

Imagining The Garden Of Eden (Part 4)

God Plants A Garden

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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At home on our refrigerator is a magnet that I got on one of my trips to Amsterdam, The Netherlands. On it is a quotation from the Roman philosopher and politician, Cicero. (By the way, if any of you are wondering what the name Cicero means, it means "chick pea." In ancient Latin it was pronounced "Kickero," which sounds a lot more like chick pea than Cicero does.) Cicero said, "If you have a garden, and a library, you have everything you need."

Now this is not literally correct, of course. We need things like air, water, clothing, food, shelter, companionship, and not to mention also, a relationship with God, as well as a whole slew of other things. But, Cicero was talking about the things not that he necessarily *needed*, but the things that brought him *contentment*—his garden where he could go out, and his library where he could read his books.

Now, this is especially the case if you know any of the history of Cicero, and the times that he lived in, which were quite tumultuous. As a matter of fact, even though he was not included in the assassination plot against Julius Caesar, he wrote later that he wish that he had been called because he would have taken part. He eventually was labeled an enemy of the state, and Marc Antony's henchman discovered him, and cut off his head and hands and posted them in the forum.

So, that is the kind of life that he lived. He was quite involved in the politics of the time, and so you can understand how his garden and his library were a comfort to him.

Tending a garden takes a great deal of work does it not? I am going to talk about a garden today, if you had not guessed.

I takes a great deal of work to maintain a garden, but the satisfaction that one receives from its beauty, and its produce more than make up for the effort it takes to maintain it. Many of you might not think so when it is 98 degrees outside, it is blazing hot, and the whole thing needs to be weeded. But, then at the end of the day when your work is done you can relax in its shade with a cool drink in your hand, and then you can take in the garden's pleasant relaxing ambiance; our troubles and concerns can melt away for a time. A garden can be a place of stillness, peace, and calm that provides us a bit of rest where we can take a load off, relax.

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How many people in today's society—this pell-mell world we live in—use a garden as a kind of therapy—a way to get away, and do something other than their other work?

I may be wrong, and I often am, but I think that this imagery of rest and contentment is a primary idea behind the Garden of Eden. I do not know if you have ever thought of it that way. Normally, when one thinks about a garden, think of something beautiful, productive, and peaceful. And I think that this is what God wants us to think about when we hear the term, Garden of Eden.

Another name for this place, the Garden of Eden, has come to be known to us as paradise. Paradise is a Persian word that originally meant an enclosed park with trees in it. So, there is the idea of trees and seclusion—that it is walled in some way by a wall or hedge; a place apart; a special place. It is a place made especially for enjoyment.

The word as found in the Bible is actually transliterated into Hebrew. The original word in Greek sounds a lot like paradise, but in Hebrew the word was transliterated into *pardis*, and it is found in Nehemiah 2:8 translated as the word "forest." It is also found in Ecclesiastes 2:5 where Solomon mentions planting this, and that, having these animals, and then also planting orchards, which comes from this Persian loan word, *pardis*, which we know as paradise.

Turn please to Song of Songs 4. To me, this is a very interesting section of the book. It is the Beloved's description of the Shulamite. Or, looking at the types we understand that comes out of the Song of Songs, then this is Christ's description of the church. So, think of that as we go through this.

Now, you will find the word *pardis*—paradise—in the word orchard in verse 13.

Song of Songs 4:12-15 A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices—a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

Like I said, *pardis* or paradise is found in the word orchard in verse 13. So we see that this idea of a garden, an orchard, a park, is in Christ's imagination, understanding, and description of His church. He describes her as a beautiful, pleasant, aromatic, fruitful, enclosed garden; set apart (as we understand it), and guarded. He is depicting her as a

place that is restful, relaxing, and secure.

But on the other hand, you have to understand the almost sexual tension that is underneath almost the entirety of the Song of Songs. He also finds her exciting, and stimulating too. All of these ideas and descriptions, emotions even, are coming through in this description of a garden, which is a type of the church. He depicts her as all of these aromatic spices as a paradise that He likes to go to, and relax in. And I will mention only in passing that there is also the figurative imagery of water—a great deal of water—fountains, living waters. You would normally find that in a garden as well. In the Garden of Eden, we not only find the trees, and the vegetation, but we also find water in abundance.

So, this is a kind of vision from God of what the Garden of Eden may have been like.

The Greek form of paradise, pronounced paradisos, is also found three times in the New Testament. Last week in the Bible study, we went over one of these as we looked through Luke 23:43 where Jesus said, "I say to you today [to the thief], 'You shall be with me in paradise.'" Paul also uses the term in II Corinthians 12:4 where he said that He was caught up into paradise—the third heaven—in a vision.

So, Jesus is talking about the Kingdom of God, while Paul is talking about the third heaven. And the third place is found in Revelation 2:7. This is the end of the letter to the Ephesian church, another statement by Christ, He is the Bridegroom (similar to the Beloved speaking to the Shulamite) speaking to part of His bride.

Revelation 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

So we are seeing here a relationship between the old Garden of Eden, the ancient Garden of Eden, and a future Garden of Eden, the paradise that is future. This scripture ties the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life in Genesis 2 to the Christian's future reward. Even though that garden no longer exists on the earth as a place where one could go, there is going to exist in the future a place where we can go, where the Tree of Life will be, where there will be a garden of God once again, and it will be a place that is truly paradise!

Now, let us look at this. Turn to Revelation 22, and we will see that this is how God's Kingdom is described after the Father comes to the earth after the new heavens, and

the new earth.

Revelation 22:1-2 And he showed me a pure river of water [the water imagery again] of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Of course the description goes on. But, here again we have a time and a place in which the Tree of Life is, and this river is. And what we are seeing here is a projection into the future of the eternity of the Kingdom of God, and it is described in these same Garden type terms—the water, the tree, and the fruits.

So, it should be obvious by now that the original Garden of Eden is a clear type of the future paradise, which we more often call the Kingdom of God. Elsewhere, it is called (and I want to tie this idea in here too) God's rest. We will see that in Hebrews 4 to read a bit of this.

Hebrews 4:3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

There is a clue. All these things were set up from the foundation of the world. And so what we are looking at in Genesis 2 is part of the foundation of the world, where God was creating, where He put Adam and Eve into a garden. But then they sinned. And so Christ would have to come and redeem us from our sins. And so the whole plan, then, was set up and ready to go. The works were finished from the foundation of the world in God's mind—that is the way He planned it, that is the way it is going to turn out.

Hebrews 4:6, 9-11 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience. . . . There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

We are tying together several ideas here. We are tying together the Garden of Eden

with the Kingdom of God, and with the rest of God. These three concepts all go together, and fit very neatly together. The peace, the tranquility, the bounty, and the security of a beautiful garden, and to be sure we should also add into that the work and the stimulation that can be found in a beautiful garden, are all elements we are to consider when we are imagining the ancient Garden of Eden, and as well, the coming Kingdom of God. They cannot be separated. The Garden of Eden is a clear type of the paradise of God we are in preparation for.

And add to your meditation, that the common source of these coveted amenities—peace, tranquility, bounty, security, beauty, etc.—is the presence of God. And that is what we had in the Garden of Eden.

Obviously, I am continuing the series about imagining the Garden of Eden. And I am doing this as an exercise in using our God-given imaginations to enhance our understanding of God's Word. Again, as I have said in every sermon, and I want to be clear, we have to keep our imaginations in check. We must first make sure that they stay within the bounds of possibility according to what has been revealed in Scripture. And secondly, we also have to be careful that we do not become too dogmatic about these possibilities, because we are warned in the Bible about the imaginations of men's hearts that can easily go astray.

And so, we have to make sure we keep these things within bounds. But if we use our imaginations properly, then we can come up with some ideas that will help us spiritually in our understanding, making connections with other things that will help us to move forward. Particularly, we do not want to be guilty of adding to what is already written. There are dire curses in God's Word for adding to, or taking away from what is written, so we want to make sure that we stay within those bounds.

Before returning to the narrative of God planting the garden we have some unfinished business at the end of Genesis 2:7.

Genesis 2:7 And the LOORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Recall from the last sermon that we discussed the relationship and connection between mankind and the dust of the earth; that God wants us to make sure that we understand that man is earthy—made of earth, lives on earth, and will return to the earth upon death. And when he dies, which we talked about in the fact that the body disintegrates back into the very elements from which he was made, the ultimate goal is not heaven.

He is of the earth.

We also went over the connection between receiving *physical* life from God, and receiving *spiritual* life from God. He wants us to look at what happened in Genesis 2:7 and come to some understanding about how it applies to our spiritual life—His calling us into the church, and bringing us through our lives of conversion, followed by the resurrection into God's Kingdom. That is the whole process of being given spiritual life.

But, we also saw that the verbiage given there suggests not an easy process, that there are intimations of force, agitation, and even abrupt shock. It was not something where God just breathed gently and Adam stretched, opened his eyes, and woke up. It was not that at all, but rather something more "shocking" like CPR being performed—something that is shocking and so abrupt that it cause the heart to start for the first time, maybe like a defibrillator. Something like that makes the body bounce. And that is sort of the idea I get from the verbiage used in Genesis 2:7, that Adam's awakening to life was a bit abrupt and shocking; intense; even in a small way, violent.

And what this made me think of as I was imagining this process is that Christ said in Matthew 11:12, "... the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." The people are pressing into it, which gave me the idea that the two might be, should be put together—the physical life given to Adam, and the spiritual life given to us. He went through a process that was abrupt and shocking, and maybe a little bit violent in order to get him to wake up into being; while for us it is not an easy thing to be taken out of this world and started over on the new path. Sometimes it is abrupt and very shocking!

And then, of course, we must understand that through the whole conversion process, we are being rolled, and buffeted, and given all these trials and things to get us to shape up for life in God's Kingdom. And of course, in order to get into the Kingdom, we have to *die* at some point because the way that Jesus Christ showed us that we enter the Kingdom of God is through resurrection—you cannot be resurrected unless you die. Even those who are alive when Christ returns, and rise in the air to meet Him, they will die, but immediately changed. You have to have a death for there to be a resurrection. That is the way that Jesus Christ did it. That is the way we will follow.

Now, I am sure that those who are alive and remain are going to be happy to be changed rather than to go through a normal death, but even so, it will be a death. The physical body will die. It will immediately disintegrate and disappear, and we will be given a new body and changed. It is still death; it is still a shocking thing to the body; the most ultimately shocking thing to a body is to die.

Several people mentioned at the end of the last sermon that I should have compared a baby's birth to the awakening of Adam. It is a different process, but when a baby is born, it is either shocked by the outside world into taking its first breath, or a doctor or mid-wife takes the baby and swats it a bit to get those lungs working. Again, it is not an easy process. And certainly going through the birth canal is no easy thing either. Coming to life is not an easy thing, and we should never think that coming into spiritual life is going to be any easier. It is going to be different, but it is still going to have its turbulence, its shocking, intense, even violent periods. We have to understand, then, in Genesis 2:7 is a warning to appreciate what we are going to have to go through. They are similar in many ways. The lesson is that the path to eternal life is a struggle, and we have to be willing to make every effort to be worthy of it.

The review is now finished. On to the new parts—"Man became a living being."

This is where the word "nephesh" comes to our notice. The word nephesh literally means "a breather," that is, a creature who breathes. Nephesh is occasionally used for animals also, which you will find in Genesis 1:20. It says in Numbers 9:6 that dead bodies are nephesh too, they were once breathing, though breathing no longer. And the word nephesh is even used for the concept of dying, which you will find in Job 11:20, and Jeremiah 15:9. So, nephesh has a fairly wide selection of meaning, but they all have to do with the essential understanding of breathing.

As you can see, there is nothing special about the word, nephesh. In Genesis 2:7 it means that the lump of earth and dust that God fashioned into a man is now animate—it had animal life—Adam breathed—he lived by the circulation of oxygenated blood. In Leviticus it reminds us of the truth that the life is in the blood. So, this is the kind of life Adam had.

The use, here, of nephesh is part of a phrase, "nephesh khai'ya," which was translated into our English Bibles as "living being," or "living soul." We can actually translate this phrase as "living life." He became a living life.

Now, the problem comes in people's understanding because the King James Version translates this phrase as "living soul." And that word soul puts all kinds of ideas into people's heads. Of course, to people in the world who believe in an immortal soul, this verse is then saying that Adam became an immortal soul and lives forever; not just that he was alive at that time with animal life, and breathing, but that he became an immortal soul at that point.

However, we know, as we have seen a lot lately, I have been over this in some recent

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Bible studies, that Ezekiel 18:4, and 18:20 say that the soul that sins shall die. The soul is not immortal. It is mortal. Notice Genesis 6:17 where the same idea is used of animals.

Genesis 6:17 "And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die.

Now, these animals—"lions, tigers, and bears, oh my!", rabbits, etc—were also living souls because they too had the breath of life, right? Are they immortal souls? Most people would not say so. (All though there are a few folks with 96 cats in their house that think that when they go to heaven they will all be there.)

But, it is not so. No one has ever seriously thought that cats and dogs, and all the other kinds of animals have immortal souls.

Genesis 7:21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died.

So it is very clear that even in the book of Genesis, if you are given the breath of life, you die—you are a mortal being. Like the animals we are physical creatures who breathe the air, and do all the kind of things that living things do. Remember in the last sermon I talked about the various definitions of what it is to be alive, which included things like you are self-regulating (such as sweating); you go from being young to old, and finally dying; you reproduce; and so forth. Man is just like every other living thing in that regard.

And, Hebrews 9:27 says that we are all appointed to die once. So it is very clear that the Bible itself does not support the idea that when God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, He was *not* made an immortal soul. He was made a mortal being.

Now, in looking this up in *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words* I found that Vine had a very helpful comment on this word, nephesh.

Soul" is an unfortunate mistranslation of the term. The real difficulty of the term is seen in the inability of almost all English translations to find a

consistently equivalent, or even a small group of high frequency equivalents for the term. The King James Version alone uses over 28 different English terms for this one Hebrew word. The problem with the English term "soul" is that no actual equivalent of the term, or the idea behind it, is represented in the Hebrew language. The Hebrew system of thought does not include the combination or opposition of the terms body and soul, which are really Greek and Latin in origin. Rather, the Hebrew contrasts two other concepts which are not found in the Greek or Latin tradition, the inner self, and the outer appearance, or as viewed in a difficult context, what one is to oneself, as opposed to what one appears to be to one's observers. The inner person is *nephesh*, while the outer person, or reputation, is "*shem*," most commonly translated "name." In narrative or historical passages of the Old Testament *nephesh* can be translated as life or self.

This argues that the translation in the New King James Version as "living being," is a good one. "Living life," jangles our minds and ears because it is redundant. But, a living being, or a living self sounds pretty good. It gives us the idea of Moses wanted to convey to us.

Moses wanted us to understand that Adam did not have mere animal life. (I am moving on a bit here.) God, breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, gave man animal life. But that was not all. Moses wants us to understand that Adam did not have mere animal life, because the translators were right in thinking there was more to this. But, they jumped to the Greek idea of soul, rather than sticking with the Hebrew idea of an inner life. Are you with me?

Because man has an inner life he is, therefore, self-aware. He is conscious. He is sentient, or intelligent. He has feelings, and he has a mind.

Now, how do we know that this is the case? That it is not just mere animal life like the evolutionists want to tell you—another animal that has evolved? Well, the idea in the text of the Bible is magnified by the fact that God *Himself* breathed into Adam the breath of life. That is the difference.

If you go back to chapter 1, He does not say that He breathed into the nostrils of the animals of the field the breath of life. He just gave them life. He created them, and, they lived. But with man, He took a personal interest, and personally breathed into Adam's nostrils this breath of life. So, this suggests that there is something very different about man. And we already know this from chapter 1:26, because it is here that God said that

He made man in His own image and likeness.

So, he is a cut above the rest of the animal world, even though he has animal life, and is made of flesh just like an animal is made of. Because God took a personal interest and breathed into his nostrils, he is superior. He is designated as something more. And, maybe what is most special about this is that God Himself had decided to have a relationship with the man.

Turn back to Genesis 1. This passage shows the difference. This is just after He created the man,

Genesis 1:28-30 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so.

What I want you to get the fact that God gave man dominion. He was not just put out there as part of the animal kingdom; he was placed over it. This implies that man had the abilities and the faculties to fill that role. You cannot imagine a bear or a lion having dominion over everything, but you can imagine man doing that. Why? Man has a kind of superiority, which is similar to something that God has.

Please turn to Job 32. Here, Elihu is speaking to Job and his friends. He finally could not contain himself.

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

Zechariah 12:1 The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him.

So, with these two verses we have an answer to what is going on in Genesis 2:7; that Adam was given the spirit of man, and he was given this spirit of man directly by God.

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From what we can see, it was likely imparted with this breath of life. When God breathed into the nostrils of Adam, He did not just give him air, but He gave him mind—those faculties that he needed to have dominion, to be dominant in this world.

So as we saw in Job 32:8 the human spirit gives mankind the ability to understand. It says the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. So then, we extrapolate that our human spirit provides us with cognitive, that is, mental, abilities and emotions. So we have intelligence, language, creativity, memory, reason, intuition; the ability to plan, do mathematics—such to rotate geometric figures in our head; the ability to project a plan over months or years. All of our various skills and talents, our emotions—even our capacity for religion—is part of this spirit in man.

It includes everything that lifts us up over the animals that we have by nature. Paul echoes this in I Corinthians 2.

I Corinthians 2:11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? [But notice] Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

Paul is obviously drawing a parallel between the spirit in man, and the Spirit that God gives. There is a similarity there. One is obviously higher because the one that we have by nature involves earthy things. But the one that God gives us involves heavenly things.

Mr. Armstrong used to say that the spirit in man allows us a point of contact with God, because God Himself is a spiritual being. Without this spiritual component in man, we would have no means of communicating with God, because there would be nothing in common. But we have this spirit in man—the spiritual component—that we can link into. It is like having two computer systems that cannot talk to one another unless you link them properly with the proper cables. Finally, they can talk to one another. And it is this spiritual component that gives us the ability to talk to Him, and He to us, having a relationship.

So, God can communicate with us—Spirit to spirit. But they are both similar enough that there is communication along that line. It is this spiritual similarity that allows us to have a relationship with Him, and ultimately it is this same similarity that allows us to be changed to spirit by resurrection. We are already partway there. It is infinitesimal, because we have this spiritual component, but because it is there we have the ability to receive the Holy Spirit, and therefore have a relationship with God, and ultimately

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become His sons and daughters in the Kingdom.

Let us see Jesus' and God's perspective in John 10. Part of this passage, verse 27, we put on the Church of the Great God seal. Notice the wording.

John 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

Notice, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them." Not only do the sheep know the Shepherd, but the Shepherd knows the sheep. There is a relationship here. It goes both ways. You might say that you are seeing the spiritual link working very well.

John 10:27-28 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

Very encouraging! If you maintain that relationship you are going to have eternal life.

So, just as He created Adam, and gave him physical life, God and Jesus Christ have set themselves the task of spiritually creating us in their image, giving us true spiritual life. You see, He is repeating the process, but not on the physical level anymore. He is now on the spiritual level. That is why we always say that the creation did not stop at the end of the sixth day. It continues on. Immediately, God began the process of creating sons and daughters—spiritual children. Not just physical lumps of dust, but spiritual children that will look like Him in *every* way, ultimately.

We can be happy because He has already given us the earnest of eternal life by putting His Spirit in us. But, you can see what He says here in John 10:28 that He *yearns* to give us the eternal life so that we will not just have this link-up relationship, but we will have a full relationship where we can share everything at the highest level of God's Spirit. Not just this little link between man and God. He yearns for the fullness of this relationship, which we will have in the Kingdom of God.

Turn to I Corinthians 15 to see more. Paul is talking about the resurrection, here. He wants to explain something because somebody had a question about the body, and how that will be changed. Paul links this with Genesis 2:7.

I Corinthians 15:45-49 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam [Jesus Christ] became a life-giving spirit.

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However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

There is proof that the creation was not finished at the end of the sixth day. We are being prepared—created spiritually to be just like Jesus Christ. And that is what the plan has been from the beginning.

Well, that is it for Genesis 2:7, taking about a sermon and a half to do so.

Turn back to Genesis 2, and we will continue.

Genesis 2:8-9 The LOORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LOORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

I do not remember if I have mentioned this before, but the word "Eden" means, "delight." You can understand why that is so. It was a delight. Another word is "pleasure." It was a pleasure to be there. Some folks do not like that definition because it makes them think of fleshly pleasures. But, that is not what God means by calling the place Eden. He means that contented, peaceful, restful, yet exciting place where this phase of His plan had its beginning. This is what causes Him and us delight!

Many scholars say that we should not make a deal out of the narrative that shows God planting this garden after Adam was made alive. But, that is the way that Moses wrote this down. Moses wrote in verse 7 that God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living being. And then the very next thing that is said was that the Lord God planted a garden in Eden.

The scholars say that the Hebrew verbs allow for the garden to have been planted at any time. And so they try to tell you that the first chapter said that God made trees and herbs and such on the third day. So obviously God made this garden on the third day, and then on the sixth day, He made Adam, and after He breathed life into him, then He

took Adam and put him into the garden. That is not what is written.

Why do critical scholars always have to disagree with what is clearly written? If the verb forms allow it, He most certainly could have planted the garden after breathing the breath of life into Adam. And I think that there is a very good reason why He would plant this garden after Adam's creation.

Notice that the word is *planted*, not created. God planted this garden. There is a difference there. He had already created the vegetation that He would then use later in planting this garden. And so, Adam still holds primacy of place as the last thing that God created—the pinnacle of His creation.

But God planted the garden afterward. That is according to the text of the Bible. Moses was much closer to the events than these scholars are, and He was obviously inspired to put it in this manner. And, if this was a text from before the Flood, who knows that maybe Adam or Seth wrote it, or even Noah—who knows? If Moses got it from them, and transmitted it to us, they surely would know better than we would.

I tend to think that God planted this garden after the creation of Adam. Why would God do that?

The word "planted" is not just planted. It is satisfactory translation, but there is an implication in the word that this is a special planting, which tends to make one think that this was done after Adam was created—it was something that was done especially because—what? For Adam and Eve? Probably. It implies a unique preparation of something out of the ordinary.

Think of it this way—*let us use our imaginations*—Adam's eyes pop open. And there is God. God helps Adam to get up. "I am God, you are Adam." Adam stands up, and looks around. Let us suppose that they are in a field of some sort. And Adam is looking around, knowing only what God has put into him. Obviously Adam was given language, and the ability to see and perceive, to draw conclusions. He would be curious, and intelligent. What would they have talked about? Well, God might have said, "I bet you're wondering why I brought you here." And, Adam might have replied, "Yes, I don't know anything—where am I? What am I supposed to do?" And, God says, "Well, the first thing you need to know is, I am God. I created you. I made you a moment ago, and breathed into your nostrils the breath of life, and now you are alive [standing] before Me."

And Adam says, "Wow. What is God?" Of course, then they would have to have a

conversation about a few things to help him to understand that God is his superior, He is the ultimate in Beings, He lives forever as The Eternal, who has certain rules about how he is going to live, and that He has some work for Adam to do.

But, Adam might reply, "It's good that you told me this. Thank you. I didn't know any of this before. But, how do I know this is true?" He probably did not say this, but someone as skeptical as me would have. I mean, here I am, I just woke up, and I do not know where I am, and I do not know anything. And now, "You're telling me that you are God, and I have to bow down and worship you, and I have to do everything that you say? Can I have a little bit of proof that you are who You say You are? And, I am here like you say I've been put here, and all this happened. Can you show me something?"

But if God then plants a garden as only God could, what would that prove to Adam? Do you not suppose that it would prove to Adam that God is who He says He is? "Here Adam, let me show you." So they walk a little ways. "Adam, I'm going to plant a garden here. You just stand here and watch. I want you to see that I am God, and how I work."

And so, God works up a garden in no time flat, as only God can do. Obviously there are only 24 hours in the sixth day to work with, and there were still things that needed to be done, so I am sure that this garden was put together quickly. And, seeing that would give Adam a great deal of proof that he was dealing with something more than kind of being he was. This was a being who could fashion a garden of immense beauty. Who knows how big it was. We are not even sure whether it was an acre or two, or much more. We do not know. But if God did this in just a short time, maybe an hour or so... It would take me an hour just to plant two trees, and God did this from nothing!

Think about it. Do you not think that this would prove to Adam that he was dealing with a superior Being? I think so. But I also think that this would be a pointed object lesson that Adam could take from this, that the Creator was not just superior to him, but that He was a diligent worker; that He was, as Creator, a worker, not that He would just speak and things were done, but that He also worked things through, and He worked at them, getting them done. He is an artisan, not a slapdash maker, but He did them beautifully. He put a garden together that just dazzled the eyes—a place that was an absolute delight; so much so that it became its name—Eden—delight!

God puts great precision and care into His work. He makes things to be beautiful, and functional and productive too; there were fruit on those trees. They were not just eye candy, but they were *real* candy! And, he could subsist on those things. They were not just pretty fruits, but they tasted so good, and would sustain his body. And we know that God does not just put function into things, but multiple functions into things. That is

another difference between what man creates and what God creates.

God creates something as simple as a drop of water. And it will have a hundred uses. On the other hand, man can create a machine that can do one thing, and do it badly too, needing much repair and re-designing. God does things perfectly and with such magnificence and skill. God does everything in wisdom. He does things in the proper order. He follows through with His plans. I would imagine even that Adam saw God clean up after Himself too, and tidy the garden up before He ushered Adam through the gate.

Adam saw an example of the kind of work God expected of him; that if God worked like this, He would expect his man to work like this. Not at the same level, of course. But, that he would need to be a worker like He is.

Turn to John 5. This is an incredible scripture. We have used it in other ways, but I think it is very interesting in terms of thinking about and imagining that Adam saw God work that day, making the garden. This would also explain His diligence in naming the animals. If he saw God at work, and doing so much work in a short amount of time, then he would put his whole mind into naming the animals. And who knows how many kinds of animals passed before him that day.

John 5:16-18 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them [notice], "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." [This is incredible. But yet, see what the Jews got out of this] Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath [as they saw it], but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

Keep in mind the understanding of working. He was doing the same kind of work as His Father. It was not just the fact that He had said that He was His Father, but He said that they do the same type of work.

We know that work is essential to our well-being, so we tend to dismiss it as routine, or even a necessary evil. We put up with work. We do it for the money. We do it for whatever creature comforts that we might get from it. We really, most of us, do not enjoy it all that much. Some people do, whistling while they work. But, most folks feel it is the drudgery that they have to get through in order to get the check at the end of the week.

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The Bible, on the other hand, shows work to be a noble godly activity. The first thing we see God doing is working—creating. And then we have a statement from Christ, "The Father has never stopped working, and neither have I. I am always working." But, this is what the Father and Son do! They are workers. They are creators.

So, the essence of what Jesus Christ said here is that this characteristic of working identifies God. Did you catch that? They should have recognized Jesus Christ not only for what He said, but also because He was working, and especially for the works that He was doing among them—the same works that His Father does.

How did He know what to do? He saw His Father doing them. His Father told Him what to do. And so He did them. He worked those works because He is God. He is God's Son.

Notice Jesus' reply to them:

John 5:19-20 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

Jesus' words: "I do what my Father showed Me."

Genesis 2:8 The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.

Could it be possible that the Creator, the One who became Jesus Christ was trying to do the exact same thing with Adam? What did Jesus say? "The Father loves me! And He shows me everything that I need to do—the same that He Himself does." Could it possibly be that once Adam was awake and aware, that Jesus—his Creator, the Word—said, "Come. I love you. I want to show you what I do, so that you can do likewise, and greater works than these will you be able to do! You will not just be able to make a garden. Gardens are nice and delightful, aren't they? But you're going to make skyscrapers, and will be able to travel to the moon, invent computers and cell phones, and all of these things I have not withheld you from doing. But, this is how I work. This is how I get things done. Go and do likewise!"

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He showed him all that He does so that Adam would imitate Him—seeing Him at work, seeing Him at His best, seeing Him when He is doing really good things, and the great pleasure He gets from doing His best. So He showed Adam how He did those things.

Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

What is Paul saying? He is saying, "As you have seen God at work in your life, doing all these wonderful things to bring you into His Kingdom, go ahead and work out your own salvation, joining Him in the job!" Is that not what happened to Adam in the Garden of Eden? We see it in a picture—God planting a garden for Adam to see. We see it in the New Testament, Jesus telling us in words the works that His Father did, that His Father had shown Him. And now Paul is telling us as our pastor, "Yes, you have seen God at work, now get to work yourself. You have gotten the example, now go and help get the job done."

So many Christian churches of this world pooh-pooh works. They do not realize how irresponsible and spiritually fatal that attitude is. You cannot have salvation without works. Eternal life will not happen without work.

I hope this helps to give you an understanding of why Moses put this in the order he did in the narrative—so that we can come to an understanding that we must work the works of God.