

Garden to Garden

Lesson 6

The In-Between Time

I. All Things New

Revelation 21:1-5

"In Genesis, God plants the Garden on Earth; in Revelation, he brings down the New Jerusalem, with a garden at its center, to the New Earth. In Eden, there's no sin, death, or Curse; on the New Earth, there's no more sin, death, or Curse. In Genesis, the Redeemer is promised, in Revelation, the Redeemer returns. Genesis tells the story of Paradise lost; Revelation tells the story of Paradise regained. In Genesis, humanity's stewardship is squandered; in Revelation, humanity's stewardship is triumphant, empowered by the human and divine King Jesus. These parallels are too remarkable to be anything but deliberate. These mirror images demonstrate the perfect symmetry of God's plan. We live in the in-between time, hearing echoes of Eden and the approaching footfalls of the New Earth." — **Randy Alcorn, Heaven**:

As Christians, we live "in between" with _____ promises and _____ privileges and responsibilities.

II. The Promise

John 14:1-6

"The kingdom of God . . . does not mean merely the salvation of certain individuals nor even the salvation of a chosen group of people. It means nothing less than the complete renewal of the entire cosmos, culminating in the new heaven and the new earth." — **Anthony Hoekema**

"Sin and death and suffering and war and poverty are not natural—they are the devastating results of our rebellion against God. We long for a return to Paradise—a perfect world, without the corruption of sin, where God walks with us and talks with us in the cool of the day."
— **Randy Alcorn, Heaven**:

"The crux of the whole matter is this: our wonderful, created world will be restored to its rightful Owner. I for one look forward to that day. I want to live here when Jesus Christ owns and rules the world. Until that hour, there will be conflict, distress and war among the nations. We will hear of suffering and terror and fear and failure. But the God who has promised a better world is the God who cannot lie. He will shake loose Satan's hold on this world and its society and systems. Our heavenly Father will put this world into the hands that were once nailed to a cross for our race of proud and alienated sinners. It is a fact. Jesus Christ is returning to earth....I bow my head and continue to pray with the humble writer of the Revelation: "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!" — **Tozer**

III. How We Live "in Between"

Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 3:20

□ With _____

Revelation 19

"The center of Christianity is the coming of the Son of God into the world as a real man to destroy the works of the devil and create a new people for His own glory. The very heart of our faith is that He did this by obeying the law of God, dying for the sins of His people, rising victorious over death, ascending to God's right hand with all His enemies under his feet. The second coming of Christ is the completion of His saving work. If you take it away, the whole fabric of His saving work unravels."
- John Piper

"Christ's second coming reminds us that ultimately our hope is not in this world and its attempts to solve its problems, but in Christ's promise to establish His perfect rule over all the earth."
- Billy Graham

□ With _____

Matthew 28:18-20

"The imminent return of our Lord is the great Bible argument for a pure, unselfish, devoted, unworldly, active life of service." - R. A. Torrey

□ With An _____ of the Father's Love **John 15:9-17**

Discussion Question

1. Read **Revelation 22**. Based on all you've studied in *Garden to Garden*, what strikes you about our eternal home with the Lord?

2. As we live "in between" this world and our eternal dwelling with the Lord, we are called to be a people of great hope. What does a hopeful disposition convey to a watching world, specifically, to friends and family who don't know Jesus?

3. As we live "in between" we are each given an assignment or "commission" to "make disciples." How are you fulfilling your calling? Or ... who might God be calling you to disciple?

4. There is a massive difference between knowing that God loves us and experiencing the Father's love. How is God revealing His love to you today? Take a minute and ask for a deeper revelation of His love. (Read **1st John 3:1** and **Ephesians 3:14-19**)

5. **From the homework (Day 23)**, we read Jesus' words from John 15 that *He is the Vine and we are His branches* (p. 136). We examined how a life connected to and dependent on Jesus brings joy (p. 138). Do you find yourself lacking joy?

In what ways have you lived independently or self-sufficiently? What steps can you take to be a branch that stays connected to the Vine?
