

Mary Craig

From: Mary Craig
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Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

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Thinking about Christ's resurrection this year, I couldn't get much past John 19.41.

Now in the place where He was crucified
There was a garden; and in the garden
A new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid.

I've been to Jerusalem and will be heading back there in a few days in answer to the fifth call to Israel. (Go to www.marycraig.org for more on the Israel mission.) I've been to the place similar to where Jesus is said to have been buried and to the nearby garden. This year, though, I just kept thinking about God and gardens.

The Garden of Eden was the garden of God. God planted it; and there He put the man (Adam) whom He had formed. (Genesis 2.8) It had all kinds of trees and fruit trees and a river went out of Eden to water the garden. Every tree was good for food and pleasant to look at. God took Adam and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. But this garden of fellowship, this garden God planned and planted, this garden that gave Adam purpose also became a garden of temptation and testing. Adam had only one rule. Can you imagine it? One rule was all Adam had to keep.

This Garden of Eden became a garden lost and a garden where death passed to all people as first Eve and then Adam failed to keep covenant with God after listening to another word, another wisdom, another voice, about another way. Adam plunged mankind into an estate of sin and misery. The garden was lost as Adam and Eve were driven out. Cherubim with flaming swords then guarded the way of the tree of life in the midst of the garden.



There's something about gardens, however, and people continued to plant various kinds of gardens...of herbs, or cucumbers, of fruit trees, of spices and flowers. They required water, whether from a river or from a pool of water, or from a well or fountain. Gardens require gardeners to tend and care for them, just as Adam was to do.



The Song of Solomon describes a garden of delights (Song 5.1, 6.2, 11) and a garden enclosed (Song 4.12). A well watered garden speaks of spiritual prosperity (Is 58.11, Jeremiah 31.12), but a garden that has no water is descriptive of the wicked (Isaiah 1.30).

God promised to comfort Zion, making her wilderness like Eden.

For the LORD shall comfort Zion: He will comfort
All her waste places; and He will make her
Wilderness like Eden, and her desert like
The garden of the LORD; joy and gladness
Shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.
Isaiah 51.3

And they shall say, This land that was desolate
Is become like the garden of Eden; and the
Waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced,
And are inhabited.
Ezekiel 36.35

Then came Jesus in fulfillment of Isaiah 61.11: For as the earth brings forth her bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. Jesus came as the Vine with His Father as the Vinedresser, or Gardener (John 15). Jesus likened the kingdom of God to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden, and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it (Luke 13.19). Jesus would be the Seed that had to die so that new life could come.



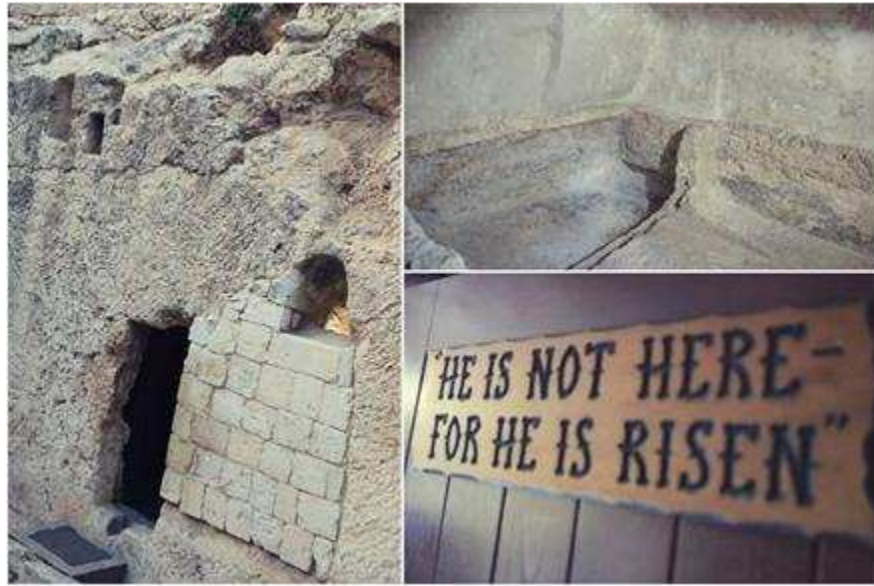
And so we find Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, a garden of the oil press, a garden of wrestling with the will of God, a garden of crushing pressure, a garden of betrayal, a garden of agony. Jesus would be led away, examined, and sentenced to crucifixion.

Near where He was crucified was a garden, the garden of the tomb. A. W. Pink notes:

"Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid" (John 19:41). Beautifully suggestive is the reference to the "garden." It was in a "garden" that the first Adam sowed the seed which issued in death; so here, in a "garden" was sown the Seed which was to bear much fruit in immortal life. In the "new" sepulcher "wherein was never yet man laid" we have the fulfillment of still another type: "And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer (previously slain) and lay them up without the camp in a *clean place*" (Num. 19:9).

Sin began in a garden, and now sin meets its conqueror in a garden. Here in Jerusalem in a garden that was near to where Jesus was crucified was a new tomb where no man had ever been placed before. Near to the cross is a tomb. Near to that part of you which is dying to self is a tomb. It feels like a cocoon, like being wrapped in the bindings of death. It feels like you will stay there forever and that it's the end; but it's only the end of sin. The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, and so what is laid to rest, dead in the grave, will be conquered and the grave in the garden will give way to new life in Christ.

Anyone who keeps a garden knows all about death and decay, times and seasons. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our God shall stand forever. (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:24) And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. It's in that grave in the garden where our minds, wills, and emotions, crushed in the process of surrender to the will of God, must come to their final rest. Yet the power of the grave will not hold those who are new creations in Christ, kept by the power of God, forged in the fires of the Flame of Yah, and joined in one spirit to the One who is a priest "who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." (Hebrews 7:16)



Death entered in a garden and death was conquered in a garden as Jesus rose from the dead. O death where is your sting? O grave where is your victory? Death could not hold Jesus Christ but His love will hold us into the ages of the ages.

There is yet a garden, of new life. It's best to let the Word of God describe it.



And he showed me a pure river of water of life,
 Clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God
 And of the Lamb.
 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river,
 Was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits,
 And yielded her fruit every month:
 And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
 Revelation 22.1, 2