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"To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding" Proverbs 1:2

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EDEN AND SALVATION (Part 2)

By David Chilton

Trees In The Garden

It goes without saying of course, that a fundamental aspect of the Garden of Eden is that it was a *Garden*: every kind of beautiful and fruitbearing tree had been planted there by God (Gen. 2:9). Before the Fall, there was no scarcity: food was abundant and cheap, and man did not have to spend much time in search of sustenance and refreshment. Instead, his time was spent in scientific, productive and aesthetic activity (Gen. 2:15, 19-20). Most of his labor involved investigating and beautifying his environment. But when he rebelled, this was changed, and the Curse was inflicted upon his labor and his natural surroundings: *"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"* (Gen. 3:17-19). God imposed the curse of scarcity, and the major part of human labor became a search for food.

But in salvation God restores His people to Eden, and food comes cheaper and easier to find. In turn, more time can be spent on other activities: the growth of culture is possible only when food is relatively abundant. God gives His people food in order to give them dominion. The biblical history of salvation demonstrates this again and again. In places too numerous to list here completely, godly men are mentioned as living near *trees* (see Gen. 18:4, 8; 30:37; Jud. 3:13; 4:5; 1 Ki. 19:5; Jn. 1:48; and, in a modern translation, see Gen. 12:6; 13:18; 14:13; Jud. 4:11). In none of these references is the mention of the trees absolutely essential to the story itself: in a sense, we might think such a detail could have been left out. But God wants us to get the picture in our minds of His people living in the midst of abundance, surrounded by the blessings of the Garden as they are restored in salvation. When Israel is blessed, we find every man sitting under his own vine and fig tree (1 Ki. 4:25), and the same is prophesied of all men who will live under the blessings of the Christ, when all nations shall flow to the Mountain of the Lord (Mic. 4:1-4; Zec. 3:10).

For this reason the Edenic imagery of *trees, planting* and *fruit* is used throughout Scripture to describe God's work of salvation. In singing about God's deliverance of His people into the new Eden, Moses said: *"Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance"* (Ex. 15:17). The godly man is *"like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper"* (Ps. 1:3; cf. Jer. 17:7-8). The Covenant people are *"as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters"* (Num. 24:6); *"Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit"* (Isa. 27:6).

The lampstand in the Tabernacle was a reminder of Eden: it was usually a stylized *tree*, decked with artificial bulbs and flowers, all made of pure *gold* (Ex. 37:17-24). The Temple also was richly furnished with Edenic-restoration symbolism: the cedar walls displayed carvings of gourds, flowers, palm trees and cherubim, overlaid with gold (1 Ki. 6:15-36; cf. the vision of the restored Temple [the Church] in Ezek. 41:18-20). The Ark of the Covenant contained not only the

Law but also a golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod which was miraculously covered with buds, blossoms and almonds (Heb. 9:4).

The High Priest was a living symbol of man fully restored to the Garden. His forehead was covered with a gold plate, on which was engraved *HOLINESS TO THE LORD* (Ex. 28:38), as a symbol of the removal of the Curse on Adam's brow. His breastplate was covered with gold and precious stones (Ex. 28:15-30), and the hem of his robe was ringed with pomegranates and golden bells (Ex. 28:33-35). As another symbol of freedom from the Curse, the robe itself was made of *linen* (Ex. 28:6), for while they were ministering, the priests were forbidden to wear any wool at all: *"No wool shall come upon them. . . . They shall not gird themselves with anything that causeth sweat"* (Ezek. 44:17-18). In Gen. 3:18-19, sweat is an aspect of fallen man's labor under death and the Curse; the priest, as Restored Man, was to wear the light material of linen to show the removal of the Curse in salvation.

This last point, by the way, explains the Old Testament prohibition against wearing a *mixture* of wool and linen (Lev. 19:19; Deut. 22:11). It was *not* a prohibition against mingled materials in general, such as a cotton/nylon shirt; instead, the symbolism referred to the relationship of the material to *sweat*. The people were forbidden to mix *life* and *death* (see, e.g., Deut. 12:23; 14:21; 20:19-20), and the sweat associated with wool was a symbol of death, while linen symbolized the righteous standing of the man who had been freed from the Curse (Rev. 19:8).

Edenic symbolism was also in the feasts of Israel, as they celebrated the bounty of God's provision and enjoyed the fullness of life and prosperity under the Covenant. This is particularly true of the Feast of Tabernacles (or "Ingathering," in Ex. 23:16). In this feast they were required to leave their homes and live for seven days in "tabernacles," or booths, made entirely of "the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook" (Lev. 23:40). Israel usually dwelled in walled cities, as a protection against their enemies; yet, at the very time of prosperity (the end of harvest) — when attack would seem most likely — God ordered them to leave the security of their homes and journey to Jerusalem, to live in unprotected booths made of leafy boughs! God promised, however, that He would keep the heathen from attacking during the festivals (Ex. 34:23-24), and Israel had to trust in His strength.

The feast was, obviously, a reminder of life in Eden, when walled cities were unnecessary; and it looked forward to the day when the world would be turned into Eden, and the nations would beat their swords into plowshares (Mic. 4:3). For this reason they were also commanded to sacrifice 70 bullocks during the feast (Num. 29:12-38). Why? Because the number of the original nations of the earth was 70 (Gen. 10), and the feast celebrated the ingathering of all nations into God's kingdom; thus atonement was made for all.

It is important to remember that the Jews did not keep this feast — in fact, they forgot it was even in the Bible — until their return from captivity under Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh. 8:13-18). When they finally began to keep it, they began also to recognize its meaning as an acted-out prophecy of the conversion of all the nations (since *understanding* comes through *obedience*; Ps. 119:98-100; Jn. 7:17). God enlightened the minds of the prophets to understand the significance of the feast during this time of renewal. On the last day of this feast (Hag. 2:1), God spoke through Haggai: *"I will shake all nations, and the desire [wealth] of all nations shall come; and I will*

fill this House [the Temple] with glory" (Hag. 2:7). About this same time, Zechariah prophesied about the meaning of the feast in terms of the conversion of all nations and the sanctification of every area of life (Zec. 14:16-21). And hundreds of years later, during the celebration of this same feast, Christ Himself declared its meaning: the outpouring of the Spirit upon the restored believer, so that the Church becomes a channel of restoration to the whole world (Jn. 1:37-39; cf. Ezek. 47:1-12).

Israel was to be the means of bringing the blessings of the Garden of Eden to the whole world: Scripture goes out of its way to portray this Great Commission symbolically when it tells us (twice) of Israel camping at Elim, where there were twelve wells of water [the 12 tribes of Israel] and seventy palm trees [the 70 nations] (Ex. 15:27; Num. 33:9). God thus organized Israel as a small-scale model of the world, giving it 70 elders (Ex. 24:1); and Jesus followed this pattern (Lk. 10:1). God's people are a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:9), chosen to bring the light of the Gospel into a world darkened by sin and the Curse. The time will come when the Feast of Tabernacles becomes a reality — when the whole earth becomes the Garden (Isa. 11:9; Dan. 2:35); when the world will be filled with blessing and security, and there is no longer any need for walled cities (Lev. 23:3-6; Isa. 65:17-25; Ezek. 34:25-29). The Garden of Eden, the Mountain of the Lord, will be restored in history, before the Second Coming, by the power of the Gospel; *"and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose"* (Isa. 35:1).

In contrast, the Bible says that God controls the heathen by withholding food and water. To understand the misery of the so-called "Third World," we need to look first at its ungodly religion and culture. The Edenic blessing of abundance will never be theirs until they repent and believe the Gospel. Christian cultures, on the other hand (especially the countries of the Reformation) are blessed with food that is relatively cheap and abundant. No Protestant country has ever suffered famine... yet. But if our nation continues in its apostasy, famine will come. We cannot possess the blessings of the Garden if we live in rebellion against God. The fruitful field will again become a wilderness: *"If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all His commandments...; all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field; cursed shall be thy basket and thy store"* (Deut. 28:15-17). *"Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers... Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field"* (Isa. 32:13-15).

Land And The Garden

When God created Adam, He placed him into a *land*, and gave him dominion over it. Land is basic to dominion; therefore, salvation involves a restoration to land and property. In announcing His Covenant to Abram, the very first sentence God spoke was a promise of land (Gen. 12:1), and He completely fulfilled that promise when He saved his descendants (Josh. 21:43-45). This is why biblical law is filled with references to land, property, inheritance, and economics; and this is why the Reformation laid such stress on *this* world, as well as the next. Man is not saved by being delivered out of his environment. Salvation does not rescue us from the material world, but from *sin*, and from the effects of the Curse. The biblical ideal is for every man to own property — a place where he can have dominion and rule under God.

The blessings of the Western world have come because of Christianity and the resultant freedom which men have had in the use and development of property. Capitalism — the free market — is a product of biblical law, in which a high priority is placed upon private property, and which condemns theft of all kinds (including theft by the state). To unbelieving economists, it is a mystery why capitalism cannot be exported. Considering the obvious, proven superiority of the free market in raising the standard of living for all classes of people, why don't pagan nations implement capitalism into their social structure? The reason is this: *Capitalism cannot be exported to a nation that has no marketplace for the Gospel*. The blessings of the Garden cannot be obtained apart from Jesus Christ. The Golden Rule, the sum of the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 7:12), is the ethical foundation for the free market; and this ethic is impossible

apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to keep the righteous requirement of God's law (Rom. 8:4). All heathen cultures have been statist and tyrannical, for a people who reject God will surrender themselves and their property to a dictator (1 Sam. 8:7-20). Ungodly men want the blessings of the Garden but they attempt to possess them by unlawful means (1 Ki. 21:1-16), and the result is destruction (1 Ki. 21:17-24). The genuine, free possession of land is the result of salvation: God brought His people into a land, and divided it among them for an inheritance (Num. 26:52-56); and, as he had done in Eden, He regulated the land (Lev. 25:4) and the trees (Lev. 19:23-15; Deut. 20:19-20).

As we have seen, when God banished Adam and Eve from their land, the world began to become a wilderness (Gen. 3:17-19). From this point the Bible begins to develop a *Land-vs-Wilderness* theme, in which the people of God are seen inheriting a *land* that is secure and bountiful, while the disobedient are cursed by being driven out into a *wilderness*. When Cain was judged by God, he complained: *"Behold, thou has driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth"* (Gen. 4:14). And he was correct, as Scripture records: *"And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden"* (Gen. 4:16). *Nod* means *Wandering*: Cain became the first nomad, a wanderer with no home.

Similarly, when the whole world became wicked, God said: *"I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth"* (Gen. 6:7), and He did so, by the Flood — leaving only Noah and his household alive in the ark (which God brought to rest, incidentally, on a *mountain*). The ungodly were driven out of the land, and the people of the Covenant repopulated it.

Again, the ungodly tried to build their own "Garden," the tower of Babel; they sought to make themselves a *name* — to define themselves in terms of their own rebellious standards — and to prevent themselves from being *scattered* from the land (Gen. 11:4). But man cannot build the Garden on his own terms. God is the Definer, and He is the only One who can give us security. The very attempt of the people of Babel to prevent their destruction actually brought it about. God confused their languages — so much for "naming" anything! — and *scattered* them from their land (Gen. 11:9). In marked contrast, the very next chapter records God's Covenant with Abram, in which He promises to bring Abram into a *land*, and to make his *name* great (Gen. 12:1-2). As a further guarantee and reminder of His Covenant, God even *changed* Abram's name to Abraham, in terms of his predestined calling. *God is our Definer*: He alone gives us our name. He "calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). Thus, as we are baptized into God's Name (Matt. 28:19), we are redefined as God's living people, free in Christ from our death in Adam (Rom. 5:12-6:23). Circumcision performed the same function in the Old Testament, which is why children officially received their name when they were circumcised (Lk. 2:21). In salvation, God brings us back to Eden and gives us a *new name* (Rev. 2:17; cf. Isa. 65:13-25).

When God's people became disobedient as they were about to enter the Promised Land, God punished them by making them *wander* in the *Wilderness*, until the entire generation of the disobedient was wiped out (Num. 14:26-35). Then God turned and saved His people out of "the waste howling wilderness" (Deut. 32:10), and brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey (another reminder of Eden, by the way: milk is a more-nourishing form of *water*, and honey comes from *trees*). God's obedient people have never been nomads — instead, they are marked by stability, and have dominion. True, the Bible does call us *pilgrims* (Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11), but that is just the point: we are *pilgrims*, not *hobos*. A pilgrim has a home, a destination. In redemption God saves us from our wanderings, and gathers us into a land (Ps. 107:1-9). A scattered, homeless people cannot have dominion. When the Puritans left England, they did not wander over the earth; God brought them into a land and made them rulers, and though the foundation they built has greatly eroded, it is still very much with us after 300 years. (What will people 300 years from now say of the accomplishments of today's shallow, retreatist evangelicalism?)

People become nomads only through disobedience (Deut. 28:65).

As the Curse functions in history, as civilization apostatizes, nomadism becomes widespread, and the wilderness increases (example: in the Arab countries — the land of nomads — the desert is increasing at an alarming rate, and no one knows how to stop it). And, as the Curse spreads, *the water dries up*. Since the Fall, the ground is no longer primarily watered by springs. God sends us water by rain instead (rain is much easier to turn off and on than springs and rivers are). The withholding of water — turning the land into a parched wilderness — is very closely-related to the Curse (Deut. 29:22-28). The Curse is also described in terms of the disobedient people being *uprooted* from the land (Deut. 29:28), in contrast to God's *planting* His people in the land (Ex. 15:17). God destroys the roots of a land and people by cutting off the water supply; drought is regarded in Scripture as a major (and effective) means of punishment. When God stops the water, He turns the land into the very opposite of Eden.

The history of Sodom and Gomorrah is a sort of capsulized history of the world in this regard. Once described as being like the Garden of Eden in its beauty and abundance (Gen. 13:10), it became through God's judgment a land of *"brimstone, and salt, and burning.... It is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein"* (Deut. 29:23). Sodom and Gomorrah were in the area now known as the Dead Sea — and it is called *Dead* for a very good reason: nothing can live in it. Chemical deposits (salt, potash, magnesium and others) make up 25 percent of the water as a result of God's judgment upon the land. Except for where water flows *into* it (and a few isolated springs in the area), the land is completely arid. It is now the farthest thing imaginable from Eden, and it serves as a picture of the world after the Curse: Eden has become a Wilderness.

But that is not all we are told about this area. In Ezekiel's vision of the restored Temple (also on a mountain, Ezek. 40:2), he sees the Water of Life flowing eastward from the threshold toward the Dead Sea and healing its waters, resulting in *"a great multitude of fish"* and luxuriant growth (Ezek. 47:8-12). We must not look upon the world with eyes that see only the Curse; we must look with the eyes of faith, enlightened by God's word to see the world as the arena of triumph. History does not end with the Wilderness. World history will be, on a massive scale, that of Sodom; First a Garden, lovely and fruitful; then corrupted into a Wilderness of Death through sin; finally, restored by God's grace to its former Edenic abundance. *"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose"* (Isa. 35:1).

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together; that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this and the Holy One of Israel hath created it (Isa. 41:17-20).

This, then, is the direction of history, in what may be called *"the Real Rapture"* — God gradually uprooting unbelievers and unbelieving cultures from the land, and bringing His people into a full inheritance of the earth.

I am not denying, of course, the biblical doctrine that God's people shall someday meet the Lord in the air, at His return (1 Thess. 4:17); but the modern doctrine of the *"Rapture"* is the doctrine of *flight from the world*, in which Christians are taught to long for escape from the world and its problems, rather than for what God's word promises us: Dominion. How common it is to hear Christians say, when confronted with a problem: *"I sure hope the Rapture comes soon!"* — rather than: *"Let's get to work on the solution of it now!"* Even worse is the response that is also too common: *"Who cares? We don't have to do anything about it, because the Rapture is coming soon anyway!"* And worst of all is the attitude held by some that all work to make this a better world is absolutely wrong, because *"improving the situation will only delay the Second Coming!"* Rapturism should be recognized for what it really is: a

deadly cult that is teaching God's people to expect defeat instead of victory.

The truth is that God doesn't *"rapture"* Christians out of the world — He *"raptures"* non-Christians! The Lord Jesus prayed, in fact, that we would *not* be *"raptured"*: *"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil"* (Jn. 17:15). And this is the constant message of Scripture. God's people will inherit all things, and the ungodly will be disinherited and driven out of the land. *"For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it."* (Prov. 2:21-22). *"The righteous shall never be removed; but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth"* (Prov. 10:30). God described the land of Canaan as having been *"defiled"* by the abominable sins of its inhabitants, saying that *"the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants"*; and He warned His people not to imitate those heathen abominations, *"that the land spue not you out also"* (Lev. 18:24-28; 20:22). Using the same Edenic language, the Lord warns the church of Laodicea against sin, and threatens: *"I will spue you out of my mouth"* (Rev. 3:16). In His parable of the wheat (the godly) and the tares (the ungodly) — and note the Edenic imagery even in His choice of illustrations — Christ declares that He will gather *first* the tares for destruction; the wheat is *"raptured"* later (Matt. 13:30).

"The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (Prov. 13:22). That is the basic pattern of history as God saves His people and gives them dominion. This is what God did with Israel: in saving them, He brought them into *already-settled lands*, and they inherited cities that had already been built (Ps. 105:43-45). God *does* *"bless"* the heathen, in a sense — just so they can work out their own destruction, in the meantime building up an inheritance for the godly (see Gen. 15:16; Ex. 4:21; Josh. 11:19-20). Then God smashes them and gives the fruit of their labor to His people. This is why we need not fret over evildoers, for we shall inherit the earth (Ps. 37). The Hebrew word for *salvation* is *yasha*, meaning *to bring into a large, wide, open space* — and in salvation God does just that: He gives us the world, and turns it into the Garden of Eden.

The Presence Of God In The Garden

Finally, what was most important about the Garden — indeed, that which made it a Garden at all (and this has been implied throughout our study) — was God's presence with His people. In order to understand this properly, we will begin with the revelation of God's presence to the Covenant people of Israel, and then work both *backward* to Eden and *forward* to the Church. (For those who wish to pursue this subject in much greater detail, I would advise a careful reading of Meredith Kline's seminal work *Images of the Spirit*.)

God revealed His presence to His people in the Cloud of Glory. The Cloud functioned as a sort of *"mobile home"* for God — His fiery chariot by which He made His presence known to His people. The Cloud served as a guide for Israel, giving light in the darkness and shade from the heat (Ex. 13:21-22; Ps. 105:39), but bringing judgment to the wicked (Ex. 14:19-25). On Sinai, the Cloud was accompanied by thunder, light, fire, smoke and an earthquake (Ex. 19:16-20), and was filled with innumerable angels (Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17). The Cloud is nothing less than a revelation of the invisible Heaven, where God is seated on His throne of glory, surrounded by His heavenly court and council (Ex. 24:9-15; Isa. 6:1-4), and from which He spoke to Moses (Ex. 33:9; Ps. 99:7). When the Tabernacle was completed, the Cloud entered it and filled it with the glory of God (Ex. 40:34-38; cf. 2 Chron. 5:13-14), and fire issued forth from it to consume the sacrifices (Lev. 9:23-24). The prophet Ezekiel looked up through the Cloud (Ezek. 1) and saw fire, lightning and winged creatures flying below a *"firmament"* — the *"pavement"* or *"sea of glass"* that is around the base of God's throne (Ex. 24:10; Rev. 4:6) — and around the throne was the Glory in the form of a rainbow. While there are many phenomena associated with the Cloud (most are listed in Ps. 18:6-15), perhaps the most striking characteristic is the peculiar, unmistakable *noise* or *voice*: virtually every account mentions it. Depending on the situation, it can sound like wind, thunder, rushing water, a shout, a trumpet, a marching army, the

rumbling of chariot wheels, or the fluttering and beating of wings (see the passages already cited; also Ezek. 3:12-13; 10:1-5; 2 Sam. 5:24; 2 Ki. 7:5-7); and Ezekiel tells us that the sound, in fact, has its origin in the beating of the *wings* of the myriads of angels (Ezek. 1:24).

It is important to recognize that the Cloud was a *theophany*, a visible manifestation of the enthroned presence of God with His Covenant people. Indeed, the Old Testament often used the term *Spirit* as a synonym for the *Cloud*, ascribing the same functions to both (Neh. 9:19-20; Isa. 4:4-5; Joel 2:28-31; Hag. 2:5). The most revealing instance of this equation of God and the Cloud is where Moses describes God's salvation of Israel in the wilderness in terms of an eagle *fluttering* over her young (Deut. 32:11). How did God "flutter"? Why does the Psalmist continually seek refuge in the shelter of God's "wings" (e.g., Ps. 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 91:4)? Certainly, God Himself does not have wings. But His angels do — and the special revelation of God's saving and protecting presence was by the Cloud of His Glory, which contains "many thousands of angels" (Ps. 68:17 cf. 2 Ki. 6:17): "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.... For He shall give His angels charge over thee" (Ps. 91:4,11).

Now, the fascinating thing about Moses' statement in Deut. 32:11 — God's "fluttering" over His people by means of the Cloud — is that Moses uses the word only one other time in the entire Pentateuch, when he tells us that "the earth was without form, and void;... and the Spirit of God *moved* upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). Nor is that the only parallel between these two passages; for in Deut. 32:10 Moses describes the wilderness through which the people were traveling as a *waste* — the same word translated *without form* in Gen. 1:2 (and, again, these are the only two uses of the word in the Pentateuch). What Moses is saying, then — and this fact was surely understood by his Hebrew readers — is that *God's saving of His people through the Exodus was a re-enactment of the history of the Creation: In saving Israel God was constituting them as a New Creation*. As in the beginning, the Spirit-Cloud hovered over the creation, bringing light in the darkness (Gen. 1:3; Ex. 14:21; Jn. 1:3-5), and leading on to the Sabbath-rest in the Promised Land, the New Eden (Gen. 2:2-3; cf. Deut. 12:9-10; Ps. 95:11, where the land is called a *rest*). Thus, God's re-creation of His people in order to bring them into fellowship with Him in the Holy Mountain was witnessed by the same manifestation of His creative presence that was there at the original Creation, when the Spirit gloriously arched His canopy over the earth. The bright radiance of the Cloud-canopy was also the basis for the sign of the rainbow that Noah saw on Mount Ararat, assuring him of the faithfulness of God's Covenant (Gen. 9:13-17). The glory of God's Cloud-canopy, arched over a mountain, is a repeated sign in Scripture that God is with His people, creating them anew and restoring His handiwork to its original Edenic state.

A basic promise of salvation is given in Isa. 4:4-5 (NASV): "When the LORD has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, *by the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning*, then the LORD will *create* over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies [the official gatherings for worship] a Cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a *canopy*." This Cloud-canopy of God's presence, full of angels' wings, is called a pavilion, a *covering* (2 Sam. 22:12; ; Ps. 18:11; Lam. 3:44; Ps. 91:4); and the same word is used to describe the position of Satan before the Fall, who as a perfect member of the heavenly host was "a covering cherub," a part of the Cloud-canopy that covered the Garden of Eden (Ezek. 28:14, 16). And *that* is why this word *covering* is used to describe the position of the carved cherubim that were placed hovering over the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:20). It is therefore significant that this Hebrew word is the *erm* translated *booths* and *tabernacles* when God commands His people to erect booths of leafy boughs to dwell in during the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34, 42-43); as we have seen, this feast was a reminder of Eden, a symbolic representation of the fact that salvation restores us to Edenic blessings.

The Garden of Eden served thus as a Tabernacle-Temple, a small

replica of God's larger Temple (Palace) in which the "heavens" are His throne and the "earth" is His footstool (Gen. 1:1; Isa. 66:1) — the invisible heavens together with the visible universe making up His great cosmic Temple. Close attention to the architecture of the Tabernacle and the Temple will reveal that they were modeled as copies, not only of the Garden of Eden, but of the original heavenly Temple: the Cloud-canopy (cf. Heb. 8:5; 9:11, 23-24).

This Edenic imagery is taken up and expanded in the New Testament, which records the fulfillment of the promises of the New Creation in Christ. An obvious passage, of course, is John's Prologue (Jn. 1:1-18), which begins where Genesis does: "In the beginning." We see the same concepts — the Word, creation, life, the light shining in darkness and overcoming it; and John says of Christ that He "*dwelt* [literally, *tabernacled*] among us, and we beheld His *glory*" (cf. Ex. 40:34). John's point here is to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the full revelation of God's presence with His people (cf. Matt. 1:23).

But John says much more. His following section (1:19-2:11) is a subtle seven-day structure that is meant to remind us of the original seven days of creation (as well as other Old Testament parallels). On the first day, John the Baptist appears as "the *voice* of one crying in the *wilderness*" (1:23). The next day, as Jesus is baptized (baptism is a recapitulation of two Old Testament re-creation events: the Flood and the Red Sea crossing) the Spirit descends, *hovering over the waters of the New Creation* — and He comes as a dove, the winged messenger that announced to Noah that re-creation of the world. The passage continues with other creation-images, and ends on the seventh day with Jesus attending a wedding, and turning the *water* (cf. Gen. 1:2ff.) into wine — the *best* wine. The blessing is superabundant, more than is necessary, as a forerunner of the promised blessings of the Garden which would come through Him (Gen. 49:10-12; Isa. 25:6; Amos 9:13-14; Jer. 33:10-11). Just before He does this, He mentions the Hour of His death — for it is His shed blood, the wine of Communion, that provides the blessings; Eden is inaccessible apart from the Atonement. And thus, by this miracle on the seventh day, Jesus "manifested His glory" (Jn. 2:11) — just as God had done by His enthronement in the Cloud on the first Sabbath. But when God is seated at rest upon His throne, He sits as Judge, examining His Creation-Temple; and when He found wickedness therein, He cleansed it, banishing the offenders (Gen. 3:24). Similarly, the next event in John's Gospel shows the Lord assessing the Temple and coming in Judgment against those who defiled it (2:12-22). On the Sabbath we appear before God's throne of judgment to be examined; and if we are approved, we enter into His Rest (see Heb. 3-4). The people at the Temple on this Sabbath were guilty, and He banished them in an awesome — and noisy — manifestation of judgment; an image of the first and final Days of the Lord. He then declared His body — Himself personally *and* His body the Church — to be the true Temple (2:18-22), for the physical resurrection of Christ's body is the foundation for His people's being constituted as the Temple (Eph. 1:20; 2:5-6, 19-22; 1 Cor. 3:10-11, 16-17). The biblical emphasis regarding the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is *not* that the *individual* believer is indwelt, but that the *Church* is indwelt; for it is the Church — not the individual — which is the Temple.

As God's Temple, the Church is re-admitted to Eden and filled with the Spirit and the glory of God (see Ex. 40:34; Num. 9:15; Joel 2:28-31; Acts 2:1-4, 16-21). The church is God's new Garden-Temple, restored to God's original mandate for man: to have dominion over the earth, expanding the Garden until it covers the whole world. In remaking us in His image, God has given us His presence. He has taken up residence in His Temple, and has promised to be with us as we fulfill His mandate to the ends of the earth (Matt. 28:18-20). "*There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the City of God, the Holy Place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early*" (Ps. 46:4-5). "*And it shall come to pass, tht every living creature which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live:...for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh*" (Ezek. 47:9).