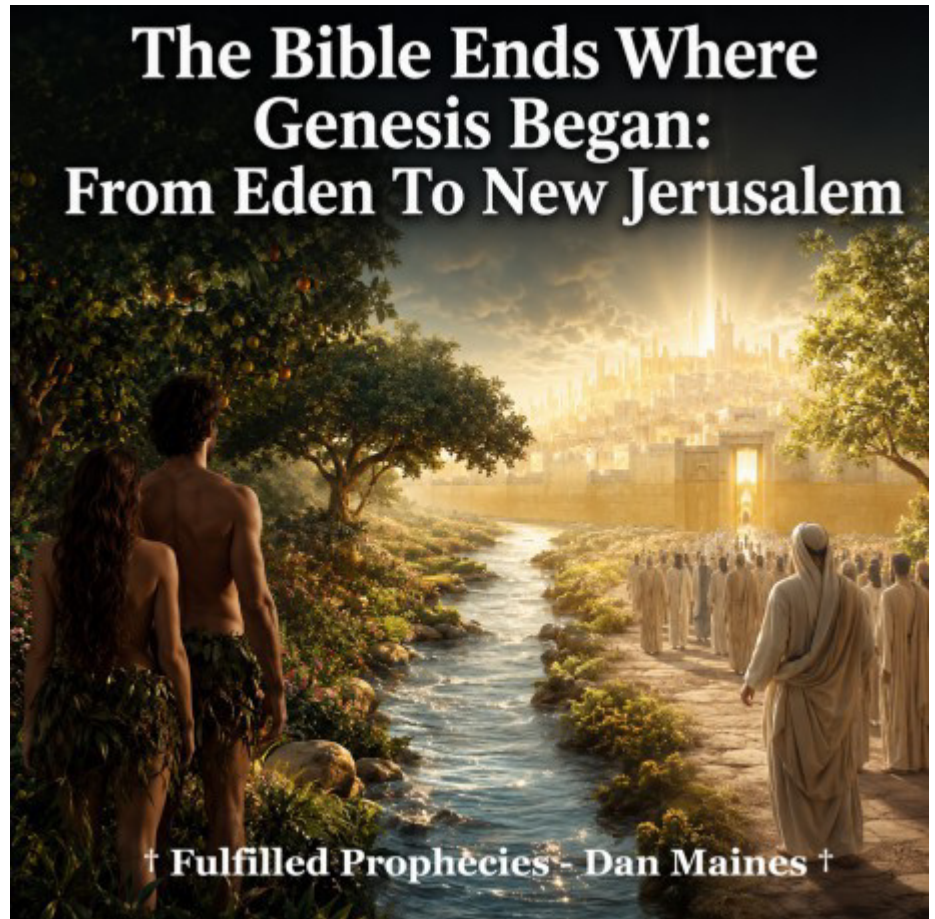


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**New Jerusalem -
The Bible Ends
Where Genesis
Began: From Eden
To New Jerusalem**



By Dan Maines

The Bible Ends Where Genesis Began: From Eden To New Jerusalem

Introduction

† The Bible begins with humanity in the presence of God, and it ends with humanity in the presence of God.

† Genesis opens with a garden, a river, the tree of life, fellowship with God, and access to His presence. Sin brought death, the curse, and separation from that access.

† Revelation closes the story by showing the river again, the tree of life again, the removal of the curse, the defeat of death,

and God's dwelling with His people.

† This is one of the most powerful connections in the entire Bible. Revelation doesn't abandon the story Genesis began, it completes it.

† The Bible moves from Eden lost to New Jerusalem revealed, from access barred to access restored, from death entering the story to death being defeated, and from the curse entering creation to there being no curse anymore.

† When Revelation 21-22 is read against Genesis 2-3, its imagery becomes much clearer. John is showing us the completion of the Bible's opening story.

Genesis 2:8-10

The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God caused every tree to grow that is pleasing 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. Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers.

† The Bible begins with a garden containing the tree of life and a river flowing from Eden.

† These aren't insignificant details. They establish images that reappear at the very end of Revelation, where John sees the river of the water of life and the tree of life.

† Genesis gives us the beginning of the story, Revelation gives us its completed redemptive picture. The same themes appear at both ends of Scripture because Revelation deliberately reaches back to Eden. (Revelation 22:1-2)

† The river represents life flowing from God's presence, and the tree of life represents the life found in fellowship with Him. What humanity lost through sin is restored through Christ. (John 4:14; John 7:37-39)

Genesis 3:17-19

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I

commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; With hard labor you shall eat from it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; Yet you shall eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Until you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

† Here the curse and death enter the biblical story through sin.

† From this point forward, Scripture develops the story of God's redemption from sin, death, alienation, and condemnation.

(Romans 5:12-19)

† Revelation eventually answers Genesis with the remarkable declaration that there will no longer be any curse. The problem introduced near the beginning of Scripture is answered at its conclusion. (Revelation 22:3)

† Revelation's ending can't be properly understood without Genesis because John is intentionally showing the reversal of what happened in Eden.

Genesis 3:22-24

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out with his hand, and take fruit also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"- therefore the Lord God sent him out of the Garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the Garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

† This is one of the great tragedies of Genesis. Humanity is driven from the garden, and the way to the tree of life is guarded.

† The issue isn't geography alone, it is access to God and the life found in His presence.

† The Bible's story then moves toward the restoration of that access. Through Christ, God's people are brought near and given access to the Father. (Ephesians 2:13, 18; Hebrews 10:19-22)

† Genesis closes Eden to sinful humanity, but Revelation ends with the tree of life accessible in the city of God. The Bible's final chapters answer the problem established in its opening chapters. (Revelation 22:2, 14)

Hebrews 9:2-3, 5, 8

For a tabernacle was equipped, the outer sanctuary, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the sacred bread; this is called the Holy Place. Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Most Holy Place, and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the atoning cover; but about these things we cannot now speak in detail. The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing,

† The cherubim guarding Eden weren't an isolated image. Cherubim appeared again in Israel's sanctuary, where access to God's presence was restricted behind the veil. (Exodus 26:31-33)

† Hebrews explains what that restricted access meant. The way into the holy place had not yet been fully manifested while the first tabernacle was still standing. (Hebrews 10:19-22)

† This connects Eden, the tabernacle, and New Jerusalem. Genesis shows the way guarded, the Old Covenant sanctuary shows the way restricted, and Revelation shows the gates open with access to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:24; Revelation 21:25; Revelation 22:14)

† The Bible's movement is unmistakable, guarded access, restricted access, then restored access through Christ. (Ephesians 2:18)

Revelation 21:1-3

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

† Here we reach the great goal of the biblical story, God dwelling with His people.

† The imagery isn't primarily about God abandoning His redemptive story and replacing the planet with a strange future world. John is describing the arrival of New Jerusalem, the bride, and the restored dwelling of God with humanity.

† New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven. God's people don't wait for the city to be constructed by human hands, the city comes from God. (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-24)

† Hebrews told first-century believers that they had already come to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem. Revelation shows that covenant reality reaching its completed form. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

† Eden began with God and humanity together. Sin disrupted that fellowship. Revelation closes the redemptive story with the announcement, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.

Revelation 21:4-5

and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

† Genesis introduced death through sin, Revelation announces the defeat of death through the completed work of Christ.

† Paul identified death as the last enemy and connected its defeat with resurrection and the victory of Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:26, 54-57)

† John isn't saying ordinary physical death no longer occurs on planet earth. Revelation itself describes people outside the city after New Jerusalem appears. The picture concerns covenant

life, reconciliation, and victory over the death brought through Adam. (Revelation 22:14-15)

† In Adam came death, but in Christ came life. The story that began with death entering through Adam reaches its redemptive conclusion in Christ. (Romans 5:17-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22)

Revelation 21:22-23

I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illuminated it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

† Eden had no temple building because God's presence was there. New Jerusalem also has no temple building because God and the Lamb are its temple.

† This is the end of the old temple-centered system. Access to God isn't through an earthly sanctuary, priesthood, sacrifices, or geographical holy place. (John 4:21-24; Hebrews 9:8-12)

† The entire city is filled with God's presence. What the earthly temple represented in shadow has reached its reality in Christ and His people. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

† The Bible began with God's presence among humanity, and Revelation ends with God's presence among His redeemed people.

Revelation 22:1-2

And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

† Here is the unmistakable return to Eden. Genesis had a river and the tree of life, Revelation has the river of life and the tree of life.

† But Revelation expands the picture. The river now proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

† Notice that nations still need healing. This isn't a description of

a planet where human activity has ceased. It is the picture of God's life flowing outward to the nations through the completed New Covenant kingdom. (Ezekiel 47:1-12)

† What was restricted in Eden is now pictured as abundant. The river flows, the tree continually bears fruit, and healing reaches the nations.

† The story has moved from one garden to a worldwide kingdom of life in Christ.

Revelation 22:3-5

There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illuminate them; and they will reign forever and ever.

† Genesis 3 announced the curse. Revelation 22 announces that there is no curse anymore.

† Genesis described humanity hiding from God's presence. Revelation describes God's servants seeing His face.

† Genesis described humanity driven from sacred access. Revelation describes God's servants living and reigning in His presence.

† This is covenant restoration language at its highest point. The separation created through sin has been answered through the redemptive work of Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17-19)

† Revelation isn't leaving Genesis behind. It is deliberately answering Genesis.

Revelation 22:14-15

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life, and may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral persons, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

† This passage gives us one of the clearest clues for

understanding New Jerusalem. There are people entering the city, and there are people outside the city.

† The gates provide access, and the tree of life is available within. The imagery isn't describing the end of human existence, it is describing access to covenant life in God's presence.

† Genesis said the way to the tree of life was guarded.

Revelation says the redeemed have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city.

† That is the wow. The Bible begins with humanity outside the guarded way to the tree of life, and it ends with the way opened in Christ.

† The story isn't about escaping God's creation. It is about reconciliation, restoration, access, life, and God's presence through Jesus Christ. (John 10:9-10; Hebrews 10:19-22)

Historical References

† Josephus described the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, documenting the historical collapse of the Old Covenant center of worship that had dominated Israel's national life.

† Eusebius later recorded the tradition that believers in Jerusalem fled before the city's destruction, connecting the first-century church with the judgment Jesus had warned was coming upon Jerusalem.

† Irenaeus repeatedly drew connections between Adam's disobedience and Christ's redemptive work, emphasizing Christ as the One who reverses Adam's failure.

† These historical witnesses don't determine the meaning of Scripture, but they help demonstrate how strongly early Christian history was centered on Christ, the end of the temple order, and the restoration accomplished through Him.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We aren't waiting for access to God. Through Christ we have access to the Father now. (Ephesians 2:18)

† We aren't waiting to come to the heavenly Jerusalem. Scripture says believers have come to Mount Zion and the

heavenly Jerusalem. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

† We don't need an earthly temple to approach God. God dwells with His people, and Christ is our access into His presence. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

† We carry the water of life to a thirsty world by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. The invitation remains open for those who thirst to receive the water of life. (Revelation 22:17)

† We live in the reality toward which the biblical story was moving, reconciliation with God through Christ.

† Genesis shows us what was lost through Adam. Revelation shows us what has been restored through Christ.

† The Bible begins with a river, a tree, God's presence, and humanity in fellowship with Him. It ends with a river, a tree, God's presence, and redeemed humanity dwelling with Him.

† Eden wasn't forgotten. Eden's story was fulfilled and surpassed in New Jerusalem.

† Writing this brought tears of joy to my eyes. I hope reading it brings that same joy to your heart as you see the beautiful story of redemption come full circle, from Eden to New Jerusalem.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why does Revelation end with the same imagery found in Genesis?

A: Because Revelation is completing the redemptive story Genesis began. Genesis introduces the tree of life, river, curse, death, and lost access to God's presence. Revelation closes with the tree of life, river of life, no curse, death defeated, and restored access to God. (Genesis 2:8-10; Genesis 3:22-24; Revelation 21:3-5; Revelation 22:1-5)

Q: If Revelation 21-22 is fulfilled, why are sinners and nations still present?

A: Because New Jerusalem describes the New Covenant reality, not the disappearance of human life from the earth. Revelation shows nations receiving healing, people outside the city, people entering through its gates, and an invitation still going out to those who thirst. (Revelation 21:24-26; Revelation

22:2, 14-17)

Q: What is the great contrast between Genesis 3 and Revelation 22?

A: Genesis 3 shows humanity driven away and access to the tree of life guarded. Revelation 22 shows God's people entering the city and having the right to the tree of life. What was lost through Adam is restored through Christ. (Genesis 3:22-24; Revelation 22:14)

Q: Are Christians still waiting for New Jerusalem to come someday?

A: No. Paul called the Jerusalem above our mother, and Hebrews told first-century believers that they had already come to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem. Revelation shows the completed New Covenant city and God's dwelling with His people. (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 21:2-3)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Genesis 2:8-10; Genesis 3:17-19; Genesis 3:22-24; Hebrews 9:2-3, 5, 8; Revelation 21:1-3; Revelation 21:4-5; Revelation 21:22-23; Revelation 22:1-2; Revelation 22:3-5; Revelation 22:14-15

† Historical writers: Josephus; Eusebius; Irenaeus

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