

# EXECUTED

## TO SUPPRESS HIS MESSAGE



Volume 8  
*The Lesson of Eden*

D. A. Taylor

# **Executed to Suppress His Message**

## ***Volume 8: The Lesson of Eden***

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(comments and suggestions are appreciated)

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Scripture quotations from the New American Standard Bible (NASB), unless otherwise noted.

Textual emphasis by the author.

Hint: If you are reading this book with a web browser, experiment to find the most comfortable browser width.

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## Introduction

Welcome to Volume 8 of Executed to Suppress His Message.

In Volume 1 we saw how money-funded, institutionalized religions suppress the teachings of Jesus Christ, so they can promote their own particular doctrines and beliefs. And now with this volume, we continue to address these suppressed teachings.

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Having Christian parents, I was introduced to the religion of Jesus Christ at an early age. My family regularly attended weekly church services. And later when I was a bit older, my parents enrolled me in church classes for teenagers.

So by the time I was thirteen years of age, my views on Christianity were firmly established. Here is what I believed:

- 1) There exists a righteous, all-powerful God;
- 2) God created an angel called Lucifer whom rebelled and became the evil Satan;
- 3) Disobeying God is called sin;
- 4) God will punish sinners by sending them to eternal punishing in the Devil's empire of Hell; while those who are obedient to God will go on to eternal happiness in heaven.

According to my parent's church, the Garden of Eden was an example of the above principles. God created Adam and Eve, warning them to obey Him. But along came the Devil, who convinced the first two humans to disobey God and sin. So instead of allowing Adam and Eve to go to Heaven, God removed them from the Garden, sending them off to labor for food until they died — after which they suffered for all eternity in Hell.

My teenage mind readily accepted this story as a basic outline for the Christian religion. And according to my church, there was little else I needed to learn or do, other than making sure I attended services every week.

Christianity seemed very simple: I should worship and obey God, overcome sin, and make sure I went to church. And if I followed these rules, I would go on to eternal happiness in heaven. But if I disobeyed,

God would send me to Hell, where I would be punished for all eternity.

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### A Divided Christianity

It now has been over five decades since those early teenage years. And throughout those many years, I attended churches from several Christian denominations. During this period, I heard thousands of sermons explaining what God is doing with humankind. But instead of obtaining more understanding, I learned how Christian churches contradict each other over matters of doctrine.

For example, many churches teach that God is a Trinity, while several denominations deny this doctrine. Then there are denominations that claim the Sabbath is on Saturday, while most others go to church on Sunday. And even though most churches teach the existence of eternal punishing in Hell, some disagree with this premise. And while most churches incorporate a hierarchy of pastors, priests and/or church boards, others follow the leadership of a single preacher.

So as I attended one church after another, I began to observe two characteristics common to all Christian churches:

- 1) Every denomination has its own set of unique Christian doctrines;
  - 2) The doctrines of one Christian denomination always disagree with the doctrines of all other denominations.
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### Why So Many Different Doctrines?

All Christians agree that there is only one Messiah. And it's equally obvious that the Messiah preached only one message, which contains a single consistent set of doctrines. Then four eye-witness apostles recorded the Lord's teachings in their writings, all of which generally agree with each other.

Nevertheless, most churches teach doctrines that contradict what is written in the gospels — with few Christians showing any level of concern.

In John 10:27, Jesus said, “My sheep hear *My* voice ... and they follow *Me*.” But church-going Christians trust that they are hearing God’s truth through their pastor, preacher or priest — even though this cannot possibly be true, because the profound differences between inter-denominational doctrines. And so I wondered: how can there be so many versions of Christian doctrine, when Jesus gave only one set of teachings?

Then finally, after 30 years of my personal spiritual journey, I woke up and realized that I needed to study the Bible on my own. And in doing so, I came to understand how almost all Christian churches teach doctrines that are different from the teachings of Jesus Christ.

*Yet I could have known this from the beginning, if I had paid attention to what happened in the Garden of Eden.*

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## 1 — Revisiting the Garden of Eden

Most Christians are familiar with the Garden of Eden story. Prominently located at the beginning of the Bible, it relates how the first man and woman rejected God's instructions, thereby setting an example for what most of humanity would do for thousands of years into the future.

After reading this story, many people conclude there's little more than the first man and woman demonstrating their carnality and sinful nature, as they refused to follow God's instructions. While others see an ancient tale created to reinforce the idea that God punishes sinners.

But what if the second and third chapters of Genesis contain one of the most important messages God has ever given to Christians? Would you be willing to take a second look at this story?

I hope so, because the story of Eden contains one of the most important messages God has ever given to Christ's Church!

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### Symbolism in the Bible

Many biblical writings use symbols to represent other things. For example, Genesis uses a rainbow as a symbol for God's covenant, while the gospel of John uses a stairway to represent the manner in which angels approach God. Then Exodus, Psalms and Revelation use thunder, lightning, clouds and smoke as symbols of God's majesty. And in the same manner, the Garden of Eden story uses symbolic imagery to represent many things. And we cannot understand God's message in the Eden story, until we determine what these symbols represent.

As an introductory example, Genesis 3:1 describes the Devil as a reptilian serpent. But notice how God describes the appearance of the Devil, as related by the prophet Ezekiel:

Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre (Satan) and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "*You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the*



*gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared. "You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire (Ezekiel 28:12-14).*

In reality, Satan projects a stunningly magnificent appearance of almost “perfect” beauty, which God described with adjectives such as rubies, diamonds and precious stones. *And especially note how this prophecy states that Satan looked like this when he was in the Garden of Eden.*

Therefore, Adam and Eve did not see a reptilian Devil, because Satan looks nothing like a snake. Instead, the Garden of Eden uses the snake as a *symbol* for the Devil. And frankly, what could better symbolize Satan’s character than a hungry, poisonous snake?

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### The Trees of the Garden

The Eden story describes how the Garden had many trees. One produced eternal life. Others were pleasant to the sight and good for food. And finally, there was the deceptive Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Notice how Genesis describes these trees:

*Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9).*

Thousands of years of human experience have proved that agricultural trees do not share knowledge or grant eternal life. So again, Genesis must be using these trees as symbols for something else.

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When Scripture uses symbols, other parts of the Bible may reveal what these symbols mean. And so in Ezekiel 31:8-9, we find a passage that provides additional information about Eden’s trees:

*The cedars in God’s garden could not match it; The cypresses could not compare with its boughs, And the plane (without bark) trees could not match its branches. No tree in God’s garden could*

*compare with it in its beauty.* I made it beautiful with the multitude of its branches, And all the trees of Eden, which were in the garden of God, were jealous of it.

This passage describes the greatness and glory of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. And it does so by stating that Pharaoh's glory was greater than the glory of all the trees in God's Garden (Eden).

But isn't this a rather strange comparison? And how could an agricultural tree compare with the great Egyptian Pharaoh?

Perhaps you noticed how Eden's trees were *jealous* of Pharaoh. But wooden trees do not possess emotions. So Eden's trees must represent intelligent beings whom are capable of possessing emotions. And given that Adam and Eve were the only humans in existence at this point in time, these intelligent beings had to be *spirits*.

We also should note how the Egyptian Pharaohs reigned from approximately 3150 BCE to 30 BCE, a period of time that started more than a thousand years after the Garden of Eden incident. Yet the jealous beings symbolized by Eden's trees were still around during the reign of the Pharaohs. So if these trees represented humans, these people must have survived the great flood of Genesis Chapters 7 and 8, where God killed every human being that was not on the ark, and then lived to be over 1,000 years old!

So again, the evidence points to the trees of Eden being symbols for eternally-living spirit beings; i.e.; angels or demons.

*There's a lot more to the Garden of Eden story than Adam and Eve eating an apple from the wrong tree!*

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## 2 — The Cast of Characters

Genesis 2:8 states the “Lord God” planted the Garden of Eden. And as we saw in Ezekiel 28:13, the garden was God’s property.

But who was the Lord God? Jesus provides the answer in [John 5:37](#) and [John 6:46](#). And according to Jesus, even up until the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, no human being (including Adam and Eve) had ever seen or heard God the Father. Thus the “Lord God” of Genesis had to be the God of the Old Covenant, whom later would be called Jesus, the Christ.

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So the Lord (Jesus) placed Adam in the Garden and showed him all the animals He created. But Adam found none of these animals to be a suitable companion. So the Lord created Eve, Adam’s wife.

Next Genesis introduces the two most prominent trees of the Garden. The first is the Tree of Life. But since no wooden tree can impart eternal life, this tree must represent deity. And since the Lord God (Christ) was walking around the garden and talking to Adam, the Tree of Life must represent God the Father, the ultimate source of eternal life.

The Garden also had another prominent tree, called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And this tree also must represent a spirit being, because later in the story, we find it *speaking* to Eve.

Then there were the garden’s numerous, but less prominent trees. Genesis states these trees were “pleasing to the sight and good for food.” And the Lord told Adam he could “eat freely” from these trees. But since Ezekiel wrote how “all” the trees of Eden were jealous (obviously, we must exclude the tree representing God the Father), these also must represent intelligent spirit beings (angels).

And finally we have the talking serpent, which represents the Devil.

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### 3 — Why a Garden?

So why did God place Adam and Eve in a garden? We can begin to find the answer in Revelation 2:7:

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of *the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God*.

Here the Greek translated into the English “paradise” is pronounced *paradeisos*. And it specifically means a park or garden. But even though Revelation was written many thousands of years after the Garden of Eden incident, the Tree of Life was still in God’s garden.

This word *paradeisos* is used only two other times in the bible. The first occurrence is in Luke 23:43, where Jesus told one of the criminals whom were being crucified that He would soon be in heaven:

Luke 23:43 And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise [Greek: *paradeisos*].”

Then in II Corinthians 12:3-4, the apostle Paul spoke of a man whom was taken up to heaven:

And I know how such a man — whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows — was caught up into Paradise [Greek: *paradeisos*] and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

As you can see from both of these passages, the word *paradeisos* refers to heaven, the spiritual realm in which God dwells. And according to Jesus Christ, there’s another Tree of Life in a spiritual garden that Jesus equates with heaven (see Revelation 2:7 above).

*But since there is only one heaven and one Tree of Life, the Garden of Eden must be a symbol for the spiritual realm in which God dwells.*

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#### Why God Put Adam in the Garden

Genesis 2:15 appears to explain why God put Adam and Eve in His garden:

Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of

## Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

However, according to Bible commentators, the original Hebrew is greatly obscured by English Bible translations. So if we want to understand what this verse is saying, we'll have to dig a little deeper.

The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon relates how the Hebrew translated into the English "put" carries the context of someone being placed in a certain location for the purpose of obtaining rest or repose. A good example of a correct translation is found in Deuteronomy 5:14, where the same Hebrew describes resting on the Sabbath. Therefore, Genesis 2:15 should be more accurately translated, "God caused Adam *to rest and relax* by cultivating and working the Garden."

But this revised translation is still not accurate, because later in the story find how Adam's rejection of God's commands resulted in him having to "cultivate the ground" (Genesis 3:23). And since working the ground was Adam's penalty for disobedience, it's unlikely that he was working the ground before he disobeyed.

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So let's take a closer look at Genesis 2:15, by focusing on the latter part of the sentence that says, "put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it." In Hebrew, the text translated "it" is of feminine gender; whereas the noun translated "garden" is masculine. And according to the rules of Hebrew grammar, this means the word "it" does not refer to the garden. Therefore, the actions of "cultivating and keeping" cannot be associated with maintaining the Garden.

The Bible usually uses the Hebrew translated into the English "cultivate" in association with *servng someone else*. Of the 294 times this word is used in Scripture, it's translated 224 times into English words *serve* or *served*. And when we remember how Adam was not required to work the ground until after he sinned, it becomes clear that God placed Adam in the Garden for a very different reason. And then when we read in the next verse ([Genesis 2:16](#)) how the Lord began to give commands to Adam, it becomes clear that Adam and Eve were placed in the garden *to serve and obey the Lord*.

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## 4 — The Trees of the Garden

Let's move on to another subject by reading the passage that introduces the Garden of Eden's trees:

Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow *every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food*; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9).

So “all” the trees were pleasing to the sight and good for food. And in the original Hebrew language, the phrase “pleasant to the sight” means *to desire, delight in, take pleasure in*. While the Expositor's Bible Commentary tells us the Hebrew should be more accurately translated: “every tree that is beautiful and edible.”

However, there were two special trees: 1) the Tree of Life; and 2) the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And these were set apart from all the other trees, because they were located in the middle of the garden — a prominent place where they could not be ignored.

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### Literal Food — Or Something Else?

Genesis states that all the trees could provide edible food for Adam and Eve. But is the word “edible” to be taken literally? Or are these trees just another set of symbols that represent something else?

We find part of the answer in Matthew 4:1-4:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’”

This passage describes the time when Satan tried to tempt the Lord.

*But it also tells us that God's words are spiritual “food” for His people.*

So with this fact in mind, let's consider the Tree of Life, the fruit of which causes one to live forever (Genesis 3:22). Certainly eating ordinary fruit like apples, peaches and oranges cannot produce eternal life. But now add what Jesus said in John 10:27-28:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Jesus said His teachings lead us to eternal life. So could the Tree of Life represent the words of Christ?

Perhaps.

But look at this:

"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

Therefore, Jesus is not the ultimate source of God's life-giving words, because He only repeated words the Father had given to Him. Thus the *source* of Christ's words of life is God the Father. And since the Lord was personally present in Eden and visiting with Adam and Eve, the Tree of Life more likely represents God the Father (as we have already suggested), the source of all eternal life.

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Now let's consider the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The name informs us that its fruit was "knowledge," rather than apples, pears and oranges. And again, we know this tree represents a spirit being, because as we shall later see, it actually talked with Eve.

Finally, there were the numerous, less prominent trees of the garden. Genesis states how these trees were "pleasing to the sight and good for food (edible)." But since the Book of Ezekiel tells us these trees had emotions, they also must represent intelligent spirit beings. And considering how the Lord told Adam he could "eat freely" from these trees, it seems safe to assume they represented holy angels.

*None of Eden's trees provided edible food for Adam and Eve. Instead, all of the trees appear to be symbols for intelligent spirit beings.*

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## Danger in the Garden

We've already seen how a proper translation of the Hebrew reveals that God placed Adam in the garden for rest and relaxation. Therefore, Adam didn't have to work to till the ground, because the Garden was a place where God provided for all of his needs.

Genesis also reveals how God visited the Garden on a regular basis. So while Adam and Eve were in the Garden, they had fellowship with their Creator.

But even though the first two humans had the "good life," which included fellowship with the Lord and an offer of eternal life through the Tree of Life, there was imminent danger from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil:

The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

And then along came the serpent:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:1-5).

[Revelation 12:9](#) tells us the serpent was Satan the Devil. And the Devil's primary objective was to get Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

But Satan didn't *cause* Adam and Eve to sin. Instead, the Devil planted the seed that God was not truthful — and that Eve could discover what God was hiding by eating from the Tree of Knowledge. But of course, Satan knew this tree contained what was necessary to destroy Adam and Eve's relationship with God.



*The Devil's primary objective was to encourage God's children to listen to lies produced by a false messenger.*

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Now observe how Satan tempted Eve:

“For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5).

Satan suggested that Eve could not truly know the difference between good and evil, unless she learned from the forbidden tree. So obviously, this wasn't a tree that produced apples, pears, and oranges. It was an intelligent being whom shared intellectual knowledge with Eve.

And we can prove that Eve's action of taking the forbidden fruit consisted of accepted false knowledge, by reading what the Lord said on His next visit to the garden:

And He said, “*Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?*” (Genesis 3:11).

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil had *shared knowledge* with Eve.

Finally, let's go back a few verses and see how Eve reacted to this talking tree:

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, *and that the tree was desirable to make one wise*, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate (Genesis 3:6).

*The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is a symbol for a lying spirit who gave false knowledge to Eve.*

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## 5 — Eden and God's Message

Let's summarize what we have learned from the story of Eden:

- The physical Garden of Eden symbolizes a much greater spiritual reality in heaven;
- The serpent represents a magnificent, beautifully-appearing spirit originally named Lucifer, but now called Satan;
- The trees of the Garden represent intelligent spirit beings. One represents God the Father, while the others represent angels and at least one demon;
- One of these spirits told Eve that she and Adam were naked;
- Once Adam and Eve accepted knowledge from sources other than the Lord, they became afraid of the Lord and hid themselves;
- The end result of listening to the forbidden tree was that both Adam and Eve *became separated from God*.

But why did Satan consider it important to separate Adam and Eve from the Lord God?

Jesus gave us the reason:

This is eternal life, *that they may know You*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (John 17:3).

God the Father's power of eternal life — which was symbolized by the Tree of Life — can only come through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Therefore, Satan worked to destroy Adam and Eve's relationship with Christ, by encouraging Eve to listen to a lying spirit, whom convinced Eve the Lord was not their friend, and that He was to be feared, rather than trusted and loved.

*Adam and Eve died, because they accepted and believed spiritual knowledge from sources other than God.*

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### Satan's Ultimate Goal

The most immediate result of Adam and Eve accepting false knowledge from the

forbidden tree was that they no longer trusted the Lord God. So now they needed to find another source of spiritual leadership.

Thus in Genesis 3:8, we find God's children hiding from the Lord *among the trees* of the Garden. And since these trees represent angelic spirit beings, this means Adam and Eve decided to place their trust in these angelic beings, rather than the Lord God.

In the Bible, the English word "angel" is derived from various Hebrew and Greek words that specifically mean "messenger." Thus the primary job of an angel is to carry God's messages to others. And now that Adam and Eve no longer trusted the Lord, they began to seek spiritual leadership from the angels.

*Thus Satan's ultimate goal was to cause Adam and Eve to trust in "messengers" more than they trusted the Lord God.*

But Satan's agenda has not changed — and there's plenty of evidence to prove that this is true. And this is why today, the average Christian has almost absolute trust in their spiritual messengers (pastors, preachers, priests, etc.), while they almost never open their Bibles to learn the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Just as with Adam and Eve, Satan has deceived the entire Christian world into believing the words of a messenger are just as good or even better than the words of Jesus Christ.*

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### Refusing the Lord's Offer of Salvation

After the Lord God created the first two human beings, He placed them in a place of continual rest where He provided for all of their needs. Moreover while Adam and Eve remained in the Garden, they each had free and open access to eternal life. But once they listened to and began to trust spiritual authorities other than the Lord God, they stopped trusting in their Creator. Incredibly, Adam and Eve became *afraid* of the very God whom created and cared for them!

By convincing Adam and Eve to trust the words of a deceiving messenger rather than the words of the Lord, God's enemies were able to overcome them. And without trusting relationship with the Lord, they lost out on His offer of eternal life, then died just as the Lord predicted.

*And all of this happened because Adam and Eve listened to and trusted a messenger, rather than the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Here's how Genesis relates the story:

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know (determine for himself) good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life (Genesis 3:22-24).

The original Hebrew of this passage is most informative. The Hebrew literally states that God placed cherubims and a flaming sword "to guard the 'road' to the Tree of Life."

Thus there's a *road* that leads to eternal life.

Now read this passage from the New Testament:

Jesus saith unto him, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me* (John 14:6).

And here again, the Greek translated into the English "way" means *road*.

*So when Adam and Eve chose to believe a lying spirit whom encouraged them to turn their backs on the Lord, they walked off the "road" that leads to eternal life (Christ).*

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## 6 —The Garden and Christ's Church

The Song of Solomon is an ancient biblical story about a married couple that are very much in love. However, many biblical scholars believe this ancient writing is an allegory (symbolical narrative) about Christ and His Church. These scholars suggest the husband symbolizes Christ, while the wife symbolizes Christ's Bride, the Church.

But here is what is most interesting:

*The Song of Solomon uses a garden to represent the bride.*

So if we accept that God inspired Solomon to write about the Bride of Christ, then his writings suggest Bible uses a "garden" as a symbol for the Church.

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Back in Chapter 3, we saw how Jesus said the Tree of Life was located in a place named by the Greek word *paradeisos*. And we saw how this word can refer to heaven, the place where God dwells.

But once the New Covenant was initiated with Christ's resurrection, Jesus promised that both He and the Father would move their permanent residence into the collective body of Christ's Church. We can read about this in John 14:23, where Jesus explained what it means to be "one with God:"

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

And here the Greek translated into the English "abode" means *residence*.

Thus according to Jesus Christ, both He and God the Father now make their permanent home *inside the members* of Christ's New Testament Church.

So if you are a genuine Christian, then God the Father and Jesus Christ dwell inside you.

*And if the spirits of God the Father and Jesus Christ dwell inside of you, then why do you need a "messenger" to help you understand the gospel?*

As Christians, we need to understand what the apostle John wrote in I John 2:27:

As for you, the anointing (the Holy Spirit) which you received from

Him abides in you, *and you have no need for anyone to teach you*; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

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### The Church and God's Garden

Once we understand how the Father and Jesus Christ have made their home within the members of the Church, we can use that understanding to equate the church with the Garden of Eden, since Genesis uses the garden as a symbol for the place where God dwells.

And this opens the door to some astounding parallels between the Garden of Eden and Christ's Church:

#### Parallel 1

After God created (begot) Adam, He placed him in the Lord's garden.

After Christians are born again (begotten), the Lord Christ places them in His Church.

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#### Parallel 2

Adam and Eve had regular fellowship with the Lord God (Christ).

Since Christ literally dwells inside of every Christian, the Lord has regular fellowship with each member of His Church.

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#### Parallel 3

Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden to serve and obey the Lord God (Christ).

Christians have been called to serve and obey Christ.

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#### Parallel 4

Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden for rest and relaxation.

Those who are called into Christ's Church enter their rest: "For we who have believed enter that rest ..." (Hebrews 4:3).

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Parallel 5

In the Garden, God provided for all of Adam and Eve's needs.

Christ promised that God the Father will do the same for those in His church: "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:29-30).

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Parallel 6

God warned Adam to ignore the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and listen only to Him.

Christ says this about those in His church: "My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me."

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Parallel 7

The Lord God commanded Adam: "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely." Thus Adam and Eve had free access to eternal life via the Tree of Life.

Christ promises His Church free access to the Tree of Life: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7).

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Parallel 8

Satan entered the Garden and cast doubt on God's goodness and truthfulness, then introduced Eve to another spiritual "messenger."

Satan does the same to Christ's Church: "These are the ones who are beside the road where the (Christ's) word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them" (Mark 4:15).

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Parallel 9

The Garden contained the Tree of Knowledge (a lying demon) whom taught Adam and Eve that eternal life is a matter of knowing good and evil; i.e., religion is a matter of knowledge.

The members of Christ's Church are bombarded by Christian preachers whom claim that Christians are saved by learning matters of knowledge (doctrine). Yet Jesus said in John 17:3, "This is eternal life, *that they may know You*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

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Parallel 11

Because Adam and Eve believed the lies of a self-appointed spiritual messenger (symbolized by the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil), the first two humans developed a false view of God that eventually destroyed their relationship with Christ. And without a personal relationship with Christ, Adam and Eve were blocked from the way (road) to eternal life.

Christians who choose to follow self-appointed preachers rather than Jesus Christ, will lose out on eternal life: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; *but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*" (John 3:36).

The comparison between the Garden of Eden and Christ's Church is amazing: in every area, the events that transpired in Eden exactly parallel what happens to Christians within the Church.

So are these parallels merely coincidence? Or does Eden have a powerful message for Christ's Church? And if Eden does represent the Church, then perhaps this is Eden's most important message:



*The first created man and woman lost access to eternal life because they chose to obtain their spiritual information from sources other than Jesus Christ.*

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## 7 — The Results of Ignoring God

Within the first few pages of the Bible, we find an ancient story that warns of an extraordinary danger to God’s people: *self-appointed “messengers” who claim to have spiritual truth*. And we don’t have to go beyond the next book of the Bible to find another warning about self-appointed spiritual messengers.

Around twenty-five hundred years after Adam and Eve died, God appointed Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. But just as the Israelites were about to enter their promised land, Moses did something quite unusual:

*It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening.*

But God never asked Moses to judge the Israelite people. Here is the biblical passage where God called Moses and assigned his duties. So read through this passage and see if you can find anything about Moses “judging” God’s people:

*“So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.” Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. “Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:8-10).*

God never told Moses to judge the Israelites. Instead, Moses was told to lead the people out of Egypt. Then later in verse 16, the Lord told Moses to gather the elders of the people together and inform them of what God was planning to do. And this is important information, because it shows how the elders (the heads of the families, households, and tribes) were the rulers over Israel — not Moses.

*Moses appointed himself* to be Israel’s judge.

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### Help From the World

Then along comes Moses’ father-in-law Jethro, who wants to give Moses some advice. Exodus 18:1 describes this man as “the priest of Midian.”

Some biblical commentators think Jethro was a priest of the true God, like Melchizedek. But most biblical commentators believe he was a pagan priest.

I tend to agree with the latter opinion, for two reasons. First, Jethro is a central figure in the rites and pilgrimages of the pagan Druze religion. Then there's the issue of Jethro's name. Strong's Bible Dictionary relates how his name means "His Excellency." While the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon states that "Jethro" means "His Abundance." And it's hard to believe that such personal titles would be associated with a man who was close to the God of Israel.

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Now let's look at what Jethro told Moses:

It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?" Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God." When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor *and make known the statutes of God and His laws*" (Exodus 18:13-16).

If you're familiar with the Book of Exodus, you probably noticed a rather large "red flag" with what Moses was doing. Because when Moses said this, *God had not yet revealed His statutes and laws to anyone!*

Thus it appears that Moses made up his own statutes and laws for God, out of his own mind. And of course, this was something that went *far* beyond any authority God had given to him.

And with that thought in mind, let's continue with what the pagan Jethro counseled Moses:

"And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you

cannot do it alone.

Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. **You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do.**

Furthermore, **you** shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to **you**, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge (Exodus 18:17-22).

Certainly, this advise must have put Moses' ego to the test, especially when Jethro told Moses, "You be the people's representative before God."

Jethro encouraged Moses to "step up to the plate" and take charge of Israel's civil and spiritual leadership. Then he told Moses to appoint leader/judges that would rule over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens of several million people — which amounted to establishing a national government over the Israelite nation.

And then we read in Exodus 18:24, how Moses did precisely what Jethro said:

So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

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### God Was Not Pleased With Moses

Exodus Chapter 19 describes how the Israelites finally arrived at Mount Sinai and set up camp. Then Moses went up to the mountain and spoke to the Lord. Then the Lord told Moses to gather the people together on the third day, so He could speak with them.

Let's focus on the very first words the Lord spoke to Moses and the Israelites:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me

(Exodus 20:2-3).

This verse contains a great deal of information that is not reproduced in most Bible translations. The Hebrew translated into the English “gods” is pronounced ‘*elôhîym*. But this word does not only refer to deity, but also to anyone whom is in authority. And if you take a biblical concordance and look up the passages where this word is used, you will find that it refers to human rulers, human judges, and even angels.

Therefore, the more accurate translation is: *You shall have no other authorities before Me.*

But there’s yet another part of this passage that is not reproduced in most Bibles. This comes from the Hebrew word *pâniym*, which is translated “Me.” Contrary to the English translation shown above, the Hebrew is not a personal pronoun. Instead, it’s a common noun that specifically means “the face.” And this is why Bible commentator Albert Barnes observed how the original Hebrew literally means “before my face.”

Here is the more accurate translation of Exodus 20:3:

*“You (Israel) shall have no other authorities *in front of my face.*”*

Or said another way, “You (Israel) shall have no other authorities *between you and me*” — including Moses.

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The very first words out of God’s mouth rebuked the nation of Israel for placing anyone in authority between themselves and Him. God never gave Moses the authority to set up a human government over His people.

And why did Moses do this?

*Because he followed the counsel of a self-appointed, lying spiritual messenger.*

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## 8 — Conclusion

### The Lesson of Eden

The Garden of Eden reminds Christians of two things: 1) the Lord Jesus Christ wants nothing but blessings for His brothers and sisters. And 2), Jesus promises to provide for our every need, while He personally guides us into eternal life in His Kingdom.

But unfortunately, most of those whom God calls do not believe this to be true. Just like Adam, Eve and Moses, these people choose to follow spiritual messengers, rather than building a personal relationship with Christ.

Some of these messengers will claim that God is harsh, unforgiving and vengeful — and that He plans to execute eternal torment on all whom do not overcome their sins. While others will claim that humans are not worthy of God's love, unless we give generous tithes and offerings to support evangelical works and church expenses.

But whatever their particular message may be, these self-appointed messengers will cause God's people to view the Lord as distant and difficult to please, while claiming that salvation can only come through following the messengers' teachings and supporting their works.

Just like with Adam and Eve, these well spoken and artful messengers will turn many away from the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, to follow the teachings and commandments of human spiritual messengers and their religious institutions.

*And many of God's people will fail to inherit eternal life — simply because they chose to believe human messengers, rather than the Lord Jesus Christ.*

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*“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”*

*— Jesus Christ, John 10:27*

*"When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.*

— Jesus Christ, John 10:4-5

“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ *and do not do what I say?*”

— Jesus Christ, John 10:27

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## 10 — Scripture References

[John 5:37](#) And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.

[John 6:46](#) Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.

[Genesis 2:16](#) The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely ..."

[Revelation 12:9](#) And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Revision 2 — 07/30/18 @ 12:40:28 PM — 7955



# Table of Contents

How to Use This Book

Other Book Volumes

Introduction

1 — Revisiting the Garden of Eden

2 — The Cast of Characters

3 — Why a Garden?

4 — The Trees of the Garden

5 — Eden and God's Message

6 — The Garden and Christ's Church

7 — The Results of Ignoring God

8 — Conclusion

10 — Scripture References