

CHAPTER 2

Tragic Temptation



NOW IN QUIET CONTEMPLATION THIS MAN PAUSES, while we continue to enjoy a delicious selection of fresh fruit and nuts. Bathed in sunlight, engulfed in our own paradise of nature, we contemplate Eden's beauty and what life must have meant for Adam and Eve. Especially the test they are about to confront.

This Man takes a long drink from his earthen vessel and in an instant his refreshed voice carries us back to the new world again.

"Life in Eden's paradise is bliss. Happy days roll into happy weeks and months. Nothing on earth could be better.

But alas one eventful day, and we are not told exactly when, Eden's tranquility is shattered and a perfect world goes terribly wrong.

Eve wanders deeper into the garden paradise. Often she and Adam walk the nature trails, exploring their garden settlement together. But today Eve is alone. An air of excitement seems to beckon her further and further from her husband's side. Trees tower above her and the undergrowth bristles with new born life.

Garden creatures scamper to and fro, pausing occasionally to wonder at the beautiful two legged creature crossing their path. In their unassuming way they welcome Eve into their environment, inviting her on an adventure she cannot refuse.

Now fully immersed in the pleasure of life, Eve recites the name of each tree she passes and delights in each exotic fruit.

Then suddenly - like a lightning bolt sent from heaven - Eve remembers the tree she must avoid at God's express command! The mysterious tree which grows in the centre of the garden - the tree which God calls *...the knowledge of good and evil... Genesis 2:17*

He has commanded, *'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

Even now over the boughs of this tree lurks an evil presence. Satan the angelic deceiver has descended upon a flying serpent and convinced the creature to give control of its body to him. And thus Satan is cunningly concealed.

...that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan... Revelation 12:9

'You were in Eden, the garden of God...You were the anointed cherub who covers...' Ezekiel 28:13,14

Like a spider spinning a web to catch its prey, Satan prepares His wily web. If the man or woman should come close enough then he has a deadly chance of ensnaring them with His deception.

Innocently, Eve enters the danger zone. The forbidden tree looms before her, bathed in a mysterious shroud. A sudden rustling among the branches catches her attention. She senses a presence and draws near to investigate.

Unwittingly Eve steps upon enchanted ground. For suddenly, from the branches of the tree a dazzling serpent appears and to Eve's amazement begins to speak! Instantly Eve is mesmerized by the serpent's melodious voice.

The beautiful, *flying serpent* is one of Eden's spectacular creatures. Adam and Eve have often seen the serpents flying through the garden paradise. But never before had Eve heard the serpents speak! *Isaiah 14:29*

Has the serpent eaten the fruit from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* and ascended to a higher state of life? This is the overwhelming illusion Satan presents to Eve. But in reality the voice is Satan's, the body of the serpent is merely borrowed. *Genesis 2:17*

Oh Eve! She does not suspect, not for one moment, that the serpent is a puppet in the master deceiver's hand! Satan's opportunity has arrived. And now with oily words of deceit he tempts his victim.

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman 'Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden"?'

And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die."'

Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You shall not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' Genesis 3:1-5

Introducing doubt, Satan, concealed in the serpent's body, strikes at the very heart of God's sincerity. With sinister words he blatantly states that God is a liar. *'You shall not surely die...'* God is withholding something very special from your life. I have eaten from the tree and look how I have evolved into a higher state of life. Now eat the fruit and experience the same ecstasy *'...and you will be like God, knowing good and evil'*. Did you notice how Satan insinuated that God participates in the knowledge of evil?

God knows all about evil but He does not ever commit evil.

Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. James 1:13

*Far be it from God to do wickedness,
And from the Almighty to commit iniquity. Job 34:10*

Now entangled in Satan's evil web, Eve questions, 'Could the serpent be right, could I ascend to a higher plane of life?' Deliberating, Eve thinks of all the precious things in her life - a loving husband and companion, a beautiful paradise home, and most importantly a God who loves her and provides for her life's needs. Satan struck at the only thing she does not have - equality with God. She thinks about Satan's suggestion. 'Knowing what God knows? Living on His level? Surely this would give me the ultimate experience in life!'

Lulled by Satan's deception, Eve faces a temptation she truly believes to be possible, yet the false temptation is laced with the poison of death.

Eve has received life from God and living within His commandments is her delight.

Death is an unknown quantity to her, but God has explained death as the opposite to life. Again His words of love echo in Eve's conscience

'If you live in the commandments of life, then you will retain life. If you step outside of the love boundaries by experiencing the knowledge of evil then you will forfeit life for death. Abide in My love, trust My judgments. I have given Myself to you in love, and I have given you a will of choice to test your love for Me. *If you love Me keep My commandments.*' *John 14:15.* 'Eat from the tree of life and live forever.'"

Now This man continues with words of dire warning.

"My dear friends do not be fooled, by alluring enticements of the mind. For temptation beckons, offering an enticing experience outside of God's commandments. Thoughts of evil are entertained in the mind and this becomes the fatal blow. For the mind says 'yes' and very soon the body follows in the steps of sin.

*Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God';
for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.
But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires
and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin;
and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:13-15*

And so Eve stands upon the precipice of temptation...

...and alas, she desires the fruit which the serpent says will open her eyes. '*And you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*' *Genesis 3:5*

As Eve begins to succumb to unholy desire she breaks the tenth commandment, '*You shall not covet.*' *Exodus 20:17*

Sadly, coveting is but a step away from theft.

Eve sees the tree is good for food, whetting her appetite to try something new and exotic.

Even more tempting, the fruit seems to offer her greater wisdom and higher intelligence. She reaches out and takes the fruit which is not hers.

That one moment, that one action, will change the course of Planet Earth for centuries.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. Genesis 3:6

Eve has just broken God's eighth Commandment: *'You shall not steal.'* Exodus 20:15

...the woman being deceived fell into transgression. 1 Timothy 2:14

As Eve bites into the fruit's succulent flesh, in an irreversible flash she enters sin and through sin, death enters her life. For God said, *'...in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'* Genesis 2:17

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

The tree and its fruit were merely the focus of temptation. The act of taking and eating the fruit was the sin of disobedience which brought death.

Alas, this is not the end but only the beginning. For Eve's sin tragically opens the forbidden door for Satan to enter further into the garden paradise.

No longer contained to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with wicked glee, Satan knows his next victim is the man, Adam. Eve is now the medium to further Satan's evil scheme. Adam must also fall to sin for Satan to gain complete control over Planet Earth.

Satan plans to overthrow humanity, seize the new world and hold its citizens to ransom. Thus fallen earth shall become his strategic outpost to wage war upon the universe. God is the ultimate target.

For you have said in your heart:

I will ascend into heaven,

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... Isaiah 14:13

Now caught in a beguiled stupor, and with the deadly fruit still clutched in her hand, Eve hurries to her husband's side. Smitten by the first fruits of sin, Eve speaks excitedly to Adam explaining her exhilarated feelings. 'There is no death. It is just as the serpent promised. In fact I feel exalted to a higher plane of life.' So Eve holds out the bitten fruit inviting her dearest companion to eat and taste for himself.

By her false report Eve unwittingly breaks the ninth commandment, *'You shall not bear false witness (a false report) against your neighbour.'* Exodus 20:16

And collaborating with Satan's lie, *'You will not surely die.'* Genesis 3:4, Eve dishonours God's Word of truth shattering the third commandment,

WOULD YOU THROW AWAY A PERFECT, AMAZING LIFESTYLE for a single taste of a mysterious and dangerous substance? What if someone was persuading you with smooth words and confident actions?

Most people would think, “Oh no, I wouldn’t be tempted.” And yet newspapers, radio stations, television broadcasts, internet feeds are filled with sad tales of people who made just one poor choice, often with disastrous consequences. Lives are scarred, and sometimes ruined through just one poor choice. People just like you and I.

So much sorrow and misery can be traced back to just one poor choice made by our ancestors, Eve and Adam. How tragic! Still, God the Father and His Son have provided a way back to Them!

But have you ever wondered if your communication channel to God could be clearer and better. As if, somehow, you could just turn a dial and get on a better channel? And have you ever considered that our 21st century diet and lifestyle could detune communication with God? Here are some more thoughts you may wish to ponder:

“Will eating natural foods help my relationship with God?”

“If I choose to reduce or avoid watching television will I hear God better?”

“Would a walk in the park be better for my brain than an hour on the computer?”

“I am foggy and disconnected from God - could chemical cleaners cause that?”

“Will turning off my wireless internet connection help me meditate more clearly.”

“Am I eating and drinking the right things for MY body, even if what is right for me is different to what I believe is the perfect diet.”

Perhaps each choice we make by putting God first, will bring us that crystal clear joy, peace and guidance we seek with Him?

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” 2 Corinthians 10:31

'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.' Exodus 20:7

Even worse, should Adam take the fruit from Eve's hand and eat of its flesh, Eve shall be an accomplice to murder, breaking the sixth commandment, *'You shall not murder.' Exodus 20:13*

'...for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' Genesis 2:17

Now it is Adam's turn to face the storm of temptation. With ease he has deliberately avoided the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But now standing before him is his beautiful wife, his only human companion. She is bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh.

What has been easy to perform in his love for God, is now extremely difficult. Yes, evil has cast its deathly shadow over Adam. For the first time sadness seeps through his lonely soul. But relishing the moment, Satan closes in upon his prey.

He muses to himself. 'Just as I used the serpent to mesmerize Eve, I will use Eve to beguile Adam. If I can break down the man's willpower by tempting him to favour the woman over and above God, then the trap will soon be sprung.' Thus Satan breathes his spirit power over Adam.

Adam contemplates the serious situation before him: Humanity's future weighs heavily upon his responsible shoulders. One tormenting question claws at his mind, 'Shall I trust God and pledge all my allegiance to Him, or shall I join Eve and suffer with her the consequences of disobedience?'

For the second time, humanity's love for God is challenged by temptation. Now it is Adam's choice - supreme love for God - or for his wife Eve.

The commandments ring with warning: *'You shall have no other gods before Me.'* No person or object shall have more importance over and above God - Commandment One, *Exodus 20:3*

'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...' By trampling upon His Name of authority - Commandment Three, *Exodus 20: 7*

'Honour your father...' First and foremost, your heavenly Father - Commandment Five, *Exodus 20:12*

'You shall not murder...' By bringing death upon your life - Commandment Six, *Exodus 20: 13 Surely for your life blood I will demand a reckoning... Genesis 9:5*

'You shall not commit adultery...' Including spiritual *adultery* by participating in Satan's evil against God - Commandment Seven. *Jeremiah 3:6-9 Exodus 20:14*

'You shall not steal...' Or receive stolen goods - Commandment Eight, *Exodus 20:15*

'You shall not covet...' Destructive desires - Commandment Ten, *Exodus 20:17*

...Your commandment is exceedingly broad. Psalm 119: 96

Oh, alas for Adam and future humanity, even you and I today. For the cunningly laid trap is about to spring. The thought that he might be separated from his dear wife and soul mate is more than Adam can bear.

As if seizing a desperate moment in time, Adam quickly casts his lot with his human companion ...*She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Genesis 3:6*

Sadly in that irretrievable moment the seeds of disobedience are sown in Adam's soul, bearing the fruits of death.

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:14-15."

With sickly curiosity we wonder, 'What does this mean for Adam and Eve - will they suddenly die? What does this mean for the human race?'

Suddenly, the dark atmosphere seeping around us lifts. Two parakeets fly over a glade and perch on a twisted bow of an oak tree. The birds chatter with love chirps, their feathers inflamed with bright colours of a rainbow. A teenage girl rises from our table and places a piece of fruit under the oak tree. The parakeets flutter to the ground and peck at the succulent flesh.

This Man smiles with approval then continues to tell the sad story of Adam's and Eve's fallen lives.

"Very soon the conscious knowledge of evil dawns upon Adam's and Eve's minds, ripping away their veil of righteous innocence, their clothing of holy light.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. Genesis 3:7

As they stand naked in sin, Adam's and Eve's minds are flooded with a torrent of fear and shame. Bewildered they try to cover themselves with the fig leaves hoping to hide their guilt from God.

For the Lord searches all hearts and understands the intent of the thoughts. 1 Chronicles 28:9

But alas the commandments of God lie shattered in their fallen lives and the damning effects of evil are soon realised as their relationship with God is severed at its roots. *Your iniquities have separated you from your God... Isaiah 59:2*

The stark reality is crystal clear. Adam and Eve failed God, and the human race, when the trust God placed in them was broken twice over – firstly by Eve and secondly by Adam.

And now God's words of warning resound with their taunting message: '*For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*' Genesis 2:17.

Tragically the first humans have taken the first steps down sinners' highway which ends in eternal death.

Now living in the shadow of death, Adam and Eve will eventually die. *'The soul who sins shall die.'* Ezekiel 18:4

Yet God did not invent death to avenge the law breaker. Death is a natural consequence of choosing evil.

*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*

*He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he
who is careless of his ways will die. Proverbs 19:16
The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23*

And now from Adam's and Eve's transgression, death will pass down to all generations of human life.

*Therefore; just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through
sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. Romans 5:12*

Through Adam's and Eve's disobedience to God and His commandments of love, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has spread its deadly branches over the entire world. And to some degree all humans have partaken of its lethal fruit.

In human lives we see the fruits of good and evil, often swirling together in a strange concoction of love and hate, peace and hostility, unselfishness and selfishness, honesty and dishonesty, purity and corruption, healing and destruction. And sadly, sooner or later all this conflict ends in death.

Alas, Adam's and Eve's sin also seals the destiny for all other life forms on Planet Earth. Reaping the consequences of humanity's sin, eventually vegetation and creature life will also die. In earth's first spiritual battle between good and evil, Satan is victorious across the full spectrum of life.

Having overcome earth's human guardians, Satan and his army of demon spirits march into the new world in full force, claiming the planet as their domain.

And so for more than six thousand years, Satan has reigned as king over evil.

...the prince of this world... John 14:30

...according to the prince of the power of the air... Ephesians 2:2

Look at Planet Earth's history from the beginning to this very day and you will see Satan's evil powers raging: anger; violence; hatred; bloodshed; dishonesties; corruptions; blasphemies against God and much, much more.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:11-12

And beware, do not be deceived, for Satan often impersonates good to further his evil schemes.

...For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11:14

But we can rest assured God never impersonates evil for *...God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:5*

Yes, the reality is clear: Since the fall of Adam and Eve the world in which we live has become a spiritual battlefield between the supernatural forces of light and darkness.

For the war which began in heaven between God and Lucifer (Satan) cascaded into Planet Earth. Thus every human born into this world enters upon the battlefield of good and evil.

Believe it or not, like it or not, all are caught up in the spiritual conflict between evil and good - the warfare of Satan against God.

Satan's plan is to divide and utterly destroy the human race individually or collectively.

...woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time. Revelation 12:12

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' So Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.' Job 1:6-7

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the **spirits**, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 John 4:1*

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons... 1 Timothy 4:1"

With a shiver running up and down our spines, we become acutely aware of the many ways we have been deceived by an evil force. This Man now speaks with clarity and purity into our souls.

“So if you want to make sense of this world in which we live then understand that there are two sides of a coin: On one side there is THIS, the physical side of life which you see, touch, and feel.

Then turning the coin there is THAT, the spiritual side of life which you cannot see with the naked human eye nor touch or feel with the human hand.

Indeed if you could see into the spiritual world, you would behold spiritual beings and bodiless spirits acting out their part in the warfare between good and evil. In the Old Testament writings we see a living example of this very truth.

*And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, ‘Alas, my master! What shall we do?’ So he answered, ‘Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, and said, ‘LORD, I pray, **open his eyes that he may see.**’ Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, **the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.** 2 Kings 6:15-17*

“The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.” Psalm 68:17, KJV

Yes, with the physical veil lifted from his eyes Elisha’s servant sees the spiritual, invisible army of God, a host of heavenly angels all around!

Indeed, we live in the midst of the spiritual and the physical.

True reality of life can only be realised when we behold, with spiritual eyesight, the interplay between the physical and spiritual dimensions in our world.

But the natural (worldly) man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinthians 2:14

Sadly, many choose to disregard the spiritual dimension and thus live a half life in the here and now of the physical world. Living a blend of good and evil they willingly choose to remain blind to the spiritual realm. Imprisoned by their own choice they eventually die within the world they have chosen for themselves.

And yet lasting reality and the true meaning of life is truly discovered when another choice is made – each of us can choose to step beyond this world’s sultry blend of good and evil and live in the spiritual dimensions of God’s pure light of good.

So now we have answers to why this world is in a downward spiral of turmoil and death. Surely any hope of escape can only be found in the goodness of God the great King!

With this comforting thought in mind, we return to the Garden of Eden, where the guilt of sin weighs heavily upon Adam and Eve's conscience."