

Adam, Aaron, and the Garden Sanctuary

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A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT parallels exist between the garden of Eden and the tabernacle.¹ The contour, substance, and meaning of the garden inform the tabernacle and its service. The reverse also is true; understanding the tabernacle helps one conceptualize the garden. The biblical texts provide a discourse between the two “sanctuaries.” Former studies of the garden as a prototype sanctuary have been topical in approach and more focused on the Temple in Jerusalem.² This article will follow the narrative of Genesis 2–3, purposely examining how the garden and Adam’s vocation point to the tabernacle and its service, especially noting the work of Aaron in the holy places.

THE CREATION OF ADAM

Adam is created unlike any other creature. He is the consummate work of God, the crown of creation.³ With regal-like terms, he is made in the “image of God” (Gen 1:27) and is to “subdue” the earth and “rule” over every living thing (Gen 1:28).⁴ He is woven into the very design of creation, yet set apart: God has a special task for him, and all creation through him. Where will Adam execute his task? It will begin in a unique place. The Lord planted a garden in Eden, and he put Adam to serve there.

It is not stated exactly where Adam was created, only that “a mist was going up from the land and watering the whole face of the ground” and “the LORD God formed the man” from the soil⁵ of this ground (תַּחַת, Gen 2:5–7). The ground from which Adam was formed was previously bathed in water.⁶ After he was formed, the Lord God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Gen 2:7).⁷ Directly inspirited by God himself, Adam becomes a “living creature” (חַיָּה שֶׁבֶת), the only one whose creation is described in this fashion.⁸ Concerning his singular character, Bonhoeffer writes, “Man does not ‘have’ a body; he does not ‘have’ a soul; rather, he ‘is’ body and soul.”⁹ Adam’s formation immediately precedes the garden narrative, and in this context the divine name (יְהוָה) first appears (Gen 2:4–7).¹⁰ In lieu of the garden, the introduction of the personal name for God coupled with the unique forming of Adam further illustrates that the man is set apart for a divine purpose.

When Aaron was anointed high priest, it was done within the tabernacle precinct (Lev 8:2, 6). His body was first washed with water. Then the priestly vestments were put on him, the final piece being "the holy crown" (Lev 8:9). Upon the crown

was engraved the divine name, “Holy to the LORD” (קָדֵשׁ לִיהוָה), Exod 28:36). It was then that Moses poured the sacred oil upon his head (Lev 8:12).¹¹ Aaron would be set apart for service to the Lord and Israel in the tabernacle.

EDEN AND THE GARDEN

"And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Gen 2:8). Eden (עַדְן) is somewhat enigmatic, although Genesis 2-4 presents it as a geographical location.¹² Traditionally the word Eden has been understood to mean "luxuriance" and has the sense of

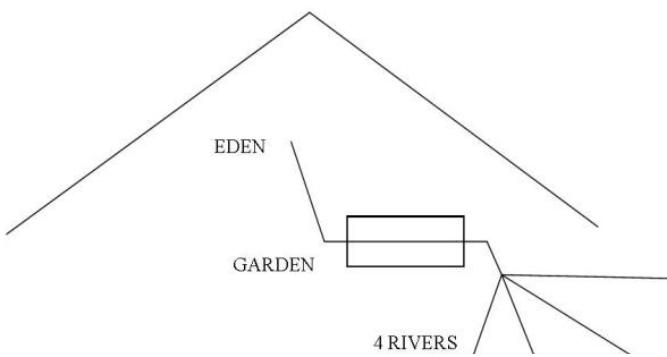
1. Parallels also exist with Solomon's temple, Ezekiel's temple vision, and the Revelation of John.
 2. Recent studies of the garden as a temple include G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 66–80; Daniel Lioy, "The Garden of Eden as a Primordial Temple or Sacred Space for Humankind," in *Axis of Glory: A Biblical and Theological Analysis of the Temple Motif in Scripture*, Studies in Biblical Literature, v. 138 (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 5–15; Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1994), 126–51; Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 4–12, 1985*, ed. Raphael Giveon, et al. (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 19–24.
 3. Psalm 8:5, "[Y]ou have crowned him with glory and honor." All Scripture quotations are ESV.
 4. פָּסָה (image) and תְּהִלָּה (likeness) are used in the Ancient Near East for kings who represent the gods; see Nahum Sarna, *Genesis: בְּרֵאשֶׁת*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 12.
 5. טְבַע (dust, dry earth) is also translated in other contexts as "soil," "clay," or "clod." It has a strong tradition of being translated "dust" here, in large part due to the end of the garden story, where the Lord says to Adam, "for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19). Genesis 2:6, however, shows the earth (הָרֹאשׁ) of which Adam was formed likely to be moist. Adam would be in his most pristine state.
 6. The popular Jewish commentator Rashi likens this action of the Lord to "a kneader of dough who puts water into flour, and afterwards kneads the dough" (*The Torah: With Rashi's Commentary*, vol. 1, *Bereishis: Genesis* [Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1995], 22).
 7. Adam is like a miniature temple. Job 4:19 refers to human beings as those "who dwell in houses of clay."
 8. Regarding this unique formation of Adam, Luther says, "Moses wanted to intimate dimly that God was to become incarnate" (AE 1:87).
 9. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1–3 [and] Temptation* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 46.
 10. "אֲלֹהָה הָהָה" is used twenty times throughout Genesis 2 and 3. The expression does not appear in the dialogue between the serpent and the woman.
 11. Psalm 133:2 indicates that the oil may have run down over his face and beard and onto the collar of his robes.
 12. When Cain left the presence of the Lord, he settled in the land of Nod, "east of Eden" (Gen 4:16).

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abundance.¹³ The Septuagint translates the garden as “paradise.”¹⁴ However, Eden and the garden are not synonymous. Eden designates a wider area of which the garden is a part. The garden is “in the east” of Eden. The word for garden (*גַן*) in the Bible denotes a “fenced-off enclosure.”¹⁵ The garden is connected to Eden yet is its own distinct entity.¹⁶

The garden even exhibits a differentiation within itself. There are two definite trees in the middle of the garden: the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of the good and evil (Gen 2:9). The “middle” of the garden expresses a central location, and a distinction is made between the trees.

The setting is further defined by a river that “flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers” (Gen 2:10). A single river flows “from Eden” to water, that is, to irrigate, the garden. Rivers generally flow downhill, which may indicate that Eden is a higher elevation than the garden.¹⁷ After the river flows through the garden it divides into four streams, distributing water throughout the earth, as if in the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, west). By following the course of the river, we witness a threefold gradation: (1) Eden, the river’s source; (2) the garden, which the river runs through; (3) the river then divides into four streams to water the whole land.¹⁸ Of the four rivers, only the directional flow of the Tigris is given, which is “to the east” (Gen 2:14). The Pishon river winds through the land of Havilah, where there is “good” gold, bdellium, and significantly, shoham (*שׁוֹמֶן*) stones (Gen 2:12).



Threefold gradation of Eden's river¹⁹

- 13. For a fuller treatment, see BDB, 726–27. Umberto Cassuto makes the case for understanding Eden as “a place that is well watered throughout” (*A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. Israel Abrahams [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989], 1:108).
- 14. Genesis 2:8, 10, 15, and so forth.
- 15. 2 Kings 25:4; Nehemiah 3:15; Jeremiah 39:4; 52:7.
- 16. Instructive here is that “ancient palaces were adjoined by gardens”; gardens were also typically “part of temple complexes in the Ancient Near East” (Beale, *The Temple*, 74, 76).
- 17. Ezekiel 28:13–14: “You were in Eden, the garden of God . . . on the holy mountain of God.”
- 18. The course of Ezekiel’s temple river has a similar flow, where it “issues from below the threshold of the temple toward the east.” He also sees “trees on the one side and on the other” of the river (Ezek 47:1, 7).
- 19. Illustration by Robert Hinckley.

Collectively, these characteristics of Eden and the garden display an affinity with the tabernacle. First, the tabernacle courtyard was oriented on an east-west axis, enclosed on all four sides by a fence, with the entrance gate on the eastern side (Exod 27:13). Second, within the tabernacle structure itself there was a separation between the most holy place and the holy place (Exod 26:33). Finally, the tabernacle complex displays a three-fold gradation: most holy place, holy place, and courtyard.²⁰ The congregation of Israel was allowed to come as far as the entrance to the courtyard (Exod 29:42–43). The priests were allowed to go as far as the holy place (Exod 28:43). Only the high priest was allowed in the most holy place and that only once a year (Exod 30:10; Lev 16:12).²¹

All the items mentioned in the land of Havilah are associated with the tabernacle. The most holy furnishings of the ark, table, lampstand, and incense altar were made with pure gold (Exod 25:11, 17, 24, 29; 30:3). The high priest’s ephod (*עֵדָה*) also had gold yarn woven into it (Exod 28:15). The shoulder pieces of the ephod were made of shoham stones (Exod 28:9, 20).²² Bdellium is considered either a white aromatic resin or another precious stone. Numbers 11:7 says the manna’s appearance “was like that of bdellium.”



שׁוֹמֶן stones of the Ephod²³

ADAM’S VOCATION

“The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work and keep it” (Gen 2:15). The verbs of this sentence are quite revealing. First, the Lord “took” (*נָפַת*) Adam, a Hebrew verb often used in the tabernacle texts to describe the enactment of one of the Lord’s commands.²⁴ Here the Lord himself

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- 20. The seminal study of the tabernacle’s tripartite structure is Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 149–88; more recently is Philip Peter Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 106 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 89–114.
 - 21. Eden and the tabernacle’s gradation may be clarified by that witnessed at Mount Sinai. The twelve tribes of Israel were camped on the plain at the foot of the mountain (Exod 19:12, 23), Aaron and the elders of Israel were allowed halfway up, and Moses and Joshua ascended further until finally it was Moses alone with God at the summit (Exod 24:1–2, 9, 13, 18).
 - 22. The shoham stone appears only here in Genesis 2 and then not until the tabernacle texts of Exodus (Gen 2:12; Exod 25:7, 28:9); both the KJV and ESV translate it as “onyx.”
 - 23. Illustration by Aleksandr Sigalov, www.thedeserttabernacle.blogspot.com.
 - 24. “And he took” describes a concrete action. The same is used of Moses, who at important moments, was acting upon the Lord’s direct commands (Exod 24:6, 7, 8; 40:20; Lev 8:10, 15, 16, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30).

took Adam and “caused him to rest” (תַּחַת) in the garden.²⁵ Second, the Lord God placed the man in the garden to “work and keep” it. עֲבָד, meaning work or service, is also a term used of the priests and Levites in the tabernacle. The Lord had asked Pharaoh, “Let my people go, that they may serve [עִבְרֵנִי] me in the wilderness” (Exod 7:16). *Avodah* describes both the work of constructing the tabernacle (Exod 35:24; 39:42) and the service in the tabernacle (Num 3:8; 8:26; 18:6). שָׁמַר (to guard or keep) is specifically the work of the Levites (Num 3:7; 8:26). They stand guard, doing what is necessary so that the service of the priests in the tabernacle may be carried out. *Shamar* is also what all of Israel is to do in regards to the Sabbath (Exod 31:13).²⁶

The collocation of verbs in Genesis 2:15 gives Adam’s vocation a priest-like character. He is responsible for maintaining the “sacred” space that God has both planted and placed him into. This godly vocation becomes clearer when Adam is given two commands (תְּצִוָּה) from God, the first occurrence of such a command in the Bible: (1) He is free to eat of every tree of the garden; (2) the only exception, he must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, “for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:16–17). This command-type of gift/prohibition is similar to that of the tabernacle: (1) The people of Israel were enjoined to keep the Sabbath, because it was holy for them; however, the one who profanes it “shall be put to death” (Exod 31:14); (2) Aaron and the priests are to wear their consecrated vestments when they serve in the holy places “that he/they may not die” (Exod 28:35, 43).

In Genesis 2:19–20, Adam begins to fulfill his vocation. The Lord brought all the living creatures to Adam “to see what he would call (אָקַרְתָּ) them.” This action sets Adam apart from the rest. By naming the creatures, Adam makes distinctions between the animals and exercises his dominion over every living thing. One of the main duties of the priests in the tabernacle service was to make a distinction between the clean and unclean animals, those which were fit for offering and those which were not (Lev 11:47; 20:24–26). Concerning the significance of a name, we have only to consider the Lord, who also clearly designates himself to Israel by name (יהָהָה, Ex 3:14–15; 20:2; 34:6).²⁷

THE FALL

Adam is conspicuously missing at the beginning of Genesis 3; it is as if his “guard” was down. The serpent glides into the garden to question the woman about God’s commands concerning the trees. The one that was prohibited, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, becomes the focus. The suggestion with this tree is to be “like God,” for its fruit is desirable for “wisdom” (Gen 3:5–6), and both the woman and the man eat

of it. At the heart of this is disobedience to God’s command and the questioning of his authority and wisdom. Ultimately, Adam will be held responsible.

After they realized their nakedness (עִירָמָה), the man and the woman made for themselves “aprons” (Gen 3:7). From the root for “gird oneself” (עַגֵּל), a similar notion exists with the sashes the priests girded around their waists (Exod 29:9). Aaron also was girded with the ephod, which was like an apron (Exod 28:6; Lev 8:7). All the priests who served in the tabernacle wore linen breeches to “cover their nakedness” (Exod 28:42).

Genesis 2:15 gives Adam’s vocation a priest-like character.

Adam and Eve heard the sound of “the LORD God walking” in the garden (Gen 3:8). From עָלָה (to walk), the verb also is used to describe the Lord’s presence among Israel in the tabernacle: “I will walk among you” (Lev 26:12). The holy ark was his footstool on earth and led the way through the wilderness (Num 10:33–36; also see 1 Chr 28:2; Ps 132:7, Isa 66:1). The Lord would “dwell among” Israel (Exod 25:8; 29:46).

“And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God” (Gen 3:8). The idiom denoting the Lord’s presence, מָפֵן יְהֹוָה, may be translated, “from the face of the Lord.” The opposite of this phrase is used widely throughout the tabernacle texts, describing the daily ritual of the high priest and Israel, whose offerings were “before the Lord” (לֶפֶנִי יְהֹוָה, Exod 27:21).

THE CURSES

The Lord then “called out” (יִקְרָא) to Adam. *Vayikra* is a major word in the tabernacle texts, often signaling an institution of the Lord, such as the tabernacle and its service (Ex 24:16; 34:6; Lev 1:1). The occurrence here introduces the curses and conditions of the fall of man (Gen 3:10–19). In spite of their nature as curses, these poetic pronouncements also contain much promise.

To the serpent, God said, “[O]n your belly you shall go” (Gen 3:14). This idiom also designates a kind of unclean animal in Leviticus 11:42, a point that could signal Adam’s dereliction of duty. Adam had not exercised his authority over the serpent, which allowed it to enter and question God’s commands. Yet, embedded in the curse to the woman comes one of the greatest promises in the Bible, Genesis 3:15, in which the Lord foretold of an offspring of the woman who would come and crush the head of the serpent.²⁸ In the curse upon Adam it is said, “[Y]ou shall

25. תַּחַת (to rest) becomes a word to describe the Lord’s dwelling in his temple. See 1 Chr 28:2; 2 Chr 6:41; Ps 132:7–8, 13–14; Isa 66:1; and Beale, *The Temple*, 60–69.

26. See also Num 9:23, where all of Israel keeps (שָׁמַר) “the charge (mandate, הָמָרָה) of the Lord.”

27. The divine name, introduced in Genesis, is further revealed in Exodus and the tabernacle texts.

28. Known as the protoevangelium (first gospel), Genesis 3:15 is the foundational messianic passage.

eat bread, till you return to the ground” (Gen 3:19). To the same ground from which he was taken, Adam will return. Yet from that ground will come also the sustenance of earthly life. Bread (בָּנָה) will be a major item in the holy place of the tabernacle, set on a table in two rows of six loaves, a weekly reminder of God’s provision. Amazingly, after all the curses, another sign of promise is given. Adam names his wife Eve, for “she was the mother of all the living” (Gen 3:20).

GARMENTS OF SKIN/SACRIFICE

Adam and Eve should have died when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17); instead, they were spared. The Lord made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them (Gen 3:21). Coming before the expulsion from the garden, the provision of garments may be seen as an act of compassion by the Lord. The word for garments here, tunic (כְּתָנוֹת), is the same as those worn by Aaron and the priests in the tabernacle (Exod 28:39–40). The tunic was a one-piece garment that went from the neck down to the feet (cf. John 19:23).

What skin were the garments made of? שְׂרֵךְ is used in the tabernacle to describe the hides of animals in sacrifice.²⁹ The hide of an animal in the garden of Eden implies that a death took place, which would be the first in the Bible. Considering the earlier declarative statement that “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:17), it may be understood that this death was executed by the Lord, the sacrifice of an animal on behalf of Adam and Eve. One may certainly ask how the institution of sacrifice originated, as evidenced in Genesis 4, where the immediate concern between Cain and Abel is that of a proper offering (חַטָּאת).³⁰

THE EXILE

Now the tree of life becomes the focus. The concern is that, having eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man would take and eat of the tree of life and live forever in this fallen state. Adam was thus sent away and driven out (פָּלַשׁ)³¹ from the garden to serve (עֲבָד) the earth from which he was taken (Gen 3:22–23). And the Lord God stationed (צָבַא)³² in the east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the turning sword of flame to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen 3:24). Adam is expelled from the garden in an easterly direction. The cherubim must do a guard duty similar to that formerly assigned to Adam. Cherubim (כֶּרֶבִים) appear only in this verse, and then not until Exodus 25:19, where they act as sentinels over the ark of the covenant. They also adorned the tabernacle cover and the veil (פָּרָכה), which led to the most holy place (Exod 26:1, 31). The

cherubim of Genesis 3:24 are placed in the east of the garden to guard “the way to the tree of life.” All the entrances of the tabernacle face east, and the east gate was also the only way in or out of the courtyard (Exod 27:13, 16).

SACRED SPACE, PRIESTLY VOCATION

Altogether, the parallels between the garden of Eden and the tabernacle are striking. Terminology that is specific to the tabernacle finds its roots in the garden, and concepts that the garden relates receive fuller expression in the tabernacle. The garden appears as a prototype sanctuary, and Adam’s service in the garden has a priestly character. Following the order of the Genesis narrative allows for its natural development and clarifies what is happening with the tabernacle and its service. One aspect of this, which has not received much treatment in past studies, is the nature of the commands about the trees. Yet there is also a discourse here with some significant theological implications.

The hide of an animal in the garden of Eden implies that a death took place.

First, God is the author and source of everything: he creates Adam, plants the garden, places Adam into it, gives Adam the commands, and brings the creatures and the woman to Adam. God is directly involved in the establishment of the enterprise. Second, because it is the Lord who institutes all this, there is a sacredness and purpose to the procedure. Here the flow of the river is instructive; its source is Eden, a detail that likens Eden to the Lord himself. The river then flows through the garden, where the man was put to begin his God-given work. Finally, the river flows out of the garden into the rest of the world, indicating a greater objective for Adam and the Lord’s garden. The progression is from the Lord to Adam to the garden to the rest of the world.

At the same time, Adam receives his vocation “to work and keep” the garden and is given the commands concerning the trees. The commands are at the top of Adam’s list of garden duties. He is to work and keep the commands of the Lord. That these commands are paramount in the Lord’s scheme of things is also evidenced by their central location in the garden, “in the middle” (בְּמִצְדָּךְ, Gen 2:9).

The two tree commands further identify the garden as sacred. The commands are from the Lord and have the character of gift/prohibition, or blessing and curse.³³ One command allows Adam access to all the trees, including the tree of life; the

29. Besides human skin, שְׂרֵךְ is almost always used in the context of sacrificial animals (Exod 29:14, Lev 4:11 refer to the hide of a bull; Exod 39:34, Lev 16:27 to goats). In Genesis 4:4, Abel “brought the firstborn of his flock [of sheep] and of their fat portions.”

30. *Offering* becomes a technical term to describe a meal or grain offering (cf. Lev 2:1; 6:13).

31. *Shalach* (to send away) is a formal dismissal from one’s presence (for example, Gen 32:26–27), often as a commission to serve an official capacity, such as a messenger (cf. Exod 3:10, 15).

32. *Shakan* describes the Lord’s dwelling among Israel through the tabernacle (Exod 25:8, 22; 40:34–35).

33. Leviticus 26 is an example of the Lord’s blessings and curses for Israel.

second command prohibits Adam from access to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One tree was for Adam's life and sustenance; the other would bring death. However, both trees are a gift: the one was for Adam to receive grace and blessing, the other was for him to honor the Lord as God. The word of God was located at the center of the garden in the form of two commands. The commands may be understood in terms of law and gospel. Clearly the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has the prohibitive character of the law, but this also becomes true of the tree of life when, after the fall, Adam was banished from access to it. Yet both trees exemplify the gospel in that they were gifts, each with a particular and spiritual role for Adam. Each tree had its own mandate and was a visible and tangible sign to Adam of the Lord's grace and presence.

It is not until after the fall that the description of the Lord's presence in the garden is relayed (Gen 3:8). The context concerns the Lord's commands and Adam's failure to keep one of them. The terminology of Genesis 3:8 is intriguing: "And they heard the sound (*קֹל*) of the LORD God walking (*לָלֶל*) in the garden in the cool of the day (*בְּרוּחַ הַיּוֹם*), and the man and his wife hid (*אָבַד*) themselves from the presence (*מִפְנֵי יְהוָה*) of the LORD God among (*בְּחִזְכָּה*) the trees of the garden."

First, the presence of the Lord is described as a sound or "voice" that was "walking" "in the spirit [*רוּחַ*, "wind"] of the day".³⁴ We noted earlier how the Lord would "walk among" Israel through the tabernacle (Lev 26:11–12).³⁵ "Walk" also describes how Israel would keep the Lord's commands—"if you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments" (Lev 26:3).³⁶ The description of the Lord's presence in Genesis 3:8 is characterized by the commands.³⁷

Second, it is thought that after the man and his wife sinned, they hid among the trees, which is entirely possible. But is that what is really being said here? In Genesis 2:9 and 3:3, *בְּחִזְכָּה* refers to the two command trees that stood in the middle of the garden.³⁸ The word *מִפְנֵי יְהוָה* of Genesis 3:8 may modify *בְּחִזְכָּה*: the Lord's presence or face is what was in the middle of the garden. The word for hide is understood as "withdraw" or "turn the other way."³⁹ Adam "withdrew" himself from the presence of the Lord, "who was among the trees of the garden"; Adam had turned away from the Lord's word.⁴⁰

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- 34. A number of interpreters have seen this as a time reference similar to that of the evening sacrifice; see Cassuto, *Genesis*, 1:154, who offers "in the period after midday."
 - 35. See also 2 Samuel 7:6–7, "I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been walking about in a tent for my dwelling."
 - 36. See also Exodus 16:4, "that I may test them, to see whether they will walk in my law or not."
 - 37. This is also true of the other command: Adam is banished from the tree of life and thus the Lord's presence. Too often Genesis interpreters characterize the Lord's presence in the garden in a dislocated way.
 - 38. See Exodus 24:18, where Moses enters "into the midst" (*בְּצִבְעָה*) of the cloud on Mount Sinai, and Exodus 29:45, where the Lord will dwell "in the midst" of Israel.
 - 39. S. Wagner, "אָבַד," in *TDOT* 4:170: "It describes a fundamental stance of the man who turns away from God."
 - 40. "All this is the old devil and the old serpent who made enthusiasts of Adam and Eve. He led them from the external Word of God to spiritualizing and to their own imaginations" (SA III, VIII, 5; Tappert, 312).

In this manner this one tree . . . killed Adam for not obeying the Word of God, not indeed because of its nature but because it had been so laid down by the Word of God. In this way we should also interpret the tree of life, from which God commanded Adam to eat as often as he desired to restore his powers; it was through the potency of the Word that the tree brought this about. (AE 1:96)⁴¹

Luther developed this thought in his comment on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: "This tree . . . was Adam's church, altar, and pulpit. Here he was to yield to God the obedience he owed, give recognition to the Word and will of God, give thanks to God, and call upon God for aid against temptation" (AE 1:95). Luther readily likens the garden of Eden to "a temple that [Adam] may worship Him and thank the God who has so kindly bestowed all these things on him" (AE 1:95).

Each tree was a visible and tangible sign to Adam of the Lord's grace and presence.

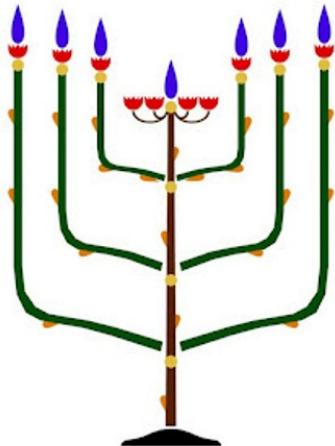
Adam had a holy calling, to work and keep the garden of God's gift and blessing. He was to live according to God's holy will, both in regards to the garden and creatures and to himself and his wife. His task was to execute his office faithfully. Adam was made for worship, and he did this first by receiving God's gifts and by giving thanks and honoring the Lord. This was true especially in relation to the Lord's commands. It was also Adam's duty to lead the creation in worship, as when he named the creatures, but also when he witnessed the woman whom God gave him. The song of Genesis 2:23 may be seen as thanksgiving to God for his good gifts. That Cain and Abel were making offerings to the Lord after the fall shows that Adam still had a sense of his vocation, although things had changed dramatically.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle displayed a threefold gradation of holiness and access. This was most evident in the work of the high priest. How might we understand this from the perspective of the garden? The command character of the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil provide a major motif for understanding the work of Aaron in the holy places, particularly in regards to the daily ritual and the Day of Atonement (that is, Yom Kippur). Keeping the statutes and commands of the Lord

41. Genesis 2:16–17 is the only command (*מְצָרָה*) of the garden. It is not until after the breaking of the command that we observe a dialogue between the Lord and Adam (Gen 3:9–13). The Lord speaks to Adam or Eve eight times in Gen 2–3; once to the serpent.

was the chief duty of the high priest (Lev 20:22; Num 18). The service of the menorah in the holy place and the ark of the most holy place will be our focus.



MENORAH מנורה⁴²

The pattern for the construction of the tabernacle menorah was given to Moses directly by God on Mount Sinai (Exod 25:40). Made entirely of pure gold, the menorah was a lampstand having a main stem with six branches or “reeds” (מְלָאכָה). The branches and stem were decorated with goblets, knobs, and flowers and gave the menorah the appearance of a tree (Ex 25:31). The knobs were spherical (תַּחַת), like either apples or pomegranates, and an almond design adorned each. Together with the blossoms, the suggestion is of a fruit tree.⁴³

At the top of each branch and the stem was a lamp, a total of seven that displayed light within the holy place.⁴⁴ A six-plus-one, the menorah recalls the seven days of creation: six creative days culminating in the seventh or Sabbath.⁴⁵ The Sabbath was a central part of tabernacle worship and is firmly established in creation, for “in six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested” (Exod 31:17; cf. Exod 20:11). God was the giver of all life, and on the first day of creation he had said, “Let there be light” (Gen 1:3).⁴⁶

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42. Illustration by Aleksandr Sigalov, www.thedeserttabernacle.blogspot.com.
43. Nahum Sarna makes a case for the almond tree; see *Exodus: תְּבוּנָה*, The JPS Torah Commentary (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 165. The biblical plans and construction of the menorah are found in Exod 25:31–40 and 37:17–24. For a summary of the menorah’s attestation from the Mosaic, Middle/Late Bronze Age, see Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers: בְּמִצְרָיִם*, The JPS Torah Commentary (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 367.
44. The menorah combines two important aspects of life: arboreal or vegetal, and solar; see Carol Meyers’s comparative study, *The Tabernacle Menorah* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 17–34, 165–81. The menorah was fueled by “pure olive oil” (Exod 27:20).
45. See Peter J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25–40,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89 (1977): 375–87, who argues the seven tabernacle speeches of Exodus 25–31 correspond to the seven days of creation (Gen 1:1–2:3).
46. The Gospel of John reflects this creation theme of life and light (John 1:1–4). More compelling for our discussion is John’s emphasis upon the Word (*Logos*) in the same context.

Aaron was commanded to tend the light of the menorah from “evening to morning” (Exod 27:20–21), a designation that characterizes the entire daily ritual (תְּמִימָה)⁴⁷ of the tabernacle. From the order of Genesis 1 and the notices for the Passover, Sabbath, and Day of Atonement, we understand that a day begins at evening and lasts until the following evening (Exod 12:18; Lev 23:32). All of the menorah’s seven lamps were lit during the evening sacrifice, and like the fire on the outer altar, its flames were to burn continually throughout the night; one lamp always was lit, even during the day (Lev 6:13; 24:2).⁴⁸ As in creation God brought light into darkness, so Aaron caused light to shine throughout the night in the tabernacle.⁴⁹ Sitting in the middle of the holy place on its south side, the menorah was the only light in the tabernacle and a daily testimony of God’s gracious presence and gift of life and providence.⁵⁰

Aaron’s access to the menorah was not immediate, however, but contingent upon the rite of atonement that began the twice-daily ritual. When the lamb was slaughtered, its blood was caught in a basin and then splashed on all four sides of the altar in the courtyard (Lev 1:3–5). The blood’s contact with the most holy altar effected cleansing from impurity and allowed safe passage into the holy place for the menorah’s service.⁵¹

THE ARK

While Aaron had access to the menorah every day through the rite of atonement, he was never to go into the most holy place where the Ark of the Covenant was, except on one occasion, which will be discussed below. When Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, drew near “before the LORD” with “strange fire,” they died (Lev 10:1–3). Their offering of incense was unauthorized and against God’s command.

The Ark of the Covenant, which held the tablets of the commandments, was God’s throne, his footstool on earth.⁵²

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47. *Tamid* refers to the rites of the tabernacle repeated regularly, such as the burnt offering of lamb, twice daily, or the weekly setting of showbread: Exod 25:30 (bread); Exod 27:20 (lamps); Exod 28:29 (breastplate); Exod 28:30 (urim, thummim); Exod 28:38 (headplate); Exod 29:38, 42 (two lambs, burnt offering); Exod 30:8 (incense).
48. תְּמִימָה, “a lamp regularly”; cf. Ex 27:20. For the ritual aspects of the menorah see Exod 27:20–21, 30:7–8; 40:24; Lev 24:2–4; and Num 8:1–4. The Mishnah, the first major work of Rabbinic Judaism (A.D. 220), attests to a continuously burning lamp, see tractate *Tamid* 3:9, and especially 6:1, where, “[if] he found the two easternmost lamps still flickering, he clears out the eastern one and leaves the western one flickering, for from it did he kindle the candlestick at twilight” (Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988], 867, 870). See also Rachel Hachlili, *The Menorah, the Ancient Seven-Armed Candelabrum* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 176–78.
49. “Both God and Aaron brought forth light—God brought forth light unto the world (Gen 1:2–3); Aaron produced light for the Tabernacle precinct (Ex 30:1–8)” (Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 138).
50. These aspects of the divine service and creation are evidenced by the prescribed Psalms sung each day at the conclusion of the daily ritual; see *Tamid* 7:4, in Neusner, *Mishnah*, 872–73.
51. “The altar was most holy; it communicated God’s holiness by way of contact with it (Ex 29:37)” (John W. Kleinig, *Leviticus*, Concordia Commentary [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003], 55); see also Figure 5, “God’s Activity in the Divine Service,” on page 39.
52. See 1 Chronicles 28:2, where David said, “I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God.”

The commandments revealed his holy will and symbolized his covenant with Israel. However, due to Adam's disobedience, there was now a separation between God and man. This separation was evidenced by the veil (*תְּכִרְמֵל*), which divided the holy place from the most holy place. Figures of cherubim adorned the veil and guarded the way.⁵³ Sinful man is unable to abide God's presence, as was relayed to Moses on Mount Sinai: "Man shall not see me and live" (*כֹּאֲנָה*, Ex 33:20). Were Aaron to approach the most holy place without the Lord's command, he would surely die.

YOM KIPPUR

Adam's path had taken him from enjoying the blessings of the middle of the garden to disobeying the Lord's command and being driven east and out of the garden, away from God's presence. On Yom Kippur, Aaron would reverse Adam's path by going west into the tabernacle, into the presence of the Lord in the most holy place.⁵⁴ What is more is that Aaron would also come out, alive.

After the death of Aaron's sons, the Lord told Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat" (Lev 16:2). How would Aaron approach the most holy place? He would do so by following the Lord's carefully laid out commands.⁵⁵

First he would bathe his body in water. Then he would put on linen breeches and a sacred yet plain linen tunic, gird his waist with a sash and don a linen turban. He started at the east gate of the tabernacle courtyard. Four sacrificial animals were brought forward, one he provided and three others provided by the congregation of Israel: a bull for the high priest's sin offering, one goat for Israel's sin offering, another goat for the scapegoat ritual, and a ram for burnt offering. He presented his bull and then stationed the two goats before the altar, casting lots to mark one for the Lord and the other as the scapegoat. He would then slaughter the bull for his sin offering, catching the blood in a basin. Before taking the blood in, however, he would use a fire pan to gather some coals from the altar of burnt offering and, with special incense in his hand, take these together for his first approach. He would walk past the laver and enter the holy place, past the menorah, incense altar, and bread table and go behind the cherubim-adorned veil into the most holy place. There he put the incense on the fire "before the LORD" (Lev 16:13). "This cloud of incense screened the mercy seat and protected the priest from the lethal danger of visual intrusion on God's presence."⁵⁶ Aaron would then go back out to retrieve the blood of his sin offering and with

it would enter again the most holy place. Facing the east side of the now incense-clouded ark, he would sprinkle the blood (*כַּבֵּד*, Lev 16:14)⁵⁷ once on the surface of the mercy seat and then seven times on the floor in front of it. Then he would go back into the holy place and sprinkle the blood seven times in front of the veil, at the same time also smearing some of the blood on the four horns of the incense altar. He would perform the same rite with the blood of the goat for the people's sin offering. After this, the blood of both sin offerings were mixed and applied to the four horns of the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard, again sprinkling it seven times.

The Yom Kippur ritual is complex, with 49 (7 × 7) manipulations of blood.

The Yom Kippur ritual is complex, with 49 (7×7) manipulations of blood. It was a "comprehensive act of atonement for the sanctuary and for the congregation."⁵⁸ What is often not understood is that Aaron's exit from the most holy place is just as important as his entrance into it. The meaning attached to the application of blood highlights this. First, the blood cleansed or purged the sanctuary and altar of any impurities (Lev 16:16); "all impurity was eradicated from his [God's] presence."⁵⁹ Second, by its contact first with the most holy atonement cover (mercy seat), the blood was made holy to reconsecrate the holy places and the altar of burnt offering (Lev 16:19), which would again grant Israel access to them for the daily offerings.⁶⁰

The importance of Aaron's exit from the most holy place was further highlighted by what he did next. The live goat was brought forward before the altar and Aaron would lay both his hands upon its head, confessing over it "all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins" (Lev 16:21), putting those sins upon the head of the goat. The goat was then sent away (*פָּרָשׁ*),⁶¹ out the east gate into the wilderness, never to be seen again. "The scapegoat took over from

57. The etymological similarity of *כֶּד* (blood), *כֶּדֶךְ* (man), and *כָּדָם* (earth, soil, ground) is not lost on interpreters; see B. Kedar-Kopfstein, *TDOT*, 3:235; Fritz Maass, *TDOT*, 1:78–79; J. G. Plöger, *TDOT*, 1:96. The most obvious connection is that of Adam's creation and the color "red."

58. Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 345.

59. *Ibid.*, 346.

60. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, The Anchor Bible, 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 534, 1031–40; see especially 1039: "'Purify it of the past (impurities) and consecrate it for the future (sacrificial uses)' (*Sipra*, *Aḥare* 4:13.)"

61. As Adam was sent away from the garden (Gen 3:23), the scapegoat is sent away from the tabernacle.

62. In Leviticus 16:22, the scapegoat "carries" (*וְנִשְׁאַל*) the sins of the people away. Aaron as high priest "carries" (*וְנִשְׁאַל*) the people of Israel on his shoulders (ephod, Exod 28:12) and upon his heart (breastpiece, Exod 28:29), but also, he would "carry" (*וְנִשְׁאַל*) the guilt (*עַמְלָק*) of the people upon his forehead (crown, Exod 28:38). The Greek verbs of Hebrews 9:26 (*ἀθέτησιν*, removal) and 9:28 (*ἀνενεγκεῖν*, bear, carry) point to Christ's high priestly work and may also allude to the scapegoat. Hebrews 9 and Leviticus 16 certainly go together.

53. *תְּכִרְמֵל* is derived from the stem *תְּכִרְבֵּה*, meaning "to bar the way, to mark off an area"; see Sarna, *Exodus*, 171.

54. I am grateful to Donald Parry for this insight. See his helpful article and illustrations, "Garden of Eden," 134–35, where he notes, "[the high priest] returns to the original point of creation."

55. The following is a brief summary of Leviticus 16.

56. Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 343.

the high priest and ‘bore all their iniquities’⁶² away from God’s presence in the sanctuary . . . to the desert, the place of the demonic Azazel. The scapegoat therefore removed the iniquity of the people.”⁶³

Finally, the high priest would enter the holy place for a fourth time to remove the special Yom Kippur linen garments and leave them there. He would then bathe a second time, put on his royal and high priestly vestments, and resume the burnt offerings at the altar, and by these “make atonement for himself and for the people” (Lev 16:24).

RETURN TO EDEN

The Bible ends in a way that it began. The Apostle John hears a “loud voice like a trumpet” and then reports: “Turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest” (Rev 1:10, 12–13). Jesus appears as a

63. Kleinig, *Leviticus*, 347.

64. Recall that the LXX translates the garden of Eden as “paradise”; see footnote 14.

high priest attending the menorah. And he says, “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).⁶⁴

The Revelation to John is replete with tabernacle and garden imagery. Every page has something new. Understanding the parallels between the garden of Eden and the tabernacle, and the vocation of Adam and Aaron, certainly brings a fuller appreciation for the work of Christ and his great love for his creation. There is no sin in heaven.

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. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev 22:1–5) **LOGIA**



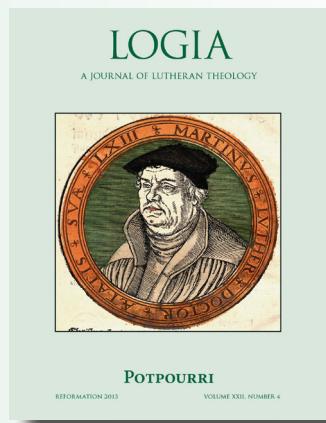
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