



REFLECTIONS

August 14, 2022

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.

Revelation 22:1-2

The Choice

Adam blinked to find himself surrounded by a rainbow of colors in the backdrop of deep blue sky. Vibrant flowers sprinkled among luscious greenery rested beneath stately trees with branches reaching for the sky. Perched within them birds chirped cheerful songs as if voicing love for their larger siblings gliding through the airways high above.

Beasts of the field roamed through the forests and among majestic mountainsides. Soothing streams teeming with life moistened the rich soil to nourish the land made Adam feel safe. He had never tasted the fruit of evil. He only knew the sweet taste of life God provided.

Adam's heavy eyes rested as the sun nestled into a bed of gold-lit clouds and moon-glow displayed a blanket of twinkling stars covering the darkness. But loneliness filled his heart.

So God made Eve his life's companion, his bride, and friend to share those vast acres of perfection. Only they didn't know perfection then for they knew nothing else. They only knew God's warning: "*You may eat from any tree in the garden except you may not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil or you will surely die.*" We all know what happened next.

But what if the world's first couple had *not* fallen for the serpent's ploy. They would raise their family in the garden, their permanent home. Cain and Abel would become loving brothers and good friends, each growing their own families. And they would know their other siblings too. Still, the forbidden tree with its ever-present invitation to discover the mysteries of its fruit would share center stage with the tree of life. Someone, some time would fall for it. Likely me.

I would likely be the one to discover the bitter taste of evil lurking all around. I would be the one expelled from the garden for life. Imperfection isn't allowed there. And I would chase through life in search of that perfect place to again call home. Until one day...

I find myself there, standing near the throne of God, in His home of endless perfection. And a river runs through it, and on each side of the river stands the tree of life. No more pain; no more sorrow; and no more temptation from the forbidden tree. Not because I lived a perfect life that avoided all those temptations and the consequences of them.

But because of the choice to follow Jesus, my Savior. His sacrifice washed my sins away.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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