





In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1), but the earth was not yet ready to be a home for humans. Darkness and water covered it, so no life grew (Gen 1:2). God's Spirit hovered over the waters like a bird (Gen 1:2). God brought light to the world (Gen 1:3-5) and dry land up from the waters on the third day (Gen 1:9-10). Because of this dry land, humans could have a dwelling place to live and worship God. (Gen 1:1-2:3)

God made the dry land into a garden-paradise. Here, there was no sin. God made Adam and Eve to live here, and Adam was God's son (Luke 3:38). God made Adam and Eve in his "image" (Gen 1:27). This means their lives should reflect God's character by obeying him (Gen 1:27). If they obeyed, they would have blessed lives (Gen 1:28), eat from the tree of life (Gen 2:16), and live forever (Gen 3:22). Best of all, they could live with God. God gave everything they needed to enjoy life with him and each other (Gen 2:16). (Gen 2:4-25) ★

God commanded Adam and Eve to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:3). If they did, they would die (Gen 2:17). But Satan came into the garden as a serpent and tempted the woman to not trust God (Gen 3:1, 4-5; John 8:44). Eve believed the fruit would give her wisdom (Gen 3:6). She "saw" the fruit was "good," "desired" it, "took" it, "ate" it, and gave it to Adam (Gen 3:6). He ate it too (Gen 3:6). Adam was a disobedient son. He sinned and did not trust God's goodness. (Gen 3:1-6)

After Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to cover their sin. So, they "hid" from God, but God found them (Gen 3:8). God first spoke a righteous curse upon the serpent (Gen 3:14-15). God promised that an offspring would come from Eve (Gen 3:15). He would be a Deliverer, resist sin, crush the serpent, and bring people into God's paradise once again. Then, God judged Adam and Eve for their sin (Gen 3:16-19). Life would now be much harder for all humans. If only Adam would have listened to God's voice instead of his wife's voice (Gen 3:17). (Gen 3:7-19)

God is holy and perfect (Lev 11:44). Eternal blessing and life are with him (Gen 1:28; 3:22; 1 Tim 6:16), but Adam and Eve brought the curse of sin and death into the world (Gen 3:6, 17). This means that God could no longer allow sinful humans to be with him or live in his perfect garden-paradise. God sent Adam and Eve away from him and his life in the garden-paradise (Gen 3:23). Will humans ever get to live with God again? (Gen 3:14-24)

Israel repeated Adam and Eve's story. Israel was God's son (Exod 4:22) and God chose to fulfill his promises through them. He promised that they would be a great nation (Exod 19:5-6), possess the land of Canaan (Exod 23:31), and have the great Deliverer come from among them (Deut 18:15-19). God saved Israel from Egypt (Exod 3:10). Israel crossed the Red Sea on dry ground (Exod 14:29), and God gave them food in the wilderness (Exod 16:31). Then, Israel crossed through the waters of the Jordan River on dry ground on the third day (Josh 1:11; 3:17). (Josh 1-3)

Like the Adam story, God's good land comes after the waters and dry land. Israel entered into Canaan. Canaan was like a new garden-paradise. It flowed with milk and honey (Deut 6:3), had springs of water, and many different fruit trees (Deut 8:7-9). If God's son would obey his commands (Deut 8:10-11), God promised to once again dwell in their midst and give life and blessing there (Lev 26:11-12). If they disobeyed God's commands, God would no longer dwell among them, and they would be cursed and exiled from Canaan (Deut 28:41). (Josh 5:10-11) ★

When Israel first entered Canaan, God commanded that the treasure of Jericho completely belong to him (Josh 6:19). Like Eve before, one of the Israelites, Achan, faced temptation. He "saw" that the forbidden treasure of Jericho was "beautiful," "coveted" it, "took" it, and "hid" it (Josh 7:21). This Israelite didn't obey God when temptation came. Like in the Adam story, Achan brought the curse of sin and death into the place that was meant to bring blessing and life (Josh 7:25). (Josh 6-7)

In Canaan, Israel acted more and more like Achan. Like a disobedient son, they didn't listen to their Father's commands and worshiped many idols (2 Kings 17:7-19). They did not live as God's obedient son. God sent many prophets to warn them and gave them time to repent, but they would not obey (2 Chron 24:19). So, God sent them away from him and his life just like he did to Adam and Eve. God sent the kingdom of Babylon to take them away into captivity (2 Kings 25:1; Dan 1:1-2). Will people ever be with God again? (2 Chron 36:15-21)

Years later, God allowed the Israelites to return to Canaan and start a life there again (Ezra 1:1-4). God kept his promises and sent a prophet named John to prepare the way for the promised Deliverer, Jesus (John 1:19-23). John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, and God called Jesus his Son (Matt 3:17). Jesus rose from the water, and God's Spirit came down on him like a dove anointing him to bring salvation (Matt 3:16). Empowered by God's Spirit, Jesus went out to obey God and do his will (Matt 4:1). (Matt 3, Luke 3:1-22)

Like the Adam and Israel stories, Jesus's temptation came after the waters. Being led by God's Spirit, Jesus left his baptism and entered the wilderness (Luke 4:1). There Satan tempted him three times (Luke 4:3, 6-7, 9-11). But Jesus is better than Adam and Israel. Jesus trusted in God's perfect Word, resisted the devil, and proved to be God's obedient Son (Luke 4:4, 8, 12)! Jesus obeyed God like no other! (Luke 4:1-13)

The devil waited to tempt Jesus again until an "opportune time" (Luke 4:13). This time came at the end of Jesus's life (Luke 22:53). Like Adam, Jesus entered a place of trees (Luke 22:39), and he faced temptation to sin. He prayed three times so he would not "enter into temptation" (Luke 22:40). Jesus chose to do God's will and not his own will (Luke 22:42). He again obeyed his Father and proved himself to be God's only obedient Son. (Luke 22:39-46)

People arrested, beat, and condemned Jesus to die on a cross. As he died, the sinner on the cross next to him believed that Jesus was sinless and trusted him (Luke 23:42). Jesus told him, "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Long ago, God promised us a Deliverer (Gen 3:15). Jesus came, and his obedient death brought sinners back to be with God in paradise. (Luke 23:26-49)

Jesus succeeded where Adam and Israel failed. His sinless life defeated the devil, and God raised him from the dead (Luke 24:5-6). He now reigns as king (Luke 24:51; Rev 11:15) and offers his people blessing and eternal life with God in the garden-paradise of a new creation (Rev 22:1-5). Because of Jesus, "the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people" (Rev 21:3). (Rev 21-22) ★

★ OVERALL THEME: God creates a place for his people.

People can't live in God's place because of their sin. Because Jesus perfectly obeys, God's people can finally live with God in his place forever.

VERSE SUMMARY: And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God." (Rev 21:3)

Other stories to consider: Genesis 6-9; Exodus 14-19