

Grace Bible Church
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 11/15/09
Recognizing no man after the flesh; The origin of the old sin nature.

We continue our study of 2Co 5:17 which says, **Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**

The Biblical interpretation of this subject begins by understanding what took place with the creation of man, where this all began. It starts off with an understanding of the word *image*. Gen 1:27, **And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.** Then in Gen 5:3, **When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.** This was after the events in the Garden.

When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, we read in Col 1:15, **And He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation.** We are told how we can be restored back to the image of God as Col 3:10 says, **By putting on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.** Therefore in 2Co 3:18, **But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.** This will happen because in 1Co 15:49, **And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.** As a part of the victory of God's plan in Rom 8:29, **For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren;**

Those passages actually give us the plan of God in a nutshell. It all began in Gen 2:15-17, **Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. And 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 shall surely die."**

Then of course we have the narrative of what happened when Adam and the woman were in the garden in Gen 3:1, **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 serpent represents evil which is the policy of Satan. Satan always uses an agent to represent him and his evil policy.

for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds. (2Co 11:14-15)

The serpent was indwelt by Satan for the purpose of tempting the woman. Satan's greatest weapon is conversation because Satan is the greatest genius that ever came from the hand of God. So, here is Satan getting ready to outsmart two of the most beautiful and perfect people who ever lived. Satan will open up his

attack with a very tender statement for the woman's well being, he's seems so sweet, he seems so *good*. In his first approach he introduces doubt to the woman: **And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" (Gen 3:1).** He tries to make her focus in on the prohibitions rather than the divine provisions. This is what Satan's ministers of righteousness do, they focus in on the do's and don'ts, they bring in standards that even God does not. Notice in verse 1 that Satan's first weapon was neither terror nor intimidation, nor threatening, his first and most brilliant weapon has always been conversation. Conversation is a medium for expressing thought and Satan is much smarter than any creature that has ever existed pre-historically or historically.

Gen 3:1, **he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"** God didn't say that. In Gen 2:16 the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From **any tree of the garden you may eat freely;**" He didn't say "you shall not eat from any tree of the garden." Satan is willfully misquoting what God said. Satan is a master at twisting the scriptures, distorting the scriptures, and misinterpreting the scriptures.

And 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 [here comes not sin but evil] or touch it, lest you die.'" (Gen 3:2-3)

She adds to the word of God which is forbidden in Rev 22:18. She was so occupied with the sin of disobedience and not eating the fruit that evil crept in. Satan's plan is to get the believer so occupied with sin that good and evil can sneak in. Sin was not the issue in the Garden. Sin was the result of those who thought evil. What came first sin or good and evil? The answer is that good and evil came first, then sin. There was no poison in the tree to kill the woman. It was simply her free-will going negative toward doctrine.

And the serpent said to the woman, [actually this is Satan speaking], "You surely shall not die." (Gen 3:4)

Satan willfully and categorically denies the truth of the doctrine that the wages of sin is spiritual death (Rom 6:23). God said it in Gen 2:17, and Satan denies it Gen 3:4.

"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." (Gen 3:5)

Satan is attributing to God a spirit of selfishness and jealousy, and Satan himself was the jealous one. So, Satan says your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God and then notice the next phrase, it has to do with our subject knowing good and evil. Satan tries to get us involved with good and evil so that he can blind us from grace and doctrine.

The Hebrew word for *opened* is a niphil perfect of *paqah*. Its in the passive voice, but more than that it has a plural suffix which says *both you and your husband*. Satan is now telling the woman that she knows what is best for her husband. Satan is saying that she knows what is best for her husband, not God. Satan is going to help the woman reject authority in life. No one can ever reject authority in life and ever come out on top, it's impossible.

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. (Gen 3:6)

The Hebrew word for *desirable* is *chamad* which means to covert or to lust after something. After the conversation with Satan, she became very lustful for the tree of knowledge of good and evil. She thought that

understanding good and evil could make her wise rather than doctrine. The word for *wise* is *sakal* which means to be intelligent, to prosper and to be successful. She begins to desire something that is negative toward God's plan.

The first thing that the woman wanted that she thought had apparently not provided for her was intelligence, and wisdom. The woman's original sin is revealed now two verbs. First, the qal imperfect of *laqach* translated *she took*. *Laqach* means to take and in the imperfect tense it means that she had it in her hands for a while. She hasn't died by touching it, and she's no longer afraid of it. Remember she thought that if you touched it she would die. She added to the Word of God and now her false doctrine will deceive her, for the Lord never said she could not touch it. She is now spiritually dead. Satan appears to be telling the truth, so she thinks. The next verb describes the first sin in human history. She took its fruit and ate. The kal imperfect of *akal*, and when she ate it, she entered in to the first sin of human history. Holding it in her hand it was still temptation. However, once she decided to eat it that was the act of volition that becomes the original sin. The woman was now in the status of spiritual death while her husband, Adam, was still in the status of perfection. The woman therefore, looked at the fruit; longed for the fruit; held the fruit; then ate the fruit, and the fruit was that she became spiritually dead. By this time Adam is with her and his original sin now follows.

And she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (Gen 3:6)

This is Satan's gospel, get others to agree with you. Of course, Adam finds himself in the status as his wife. She gave it to him, he ate it. Adam had no conversation with Satan therefore his temptation is entirely different. Adam is looking at the first sinner in the human race, his wife, who is now of course spiritually dead. Adam must choose between Jesus Christ and remaining in the status of perfection, or his wife and entering into the status quo of spiritual death. Adam's act was not a noble one, he was not protecting her, it was outright rebellion and disobedience. Adam is still the ruler of the world. He is still the authority in marriage. The issue is: Fellowship with God verses compatible relationship with the woman. He now must make a choice. So the woman who is spiritually dead gave him the fruit. The woman is now Satan's agent being spiritually dead. Adam actually ate the fruit. He decided to go with the woman rather than the Lord Jesus Christ. Adam should have been leading, instead he was led. This is his act of volition and his original sin. Satan had victoriously caused them both to be independent of God.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; (Gen 3:7)

The Hebrew word for *naked* is *erom* which means that their physical body was no longer covered by light. Satan's first objective in this temptation was to take control of the world from Adam. Satan's second objective was to defeat God in the courtroom appeal trial of the angelic conflict which he did not succeed in doing. So disobedience to God regarding the tree of knowledge of good and evil meant not only spiritual death but coming under the rulership of that creature genius Satan. When you understand that human good plus sin equals evil, you will understand the policy of Satan, and the genius of Satan as the ruler of this world.

Satan spends more time trying to acquire human good from his followers rather than getting them to sin. Sin is something that is inevitable because of the sin nature. When you understand that human good was not necessary for a relationship with God then you understand something that most Christians do not understand today. This is why the tree of the knowledge of **good** and **evil** was prohibited. The average believer today thinks that they must be doing good, and that the Christian way of life is a function of their human good. Human good produced from the cosmic system is never acceptable to God, Isa 64:6 tells us that all our righteous deeds are like menstrual rags to God. All human good in history will be judged because it comes from the same source as sin: The old sin nature (OSN).

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig

leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. (Gen 3:7)

They covered their waist where their genitals or their sexual organs were. They didn't cover their whole body with fig leaves. They were now both spiritually dead. After the original sin of Adam and the woman, the first act of spiritual death was an act of **human good** and the function of legalism. They now both **know** that they are naked. Now they **know** good and evil. Remember in perfection and innocence, the man and the woman were married and nakedness was not an issue. In spiritual death and sinfulness, nakedness now becomes an issue in the marriage. They're naked, but so what, they're married. There is no one else to look at their nakedness. So what's the problem? Spiritual death has taken a strange turn. Nakedness, the normal status in the garden, now becomes a social problem and demands a solution.

There were two possible solutions: First, the divine solution which is regeneration, that, for the moment, they have rejected. Secondly, the other solution, is legalism or human good, this is the wrong solution, but that's the one that they have accepted. Their conscience is now suffering from guilt reaction. Therefore, a culprit must be found to pacify the conscience. What did they decide? If they covered their genitals who were they hiding them from, the animals?

No, it was from **each other**. Here are two married people who are the only people on the earth and now they have a marital problem and they have a social problem.

There is no thought of God, no turning to God, no leaning upon the grace of God. They have completely forgotten about God because they are spiritually dead. As spiritually dead persons, there is nothing that they can do to enter into a relationship with God but they're going to do something anyway. The culprit is nakedness, in covering their genitals or their loins they made a statement. There were no other human beings in the garden to hide from, so they're making a human good statement. "We are not going to have sex." We have this big guilt complex now because we've done something wrong. We're going to make up for it by doing something else which is wrong. We're going to deny each other sex. We are going to cover that part of our physical body which has given us so much stimulation and arousal and happiness.

We're going to show God that we can do something **good** because of the **bad** which we've done. This is why we need to ministry of God the Holy Spirit so that He can produce the only good that God will accept, divine good. (see Rom 16:19; Heb 5:14; 3Jo 1:11).

When they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and [what was the result of their now new OSN and spiritual death manifested by separation from God? Fear!] I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." (Gen 3:8-10)

They were separated from God and hiding from Him in the trees of the garden. Fear is a result of the OSN controlling us but now the old things, like the OSN, spiritual death and separation from God, are now passed away. It's lost its power over us as well as delivering us from our spiritual death and separation from God. When we become independent from God and think that we know the difference between good and evil, and what is right or wrong than that we fear end up becoming a reality. What happens is that we end up trying to make plans to avoid what we fear. However, without God's wisdom, or metabolized doctrine, our imagination runs wild and becomes a cruel taskmaster. By choosing to claim that we know the difference between good and evil and what is right and wrong, we seek to determine our own destiny and live for ourselves, not others. We choose our personal sense of destiny for our lives rather than God's.

And the Lord said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Gen 3:11-13)

In Gen 3:16 the Lord told the Woman, "I'll multiply your pains in childbirth; and also, you will want to please your husband, but he'll lord it over you." To Adam He said, **"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you shall eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."** (Gen 3:17-19)

All of this was simply because of the sin of being independent from God and thinking that they knew the difference between good and evil, not the sins of immorality. TLJC gave up everything (His Deity-kenosis), so that by His dependant life upon God, He became our prototype that would allow us to live free enough to willingly give up our own rights. What is good and what is evil for us can really deceive us. The problem with Adam and the woman was not the lust for immoral sins but choosing to be independent from God. Adam and the woman left the unity of the thinking of one mind (mind of Christ) when they chose independent thoughts over God's. Therefore, it was independence from God that brought the OSN spiritual death and separation from God into this world.