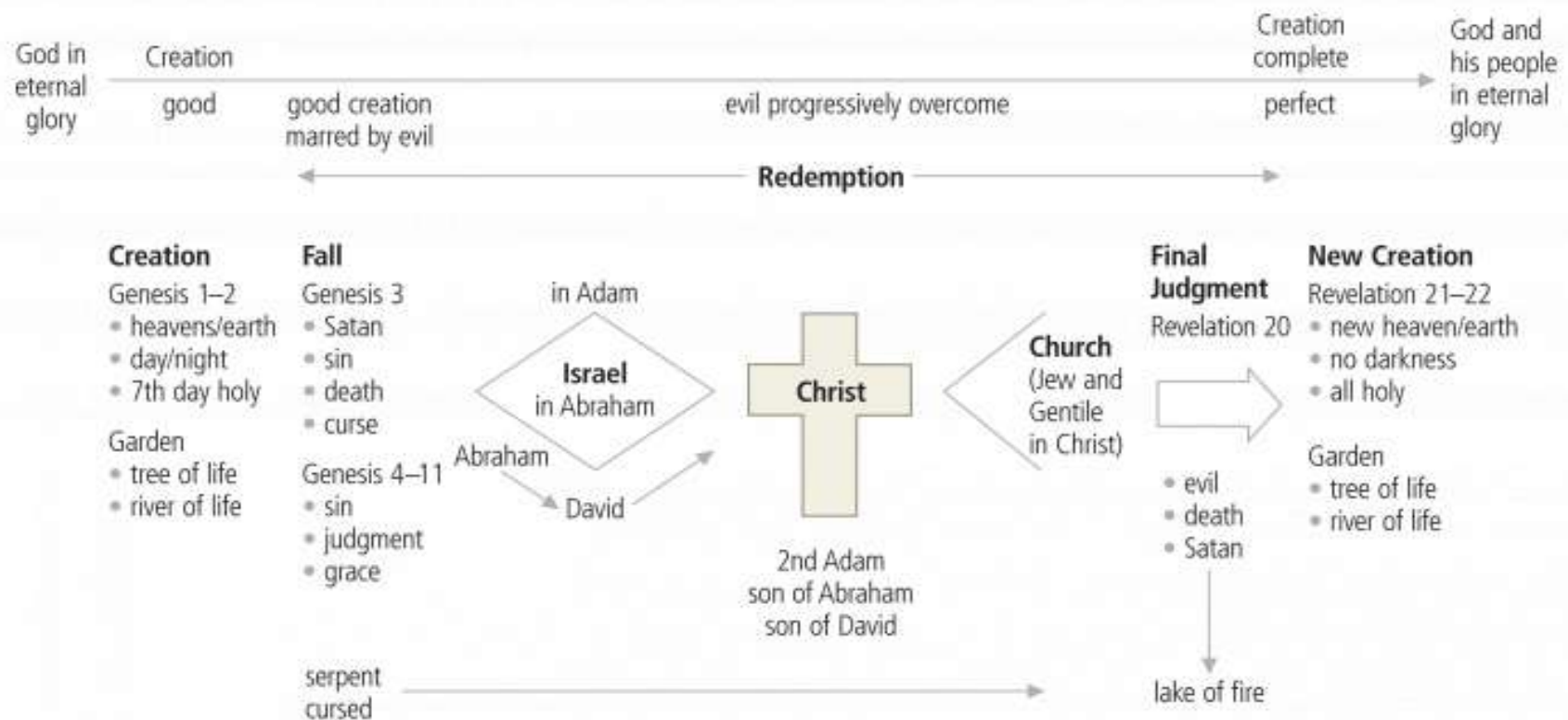


The “Bookends” of Biblical Theology



God’s ultimate purpose in redemptive history is to create a people to dwell in his presence, glorifying him through numerous varied activities and enjoying him forever. The story begins with God in eternal glory, and it ends with God and his people in eternal glory. At the center stands the cross, where God revealed his glory through his Son.

The biblical story of redemption must be understood within the larger story of creation. First Adam, and later Israel, was placed in God’s sanctuary (the garden and the Promised Land, respectively), but both Adam and Israel failed to be a faithful, obedient steward, and both were expelled from the sanctuary God had created for them. But Jesus Christ—the second Adam, the son of Abraham, the son of David—was faithful and obedient to God. Though the world killed him, God raised him to life, which meant that death was defeated. Through his Spirit, God pours into sinners the resurrection life of his Son, creating a new humanity “in Christ.” Those who are “in Christ” move through death into new life and exaltation in God’s sanctuary, there to enjoy his presence forever.

The “bookends” of the biblical theology concept illustrates that in the third-to-last chapter of the Bible (Revelation 20) God removes his enemies—Satan, death, and evil—that entered the story line in the third chapter of the Bible (Genesis 3), thus completing the story of redemption. The last two chapters (Revelation 21–22) don’t simply restore the first two chapters (Genesis 1–2); they go beyond them to a world that is fully ordered and holy, in which God is fully present with his people, completing the story of creation.