

# Now I Know Why Adam and Eve Left the Garden

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Why would anyone leave Eden? It's something I ask myself every year as we roll around to Genesis again. Well, right now I'm in paradise. It's our 26th wedding anniversary today and my husband fulfilled one of my dreams (he's good at that!) by taking me to New Zealand. It's my first time below the equator (all my kids have already done this and Steve, of course, has done it more times than anyone can count). We're spending our time in Queensland on the south island. It's Eden. Seriously. Gorgeous mountains and glaciers, a lake of glacial melt water of an indescribable, and unbelievable, color of pure blue, almost a neon blue. Yesterday, I took a gondola ride to the top of a mountain overlooking the whole bay and just spent time looking at the views.

I earned points in my husband's book by not a) bungee jumping b) driving a luge down the mountain and c) hang gliding over the bay. I went inside the heated area for a bit and there I saw the answer to the riddle of why Adam and Eve left the garden. I sat down at a table across from a teenage girl who spent the entire time, 15 minutes, looking at things on her cell phone. She never looked up. She never looked out at the view. She was sitting in one of God's greatest floor shows on earth but her phone kept telling her the action was somewhere else, blinding her to her surroundings.

How many times have I seen people make this exact same mistake? Rabbis who've been happy for years in their congregations leave them for someplace bigger because someone, long ago, said that "success" lay in having a bigger congregation. Spouses who abandon marriages that are working quite well because someone/the media/a "friend" convinced them there was something better down the road; as if you could automatically walk into a garden nicer than the one you spent years tending and cultivating.

It doesn't even have to be as drastic as that. Fretting about money or status or the fact that you don't look as good as you did 10 years ago or that you've gained five pounds can blind you to the Eden in which you live.

So here are my questions for you:

## Discussion Questions

1. Is it possible that most of us actually live in Eden, no matter what our circumstances? Is it possible that Eden is always, or at least frequently, "on tap"? Try this exercise: just take a minute to look around you. Is a glimmer of Eden there? Had you missed it before you looked? Could you see it again, now that you've seen it once?
2. Why is the siren song of "Eden is somewhere else/having something else" so seductive? Why don't people pay attention to the still, small voice within them that counsels, "Weigh what you have versus this image of what you might have that might be greater"? Why don't people factor in the costs and losses of leaving their current Eden to go exploring for a new one?
3. One of Judaism's most basic spiritual practices is saying 100 blessings a day, or, as it is said, "Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, WOW!" If people followed this practice, might they be more likely to stay in Eden and less likely to listen to their phone, advertisements, etc. that try to convince them that Eden is somewhere else?

As always, looking forward to your insights! And, on a personal, yet public note, a heartfelt thanks to my husband for 26 years of Eden and happiness I don't deserve but still have. Thanks, hon and thank you God for my family.