

THE MEANING OF THE TWO TREES

We read in Genesis 2 that God planted two trees in Eden. One tree was called the Tree of Life and the other the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

THESSE were real trees, not merely symbolic. However, they also have great symbolism, yet most people do not grasp the significance.

When God created Adam and Eve, they were created neutral in nature – not knowing good from evil. Everything was good in the Garden of Eden, and evil was not present until Satan appeared (Genesis 1:31).

Satan is the being who was formerly known as Heylel, or more popularly, as “Lucifer”. He was the formerly anointed cherub who was around God’s throne (Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28). He had sinned by exalting himself, and allowing PRIDE to take over his mind. It was in this way that God “created” evil (Isaiah 45:7). Since God does not have any evil, He created evil *indirectly* by allowing Satan to create evil, and then God used Satan’s evil influences to teach mankind to RESIST evil and thus gain Godly character. (Review "How to Be an Overcomer" article).

God allowed Satan to come into the Garden to tempt Adam and Eve, even though God knew that they would probably give in to Satan – since God the Most High and the Being known as the Word had together planned out the plan of salvation even before Adam was created – see John 8:58 and Revelation 13:8. Also, God had created Adam and Eve with free moral agency – they were free to choose God’s Way or Satan’s way.

Part of God’s plan was to plant two trees, one symbolizing God’s Way and the other Satan’s way. Both trees pictured a choice that we have. We can either RELY on God for instruction and direction on how to live, or we can rely solely on ourselves. But if we rely on ourselves, we are indirectly subjecting ourselves to Satan’s influence, because Satan rules this world, this society, invisibly (see 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:1-3). Furthermore, Satan’s influence is very pervasive and he starts injecting his attitude as soon as he can – even while we begin reasoning as young children. This is what has produced the chaotic world that we live in!

Each tree has its fruits. The fruits of the Tree of Life are those that reflect God’s character. His character is basically one of OUTGOING CONCERN – or love, away from self. When we receive God’s Spirit and grow in grace and knowledge, we grow in outgoing concern toward God and toward our neighbor.

This great law of DIVINE LOVE (*agape* in the Greek language), is summarized in the TEN COMMANDMENTS. The first four commandments cover LOVE TOWARD GOD, and the last six cover LOVE TOWARD NEIGHBOR.

The fruits of God’s way of life are love, joy, peace, longsuffering [patient endurance], gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance [self-control] – Galatians 5:22-23, KJV. LOVE is mentioned first since it includes all the other attributes!

The fruits of the Knowledge of Good and Evil – the tree from which Satan gave his first “sermon” to Eve – are known as “works” more than fruits. Some of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the “good” that we see in the world, such as motherly love, which is a good attribute, yet it still falls short of

the love of God because it is limited to the members of one's immediate family. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is what Daniel had to experience in Babylon. Not all that was in Babylon was bad. They knew scientific facts that were good in themselves, e.g., the knowledge of mathematics. The discipline of mathematics is of and by itself a good thing, because there are no philosophies that enter into it. However, if you study Social Sciences in school, then the philosophies of Satan enter into that subject.

Understanding what the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil symbolizes helps us to see that this world's system or society is "a mixed bag," containing both good and bad. This is why some things that individuals or nations do can be "good," while other projects or actions can be undeniably atrocious or evil. Such is the world we live in. More than 2,500 years ago, God told Daniel that those who are wise would understand this (Daniel 12:10).

Galatians 5:19: "Now the works of the flesh [the evil portion of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil] are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

5:20: "Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

5:21: "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Notice that all these "works" go against the Ten Commandments!

Much of this can be seen at "Carnival" in Brazil, which came from the bacchanalia of the Greeks and Romans.

If one practices these works of the flesh, and remains without repentance, one will NOT be in the Kingdom of God!!

The AMPLIFIED BIBLE of verses 19-21 help clarify:

Here is how the Amplified Bible renders those verses:

"Immorality, impurity, indecency; idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions); party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies); envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like ..."

Comparing these to the King James text, here are the equivalent synonyms that the Amplified supplies, which match some of the choices given by concordances:

KJV Synonyms:

- hatred = enmity
- variance = strife
- emulations = jealousy
- wrath = anger, ill-temper
- seditions = party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions), heresies, RIVALRY

It is from this word sedition that we can arrive at the equivalent synonym of RIVALRY.

Rivalry is the competitive spirit that produces strife, party spirit (politics!). RIVALRY is one of the fruits of the flesh.

Rivalry is included in the words VARIANCE, EMULATIONS, SEDITIONS, ENVYINGS. We can find out these meanings by checking the original Greek.

Hence, among the disciples, each one was “out for number one” while they were unconverted. See Matthew 20:20-28.

In our day we have seen well-known “pioneers” of the Work of God enter into rivalry. After the breakup of the Worldwide Church of God due to apostasy, we saw break-offs of leading men, each wanting to carve out a corner of the scattering/splintering of the Church, to draw disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30).

The Early Church leaders avoided this, but this did not prevent members trying to foist a following, some after Peter, some after Paul, some after Apollos, etc. Paul stated: “For it has been made clear to me, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions and wrangling and FACTIONS among you” (1 Corinthians 1:11, Amplified). It was “GURU” mania in full swing! Each member wanting to follow a certain *guru* or personality (in their minds). Yes, Christ had set up teachers, but the membership wanted to put them on a pedestal.

FACTIONS are the result of RIVALRY.

When this starts to creep into a small community of believers, it must be nipped in the bud!

Each member must have proper respect one for another, allowing for differences in personalities and background. We must “give space” to each other without compromising the godly standards set by Christ himself. God has not called a pile of “yellow pencils,” to be exactly alike, but each one is to follow after Christ.

When Christ comes to dwell in each one of us, through the work of the Holy Spirit, that does not mean we all become of one personality. Christ’s personality works *within* our individual personalities.

We then adapt to each other’s personalities.

That is the message of First and Second Corinthians! We are very much like the local church at Corinth in this regard.

What a warning Paul gives us in Galatians 5! He wrote: **“But if you bite and devour one another [in partisan strife], be careful that you [and your whole fellowship] are not consumed by one another”** (Galatians 5:15, Amplified).

A “fix” for this problem is for each member to be tuned in to the Vine, and the mind of Christ will lead us to be subject to Christ, and then to submit one to another – Ephesians 5:21.

Going back to the Two Trees and what they stand for, we come to understand through a study of the entire Bible and meditation that the Two Trees are depicted as TWO BASIC WAYS OF LIFE. Throughout the Bible we find these TWO OPPOSING WAYS OF LIFE being shown. We have the Way of Abel (the righteous son of Adam) and the Way of Cain (the wicked son of Adam). The Way of Cain is mentioned in Jude 11.

In Deuteronomy 30 we read of the need for mankind to make a choice between these two ways.

30:15: “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

30:16: “In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

30:17: “But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

30:18: "I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

30:19: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: **therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live ...**"

YES, CHOOSE LIFE!

The TREE OF LIFE has been shut off from mankind, UNLESS GOD THE FATHER DRAWS YOU TO IT so that you can receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day**" (John 6:44).

If you can understand this subject up to this point, it is quite possible that you are being drawn by God and have started to REPENT of your own way, and that you desire to accept God's Way of Life. You are possibly being called, in which case, you need to consider your calling carefully. Please visit our website, www.thebiblefund.org, to read more about the subject of repentance: "What Is Real Repentance?"

After repentance then follows water baptism. Please read the following booklet on our website: *All About Water Baptism*.

If you are called of God and then accept His Way of Life, you will then begin to partake of the Tree of Life and find out how to have REAL, ABUNDANT LIFE! Yes, you will then be on the way to be able to solve all your problems. Please read the following article on our website: "*This is the Life! – Real Abundant Life.*"

May God bless you in your studies, especially regarding this hidden mystery (hidden to most of the world) on the subject of THE TWO TREES!

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