragrance shall be in their bones, and they shall live a long life on earth, such as thy fathers lived: and in their days shall no sorrow or plague or torment or calamity touch them.’ Then blessed I the God of Glory, the Eternal King, who hath prepared such things for the righteous, and hath created them and promised to give to them. And I went from thence to the middle of the earth, and I saw a blessed place in which there were trees with branches abiding and blooming [of a dismembered tree]. And there I saw a holy mountain, and underneath the mountain to the east there was a stream.”²⁰¹

Since the new creation shall be free of death and suffering, the healing from the tree of life must consist of a once for-all-time event. Nevertheless, the tree shall continually produce fruit (Rev 7:16–17; Rev 21:3–4).²⁰²

Where Adam failed miserably, Jesus proved victorious (Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:20–22; Heb 4:14–16). As a result, the glorious temple which the Lord began to create in Eden shall reach its completion in the new creation when the people of God fill the earth (Hab 2:14).²⁰³ Then we shall experience the intimate communion with God which he intended from the beginning (Exod 28:36–38).²⁰⁴

Nevertheless, while we remain in this age, we can enter the life of the Trinity by the presence of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13–15; Rom 8:9–17, 26–30). As a result, we experience transformed lives, which lead us to actively seek fellowship with God, pursue justice for our neighbors and the world around us, and spread the good news of the gospel (Eph 1:3–23; Matt 22:34–40; Matt 28:18–20). As we devote ourselves to these aspects of life, not only do we experience the unity of the Trinity, we anticipate the age to come.²⁰⁵

The theologian John Cassian (ca. 360–435 AD) wrote:

“No one will arrive at the fullness of this measure in the world to come except the person who has reflected on it and been initiated in the present and who has tasted it while still living in this world; who, having been designated a most precious member of Christ, possesses in this

²⁰¹Charles, trans., “Book of Enoch,” 24–6, 51–4,

<https://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n165/mode/2up>.

²⁰²Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1108.

²⁰³Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1111.

²⁰⁴Joachim Jeremias, “παράδεισος” (*paradeisos*), *TDNT* 5:765–73, 765.

²⁰⁵Donald Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 230–1.

flesh the pledge of that union through which he is able to be joined to Christ's body; who desires only one thing, thirsts for one thing, and always directs not only every deed but even every thought to this one thing, so that he may already possess in the present what has been pledged him and what is spoken of with regard to the blessed way of life of the holy in the future—that is, that 'God may be all in all' to him."²⁰⁶

Read Rev 22:1–5, 20. What parallels do you see between the visions of Ezekiel, 1 Enoch, and John? How does the promise of the new creation encourage you as you seek to extend God's kingdom? In what ways do you experience the fellowship of the Trinity?

²⁰⁶Cassian John, Boniface Ramsey, trans., in *John Cassian: The Conferences* (ACW; Costa Mesa, CA: Paulist Press, 1997), 253–4.

An Overview of Genesis 1–3

Imagine that slavery is all that you, your parents, and your grandparents remember. While living in the New Kingdom of Egypt, you learned that the sun god Re spoke the god Ptah—his Word—into being as the firstborn of all creation. Then Ptah created the rest of the gods and the entire universe out of nothing.²⁰⁷

You have heard the Babylonians tell another part of the story. They say that a problem arose: the gods got tired of having to work to provide food for themselves. At that time, the god Kingu chose to align himself with Tiamat, the cosmic sea monster. The hero Marduk split her in two, separating the vapors in the sky from the waters of the seas. Then he executed Kingu and mixed his blood with dirt to create the first people to do the gods' work.²⁰⁸

Since people in Egypt worship the pharaoh Ramesses II as a god,²⁰⁹ you had always known that you existed solely to labor as his slave. About a year ago, a man named Moses emerged from the desert to confront the pharaoh. He claimed that the God of your ancestors had sent him to deliver you from the horrors of Egyptian servitude (Exod 3:7–9; Exod 4:29–31). You watched in awe as the one who called himself “I AM” (Exod 3:14) used Moses to bring judgment upon the gods and goddesses of Egypt: those of the Nile (Exod 7:20–21), the sun (Exod 10:21–23), agriculture (Exod 9:22–26, 31–32), and cattle (Exod 9:1–7).

I AM did not spare even the future god of Egypt, the son of Ramesses the Great (Exod 12:21–30). Amazingly, the region where your people lived remained untouched by most of these plagues. After Ramesses freed you from slavery, he changed his mind, sending chariots to prevent your escape. I AM split the Sea of Reeds so that you could walk through and then destroyed Pharaoh's army as it followed you (Exod 14).

Soon after that, when I AM made a covenant with your nation on Mount Sinai (Exod 24:3–8), Moses called everyone together to learn the history of God's dealings with your ancestors. While much of what you heard sounded like what you had been taught in Egypt, there were shocking differences. This is what you learned:

Moses began by teaching, “In the beginning of God's creating of the heavens and the earth, the earth had been formless and empty.” The cosmos arose from nothing, coming into being by the spoken word of God. Order emerged from disorder. Unlike in other Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) creation accounts, God did not need to restrain forces of chaos or any personification of evil.²¹⁰

Even the deep waters obeyed the Lord's commands, for the Spirit of God hovered over them as a witness of and participant in this divine activity. During the first through third days, God created habitations and assigned functions to them.²¹¹ Thus, he demonstrated his power and authority over the universe.²¹² First, he created light and separated it from darkness, establishing periods of time.²¹³ Then the Lord split the primordial waters into vapor in the heavens above and

²⁰⁷John A. Wilson, trans., “Theology of Memphis,” in *ANET*, lines 53–4, 4–6.

²⁰⁸E. A. Speiser, trans., “Enuma Elish (The Creation Epic),” in *ANET*, 4.135–40, 67.

https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n91/mode/2up.

²⁰⁹W. F. Albright and George E. Mendenhall, trans., “The Amarna Letters, RA XIX,” in *ANET*, lines 1–10, 485.

<https://archive.org/stream/in.gov.ignca.16119/16119#page/n283/mode/2up>.

²¹⁰John Walton, *Genesis* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 73.

²¹¹Meredith G. Kline, “Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony,” *PSCF* 48, no. 1 (March 1996): 2–15.

<http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1996/PSCF3-96Kline.html>.

²¹²Walton, *Genesis*, 71–2.

²¹³Walton, *Genesis*, 79.

water in the seas below. He collected the waters below together so that dry land appeared and produced various types of vegetation. This set the framework necessary for living creatures to survive.²¹⁴

In a second set of three days, God created the inhabitants of the cosmos which he formed on the first triad of days. On the fourth day, God spoke to generate the luminaries of the heavens, paralleling the creation of light on the first day. These lights enabled vision and set the secular and religious calendars. People tracked star movement to synchronize the lunar and the solar calendars. In contrast to the ANE focus upon worshiping these lights as gods, the Lord created them to serve.

Day five harmonizes with day two. On the second day, God separated the sky from the waters. Then on the fifth day, God created the inhabitants of those environments: aquatic creatures and birds.²¹⁵ Among these were “the great sea monsters.”²¹⁶ You previously associated these with the forces of anarchy who ruled the cosmic waters in ANE creation epics.²¹⁷ However, these monsters were not chaotic rivals of God but merely creatures whom he made,²¹⁸ living under their his command.²¹⁹ God saw that it was good, and he blessed them.

On the sixth day, God brought forth living creatures from the earth. These animals fell into three categories: domestic animals, prey, and predators. Together, the Lord described them as, “every living thing which moves on the earth.” By constructing plants and creatures which self-propagate “according to their kind,” the Creator produced creators.²²⁰

Most importantly, you discovered that the gods did not make your ancestors from the blood of a rebellious god. Instead, the one who spoke the entire universe into being made you in his image.²²¹ People believed that an image placed in a temple did the work of a god and wielded his authority.²²² Therefore, God’s intention for you—as his image-bearer—is to serve as his representative.²²³ You can fulfill his purposes through your faithful stewardship in tending, guarding, and governing the earth while displaying the Lord’s glory to other people and extending his kingdom among them.²²⁴

After creating men and women in his own image, God rested from his work of creating the cosmos as his temple. Therefore, he provided us with an example to follow by ceasing from his labor on the Sabbath. Furthermore, the Lord prepared an eternal place of rest for his people.

The narrative of Gen 2:4–24 reiterated the sixth day of creation from a more intimate perspective: God’s provision for and relationship with those created in his image. After forming Adam from the ground and breathing a living soul into him, the Lord placed him into a well-watered, luxuriant garden to perform the priestly function of serving, working, cultivating, and

²¹⁴Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 20.

²¹⁵Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 129.

²¹⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 24.

²¹⁷Walton, *Genesis*, 126–7.

²¹⁸Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 24.

²¹⁹Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3* (ed. Martin Rüter, Ilse Tödt, and John W. De Gruchy; trans. Douglas Stephen Bax; DBW; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004), 58.

²²⁰Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 132.

²²¹“The Creation Epic” (Enuma Elish), *ANET*, lines 6.1–36, 68.

²²²James H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 46, <http://sacred-texts.com/egy/rtae/rtae05.htm>.

²²³Ian Hart, “Genesis 1:1–2:3 as a Prologue to the Book of Genesis.” *TynBul* 46, no. 2 (November 1995): 315–36, 317–9, http://tyndalehouse.com/tynbul/library/TynBull_1995_46_2_06_Hart_Gen1Prologue.pdf.

²²⁴Walton, *Genesis*, 130.

keeping it. This beautiful park full of trees produced wonderful food, including the tree of life which stood at its center. God gave Adam freedom to eat from any of these.

However, he made one prohibition. “The Lord God laid charge upon the man, saying, ‘From all of the trees of the garden you are able to eat, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, because in the day you eat it, you shall surely die.’” God expected Adam to acquire wisdom through their relationship, rather than seeking it on his own.

Recognizing that the man should not be alone, the Lord sent a parade of animals he had created to Adam. While exercising the authority of an image-bearer of God by naming each animal,²²⁵ Adam reached a devastating conclusion: every animals had its partner, but an equal and adequate helper did not exist for him. Now that God had awakened Adam’s longing, the Lord placed him into a very deep, supernatural sleep. God took raw material—not from the ground—but from Adam’s side to fashion the first woman. Upon awakening, the man recognized his true counterpart and enthusiastically uttered a covenant of unalterable loyalty:

This, this time,
[is] bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh.
This shall be called woman,
for from man was taken this!²²⁶

In harmonious intimacy, the two became one flesh. Despite their nakedness, they knew no shame.

Adam, as the representative for all of humanity, underwent a time of probation to determine whether he would accept his position of power under God, his emperor. The Lord accomplished this by presenting him with a seemingly arbitrary command.²²⁷ Meanwhile, the serpent sought to thwart the expansion of the kingdom of God through the disqualification of the Lord’s vice-regents.²²⁸

In contrast to the man and woman’s innocent nakedness (*arummim*), the snake was shrewd (*arum*).²²⁹ Aside from the fact that the serpent spoke,²³⁰ the text gives no hint that the snake was anything more than an animal made by God.²³¹ Moses did not state why the serpent addressed Eve,²³² why she misunderstood what the Lord had said, or why Adam failed to assist her in countering the snake’s assertions.²³³ By twisting God’s words, the serpent snared Eve into allying herself with him in her quest for divine wisdom, causing her to covet the forbidden fruit.

Events cascaded rapidly: “And she took of [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’s] fruit, and she ate, and she gave [it] also to her husband [who was] with her, and he ate.” Each fell

²²⁵Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 75.

²²⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 69–70. Translation by Wenham.

²²⁷Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 104–5.

²²⁸Victor H. Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament (IVPBBOT)* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Gen 3:1, electronic ed.

²²⁹Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 90.

²³⁰Walton, *Genesis*, 204.

²³¹Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 105.

²³²Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 188.

²³³Walton, *Genesis*, 206.

because of the other, in unity yet carrying the entire burden of guilt. In one respect the serpent told the truth. Their eyes were opened, but to a shocking discovery. They were naked!²³⁴ With their innocence replaced by shame, they quickly made coverings for themselves out of fig leaves.

Well-aware of what they had done, the Lord came to Eden in “the wind of the storm.”²³⁵ Adam and Eve saw and heard evidence of impending judgment and went into hiding.²³⁶ In his attempt to evade answering God’s question, Adam immediately indicted himself by declaring that he knew he of his nudity. The divisive effects of sin quickly emerged. Adam blamed Eve as well as the Lord for creating her. Eve admitted that she was deceived and pointed to the serpent. Sin had obliterated the harmony between God and humanity, men and women, and people with animals.²³⁷

Unlike with Adam and Eve, the Lord neither interrogated the serpent nor allowed him an opportunity to explain his behavior.²³⁸ Instead, the one who was crafty (*arum*) became cursed (*arur*).²³⁹ By being forced to crawl on his belly and eat dust, God reined in the snake’s aggression and hinted at his demise.²⁴⁰ The serpent and his seed would engage in battle with the seed of the woman,²⁴¹ corporately and, eventually, in single combat.²⁴² Both champions would be mortally wounded.

In the aftermath of eating the forbidden fruit, the arrival of the seed which Eve would conceive would cause her agony.²⁴³ In addition, she would long for the intimate, equal relationship she had previously experienced with her husband. Instead, Adam would rule over her. After informing Eve of the results of her sin, the Lord shifted his focus to Adam.

Since Adam had disobeyed the Lord and eaten of the forbidden fruit, God cursed the ground. He made it dry and unfruitful by withholding his blessing. Thus, the toil behind the preparation of every meal reminded Adam and Eve of their guilt.²⁴⁴ Creation fell into disarray, becoming nature without masters, existing in rebellion and despair.²⁴⁵ In a great reversal, the ground from which God created Adam would resist his efforts and eventually swallow him into itself.²⁴⁶

After the Lord completed his decrees of judgment, Adam named his wife as both a sign of his new rule over her and a re-inauguration of their covenant of marriage.²⁴⁷ By calling her “Eve”—which means “the mother of all the living”—Adam spoke in faith that God’s promise of progeny would come to pass.²⁴⁸ Despite the Lord’s pronouncement of death, Adam named his wife in terms of life.²⁴⁹

Finally, God clothed the couple with leather tunics. This signified that he would not

²³⁴Walton, *Genesis*, 206.

²³⁵Walton, *Genesis*, 224.

²³⁶Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:8.

²³⁷Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 78.

²³⁸Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 93.

²³⁹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 196.

²⁴⁰Walton, *Genesis*, 225.

²⁴¹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 198.

²⁴²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 93.

²⁴³Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 200.

²⁴⁴Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 82.

²⁴⁵Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 134.

²⁴⁶Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 95.

²⁴⁷Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 72.

²⁴⁸Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 205–7.

²⁴⁹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 216.

disinherit them but instead would graciously reinstate his covenant with humanity.²⁵⁰ Clothing also provided protection from the thorns and thistles which awaited Adam and Eve as they cultivated the ground which the Lord cursed.

The Tree of Life stood at the center of both the garden of Eden and the story of creation.²⁵¹ By eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the former priests of Eden became intruders.²⁵² Lest Adam and Eve stretch out their hands to take from the tree of life, the Lord made a preemptive strike against any further desire of theirs to become like God.²⁵³ He drove them out of the only home they had ever known.²⁵⁴

God placed new protectors at the entrance to the garden: a pair of cherubim and “the flame of a sword turning this way and that.” Consequently, all of us have been born outside of Eden, with our natural inclinations and thoughts confirming our status as outsiders.²⁵⁵ No longer do we automatically enjoy a personal relationship with the Lord.²⁵⁶

Concluding Thoughts

Take some time to reflect upon what you have learned during this Bible study and discuss these questions within your group:

a) **What new insights** have you gained into the process of Creation/Covenant, Sin, Exile, and Restoration as revealed in Scripture?²⁵⁷

b) **How has this information affected** your relationship with God, with other people, and with creation?

²⁵⁰ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 151.

²⁵¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 141.

²⁵² Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 137.

²⁵³ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 85.

²⁵⁴ Holladay, “shalakh,” *CHALOT*, 372.

²⁵⁵ Walton, *Genesis*, 232.

²⁵⁶ Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 132.

²⁵⁷ “The History of Redemption” in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, 254–308, 257.