

**GRACE BIBLE CHURCH**  
*Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries*

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.**

**The Tree of Life for week ending 10/06/02.**

***“The God who has been my sheperd all my life to this day” Gen 48:15***

In our ongoing study of the *Israeli-Arab Conflict*, we have now reached the end of Jacob’s life and have seen how it relates to the origin of the Jewish race.

**Gen 48:1-4** *Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, “Behold, your father is sick.” So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him. When it was told to Jacob, “Behold, your son Joseph has come to you,” Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed. Then Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and He said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.’”*

The Lord Jesus Christ made this promise to Jacob and said in effect, “I am going to give you this land forever.” Obviously, to possess the land forever, Jacob must live forever, and as we know, Jacob has eternal life. Jacob is saying here that this was one of the greatest moments of his life.

**Gen 48:5** *“And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.”*

Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, became two tribes of Israel. Manasseh would die on the vine and become a “shriveled-up,” weak tribe, while Ephraim would become a powerful tribe. Ephraim was a man who grew up and lived by Bible doctrine. Manasseh was just like his grandfather Jacob was for the first 130 years of his life—a selfish, egotistical, self-centered, petty, jealous, bullying deceiver. Ephraim and Manasseh were brothers, yet one learned doctrine and the other would not. This simply reminds us that regardless of the circumstances and events that surround our birth, God gave us life at the right time for us to be born.

**Gen 48:6-11** *“But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance. Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).” When Israel saw Joseph’s sons, he said, “Who are these?” And Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me here.” So he said, “Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them.” Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them close to*

him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well.”

God again overrules and blesses the younger son over the first-born.

**Gen 48:12-15** *Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel’s left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel’s right, and brought them close to him. But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh’s head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the first-born. And he blessed Joseph, and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day...”*

God took care of Jacob *all the days of his life*. For most of his life, Jacob was a carnal believer. It was for only 17 years at the end of his life that was he a spiritual believer. However, God shepherded him all that time, whether carnal or spiritual, in His unerring faithfulness. Once you belong to Him, He is faithful no matter what you are like. This is grace. Grace is who and what God is like, not what we are like.

God is faithful to us in rebound and recovery, **1Jo 1:9**, “*If we acknowledge [name and cite] our sins, He is faithful and righteous, with the result that He forgives us our sins [known sins] and purifies us from all unrighteousness [unknown sins].*” God knew our sins in eternity past. He imputed them to the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross and judged them. The justice of God is satisfied with the Lord Jesus Christ as our substitute. God is justified to forgive us because He has been propitiated by the sacrifice of *His perfect Son*. Therefore, there is no compromise of His integrity when He faithfully forgives us as we name and cite our sins. A very important principle emerges here—there is **no merit** in naming a sin. Legalism says you must feel sorry to be forgiven, but grace says that the way you feel is not the issue. When we name and cite our sins, God faithfully forgives us, regardless of how we feel. We can forget the sin and move on immediately.

1. Name it, **1Jo 1:9**.
2. Isolate it, **Heb 12:15**.
3. Forget it, **Phi 3:13**.
4. Keep moving, **Phi 3:14**.

God treats us in grace, and that grace is never a license to sin, but it is the motivation to press on to spiritual maturity. The basis of God’s faithfulness is His grace, **Jam 1:17**, “*Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.*” God’s faithfulness is manifested in His perfect plan, **1Co 1:9, 1Th 5:24, Job 23:14**.

As believers, we do not need to worry about the basic necessities that sustain our lives. God will provide everything we will ever need. It was more “difficult” for God to find a way to save us than it was for Him to bless us in time. If He could do the most for us at salvation, He can provide the lesser blessing of *logistical grace support* in time. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must never lose sight of the grace and mercy of God. As Israel (Jacob) says, “*The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd **all my life** to this day.*” As we have seen in our study, through their failures and successes, He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob. This should be a great comfort, for there never was a time when God was not totally faithful to us as believers. As the Bible says so many times, in passages such as **Lam 31:21-25**, “*The Lord’s lovingkindness is everlasting.*”

We will now see a great passage in the Bible concerning the Jews and some fascinating issues related to the prehistoric **angelic conflict** and the proof that God keeps His Word. The angelic conflict is the result of prehistoric creatures being in opposition to God, which began with the fall of Satan and continued until all angelic creatures had made a decision for or against God. This is a vital doctrine of the Word of God that dogmatically and irrefutably proves the **faithfulness of God**.

The angelic conflict includes the two trials of Satan and the fallen angels, one in prehistoric times, the other during human history. There are only two categories of rational creatures in scripture; those of *prehistoric* times are called angels, **Psa 8:3-6, Heb 2:6-9, 2Pe 2:11**.

**Psa 8:3-6** *When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him? Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God, and dost crown him with glory and majesty! Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet.*

**Heb 2:6-9** *But one has testified somewhere, saying, “What is man, that Thou rememberest him? Or the son of man, that Thou art concerned about him? Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, And hast appointed him over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*

In their physical beings, angels are quite different from humans; they were apparently created out of light. They are able to move through space at will, and are invisible to the empirical investigation of mankind. They are superior to mankind and existed in the universe before man for an unknown period of time. Angels are created far superior to mankind in power and intellect. However, they are still created beings just as much in need of the grace of God as we are.

**Psa 148:1-6** *Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all stars of light! Praise Him, highest heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.*

The *historical* category of rational creatures is mankind. The term “rational” simply means having a soul, a complete soul essence (not that they always behave

rationally).

Satan is the most brilliant creature who has ever lived, and he is also the most attractive and most personable. The closest reference we have to his real name is “Heylel” (**Isa 14:12**), the “son of the morning,” the anointed cherub. There was a time when he was the highest of all creatures. The cherub at that time was the highest form of angelic life. Today the *seraphim* are the highest-ranking angels. Both elect and fallen angels observe the human race and human history.

It can be very difficult for a pastor to teach Satanology and the angelic conflict because the devil hates to be exposed. When the average person thinks of the devil they think of red skin, a pointed tail, horns, a trident, and all the rest, but this is not the devil at all. The devil is the most beautiful creature who ever came from the hand of God. One of the most shocking principles for many people to hear is that the devil is not interested in getting people to sin. He is vitally interested in getting you to perform *human good*. This is why Paul said in **2Co 2:11**, “*In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*” Satan is actively involved in putting down any believer anywhere who understands Bible doctrine.

Immorality is actually embarrassing to Satan because he is the ruler of this world. His plan is to get humans, especially believers, to produce human good, in order to infiltrate the plan of God with human good. Satan cannot do this to a believer who has a knowledge of doctrine, but an ignorant believer is a sucker for human good every time. Human good appeals to approbation lust, power lust, and the old sin nature. In fact, the presence of sin, chaos, and problems in the world is not due to Satan’s intention to have it so but his inability to control the human race. Therefore, God’s plan for the human race is *not* to clean up the devil’s world; it is to offer salvation to the unbeliever and knowledge of doctrine to the believer. One verse that describes this very accurately and completely is **1Ti 2:4**, “*He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge [epignosis] of the truth.*” In every generation there will be believers who will mature through knowledge of Bible doctrine, which is the only possible way for the believer to grow. Through his cosmic control, the devil will give those believers a great deal of attention because they constitute the greatest threat to his cosmic system on earth today.

Adam was created perfect in the garden of Eden, but as we know, he fell and we fell with him, and now anyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ actually becomes greater than Adam was in the Garden. We now have the very righteousness of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the eternal state, the difference between the perfection of Adam in the garden and the perfection we will enjoy is that we have received a nature that can *never* sin, **1Jo 3:9**, **1Pe 1:23**. When we do sin, we are not sinning as new creatures but in our *old sin nature*, **Rom 7:17**, “*So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.*” Adam was created perfect, but he fell and sinned against God, and a *higher category* of humans came into existence called the children of God.

The same is true in the angelic realm. Heylel, or Satan, the son of the morning, the anointed cherub, was created perfect and was the highest-ranking angel at that time. The cherub was originally the most superior angel. And Satan was the greatest of them all. However, just as a higher creature came after Adam in the human race, certain angels were awarded a higher rank than Satan after his fall—the *seraphim*, angels with six wings. Because of the character and nature of God, in which He is righteous, just, and immutable, we must conclude that, just as members of the human race are rewarded for

their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ, the angels were given rewards for following whatever plan God designed for them. There is the same basic difference among the angels as among humans, **1Co 15:40-42**, *“There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for stars differ from stars in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.”* God never has and never will coerce or force angelic or human volition to make choices. The “elect” angels, who in eternity past made the right grace decisions found in God’s plan, are now in their eternal state and serving the Lord in the current extension of the angelic conflict.

The revelation concerning the angelic conflict begins with the dateless period between the creation of the heavens and the earth in their perfect form, in which they first appeared in **Gen 1:1**, and the desolating judgments that ended that period, when the earth became waste and empty, **Gen 1:2**. In **Gen 1:1**, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* This is *not* the beginning of the angels, because the angels were already alive before God created the heavens and the earth, **Job 38:4-7**, *“The Lord said, ‘Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, who set its measurements, since you know? Or who stretched the line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars [angels] sang together, and all the sons of God [angels] shouted for joy?’”*

The angels were already here before **Gen 1:1**. At some time in eternity past, before the creation of the physical universe as we know it, God created the angelic host. It is important to note in **Job 38:7** that when God laid the foundation of the earth *all* the sons of God shouted for joy because they were undivided at that time. Satan and the one third of the angels who would follow him had not yet rebelled in arrogance; therefore they all shouted for joy in unity, when they saw the creation take place. Therefore, in **Gen 1:1** the universe, the heavens and the earth, were originally created as the domain of the angels. Here they ruled and performed whatever responsibilities and tasks God had for them. It was between **Gen 1:1** and **Gen 1:2** that Satan rebelled against God and enticed one third of the angels to follow him, as described in **Rev 12:4**, *“And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven.”*

For a more detailed study, order last week’s tapes, IA11-215 to IA11-217.