

# Paradise Restored

Bill Rudge

Those who have gone on to be with the Lord are delighting endlessly in the glory of the Creator, exploring the incomprehensible splendor of the heavenly realm, meeting the heroes of the faith and being reunited with loved ones who have gone on before.

Just ponder for a few moments what God has prepared for those who love Him. The whole universe will be a magnificent paradise of beautiful sights, amazing sounds, awesome feelings, incredible tastes and indescribable wonders we cannot even begin to imagine at this time with our finite minds. The psalmist said that in God’s presence is fullness of joy and pleasures forever (Psalm 16:11). Jude 24 tells us that in His presence is great joy.

Can you imagine what the New Jerusalem (the capital city of the New Earth) will be like with an endless array of remarkable relationships, extraordinary experiences and astounding adventures to satisfy us for all eternity? You will have forever to enjoy God’s bountiful blessings. Those who have been redeemed by Christ, whose names are written in the Book of Life, will receive everything He has prepared for those who love Him.

As Moses was given a glimpse of the Promised Land before his death (Deuteronomy 34:1-4), God has given us His Spirit as a pledge, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Corinthians 5:5)—immortality and blessing beyond measure in a city whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10).

## A New Heaven and a New Earth

Scientist and personal friend, Dr. T.V. Oommen, sent me the following article he wrote before he went home to be with the Lord:

The crowning act of God is the creation of man in His own Image. God created a beautiful Garden on the earth for Adam and Eve to enjoy. He came to visit them every day. Adam and Eve had fellowship with God, but then things changed. You know

the rest of the story. Adam and Eve abandoned their God and went for the wisdom offered by the Serpent which was the

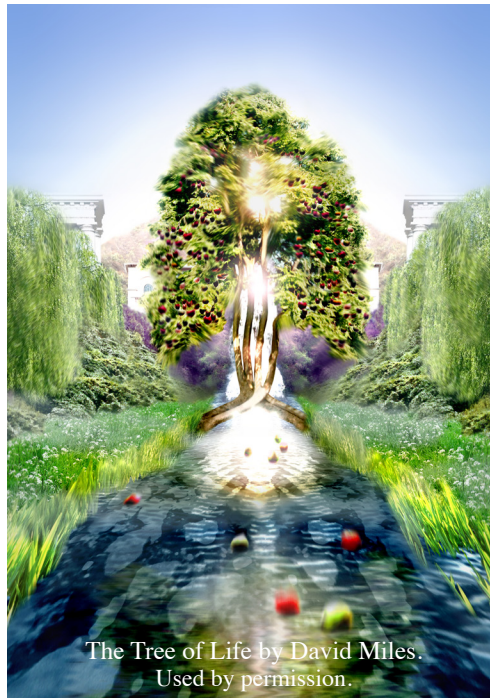
impersonation of Satan. From that moment humankind came under the power of Satan who gained control of the world. God cursed the earth and it gradually filled with violence and other evils. After several hundred years the earth became an intolerable place to live. That is when God stepped in to destroy it with the Great Flood.

Initially, God considered the earth He had created in six days the “Good Earth.” Everything He created was “good” or “very good.” But our present earth is far from the ideal earth He originally created. The Good Earth had ideal climate and topography. This is inferred from the statement that God commanded all the waters to be gathered into one place (Genesis 1:9). Islands are mentioned only after the Flood (Genesis 10:5). Men and animals all lived on one piece of land surrounded by one ocean. When the supercontinent split and moved apart violently (during Noah’s Flood), the crustal plates collided with each other and created mountains such as the Alps and the Himalayas.

The Book of Revelation reveals the ideal world of the future following the Second Coming of Christ and the Millennium—the New Earth in combination with the New Heaven (Revelation 21:1). Let us rejoice in what God has planned for His people. May we all be partakers of His eternal Kingdom!

## Paradise Restored

Imagine living in a beautiful paradise surrounded by the radiant light of God’s glory and enveloped in the warmth of His love. Envisage the ideal environment and climate. Everything you could ever need or want is provided. There will be no pollution, rust, weeds, cancer, pain, suffering, jealousy, anger, bitterness, hatred, violence nor murder. There will be no more terrorism, natural disasters, corrupt governments, lying, immorality nor countless other ills that have plagued humankind for six thousand years of history. Instead of false gods and religions, one LORD and His name the only name.



The Tree of Life by David Miles.  
Used by permission.



In Genesis, fallen man and woman are banished from the Garden of Eden and the tree of life (Genesis 3:22-24); in Revelation, redeemed men and women receive the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-2, 10-27) and are given access to the tree of life (Revelation 22:2). In Genesis, death and suffering enter (Genesis 3:16-19); in Revelation, God wipes every tear from the eyes of His children and removes death, mourning, crying and pain (Revelation 21:4). In Genesis, disobedient Adam and Eve hid from the Lord God (Genesis 3:8); in Revelation, believers live with God (Revelation 21:3) and see His face (Revelation 22:4). We will be in Christ's presence beholding His glory throughout all eternity.

### Re-Materialized and Resurrected

Scripture informs us that the body of every person who ever lived on this planet will one day be raised from the dead to stand before God (Hebrews 9:27). Whether the body deteriorates in the ground, is cremated, consumed by wild animals, lost at sea or experiences any other fate—our physical bodies will be re-materialized and resurrected to stand before God.

As Scripture promises, the bodies of believers in Christ will be transformed into immortal, incorruptible, imperishable, indestructible, glorified bodies to eternally rule and reign with Christ over an Earth returned to its original paradise.

The righteous will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive their eternal rewards, and the unrighteous will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment of God. From its final eternal verdict, there will be no appeal. At this point, their judgment is final; there is no reprieve, no second chance. There will be no opportunity to change one's mind or reverse one's destiny. Anyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life will be eternally separated from God's presence.

The Greek word that is often translated *hell* (abode of the damned in the afterlife) in the New Testament is *Gehenna*. *Gehenna* is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *Ge Hinnom*, meaning "Valley of Hinnom," located southwest of Jerusalem. In this valley, children were burned as sacrifices to the false god Molech and idolatry was practiced. During the reign of righteous King Josiah, the idolatrous sacrifices were stopped (2 Kings 23:10). The Valley of Hinnom became a location where every kind of garbage, even corpses of criminals, was dumped. It was infested with worms and maggots, and a foul-smelling smoke rose from the constantly burning fires. Jesus used the metaphor of *Gehenna* to describe the place of everlasting punishment (Mark 9:47-48), and, just as *Gehenna* was outside the gates of Jerusalem, the final fate of the unrighteous lies outside the gates of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:27; 22:15) where believers will dwell with the Lord.

### Separated from God's Presence

The darkness over the land and Jesus' loud cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:45-46) were the consequences of His temporary separation from God as He was taking on Himself the sins of the world, being abandoned by God. Sin separates us from God, and since Jesus was bearing the sins of the world, He was momentarily forsaken by God. His cry is representative of the awful reality of being separated from God for eternity.

Cynthia Seigart Bryan, a wonderful person I met while speaking at New Hope Baptist Church in Florida, writes in her compelling book, *And the Name Wore Sandals*:

What does it mean to be separated from God's manifested presence? What would it look like to experience the undiluted absence of God? The absence of the Light of the World is a heavy, smothering darkness. The absence of the Living Water and Bread of Life will produce nothing but unquenchable thirst and insatiable hunger of soul, resulting in burning unfulfilled desire. The absence of the God of peace would mean unending restlessness and conflict. The absence of the God who heals would yield eternal torment and the anguish of disease from head to toe. The absence of the Holy God of Righteousness would produce the stench of unfathomable debauchery and evil. The absence of the God of reconciled relationships will bring about stifling solitude—heart-wrenching loneliness....That is why our Lord spared nothing to save those who were lost and spent more time warning about hell than any other subject.

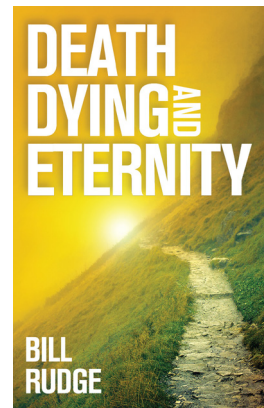
### Is Your Name in the Book?

It has been said: The first two chapters in the Bible (Genesis 1 and 2) and the last two chapters (Revelation 21 and 22) are about perfection. They reveal God's intent for His creation and the restoration, after the Fall, of His creation. Everything between Genesis 2 and Revelation 21 is the story of redemption and reconciliation.

Those people who do not receive the holy and just God's provision of salvation will be given what they chose in this life—to remain eternally separated from their Creator.

If your name is written in the Book of Life, then you will inherit all that God has prepared for those who love and obey Him. If it is not, then you have ignored or rejected Christ's tremendous sacrifice and gracious offer of salvation (1 John 5:11-13). Do you know Him? Is your name in the Book of Life?

The preceding was excerpted from Bill's new book *Death, Dying and Eternity*.



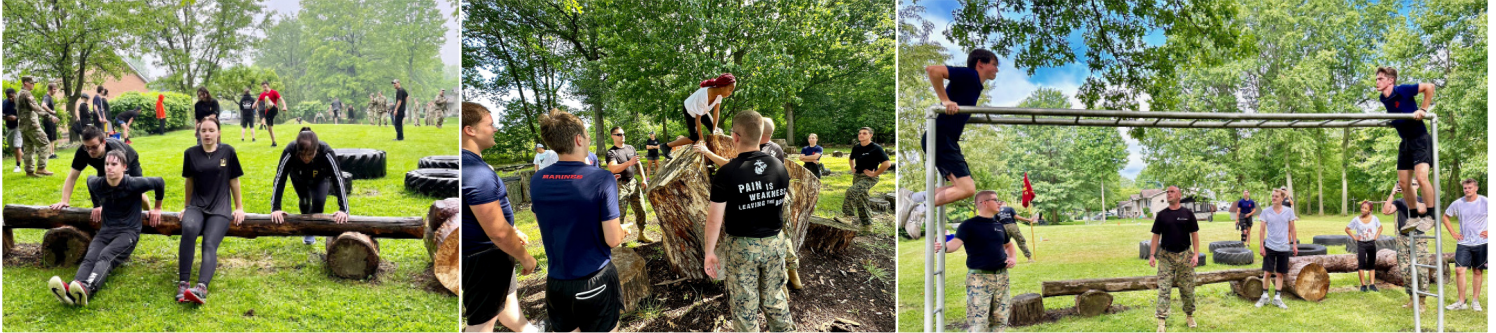








Bill leads Army and Marine recruits and enlisted men and women through the obstacle course at BRM. The recruiting sergeants wanted an intense workout, without injury, since many would soon be leaving for boot camp. Bill's challenge was to send the recruits home hurting, but not hurt. Mission accomplished!



**A Few of the Comments from Last Season**

Future Soldiers and US Army Service Members from all over northwestern PA participated in a team building obstacle course at Bill Rudge Ministries. This was a great event that helped our Future Soldiers get a workout while building bonds with each other. From the tug of war to the obstacle course, our Future Soldiers were given the opportunity to work together as a cohesive team – a good introduction to the teamwork utilized daily in the Army. The event was coordinated with the New Castle Recruiting Company, consisting of stations in Erie, Meadville, Hermitage, New Castle, and Beaver, PA.

**SSG Erika Rogers, U.S. Army Recruiter**

The Poolee's had an amazing time at the obstacle course! Great workout that involved the whole-body concept (mind, body, spirit) which is a major focus point of MCRD training. I can't thank you and your staff enough for the opportunity to go through this course and I look forward to doing it again with our next class of future marines.

**GySgt Daniel T. Pelletier, RSS Cranberry, Station Commander**

It was a fantastic day! Bill is a fantastic leader, and his team was top-notch! eAcademy students spent the afternoon challenging themselves and each other to be better with every task Bill presented. The obstacle course allows for individual challenges, small group competitions, and whole team initiatives. He and his team kept students engaged for over two hours, as they learned how to persevere through struggles. One of their favorite challenges was the box race! They had a blast improving communication, producing leadership skills, promoting teamwork, instilling cooperation, and enhancing trust and encouragement of each other. Thank you so much for spending your afternoon with us! We can't wait to come back! (A card was signed by all the students.)

**Katie Parr, M.Ed., eAcademy Program Director, LindenPointe**

Thank you for letting the team come and for leading such a wonderful ministry! We hadn't done anything like this before, and I wasn't sure what to expect. I think sometimes, in order to learn things, it is helpful to learn them in a different context, and I am so grateful that we were able to do this! Doing something that was challenging and unpredictable was really beneficial for the team: there is something incredibly valuable in physical challenges that are about more than "you." I think it brings out the best in people and helps us to see, in a tangible way, how our actions impact others. The way that Bill brought faith, service, and sacrifice together was beautiful and fit in perfectly with the mission and purpose for the XC programs here. This is an amazing ministry, and is especially impactful for those who are kinesthetic learners.

**Laura Rybka, Head Men's and Women's Cross Country Coach, Grove City College**

I highly recommend bringing your group to Bill Rudge Ministries' obstacle course, whether a sports team, staff, club or another group. Rudge Ministries provides a challenge tailored to you no matter your experience level. It is a great way to get in good physical and mental shape and a way to have a lot of fun with your group. Christians and non-Christians alike can grow here; a very unique facility for the area with a very encouraging staff. I encourage you to give it a try.

**Brett McBride, Summer's Best Two Weeks Work Crew Director / Grove City College Admissions Counselor**