

The Other Tree

By
Jim Sayles



As a volitional creation, Adam could have chosen to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life, but he didn't. The ultimate consequence for him and for all mankind was disastrous.

Those who are born again believers in Jesus Christ have the same choice to make today.

In the Garden of Eden there were two supernatural trees. The "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" and the "Tree of Life."

The supernatural result of eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was that it gave man the knowledge of good and evil. The supernatural result of eating the fruit of the Tree of Life was that it gave man eternal life.

When God revealed his covenant with Adam, the only prohibition was against eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, **but he did not prohibit Adam from eating the fruit of the Tree of Life.**

God gave Adam the *implied* choice: eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and die, or eat the fruit of the Tree of Life and live.

That reminds us of Deuteronomy 30:19.

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live. Deuteronomy 30:19

How strange that Adam did not eat the fruit of the Tree of Life as quickly as he could get to it.

Remember that after Adam sinned God set up a cherubim with a flaming sword flashing back and forth to prevent Adam or Eve (and mankind) from eating of the Tree of Life, because, to do so would have given them eternal life in their fallen de-generated condition with no chance for redemption.

Satan, being cleverer and more cunning than natural man, deliberately chose to tempt Eve rather than Adam. In Satan's cunning he knew that an attempt to deceive the man might result in the man turning to God for wisdom, and, having turned to God, he might then, as an act of free will, eat the fruit of the Tree of Life, which would put him and all mankind out of Satan's reach forever.

Instead, Satan deceived the woman, knowing that the man's desire for the woman was stronger than his desire for God and that Adam had been passive about eating the fruit of the Tree of Life.

Therefore, Adam chose to follow Eve into condemnation rather than be separated from her by the gulf that separates righteousness from sin.

What this illustrates to us is simple and compelling.

Adam was originally in a state of untested, non-committed innocence as a generated (created) man. In this state Adam had three choices. He could choose to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life and live in eternal communion with God (which would have resulted in all of his children living in eternal communion with God). Or he could choose to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, gaining awareness of good and evil, but condemned to eventual physical death and instantaneous separation from the life and covenant blessings of God.

The third choice, an implied and passive choice, was to live in communion with God, but without an active commitment to God.

As we see, it was this passive choice that ultimately led to Adam's downfall.

What God desires from a man is his free-will choice to be wholly committed to His perfect will. This commitment results in blessing for the believer along the lines of Jeremiah 29:11.

For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Why then do we, upon whom the fulfillment of the ages has come, refuse to make this choice? Why are we content with non-committed awareness of some ultimate redemption in Christ, but refuse to make the Tree of Life choice in the flesh?

The answer is simple. The flesh loves and trusts in the creation and the world systems dominated by Satan more than it loves or trusts in God.

We are content to live non-committed lives in the flesh, aware of our ultimate redemption, but unwilling to make the choice of true discipleship:

If any person wills to come after Me, let him deny himself [disown himself, forget, lose sight of himself and his own interests, refuse and give up himself] and take up his cross daily and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly My example in living and, if need be, in dying also]. Luke 9:23 Amplified (emphasis is the author's)

“If anyone...” indicates that a choice is offered. Are we satisfied to be ultimately redeemed but living in pursuit of the de-generated fallen nature, offering ourselves in bondage again to sin? Or will we make the Tree of Life decision and deliberately follow after Jesus, by denying ourselves (selfish desires programmed into us by the world), taking up our crosses daily (deliberately and whole-heartedly submitting to God’s revealed will), and following Jesus (remaining in fellowship with Him and pursuing the ministry He has chosen for us)?

What I have to ask myself is: What is my Eve? Is it the trust I have in my own intelligence and abilities? Is it money and stature in the community? Is it my house, my car? Is it an addiction of some kind? Is it sexual pleasure? Is it anger, rage, unforgiveness? Is it my denomination or my position of importance in the local church? Is it my ministry?

Whatever it is, we can be certain of two things. First, Satan knows what it is, and he is watching us and setting traps and snares for us at every opportunity. Second, the Holy Spirit is prompting us to choose “life” in the deliberate, whole-hearted pursuit of Jesus Christ.

Let him who has an ear to hear what the Spirit says, choose life.