

“A TREE TO BE DESIRED”

A ‘temcat’ study

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Genesis 3:6

Two trees in the centre of the garden; the ‘Tree of Life’ and the ‘Tree of Knowledge’. People, who read this account and just see two trees, are missing one of the grandest lessons on salvation in the whole Bible!

It is a fact in Bible prophecy that the first time a subject appears in the Bible is most important, and all major aspects of it are present in the first account. So here in the centre of the garden we see the issues of what was to become the Great Controversy spelled out for us with great clarity.

To begin our exploration of the subject first we need to understand some basic facts about God. We all know the basic that “God is Love”-1John 4:16 “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

But ‘Love’ is a very abused word in our language and we don’t always have a clear concept of what the ‘Love of God’ really is. ‘Love’ in our culture all too often degenerates into a sentimental feeling of warm teddy-bearishness that tells us nothing accurate about the character of the Great God of the universe.

Let’s see what the Bible says: “And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” Exodus 34:5-7:

“To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.” Ps 92:15

Here we see a character described that is 100 % good. We know also that the Ten Commandment Law of God is, in truth, a representation of God’s Character put into human concepts.

There is another aspect of God’s character that is very important to us to understand:

De 7:9 “Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;”

God is 100% faithful; He does not change or go back on His word.

Now we see something else in verse 14:

“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:”

Because God is 100% good and righteous altogether, he has absolutely no toleration of wrong. He describes this intolerance of evil as His being ‘Jealous’. Now Jealousy is something the Bible has some warnings about-

Song 8:6 “...jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.”

We see the Hebrew word translated 'jealousy' is <qin'ah>. It is also translated as 'envy' but also as 'zeal'. In the text "The zeal of Thy house has eaten me up" it can also be read as "Jealousy for Thy house".

It seems strange to us to have something we tend to think of as an undesirable trait, to be part of God's make up, however a little study shows us that God has much more to say about being a Jealous God in the Bible, than He does about being Love. But it has to be put into perspective. Man is naturally evil since the fall and therefore the Jealousy of man, like the wrath of man, worketh not the righteousness of God. (Jas 1:20)

But God is 100% righteous, or good; He is also 100% faithful and unchangeable. So now we begin to understand. It all goes back to God's intolerance of evil.

Ps 45:7 "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness:.."

Why does God HATE? To understand that just look at what He hates- He HATES wickedness! Why? Because He IS a God of righteousness and good, AND He IS a God of LOVE! Love cannot tolerate harm to come to what it loves. Wickedness is harmful. Anything that deviates from the character of a perfect God is harmful.

You see, if I think I am perfect and everybody ought to do exactly what I want him to do, well, I have a problem. Why? Because I am NOT perfect- I am a fallen being. The Bible is clear about that- "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Pr 16:25

So I could really believe I am guiding you aright, but I could advise you right into death. (This is why we must not guide others or ourselves by our personal ideas but rather only take or give counsel from the Word!) But when we look to God we see something different indeed; He IS perfect. He DOES know what is right all the time and He does what is right all the time. You know, it is easier for us to comprehend His Almighty power than it is for us fallen beings to comprehend His Almighty right-ness.

So God tells us:

"That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days:" Deut. 30:20

"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul," Deut. 10:12

"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." Deut. 30:16

Do you see the pattern?

Obey God = LIFE! Turn away from obeying God= DEATH

Now do you understand why God is Jealous and at the same time a God of Love?

OK. Now lets get back to the TREES. I told you that the whole good vs. evil story is spelled out for us there.

Why were there two trees? Why did a God of Love have a restriction that could lead to evil? Here we see the reason:

"... for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul." De 13:3

There can be no true love unless the being is free to not love. There can be no true obedience unless the being is free to disobey. So the God of Love made a simple rule to test His

children. He said in effect, "Here is everything good; I want you to have it all and enjoy it to the full. But here is evil; I don't want you to have that. Stay away from it. Don't touch it."

Adam and Eve were carefully informed as to the rebellion of Lucifer and the reason why God had to test them. They also were given mountains of evidence that God had love for them and their highest good in mind. They had a whole planet of evidence! They were not, as some people maliciously believe today, sentenced by God to live a dull, uninteresting slave-type life, unable to develop their minds and abilities. (Neither, by the way, were they denied having sexual marriage relations as some think the issue was about.)

God told them that if they were willing and obedient, everything that was good would be theirs to enjoy, forever. All that they needed back then for eternal happiness is simply to recognise that God's way was the only right way and to obey Him. His Laws were not grievous then, nor are they now.

He was not just arbitrarily sitting there on His throne, wanting to create beings so He could have someone to boss around. No indeed, He is not the least inclined to be arbitrary or bossy. He just knows where the line between good and evil lies; and He shows it to us and says- Keep on my side, because it's bad over there; it's death over there."

Stop and think; it would be insanity to do, as so many in the worldly philosophies, under the tutelage of Satan, say, and create beings with abilities, and then deny them any opportunity to use those abilities. Or give them a mind capable of endless development and forbid them to develop it. God is not insane; but we can sure see who is!

So here we see Eve with the whole world available to her, but where is she? Staring at the 'mysterious' tree! What was there about that tree, that God should forbid her to eat of it? It sure must be something wonderful if God was keeping it to Himself. Now here we see the greatest tragedy of the ages begin to happen, the tragedy out of which every sad tragedy in this whole wretched world, throughout its whole wretched history arose.

Satan, through the serpent says, "Yea, hath God said...?" and His whole tone shows contempt for the authority of the One who had given the command. Now here we see insanity communicated from the serpent to Eve. "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil."

Now think for a minute and see what Eve failed to see under the serpents bewitching gaze; If God really wanted to prevent them from having the tree for His own selfish purposes, because He had something that He wanted to keep away from them; could He not have placed it where they could not get to it? Of course He could. But God is not of that kind of mind at all. Anything that HE has which is good for His creatures He not only is willing for them to have it, but He eagerly offers it to them, as it were. Notice here in Rev. 3:21 "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Now does that sound like a selfish dictator? Here I am on my throne and you better do what I say or else!! This is the kind of 'god' that Satan tries to convince man that our heavenly Father is. But here is Jesus, the Son of God saying, you can sit here with me in my throne. Any good thing I have, you can have too.

So Eve began to absorb the insanity of Satan and to think in crooked and untrue ways. The serpent presented only circumstantial evidence of his theory; that God was being mean and selfish. What was his evidence? That he was a serpent and he was in the tree and eating from it and now he could talk. So if he, who was only an animal could gain so much from eating the fruit, what could she, made in the image of God become! He appealed to pride.

Everything in nature and in Eve's experience with her Creator had presented proof that God was not selfish; but here a bit of circumstantial evidence, of which she had not the whole

story, was allowed to shake her faith in the truthfulness of God. How many millions will be lost for allowing some bit of seeming contradiction to shake their faith in God's Word as truthful?

So mankind had all the good- and they wanted what God jealously did not want them to have. What was that? The EVIL! The harm, the pain, the death. They wanted that because they thought of it as KNOWLEDGE! The 'Tree of Knowledge'. They wanted the good, AND the evil. AND included in the deal and at the bottom of it all was the desire to decide for themselves what WAS good and what WAS evil.

This is what was at the root of the whole thing. God says, "I know what is best and I give you all the good; trust Me, and leave the evil alone. I am God."

Man said, "Sure I want the good, but I am going to decide for myself what is good and what is evil. I don't need anybody to tell me what is good and what is evil. I'll figure that out for myself; that way I can be sure that I don't miss out on anything good. I am my own god."

Really, it is not possible for a man to be his own Creator, neither is it possible for any of us to be our own god. Adam and Eve thought they were declaring their own independence, but all they did was to exchange a loving Father for a cruel dictator. Satan began at once to dish out the evil and tell them it was good.

Has man acquired a broad knowledge of evil? Oh yes, indeed he has! Guided by the enemy of all right doing, he has made evil into a thousand sciences. They range from almost pure evil to almost good with a few drops of evil, like rat poison mixed in. And when the difference between Good, the Truth, the expressed will of God; and evil is clearly laid out before most of mankind, what happens?

Oh, I wish I could say that we quickly drop the evil and eagerly grasp the good and cling to it. But it just is not so. We just cling to the idea of Eve; "I'll decide for myself what is good, thank you! I am my own god, and I don't need anyone to show me what is good for me."

Do you see now the question that the two trees brought before our race? It is the question of 'Who is God around here, anyway?' Is the great Creator, who in every way is worthy to be the ultimate authority, going to be acknowledged? Or are we going to cling to our own ideas and 'independence' until we perish with the author of rebellion himself?

In the beginning there were two trees; it was a simple test. One was the will of God and it was LIFE to partake of it; the other was against the will of God and it was DEATH to partake of it. It wasn't poisonous, there was nothing in the tree itself; it was merely a principle- "Who is God around here?" Pharaoh asked the same question remember? "Who is God that I should obey Him?"

There is another interesting side to this 'Great Controversy'. God is NOT a tyrant and because He is not, He will not use force or coercion to get His children to obey Him. He only uses one thing; TRUTH! The truth that He loves us and DOES know what is best for us, and wants only what is best for us, is something that the heart has to decide for itself. It cannot be forced to believe it, or threatened into it. The heart has to see the facts God has laid out to prove His right to be God, and respond by loving Him in return, by its own free choice.

The service given gladly and freely from love is the ONLY service acceptable to God. Think about that the next time you are tempted to try to force or manipulate someone into 'obeying' God. Only Satan's side uses force, and they have to use it, as they have no truth to use.

Everywhere in our world today you see the sides drawn between Truth and lies with force always being used on the side of lies to make them accepted.

You see it in evolution- the facts just pile up declaring evolution is impossible; so laws are passed to enforce the teaching of evolution and forbid the teaching of truth.

In medicine- God's Laws of Health are true and stand like mighty monuments to the wisdom of a loving Creator, but drug companies are big money, and drugs and vaccines etc. make

billions for their pushers; so laws are passed forcing people to use drugs and receive harmful treatments and vaccines.

In religion- God's Word is clear and easily understood; so new versions are produced to blur it and bring it closer to the spiritualised error the world loves.

God's Word tells us to go everywhere and teach the TRUTH; but the lovers of fables and evil, pass laws to stop people from hearing the truth.

God's Word shows us certain habits and 'lifestyles' are wrong and wicked; so laws are passed to stop us from warning people who do these things of their ultimate fate.

And the funny thing is that people call tolerance of evil, and leaving people in darkness, - love. God is the clearest example of perfect Love and what do we see in Him? He will not tolerate evil. No, not to make people feel good, or for any other reason- why? Because evil destroys and kills, and God will have no part of it.

Everywhere you look you see TRUTH, quietly standing there, waiting to be acknowledged; and error using force and manipulation of every sort, to try and keep the people enslaved.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

Yes, the TRUTH of God and freedom are synonymous. God created us free and He wants us free; if we obey Him we will be free!

In the final test there are two days: one set up and honoured by God, the Creator, for all time as His sign for His people to observe to show that they accept His covenant. "I am God; and you are my people". He promises us again that if we obey Him, we will receive all the good. We are not perfect anymore like Adam and Eve were, fresh from their Creator's hands, but that is no problem, for the Creator can recreate. If we just decide that He IS God around here, and we ARE His people, and we surrender to Him and accept the atoning blood of our Saviour to redeem us, then He will work in our surrendered hearts and lives, creating good and removing evil, until every trace of evil is eradicated. God's people, every one of them who will ever be saved, will be very clear in their minds about 'Who is God around here?'

But there is another day: a day set up by man under the direction of Satan, the great rebel. Most of the world now gives homage to that day. It is the first day of the week. The day of 'light' or the sun-day. (we often use 'light' as a synonym for 'knowledge') It is the one day of the week that could not possibly have been the Sabbath, because it was the first working day. God could have created in one day and rested the second; or any of the others, but not the first; that is impossible. Satan chose the day of 'light' to be his Sabbath. Friends, these things have not happened by accident! It is not just some people, or even God himself, being nitpicky and making a 'big deal' over something insignificant!

Are you beginning to see the parallels? Two trees; one of LIFE and one of KNOWLEDGE. Two days; one says 'God is my Creator and my God!' The other says, 'Well, God is all very well in His place, but I will decide how I am going to serve Him. I am 'enlightened'; I am my own god.'

I have noticed that people today are mostly all crowded under the 'Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil'. Sure they want 'good', but they will decide what IS good. Also they want good but don't want anyone to forbid them to have evil too, if they want it.

The escalating popularity of Halloween is a good example of this. Are ugliness, death, evil doing, torture, and cruelty really desirable to most people? Of course not, but look at them parading these things as if they were 'fun', and 'cute' and innocent on that day.

I see people dressed up as every kind of evil, ugly thing. If they stayed as ugly as they do themselves up to be- wouldn't they be upset? You see woman at work with spiders dangling from their ears. These same women would go into a screaming fit if a tiny, real spider ventured onto

their desks! And a spider isn't really evil. What about some of the 'things' they dress up like? What a twisted message we give to our poor children! Most of the year we would punish them for dark, evil behaviours but on Halloween we tell them it is cute?!

Look at the subject of health; people want the 'good' of health, and they will go to great lengths to have it- if they can have it in their own way, and if they don't have to give up anything to have it. They will join clubs and sports; they will buy vitamins and herbs and take all kinds of treatments- many even painful. But don't show them the simple 8 Laws of Health! Oh, No! They would have to give up their indulgences and change their habits. No, just give them 'something to take' and assure them that they can keep right on with their unhealthy, evil habits and they will pay any price to have it.

What is the main reason why we have so much darkness around us everywhere today? Let's let the Bible tell us:

John 3:19 "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

2Tim. 3,4 "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Isa. 30:9-11 "That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us."

What is at the bottom of it all? Rebellion and love of sin! that's it in a nutshell. And it applies to you and me, as well as all 'those other people' out there. We all naturally love our own ways. We go astray from the womb, the Bible says, and anyone who has cared for children knows how they love their own way.

But we all have rebellious hearts, and unless we fall on the Rock and be broken and surrender to our Saviour, to be remade and cleansed and set free of sin totally, we will just get more and more determined to follow our own path right into perdition. Why are things falling apart around us in the world today? Because man has set himself to go his own way no matter how much evidence is there that shows him to be wrong.

Isa 5:20 "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

It isn't more facts we need, friends; it isn't more light. We need to surrender to what we already know; we cannot be our own god. We must decide "Who is God around here anyway?"

The final test? Well in this corner we have the popular side; here are ranged all the proud and those wise in their own eyes. They claim they are going to 'honour God' and He is going to bless them. They are going to do great things for Him. They are going to set aside a day of their own choosing, just for Him, and then force everybody, rich and poor, bond and free to keep it. They are going to make great sacrifices to Him, but in their own way. "Sure God is God, but I am greater because I'll tell Him how I am going to serve Him. He'll have to accept me on my terms." Who really is their god? Why Satan, of course, is the god of this world! He's the only one they are honouring.

2Th 2:4 "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

In the other corner are those who declare; "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." Ps 100:3

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” Jos 24:15

How do they show Who is their God?

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.” 1Jo 2:3

Re 14:12 “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

The two trees were not there by accident; they were part of God’s wise plan. The two days are not accidental either; it is the TEST that God has chosen to finish the judgement of the living and bring this whole nasty ‘sin’ mess to an end. It is decision time and everywhere people are making decisions that are going to seal their fate.

Now tell me, what if back in Eden, the two trees were placed in the garden and not explained to Adam and Eve? Suppose God sent an angel with the job to warn them about the ‘Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil’ and he decided, ‘Oh, they are happy with what they know, I won’t bother them with this information as it might make them upset.’

Ridiculous, you say, and rightly so! Well, it is God’s plan to use the Sabbath/Sunday issue to allow people to choose whether they will serve Him or not. So it IS certainly God’s will that EVERYONE be informed about what issues are at stake, is it not? God could not be fair if people had to choose something, but had no idea what or why.

In the final judgment no one saved or lost in the entire universe will be able to point out anything that God could have done better, or any way in which He has been unfair. So- the clear message of the Mark of the Beast is God’s information to go to every reasoning being on earth.

This being the case, do you really think that all the powers of hell and wicked men in confederacy can prevent this message from going out? “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.” 2Co 13:8 Truth is like a mighty mountain, we can smash ourselves against it but never can we move it!

"Truth is Truth"

It doesn't cease being truth just because it offends us.

It doesn't cease being truth if we don't like it

It doesn't cease being truth if we don't believe it.

"Truth is Truth" even if no one likes it or believes it:

We'll all find that out sooner or later whether we like it or not!

If we fall on the Rock- we will be broken:

If the Rock falls on us; it will grind us to powder!

Take courage brothers and sisters, first lay hold with your own soul on the truth and surrender completely to your Creator God, then work for your family and then out to all the world. Carry the message that cannot be stopped. Carry the last invitation of mercy from our great God of mercy to this dying world. Though every power of men and devils should conspire to prevent this message going out- to do so is impossible!

We need to look beyond the things of earth that loom so large before our eyes and see the big picture with the eye of faith! Cast off the chains of earth and break off every yoke of satanic bondage. Realize that the entire unfallen universe is on our side. Get to know the only true God and Jesus Christ who He has sent, and you will have more and more Holy Boldness to be a voice for Him crying out His message. It’s ALL or nothing; it’s all about ‘Who will you serve?’

“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:” Deut. 30:19

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Eze 33:11

What will God say about the faithful ones?

“Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.” Isa 26:2