

Two Trees in the Garden of Eden

by Randall Ricker

Samaritan's Purse is a charitable organization that provides relief to victims of disasters. They provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care and comfort. Victims sometimes are angry at God and ask Franklin Graham, the leader of the organization, why God caused a disaster. I do not know what he says, but we can see from the Bible why God allows natural disasters.

We might wonder why there is so much evil in the world. We have COVID-19, abortions, crime, and hatred. It can all be very discouraging. The Bible also explains why there is evil in the world. We need to have a biblical worldview to understand how the world got to be this way.

Two Trees

The incident of the two trees in the Garden of Eden helps us to understand.

Genesis 2:8-9

8 The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Later it says Eve thought the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was attractive to look at, but in truth it was really a very ugly tree. It just looked good at the time. God was working with a purpose.

Humans in God's image

Genesis 1:26-27

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Humans resemble God in form and shape and also how our minds work. Think of it this way. We have emotions. God has emotions. We could go into all those details in the Bible if we wanted to. Romans chapter 8 helps us understand what our purpose is.

Romans 8:14-17

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption [5206 the placing of a son, i.e., adoption] by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

The word adoption is number 5206 in the Greek Strong's concordance. We like to look up meanings of words. Sometimes we are not sure if they were translated properly, or we want to look at things more deeply. This word is translated adoption. The Strong's is defined as the placing of a son, i.e. adoption. It is consistent with becoming sons and daughters of God.

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that **we are children of God**, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

We are to become part of God's family.

I Corinthians 2 talks about the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:16

For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But **we have the mind of Christ**.

We have the mind of Christ by the Holy Spirit, which is the power of the Father and is the power of Jesus Christ. We have to become like God. We are to love as God loves.

To love as God loves

1 John 4:7-11, 16

7 Beloved, let us love [25G *agape* to love in a social or moral sense, a deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty, and propriety] one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Consider that word love. There are several words for love in the Bible. One of them is number 25 in the Greek Strong's Concordance. It means to love in a social or moral sense, a deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty, and propriety. It is a deep kind of love, not just the love of a friend or love of a spouse, but even deeper than that.

Verse 7 for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**.

God is love. That is the principal primary characteristic of God.

9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

This was such love that God the Father gave Christ to be the payment of the penalty for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another... 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

When we are resurrected, we will have love as our primary characteristic. We would like to have love is our primary characteristic now. We are all still growing.

The Ten Commandments show how to express love - the first four how to express love toward God: 1. having no other god before the true God, 2. not making objects of worship, 3. not misusing God's name, and 4. keeping the Sabbath as we're doing today.

The last six show love toward our neighbor: 5. to honor our parents, 6. not to kill (we will get into that more deeply. There are many ways we could violate that commandment if we wanted to.), 7. not to commit adultery, 8. not to steal, 9. not to lie, 10. not to covet. All these are ways that we show love toward our neighbor. Think about the biblical instructions throughout the gospels and throughout the epistles, all the instructions on how to live as Christians that are based on the 10 commandments.

1 John 3:1-3

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And **everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself**, just as He is pure.

We have this hope of being like God, being part of God's family. That gives us motivation to overcome sin and gives us motivation to do good at every opportunity, doing good for other people.

Eat from the tree of life

Revelation 2:1, 7

1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: ...7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to **eat from the tree of life**, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.' "

In the future, the whole Earth will be a paradise in the Millennium. The people who are resurrected by then will have chosen God's way of life which is symbolized by the tree of life.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil

There is another tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Let's talk about that tree for just a little while. This was in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:1-6

1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, **she took of its fruit and ate**. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

The tree looked good, but it really was not. Adam and Eve were taking to themselves the knowledge of what was right and wrong. They were not letting God tell them what was right and wrong. That would have been the tree of life to eat from, but they didn't do that. They got caught.

Genesis 3:22-24

22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Humanity at this point was being cut off from God. The first man was driven out, and then angels guarded the way to the tree of life. The Bible has the history of the relative few who had a relationship with God over the millennia, the relative few. Romans 8 verse five is talking about people who do not have a relationship with God. They are carnally minded, their minds on the things of the flesh, the physical things.

Romans 8 verse 5

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Many people are currently looking at physical things, fleshly minded. They live by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.

It is another group, people who have the Spirit of God.

9 Now **if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**

Many people are not called now to receive the spirit of Christ.

10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

The two trees and our time

As we consider the two trees in the Garden of Eden, think of how we can apply them to our time. We see the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We see the evil, as I mentioned, the COVID-19 virus, the abortions going on, crime, hatred, etc. It goes on and on. I realize that a lot of people not practicing righteousness.

Psalms 119:172 tells us that God's commandments are righteousness. Many are not keeping God's commandments.

1 John 3:10-16

10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: **Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God**, nor is he who does not love his brother. 11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, 12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. 13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

This is consistent with the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus Christ said that if a person were to be angry without a cause, or to look down on somebody, or call someone names, these are all things that show hatred. Then he has broken the commandment against murder. This is consistent with that. It says whoever hates is a murderer.

16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought **to lay down our lives** for the brethren.

We take a different approach. We want to lay down our lives for our brothers, people in the church, but everybody else for that matter. That is in many other places in the Bible. We try to do what we can for other people, laying down our lives and giving our physical

things as well as giving our time. We can be lights to those around us. We can be examples of a better way of life.

Second Peter chapter one reminds us to make our calling and election sure.

2 Peter 1:10-11

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to **make your calling and election sure**, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

We are called to receive God's Spirit. We respond. Then we are selected to receive the Spirit in this life. They call us the elect. We are the selected ones, if we have God's Holy Spirit.

11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Some are selected to receive the spirit in this life. Others will receive God's Holy Spirit in the Millennium or in the second resurrection. We learned a lot. We have a lot to learn, and we have God helping us to learn.

1 Corinthians 2:1-9

1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

There are lots of skilled speakers around, but are they speaking the wisdom of God?

6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak **the wisdom of God** in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man **the things which God has prepared** for those who love Him."

We are given the wisdom of God. We can understand so much of the Bible. We understand that God had a plan put in place before time even began. We know what God has prepared for us: a place in His family in his Kingdom. It is an amazing potential that we have, an amazing future.

1 Corinthians 2:10-14

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

Yes, through the Holy Spirit we can understand the things of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.** 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual [Interlinear: communicating spiritual things by spiritual means].

I read that in the New King James and the old King James. It is hard for me to follow, so I looked at the Greek interlinear version. It says communicating spiritual things by spiritual means. God's Holy Spirit is communicating spiritual things by spiritual means. That makes more sense to me.

14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

We understand the Bible better by having God Holy Spirit. Without God's Holy Spirit one can pick up a lot, but with the Spirit we learn even more.

We are considering the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life in our time. We should be following the Tree of life. What are we supposed to be doing? Solomon summed it up quite well.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God and keep His commandments,** For this is man's all.

The King James says, "this is the whole duty of man." We keep God's commandments in the letter and in the intent. We have a biblical worldview. We can see what is required of us. The Bible tells us to keep God's commandments in the letter and in the intent.

Part of having a worldview of how the world got this way has to do with the two trees in the Garden of Eden. That's how it got this way. We have peace of mind when we know how things happened, why things are this way, and what we are supposed to be doing.

The two trees and our future

Let's consider the future in relation to the two trees. Christ will return, and he will offer His Holy Spirit to everybody. In Revelation 7 we have what we like to call the innumerable multitude

Revelation 7:9-10

9 After these things I looked, and behold, **a great multitude which no one could number**, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

As part of our biblical worldview we can see how the current situation is going to be remedied, by Jesus Christ returning and giving people His Holy Spirit. They will live by God's law, as we are trying to live.

Revelation 21:7

He who overcomes shall **inherit all things**, and I will be his God and **he shall be My son**.

The biblical worldview helps us understand our future: that we are to inherit the universe and to be sons and daughters of God. The Bible tells us how things got to be this way beginning with the two trees in the Garden of Eden, what is expected of us, and how the world situation will be remedied.

The Biblical worldview gives us the purpose of life: to be part of God's family. The Bible gives us peace during adversity and a motivation to resist sin. There is a wonderful future ahead of us.