

What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Part 3

Death as a Consequence

In Genesis 2:16 God tells Adam that he “may freely eat of every tree” in the garden except one. The use of “every” lets us know there were multiple trees in the garden. However, there was one tree, and *only* one tree, in the garden that Adam was instructed *not* to eat from: *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. This tree was not to be eaten from, but why? What was it about this tree that created a problem? To read too quickly over this point is to miss a huge spiritual understanding that runs throughout the entire Bible.

First, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was *more* than a tree: within its root system, and, subsequently, the fruit it produced, was the venom of destruction, ruination, chaos, and **death** for *all* of life on Earth (which Adam and Eve had been entrusted to protect).

God warns Adam, “for in the day that you eat thereof you will surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Many Hebrew scholars translate “you will surely die” as “dying you shall die.” The difference in translation is grammatical, of which it is not the focus of this Bible Study today. However, what does it mean; “dying you shall die?” To eat from that tree will bring with it a two-fold death experience. First, there is an immediate spiritual death and then a physical death. It can also be understood to mean that if Adam eats from it; he (and all of life) will enter into a perpetual state of dying until death, finally, takes over completely destroying the body. Certainly, it is clear that God was warning Adam that the tree was deadly and not to be ingested in any way.

This tree had to exist in the garden (as earlier lessons have stated) because evil already occurred and existed; Satan along with the other fallen angels had been cast out of heaven. Humanity was created and given a task to keep this world safe from Satan’s influence and terror. How do we know this? At creation humanity was given power; the power to subdue, to have dominion, to subjugate (Genesis 1:28). We talked extensively about this point when we studied the Fall from Adam’s perspective. If you haven’t had those lessons yet please keep reading as those lessons will be added soon and a fuller understanding can be formed.

So since Adam and Eve had not, yet, fallen into sin there was overwhelming peace and contentment among the animals and humans alike. Therefore, it only makes sense that the power given to humanity was to be used as a defense with the only destructive force that existed—the tree of the knowledge of good [that is] evil.

Humanity was created to withstand and to hold back the evils of Satan and his angels and to keep his forces from harming the garden and with time to extend the boarders of the Garden to

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include the entire earth. The word “replenish” in the KJV is actually the Hebrew word: **לֹא** mala pronounced [ma-lay]. It means “to fill” or “to consecrate as a priest.” Many Hebrew Bibles translate this word in this verse as “Fill the earth!” So, Adam and Eve’s purpose was to fill the earth (which would mean extending beyond the borders of the Garden of Eden) and to do so as one who is in *service to God*.

For way too long, many Biblical theologians have held the assumption that humankind was given power to rule the earth for humanity’s sake!!! NOTHING could be FURTHER from the truth!! Humanity, from the beginning of their creation, was given power and authority to tread on and to overcome **evil!!!!** This means humanity’s purpose had a spiritual significance. This life wasn’t about us and our wants and our desires; though we (humanity) have done everything we can to diminish our life and the lives of others to that type of menial existence.

To further stress this point (that this battle was spiritual from the beginning): No verse in the Bible appears haphazardly; but is purposeful. If we go back to the scriptures and read in Genesis chapter two, we will see that the immediate statement from God after advising Adam about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is: “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet” (Genesis 2:18). God is establishing here Adam will need another; someone to work with him to complete the task he has been assigned to do.

Yet, here is the sad part, many never understand the value of Eve to Adam or the importance of the marriage relationship in general, because Eve’s original purpose has been debated and argued for millenniums. Sadly, many have debated her existence from a biased agenda hidden in what appears to be scholarly work!

Much debate begins with the first mention of Eve in the scriptures with the words translated as “help meet” in the KJV or as “helper suitable” in the NASB or similar in other translations. First, we will look at the word “help” or “helper” from the Hebrew translated word: **אֶזֶר** ezer. This word (ezer) is a verb and *most often* in the Hebrew Scriptures is used in reference to God. When referring to God the word means God is our: savior, rescuer, or protector; i.e., Exodus 18:14, Deuteronomy 33:7. Again, the word: ezer means HELP. Almost always referring to God’s HELP *that is being offered* (1 Chronicles 12:18, Psalm 10:14, Psalm 28:7, Psalm 54:4, Psalm 72:12, Psalm 121:1). However, there are other times it is referring to human help rushing in to aid in a battle; i.e. Ezekiel 30:8.

The English word “meet” or “suitable” comes from the Hebrew word: **kenegdo** usually translated “corresponding to” which means “equal and adequate for.” So, here is where it gets difficult; the Strong’s Concordance translates kenegdo as **נֶגֶד** neged [neh’ghed]. So, in the Hebrew Bible it is kenegdo but in the Strong’s Concordance it is translated as **נֶגֶד** neged

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[neh'ghed]. However, a full reading of the Strong's Concordance (5049) will show that neged [neh'ghed] also means "correspond to." So, this isn't just a person standing in front of another or someone who is just a reflection of another, but this is someone who is "equal to" the other.

So what what's the big deal, what does this mean, and why does it, even, matter?

It is important because it tells us God's original design for humanity. It allows us to see that Eve was created **not to** stand in front of Adam as a superior, nor to stand behind him as an inferior, but she was intended to stand *beside him as an equal*. This point does not take away from the fact that *Adam was created first*, or that *Adam was the elder* in the garden (he was older than she and, therefore, more experienced). What it does tell us is: Eve was created as a help from God to aid Adam in the battle against Satan in the Garden.

Therefore, from the beginning God intended for Adam to have an adequate and equal other to assist him in the task he had been assigned. God didn't just create Eve as an afterthought. There is deliberateness on the part of God who has Adam to name every animal before creating Eve. There are no mistakes in how God expresses Himself; therefore, the fact that He says, it isn't good for Adam to be alone and, yet, He does not create Eve then, but waits to have Adam name every animal has to be significant; to miss this point is to miss something major.

How long did that take Adam to name all those animals? It could have been days, weeks, months, even years. God created all the other animals, both male and female, but with humanity He waited to create Eve until after Adam had lived a while. Again, this cannot be by accident. God knew the task ahead for Adam. God knows the end from the beginning. He knew how the enemy would tempt them both, and he would give Adam the best opportunity to succeed.

God is just, righteous, and fair. Though God knew when He created the world that He would become the lamb slain from the foundation of the world; God would offer Adam every possible option **not to fail**. Waiting to create Eve until after Adam had some time by himself gave Adam an opportunity to work without help, thus, alone. Adam was able to experience life as one of a kind while working in the garden. This does not mean Adam was lonely. There were no ill feelings or sickness or dread, or depression in the Garden of Eden, because Adam, to this point, had never experienced sin. Adam walked with God and was God's son (Luke 3:38). Adam wasn't sad in the Garden without Eve. How do we know this? It was God who said, "It's not good" for Adam to be alone. Adam never said it! In fact, there is nothing to give us any indication in the scriptures that Adam ever would have asked for another to share his work with in the Garden of Eden.

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The word “alone” comes from the Hebrew word: **בָּאָד** bad pronounced [baad]. The word does not mean to be “lonely” but to be “on one’s own” or to be an “only” or “without regard.” Since Adam had never known another human and had never had the privilege of working with one; Adam didn’t know what he was missing. This would be living *without regard*, or living as *an only*, or to be *on one’s own*.

Then, once again, in Genesis 2:20 it states: “...there was not found a helper for [Adam].” As before, the word “helper” here is from the Hebrew word: ezer and is interpreted “God’s help.” What this verse is saying to us is that God had not, yet, given Adam someone to help or to aid him in the Garden. We can only conclude from this action from God that God knew what Adam needed and when to give him what he needed (this point will make much more sense once you have a chance to read: the Fall From Adam’s Perspective. If it isn’t on the website yet it will be soon).

We are told in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 that two are better than one, why? Let’s pause and read. What are some of the points that stand out in this scripture?

Some points to take away from this reading *and* the creation of Eve are: community, support, and care for another. Humanity was not created to be selfish, entitled, or for one person to take *all* the credit. We were created to share the load, and to bear the work of life together. The first man and woman were to be the proto-type for this kind of human relationship that would be shared by all. Again, Adam was not created to bear this work alone but his wife, Eve, was created to work alongside him. Both Adam and Eve were created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27). So, God created mankind/humanity in His own image. The use of the word “man” is translated from the Hebrew word “Ha-adam” and literally means humanity or mankind. So, not only was Adam created in the image of God but so was Eve.

So, now that we have the couple together; we move on to the tree and why it was so deadly.

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What was the real danger to eat from that tree? To eat of the tree where evil resided would be to take in, to ingest the evil that God intended to be kept contained and the world untouched by it.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not placed in the garden to “tempt” Adam and Eve. The tree was there because it was a reality of life, already; however, humankind could remain untouched by this evil because they had never experienced it. In fact, humankind was created to keep the garden free from evil, but, sadly, we know that isn’t what happened. Adam and Eve eat the fruit and every one of their descendants has eaten the fruit of that tree since.

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From the moment they ate, they felt the change, and death became a reality of life (we will discuss this point more in future lessons).

We will end here now and resume this study next time...