

**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 11/22/09**

**The new things that have come; the principle of equality in election and predestination. Part 2.**

As a part of “the new things” that have come from 2Co 5:17, we have been noting the ten unique asserts that believers in other dispensations did not possess which are in view. We have seen the first three:

- a. The baptism of the Spirit which results in the creation of a new spiritual species and the royal family of God.
- b. The PPOG and a personal sense of destiny which is unique for the royal family of God only.
- c. You also have a phenomenal portfolio of invisible assets which belongs to you as a member of the royal family of God.
- d. The fourth is the principle of equality. For the first time in history, every believer, regardless of background or personal history has equality given by God. The unique equality factor has to do with the subject of election and predestination as equal privilege and equal opportunity. Under the principle of election, God wills His highest and His best for each believer. Under the principle of predestination God has provided a plan for the believer to have that highest and best. Every member of the Royal family of God has equal privilege and equal opportunity to live in God’s pre-designed plan. At the moment of salvation, no one is superior or inferior, no one has a higher position than any other. There is a passage written by the apostle Peter just before his death that deals with election as it should be dealt with, and that is with a recognition of the free will of man.

**For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.**  
**(2Pe 1:8-11)**

We begin with the first phrase in 2Pe 1:8, **For if these qualities are yours.** The word Greek word for *quality* is the pronoun *tauta* referring to the qualities or the virtues mentioned in verses 5-7: **Virtue** (includes respect, loyalty, devotion). **Knowledge** - perception of doctrine. **Self-control** - organized life. **Perseverance** - endurance or consistency. **Godliness** - living the spiritual life.

Then in verse 7: **Brotherly love** - love for members of the Royal family. **Agape love** - impersonal love for all members of the human race. This means that we never arrive, which is why the second quality mentioned is *gnosis* or perception of doctrine. We cannot afford to ever stop our intake of Bible doctrine and live on yesterday’s manna as the children of Israel did.

The next phrase *they render* is the Greek word *kathistemi* which means to prevent you from being neither useless (ineffective) nor unfruitful (unproductive). *Useless* is the adjective *argous* which means lazy, inefficient, inactive, careless, apathetic. It means to shun the labor which one ought to perform which is being a procrastinator. *Unfruitful* is the Greek word *akarpous* meaning unproductive, without fruit, contributing nothing to the instruction, improvement, comfort of others. (see 1Co 14:14; Mat 13:22; Mat 13:22; Jud 1:12).

To be useless or inefficient means that if you cannot take doctrine in and apply it to your personal life you will never

be spiritually self-sustaining, and therefore you will be inefficient. Your efficiency in the spiritual life must start with your own thinking. This is why we need to learn how to organize our time. The organization of our time is based upon what our preference is or where our heart is. We have to decide what is important in our life and give that number 1 priority in our time slots.

**For if these qualities [the dramatic seven principles of verses 5-7] are yours and keep on increasing or are ready for action, they prevent you from being neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2Pe 1:8)**

The phrase **the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ** is the Greek prepositional phrase *eis epignosin* referring to metabolized doctrine. Peter is saying that if you have the dramatic 7 doctrinal principles of verses 5-7, you will not be ineffective or unproductive in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Your whole Christian life centers around how much knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ you have. This is because the key to the Christian life is proper motivation. Metabolized doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ gives the believer the proper motivation to live. Motivational virtue, love for God, must precede production and Christian service. This is the whole issue once again of the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden.

In the garden, the issue was not really man's desire to sin, but his ambition to be independent from God. The result of his independence was human good and operation fig leaves, only to find out that man's goodness or righteousness was minus the perfect righteousness of God. This is what confused Satan as the serpent in the garden of Eden, because even he did not really understand the difference between good and evil. For good and evil is what the creature produces without the power and nature or help from God. In the garden the issue was not just God revealing His love to man through the promise of the coming of the seed of the woman to solve man's problem with sin. **And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen 3:15).** But also it was man's problem of thinking that through the knowledge of good and evil that he could be like God. The woman's seed is a prophecy regarding the virgin birth of Jesus Christ and the entrance of the God man in the dispensation of the Hypostatic-union.

The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world through the seed of the woman. In Gen 4:1, Eve said **"I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord"**, she thought that Cain was the promise seed. That's another reason why she was disappointed when she had Abel because she realized that more children were on their way. Remember that Abel's name means vanity, vapor, nothingness and even disappointment.

So the sign of their salvation is given as leather clothing; for the animals had to die to provide the skins for man. Up until now they had been wearing fig leaves. The leather skins replaced the fig leaves, and the garments of skin are a picture of salvation. The animals had to die to provide the skins, a picture of the work of our Lord on the Cross. The Hebrew verb *labash* means God caused them to be clothed. In the same way God causes us to have salvation, everything comes from God.

**Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life. (Gen 3:22-24)**

Man was cut off from the tree of life because of his positive volition to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life represents God's perfect happiness, and God's perfect happiness perpetuated, and both were cut off so that they cannot exist in the human race. The closest you can come to it is spiritual maturity. The analogy is that in the same way we can destroy the happiness of maturity by negative volition to God's plan. If man, in spiritual death, had eaten from the tree of life, his free will would no longer be the means of resolving the angelic conflict. He would have lived forever in his present state of immortality, in the status of spiritual death, and the human race would have been totally condemned to the lake of fire. You cannot have an old sin nature and eat of this particular tree of life. You cannot have God's perfect happiness and live in a state of sin.

You can't choose both the plan of God and the cosmic system of Satan. Man would have no free will after the fall if

he had been permitted to eat of the tree of life. He would have been in bondage and slavery forever, therefore the tree of life was put out of his reach, so that his free will would determine where he would spend eternity and whether he would be happy or miserable. The tree of life was provided by God's grace to be associated with man's positive volition, which was to be expressed in his free will toward the plan of God. So again, the tree of life represents two things: 1. Perfect happiness. 2. Perfect happiness perpetuated. Just as eating from the tree of life meant happiness, so eating doctrine is the closest that you can come to the perfect happiness of the Garden. You can destroy that perfect happiness the same way Adam did, by the use of your own volition.

So concerning the trees in the garden, the Lord said, **"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"** (Gen 2:16-17). Then, you know the rest of the story: **The serpent said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" 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 or touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall 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 (Gen 3:1-5).** Being able to discern the difference between what is divine good and what is evil or what is right and what is wrong.

So with this enticement and lying interaction between the serpent and the woman, we read in Gen 3:6, **When the woman saw that the tree [that is the tree of knowledge of good and evil] 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.** Adam and the woman ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, with no coercion of their own free will, and they realized that without the divine provisions of God, they were completely naked or in need of a covering from the divine provisions of God.

In Gen 3:11-12, **And He 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 notice that something very interesting is said in Gen 3:22-24, **Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the Garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.**

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was that which the original man and woman ate from while the tree of life was protected and denied by God. So when we get over to the New Testament, we see the divine provisions of God revealed through the equality factor of the equal privilege of election and predestination.

**2Pe 1:1, Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours.** Note that every believer starts with the same kind of faith but none of us end up that way. It all depends upon the operation of the filling of the Spirit in our lives. Everyone has the same chance from the start of salvation. We all start out with an equal amount of faith and with equal privilege and equal opportunity. In eternity past the sovereignty of God elected us to privilege but we have the freedom to accept or reject His way of doing things. God has one will for all of us and that is He wills the highest and best for each of us. Therefore, He starts us all out with equal faith. If he had his way, we'd all be advanced, living in spiritual maturity. But in contrast; some succeed, some fail, some are winners, some are losers. It all depends upon your perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine and the development of virtue in your life.

So Peter says in this verse, **to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.** It is through the righteousness, virtue, and integrity of our God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, that we attain everything. The divine policy and the divine purpose are stated in verse 2.

2Pe 1:2, **Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;** Grace is the policy of God toward man. Grace always depends on the character and nature of God and man being dependent upon that character and nature. It depends on who and what God is, not who and what we are. For the spiritual believer,

grace must be multiplied. This is because the believer cannot execute or fulfill the divine plan from his own ability, human energy, or human talent. The believer cannot execute or fulfill the divine plan through good works, or through a pleasing, sweet, personality, or any other system of self-righteousness, morality, or sacrifice. Grace always has to come first because it's a reminder that none of us ever earn or deserve anything from God. That's why it's always:

Joh 1:17 - "grace and truth."

Rom 1:7 - "grace and peace."

Eph 2:8 - "grace and faith."

1Ti 1:2 - "grace and mercy."

2Pe 3:18 - "grace and knowledge."

It is always God's magnificent essence that provides everything.

Everything we need pertaining to life or spirituality comes from metabolized doctrine or divine power provided by God. The tree of life represents dependency upon the life of another. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is self-dependency. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is legitimate for God because He lives in self-dependency, but it is not the type of fruit for man.

then you are deceived and living in self-deception.

**2Pe 1:3-9, Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge or epignosis knowledge [metabolized doctrine] of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these [metabolized doctrine, God's own glory in verse 3 and God's moral excellence or virtue] He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them [the promises of God] you might become partakers or partners of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.**

**Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence or making every effort, with your faith making every effort, with your doctrine supply moral excellence or virtue, and in your moral excellence or virtue, knowledge; [or gnosis which is academic information]. And in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness or spiritual living; And in your spiritual living, brotherly kindness [the royal family honor code], and in your brotherly kindness, virtue-love. For if these qualities are yours and keep on increasing, they render you or prevent you from being neither useless [meaning ineffective] nor unfruitful [or unproductive] in the true knowledge [or the epignosis knowledge] of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks or does not have these qualities, [in context the qualities are found in verses 5-7] doctrine, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, and spiritual living, brotherly kindness [the royal family honor code], and virtue-love. For he who lacks or does not have these qualities is blind or short-sighted, [blind in the sense of blindness in the soul or blackout of the soul] having forgotten his purification or being cleansed from his former sins.**

Most believers are blinded in one of two ways. Satan has two main systems that he uses against believers: In the first system arrogance blinds him. In the second system animosity toward truth blinds him. The target of Satan's first system is the believer's ego resulting in pre-occupation with self to the exclusion of reality. Speaking to Satan, the Lord says in Isa 14:12-14, "**How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'**"

Notice the five "I will's of Satan." First, **I will ascend to heaven**, which is a reference to his dissatisfaction with the authority and position which God had given him. Satan wasn't content with the appointment of God, and he wanted to take up his abode in the highest heaven where God resides.

Secondly, **I will raise my throne above the stars of God**, this refers to sitting on the throne of God and ruling all the angels. Again, we see the frustration and the rejection of a creature that had negative volition toward the plan of God for his life. Satan or as the Latin says, Lucifer, had been appointed the guardian of the throne of God. However, he aspired to the possession of a throne of his own where he could rule all of creation. Which he cannot even do now because, those under his rulership choose also to be independent from him as he was independent from God.

The third *I will*, **I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north**. The mount is a phrase, which refers to the seat of divine government on planet earth. Remember that angels were on earth perhaps thousands of

years before humans.

The fourth *I will* is found in Isa 14:14, **I will ascend above the heights of the clouds which refers to the glory which belongs to God alone;**

Then probably the most shocking of the I will's, the fifth one: **I will make myself like the Most High.** Satan's main purpose is not to be unlike God, but like Him.

All of this is to say that the first form of rebellion ever committed in the universe was committed in the form of negative volition toward the plan of God on the part of a creature. Yet the shocking thing is that this same independent viewpoint or system of thinking now controls the majority of unbelievers and believers in the world today. Very few believers take their calling and election seriously and therefore they reject the plan of God for their life. This is why the apostle Paul said in Gal 5:24, **Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** If you truly believe that you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not allow your fleshly desires or passions to control your life. Remember that there is a divine blessing or a divine curse on the believer depending on his love for Jesus Christ.

The divine blessing; Psa 23:6, **“Only prosperity and grace shall pursue me [prosperity looks for the mature believer] all the days of my life.”**

The divine curse, 1Co 16:22, **If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha."**

So, the target of Satan's first system is the believer's ego resulting in pre-occupation with self to the exclusion of reality. The target of Satan's second system is truth or Bible doctrine resulting in antagonism toward Christ, His body, and doctrine itself. One system emphasizes self over God. The other system emphasizes human viewpoint over divine viewpoint. One system was developed by Satan before the human race which is simply living for self rather than God. The other system was developed by Satan at the fall of the human race which is human viewpoint over divine viewpoint.

Both systems are controlled by the philosophy of Satan.

The whole world lies in the power of the evil one: 1Jo5:19, **We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.**