

Genesis 3

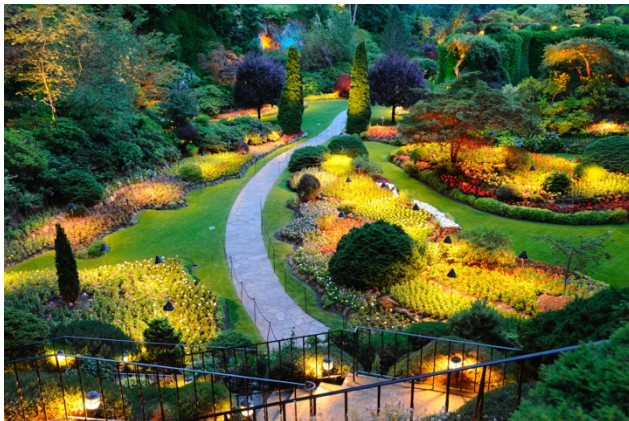
Part 3: Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden

“But **you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**; for in the day that you eat of it, **you will surely die**” (Genesis 2:17).

God warned Adam and Eve that a leader who still remains in God’s family (in the garden), is dangerous and has the power to kill them, spiritually. God was trying to protect them, while at the same time, allowing them their free will. God did say that His garden (his family) was filled with many trees that were pleasing to the eye and good to eat, including another tree in the middle of the garden referred to as the tree of life.

MANY TREES IN GOD’S GARDEN

“Out of the ground the LORD God gave growth to every tree that is pleasing to the eye and good for food. And in the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:9).



TWO POWERFUL LEADERS

God’s imagery is telling. He described his eternal family of sons—spiritual beings from the first creation, who are highly trained and skillful leaders. They were pleasing to the eye because their actions were righteous. In the middle of the garden were two powerful leaders: one is the expert on knowledge that leads to life eternal, the second is an expert in knowledge of the knowledge of good and evil.

The leader of the knowledge of life has full and complete trust in Almighty God and has no need to test Him, while, the leader of the knowledge of good and evil does not trust Almighty God—he believes that there exists outside of the Great God alternative knowledge that is unknown and waiting to be discovered. When Eve looked at the leader of the knowledge of good and

evil, his actions appeared righteous because on the outside his actions were carefully enacted to hide anything that would raise questions. He knows to hide darkness from naive wanderers.

LUCIFER

Lucifer, when created through the power of the Great and Almighty God, was **“the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty”** (Ezekiel 28:12b). His downfall was the pride he acquired because of his beauty. **“Your heart became proud because of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor”** (Ezekiel 28:17a).

Lucifer’s body was a perfect, shining splendor.

The fall of this once highly esteemed being was foreknown to God and instrumental in His flawless design to create mankind out of the lowly dirt of the ground that covers earth. God is forming shatterproof character forged out of suffering to form a humble and repentant mindset that recognizes the selfish acts of wickedness, and turns to bind with their Creator to live righteously trusting fully in Him eternally. Almighty God knows best. There is no need to experiment and test. Simply, listen and obey Him. There is none like Him in all creation.

A SUPREME GOD EXISTS

“Remember what happened long ago, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me. I declare the end from the beginning, and ancient times from what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and all My good pleasure I will accomplish’” (Isaiah 46:9-10).

The Great Creator declares His supremacy over all creation and there exists not a single other being that can be likened to Him in all His glory. He only has the ability to see the future and His purpose cannot be thwarted or challenged.

King David knew the Almighty God. He also knew that angels in heaven who are spiritual sons of God are not on the same level as the Supreme God. **“O Lord, there is none like You among the gods, nor any works like Yours”** (Psalm 86:8).

Into the 21st century, a discussion on who is Supreme is silent. It is hard for mankind today, who have mythicized the Great God and discarded the recorded history or ignored all the work done by Jesus Christ, to believe or even conceive of the existence of one being who exists and is all-powerful. Most of mankind continue to listen and act on the words of the leader of the knowledge of good and evil, who has convinced them that they are the centre of all that exists and through specialized technology given by them, they can achieve anything they want. In their very limited world, carnal mankind believes in their own supremacy.

The angels in heaven were created with the fundamental knowledge to make decisions without sinning. The increase in God’s Holy Spirit provided spiritual growth for the angels.

MANKIND WAS DESIGNED TO GROW INTO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Adam and Eve, upon their creation, were being taught by God; they were learning gradually. They followed God's instructions up until they wandered close to the serpent. He spoke, they listened. Eve acted first and Adam followed her.

The serpent knew what Eve didn't know. She was still an infant in God's word. The Apostle Paul said, "Anyone who lives on milk, **being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.** But solid food is for **the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil**" (Hebrews 5:13-14).

Eve thought she could distinguish good from evil, but the fact that the serpent deceived her was the proof of her immature spiritual mind. She was unable to distinguish good from evil. That is why God warned both Adam and Eve not to listen to the leader who has decorated himself with neon credentials of expertise knowing good and evil. It is Satan's intent to totally destroy mankind. He loathes creation on earth. Their destiny and their God-ordained role as a kingdom of priests—experts in righteousness are his primary mission of destruction.

"If those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short" (Matthew 24:22).

Many sons of God exist in heaven ruling over vast domains. These rulers are very powerful. The Apostle Paul warned about being on guard against the spiritual rulers, powers and principalities in heaven and on earth. They are the only enemies of mankind. Regardless of the high leadership positions Satan awards to people on earth, he will not save them. Satan is king over his domain in heaven called Tyre. Often Biblical scholars think of Tyre on earth, but Almighty God is speaking to Satan and his domain in heaven with the same name.

"Who planned this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants are princes, whose traders are renowned in the earth?" (Isaiah 23:8)

This heavenly ruler has the power to bestow crowns to his merchants who must worship him. They are the famous on earth. Revelation 18:23 links the merchants of Isaiah 23 with the world's great [the most honoured] men. The world's kings and their royal families, prime ministers, presidents, chancellors, and very wealthy entrepreneurs are the honoured, on earth. They are all prophesied to come into God's judgement.

"In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; **they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days**" (Isaiah 24:21-22).

Satan and his beastly coalition will fight to the end. They will not back down; nor will they surrender, but they will not win. The outcome is already known. They will be captured, judged and sentenced to death.

MANKIND MADE MORTAL

Mankind's journey into spiritual maturity is a growing process. Each person will grow at different rates and develop different strengths. Every moment in the dying process is a struggle that searches for relief, it has achievements that release unquenchable energy and within exists a nagging conscience to understand the meaning of life.

Mortality into spirituality is a painfully rich journey when growth brings joy, setbacks bring humility, overcoming brings blessings. When God opens His door into His world, mortal mankind cannot turn away from ecstasy. God's law of love and His ways of peace brings complete rest and happiness to humble, God-fearing and God-loving creation on earth and in heaven.

SATAN'S LAST GREAT BATTLE

Satan lives in his world of chaos and fear. He knows that he lost the battle against God; his remaining hope is in the beastly coalition. In the last years of this evil age, Satan will give this beastly coalition all of his authority, great power and his throne (Revelation 13:2b). Battered and tired, he will crawl to the side-lines and watch, shouting like a desperate coach to this coalition who are fighting to subdue Jesus Christ of whom Almighty God has given all power. The amalgamation of all of their power is their only hope.

Within, the beastly coalition fights among themselves. An unlikely being will rise. Described in Daniel as a "little horn", he will overthrow three kings; the remaining seven submit to his authority. They will put all their resources into taking control over God's legal system and change His law to pardon themselves. "He [the little horn] will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and **try to change the set times and the laws**" (Daniel 7:25).

THE "LITTLE HORN"

God Almighty sets the times for events and determines how long they will last. He, also, has written the laws. The "little horn" will rise with such military strength in heaven to confidently attack God's army. He will overpower some, throw them down to earth and trample on them (Daniel 8:10). Trust in Almighty God will be essential at this time. God is building a legal case against these rebels. He will allow this rebel coalition to succeed but only for the time He has set, which this "little horn" will try to change. "It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host [Jesus Christ]; it took away the daily from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low" (Daniel 8:11).

This rebel heavenly ruler will be allowed, for a time, will stop the daily service of Jesus Christ in heaven and demote his sanctuary. "The host of the saints and daily [sacrifice] was given over to it" (Daniel 8:12).

The word "sacrifice" in Daniel 8:12 is inferred by translators. Animal sacrifices are not performed in heaven. However, daily, Jesus Christ intercedes for the saints before God. For a short time, this "little horn" will be allowed to assume the role of Jesus Christ. This war in heaven will be seen on earth at some level. Mankind will be commanded to pray to this "little

horn” for forgiveness of sin. He is the Antichrist. “Because of rebellion, **the host and the daily were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground**” (Daniel 8:12).

This terrifying battle in Daniel 8 will spillover out of heaven onto earth. A great deception will take place. The saints on earth and the angels in heaven will have to trust God Almighty and believe that He is the Almighty while He builds a complete and solid case against these rebel forces.

Complete trust in Almighty God is what Adam and Eve lacked. The serpent seeded tiny thoughts that appeared harmless, which grew into actions that caused sin. Today, mankind continues to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Some have sold their souls to the devil and cannot be saved, others are bribed and locked into serving Satan because of their pledges, while others seeing a little good, assume the whole is good.

DECEPTION, DECEPTION, DECEPTION

Satan’s deception will run rampant during the Great Tribulation. Application of God’s law and His word bound with an intimate relationship with God through Jesus Christ is mankind’s only saving grace during times when rebel rulers from heaven establish their thrones on earth. These rebel rulers will become completely wicked. Their leadership will darken into total blackness, sweeping people, who rely on the knowledge from leaders specializing in good and evil, into their grips. It is a progressive walk into complete blackness that guarantees spiritual death.

TREE OF LIFE



Jesus Christ is the leader [tree] of life. Through him, mankind is saved. The overcomers who keep the commandments of God and live His way have cleansed their clothes through righteous living. They will be given the right to be with Jesus Christ and learn directly from him for all eternity.

“Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by its gates” (Revelation 22:14).

Jesus Christ is the conduit to God our LORD. Nothing compares to God’s depth of knowledge, His vast array of understanding and His incredible wisdom that brings wonder and amazement to His creation.

“How blessed is the man who finds **wisdom** and the man who **gains understanding**. For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her” (Proverbs 3:13-18).

CHRIST’S UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH CREATION ON EARTH

Jesus Christ holds a unique relationship with mankind on earth. Through the power of Almighty God, he created everything in heaven and on earth. When Adam first saw Eve, he marveled with joy. “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man” (Genesis 2:25). Jesus Christ looks at his church in the same way with eye-catching wonder. She has his rib—a part of him that protects all vital organs—a leadership quality—bone of His bones. Her spiritual life is because he paid the penalty. The church is reborn through him. Jesus now has a suitable helpmeet—a co-ruler—a Queen and siblings that are dear to him.

“Both the one who makes people holy [Jesus Christ] and those who are made holy [the repentant] are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, ‘I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises.’ And again: ‘I will put My trust in Him.’ And once again: ‘Here am I, and the children God has given Me.’ Now since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity, so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying. **For surely it is not the angels He helps, but the descendants of Abraham**” (Hebrews 2:12-16).

All who repent are the descendants of Abraham—the man who put his full trust in Almighty God.

Creation on earth is a special family to Jesus Christ. He lived and suffered for them and with them. He was made perfect through suffering. “For this reason, he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every way, **in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God**” (Hebrews 2:17). Jesus Christ was trained to fill the role of Lord perfectly, expressing mercy and faith. Believers are told to expect suffering because they too, are being trained as **merciful and faithful lords**.

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, **if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory**” (Romans 8:17).

Suffering develops soothing and healing characteristics essential to the priesthood. “Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free, but **Christ is all and is in all**. Therefore, **as the elect of God, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with hearts of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with one another and forgive any complaint you may have against someone else. Forgive as the Lord forgave you**” (Colossians 3:11-13).

CO-RULERS WITH CHRIST OVER ALL CREATION



Mankind is a unique creation—destined to become a kingdom of priests who will rule with Christ over holy nations.

To creation on earth, the Apostle Paul wrote, “It is not to angels that he [Jesus Christ] has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking [God’s kingdom in the making].

The angels will not be ruling over God’s kingdom. Rulership has been awarded to Jesus Christ, king over all kings and Lord over all lords as well as the saints who will co-rule with him.

“But the court will sit, and his [the little horn] power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of **the kingdom under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High**. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey Him.’ **This is the end of the matter**” (Daniel 7:26-28a).

Battles are raging for control over God’s kingdom in the making. Rebel sons of God believe they can take it by force. They were never briefed on the details of creation on earth and their glorious destiny.

King David saw a shadow of this destiny and said, “**What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet**” (Hebrews 2:6-7).

The Apostle Paul knew this scripture was referring to both Jesus Christ and the saints. He explained, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” Paul previously added, “It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking.” Paul clarified his point clearer when he wrote, “Are not **the angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?**” (Hebrews 1:14)

Those destined to inherit salvation are the repentant from creation on earth. This calling is so great and God’s grace is so generous that Satan cannot control his rage against mankind. He is a legalist without kindness, compassion or forgiveness. He throws the book of the law before Almighty God every day shouting the sins of mankind before Him. Satan does not understand that sinners who repent are filled with remorse, shame and disappointment for their mistakes and their heart transforms, bringing them into subjection to God, **willingly and humbly**. They have experienced the pain of chaos. They have matured spiritually and now can distinguish good from evil. An intimate relationship develops where they put their complete trust in their loving Father in heaven of whom they cry out saying, “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). This kind of change is not understood by legalists. **This kind of change is what God, our Father holds dear to Him.**

From the beginning of the creation of mankind, two leaders stood before Adam and Eve. They chose to listen and act on the words of the serpent and they fell into darkness suffering in sin. The leader of life eternal saved them and brought them back into the light. Christ came to earth as one of them, belonging to their family. Those who listen and act on the word of the leader of life eternal, Jesus Christ will rule as priests over a holy nation with him. Creation on earth was made in the image of Almighty God and of His likeness—a gracious loving LORD and KING.

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