

# **Eden and Sanctuary Symbolism Chart**

**By C M White  
Version 1.1**

## **Introductory Comments**

For many decades, scholars and Bible students have discovered that imbedded within the Edenic narrative contained in Genesis chapter two, there are a number of inferences to a sanctuary – that is similarities or typologies that finds a sort of mirror or matching with both the Tabernacle and Temple of ancient Israel. And also the millennial temple.

This chart is the result of reviewing a number of papers and articles on the subject and then distilling or summarising the key points for easy comprehension of the topic.

It should be noted that though demonstrating that the typology indicates the Garden in Eden had sanctuary meaning, it does not mean that it was a sanctuary – but rather an archetypal sanctuary.

“The garden of Eden is not viewed by the author of Genesis simply as a piece of Mesopotamian farmland, but as an archetypal sanctuary, that is a place where God dwells and where man should worship him. Many of the features of the garden may also be found in later sanctuaries

particularly the tabernacle or Jerusalem temple. These parallels suggest that the garden itself is understood as a sort of sanctuary” (*Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden Story*, p. 399)

Another excellent article is “Earth’s First Sanctuary: Genesis 1-3 and Parallel Creation Accounts,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 1: 65-89 by Richard Davidson (2015).

The article contains many proofs for Eden being the first sanctuary and its parallel in both the Tabernacle and Temple.

“There is an emerging consensus among biblical scholars that the pre-Fall Garden of Eden (and its surroundings) is to be regarded as the original sanctuary on earth, a copy of the sanctuary/temple in heaven. The biblical evidence for this conclusion has been documented by scores of biblical scholars,<sup>1</sup> but the full range of evidence has not yet been succinctly” (p. 65).

His chart found on page 88 of the article summarises the typology and is included in **Appendix. Earth’s First Sanctuary**.

Also included is a *Bibliography & Suggested Reading* list for further research and an **Appendix. The Temple of Eden** containing an article by Tony Reinke which throws further light on the subject.

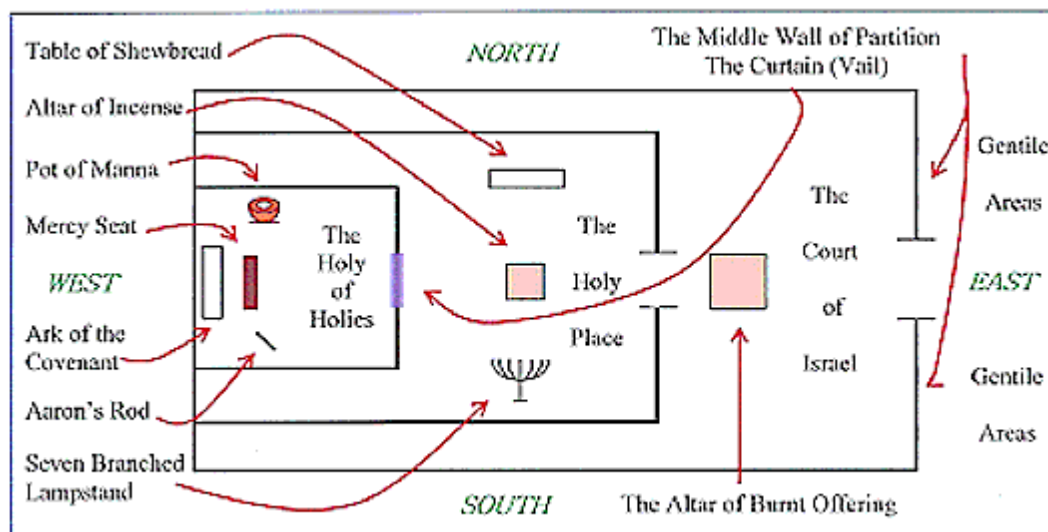
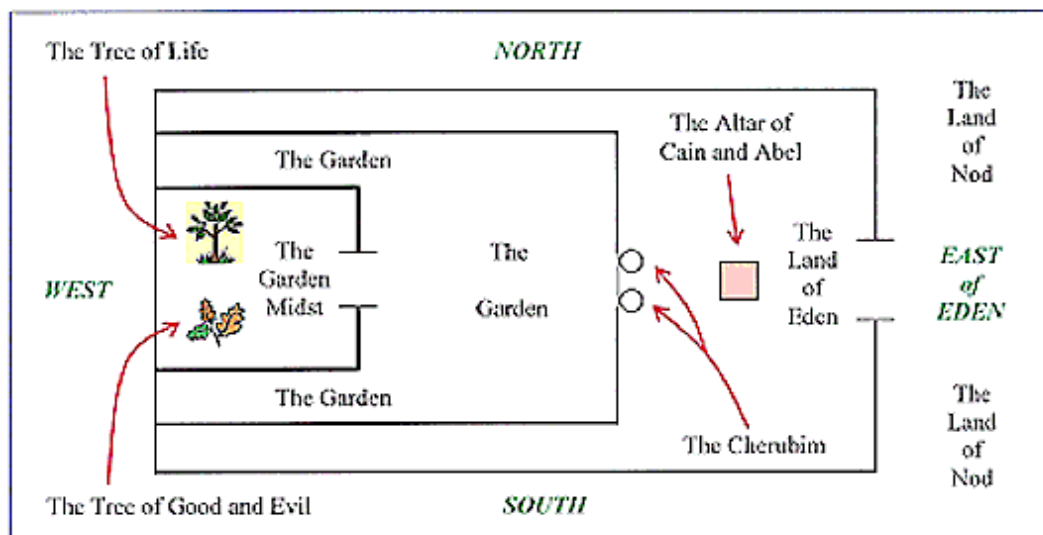
## Typology Chart

Sanctuary Typology	Genesis Reference	Typological fulfillment
<b>Eastern orientation</b>	Garden located in eastern section of Eden (Gen 2:8-10), probably near the boundary. The entrance probably faced east (Gen 3:24)	The entrance to the Tabernacle was to the east (Ex 27:13-16) and will also be in the millennial temple (Ezek 40:6) Eden = Temple; Garden = inner sanctuary
<b>Mountain location</b>	Probably on a mountain or high hill (cp Ezek 28:14-16)	Millennial temple will be on a mountain (Ezek 40:2; 43:12)
<b>Concentric circles of holiness</b>	Eden -> Garden -> Outer area	Holy of Holies -> Holy Place -> Outer court (courtyard). NB: the plural sanctuaries or holy places (cf Lev 21:23; Ezek 7:24; 28:18; Jer 51:51)

Sanctuary Typology	Genesis Reference	Typological fulfillment
<b>River</b>	Water found its source in Eden (Gen 2:10)	Priests used water for purification and to clean the tabernacle (Ex 38:8). Note the streams of water in regard to the temple and the millennial temple (Ps 46:4; 36:8-9. Cp Ezek 47:1-12; Zech 14:8; Joel 3:18) as well as the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-2; 22:1-2)
<b>Tree of Life</b>	Tree of life (Gen 2:9)	Many scholars see the tree to life as finding representation by the golden candlestick inside the sanctuary – note that it had 7 branches each which had almond flower forms that contained blossoms and bud decorations (Ex 25:31-36) and also the Law (Ps 19:8-9; Ex 25:16; Deut 31:26)
<b>Garden</b>	The garden contained trees, plants, flowers (Gen 2)	Both the tabernacle and temple had a sort of garden flavour to them given the wood carvings. The brazen altar was made of acacia (shittim) wood as were the carrying poles (Ex 27:1-8) and wood was used in the temple (IKings 6:18, 29, 32, 35; 7:18-20)
<b>Gold &amp; precious stones</b>	These are referred to in Genesis (Gen 2:12)	In the tabernacle the priest's garments contained precious stones and furniture in the tabernacle was covered in gold (Ex 25:13, 18, 24; 25:7)
<b>Cherubim</b>	These creatures, servants as God, stood as if on guard to the entrance to Eden and demonstrated that access to Him was still possible (Gen 3:24)	Two cherubim covered the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:17-22) and the tabernacle's inner curtains were decorated with cherubim (Ex 26:1). Similarly, the Levites guarded the entrance to the tabernacle (Num 1:53)
<b>Adam's work</b>	His duty was to <i>work</i> and <i>take care</i> of the land (Gen 2:15). The Hebrew words are <i>cabad</i> and <i>shamar</i> respectively. Some even describe Adam as an archetypal Levite. A sort of quasi-priest. "... vocabulary associated with worship in the sanctuary is	You can find these verbs used in Num 3:7-8; 8:26 and 18:5-6 in a way which describes the guarding of the sanctuary and work of the duties of the Levites (Cp Ex 3:12 and Num 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 28:2; IChron 23:32; Ezek 44:14)

<b>Sanctuary Typology</b>	<b>Genesis Reference</b>	<b>Typological fulfillment</b>
	being used in Genesis." ( <i>Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story</i> , p. 402)	"Adam's priestly role of 'guarding' ( <i>samar</i> ) the garden sanctuary may also be reflected in the later role of Israel's priests who were called 'guards' (1 Chr. 9:23) and repeatedly referred to as temple 'gatekeepers' (repeatedly in 1 and 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah: e.g., 1 Chr. 9:17-27) who 'kept [ <i>samar</i> ] at the gates' (Neh. 11:19), 'so that no one should enter who was in any way unclean' (2 Chr. 23:19)" ( <i>The Temple and the Church's Mission</i> , p.69).
<b>Adam &amp; Eve's clothing</b>	They dressed in skins of animals (Gen 3:21)	The hide or skin of animals were given to the priests (Lev 7:8)
<b>Sabbath rest</b>	The resting of God on the Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3)	This seems to correspond to His resting in the tabernacle
<b>Meeting place with God</b>	This was where God walked where He and man met and talked (Gen 3:8)	In the tabernacle, humans 'met' with or communed with God, coming before His presence (Ex 40:34-38; Lev 26:12; Deut 23:14; II Sam 7:6-7; cp Ezek 28:14; Ex 31:12-17)
<b>God as judge</b>	There appears to be a judgment scene in play (Gen 3:11-20): a discovery (v8-10), interrogation and defence (vv11-13), a sentencing (vv14-19)	It would appear from Deut 17:8-13 that priests and a judge formed the supreme court or judiciary and met inside the tabernacle
<b>God's plan for man</b>	Inferences of His Plan (Gen 3:15)	Christ's first and second coming

The above may be found in graphic form in Ernest Martin's article *The Temple Symbolism in Eden*. Two graphics from his article are included below – as you can see, these make it easier to understand the above:



## Bibliography & Suggested Reading

Beale, GK (2004)	<i>The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God</i> (New Studies in Biblical Theology). IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL.
Beckman, P (2017)	<i>The Garden of Eden: An Archetypal Sanctuary</i> . A thesis presented to the Dept of Old Testament Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary. In partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Theology, Dallas, TX (May).
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Moss, VM (2012)	<i>Tabernacle Orientation as a Return to Eden</i> . Durham University, Durham, UK.
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Reinke, T (2009)	<i>The Temple of Eden</i> . Minneapolis, MN (reproduced at <a href="https://tonyreinke.com/2015/11/05/the-temple-of-eden/">https://tonyreinke.com/2015/11/05/the-temple-of-eden/</a> )
Rodriguez, AM (2002)	"Eden and the Israelite Sanctuary," <i>Ministry Magazine</i> , April:11-13, 30.
Wenhem, GJ (1994)	"Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in <i>"I studied inscriptions from before the Flood": Ancient Near Eastern, literary, and linguistic approaches to Genesis 1-11</i> (Hess, RS and Tsumura, DT (eds)). Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, IN.

## Appendix: The Temple of Eden

By Tony Reinke

12 October 2009

In his book *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (IVP/Apollos, 2004), G. K. Beale argues that the Garden of Eden was the “first archetypal temple.” He provides 14 conceptual and linguistic parallels between Eden and future tabernacle/temple structures. My brief summary:

- 1. The Garden as the unique place of God's presence.** Eden was the place where God walked back and forth with man, paralleled this with later references to the Tabernacle (Gen. 3:8 with Lev. 26:12, Deut. 23:14; 2 Sam. 7:6–7).
- 2. The Garden as the place of the first priest.** Adam was placed in the garden to “cultivate and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). Taken alone, “cultivation” has obvious agricultural meaning. But this pair of terms (“cultivate/keep” also translated “serve/guard”) is used elsewhere in the OT to describe the work of the priest (Num. 3:7–8; 8:25–26; 18:5–6; 1 Chr. 23:32; Ezek. 44:14). Thus “the task of Adam in Genesis 2:15 included more than mere spadework in the dirt of a garden. It is apparently that priestly obligations in Israel's later temple included the duty of ‘guarding’ unclean things from entering (cf. Num. 3:6–7, 32, 38; 18:1–7), and this appears to be relevant for Adam, especially in view of the unclean creature lurking on the perimeter of the Garden and who then enters” (p. 69).
- 3. The Garden as the place of the first guarding cherubim.** After sin was introduced into the garden, Adam and Eve are barred from the tree of life by cherubim. This reveals that Adam's work included more than gardening—he was to protect the garden from evil and uncleanness. (Gen. 3:24 with Ex. 25:18–22; 1 Kgs. 6:29–35, 8:6–7; Ezek. 28:14–16, 41:18).
- 4. The Garden as the place of the first arboreal lampstand.** Likely, the Tree of Life provides the model for the lampstand placed directly outside the holy of holies (Ex. 25:31–36).
- 5. The Garden as formative for garden imagery in Israel's temple.** Temple references in the OT possess botanical, garden-like features (1 Kgs. 6:18, 29, 32; 7:20–26, 42, 47; Zech. 1:8–11; Ps. 74:3–7; 52:8; 92:13–15; Lam. 2:6; Isa. 60:13, 21).
- 6. Eden as the first source of water.** Like Eden, the eschatological temples feature a source of water (Gen. 2:10 with Ezek. 47:1–12; Rev. 21:1–2).
- 7. The Garden as the place of precious stones.** Note the correlation between precious stones in Eden and the building materials of the later tabernacle and temple (Gen. 2:12 with 1 Kgs. 6:20–22, Ex. 25:7, 11–39; 28:6–27; 1 Chr. 29:2).
- 8. The Garden as the place of the first mountain.** Eden was situated upon a mountain (Ezek. 28:14, 16) just like Mount Zion (Ex. 15:17) and the eschatological temple (Ezek. 40:2; 43:12; Rev. 21:10).
- 9. The Garden as the first place of wisdom.** “The ark in the holy of holies, which contained the Law (that led to wisdom) echoes the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (that also led to wisdom). Both the touching of the ark and the partaking of the tree's fruit resulted in death” (pp. 73–74).

**10. The Garden as the first place with an eastern facing entrance.** Like the future tabernacle and temples, Eden was entered from the east (Gen. 3:24 with Ezek. 40:6).

**11. The Garden as part of a tripartite sacred structure.** Genesis 2:10 reveals that “a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden.” This reference formally distinguishes Eden from the garden. From this Beale builds the case that Eden and its adjoining garden “formed two distinct regions” (p. 74). He sees here tripartite degrees of holiness, similar to the temple complex, comprised of (a) the region outside the garden (the outer court); (b) the garden representing a sacred place (the holy place); and (c) Eden, where God dwells (the holy of holies).

**12. Ezekiel’s view of the Garden of Eden as the first sanctuary.** In Ezekiel 28:13–18, the prophet draws a number of parallels between Eden and Israel’s tabernacle/temple. Specifically, the prophet references Eden as a sanctuary and pictures Adam dressed as a priest (v. 13). And “Ezekiel 28:18 is probably, therefore, the most explicit place anywhere in canonical literature where the Garden of Eden is called a temple” (pp. 75-76).

**13. The Ancient Near Eastern concept of temples in association with garden-like features.** “Gardens not untypically were part of temple complexes in the Ancient Near East” (p. 76).

**14. Early Judaism’s view of the garden as the first sanctuary.** Beale provides evidence from the non-canonical Jewish literature to further prove that “Judaism in various ways also understood the Garden to be the first sanctuary in line with the above Old Testament evidence” (p. 27).

**Conclusion:** “The cumulative effect of the preceding parallels between the Garden of Genesis 2 and Israel’s tabernacle and temple indicates that Eden was the first archetypal temple, upon which all of Israel’s temples were based” (pp. 79-80).

Read more on these conceptual and linguistic parallels on pages 66–80 of Beale’s *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (IVP/Apollos, 2004).



## Appendix: Earth's First Sanctuary

The chart below is extracted from "Earth's First Sanctuary: Genesis 1-3 and Parallel Creation Accounts," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 1, pp. 65-89 by Richard Davidson (2015). With the exception of some nonsense about Eve being a priestess, most of the article is well worth a read.

Sanctuary	Creation
1. Lavers ( <i>yam</i> )	1. Seas ( <i>yam</i> )
2. Veils, curtains ( <i>badal</i> )	2. Separating Firmament (and other separations, <i>badal</i> )
3. Menorah Lamps ( <i>ma'or</i> )	3. Heavenly Luminaries ( <i>ma'or</i> )
4. Table(s) with Bread (for food)	4. Trees of the Garden (for food)
5. Golden altar's incense cloud ( <i>'anan</i> )	5. Mist wafting on face of ground/ clouds ( <i>'anan</i> )
6. God's Presence (the Ark, containing the almond tree branch that budded) in the midst of the sanctuary precincts quadrangle	6. Tree of Life and God "walking around" in the midst of the Garden
7. The altar of burnt offering	7. The place of sacrifice at the door/ gate of the Garden (after the Fall)
8. Cherubim covering the Ark in the Most Holy Place	8. Cherubim at the Gate of the Garden (after the Fall)
9. Priests "serve" and "guard" ( <i>'abad, shamar</i> ) the sanctuary and are inaugurated by being clothed ( <i>labash</i> ) with tunics ( <i>ketnot</i> )	9. Adam and Eve as priests "serve and guard" ( <i>'abad, shamar</i> ) the Garden before sin and are "clothed" ( <i>labash</i> ) by God with tunics ( <i>ketnot</i> ) after the Fall
10. The "sin offering" ( <i>kbattat</i> ) of the sanctuary services	10. The "sin offering" ( <i>kbatt'at</i> ) available at the door of the Garden (after the Fall)

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