

It all began in a garden...

In the beginning, the Bible declares, God created the heavens and the earth. When the earth was finished, God created a man and placed him in “the garden of God,” more commonly known to us as the “Garden of Eden.” “And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.” (Genesis 2:8) Here in the world’s most famous garden, Adam enjoyed the splendor of God’s creation in all its breathtaking beauty, and maintained a garden that had no pests or weeds or destructive diseases of any kind. Best of all, Adam enjoyed the physical presence of God who walked and talked with him in the garden.

Life for Adam was sheer paradise—except for one thing. He had no human companion and no offspring, as did the animals he named. The Bible tells us God saw Adam’s plight, “And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone...” (Genesis 2:18a) So with compassion and love, the Lord made Adam a special companion who would share the joys of life together with him in perfect harmony and delight. No marriage squabbles, no selfish demands, no disappointment whatsoever—Eve was perfect in every way and was the crowning jewel of beauty in Adam’s life. Together they enjoyed the delights of the garden and a special friendship with God.

Adam and Eve were free to do anything they chose to do. They ate whatever they wanted, explored to their heart’s content, and exercised the creative abilities God had given to them. There was only one rule God commanded them to obey. We read, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17) Adam and Eve could choose fruit from any of the myriads of fruit trees and eat to their heart’s content—just one tree was off limits.

Adam and Eve were happy to obey, until one day when Eve was suddenly confronted by the “father of lies,” Satan himself in the form of a snake. The Bible tells us, “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:1-3 5)

Oh the treachery of a half-truth and twisted words! In the hands of the devil, the tools of deception are skillfully executed to produce what the devil loves best—a false perception of the character of God and the destruction of whatever God has made good. So Eve doubted the goodness of the God who made her, reasoned in her own heart that the devil’s comments sounded right and thus took the bait. In one fatal moment, Eve chose to disobey God’s command and ignore His warning—she ate from the forbidden tree and convinced her husband to eat as well. It was a choice that forever changed Adam and Eve, the world in which they lived and the eternal destinies of all their descendents. As God had warned, they died spiritually and would one day die physically. Their life on earth was no longer one of effortless harmony, for they were forever changed by something they had never known before—a sinful human nature. The Bible tells us, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” (Romans 5:12)

Knowing evil did not make Adam and Eve wise as Satan had promised—instead it made them and their descendants foolish, self-willed, and spiritually blind. Worst of all, it made them unsuited to fellowship with God or live in His presence. For the first time in their lives Adam and Eve found themselves filled with remorse, guilt, and fear. No longer did they eagerly anticipate the presence of God with childlike confidence. Instead, they hid themselves among the trees of the garden when they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day. (Genesis 8:1)

God's creation was marred, but all was not destroyed, for God loved Adam and Eve and promised a remedy that would take away the curse of sin and make reconciliation and renewed fellowship with Himself possible. God's holiness and justice would not allow Him to overlook sin or remain in fellowship with those who would live in rebellion against Him—but God's love and mercy prepared a way for justice to be satisfied and holiness to be restored, making eternal life in His presence possible once again. The good news is that Adam and Eve and every human descendant after them is able to receive God's forgiveness and eternal life. The sad news is that only God Himself could pay the penalty for man's sin (death) and then rise again victorious over it. We read, "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

The same God who created Heaven and earth and walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden became a man and died on a cruel cross to pay the penalty of sin. The Bible tells us "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified (forgiven/proclaimed righteous) by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Romans 5:8-10)

The Lord Jesus had once enjoyed the quiet moments at the end of the day walking with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Now, many years later, He prayed in a garden called Gethsemane and prepared Himself for the hours that lay ahead of Him when He would pay the ultimate cost of sin. In this quiet garden place, Christ poured out his heart in prayer, knowing the agonies of the cross that He would soon experience. The sin that began in the Garden of Eden now brought Him to the Garden of Gethsemane, and would soon take him to yet another garden where his crucified body would be placed in a tomb. The Bible tells us, "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid." (John 19:41)

It is from this garden tomb that Christ arose three days later, victorious over death, the curse of sin. Human life on this earth began in a garden, but new life, *eternal life*, began in a garden as well. For it is because the Lord Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead that we may receive the gift of eternal life if by faith we put our trust in Him alone. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." (1 John 4:9) Forgiveness of sins and eternal life cost us *nothing*—but it cost God *everything*. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Like Adam and Eve, we rebel against the commandments of the Lord in spite of God's warning and in spite of His goodness to us. It is our sinful self-willed hearts that separate us from God and make us unfit to enjoy a right relationship with God on earth or in Heaven. But God has made a way and by His power, He is able and willing to change our sinful hearts, forgive our sins, reconcile us back to Himself, and give to us eternal life. Only the Lord Jesus Christ is able to destroy the curse of death that is upon every human being and restore us again to the Garden of

God where we will enjoy Him forever. Won't you seek His forgiveness and receive Him as your Savior today? "But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His name." (John 1:12)

Do you have questions about the Bible, God's plan of salvation or the life of a Christian? You will find help, and hear the Word of God taught and explained at Lighthouse Baptist Church located at 2600 White Ave. in La Verne. Please do not hesitate to call (909 398-4838) or write to us if we can assist you in your desire to know Christ. We would love to hear from you and would be honored to have you as our guest.