

## *Made in the Image of God: The first Adam before it all went south*

### ***A Place***

#### *In a Garden*

The Garden of Eden was a holy realm of God's choosing for Adam to begin, increase and spread the glory of God.

Eden was located somewhere in the Fertile Crescent of the Middle East.

This garden represented the domain of Adam's authority and stewardship. God mandated Adam to keep it and protect it.

#### *Stewarding God's Creation*

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen 1:26-28).

"The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it" (Gen 2:15).

The *cultural mandate*: God's command to exercise dominion over the earth, subdue it, and develop its latent potential (Gen. 1:26-28; cf. Gen 2:15, 9:1).

A two-fold limitation to this cultural mandate:

- 1) The fall of Genesis 3 changed everything. The creation is subjected to futility (Rom 8:23, 26).
- 2) God still owns and maintains his creation:

"For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine" (Ps 50:10-12).

In the consummation of God's redemptive plan at the end of the present age, God will make all things new. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away..." (Rev 21:1).

## ***A People***

The *who* of the garden begins with Adam. God created him *from the dust*.

"The LORD God formed *the man of dust* from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." This is both biological and theological.

1. We are still of the creation.
  - a. The Hebrew play on words for man (Hebrew: *adam*) and ground (*adamah*) is intentional.
2. Humanity is unique from the rest of creation as body-souls.
3. We are always dependent upon God. It is a moral-spiritual dimension that we stand utterly contingent upon our Creator, who sets the boundaries for us in every way, not just physically.
4. Genesis 2:4 - The first appearance of the covenantal name of God: the LORD God. God did something unique with Adam, establishing a relationship with him that organizes the entirety of the rest of the Bible. When God created Adam he entered into a covenant with him.

God created Adam and Eve by creative feat (it was a miracle) – something that natural occurrences cannot explain. It was supernatural. God gives us this man, Adam, and teaches us two major things about being an image-bearer and being a representative for all humanity after him.

## ***Made in the Image of God***

The foundational text is Genesis 1:26-28:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" So God created man in his own image in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have

dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the every living thing that moves on the earth.”

God’s second commandment forbid the making and worshipping of such images.

“The integrity with which Adam was endowed is expressed by this phrase (image of God), when he had full possession of right understanding, when he had his affections kept within the bounds of reason, all his senses tempered in right order, and he truly referred his excellence to exceptional gifts bestowed upon him by his Maker” (John Calvin, *Institutes*, I. 15. 3).

God created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, with true knowledge, righteousness and holiness before God, along with dominion over the created order (cf. WCF IV. II.).

How the image of God is *retained* after the fall:

1. All people, regardless of sin, are still image-bearers. They have inherent dignity, value, and worth not only in the eyes of others, but ultimately before God.
2. Genesis 9:6 says, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God he made man.” The reason no human may murder another human turns not on the potential value (either past or present) but on the *actual value* of a human being as an image bearer.
3. James 3:9 says, “With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made according to the likeness of God.”

### *A Federal Head*

God seeks to confer a holy realm on a holy people by a Federal Head. Life was promised to Adam and to all those after him upon perfect obedience to this agreement. By doing the work to keep the Covenant, life was offered. Works was the means, and life is the result. Failure brings death.

### *Adam, the Covenantal Head*

Before God created Eve, God commanded Adam:

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’” (Gen 2:16).

Adam fails to keep God’s command:

“And to Adam he said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of tree of which I command you, ‘You shall not eat of it’ ...’” (Gen 3:17, *emphasis mine*).

Adam represented all humanity. His obedience meant obedience for all, his trespass meant trespass for all:

“...sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin...” (Rom 5:12)

“...many died through one man’s trespass...” (5:15)

“...death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam...” (5:14)

“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men...” (5:18)

“For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners...” (5:19)

The Garden was temporary. Eden was a provisional place providing the way for Heaven. Eden promised Adam something greater: Heaven.

### *The Tree of Life*

The Tree of Life was in the garden. It held forth to Adam a sign for eternal life.

“Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way of the tree of life (Gen 3:22b-24).

When you consider your sin, it is directly linked to this man, Adam. As a result of Adam’s disobedience, his original sin was imputed to all humanity (next class topic).

### *The Man of Heaven*

“He *is the image* of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Col 1:15, *emphasis mine*).

“The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47-48).

From the man of heaven comes the fruit of the man of heaven. This is what Revelation symbolically holds forth to us in the reappearance of the tree of life:

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” (Rev 2:7; cf. 22:1-2, 14).