

CHAPTER 1

Custodians of Planet Earth



SEATED IN THE GARDEN COURT our minds stir with anticipation. Shadows of night flee before the rising sun while our faithful fire flickers her last flame of life then bows to the sun's warming rays.

In the dawning light we gaze at each other as if meeting for the first time.

A question burns in each mind, "What will this new day bring?" All eyes turn toward This Man who seems larger in the light of dawn. This gentle giant senses our mood and begins to speak, his voice glowing with hope and cheer.

"We have found peace and comfort in this garden court, receiving into our lives the beginnings of universal life. We have met and embraced the Great King and His beloved Son, the foundation of our being. Their Spirit presence has enlightened us with true knowledge leading us onward through universal times reaching into our world.

But now my friends we have come to the cross roads of choice. God the Great King shall never force your will to follow Him. Freedom of choice is His gift of love to you.

I want you to know we are about to leave this tranquil garden and journey through troubled times and difficult places. We shall encounter disturbing circumstances, but equally we shall soar in the grace of the Great King and His beloved Son."

Now This Man rises from his seat and gently announces, "If you choose, please follow me, and discover your path of destiny."

We stir in the garden court and rise to our feet. Yet there are some who seem to hesitate. We must choose quickly for This Man is quickening his pace and we must not lose sight of his guiding hand.

Sadly, some among us choose to part company and return to the world's enticing pleasures.

But we follow This Man and wonder, "Will we ever see our departed friends again?" Soon our sadness slips away as we anticipate the great adventure which lies before us.

We continue to follow This Man, his cloak flowing in the morning breeze. A woodland paradise opens before us, grassy glades meandering here and there. Birds warble their morning songs. Monkeys swing from branch to branch. Deer contentedly graze lush pasture, sleepy bears emerge from their dens and a kingly lion roars across the glades. And can you believe it? Over there among those trees! A herd of giant elephants and another of towering giraffes, nibbling leaves from the very top tree branches.

Venturing on through this wonderland we arrive on the shores of a welcoming lake, swirling mist rises upon her mirrored surface. In this magical moment we pause and give thanks for our Creator's loving touch. Now This Man draws our attention to a sunlit grove. And in this grove stands an intricately carved wooden table laden with succulent fruits, nuts of every kind, and earthen jugs filled to the brim with berry juices or still, clear water.

This Man speaks a pleasant invitation: "Come, eat, revitalise your minds and bodies. Eat and drink deeply of bountiful health."

We move closer to the table and discover each person's name beautifully written on paper scrolls.

Oh yes, someone knew we were coming, and prepared a banquet to honour our choice.

Silently, each person sits and opens the scroll placed before them. The words we read trickle through our hearts with praise and gratitude to the great King and His beloved Son.

Now dining at Their table of sustenance This Man continues the greatest true story ever known to human life.

"From the shores of the lapping lake our minds are transported back in time to Planet Earth's first era of life. And here in Eden's paradise garden we discover the first humans - Adam and Eve made in the image and likeness of God himself"

We behold their wondrous bodies clothed with holy light! Suddenly our own bodies seem small and feeble. Oh yes, there is a vast difference between them and us.

Once again This Man reaches inside his cloak and places his ancient book on the table. With an eloquent turn of his hand, he opens to a page, and delves a little deeper into the earthlings' lives.

"In their beginnings Adam and Eve are perfect in mind body and spirit, living a holy life, modelled after God's most holy character."

And like all created beings before them, from their Creator Adam and Eve received everlasting life.

In today's world the concept of perfect, everlasting life can be difficult to imagine. Yet we know through this inspired book called the Bible, in their humanity Adam and Eve are "*...partakers of the divine nature...*" *2 Peter 1:4*

Like their Creator their deeds are righteous and good, their thoughts pure, their love selfless and noble.

"He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous." 1 John 3:7

"...O God of my righteousness!" Psalm 4:1

And to govern these fine attributes, God graciously gifted Adam and Eve a conscience and a will for free choice.

Now this gift of free choice fulfilled one of God's desires. Yes, God's desire was for humanity to choose to love Him and freely live in His commandments of life. There was to be no enforcement, for true love cannot be forced.

So with wise counselling the Creator explained to Adam and Eve the vital connections between love, His law, and obedience. And the deadly differences of rebellion, evil and death.

*"Hear, my children, the instruction of a father,
And give attention to know understanding;
For I give you good doctrine:
Do not forsake my law." Proverbs 4:1-2*

*"...keep my words,
And treasure my commands within you.
Keep my commands and live,
And my law as the apple of your eye.
Bind them on your fingers;
Write them on the tablet of your heart." Proverbs 7:1-3*

'Listen to Me, you who know righteousness...' Isaiah 51:7

"...all Your commandments are righteousness." Psalm 119:172

*"In the way of righteousness is life,
And in its pathway there is no death." Proverbs 12:28*

*"...do not forget my law,
But let your heart keep my commands;
For length of days and long life
And peace they will add to you."
Proverbs 3:1-2*

'...if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.' Matthew 19:17

'If you love Me, keep My commandments.' John 14:15

*"The wicked man does deceptive work,
But he who sows righteousness
will have a sure reward.
As righteousness leads to life,*

*So he who pursues evil
pursues it to his own death.”
Proverbs 11:18-19*

‘See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil...’ Deuteronomy 30:15

*“He who keeps the commandment
keeps his soul,
But he who is careless of his ways will die.” Proverbs 19:16*

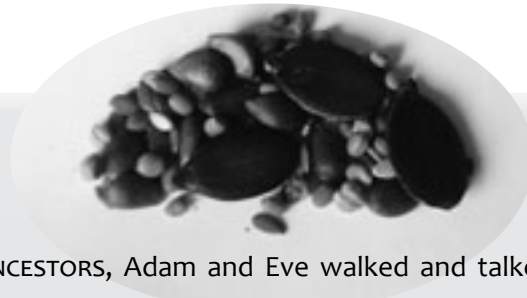
And so embracing the King’s plan for their lives, and with His blessing, Adam and Eve become custodians of Planet Earth.

“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” Genesis 1:28

*“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?
For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honour.
You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet,
All sheep and oxen - even the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air,
And the fish of the sea
That pass through the paths of the seas.
O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!” Psalm 8:3-9*

And in the wider sphere of universal life, Planet Earth is linked to other worlds orbiting in God’s vast creation. Just as the great King has always been open and honest before the universal family, He shall remain open and honest before this new race of created beings, the human race. Even the existence of evil in the universe shall not be hidden from the fledging earthlings.

*“For thus says the Lord,
Who created the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,
Who did not create it in vain,*



OUR VERY FIRST ANCESTORS, Adam and Eve walked and talked with God in their beautiful home in the Garden of Eden. A privilege we can only dream of.

But something happened, and these beautiful spiritual sights were hidden from Adam and Eve for the rest of their lives. They were the only humans to see God on a daily basis and speak with Him face to face.

But just because we cannot see God, does not mean He is not real. We simply cannot see Him. Instead of sight, we have faith in God: We believe He is there. *“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”* ² *Corinthians 5:7*

Through our faith, we communicate with God through prayer – talking with God through His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. And through our faith, we can meditate - thinking about and visualising God, His ways of working, His truth.

But did you know that prayer and meditation change our brains and our immune systems? Dr Andrew Newberg, in the United States, has mapped thousands of brains through a scanning technology called single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT). He is also a pioneer in the emerging science field called “neurotheology”.¹

His work shows that when praying, people who believe in God consistently activate areas of the brain in the same way as if they were having a conversation with another person in the room: Their frontal lobes (just behind the forehead) light up, showing they are attentive and concentrating, and the language centre of the brain lights up too. ² When atheists (those who think there is no God) are asked to meditate or “contemplate God”, their brains fail to activate much at all. ³

Dr Newberg’s research into meditation shows one big difference compared with prayer. During meditation, the brain decreases activity in one specific area, the parietal lobes during mediation. This is the area where a person thinks about “self” and their individuality. ⁴

Another neuroscientist, Richard Davidson also in the USA, says one study showed mediation changes people’s brains in just two weeks. Another similar study showed systematic change in both the brain as well as improving the immune system with

just a few minutes meditation a day for just two months. The subjects developed more antibodies to a flu virus than those who didn't meditate.⁵

Let's allow Dr Newberg to have the last word: "The more you focus on something — whether that's math or auto racing or football or God — the more that becomes your reality, the more it becomes written into the neural connections of your brain."⁶ What do you want to focus on today?

1. "Andrew Newberg Professor and Director of Research Myrna Brind Center of Integrative Medicine | Thomas Jefferson University and Hospital."
2. Puglionesi, "God On The Brain Does Neuroscience Hold the Answers to Life's Biggest Questions?"
3. Barooah, "Study Shows How Prayer, Meditation Affect Brain Activity."
4. Bradley Hagarty, "Prayer May Reshape Your Brain ... And Your Reality."
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

*Who formed it to be inhabited:
I am the Lord, and there is no other.
I have not spoken in secret
In a dark place of the earth ...
I, the Lord, speak righteousness,
I declare things that are right."
Isaiah 45:18-19*

But secretly someone else is thinking very different thoughts, someone not so honest, and someone with a very different purpose in mind than God's purpose of love.

Oh yes, appearing in the shadows of his own darkness, Lucifer the fallen angel now called *the Devil and Satan*, seizes the occasion to exalt himself above God's holy law. *Revelation 12:9*

Now you may remember back in the beginning of universal time Lucifer was the leading angel in heaven serving in God's government.

"...Lucifer, son of the morning!" Isaiah 14:12

But sadly Lucifer began to harbour resentful thoughts toward the great King and Son.

Lucifer wanted to become one with them and enter into their divine council. Of course this could never become reality for God the Father and Son are the divine Creators. Lucifer is merely a created being of lower life. Slowly but surely Lucifer's wild fantasies escalated into open rebellion against God's authority and governing rule.

"For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'"

Isaiah 14:13-14

And so plotting his evil scheme Lucifer conspires with the angelic host, darkening their trust in the great King. Sadly many angels are deceived by Lucifer's lies and join the great rebellion against God. Eventually *war broke out in heaven* and winning the battle the Son of God cast Lucifer and his army of angels out of heaven. *Revelation 12:7-9*

Lucifer becomes the *Devil and Satan* ruling over the fallen angels who mutate into *spirits of demons*. *Revelation 12:9, 16:14*

And so through galactic space and time Satan and his demon forces have waged war against God and the universe.

Now in the realm of Planet Earth, God's new creation, Satan again trumpets his lying accusations before the worlds of the universe. Cloaked with arrogant pride Satan parades himself as if he is a benevolent god.

With oily words of deceit he trumpets aloud: 'God's governing law is far too restrictive. Why, it stops all created beings from experiencing the knowledge of good and evil in which I have evolved to the status of a god. God is unfair, untruthful.'

But the truth remains crystal clear – the great King and Son are fair in all their dealings with created life.

*"The Lord is righteous in all His ways,
Gracious in all His works." Psalm 145:17*

*"For I proclaim the name of the Lord:
Ascribe greatness to our God.
He is the Rock, His work is perfect;
For all His ways are justice,
A God of truth and without injustice;
Righteous and upright is He."
Deuteronomy 32:3-4*

And so being true, fair and just God considers Satan's sinister demand to test the earthling's sincerity.

We know true freedom for life is living within God's commandments, exercised through freedom of choice.

However in God's new world Satan's false theories of freedom must be faced in open contest.

And so in the garden of Eden God will allow a testing time in the conflict between good and evil. Satan shall have limited access to test Adam and Eve's sincerity toward God.

*"Righteous are You, O Lord,
And upright are Your judgements."
Psalm 119:137*

*"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne;
Mercy and truth go before Your face." Psalm 89:14*

And so Adam and Eve's destiny and indeed the future of the human race lie in Adam and Eve's will of free choice.

In Eden's paradise the earthlings are destined to face evil, just as the citizens of the universe were once confronted with evil emerging through Lucifer's rebellion long ago.

Adam and Eve are offered a choice: To remain obedient to God's commandments or step outside of His love boundaries and experience the knowledge of evil. What will they choose?

*'Listen to Me, you who know righteousness,
You people in whose heart is My law...' Isaiah 51:7*

'...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...' Joshua 24:15

Very simply, the test involves two supernatural trees.

"And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Genesis 2:9

Now the tree of life represents all God's goodness, also called 'righteousness.'

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life..." Psalm 119:172

As the tree of life mirrors God's righteousness it also reflects God's commandments.

"For all Your commandments are righteousness." Psalm 119:172

By keeping the commandments Adam and Eve are living the very essence of God's righteousness - His goodness - and this entitles them to eat from the tree of life and live forever.

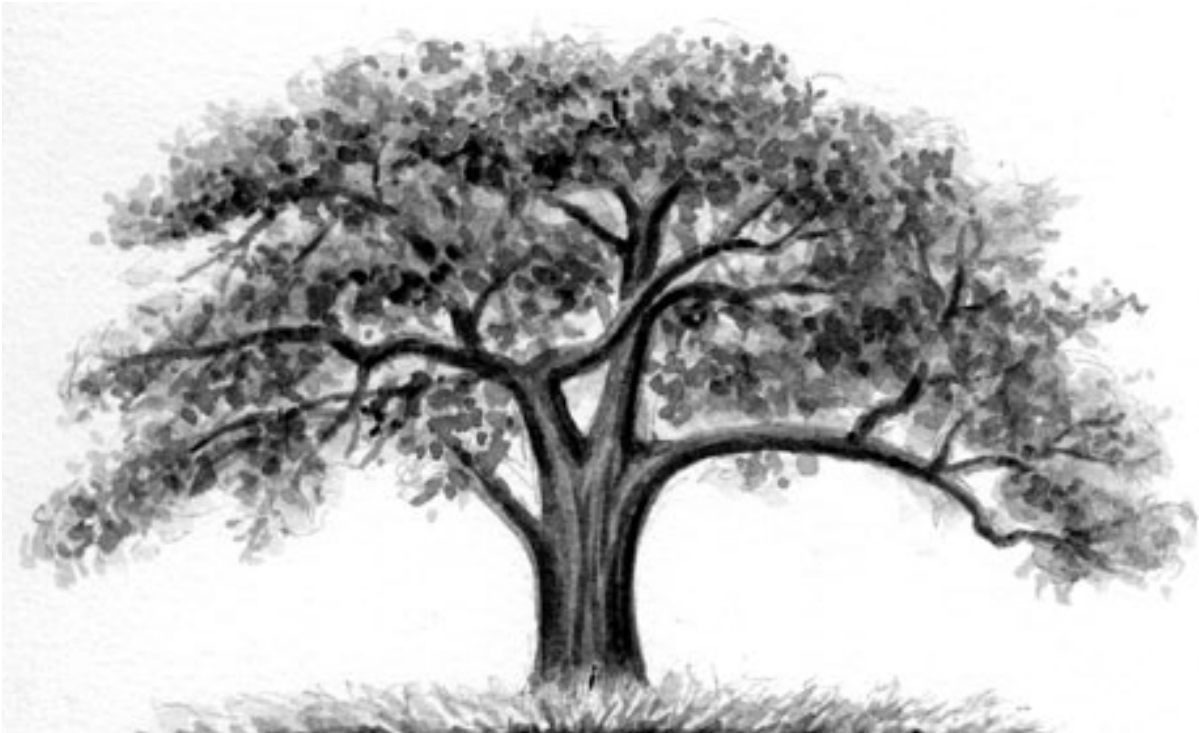
"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life..." Revelation 22:14

And partaking of the tree of life Adam and Eve receive God's knowledge of wisdom into their lives.

*"...the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it."
Ecclesiastes 7:12*

"... the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." James 3:17

"Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days is in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who retain her." Proverbs 3:13 -18



The tree of life grew...

*"...fine branches that shaded the forest, And of high stature;
And its top was among the thick boughs
The waters made it grow; Underground waters gave it height,
With their rivers running around the place where it was planted,
And sent out rivulets to all the trees of the field.
Therefore its height was exalted above all the trees of the field;
Its boughs were multiplied, And its branches became long
because of the abundance of water, As it sent them out.
All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs;
Under its branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young;
And in its shadow all great nations made their home.
Thus it was beautiful in greatness and in the length of its branches,
Because its roots reached to abundant waters.
The cedars in the garden of God could not hide it; The fir trees were not like its boughs,
And the chestnut trees were not like its branches;
No tree in the garden of God was like it in beauty.
I made it beautiful with a multitude of branches, So that all the trees of Eden envied it,
That were in the garden of God.' "
Ezekiel 31:3-9*

Now the other attraction in the beautiful garden is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam and Eve can eat the fruit from this tree and experience a blend of good and evil. But God warns them; evil is the downward spiral to death.

“And the Lord God commanded the man saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” Genesis 2:16-17

“Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.” Jeremiah 21:8

Yes. The decisive issue at hand is life and death. God *the everlasting King* has gifted everlasting life to Adam and Eve, but evil has the power to take life away in death.
Jeremiah 10:10

You see, the natural consequence of rebelling against the commandments of life is death.

“...for sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4 KJV

“...the wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23

‘The soul who sins shall die.’ Ezekiel 18:20

But in the lives of those who are obedient, the commandments nurture and protect life.

*“In the way of righteousness is life, And in its pathway there is no death.”
Proverbs 12:28*

‘...If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.’ Matthew 19:17

“For all Your commandments are righteousness.” Psalm 119:172

*“Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, But righteousness delivers from death.”
Proverbs 10:2*

By God’s overruling decree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the only place on Planet Earth where Satan can infiltrate the new world with sin. Thus standing as a wall of defence, Adam and Eve are Planet Earth’s first guardians, to ward off all temptation to eat the deadly fruit.

Seated in the sheltered grove we ponder the great responsibility facing Adam and Eve and the finality to their lives if they should fall to evil. Answering our concern

This man unveils a rainbow of hope arched over the forbidden tree.

Showing His love for human life, God provides a safety net for the innocent earthlings. For you see, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil not only represents the evil found in Satan but also the good found in God. If the tree grew only the fruit of evil then all partakers would be hopelessly engulfed by ever lasting death. God's good also fruits on the tree to prolong life and give hope of a rescue.

God's goodness is the fruit of His holy Spirit, His Spirit of life.

"God is Spirit..." John 4:24

"...The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Galatians 5:22-23

*"...For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth..."
Ephesians 5:9*

The fruits of evil, also called 'unrighteousness' grow from Satan's fallen spirit.

"...the spirit of error." 1 John 4:6

"All unrighteousness is sin..." 1 John 5:17

"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning." 1 John 3:8

"Now the works of the flesh (evil) are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries and the like..." Galatians 5:19-21

Can you see the fruit growing on *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*? Yes, this supernatural tree bears seeds of good from God and seeds of evil from Satan. Life and death are side by side. *Genesis 2:17*

The looming question is simply this, will the good and evil fruiting upon the testing tree become a lethal concoction of sin and death.

And so, the ultimate question looms over the garden: Will Adam and Eve remain obedient to God's commandments and eat of the tree of life? Or will they become disobedient by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

Remaining obedient to God will prove their love for Him and show loyalty to His law of life.

*“He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?”
Micah 6:8*

*“Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man’s all.” Ecclesiastes 12:13*

*“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments
are not burdensome.” 1 John 5:3*

*“...he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful
hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” James 1:25*

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all
your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: “You
shall love your neighbour as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law
and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:37-40*

No! God’ law is not a lashing whip to make us submit to His kingship. Quite the opposite is true. For God’s law is his spiritual guide of love keeping us safe in all His goodness. While living in partnership with God we play our vital role by choosing responsible behaviours.

As Planet Earth’s first guardians of righteousness, Adam and Eve are placed between the two trees to prove their love for God and their allegiance to His universal law.

And so in Eden’s paradise the test is about to begin.