* Contrast 2 men:
	+ Louis XIV: “no-one must speak of death in my presence” – our culture: ultimate taboo.
	+ Philip II of Macedon – ancient Greece – paid s/o to tell him every day, “Philip, remember you must die”[[1]](#endnote-1)
		- No Xn – but much closer to B view abt death. /Afraid to speak abt death:
		- People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment[[2]](#endnote-2). So you … must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him[[3]](#endnote-3).
* Talking abt heaven today. Nothing more impt today: make sure you are going there.
	+ J: I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me[[4]](#endnote-4). Want to go to F – through J.
	+ Not Xn yet? Pr: today, seek him with all your heart – find him[[5]](#endnote-5).

Bible starts and ends in a garden. Eden -> Rev 22

**Genesis 2:8** Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.

Lots of themes - shared:

* **River**
	+ Eden: steams[[6]](#endnote-6) & great river[[7]](#endnote-7) watering the garden. Well-watered garden – B: symbol of abundance – peace[[8]](#endnote-8).
	+ **v1-2** river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.
		- If you lived in ancient Israel – 2 great seas: Med: abundant life. Dead Sea: death. Ezekiel 47[[9]](#endnote-9) describes heaven – river of life-giving water – flows into Dead Sea - /living – brings it to life - teeming with life – like Gen 1.
	+ Point of course: /so dead that God’s river /bring back to life. And all the life in heaven is sustained by his water – from his throne.
		- J: the water I give … will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life[[10]](#endnote-10)
* **Tree of life**
	+ In Eden: tree – representing everything life-giving[[11]](#endnote-11). When A&E rebel against God – banished from garden – lose access to ToL.
	+ Rev: **22:2** tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.
		- In this earth – 1 crop of fruit, once/yr.
		- There: 12 crops, once/mo.
		- Symbolism: place bursting with life – energy – vitality.
	+ But could also be literal. Seems to me – that world – same things: trees, rivers, mountains, minerals. But more – and better!
* **Presence of God**
	+ God walked in the garden in the cool of the day (Gen 3:8) – there - /all time
	+ **v3-4** throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city… They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Permanent presence of God – throne. See him F2F. Identity.
* **Curse**
	+ A&E sinned – the curse of sin & death falls on mankind.
		- Our whole experience of life – affected by sin. Every rel: harmed by sin. Every task: difficult. Everyone you know will die.
	+ Sin & death banished forever. Curse lifted. **v3** No longer will there be any curse.

New Earth is better than Eden in every way: more life – more vitality – closer presence.

**Bodies like?**

* A&E created “very good” – not hard to see how our bodies have gone backwards from there!
	+ New bodies like? Resurrection.
* Like Jesus[[12]](#endnote-12)

**Philippians 3:21** [God] will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

* + **Def human** – had a body – eat-drink[[13]](#endnote-13).
		- Eat, drink in heaven. God made food for our pleasure that we should glorify him.
	+ **Def male** - /androgynous.
		- No marriage in heaven[[14]](#endnote-14), but still MF.
		- Jesus was celibate - single – and completely fulfilled – person on Earth. All be like him in heaven.
	+ **Def recognisable**, but maybe slightly different. /Always seem to recognise him instantly[[15]](#endnote-15). Make sense if best version.
* +verse: **1Cor 15:42** The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable [/decay - /ageing process to dread]; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory [come back]; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power [Jesus twice appeared in a locked room[[16]](#endnote-16) - do that? /Know! Raised in **power**? Or SoG?!]; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. [**sinless** – what it will be to be free of a body that is subject to death because of sin – curse is lifted![[17]](#endnote-17)]
* Raised in **glory**?
	+ Jesus - intriguing: **Matthew 13:41-43** The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.
	+ Hyperbole? Exaggeration to make a point?
		- **Daniel 12:3** [the righteous will] shine like the brightness of the heavens[[18]](#endnote-18)
		- When Moses & Elijah came from heaven – transfiguration: appeared in glorious splendour[[19]](#endnote-19)
		- Moses met w God – receive 10C – face shone[[20]](#endnote-20)
		- **1Cor 15:43** [bodies] raised in glory.
	+ /Certain – but likely: our new bodies will glow – if they do, it will be the reflected glory of God.

**All same?**

In Eden, only 2 ppl. V good[[21]](#endnote-21). New Eden?

* Certainly: ppl from every nation. Love that here at Park!
	+ **5:9** 24 elders around the throne cry out: You are worthy… why? because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation[[22]](#endnote-22).
		- Tribe: family line
		- Language
		- People: race
		- Nation: ppl who share a national identity & culture.

But will we keep our ethnic identities?

* **v24** The nations will walk …[by the light of Jesus’ presence]
	+ Suggests there will be nations – peacefully coexisting nations.
		- Rather than obliterating nations in heaven, celebrate them.
* **v26** The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into [the city]
	+ Every nation – every culture has strengths & weaknesses. All the best things from every culture: art – music – science – food – dancing - everything that is glorious and honourable from each culture -> heaven.
		- Heaven will be a joyful celebration of the diversity of all that God has made.
	+ Sin caused division between races, languages – Jesus is bringing all things together under him.
		- **Eph 1:9-10** the mystery of [God’s] will – what does God will for creation? - [it will be] put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment – to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.
		- One of the glorious hopes: /ethnic struggles any more - /distrust - /racism – everything united to bring glory to J.

Languages

* **7:10** They cried out in a loud voice
	+ singular voice - suggests one language – maybe all learn one common language?
* But already seen: ppl of all languages in heaven.
	+ Remember in Acts 2: HS comes – SiT: all declaring the wonders of God – more languages – greater the glory to J. Universal King!
	+ Less in heaven? Doubt it.

**What will we do?**

* Well what did Adam do in Eden?
	+ Contemplate God all day? No.

**Rule, Reign & Work**

* **Genesis 1:28** Subdue [the earth]. Rule [over creation].
* **Genesis 2:15** [God] put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it
	+ That’s what a good ruler does – care for what they’re responsible for. Adam had a job – work was a “very good” thing.
* Imagine Earth: vast, wild, undiscovered place. God is saying, go – discover – explore – understand.
	+ Don’t just sit here in your own little spot. /build a tree house and eat the berries you can see around you.
	+ Be curious! Explore! Do science! Figure out how to dam rivers and make hydroelectric power – figure out optics and telescopes so you can see the vast glory of the galaxies. Make music – cook – climb mountains – drink fine coffee.
		- This is for you: rule over it.
* **22:5** they will reign for ever and ever
	+ In fact, B talks a lot about ppl reigning[[23]](#endnote-23)
		- **2:26** To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations
		- Song of angels: **5:9-10** you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.
		- **2Tim 2:12** if we endure, we will also reign with him…
* Mean?
	+ Doing what A&E did as king & queen of Eden. His ppl will rule & reign in New Earth.
		- /Sit around contemplating God – or his new creation. Work – just like in Eden.
		- Seems to me: vast unexplored places to discover. The city itself – last week: massive – 3dimensions. Outside of the city – open gates – a vast earth to explore & make our own. New Earth to subdue & make our own.
		- Not all work though: Spend our time exploring – building – drawing – baking – talking – all the expressions of creativity God has given you that reflect his character.
* Think? Rule over what?
	+ A&E ruled over animals – garden – world – over ppl – over angels[[24]](#endnote-24)
	+ Think: what will I rule over? Don’t know until judgement day. But we know the basis on how its decided:
		- **Luke 14:11** all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.
		- **Matthew 5:5** the meek…will inherit the earth.
		- The greatest rulers in next life will be those who humbly served in this life.

**Bible starts and ends in a garden.**

* Adam & Eve faced a test in their garden. Failed.
	+ Given vast responsibility to rule & reign over earth, under God.
		- Instead, rebelled against God – wanted to take his position. Consequences of that sin hit them: died - rolled on through the generations.
* Jesus faced a test in his garden – Gethsemane – succeeded!
	+ In that garden – will he obey his F – go to the cross – die for the sins of the world?
		- Or will he abandon the plan - call down 10’sk angels to rescue[[25]](#endnote-25) –?
		- Yet not what I will, but what you will[[26]](#endnote-26). Obeys. Follows.
* 2 men who represent the whole of humanity:
	+ Adam: rebel
	+ Jesus: holy, righteous
	+ Who is your “head” today? Who represents you? Who are you following?

*Pr:*

* *Acknowledge sin – moral failure – rebellion. By nature: instinctively follow Adam more than J.*
	+ *Thx: when we make your son J #1 – want to turn away from sin – gift of Sp – desire for holiness.*
* *Any here: /following J yet – today be the day.*
* *Rest: /remaining fear.*

**Sing: 10,000 reasons – confidence to face death.**

**Animals?**

* **Is 11:6** The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion … together; and a little child will lead them.
* Horses are mentioned several times in heaven: Elijah’s chariot (2Kings 2:11; Revelation 6:2-8; 2Kings 6:17)
* God’s covenant with animals (Genesis 9:9-17; Psalm 50:10-11)
* Breath in animals – until recently it was normal teaching than animals have souls, although not of the same kind and unclear whether eternal. (Genesis 1:30, 2:7, 6:17, 7:15,22)
* Praise from animals (Ps 148:10-13; Rev 5:13; Baalam’s donkey!)
* The 4 “Living Creatures” around the throne – lit: animals.
1. There’s a few references to this online in various forms. Alcorn quotes it with no source. The phrase is “momento mori” in Latin. The best old source I can find is this: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=RebGdFyvkd0C&pg=PA39&lpg=PA39&dq=Philip,+remember,+you+must+die+macedon#v=onepage> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Hebrews 9:27 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Matthew 24:44 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. John 14:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Jeremiah 29:13; Deuteronomy 4:29; Proverbs 8:17; Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 11:9; Acts 17:27 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Genesis 2:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Genesis 2:10 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Eg. Genesis 13:10; Numbers 24:6; Song of Solomon 4:15; Isaiah 58:11; Jeremiah 31:12 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Ezekiel 47:7-12. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. John 4:14 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. I think this is borne out by the other many references to the Tree of Life in the scriptures, especially in Proverbs. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Also 1Cor 15:49 just as we have borne the image of the earthly man [Adam], so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man [Jesus]. And 1John 3:2 when Christ appears, we shall be like him [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Luke 24:42; John 21:12 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. I don’t mean on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24) – there they were “kept from recognising him”. But in John 21 on the beach “they did not realise it was Jesus”. It’s possible it was too dark though of course. Mary also didn’t recognise Jesus at first (John 20:14) – although that could have been because of her tears. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. John 20:19, 26 [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Romans 8:10 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. The context is the resurrection of the dead. Sure, it could be symbolic, but why must it be? And in the light of the other, obviously very literal examples of Moses and Elijah, the onus is very much on anyone who would disagree to prove it. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Luke 9:31 [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Exodus 34:29-30 [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Genesis 1:31 [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Also Revelation 7:9 [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Also Revelation 2:10 (crowns signify kingship and rule) [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. 2Corinthians 6:2-3 – the form of the verb “to judge” implies ongoing rule rather than one-off judgment. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Matthew 26:53 – a legion at the time of Jesus was 6,000 fighting men. So, Jesus is saying he could call upon the resources of at least 72,000 angels at the drop of a hat! [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Mark 14:36 [↑](#endnote-ref-26)