

Eden, The Garden, And The Two Trees (Part 2)

John W. Ritenbaugh

Given 01-Oct-07; Sermon #FT07-09

In the last message it was established that the real true beginning of mankind's civilizations was not in Mesopotamia, but in Eden, the Garden of the Lord. However, it *is* true that all civilizations formed in opposition to God had their beginnings in Mesopotamia, and most specifically, in Babylon and Ninevah. Mesopotamia means "between the rivers." Cain fled from the presence of God to the east. And the descendants of the survivors of the Flood of Noah went southeasterly from the ark's resting place in the mountains of Ararat.

God laid great stress on Moses as the Tabernacle was built, to follow the pattern He had given him. He emphasized the same to David as He prepared plans for the Temple to be built in Jerusalem. These buildings were designed to be the dwelling place for God on earth. Each was a copy of the reality in heaven. In like manner spiritually, the church of God today, is the dwelling place of God on earth. And each of us, individually, is required to make choices that will conform us to the reality of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is in heaven. God establishes never-varying patterns regarding Himself, His character, and His operations in order that we may not be in doubt, and thus grow to trust Him without question.

Today, we are going to continue to show how that one small area of earth is where His operations of His spiritual creation began, where they continued, and where they will end.

When God began His spiritual creation in earnest, He called Abraham *out* of Babylon and sent him into what became known as the Promised Land. It was the very land that Adam and Eve had been placed in, and in which Jesus Christ was born, ministered in, and will return to. We are going to begin in Joshua 24.

Joshua 24:2 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor: and they served other gods.

Abraham did not come from a God-fearing family. Abraham came from idolaters, and until the time that he was called and God began working with him, he, too, was an

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

idolater. And there too He sets the pattern. God called our father in the faith *out* of Babylon where he was practicing the local religion.

Genesis 12:1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you: [and God is taking us, too, to a land that He will show us].

Genesis 12:5-9 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto your seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

I want you to note that Abraham was led to a specific location in Canaan. He passed through Shechem, and there is a mention of a place called, "Moreh." Moreh is a Canaanite name. However, the Canaanite language was Semitic, because he, too, was descended from that same general area. It was a Semitic language, but still it had its differences from the language that Abraham spoke, which was, of course, Hebrew.

Moreh is a Canaanite name that means "teacher" or "teaching." But, somehow or another, through the ages, it became associated with early rain. Shechem is about 35 miles north of Jerusalem, and it was here, on the plain of Moreh, that God first appeared to Abraham within the Promised Land as he neared the end of his journey.

Interestingly, there is no record in the Bible of Abraham building an altar to worship God until he was actually within the boundaries of the Promised Land, which by the time he got to Shechem, he indeed was. Perhaps God appeared to him to assure him that he was actually in the general area that He wanted him to be, but not yet in *the* specific area. So He took Abraham further south.

In verse 8, that place is identified as a mountain east of Bethel. This is intriguing because, in contrast to Moreh, Bethel is a Hebrew name that means, "house of God."

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

He stopped there long enough to build another altar, and he prayed just to the east of a place named, "House of God." Now with that name, Bethel, is either near or even possibly *within* the area that became the city of Jerusalem. I cannot quite pin it down. Significantly, Bethel comes to the fore again in Jacob's life two generations after Abraham. Turn to Genesis 28, because some significant things took place there. I will not comment much because it is pretty plain what happened here.

Genesis 28:10-15 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed; And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. [God is passing the baton, as it were, or at least promising to pass it to him.] And, behold, I am with you, and will keep you in all places whither you go, and will bring you again into this land; for I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken to you of.

So Jacob is on his way to conversion. And interestingly, significantly, it takes place in a place called Bethel. Let us go to Genesis 35. Again, Jacob is the central figure here.

Genesis 35:1-10 And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother. [That was when he saw the ladder] Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

him. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-bethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother. But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth. And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Your name is Jacob: your name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be your name: and he called his name Israel.

I am just trying to draw your attention to the name, "Bethel." It is not necessarily in Jerusalem. There is a city called Bethel, or there was in Christ's day, about ten miles north of Jerusalem. But the significant thing is that significant things happened there, and it is within the general area of the Garden of Eden and most certainly within Eden itself. No doubt about that at all. This will come back into the picture a little bit later.

Now, back to Abraham. Abraham set up that altar at Bethel, and he undoubtedly prayed facing west toward the area named, "House of God." He did not remain there, though, but continued on further south toward Beersheba, and that became his most permanent location within the Promised Land. However, we must fast-forward through time about sixty years. Not only was Abraham led to the Promised Land, he was eventually led to one *specific* spot to perform the most awesome of his acts of faith. So turn with me to Genesis 22. Again, let me remind you, all this activity is taking place in a very small area.

Genesis 22:1-2 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt [or test] Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and get you into the land of Moriah; [I want you, especially, to hang on to that name.] and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you.

Genesis 22:4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

Does it not seem already that he knew where to go? He saw it afar off.

Genesis 22:9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

Drop down to verse 14: We all know what happened there.

Genesis 22:14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh [Or yireh. There are no "j's" in the Hebrew language, so it is really pronounced like a "y." Yahweh-Yireh]: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.

He sent Abraham to the land of Moriah, and did you notice as we came through there, Abraham had no doubt as to where he was to specifically go. At first it appears as though God simply told him to go to the *land* of Moriah.

Israel was called the Promised Land, and you know that it was certainly bigger than the area that we are talking about. Land implies a large area, perhaps even as large as country-wide or country-side area. However, by verse 9, we find that God's direction seems much more specific. And in verse 14, Abraham calls Moriah, "the Lord's mount." Now it is very specific—much more specific than land. Why would he do this if there was not already an association of a Mount Moriah that was uniquely God's? It was God's mountain.

Following God's supplying of the ram, Abraham renamed the area "Yahweh-yireh," and this means, "the Lord will see to it, the Lord will provide." Almost like it has a double meaning. "The Lord will see to it." "The Lord will provide." According to Ernest Martin in "Secrets of Golgotha," the word "Moriah" means, all by itself, "the Lord will watch over it." Thus, Moriah indicates giving attention to—that is, "the Lord will give attention to"—but that does not have a strong sense of provision.

In other words, you can *watch* something without *doing* anything. But the addition of that word, "yireh," adds something to the name. When both place names are put together, the implication is that the Lord will not just give His attention to, but will also provide here; with "land" for "mountain" being understood. That is a very, very significant place name.

This event draws our attention to a specific mountain, Moriah, or the Lord's mount, as it is called in verse 14. Now, where is it? I ask that in the present tense, because it still is in the same place as it was in Abraham's and Jesus' day, and in our day as well. And the place that it occupies is very interesting, indeed.

So first, Moriah is a general name for the whole Jerusalem area, and this is how it is

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

referred to when it states, "go to the land of Moriah," referring to a larger place than just one particular spot. And so even if we include Abraham's name change, then the Jerusalem area is the one which God will watch over. The land of Moriah, then, includes at the very least, as we continue to add things you will see, what we call today the Temple Mount, the City of David on Mount Zion, and the Mount of Olives. The name, "Mount Moriah," appears only one other time in Scripture. And the circumstance of its appearance is significant.

Go with me to II Samuel 24, and we are going to read something that does not have the words "Mount Moriah." This, of course, took place on the heels following David's taking a census for a very wrong reason and then plagues started hitting and then God sent a prophet to tell him why, and David was really down.

II Samuel 24:18-25 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of you, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood. All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord your God accept you. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of you at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. [That is a big, big principle, there, brethren.] And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

Next we will go to a scripture that does mention Mount Moriah.

II Chronicles 3:1 Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem at Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

There are two things to notice here. The first is that the Temple is referred to as the house of the Lord. Remember Bethel. What does it mean? It means, "God's house." We are getting connections here. "House" indicates a dwelling place—a building in which one lives. Again, connect this thought to the fact that Abraham stopped on a hillside just east of Bethel, the house of God, built an altar, and prayed. This association is similar to Abraham's declaration that Mount Moriah was God's mount. Even before Araunah was there, even before David bought it from him, it belonged to God. And Abraham knew that. The mountain belonged to God.

So it has a special relationship to God in Abraham's mind, a relationship that was established long before Abraham ever arrived on the scene. The question for us is, "Why that identification with that mount?" The answer, here, is already plain. About 600 years later Solomon built the Temple—the house of the Lord—on Mount Moriah, the place where God would give His attention and provide. That is Mount Moriah and its lands. So as with Abraham before Solomon, that place, that mountain already had an association of belonging to the Lord. That association is going to be continued in David and Solomon's day.

It was also, then, in that same general area, that Abraham was spared from sacrificing Isaac. I want you to note that I did not say the very spot that Isaac was almost sacrificed, but the general area. That little difference is important. We shall see as we proceed, the altar that Abraham used was not on the mount in which Araunah's threshing floor existed, but an adjacent one. He sacrificed *looking* in that direction.

The mount in which Araunah's threshing floor was part of Mount Moriah, but that specific area has become known as the Temple Mount. Of course that name remains to this day. It has become the holiest spot on earth to Christians, to Jews, and is just adjacent to the spot where the Muslims consider one of their holiest spots on earth.

It should begin to become evident to you. And we will add more to this that Mount Moriah was also the location of the Garden of Eden.

Solomon's Temple—the original Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and rebuilt to some degree in Ezra and Nehemiah's time. Antiochus Epiphanes defiled that rebuilt Temple, but it was cleansed under Judas Maccabeus. I believe it was in 168 B.C. And it was this event that established the Jewish festival of Hanukkah.

That cleansed Temple was greatly expanded by Herod the Great and was the one used in Jesus' day. It became known as the second Temple. The third Temple, if there is ever

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

going to be one, is yet to be built. And I think you can bet the farm, that if it is built, it is going to be built on the same spot that Solomon's Temple was built.

Zechariah 14:1-4 Behold, the day of the Lord comes, and your spoil shall be divided in the midst of you. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, [Brethren, it is directly east of Mount Moriah], which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

So Christ is going to return to the Mount of Olives, not the Temple Mount, but the Mount of Olives is adjacent to the Temple Mount. In fact it is directly east of it across the Kidron Valley, and the entire Mount of Olives is less than one mile from the Temple.

We are seeing more and more evidence that the geographical focus of God's attention has been and will continue to be Eden and its Garden, the Promised Land, its capital city Jerusalem, and its environs, including Mount Moriah, the Mount of Olives, and Mount Zion.

So this area is the place where Abraham was led, Israel was led, where the Messiah witnessed, was crucified, and resurrected. Furthermore, it was from the Mount of Olives that He rose to heaven. And it is to the Mount of Olives He will return. A Jewish tradition exists that Adam was created of the earth of Mount Moriah and is buried in the Mount of Olives. Regardless of whether that is true, I believe that we can safely say where God began His work in and through man He will also end it.

The land of Eden, its Garden and Mount Moriah, the Mount of Olives, and the Temple connection does not end here. In fact, to me the most fascinating connections are just beginning.

I believe it can be shown pretty conclusively that the general geography of the Garden of Eden can be determined by means of the Tabernacle and the Temple. And from the Temple and its location, its design and measurements, its system of ceremonial

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

offerings, and the location of its furniture and the adjacent parts outside of the walls, we can determine almost the exact spot that Jesus was crucified.

Before creating man, as far as we know, God dwelt only in heaven. It is apparent, though, that once He created man, God spent time on earth. Thus He prepared a place that was suitable for Himself as well as for man. And we have seen that what He prepared on earth was patterned after where He dwelt in heaven.

Let us be reminded of this and go back to the book of Hebrews in chapter 8. It is always good to remember that we are operating in what, compared to heaven, are just shadows. It is real, but compared to the reality it is just shadows.

Hebrews 8:4-5 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the Tabernacle: for, See, says he, that you make all things according to the pattern showed to you in the mount.

This next verse is even clearer.

Hebrews 9:19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people.

Hebrews 9:21-23 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the Tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

We are operating in patterns. They are patterns of something specifically existing in heaven. So the clear implication of these verses is that the reality is that the Tabernacle and Temple were patterned after were copies, they were shadows, of the original already existing in heaven.

I want to caution you here that this does not mean all the dimensions were exactly the

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

same, but the form of the structures were exact copies. Understand that these shadows include such things as the furniture and instruments of service. Those buildings—the Tabernacle and the Temple—were a physical representation of God's heavenly domain. Before Solomon built the Temple, notice what God said to David in I Chronicles 28.

I Chronicles 28:11-13 Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlors thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things: Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service. . . .

I Chronicles 28:18-19 And for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubims, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord. All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.

Just like Moses, David called what he gave to Solomon copied from a pattern. He also claimed here, and I am sure that it is true, that he was directly inspired by God. It was not something that came from a figment of his own imagination. God did not appear to David in the way that He appeared to Moses, but the effect was similar. He directly inspired David to put these things down.

So the Tabernacle and the Temple were both literally conceived and designed by God in heaven. And this helps us understand that God's dwelling place in heaven has specific design and definitive elements to it. Since everything was a copy, and more importantly that His earthly abode, wherever it might happen to be, follows the same pattern as in heaven. God dwelt in heaven—in a house. He came to the earth first in Eden. And He dwelt in a house—Bethel, the house of God. And you can bet the farm again, it followed the same pattern, with a few modifications, as did the Tabernacle and the Temple.

So the Tabernacle, the Temple, and Eden were all of the same design. They had a three-part arrangement. First, the front faced east. And this includes the Tabernacle every time that it was set up in the wilderness. The Temple, of course, was solidly set in the ground, but like the Garden of Eden, and the Tabernacle, it faced east as well.

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

From the outside proceeding from east to west, the first part was the outer court. Then through the Temple or the Tabernacle or the Garden of Eden's only door, on the east side, one entered the holy place and then continuing west one would go beyond the veil that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies in order to enter the Holies of Holies.

The Holy of Holies was considered God's private dwelling place. And in order to meet with God one had to go west. He was always approached *from* the east because of the alignment of the building and the place He considered as His room. To travel *to* the east is always considered as departing from God, unless otherwise specifically stated within the context.

Both buildings were enclosures. They had walls, doors, sections, and, therefore, so did Eden. I did not mention this at the beginning, but I am going to make up for it now. The Hebrew word that is rendered into the English word "garden" suggests an enclosed area. In fact, Strong's #1588 states it means, "a garden as fenced." The Hebrew root word, #1598, means "to hedge about." That is very clear.

This was a garden that was hedged about. I get the picture that it was really heavily hedged, so the Garden, just like the Tabernacle, and the Temple following it, was an enclosed area with one entrance. Farmers and ranchers do this to this day in order to separate their property from a general area or from another person's farm or ranch. In addition, the hedging gave the Garden a definitive shape. The hedging was broken only in one place, even as the walls of the Temple and Tabernacle were broken only in one place. Its only entrance and exit were on its east side.

Let us go to Genesis 3. We have been to these scriptures a couple of times. But I do want you to see that there is proof, substantiation, evidence, more than two witnesses all the time.

Genesis 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Why did He not put or place cherubim at each door? Well He did not have to. He is telling us the truth, that there is only one door—just as there was only one opening in the Tabernacle and only one opening in the Temple.

Genesis 4:16 And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

So when Cain was disfellowshipped, he headed east. And in so doing, he went out from the presence of the Lord. And I think that we can safely assume that Adam and Eve still dwelt in the eastern part of Eden or just beyond. There is evidence that points in that direction. But they were no longer in the Garden.

The Hebrew word for Eden, as I mentioned yesterday, specifically means, "delight." It indicates something that gives one pleasure. This indicates, since God named it, that the place of its construction within Eden was not just randomly used, but was selectively chosen, because its construction gave God pleasure from start to finish.

We are going to go all the way back to Hebrews to pick out one verse in chapter 12. This little section is going to show you how closely things are copied from the realities in heaven. In verse 22, Paul says to Christians:

Hebrews 12:22 But you are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Brethren, there is a heavenly Mount Zion. There is a heavenly Jerusalem. And in Revelation 21, it says,

Revelation 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

I hope you are coming to understand, not one of these things is done randomly. They just do not accidentally happen. Every detail of this was worked out from the beginning. And it was done so that we could have confidence in God because His patterns never vary. Because if He or His patterns varied, how could He be trusted? He is a God of truth and a God of light. He will never vary, ever.

These things are showing you that right from the very beginning, He had one plan in mind. There was one purpose in mind and everything right down to this day is following right after what He set from the beginning, perhaps, even you and me. I do not know for sure, but His mind is awfully great. These things were done specifically to give us understanding and faith.

There is a reason the place just west of where Abraham worshipped was named Bethel. It was so named because even though no house was there when Abraham entered the land, Eden, it once had been the general location of God's house, and it would again *be* the location of God's house. And that area had once been called Eden, and Eden contained the Garden of Eden. In later times, that is by Abraham's day, the general name of that area was now called Moriah—the *land* of Moriah—the one that God would watch over. And one of the mountains within Moriah was specifically called, "the Lord's Mount."

I just happened to think of something. It says there in Genesis 22, where Abraham just about sacrificed his son, and then he changed the name. Abraham said, "the Lord will watch over it." What is that "it?" I think you will be pleased when you hear.

At any rate, Mount Moriah is one that specifically belonged to Him. And it belonged to Him because that is where His home was on earth and would be again. The Temple was built on Araunah's threshing floor. And that was built on Mount Moriah, the Lord's mount. And the mount became eventually commonly known as the Temple Mount. The Mount of Olives was and is directly east of that Temple Mount, across the Kidron Valley.

Incidentally, the distances we are talking about here are very small, by American standards anyway, where we have such expansiveness in terms of area. From the Temple Mount to Olivet is less than a mile, actually only six-tenths of a mile. I have no doubt, whatever, that Abraham built that altar on the Mount of Olives looking directly west at the Temple Mount, where the Temple, God's dwelling place, would be located over 600 years later, and was once the site of God's house, the Garden of Eden. And thus the Temple Mount and the Garden of Eden are one and the same location. We are going to see later why I am positive that is where Abraham built that altar to sacrifice Isaac on.

The Garden of Eden was surely on a mountain, because a river that had its source there divided into four rivers, watering other areas. Since water seeks its own level, it was surely running downhill from Eden. And this is not the only way in which Abraham's selection of that site fits the divine pattern.

Here is a question for you. How many altars were related to the Tabernacle and the Temple? Most church members would say two, because they are unaware that the Temple, Tabernacle, and Garden of Eden actually had three. The first one was inside the holy place: The first room at its westernmost end, against the curtains separating it from the Holy of Holies, the incense altar. Number two: immediately outside the holy place's only door on the eastern end, was the other, the second altar. This is the one on

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

which many, many, many, many sacrifices were burned, and it is known to us today as the brazen altar.

However, there was a third altar, called by the Jews, the "Miphkad altar." This altar was located 2000 cubits to the Temple's east. 2000 cubits is about 3000 feet or 1000 yards. In Jerusalem, measuring from the Temple, that distance puts it across the Kidron Valley and almost directly on one of the Mount of Olives' two peaks. I bet you did not know that the Mount of Olives had two peaks. Two peaks, and in this case it was the southern one.

At the time of Christ a double-arched bridge crossed the Kidron Valley and led directly to that little-known third altar. The bridge was built to enable priests to cross the Kidron Valley and thus avoid defiling the sacrifices they were carrying to be burned upon that little-known altar. That little-known altar is of considerable importance to this study. Actually it begins to center on it. Some commentators refer to the Miphkad altar as the altar of the red heifer.

The Hebrew word appears only three times in Scripture. And we are going to turn to those three.

Nehemiah 3:31 After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the going up of the corner.

Here he is not talking about the altar itself, but the gate that led to the altar, also called, "Miphkad." In other words it was the entrance to that altar. That is the gate you went through to get to it, so the gate has the same name as the altar did—the Miphkad altar.

Next we will go to Ezekiel 44. I think you understand, that at this point in the book of Ezekiel we are in a millennial situation, and we are going to be apprised of the fact that during the Millennium when the Temple is rebuilt and the altars are put in place the Miphkad altar is going to be there, too.

Ezekiel 44:1 Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary. [There is the word, *miphkad*, "outward sanctuary." The translators interpreted it for you and put the interpretation into the narration there.] Which looks toward the east, and it was shut.

Ezekiel 43:21 You shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

burn it in the appointed place of the house [again], without the sanctuary.

There is the word *miphkad* again. So we are beginning to see that the Miphkad altar had several different names, and we are going to come up with at least three or four. But that is its technical name—"the Miphkad altar," the third altar belonging to the Temple, the Tabernacle, and also to Eden.

Incidentally, *miphkad* has a variety of applications, and so the application will change somewhat, depending on the context, but it literally means "numbering." But others say "appointed." These are literal meanings. It also means "inspection." This ought to begin to give you a clue. It also means "recruiting," like in the army. And it also means "census," and that is very close to the numbering.

In all cases, though, it is suggesting judgment. Remember, David took a census, and boy, was he judged! There is a connection, here, not specifically with David, but there is a connection with the word "census." Okay, back to Numbers 19. What we are going to read of, here, is this altar of the red heifer, the Miphkad altar. And if your Bible has little subtitles at the top of the chapter, mine has, "The Purification of the Unclean."

Numbers 19:1-9 And the Lord spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke: And you shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp [remember that term], and one shall slay her before his face: And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the Tabernacle of the congregation seven times: And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn: And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even. And he that burns her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even. And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place. . .

Remember that because it is one of the titles that is ascribed to the Miphkad altar—a

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

clean place, not to the altar itself, but to the area that the altar is in—a clean place.

Numbers 19:9 . . .and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.

So a young cow—a red heifer—was burned on that altar. But that was not all that was different about what was sacrificed and burned on this altar.

There are nine differences between what was burned on this altar and what was burned on the brazen altar. So you do not get them confused, each had very specific uses. All that I am going to give you applies to the brazen altar.

The animal was to be a male. On the Miphkad altar, it had to be a female.

It was to be presented at the entrance of the Tabernacle. But for the Miphkad altar's sacrifice, they went right past the Tabernacle. They passed it right by.

The priests had to lay hands on the sacrificial animal to establish identification. That was not done with the heifer.

The animal was sacrificed at the altar, not the brazen altar—I mean that animal was sacrificed at the altar.

Its blood was sprinkled on the altar—the Miphkad altar. Blood was not sprinkled on the altar.

The sacrifice was skinned and cut in pieces. The Miphkad altar sacrifice was burned whole.

Special attention was given to the burning of the head. This was not so with Miphkad.

The various parts of the sacrifice had to be washed before burning. Not so with the Miphkad. It went on there dirty.

It was burned inside the camp. The Miphkad altar sacrifice was burned outside the camp.

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

So, not one of these specific items applies to the Miphkad altar sacrifice, as shown here in Numbers 19. What was offered there?

First and foremost, it was a red heifer, without blemish. It had never had been hooked to a yoke, and it was virginal in every respect. It was led alive by the high priest across the Kidron Valley, by way of the bridge to the Miphkad altar, located on the southern peak of the Mount of Olives.

Then it was unceremoniously killed. A small amount of the blood was caught and then sprinkled seven times toward the Temple or the Tabernacle. The animal was then completely burned without being skinned or cut up in any way, shape, or form. It was just thrown on there. The flames consumed every part of it, including its dung. Nothing was excluded from the fire.

And while it was being consumed by the flames, the priest added cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet to the mix. Once the animal was completely devoured by the flames, its ashes were collected, mixed with pure water, and set aside, probably in the same general location used for purification rites, that is, purification from sin as it says in verse 9.

So there are many, many, differences, but no part of it was ever brought into the camp. (We will learn about the camp later and what its dimensions were.) It had to be kept—these waters of purification—outside the camp, never to be brought in.

Let us go to Leviticus 4. Here we have the instructions for sin offerings that are to be burned on the brazen altar. The reason I am turning to this is because there are descriptions of four sin offerings in which the main difference is who committed the sin. Otherwise they were identical. Who committed the sin that is going to be recognized, here, makes all the difference in the world.

Leviticus 4:3 If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he has sinned, a young bullock [male] without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering.

Leviticus 4:13 And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty;

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Then the same thing is done as was done with the sin of the priests. These are the only two sin offerings that are partially burned on the Miphkad altar.

Leviticus 4:8-10 And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock [God is describing directions for this sacrifice. This sacrifice is cut up.] for the sin offering; the fat that covers the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away, as it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt offering.

And then, beginning in verse 11, comes the instructions as to what you do with the rest of it.

So, the bullock for the sin offering was cut up. The parts were separated. Part of it went on the brazen altar, and the rest of it went on the Miphkad altar. There it was completely burned up. Only those two sins. And incidentally, some of the meat from sin offerings was given to the priests, where it became their gift from God for the work that they do. However, of these two sin offerings here, they got nothing. Once it was cut up and the other part was taken out to the Miphkad altar, anything that was taken out there was completely consumed. So they got nothing from this.

Incidentally, I do not know whether you thought about it, but those two sin offerings—the one for the priest and the one for the whole congregation—when that meat was taken across the bridge, what direction was it headed? It was headed away from God. It was just a symbolic way for God to say, "I'm really disgusted about this, because they have departed from Me. I think there was no excuse for a priest to sin in that manner."

Let us expand on that a little bit. I do not know whether you have caught the picture yet. But since the Holy of Holies was considered God's dwelling place, and the Mercy Seat His place of judgment, every symbolic ritual assigned to be performed by the priests were performed right in God's line of vision, right out through the east door of the Tabernacle and the Temple. He was watching the whole show, in other words. We are going to look into this altar further, later. We will get back to it because it is too important to let it go, but we will let it go, probably, until the third sermon.

That is really an important altar, but we are going to take further looks into the design of the Garden of Eden itself, and into the threefold design of the Tabernacle and Temple, looking from east to west, that is in front to back. You have to consider the outer court,

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

which is outside the east door and the holy place and the Holy of Holies.

Now, in relation to the Garden of Eden, the land of Eden itself was the outer court. The Garden of Eden was the camp. I will not describe "camp" yet. That will come later, and it becomes very important. "Camp" was a word that was assigned back in the Old Testament to an area surrounding the Tabernacle. But the term continued right on through to the Temple and right into Jesus' day. In fact, if you want to look later into Hebrews 13, Paul mentions it, himself. The term "camp" was still being used. It is a specific area in the area of the Temple.

In Hebrews 9:2, Paul calls the first part of the Tabernacle, what we call the holy place. And then the second part was what we call the Holy of Holies. I want you to recall that in Genesis 2:9 and Genesis 3:3, that both of those verses show that the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil were in the midst of the Garden. That term, "the midst of the garden," is the equivalent of the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle and the Temple.

That is where God walked. He was walking in the midst of the Garden. That was His house and both the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil were in that Garden. As I said to you before, I speculate that they were side by side, in order that there be a clear choice made available to Adam and Eve.

The midst of the Garden and the Holy of Holies were parallels of each other. You might wonder how closely God followed the heavenly abode pattern on Earth, as compared to heaven. I have already shown you one. Hebrews 12:22 shows that heaven has a Mount Zion. I will give you one before we go to another: Genesis 3:24. What appears in that verse? Cherubim. Okay, here is where I am headed: anywhere you find God, somewhere near His house, or operating in an official capacity, such as we are talking about now, there are cherubim around him. We are going to turn to Ezekiel, so we get our two or three witnesses.

Ezekiel 1:4-5 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.

Ezekiel 1:10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.

Turn to chapter 10. What Ezekiel was describing were the cherubim.

Ezekiel 10:19-20 And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubim.

What Ezekiel saw, in chapter 1, was God apparently on His heavenly chariot charging about and Ezekiel saw this in vision. He saw God; also, the cherubim associated with God. It seems to be a pattern developing here that everywhere God goes, in this kind of capacity, the cherubim are there.

Revelation 4:1-2 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Revelation 4:6-7 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

All I am getting at here is the cherubim are so closely associated with God, that when you see Him in a glorious picture like this, everywhere He is they are there. And they were in Eden, in the Garden of Eden, with Him.

So, there is a Mount Zion in heaven and when God came to earth in that capacity He brought the cherubim with Him, to keep Him company, I guess. So He had somebody to talk to. I do not know. But there they are. So you look at them in one place and they are at the throne in heaven. You look at them in another place, and they are flitting through the universe on their way to do some kind of thing. And you see them again, and they are at Eden, as well.

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Does it not seem that the cherubim are directly associated with the presence of God, especially with respect to His throne, wherever it might be located at any given time?

The Tabernacle and Temple's brazen altars were located just outside the east entrance. Did the Garden have any such thing? The answer to that is, "absolutely." It was located just outside the midst of the Garden and outside what Paul called "the first part" in Hebrews 9:2. But still that part of the Garden compares with the outer court of the Tabernacle. Recall that Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden.

Genesis 4:3-5 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

This is the first mention in the Bible of an offering. But, I think we can understand from this that Adam and Eve also made offerings. It does not say that Cain and Abel had to build it, it was already there. And they went to it, and Adam and Eve performed some of the responsibilities of parents by instructing Cain and Abel verbally as well as by example regarding their duties to God.

I say this because the way the sacrifices of Cain and Abel are introduced, a background of their understanding is assumed in the narrative. In other words, sacrificing was not something new to them. In addition, the phrase, in the process of time, which can also be translated, "at the end of days," indicates "a set time." Some have speculated that this could even indicate a holy day, a weekly Sabbath, or whatever. In other words, it was something appointed to do, and they came to do it.

Thus their sacrifices would have taken place within the land of Eden, but outside the Garden. Remember they were not allowed in. So within the land of Eden, but outside the Garden even as the sacrifices were offered outside the Tabernacle and the Temple, but within the outer court.

I will go over this quickly but it is kind of interesting.

Genesis 4:6-7 And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lies at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shall rule over him.

This may look as though it does not apply to anything that we covered today. However, it does, and it very greatly does. It is very important to what follows later on because of the location of various items touching on this subject we are covering, here.

Despite the fact that Cain was absolutely dead wrong on what he did, and he was angry because his sacrifice was not accepted, God said something to him that is actually positive. "If you do well shall you not be accepted?" Okay so far. Then he adds, "if you do not well sin lies at the door." That is what the *King James Version* has God saying. That is somewhat redundant. Why? Because Cain had already done "not well."

But, was there something that he could do at this point? Remember this is an ongoing event. At the time that it occurred, was there something that he could do at that point that would be approved by God and would be well? Remember, He just asked him. If you do something and you do well, you will be approved.

What precipitated this whole thing? It was his sin that precipitated all this dialogue. In this conversation, sin is not lying at the door. It was already present. It was right there. But God says something lies at the door. It is something that has to do with sin.

Let us consider Adam and Eve's sin just a moment, because it will help explain here. Following their sin, their mind was changed and they knew that they were naked. And that nakedness was for them an indication that they indeed had sinned. So what did they do to cover themselves up, to hide their shame? Well, there was a handy fig tree right there, and they took that stuff off the fig tree and tried to cover their shame with fig leaves. Well, fig leaves are good for fig trees for covering them up, but fig leaves are not good at all for covering sin.

So what did God do? "Who told you that you sinned, or that you were naked?" Well, they blamed it on each other, and on Satan. What did God do? He covered them, did He not? And what did He do to cover them? He killed an animal—shed blood and covered them with the skins. He made coverings for them. It is interesting that it says He *made* them. Do you suppose that they had to stand around there buck naked while He made those things to impress the embarrassment on them? I do not know. But that is what He did. He shed blood and then covered them with the skins of an animal.

Now God said that if you do *not well* a sin *offering* lies at the door, because that is what they needed—a sin offering. If you did not do well, you need a sin offering. That is really what He said to them, "if you sin, an *offering* lies at the door."

Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

This word, "lies," is rather expressive. Actually, taken all together, it is a complex declaration. Some translators will say that sin "crouches," not lies, but crouches at the door, because they pick that up from the meaning of the word and the context in which it is.

Why would they say, "crouch," which, incidentally, is a good, reasonable translation? Because the sin offering, as the wording is there, gives the impression that it is under a tremendous burden, and is being worn down—as though it is carrying something that needs to be gotten rid of. You can write this into your notes, that God was offering to Cain an offering to be burned, to be slain and burned.

Here is the question that I have for you, since God was offering him forgiveness and grace, so that he could be relieved of this penalty that was being imposed upon him. What altar was He referring to, that lies at the door? Was it the brazen altar that was just outside the entrance to Eden's inner parts, or is there a possibility that the door God was referring to was the door to the whole land of Eden that would be the parallel of the Miphkad altar? We will explore more about this altar and its meaning and other things regarding the Temple and the Tabernacle, hopefully, God willing, the Last Great Day.