

**A STUDY IN BIBLE INTERPRETATION:
Two Gardens
Passage: John 20:11-18**

QUESTION: What are the different bible study methods you have been taught in the past?
(Example: What to look for in the text, history, application?)

QUESTION: What was the initial application these methods produced?
(Example: How does this apply to my life today?)

The Bible is one story that is unfolded through many different books. These books consist of all different kinds of genres (law, history, wisdom, poetry, narrative, epistles, prophecy, and apocalyptic literature). The different books and genres can seem disconnected and confusing at times. The most important key to biblical studies is that God is the primary author of the Bible. I know that might seem elementary, but it is important when we think about the flow of the Bible.

Humans wrote down what they experienced, saw, or heard from God or angels. These words had purposes and meanings to the current audience, but what was written also played a role in the unfolding story of how God redeemed sinners. We at Grace Reformed believe the Bible is one story of how God fulfilled his promise to redeem underserving sinners from death. This story is unfolded by the various books and genres to explain in perfect detail the good news.

Ephesians 1 is where we draw our understanding of seeing the bible as a historical story about redemption.

Eph. 1:3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

Eph. 1:4 even as he chose us in him [key phrase] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

Eph. 1:5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, [key phrase] according to the purpose of his will,

Eph. 1:6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Eph. 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

Eph. 1:8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

Eph. 1:9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ

Eph. 1:10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

We see from Paul that God determined before creation that he would adopt sinners to be his children. This was not in response to sinners, but "according to his purpose" (1:9).

Passages like Ephesians one are helpful keys to help us unlock the bible's purpose and flow.

We see New Testament preachers use the Old Testament as proof that the message is about Jesus:

Acts 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

Jesus also taught that the Old Testament was the revelation of his coming to save sinners.

Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

APPLICATION: When we look at scripture, we must always back out of the text and answer this one important question: How does this text fit with the purpose of the Bible?

QUESTION: How does a Redemptive-Historic understanding help you now in studying the bible?

QUESTION: How do you think viewing the flow of the bible in this way will help with confusion or complicated text?

Let's apply what we have learned about seeing the bible as the unfolding story of redemption to our text here in John 20:11-18.

1. There were two gardens.

Man's Fall occurred in the Garden of Eden—a place of intimate fellowship with God.

After Adam and Eve disobeyed Him, the Lord cursed the ground and banished them from Paradise.

On Resurrection Sunday, Christ appeared in a garden to remind us that now, because of His redemption, intimate fellowship with God is available again. Jesus reopened the doors to Eden.

2. There were two women.

Sin entered the world when a serpent deceived the first woman, Eve. On Resurrection Sunday, after Christ had defeated Satan through His atoning death, Jesus appeared first to a woman—one who had previously been in bondage to Satan's demons.

Luke 8:2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,

Mary Magdalene is the New Testament counterpart to Eve. Her life reminds us that Jesus offers us total deliverance from the bondage of our past.

The one woman was deceived, the other announced her rescue and deliverance.

3. There were two gardeners.

In the story of the Fall, Eve and her husband, Adam, the tenders of Eden, rebelled against God after she was deceived.

On Easter morning, Mary Magdalene met a man outside the tomb who she thought was a gardener. When she realized it was Jesus she exclaimed, "Rabboni!," and began to embrace Him.

The woman in the second story is with Christ, "the last Adam...the second man" ([1 Corinthians 15:45-47](#)). We now have this promise: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive" ([1 Corinthians 15:22](#)).

4. There were two sets of angels.

After Adam and Eve fell into sin, God posted the cherubim with the flaming sword east of Paradise to keep mankind out (see [Genesis 3:24](#)).

On Easter morning, two angels appeared in the garden, not to banish mankind from God's presence but to invite us to behold the risen Messiah.

QUESTION: What are your thoughts after walking through the text and seeing these connections John made about the story of redemption?

Praise, Prayer and Confession:

- What can you offer to the Father in praise?
- What is a sin you need to confess?
- What is a burden we can carry?
- What can we take to our Father in prayer?