

The background is an abstract, textured composition. It features a mix of colors: deep blues, vibrant teals, and warm oranges. The textures are layered and somewhat chaotic, resembling a close-up of a rock face or a piece of weathered wood. The lighting is dramatic, with some areas being very bright and others in deep shadow, creating a sense of depth and movement.

FIRST CHRONICLES 29:15

# SOJOURNERS

A visual meditation on the story of redemption  
and our spiritual journey with God as strangers  
and exiles on the earth.

ALISSA CLARK & DAVE GUNDLACH





art work by @alissadelark





# SOJOURNERS

FIRST CHRONICLES 29:15

FOR WE ARE STRANGERS BEFORE YOU AND SOJOURNERS,  
AS ALL OUR FATHERS WERE.

OUR DAYS ON THE EARTH ARE LIKE A SHADOW,  
AND THERE IS NO ABIDING.

A visual meditation on the story of redemption  
and our spiritual journey with God as strangers  
and exiles on the earth.

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SO!



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## GALLERY STATEMENT

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Displayed in this room is a series of landscapes based on the narrative arc of the Bible. Each piece is a meditation on a chapter in God's great story of redemption as well as a reflection on the stages of our own spiritual journeys with God - represented by color, form, and movement. You are invited to join in the adventure from the garden to the flood, from the wilderness through the waters of redemption and onward to the culmination of God's great story in God's eternal city — his Kingdom of light.

One theme repeated throughout the Bible is that “God loves the sojourner,” and we, the people of God, are on a journey both historically and personally. As we pass through our temporary home here, we experience the garden in times of fullness and peace, or the flood when we are overwhelmed with the weight of our sin, or the wilderness during times of testing and sanctification, or the baptismal waters when we die to ourselves and allow God's Word to wash and cleanse us. And all the while, our deepest desire is for that “better country.” The journey is hard, and we are required to wait, but God loves the sojourner and has compassion on us.

Another theme depicted in this series is the continuous use of gold found throughout Scripture, from the gold of Eden's land, to the gold used in the Israelite temple, to the gold of the New Jerusalem. Each panel is overlaid with gold which invites us to ponder a question: what was all that gold for? Perhaps it represents God's ongoing presence with us, or the richness of our inheritance, or that He himself is the source of all abundance.

By faith we journey with our great God, and we join those who have sojourned before us.

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THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE THINGS PROMISED, BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AND GREETED THEM FROM AFAR, AND HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND EXILES ON THE EARTH. FOR PEOPLE WHO SPEAK THUS MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THEY ARE SEEKING A HOMELAND. IF THEY HAD BEEN THINKING OF THAT LAND FROM WHICH THEY HAD GONE OUT, THEY WOULD HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN. BUT AS IT IS, THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY, THAT IS, A HEAVENLY ONE. THEREFORE GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, FOR HE HAS PREPARED FOR THEM A CITY.

— HEBREWS 11:13-16

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SO!





# INTRODUCTION

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## ART AND WORSHIP BY DAVE GUNDLACH

Art has always played a central role in the worshiping life of God's people. Whether through architecture, painting, stained glass, sculpture, music, or other mediums, God's people have been inspired to worship through the arts. As you embark on a reflective journey through this exhibit, we invite you to consider the value of the arts in a life of worship.

It's worth noting that the first pages of Scripture portray God himself as the consummate artist who creates out of his unlimited imagination. It's hard to miss the tone of joy and delight in Genesis 1 as God creates and then steps back to celebrate the goodness of his creative work. The whole venture is full of color, diversity, order, and beauty.

In his crowning achievement, God then creates humanity in his own image. And as his image bearers, we are invited to co-create with God, not out-of-nothing as he does, but out of the raw materials of his good earth. We are placed in a world rife with creative potential and resources and sent out to fill the earth and subdue it, partnering with God to bring his truth, beauty, and goodness to the entire earth.

It shouldn't surprise us, then, that we see creative art showing up throughout the Scriptures, especially in the worship of God's people. Whether it's the intricate interior design of the tabernacle, the architecture of the temple, the melodies of the psalms, or the incense of the heavenly throne room, art finds a place within the worship of God's people.

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As you journey through this exhibit, we invite you to consider two specific ways art can inspire and facilitate our worship of God. First, art draws us into beauty, and we've all experienced the power of beauty to stop us in our tracks. Whether we're stepping into an ancient cathedral, pondering an oil on canvass, or hearing a haunting melody, beauty has a unique power to disarm us. It has a way of getting underneath our anxieties and ambitions, confronting us with a grace that is much bigger than ourselves. It can restore and comfort by reminding us that, in the midst of all the brokenness, there is still a deep-down goodness in this world.

Second, and in a similar vein, art draws us into the world of the imagination. Whether color and line, lyric and melody, or form and structure, good art stirs our imagination. And in using the word "imagination," we are not talking about an escape from reality. Just the opposite. All good art actually draws us deeper into reality, helping us see it in a fresh and meaningful light.

As Christians we don't need less imagination, we need more. We need what C.S. Lewis calls a "baptized imagination" that is informed by the deep truths of Scripture and equipped to engage creatively with daily life. And art serves to bring our imagination into worship as we celebrate a God who is, "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." Ephesians 3:20.

So as you journey through this exhibit, we pray you will encounter our great God and his story through art, beauty, and the imagination.







# ARTIST STATEMENT

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## HOW THIS SERIES CAME ABOUT BY ALISSA CLARK

This project ended up being very personal for me when a few years ago, in 2020, I began to ponder what kind of art would be appropriate for this space in our church. I wanted to create a series of works that tell the big-picture-story-arc of the Bible. But I wrestled with how to tell it. I kept asking myself – what kind of imagery would tell this story in a way that is fresh and new?

I needed time to think. So I went away. I left town. I went backpacking in the Sierras for three weeks. I got out of the concrete jungle and I went up into nature. I hiked the John Muir Trail, which in my opinion is one of THE most beautiful backpacking trails in nature. And on that trip I prayed a lot. I walked a lot – 211 miles to be exact – and while I was walking I prayed every day, all day. For three weeks. Not just about art but about everything. I had no reception, no distractions, just my thoughts. Praying and singing hymns and asking God for strength to make it over those high mountain passes. I felt an intense awareness of the Holy Spirit up there and we had some really good conversations – maybe it was the elevation, I don't know. But what I DO know is that He was THERE with me - helping me the whole way until the finale when I made it to the top of Mt Whitney.

And then I came home to my studio still thinking, praying, and asking the Spirit for help. And finally after several months and several painting attempts later it dawned on me how God wanted me to tell this story – from the view point of the sojourner! These needed to be landscapes!

But not traditional landscapes, because I wanted to create something poetic by using color, form and movement but also something that leaves plenty of room for the imagination – to draw us into the adventure. Beginning with a lush garden, moving under a deluge of water, then far out to the dry desert wilderness, trudging back through the deep waters on dry ground, and culminating with our arrival in that high country – the new heaven and earth. The New Jerusalem, in God's eternal kingdom of light. The Biblical

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landscapes are not unlike the undulating backpacking trails of the high Sierras. I couldn't help but see the connection.

The purpose for the paintings is two-fold: they are meant to be a personal reflection on our spiritual state before God, AND a meditation on the story-arc of Scripture. We are all sojourners, in a historical sense and a spiritual sense. We travel through this temporary earthly home, like a backpacker passing through with nothing but a burden on our backs. The journey is difficult, and sometimes we lose our way. But we keep faith by remembering that God is trustworthy, and he is always with us until one day when we reach the top of that highest mountain peak - when all is made new, and we are dwelling with God and sharing in his glory for eternity.

As you ponder the works, there are two notes I want to highlight about the medium and materials. One is the fact that under those paintings are several layers of other paintings that have been attempted and then scraped down. Not just a few layers - a LOT of layers. These scraped-down layers built up a wonderful texture upon which I was able to overlay and burnish gold leaf. The result being a distressed patina and a beautiful surface to begin applying the final colors. I want to mention this because the act of building up and then scraping down reminded me of the sanctification process we all go through as God's children on this journey of ours. If we belong to Him, we are constantly being refined and refurbished.

This brings me to the second note which is the use of gold. Have you ever noticed how gold is used all throughout Scripture? Each panel is overlaid with gold to represent God's continuous and meaningful co-creation with us, his children. He is making us into a new creation, refining and burnishing us into a wonderful rich (and dare I say - aged!) patina. Gold represents the treasure hidden inside each of us, which is the Holy Spirit. That same Spirit who is with us in the peaks and valleys of life, and who was even there with me in the quiet of my studio co-creating along side of me. Gold represents the riches of our inheritance because God himself is the source of all abundance.









# THE GARDEN



The Garden 72" x 36" 2022. Clay, gold leaf, mineral pigments, acrylic, oil, cold wax, and oil pastel on wood panel.

"AND THE LORD GOD PLANTED A GARDEN IN EDEN, IN THE EAST, AND THERE HE PUT THE MAN WHOM HE HAD FORMED. AND OUT OF THE GROUND THE LORD GOD MADE TO SPRING UP EVERY TREE THAT IS PLEASANT TO THE SIGHT AND GOOD FOR FOOD. THE TREE OF LIFE WAS IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN, AND THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. A RIVER FLOWED OUT OF EDEN TO WATER THE GARDEN, AND THERE IT DIVIDED AND BECAME FOUR RIVERS. THE NAME OF THE FIRST IS THE PISHON. IT IS THE ONE THAT FLOWED AROUND THE WHOLE LAND OF HAVILAH, WHERE THERE IS GOLD.

AND THE GOLD OF THAT LAND IS GOOD." — GENESIS 2:8-12

I love the passage in Genesis 2:8-12 where the opening scene describes a place in which everything is pure and raw and filled with new life, energy, materials and creatures. The dawning of the first landscape ever. The image I have in my head is of a place I've never seen but am somehow familiar with. I can feel the cool mist, the warm sun, smell the grass and newly formed molecules floating in the air back-lit by the sun, where I squint my eyes and peer through a bouquet of light and colors like a reflection in a dream. It's romantic. Pure untouched scenery. I feel I've seen remnants of this in the



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meadow mountain passes of the high Sierras – a stark reminder that the DNA of that ancient place still permeates my soul. I have a garden-shaped space in my heart that calls me back to my original homeland, even though I know I will never return. Security. Love. Safety and Newness. Beauty is contagious and was born like a tiny child who sings, “Look! Here I am! Do you see me?”

In my mind the garden is filled with light, photosynthesis glowing through the leaves in a bright yellowish green, where even the tiniest particles dance and sing out their praise in symphonic harmony like a full-on orchestra to their creator. Sunbeams beaming, bees buzzing, earthworms earthing... fruit is brilliant and irresistible.

These are the colors I see when I begin to mix paint for this work. The greens and olives of rich earthiness. Cool and warm. Light and dark. Red vs. green, blue vs. orange, green vs. violet. A poetic spectrum of complimentary hues and values juxtaposed together in form and movement. In the garden, all is light and shadows, mud and water sucking up sweet nectar and swirling into something good for food. The vertical nature of the painted forms are my idea of dancing trees that bounce in the momentum of their growth from out of the fertile ground. You will notice they float in a field of gold, a commentary on the riches God provided for humanity when he created the earth... “Under the river there is a field of gold” (Genesis 2:11-12). Life and abundance are everywhere.

I think about Adam’s beginning; God forming him from a mixture of the wet mist and dust that covered the ground, carefully pulled together like a potter forming clay. A begotten son with newly expanded lungs still stinging with the breath of his maker, they walk hand in hand to Adam’s new garden home where he can run barefoot on the soft grass, sleep under the stars, eat the purest of fruit and bask on a large flat rock in the late afternoon sun after a cool swim in the river. God gives him a companion, Eve, to know her fully in intimate fellowship and who in return fully knows him in the shameless innocence they share together.



The Tree of Life  
16" x 16" 2022. Gold leaf, oil,  
cold wax and oil pastel on canvas.



The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil  
16" x 16" 2022. Gold leaf, oil,  
cold wax and oil pastel on canvas.

But Adam's days aren't all lazy - he has work to do. God brings him into the creative process by asking him to tend the garden, to name the animals and work alongside Eve to dig and build. God is a giver, and he gave Adam and Eve everything they needed - love, safety, shelter, companionship, food, all of the materials to build (such as gold, onyx and bdellium), a fully formed mental faculty and an entire language to name the plants and animals. He gave them the desire to create. He gives that desire to us too.

To the left and right of the large garden painting there are two small paintings that represent the description in Genesis 2:9. We read about two special trees in the middle of this magical place that demand attention. The leaves in the one on the left make Adam live forever (notice the colors used to represent eternal life), and the fruit in the one on the right makes him die (notice the colors again, I tried to make them "pleasing to the eye"). We know the rest of the story from here: human choice is given and then taken for granted. Proudful autonomy wins with a deadly price. A bite is taken. Blood is required, naked bodies are covered by a severe mercy and the view changes. Exile, toil and regret sink in. But a promise is made for something new... and this is where our journey begins.

## FOR REFLECTION

01 As you contemplate "The Garden," what do you imagine enjoying most about that original state of innocence, beauty, and delight?

02 Where have you experienced traces of this Edenic beauty and goodness breaking into your own life lately?











# THE DELUGE



The Deluge 60" x 36" 2022 . Clay, gold leaf, mineral pigments, acrylic, oil, cold wax, and oil pastel on wood panel.

“IN THE SIX HUNDREDTH YEAR OF NOAH’S LIFE, ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE SECOND MONTH – ON THAT DAY ALL THE SPRINGS OF THE GREAT DEEP BURST FORTH, AND THE FLOODGATES OF THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED. AND RAIN FELL ON THE EARTH FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS. ON THAT VERY DAY NOAH AND HIS SONS, SHEM, HAM AND JAPHETH, TOGETHER WITH HIS WIFE AND THE WIVES OF HIS THREE SONS, ENTERED THE ARK. THEY HAD WITH THEM EVERY WILD ANIMAL ACCORDING TO ITS KIND, ALL LIVESTOCK ACCORDING TO THEIR KINDS, EVERY CREATURE THAT MOVES ALONG THE GROUND ACCORDING TO ITS KIND AND EVERY BIRD ACCORDING TO ITS KIND, EVERYTHING WITH WINGS. PAIRS OF ALL CREATURES THAT HAVE THE BREATH OF LIFE IN THEM CAME TO NOAH AND ENTERED THE ARK. THE ANIMALS GOING IN WERE MALE AND FEMALE OF EVERY LIVING THING, AS GOD HAD COMMANDED NOAH. AND THE LORD SHUT HIM IN.” — GENESIS 7:11-16



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God's wrath is a dark subject and, according to the Scriptures, it's the natural consequence of our fallen nature. Mankind's journey has taken a sharp left turn by the time we get to Genesis 7, and the view is bleak. This prideful nature of ours has marched its way down through several generations and spread its twisted tentacles throughout the entire globe. "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart" (Gen 6:5-6). God pronounces a severe judgment on the wicked, corrupt and violent nature of his lawless creation; "For all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth" (Gen 6:12). "Behold I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die" (Gen 6:17). God has declared his righteous judgment over man and is about to wash the canvas clean in a big watery do-over with creation. Lungs will cease to contain the breath He so generously gave to his creatures in the garden, by drowning all flesh "in which is the breath of life". God uses water to execute his judgment on man and creatures with the exception of one man's family. If you've ever been in big surf at the ocean, you've experienced the force water can take, or perhaps you've witnessed the footage taken of a destructive tsunami.

When thinking about this painting, I contemplated the immense force it required to "deluge" all of earth and everything in it... "on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened" (Gen 7:11). I pictured what Noah saw that day - what the movements and colors were in the exact moment when the great deep burst open. A great tremor and then a rush of dark and violent water. Heavy water. The colors I use towards the bottom of this painting are the deepest violets and navy - almost black - and gradually move up in value to a whipped-up foamy white. I imagine the ark churning and rocking as it takes on this



violent event. It must have been so disorienting to have water coming in a rage from all sides. I couldn't help but represent the ark at the bottom of this chaos, like a buoy bobbing its way up from the great deep to ride high above the tallest mountains.

There is no door in my ark because it has been closed from the outside, sealed and nailed shut by God's own hand. "And God shut them in" (Gen 7:16). This saving vessel is RED, the color of blood, of sacrifice. A tangible structure that Noah and God built together and a beautiful symbol of God's mercy, a picture of the one to come – the one who is the only way out from under the future wrath of God – Jesus, who carries us into the NEW as our faithful captain.

**FOR REFLECTION:**

- 01 As you meditate on "The Deluge," what stirs in you as you consider a God who is willing to confront evil so directly?
- 02 What darkness in this world are you currently mindful of that might necessitate such drastic judgment?







# THE WILDERNESS



The Wilderness, Diptych 36" x 48" each. 2022. Clay, gold leaf, mineral pigments, acrylic, oil, cold wax, and oil pastel on wood panel.

"AND THE LORD WENT BEFORE THEM BY DAY IN A PILLAR OF CLOUD TO LEAD THEM ALONG THE WAY, AND BY NIGHT IN A PILLAR OF FIRE TO GIVE THEM LIGHT, THAT THEY MIGHT TRAVEL BY DAY AND BY NIGHT. THE PILLAR OF CLOUD BY DAY AND THE PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT DID NOT DEPART FROM BEFORE THE PEOPLE." — EXODUS 13:21-22

"REMEMBER HOW THE LORD YOUR GOD LED YOU ALL THE WAY IN THE DESERT THESE FORTY YEARS, TO HUMBLE YOU AND TO TEST YOU IN ORDER TO KNOW WHAT WAS IN YOUR HEART, WHETHER OR NOT YOU WOULD KEEP HIS COMMANDS. HE HUMBLING YOU, CAUSING YOU TO HUNGER AND THEN FEEDING YOU WITH MANNA, WHICH NEITHER YOU NOR YOUR FATHERS HAD KNOWN, TO TEACH YOU THAT MAN DOES NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LORD."

— DEUTERONOMY 8:2-3

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I believe the wilderness event is where God finds a special place in his heart for the sojourner – for his wandering people who are fulfilling the promise of a new nation. Over a thousand years from the muddy mess of the flood, this passage takes us to the arid wasteland of the parched desert. The massive sprawl of Hebrew sojourners strewn out over the desert must have been quite the vision as they slowly made their way towards the promised land. Trusting in God’s miraculous leading by a supernatural phenomenon, they were guided by a pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of cloud by day, looming and alien-like, towering over the sojourners for all to see and follow. Those pillars would have to be gigantic in order for the slower moving families in the back to not lose their way. We’re talking about a hiking trail one million people long!

When I was working out the imagery for this diptych, I had the opportunity to visit Monument Valley in Utah, which is a similar desert terrain and climate to that of the Sinai desert. I couldn’t help but compare the scale of the pillars of cloud and fire in a tangible way to the monoliths in Monument Valley. If you’ve ever been there, you know what I’m talking about. Back in my studio, working through the imagery for the cloud and fire pillars, I decided to leave them structural because of how unusual they must have looked in the middle of a flat land. I left them gold because I wanted to represent the purification process of God leading his people into holiness, stripped of the comforts of regular life, and purified and sanctified from the rest of humanity. God supernaturally manifested his glory to his chosen people, and the use of gold seemed like the right fit.

As I worked, the number two became prominent in my mind – a diptych of two paintings to represent this theme, two pillars each (one for night and one for day), two copies of instructions inscribed by God’s own finger on stone tablets. There were two trumpets for mustering their marching orders when it was time to set out and move camp. The number TWO – representing the fact that God still intends to fulfill both sides of the covenant he’s making with Moses – a guarantee to see things through in the same way he promised Abraham and Noah.



The colors in this work are those of any typical desert scape, where the inscription of a new nation was being worked out in the red dry dirt and dust. I also included the color white to represent the manna story. The dewy particles settling down to the ground each morning and providing sustenance for 40 years was an integral part of every sunrise on those plains. As you look toward the top of the right side painting, you might be able to make out the face of a Lion. This happened entirely by accident, but it made me happy because it represents the Lion of Judah – Jesus – the ONE who was, and is, and is to come. The unfailing watcher over his sojourning people, for 40 years and forever.

**FOR REFLECTION:**

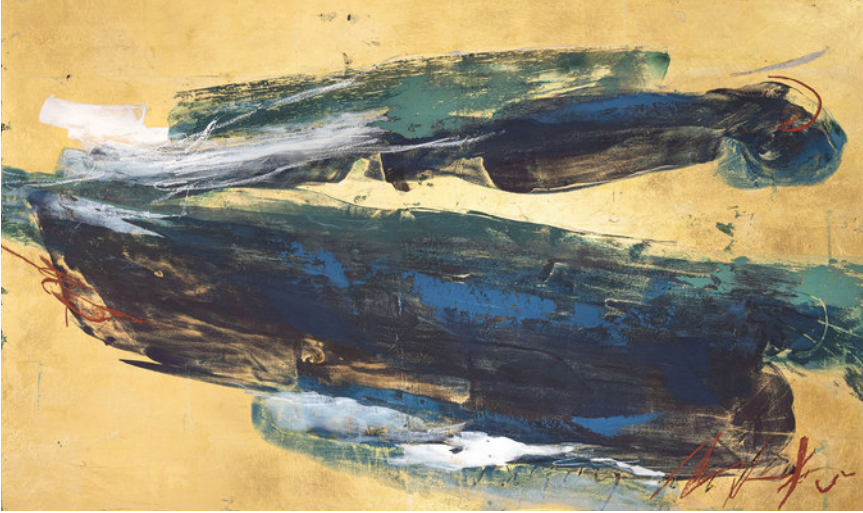
01 As you survey the “The Wilderness,” consider the wilderness seasons of your own life when God led you along an unknown and difficult path. What have been the lessons of your own wilderness seasons?

02 How have those wilderness seasons impacted your relationship with God?





# THE IMMERSION



The Immersion 60" x 36" 2022. Clay, gold leaf, mineral pigments, acrylic, oil, cold wax, and oil pastel on wood panel.

"THEN MOSES STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND OVER THE SEA, AND THE LORD DROVE THE SEA BACK BY A STRONG EAST WIND ALL NIGHT AND MADE THE SEA DRY LAND, AND THE WATERS WERE DIVIDED. AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WENT INTO THE MIDST OF THE SEA ON DRY GROUND, THE WATERS BEING A WALL TO THEM ON THEIR RIGHT HAND AND ON THEIR LEFT." — EXODUS 14:21-22

"FOR I WILL TAKE YOU OUT OF THE NATIONS; I WILL GATHER YOU FROM ALL THE COUNTRIES AND BRING YOU BACK INTO YOUR OWN LAND. I WILL SPRINKLE CLEAN WATER ON YOU, AND YOU WILL BE CLEAN; I WILL CLEANSE YOU FROM ALL YOUR IMPURITIES AND FROM ALL YOUR IDOLS. I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART AND PUT A NEW SPIRIT IN YOU; I WILL REMOVE FROM YOU YOUR HEART OF STONE AND GIVE YOU A HEART OF FLESH." — EZEKIEL 36:24-26

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Not only does God use water for judgment (as mentioned in *The Deluge*), but He also uses it for purification. The theme of being cleansed by water is a clear and evident sign that can be found all through the Scriptures. God used the parting of the Red Sea to judge Pharaoh and his army by drowning them, while he simultaneously cleansed his people as they passed through the sea in an event that marked the beginning of a new way of life. They “passed through” with the waters being like canyon walls to the right and left of their caravan.

For this painting, I imagined a satellite view of the Red Sea in mid-part as the wind drove the water back and dried out the ground for the Israelites to escape. It was a dramatic purification ceremony for being rid of empty pagan worship and being brought into covenant worship with the one true God. This ceremony was repeated again 40 years later at the Jordan when the next generation of Hebrews finally crossed into the promised land after much wandering, with the ark of the covenant standing guard and holding back the waters until every member of their nation made it to the other side. What’s even more interesting is that this action was repeated by Jesus himself hundreds of years later when he was baptized by his cousin, John, in the Jordan. (Not only was his baptism a repeat of the Hebrew experience, but he also journeyed to Egypt as a little boy, and then later as a man spent 40 days in the wilderness to launch the start of his ministry.) And now we, thousands of years later, still practice the symbolic water baptism and immersion ceremony as a way to identify with his life, death and resurrection. It’s all so strange and wild and meaningful to me when I think about how God uses our physical senses to reinforce the truths he’s trying to get through to us. What a gift all of this symbolism is! As I paint, I try to do well by it.

As you look at this painting, one of the first things you may notice is something that looks like the head of a whale. This was an accident at first, but as the painting progressed, I started to make a connection between the symbol of baptism and what Jesus called the sign of Jonah – something he referred to when talking about his death and resurrection. “For just as Jonah





was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Mt 12:40). Not long after I finished this painting, I was on a fishing boat about 15 miles outside of Dana Point, CA when we happened upon a gigantic blue whale. We watched him for a minute while he watched us before he finally submerged. What an experience to look into the eye of this magnificent creature! In retrospect I was glad I decided to leave the whale to under-gird the idea of Jesus’ redemptive sacrifice in combination with our symbolic participation in his death and resurrection. When we ourselves, Jew and Gentile alike, are “brought safely through water” we are free to exist without guilt or condemnation, to experience forgiveness of sins, and enter into that abundant land flowing with milk and honey. This brings us to the concluding view as our sojourning comes to a finale...

#### FOR REFLECTION:

- 01 As you take in “The Immersion,” imagine immersing yourself in this cleansing water of forgiveness and renewal. Where specifically have you experienced God’s cleansing forgiveness in your own life?
- 02 Where do you long for refreshment and renewal in this season of life?





# THE NEW JERUSALEM



Detail of *The New Jerusalem* 36" x 36" 2022. Clay, gold leaf, mineral pigments, acrylic, oil, cold wax, and oil pastel on wood panel.

"THEN I SAW A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH, FOR THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH HAD PASSED AWAY, AND THE SEA WAS NO MORE. AND I SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND. AND I HEARD A LOUD VOICE FROM THE THRONE SAYING, 'BEHOLD, THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD IS WITH MAN. HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM, AND THEY WILL BE HIS PEOPLE, AND GOD HIMSELF WILL BE WITH THEM AS THEIR GOD. HE WILL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES, AND DEATH SHALL BE NO MORE, NEITHER SHALL THERE BE MOURNING, NOR CRYING, NOR PAIN ANYMORE, FOR THE FORMER THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY.' HE WHO WAS SEATED ON THE THRONE SAID, 'BEHOLD, I AM MAKING EVERYTHING NEW!'" — REVELATION 21:1-5



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The Garden, the Deluge, the Wilderness and The Immersion paintings are like mini time-portals within the big chronology of the story-arc of the Bible which are meant to remind us of our collective journey up until this point. In the year A.D. 2023 we are (I believe) on the brink of the promised new age and standing in the doorway of the great Revelation. There is no going back to the garden where all is ideal and innocent. We are encouraged to look forward to something that hasn't been created yet; new creatures with a new beginning. C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* says, "God became man to turn creatures into sons; not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man." Revelation reveals to us that this new kind of man will need a new kind of home. As children of God being transformed into new creations, we wait for our final destination in The Dwelling Place of God: A City that is also a Garden. An echo of the first garden home, but better, with all that is good from the beginning of time.

The apostle John in Revelation 21:10-11 says "He showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper clear as crystal." John's passage describes the city as a cube that is 1380 miles square with a wall around it that is over 200 feet high. I imagine how surreal it must have been for John to stand on a mountain and watch a giant shimmery golden cube floating down from outer space like something out of a sci-fi movie. (My imagination is sparked at every turn. Will we come and go through the gates to visit the far reaches of this new earth? Will we be able to fly to outer space? What new adventures await us in eternity?) But for this art piece, I wanted to capture the very moment when this unusual architecture is suspended mid-atmosphere. Redundancy with the gold leaf was intentional, to try to capture some essence of the description in Revelation, and I minimized the use of colors to white (the color of purity) and a few jewel tones like purple and green and blue (the colors of our royal home).

As I mentioned in the beginning, the use of Gold has been the continuous element throughout this series. It's a reminder that God will make good on



his promises to us and to those who have gone before us. Gold is the deposit God has made in our hearts to bring everything full circle. It represents the final hope and destination of our sojourning where there will be no more tears, death, pain or crying because the former things have passed away. A place where our names will be written down in permanent ink, and where we will live forever under the rule of God with Jesus, glorifying our Creator who makes all things new.

**FOR REFLECTION:**

- 01 As you contemplate “The New Jerusalem,” what specific longings for eternity are stirring within you?
  
- 02 In what ways do you imagine the New Jerusalem to be similar to the original experience of Eden, and in what ways do you imagine it to be different?







SO!

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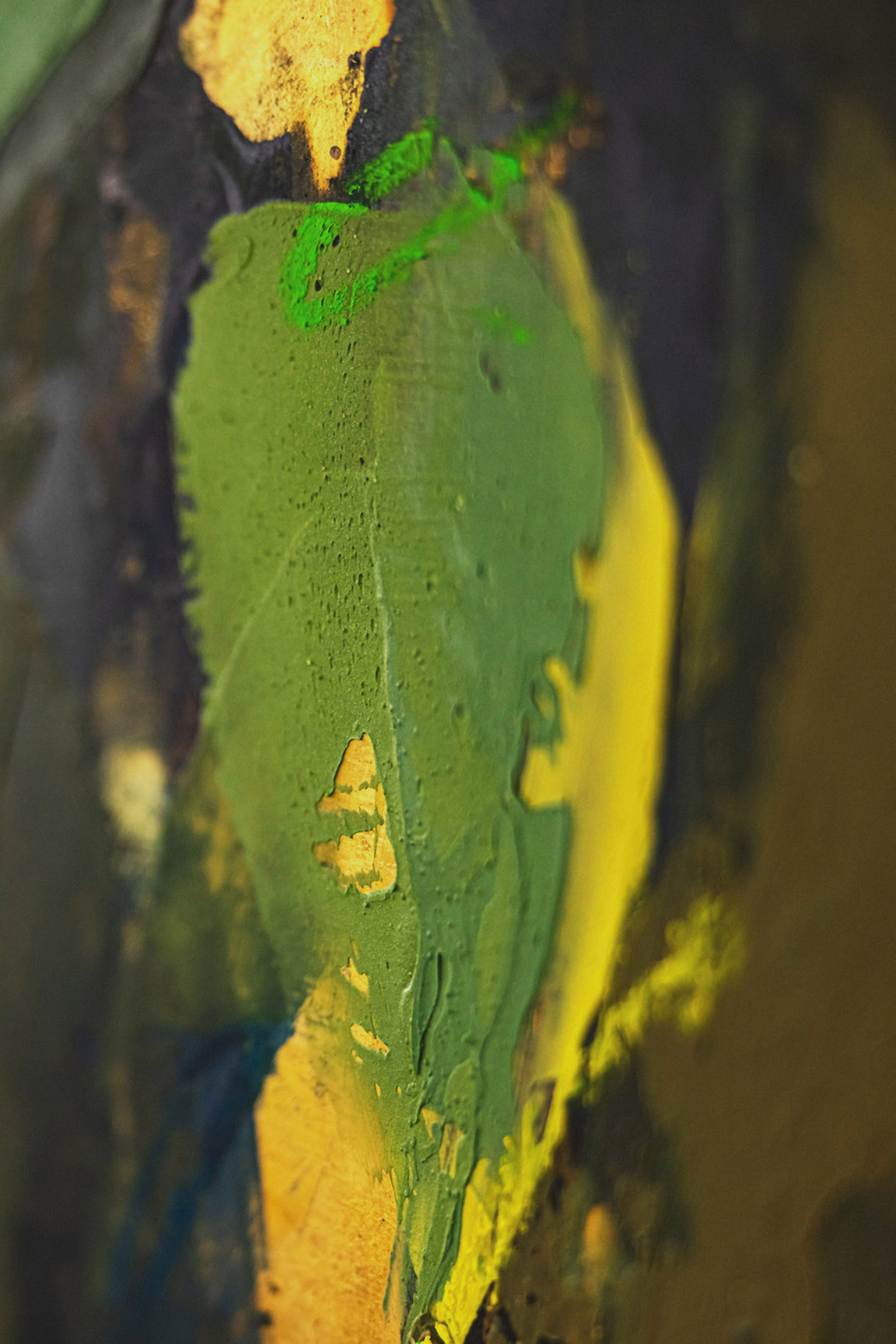
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# CONCLUSION

IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THESE WORKS HAVE ELEVATED YOUR VISION OF GOD'S PURPOSES IN A NEW WAY, THROUGH THE USE OF COLOR, FORM, AND MOVEMENT. WE HOPE THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO INSPIRE YOUR WORSHIP OF HIM "WHOM NO ONE HAS SEEN OR CAN SEE" (1 TIM 6:16). MAY THESE WORKS LEAD YOU TO DIVE DEEPER INTO THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD WHERE HE HAS MADE HIMSELF KNOWN MOST PROFOUNDLY. MAY YOU TAKE UP THE SHIELD OF FAITH AS YOU STEP INTO THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE, TRUSTING THAT GOD'S WORD IS TRUE AND KNOWING THAT OUR HOPE WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME. MAY YOU TRUST IN THE UNSEEN PROMISES OF GOD AND WALK IN HIS TRUTHS ALONG THE PATH OF REDEMPTION. WE LIVE BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT. THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SOJOURNERS.







The art works in this book are currently on display at Grace Fellowship Church in Costa Mesa, CA, and are part of the permanent collection of works owned by the church.

Alissa Clark is a fine artist working and living in Costa Mesa, CA.  
You can learn more by visiting [www.alissadclark.com](http://www.alissadclark.com).

Dave Gundlach is the teaching pastor at Grace Fellowship Church and has been faithfully teaching God's word to this community of believers for over 20 years. [www.gracefellowshipchurch.org](http://www.gracefellowshipchurch.org).



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Alissa D Clark Artist - 2326 Colgate Dr. Costa Mesa 92626.

Thank you!











FIRST CHRONICLES 29:15

FOR WE ARE STRANGERS BEFORE YOU AND SOJOURNERS,  
AS ALL OUR FATHERS WERE.  
OUR DAYS ON THE EARTH ARE LIKE A SHADOW,  
AND THERE IS NO ABIDING.