



Scriptures and Doctrine :: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - posted by NMatheson (), on: 2012/7/15 21:30

I realize that this is a question I may never receive an answer to, though I have been thinking about it very much for the last 4 or 5 months.

Why did the Lord command Adam to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Why did God create such a tree in the first place?

Some random thoughts I have had about this are as follows. Did we have any sense of self before we ate of it? Did it divide our soul from our spirit, thus giving us the ability to discern our "conscience"? What effects of this tree must we avoid today?

I understand that conviction of sin and TRUE repentance must come from within, and not from without. Words from a brother will never properly convict me if the Holy Spirit is not involved. I believe repentance from an accusation outside of the workings of the Lord is not always true repentance, but a neurotic mechanism of self defense. In essence, a weakness of the accused, exploited by the accuser. So is false judgment the effect of this fruit?

What are your thoughts on this matter? Surely I can't be the only one who's thought of this.

Re: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, on: 2012/7/15 21:58

Wow, that's a lot of questions :)

I only want to approach one.

"Why did God create such a tree in the first place?"

There's a reason that the book of Job is Chronologically the first book written in our canon of Scripture and that was so that GOD could give man a glimpse of what goes on in the heavenlies.

The first thing we find is Satan talking with GOD.

The man Job comes into the conversation and Satan tells GOD that the only reason that Job is righteous is because GOD put a hedge around Job.

You know the rest from there.

The point is - GOD wants people to love Him of their own freewill and how would that happen if GOD didn't put that tree there? Satan could say the same to GOD about putting that hedge around them as he tried to accuse GOD with Job.

In a perfect environment - man sinned, of his own freewill.

What good is "love" if it's not by a person's own will?
If they're forced to. Or created to only love Him - like robots.

So, it's a Heavenly Love story being played out in Reality.

Few believe this though - but I had to say it anyway.

It's all about loving Him enough to trust His Words are trust-worthy and worthy to be followed because He loved us first.

Re: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - posted by NMatheson (), on: 2012/7/15 22:37

Wow! That's an awesome answer to that question. The free will that you speak of I agree with entirely. I guess I never thought to apply that thought with this one. Thank you!

Re: - posted by Blayne, on: 2012/7/15 22:39

Hi! 'Jesus-Is-God'

I found your Comment here a very remarkable thing.

In particular where you stated: "There's a reason that the book of Job is Chronologically the first book written in our canon of Scripture and that was so that GOD could give man a glimpse of what goes on in the heavenlies".

Your viewpoint is a very profound insight which not everyone can so easily comprehend.

The narrative of the events in the Garden of Eden is near exact as what you have described concerning Job; it reveals in visible events using visible pictures (aka: parable).

Re: , on: 2012/7/15 22:50

"So, it's a Heavenly Love story being played out in Reality."

I like how you put that

Re: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - posted by Blayne, on: 2012/7/16 2:13

Hi! 'NMatheson'

I would like to contribute my personal understanding of the Genesis account concerning the Garden of Eden and hopefully add some benefit to your questions.

Ummm, I guess I should warn you that your questions demand adequate explanations and so you should expect my comments here to be rather lengthy.

The first question that needs to be answered is, Why did God create Adam and Eve in the first instance? Meaning: what was God's purpose and plan with mankind?

The answer can be found by questioning about our own spiritual existence; our own Christian journey. What is the motive and intent of God concerning us ... His children?

There are of course many degrees of responding to this question. But the primary answer is that God is seeking a worthy partner. James 4:5 says that God seeks "jealously the spirit He made to dwell in us". God's desire is to unite with human spirits. God is seeking a fellowship of love and cooperation with every man.

(The reason that every man and woman have the intrinsic desire for a mate is because our inner being was created in the image of God Who possesses similar desires and yearning).

God wanted to give from Himself; He wanted us to be a part of Him. God wanted a partner to whom He could give Himself completely in love and in whom He could rejoice throughout eternity. This partner would be able to return His love and have an enormous amount of possibilities and thus God would never lose interest in him. This partner would be able to participate and cooperate in all of God's plans.

This partner would be on God's level. A partner able to live in an atmosphere of pure love and who would, from out of their free will, dedicate all their created abilities and talents to a relationship in complete dependence on God. A being in whom God could be "all in all", (1Cor 15:28).

No, God wasn't thinking of a second God. Rather, He thought of a worthy partner that would fit Him perfectly and harmoniously. A woman to God, after His image and likeness. We could describe it as "complementary" to God; completely belonging to one another, in existence and works. Yet, it cannot be said that man is somehow equal to God. God created man with qualities and abilities which correspond to what is in Him. He created a human being that was completely complementary to His own being. Not a being that was identical to God, but a being who fitted God harmoniously in every aspect.

All of God's plans and purposes are based on the thought of His longing for a worthy partner. So, it would be man who would be created as "God's son"; born from God, and to God, and would grow into an adult son. Man, with his (by God) created potential to grow into a mankind, who as God's wife would live with Him until eternity.

God created the heaven and the earth and all things therein to acquire this woman. In the Garden of Eden, God had us envisioned. There would be a heaven and an earth, richly and abundantly provided with all possibilities and means to prepare that man for his godly destiny.

Why did God create the heaven AND the earth? We might be inclined to say that these worlds cannot be complimentary to each other. But the very opposite is true. The visible, material world does not exist independently on its own. It is influenced, carried and controlled from the spiritual world. Heaven exists for earth and earth exists for heaven. They "belong" to each other; they are complementary to each other.

God is not only King of heaven, but also of earth. It is especially with regard to man, that God created these two worlds.

What does this mean when the Scripture says that God blew the breath of life into his nostrils? In the original Hebrew text a word is used, (neshamah), which is translated as "spirit"; also in other Old Testament verses too, (Job 26:4 and Pro v 20:27). The breath of life is not something "material", but something "spiritual". We could say that the soul connects spirit with matter, the spirit with the body. Perhaps even better said, because the soul lies enclosed in the human spirit, the spiritual body of man has the ability to form a unity with the natural body and functions in it as "neshamah".

In Isaiah 57:16 the word "neshamah" is translated with "soul". Therefore, God gave man something which can be described in words as breath of life, spirit and soul. Therefore, blowing the breath of life indicates the formation of the inner man which is formed from the elements of the invisible world (heaven) which enabled man to function in the spiritual world.

Paul speaks of the eyes of your understanding, (Eph 1:18), the eyes of your heart. Of Jesus it was said that he perceived in His spirit, (Mark 2:8). The spirit of man can therefore "see"; he has spiritual eyes. The book of the Revelation states, "he who has ears, let him hear". So, man not only has natural eyes and ears, but also spiritual senses with which he can perceive the invisible things in the spiritual world. Because man can "hold on to something" in the spiritual world; he also has spiritual hands. In Ephesians 6 we are called to put on the spiritual armor and to clothe our inner man with it. Paul was not speaking here about our natural hands, feet, head and loins, but about our spiritual. In John 13:31 it says that Jesus was troubled in spirit. His spiritual heart was moved. Man therefore not only has a natural, but also a spiritual heart. This is how we understand the meaning of Proverbs 23:26, "My son, give me your heart". This is about our spiritual heart, the core of our life.

In many ways, the inner man was created similar to the heavenly being of angels. The description of angelic beings lend a clear image of a body. Therefore, our inner man has the shape of a body. Man has, as do the angels of God, spiritual eyes and ears. He can, just as the angels, speak in the spiritual world with a spiritual mouth. He has a spiritual heart and spiritual hands and feet. Man has, just as the angels do, a spiritual body by means of which he can function in the spiritual world. This is how God created us.

However, an angel is created for the spiritual world, for an existence in one world. Plants and animals were created for the natural world, they live only on earth.

It must be said that the spiritual heart of man was created and intended as a higher level than that of an angel. Angels cannot assume a physical shape because they do not possess a natural body. Neither do they have a soul. They are spirits and not men, having no flesh and bones, (Luke 24:39).

But the most important distinction between an angel and a man is that the spirit of man has the ability to grow and develop; to mature. Angels do not have this ability; this ability was not created in their spiritual hearts.

So, the spiritual heart of man is something specifically "human" which contains and holds all abilities that God gave to man. The word "soul" describes our being human; while the word "heart" describes the very inner being of man.

Man is a unique creation of God, the highest being that is formed in heaven and on earth. It's not for nothing that the Scripture says that man is the crown of God's creation. God created man for a life in two worlds simultaneously. Because of this, all the laws of the invisible world flow together with the unique principle of growth and development which is the basis

is of the visible world. In man, the material and immaterial is clenched together in one being. Man, together with God, could and would be able to rule both the heaven and the earth. That's how God thought of it all "in the beginning" and continues to think of it in this very day.

God established a unique principle of growth and maturity in this human being. From this perfect starting point, man could grow into an adulthood which God had pictured: a life on a level worthy to God. Therefore, it's not without cause that the psalmist sang: "For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet", (Ps 8:5,6). The Psalm does not point to the imperfect man (nature), but to the still immature man, (stature).

The "let them have dominion" must be understood in all its fullness. The dominion of man(kind) over all created things is only possible from a heavenly position. Not merely a being that only lives on earth. No, a being who has a relationship with the Creator of the earth, to someone who finds himself on the same level as that Creator, and who can work with all possibilities that position offers.

The inner man is a beautiful "composition"; it is not divided. When the Bible uses the word "soul", both the inner core of the person as well as the person as a whole is indicated; because they are inseparably interconnected as one. The personality of man is seated in his most inner being which permeates every fibre of both his natural and spiritual body. The word "soul" encompasses the unseen characteristics of the being "man". No other creature is addressed in such a manner.

Paul writes that the natural comes first and afterwards that which is spiritual, (1Cor 15:46). This was and remains for all men; including Adam. No one can gain understanding of the heavenly realities, if there is not first an awareness of the natural things. This is why Adam and Eve are introduced to us as living a completely naturally orientated life; naming the animals and other earthly duties associated with his dominion over the visible world.

The narrative about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is telling us about the beginning of a new stage in the life of the man which God had created. Outside the Garden, Adam was a creature made in the image of God. But now, Adam is about to undergo a metamorphosis and changed into the likeness of God; from a natural being into a spiritual being ... what we Christians name as a "new creature".

The Genesis account clearly shows that Adam did not initially live in paradise. In verse 15 we read: "The Lord took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it".

Outside the Garden the rule had been: "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food".

However, inside the garden there was one tree, the fruit of which man was not allowed to eat: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die", (Gen 1:29 & 2:16-17). So, just as an eclipse, the garden of Eden had two centers: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The narrative about Adam and Eve dwelling in the Garden of Eden is speaking to us about the beginning of the spiritual part of their lives; their functioning in the invisible world of the spirits (heaven) and about equipping themselves spiritually to discern between good and evil in that dimension. We are reading about when man was in the position to start his journey to the throne of God!

If Adam and Eve wanted to become truly spiritual people they would have to take up their position in the heavenly places. They would never be able to reach the throne of God without meeting fallen angels on their way. This means they needed to have discernment of spirits. Entering into the Kingdom of heaven means: opening one's spirit for the inspiration and influence of the thoughts of God. In their inner man they would have to be able to discern the voice of God and close their spirit against the seducing inspiration of the Evil One who would try to block their way through the heavenly places to the throne of God. That is why Jesus said: "And the sheep follow Him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of the strangers", (John 10:4-5).

The meaning of the earthly garden of Eden is derived from the unseen, spiritual, heavenly paradise. In the Kingdom of Heaven there are two centers: the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness; God and the devil. The trees in the midst of the garden were images of the invisible reality in the Kingdom of heaven; indicating the two opposing kingdoms.

Clearly, the Garden of Eden was not without its grave dangers because it was a picture of the heavenly places. Toil and struggle were the divine instruction to Adam. He had to till the garden. To reach the purpose, man would have to strive to

to enter. Two kingdoms were represented in the garden. Adam had to learn to choose between life and death, between the truth of the Word of God and the error of the lies of the devil. He had to learn to abide only in the thoughts and the words of God and to obey without listening to the enemy. Jesus said: "He who keeps my Word has eternal life".

Although Adam and Eve had no knowledge of the heavenly places yet, they were not to be excused for what they did. Their insight into the natural world should have drawn their attention to the fact that a serpent who spoke with a human voice was a lawless creature. Adam and Eve knew the substance and the nature of all living creation and the way in which it was to behave. It was their duty to protect the garden from lawless intrusions. What should they have done? They should have seized the reptile and thrown it out of Eden. Instead, they allowed the dark evil forces to do their work in this animal and which successfully turned it into a tool of the devil.

The serpent had put itself at the service of the Evil One and opened itself up for him. Now it was cursed and surrendered to the demonic powers. These turned it into an outcast, a pariah of the animal world, whose purpose it is to injure and oppress creation.

The Evil One had taken possession of the serpent in much the same way as the demons later went into the herd of swine in the country of the Gadarenes. In allowing this the serpent had also elevated itself above its natural, earthly limitations and made itself available to the world of the occult. For this reason it was humiliated among the animals and pushed back to the earth where it belonged. The verdict was: "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat, all the days of your life".

The way things went with Adam and Eve was no different from what happens to so many Christians of our days: they were seduced 'by the activity of Satan with all power and with pretended signs and wonders', (2Thess 2:9).

People assume that all supernatural things are from God. We hear many Christians boasting about miraculous healings take place at some evangelistic meeting, about phenomenal forces which are at work where even strong men are thrown onto the floor. Whether these things are in accordance with the Bible, such a question is of minor importance to them. The masses are attracted by the miracles. People who are attracted by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil will be mesmerized by the powers of magic. They see forks and spoons being bent by mysterious forces and old watches start to tick again by means of the lawless powers of the kingdom of darkness. All who seek miracles outside the confines of the faithful church will be deceived in the end.

In paradise the serpent opened a door into the kingdom of heaven by which man was enabled to 'climb in by another way'. By this we can recognize the 'thief and the robber'. In the mass healing campaigns, for instance, miracles are the main thing. The disappointments people have, become reasons to reject the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord taught us that healing and restoration of man will follow the preaching of the gospel.

The words Balaam's ass spoke were true, somebody may object. The animal was used by God. The words the slave girl cried after Paul and his companions were good words. With a loud voice she cried: "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaims to you the way of salvation." (Acts 16:17). But Paul was annoyed by this seemingly positive interference of the Evil One, and in the name of Jesus he commanded the demon to depart. Balaam's ass had served its master throughout its life, and this had created such strong bonds between it and the occult world of the sorcerer that it spoke with a human voice, just as the serpent, and saw more clearly even than the double-hearted prophet.

Adam and Eve should have chased the serpent from the garden. This is a rule in the Kingdom of heaven. For a few moments only Eve refuted the tempting lies of the Evil One, but then she gave in to his subtle message. The first human couple did not obey the words of God precisely, and that is why they were removed from the garden. In our days let us be watchful that we do not sin in the same way as our ancestors by listening to the fantastic and dangerous lies of the Evil One. If we listen to him we, too, will surely lose our contact with the Father and die. Let us instead eat of the tree of life in faith and obedience, and thus have eternal life.

The words of God in Genesis 3:19 could be paraphrased as follows: "As you now prove to, be dust, so you will return to dust". Carnal, natural man cannot enter the eternal Kingdom of God. He will not be changed in a moment; but die and enter into Hades, the realm of the dead. God now prevented man from further developing in the spiritual world.

Before, we saw that eating the fruits of both trees would stimulate man to become a spiritual being. Now God did not want this to happen any longer, for the Evil One was able to claim man for himself. Thus God sent the man and the woman forth from the garden of Eden, the image of the Kingdom of heaven, to return to the soil from which they had been taken.

As far as achieving His purpose was concerned, God thus abandoned the old creation. Henceforth, the best thing for man was to lead an ordinary natural life after the law. For man it would be best to use his spirit in understanding and developing the visible creation. His spirit was no longer allowed to rise up to share in the life of the heavenly places because of the grave dangers threatening there.

For that reason God placed cherubim at the east of the garden who had flaming swords which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. The flaming blade is the image of the word of God which expresses His thoughts and commands. In the Old Covenant man, these words now applied: "The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth He has given to the sons of men", (Psalm 115:16); Deuteronomy 29:29 also says; "The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law".

After Adam and Eve were sent out of Paradise, heaven became a closed region for men. For that reason Old Testament worship concerned itself with the visible natural things instead of with the invisible spiritual things. The Old Covenant had an earthly sanctuary and high priest and ceremonies. However, the law could not address the real causes of sin; the unseen evil spirits. By observing the law, one achieved righteousness by means of outward effort. On the other hand, the New Covenant revealed the things which had been "hidden since the foundation of the world", (Matt 13:35).

The New Covenant mentions the opened heavens. Paul wrote: "For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God", (Cor 2:10). He added: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God". So Paul here mentioned the depths of God, a walk, a struggle and a victory in the heavenly places. To us the Word of God says: "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth", (Col 3:2).

At the east of Eden lies the land of Nod, (Gen 4:16). The word Nod means 'exile' or 'sojourn'. This is the place where Adam and Eve were sent. They were doomed to live as sojourners in a strange country. Their own soil, their proper place in the heavenlies, was closed for them. They could not return to the Garden of Eden, and similarly their inner beings (spirit) could not rise up to the regions for which they had been created.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2012/7/16 3:10

hi, there were 2 trees in the garden the tree of the knowlege os good and eevil and the tree of life. Jesus staited that He was the life. the tree that was eaten of looked good to the eye as it does today for it was religion;good and evil... the tree of life was not as pretty and would not be coveted.it was the cross of christ.man has been choosing the same tree for centuries. look on the this site and watch how many blogs are on sin and sinning and how few are on Jesus and the sweet joy it is to follow Him.jimp

Re: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - posted by Blayne, on: 2012/7/16 4:02

Hi! 'NMatheson' again - :)

I might as well offer some thoughts about your additional question too ... "Did we have any sense of self before we ate it ? Did it divide our soul from our spirit; thus giving us the ability to discern our 'conscience'? What effects of this tree must we avoid today?"

I'm in agreement with Member 'Jesus-Is-God' writing: "Wow, that's a lot of questions :)"

Anyways, some of these questions seem malformed to me; but that I mean, they wrongly presuppose something which interferes with the basic question itself. But I'll try my best to maybe help you through the muddles and puddles of them. :)

We don't normally speak about a 'sense of self' as Christians. Perhaps it would be better said as "sense of identity" or something similar. This would be in keeping with "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified", (1Cor 2:2).

Maybe the question we should be struggling to answer is, "Who am I becoming?" rather than, "Who am I?"

This is because "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known".

We have to have this particular idea firmly placed in our minds: We don't lose the self when following the Gospel. We only lose that portion which does not lawfully belong to self. We are not being cremated; but restored and resurrected. We are not being extinguished but made alive. We, like the parable of the lost coin and lost sheep, do not lose ourselves but find ourselves ... our true identity which is being revealed ... "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is".

Nothing can divide the soul and spirit. Yes, I know that Heb 4:12 seems to say that the Word of God divides the soul and spirit, but let me explain that verse. There is a wrong interpretation which says that the spirit is divided from the soul, the marrow from the joints and the considerations from the thoughts. We should all understand that it is not God's intention to dissect and damage man by His word in such a manner. While God's word brings a division, it is only between good and evil; and in every part of the human life.

The spirit and soul are inseparably intertwined. But as I stated at the beginning here, this question is malformed because it's asking from a wrong posture/position. If you need some thoughts about how the inner man (the invisible part of your existence) functions, that would be better addressed in an entirely new Thread because there are multiple topics/subjects to individually address ... soul, spirit, heart, mind, conscience and such things.

The trees in the Garden of Eden are symbols/pictures of invisible things. Nevertheless, you have the ability within your renewed spirit to comprehend these invisible things by faith.

After all, Hebrews plainly states what true Christian faith is "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see", (NIV). In other words, you can understand the unseen heavenly things through faith which grasps "things unseen" and causes them to become visible to your renewed mind. This is why we are instructed to "set our minds on things above" which enables us to see into the unseen things of the invisible heavenlies through faith.

I hope that might help you some.

Re: - posted by NMatheson (), on: 2012/7/16 19:40

Thank you very much Blayne for your response. I love seeing others perspectives on these things.

Personally (I guess I'm not sure if we disagree), I view the creation account as a very literal writing. I do not believe that the garden was a merely spiritual place. I believe those trees were actually there and not just a metaphor.

What you wrote farther below was quite a read and I need to read it several times because many many thoughts were addressed in it but I may have mis-worded what I meant exactly.

I believe that the Lord never commands us to do anything without His best intentions in mind. He never says "no" merely for the sake of saying no. There are reasons for it. Very deep spiritual reasons that we may not understand, but must obey in faith. So what I wonder are the effects of the sin Adam committed. Not just the curse, which was the judgment from God, but the effects on us. What was God trying to protect us from? They were unaware and guiltless of their nakedness before eating of the tree. What does that say? Once they ate of it, they tried to cover themselves but God knew that their covering was not enough. Blood must be used to atone for it, thus a covering of skin from an animal. He was saying that only by blood could we be delivered from sin.

What I mean by sense of self is exactly what Jim was talking about. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the law. We brought the law on ourselves by eating the fruit of it. We wanted to know what was good and evil, the knowledge of God. When we attained it, it was a curse because we could in no way fulfill it. So how many people today live in this? People often say this is evil, that is evil... smoking and drinking are two major subjects that come to mind. Are they evil in and of themselves? I don't know but I would imagine that the freedom we have in Christ is greater than that. Now don't get me wrong, I am in no way in support of drunkenness. I am however opposed to the idea of judging based on outward actions and ignoring the heart of the matter.

I remember one day when I was young, I was at church. My grandma decided to come with us and the people who sat in front of us said out loud, "Who smells like smoke? Why would you come here smelling like that?" Needless to say, my grandma never came back. I feel it is a lack of love for the person themselves that we are guilty of, and I wonder if the constant pointing out of flaws in others is a result of eating that fruit.

I'm glad to have a place to unburden my crazy thoughts. I have a lot to think about and I thank you for taking your time to

address some of these questions.

Re: - posted by Blayne, on: 2012/7/17 2:17

Hi! 'NMatheson'

You wrote: "I do not believe that the garden was a merely spiritual place. I believe those trees were actually there and not just a metaphor".

Yes, you are absolutely correct about this. The trees were "actually there". But just like the Tabernacle, the trees are also to us Christians visible images which reveal invisible realities; an earthly pattern of unseen heavenly things.

You wrote: "They were unaware and guiltless of their nakedness before eating of the tree. What does that say? Once they ate of it, they tried to cover themselves but God knew that their covering was not enough".

The sense of nakedness which Adam and Eve felt was spiritual. They had lost their garment of righteousness. "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life".

Evil is an INNER reality; the guilt and unrighteousness which follows sin originates inwardly. Adam and Eve had their garments of righteousness torn and shredded; their spiritual body (inner man) had become naked.

In Revelation the garments are images of the righteous deeds of the faithful during their life on earth. This garment must be woven during our life in order not to go naked and be seen exposed, "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame", (Rev 16:15).

Well, 'NMatheson', you strike me as someone who is very sincere and eager for the Lord and I've been encouraged by reading your discussions in here. I wish you continued blessings in your Christian life.

This will be my final discussion/comment at SermonIndex. I sorta' stumbled into here doing some Bible research a couple of months ago. I've read some excellent thoughts and comments since and I'm very grateful for that. I've been a long-standing member at another Forum and I just don't have the time to properly participate here.

Re: - posted by NMatheson (), on: 2012/7/18 19:32

Thank you Blayne. I know some of these questions may seem elementary and thank you for putting up with them lol. I realize sin is an inner reality but for some reason never related it to this scripture in the way you did. Really I just wish to learn more about our Creator and His creation and the nature of our existence. Lately to me the subject of guilt in particular has been on my mind and I have the impression that part of the key to understanding it more fully lies in the creation account.

Sad to see you leave and I pray blessing for you wherever you go brother.

Re: - posted by Blayne, on: 2012/7/19 7:00

Hi! 'NMatheson'

On the contrary! I was profoundly moved by the sentiment of your questions. Your questions were FAR from elementary! Using your own formulation: I'm very impressed with your acknowledgement that our Christian journey is inextricably linked to our Creator and His creation and the nature of our existence ... ummm, maybe more fully stated as: our Creator and His RE-creation and the nature of our spiritual existence. Regardless, I fully understood what you were saying and was much encouraged about you because of it.

Anyways, 'NMatheson', I wouldn't want you thinkin' that I'm some sort of Bible sleuth 'er scholar 'er anything like that. Jesus found me suffocated on the roadside of life; at a time when I was walking dazed and wounded in a land of stolen spirits.

The Bible says, "You have not because you ask not". I've learned that only those who are courageously honest about themselves and their condition can genuinely testify to the validity of Jesus saying: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you".

I spent the first few years of my Christian life unable to reach beyond my protesting ego and thus failed to admit to my needs and opening myself to the healing power of God.

To put it bluntly: I was jus' a messed up guy who became desperately weary of the mess I was in and called out to the Name above every name.

But here too, I discovered yet another distinguishing separation. It's not sufficient to be satisfied with our being redeemed (rescued); we must also earnestly desire to be restored (re-created).

It was these two critical issues I mentioned above which eventually brought me to a critical fork-in-the-road; namely the difference between being a "disciple of Jesus" and a "disciple of the Kingdom".

It isn't that being a disciple of the kingdom is of a higher order or stature than the other; absolutely not! It merely involves a shift in focus; in keeping with the Scripture saying, "put your mind on things above".

There are many Christians who eagerly testify that they are "following Jesus". But I often catch myself asking the question: are they following Jesus's footPRINTS (righteous behavior) or His footSTEPS? ... "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am".

The followers of Jesus seem to know every rule in the book (so to speak); they have a moral judgement about everything earthly; are quick to discern between good and evil in this visible world.

This is because they know the gospel ABOUT Jesus.

But the question we must ask ourselves is: what do we know about following after the footSTEPS of Jesus? What do we know about the gospel OF Jesus?

After all, it's only the gospel OF Jesus which invites us to follow in His footSTEPS.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that I discovered that there are two different ways to follow Jesus: with our eyes focused on "things of above" or with our nose drawn to "things of the earth". This is how we should understand the Scripture saying, "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus". Our focus changes from following after Jesus' footPRINTS on the shores of Galilee to following after His footSTEPS in the kingdom of God.

When reading the Bible, we always want to agree with the verse asking, "'Have you understood this?' They said to him, 'Yes'".

I sometimes suspect that this posture of Jesus, "He sighed deeply in His spirit", (Mark 8:12), applies to those insisting to follow only after the footPRINTS of Jesus.

The Scribes of Jesus' day were well-versed in the law and the prophets. Yet, they did not understand the words of Jesus. This was because they were spiritually blind and took the words of Jesus literally. They tried to fix the thoughts of Jesus on to the visible things and not on the invisible things concerning the kingdom of heaven. Paul remarked that there was a "veil over their minds", (2Cor 3:15).

Speaking about footPRINTS:

Usually the gospel message being preached today has for its subject one or more aspects of the person or the ministry of Jesus. This is the gospel 'ABOUT' Jesus.

This kind of knowledge is essential; absolutely! The gospel 'ABOUT' Jesus rightly forms the foundation of our faith. After all, the forgiveness of sins and our justification have been accomplished by a crucified Christ, and there is no salvation, deliverance, healing, restoration, fullness of the Holy Spirit, or growth to mature manhood except on the basis of the grace and truth which came through Jesus Christ, (John 1:17).

Therefore, it's not for nothing that Paul wrote, "For I decided to know nothing amongst you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified".

Speaking about footSTEPS:

Yet, the Lord had something else in mind when He spoke these prophetic words: "And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come", (Matt 24:14).

While the gospel ABOUT Jesus is the indispensable milk, it is insufficient as food for the development of God's children "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". This requires the preaching of the gospel 'OF' Jesus Christ ... the gospel message which Jesus Himself preached when He was on earth.

Matthew 3:24 says: "And He went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people". This was the gospel 'OF' Jesus.

Rather than preaching a gospel about Himself, our Lord revealed the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven. His own personal walk was in the Kingdom of God, and His entire life was a manifestation of this fact. Apart from preaching, He also showed what life in the Kingdom of God was all about. In word and in deed He preached the 'gospel of glory'.

The gospel OF Jesus was a message absolutely new. Jesus explained the Father's nature, for no one had ever seen the Father, but Jesus revealed to us the Father who is in heaven. He was the firstborn of the New Creation, that is, the first new or spiritual man who made known the thoughts of God. He also exposed the evil powers which were resisting God's purposes and intents for man.

For all who understood His teachings, Jesus opened up an entirely new world. To those who followed after His footSTEPS, He gave the power to rule in the heavenly places.

The Old Covenant functioned in the visible world; it was a shadow of the things to come. As such it was unable to fully develop and mature those who served God. But Jesus invited His followers to share in a heavenly call which enabled them to actually strive for the spiritual maturity. This is why they focus their eyes on the crowned Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of their faith.

The gospel OF Jesus revealed that man is destined to be set free from the realm of darkness and the powers of darkness, to enter into the light of God's Kingdom. It proclaimed that man is destined to walk on the high road in the heavenly places and become perfectly equipped for every good work, (2Tim 3:16).

Jesus said of those who follow the footSTEPS of His Gospel message, "Scribes who had been trained for the Kingdom of heaven", or in other words: scribes who had become disciples or pupils of the Kingdom of heaven.

This means that the Gospel OF Jesus must also to be part of the Christian experience.

Those who follow the footSTEPS of Jesus, have their minds "set on things above". They have understood that having enormous knowledge of the word of God, (just as the scribes and Pharisees had), does not necessarily exclude being blinded to the Kingdom of heaven and consequently for the Master's message.

So, it is 'NMatheson' that we have to keep asking ourselves: have the leaders, the ministers, the pastors, the teachers and the elders of our churches really become disciples of the Kingdom? Are they pupils of the Kingdom of heaven? Or do they insist on turning the Kingdom into a matter of the visible world? Do they preach only the truncated gospel 'ABOUT' Jesus?

Those who only follow after the footPRINTS of Jesus mostly look forward to the Son of man's VISIBLE manifestation on this earth. But those who are following after the footSTEPS of Jesus have become disciples of the Kingdom of heaven and who first seek to become sons of God themselves, conformed to the image of the Son. It is for this reason they follow Him where He now is: in the heavenly places.

Re: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - posted by rufnrust (), on: 2012/7/19 8:09

God intended for us to know LIFE! Besides, who knows how many other trees there were. He said "of all the trees in the garden you may freely eat but".... It was almost like they went straight for the "one" tree they were told not to eat from.

Rick Joyner has a great book called "There were two trees in the garden". It follows the theme of "knowledge vs "life" through the Word.

Ruf

Re: - posted by Blayne, on: 2012/7/19 8:23

As Christians we know (or, at least we should know) that it is EARTHLY knowledge that is redundant. Spiritual knowledge is absolutely necessary to the Christian walk. There can be no LIFE without knowledge; this is in keeping with "My people perish from a lack of KNOWLEDGE" ... it doesn't say for lack of life, (Hosea 4:6). It is the lack of knowing the Word which causes the lack of life. Rick Joyner might have been better to speak about knowledge concerning the "Word of Life". (Phil 2:16, 1John 1:1).

Re: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - posted by savannah, on: 2012/7/19 23:31

Genesis 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

From God's standpoint the result of Adam's probation was not left in uncertainty.

Before He formed him out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, God knew exactly how the appointed test would terminate.

With this statement every Christian reader must be in accord, for, to deny God's foreknowledge is to deny His omniscience, and this is to repudiate one of the fundamental attributes of Deity.

But we must go further: not only had God a perfect foreknowledge of the outcome of Adam's trial, not only did His omniscient eye see Adam eating of the forbidden fruit, but He decreed beforehand that he should do so.

This is evident not only from the general fact that nothing happens save that which the Creator and Governor of the universe has eternally purposed, but also from the express declaration of Scripture that Christ as a Lamb "verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:20).

If, then, God had foreordained before the foundation of the world that Christ should, in due time, be offered as a Sacrifice for sin, then it is unmistakably evident that God had also foreordained sin should enter the world, and if so, that Adam should transgress and fall. In full harmony with this, God Himself placed in Eden the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and also allowed the Serpent to enter and deceive Eve.

Here then is the difficulty: If God has eternally decreed that Adam should eat of the tree, how could he be held responsible not to eat of it?

Formidable as the problem appears, nevertheless, it is capable of a solution, a solution, moreover, which can be grasped even by the finite mind.

The solution is to be found in the distinction between God's secret will and His revealed will.

Human responsibility is measured by our knowledge of God's revealed will; what God has told us, not what He has not told us, is the definer of our duty. So it was with Adam.

That God had decreed sin should enter this world through the disobedience of our first parents was a secret hid in His own breast. Of this Adam knew nothing, and that made all the difference so far as his responsibility was concerned.

Adam was quite unacquainted with the Creator's hidden counsels. What concerned him was God's revealed will. And that was plain! God had forbidden him to eat of the tree, and that was enough.

But God went further: He even warned Adam of the dire consequences which would follow should he disobey--death would be the penalty.

Transgression, then, on the part of Adam was entirely excuseless. Created with no evil nature in him, with a will in perfect equipoise, placed in the fairest environment, given dominion over all the lower creation, allowed full liberty with only a single restriction upon him, plainly warned of what would follow an act of insubordination to God, there was every possible inducement for Adam to preserve his innocence; and, should he fail and fall, then by every principle of righteousness his blood must lie upon his own head, and his guilt be imputed to all in whose behalf he acted.

Had God disclosed to Adam His purpose that sin would enter this world, and that He had decreed Adam should eat of the forbidden fruit, it is obvious that Adam could not have been held responsible for the eating of it.

But in that God withheld the knowledge of His counsels from Adam, his accountability was not interfered with.

Again; had God created Adam with a bias toward evil, then human responsibility had been impaired and man's probation

merely one in name. But inasmuch as Adam was included among that which God at the end of the sixth day, pronounced "Very good.", and, inasmuch as man was made "upright" (Ecc. 7:29), then every mouth must be "stopped" and "the whole world" must acknowledge itself "guilty before God" (Rom 3:19).

Once more, it needs to be carefully borne in mind that God did not decree that Adam should sin and then inject into Adam an inclination to evil, in order that His decree might be carried out.

No; "God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth He any man" (Jas. 1:13). Instead, when the Serpent came to tempt Eve, God caused her to remember His command forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and of the penalty attached to disobedience!

Thus, though God had decreed the Fall, in no sense was He the Author of Adam's sin, and at no point was Adam's responsibility impaired.

Thus may we admire and adore the "manifold wisdom of God", in devising a way whereby His eternal decree should be accomplished, and yet the responsibility of His creatures be preserved intact.

Perhaps a further word should be added concerning the decretive will of God, particularly in its relation to evil.

First of all we take the high ground that, whatever things God does or permits, are right, just, and good, simply because God does or permits them.

When Luther gave answer to the question, "Whence it was that Adam was permitted to fall, and corrupt his whole posterity; when God could have prevented him from falling, etc", he said, "God is a Being whose will acknowledges no cause: neither is it for us to prescribe rules to His sovereign pleasure, or call Him to account for what He does. He has neither superior nor equal; and His will is the rule of all things. He did not thus will such and such things because they were right, and He was bound to will them; but they are therefore equitable and right because He wills them. The will of man, indeed, may be influenced and moved; but God's will never can. To assert the contrary is to undeify Him".

To affirm that God decreed the entrance of sin into His universe, and that He foreordained all its fruits and activities, is to say that which, at first may shock the reader; but reflection should show that it is far more shocking to insist that sin has invaded His dominions against His will, and that its exercise is outside His jurisdiction: for in such a case where would be His omnipotency?

No; to recognise that God has foreordained all the activities of evil, is to see that He is the Governor of sin: His will determines its exercise, His power regulates its bounds (Psa. 76:10).

He is neither the Inspirer nor the Infuser of sin in any of His creatures, but He is its Master, by which we mean God's management of the wicked is so entire that, they can do nothing save that which His hand and counsel, from everlasting, determined should be done.

Though nothing contrary to holiness and righteousness can ever emanate from God, yet He has, for His own wise ends, ordained His creatures to fall into sin.

Had sin never been permitted, how could the justice of God have been displayed in punishing it?

How could the wisdom of God have been manifested in so wondrously over-ruling it?

How could the grace of God have been exhibited in pardoning it?

How could the power of God have been exercised in subduing it?

A very solemn and striking proof of Christ's acknowledgment of God's decretal of sin is seen in His' treatment of Judas.

The Saviour knew full well that Judas would betray Him, yet we never read that He expostulated with him!

Instead, He said to him, "That thou doest do quickly" (John 13:27)!

Yet, mark this was said after he had received the sop and Satan had taken possession of his heart. Judas was already prepared for and determined on his traitorous work, therefore did Christ permissively (bowing to His Father's ordination) bid him go forth to his awful work.

Thus, though God is not the Author of sin, and though sin is contrary to His holy nature, yet the existence and operations of it are not contrary to His will, but subservient to it.

God never tempts man to sin, but He, has, by His eternal counsels (which He is now executing), determined its course.

Moreover, though God has decreed man's sins, yet is man responsible not to commit them, and blameable because he does.

Strikingly were these two sides of this awful subject brought together by Christ in that statement of His:

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come (because God has foreordained them); but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh" (Matt. 18:7).

So, too, though all which took place at Calvary was by the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23), nevertheless, "wicked hands" crucified the Lord of glory, and, in consequence, His blood has righteously rested upon them and on their children.

High mysteries are these, yet it is both our happy privilege and bounden duty to humbly receive whatsoever God has been pleased to reveal concerning them in His Word of Truth. - by AWP

Re: , on: 2012/7/20 0:16

Quote:

-----He had decreed Adam should eat of the forbidden fruit

Jas 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

Jas 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Jas 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Jas 1:16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Jas 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

GOD's Foreknowledge of Adam's transgression - Yes.

That GOD is the Author of sin - Definitely not.

The Lamb was foreordained/slain before the creation of the world 'because' of GOD's foreknowledge.

GOD did not create robots - but desires that men/women would love/obey Him of their own freewill, as seen clearly through Job.

Quote:

-----Moreover, though God has decreed man's sins,
yet is man responsible not to commit them,
and blameable because he does.

This could drive a Christian or even an unsaved person insane.

Thank GOD there aren't many that hold to this belief.

Re: Jesus-is-GOD - posted by proudpapa, on: 2012/7/20 0:28

RE //Thank GOD there aren't many that hold to this belief.//

actually there are many that hold to that belief especially in the more educated Christian elite and more ascribing to it every day. truly what is written is Historic Protestantism, The Gospel of Grace as they like to call themselves.

Re: , on: 2012/7/20 0:35

If 7 point Calvinism is on the increase, then I KNOW we're in the Last Days.

I'm going to email that post to my Pastor.

It's not "historic" as far as the early Church goes.

Bless you!

{eta} Yes, I know who wrote it.

Re: correct myself - posted by proudpapa, on: 2012/7/20 0:49

I wrote RE: //truly what is written is Historic Protestantism, The Gospel of Grace as they like to call themselves.//

I should correct myself from what I read it sounds very similar to me to what I have read of Luthers Bondage of the Will and Calvins institutes of which I am no expert.

If what was wrote differs from Historic Protestantism, I am open for correction.

Re: , on: 2012/7/20 1:00

I'm sorry PaPa - you're right in your terminology - I only meant it's not "historic" to the Early Church. Had posted the ECF on "freewill" not too long ago and was thinking of that and others.

They don't believe in the last days neither - so ... just try to agree where we can - but I just worry about some young folk getting all confused over their temptation to sin and where it's coming from - then blaming GOD.

Excuse my caps earlier as well. Not yelling, just emphasis, for a lack of bold print.

Theres just so much Scripture that could be posted but - it won't help.

'Thanks' for your post on 'forgiving' the other night.

Re: - posted by NMatheson (), on: 2012/7/20 12:35

Hey man, scripture always helps! It's the only thing that matters.