

4. Gold reflects light and we reflect God's light when we live in His presence. The onyx stones bore the names of the tribes – indicating their preciousness before God.

"A heart for mission grows out of a soul that finds satisfaction in God's presence, the riches of which can be seen in the imagery of Eden." – G.K. Beale (p. 24)

5. Jesus offers us "a spring of water welling up to eternal life (Jn. 4:13-14) and all true believers have "rivers of living water" that can flow out of their hearts in mission to others.

III. God's Presence Compels our Mission

1. ANE practice would put images in temples to represent the king as an image of his god.
2. Similarly, the true God puts living images in his garden-temple: Humanity is to represent God spiritually.
3. As Eden is expanded, humanity is to multiply images for God.
4. Sin distorted our testimony to the God we represented, but by beholding the true God in Jesus Christ, we are "transformed into the same image, from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:18).
5. Like our Creator, man was to speak and name the animals.
6. The son of man (or Adam) in Dan. 7:1-14 subdues the beasts and is takes true dominion forever as Adam should have.
7. Unlike Adam, Jesus, the Son of Man, triumphed over the Serpent [Satan] and we can too (Rev. 12:10-11; Rom. 16:20).
8. The Church in Acts is described as fruitful and multiplying. Colossians 1:6, 10 also stresses how believers are to themselves be fruitful and increasing in God's knowledge.

"Spiritual progeny are multiplying to fill the earth through the gospel." – G.K. Beale (p. 36)

Based on: *God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* by G.K. Beale and Mitchell Kim (Crossway, 2014).

Review

- The Church is described as a Temple – the dwelling place of God. We are included in the many promises of God to dwell with his people and be with them as their God.
- God promises to be the God of Abraham and his descendants and to dwell with them (Gen. 17:7). He repeats that promise for Israel in Moses' time (Exod. 6:7; 29:45; Lev. 26:11-12). David praises God for this in (2 Sam. 7:24) as does the psalmist (Ps. 132:13-14).
- The New Covenant extends these promises into the future including the NT Church in them – Jer. 31:33, Ezek. 37:27. Jesus tabernacled among us, as "God with us" (Matt. 1:23, Jn. 1:14) and Rev. 21:3 looks to the final fulfillment when Heaven comes to earth and God dwells in the New Jerusalem with his people finally for all time.

I. The Garden of Eden as the First Temple

Many view the Garden of Eden as a Temple or Sanctuary.

A. Place of God's Presence – God "walks" in the Garden.

1. The same Hebrew verbal form meaning "walking back and forth" refers to God's special presence – Lev. 26:12.

Lev. 26:12 *"I will walk among you and... be your God, and you shall be my people."*

2. Also used of the Tabernacle – Dt. 23:14, 2 Sam. 7:6-7.

2 Sam. 7:6 *"I have been moving about [walking about] in a tent for my dwelling."*

B. Position:

1. Eastern entrance, like Tabernacle & Temple (Ex. 27:13; Ez. 47:1).
2. Guarded by a Cherub (Gen. 3:24); Cherubim on the Tabernacle's veil and curtains (Exod. 26:31, 36:35; 2 Chron. 3:14), as well as above the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies (Exod. 25:18-22; 1 Kings 6:23-29).
3. Eden on a mountain.

- Eden is the source of rivers flowing into the Garden and out.

Ezek. 28:14-15 *"Eden the garden of God... the holy mountain of God."*

- The Temple was to be on a mountain (Ps. 68:16; Isa. 11:9).

4. Near lands known for gold and onyx.
 - Gold especially related to the construction of the Tabernacle and temple. Onyx was important too (for priestly garments).

C. Provision:

Gen. 2:9 *“...every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.”*

1. Tree of Life: may be what the Lampstand (Menorah) is patterned after, as it was crafted to look like a tree with branches & flowers.
2. Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil: brings wisdom, but its fruit bring death; similarly the Ark had the Law inside which brings wisdom, and to touch the Ark brought death.
3. Eden is paradise, with verdant life-giving qualities. The Tabernacle and Temple had arboreal decorations – fruit, trees, palms, etc. (1 Ki. 6:18, 29, 32, 35; 7:18-20).
4. A single river flows from Eden that becomes 4 rivers and the impression is that the river gives the provisions of the Garden. A river bringing life is developed in later Scripture:

Ps. 46:4 *“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God....”*

Ps. 36:8–9 *“... you give them drink from the river of your delights [lit. “Edens”]. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.”*

Rev. 7:17 *“...the Lamb... will guide them to springs of living water...”*

Ezek. 47:1, 9, 12 *“...water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east)... so everything will live where the river goes.... And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”*

Rev. 22:1–2 *“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”*

D. Priestly Service

1. Adam was to “work and keep” the Garden.
 - “Work” [*abad*] – prepare or tend; server or minister.
 - “Keep” [*shamar*] – can mean guard or obey.

2. This combination of terms:

- Sometimes refers to Israel serving God and keeping His Word.
- Most often refers to Levites or priests keeping the service or the charge of the tabernacle (Numb. 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chron. 23:32; Ezek. 44:14).

3. The Serpent violated sacred space, and the implication is that Adam had failed at his job of guarding/keeping Eden.
4. Adam is replaced by a cherub who guards access to the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:24).
5. Ezek. 28:12-16 seems to refer to Adam as the one who (like) a cherub, was holy in the Garden of Eden, clothed with precious stones (like a priest), but who by sin defiled the sanctuary and was cast out.

E. Proliferation: Eden was to be expanded to the ends of the Earth.

1. Outside of Eden was a wilderness, yet humanity was called to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28).
2. With Eden as a garden-temple, in light of Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) practices, a city would grow up around it.
3. The implication is that the borders of the garden would be expanded as the city grew and grew, until it eventually took the glory of God all over the earth.
4. We see the final fulfillment of this initial purpose for mankind in Rev. 21 where the new heaven and earth are seen as a single great garden-temple city: the New Jerusalem.

II. God’s Presence Satisfies our Longings

1. Eden as Paradise speaks of abundant life in God’s presence.
2. God’s wisdom is compared to a “tree of life” – Prov. 3:18.
3. Joy expands: the “river of delights” – lit. “river of Edens” (Psalm 36:8) flows from Eden to the garden.

“This river of life abounding with God’s presence flows from the inmost place of God’s presence outward into the nations... our mission to the nations must flow from the life found in God’s presence.” – G.K. Beale (p. 21-22)