

Christian Students @ SAC
Bible Study - Spring 2022
Week 9

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE
Chapter 7

ETERNAL PURPOSE
(2)

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:8-9, 17; 3:6; 1 Cor. 15:45; John 6:57; 1:12-13

Gen. 2:8 And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Gen. 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Gen. 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make oneself wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate.

1 Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,

John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Choice That Confronted Adam

God planted a great number of trees in the garden of Eden, but “in the midst of the garden”—that is, in a place of special prominence—He planted two trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam was created innocent; he had no knowledge of good and evil. Think of a grown man, say thirty years old, who has no sense of right or wrong, no power to differentiate between the two! Would you not say such a man was undeveloped? Well, that is exactly what Adam was. And God brings him into the garden and says to him, in effect, “Now the garden is full of trees, full of fruits, and of the fruit of every tree you may eat freely. But in the very midst of the garden is one tree called ‘the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’; you must not eat of that, for in the day that you do so you will surely *die*. But remember, the name of the other tree close by is *Life*.” What then, is the meaning of these two trees? Adam was, so to speak, created morally neutral—neither sinful nor holy, but innocent—and God put those two trees there so that he might exercise free choice. He could choose the tree of life, or he could choose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now the knowledge of good and evil, though forbidden to Adam, is not wrong in itself. Without it however, Adam is in a sense limited in that he cannot decide *for himself* on moral issues. Judgment of right and wrong resides not in him but in God, and Adam's only course when faced with any question is to refer it to Jehovah God. Thus you have a life in the garden which is totally dependent on God. These two trees, then typify two deep principles; they represent two planes of life, the divine and the human. The “tree of life” is God Himself, for God is life. He is the highest form of life, and He is also the source and goal of life. And the fruit: what is that? It is our Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot eat the tree but you can eat the fruit. No one is able to receive God as God, but we can receive the Lord Jesus. The fruit is the edible part, the receivable part of the tree. So—may I say it reverently?— the Lord Jesus is really God in a receivable form. God in Christ we can receive.

If Adam should take of the tree of life, he would partake of the life of God. Thus he would become a “son” of God, in the sense of having in him a life that derived from God. There you would have God's life in union with man: a race of men having the life of God in them and *living in constant dependence upon God for that life*. But if instead Adam should turn the other way, and take of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then he would develop his own manhood along natural lines apart from God. As a self-sufficient being, he would possess in himself the power to form independent judgment, *but he would have no life from God*.

So this was the alternative that lay before him. Choosing the way of the Spirit, the way of obedience, he could become a “son” of God, living in dependence upon God for his life; or, taking the natural course, he could put the finishing touch to himself, as it were, by becoming a self-dependent being, judging and acting apart from God. The history of humanity is the outcome of the choice he made.

Adam's Choice The Reason For The Cross

Adam chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and thereby took up independent ground. In doing so he became (as men are now in their own eyes) a “fully developed” man. He could command a knowledge; he could decide for himself; he could go on, or stop. From then on he was “wise” (Genesis 3:6). But the consequence for him was death rather than life, because the choice he had made involved complicity with Satan, and brought him therefore under the judgment of God. That is why access to the tree of life had thereafter to be forbidden to him.

Two planes of life had been set before Adam: that of divine life in dependence upon God, and that of human life with its “independent” resources. Adam's choice of the latter was sin, because thereby he allied himself with Satan to thwart the eternal purpose of God. He did so by choosing to develop his manhood—to become perhaps a very fine man, even by his standards “perfect” man—apart from God. But the end was death, because he had not in him the divine life necessary to realize God's purpose in his being, but had chosen to become instead an “independent” agent of the Enemy. Thus in Adam we all become sinners, equally dominated by Satan, equally subject to the law of sin and death, and equally deserving of the wrath of God.

From this we see the divine reason for the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We see too the divine reason for true consecration—for reckoning ourselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus, and for presenting ourselves unto Him as alive from the dead. We must all go to the Cross, because *what is in us by nature is a self-life*, subject to the law of sin. Adam chose a self-life rather than a divine life; so God had to gather up all that was in Adam and do away with it. Our “old man” has been crucified. God has put us all in Christ and crucified Him as the last Adam, and thus all that is of Adam has passed away.

Then Christ arose in new form; with a body still, but in the Spirit, no longer in the flesh. “The last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45). The Lord Jesus now has a resurrected body, a spiritual body, a glorious body, and since He is no longer in the flesh, He can now be received by all. “He that eateth me, he also shall live because of me,” said Jesus (John 6:57). The Jews revolted at the thought of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, but of course they could not receive Him then because He was still literally in the flesh. Now that He is in the Spirit, every one of us can receive Him, and it is by partaking of His resurrection life that we are constituted children of God. “As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God ... which were born ... of God.” (John 1:12-13).

God is not out to reform our life. It is not His aim to bring that life to a certain stage of refinement, for it is on a totally wrong plane. On that plane He cannot now bring man to glory. He must have a *new* man; one born anew, born of God. Regeneration and justification go together.

Questions

1. What are the names of the two trees God planted in the garden? What two principles do they typify? What is the issue of each tree?
2. Explain the divine reason of the Cross in regards to Adam's choice