

Adam and the Fall – Part 2

Now we have arrived at the point before the fall of man, where Adam is given a help that is proper for him. In understanding this situation, we also need to understand Eve's relationship to Adam as far as authority and dominion are concerned, as it bears significantly on the fall. This relationship is clearly established in Scripture by the following:

And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (*Genesis 2:20:23*)

This is confirmed also by the following passage:

But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. (*I Timothy 2:12-13*)

This "order of creation" reinforces the intent of the LORD God when he gave man dominion, but commanded Adam only concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (*Genesis 2:16-17*)

Thus, Adam is the individual that will be held accountable if error is made and the dominion is lost, which we also see

confirmed in Scripture:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (*Romans 5:12-14*))

And again:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (*I Corinthians 15:22*) ((Yes, I know. Those who believe in Universal Salvation like to cite this verse as one of the "proofs" of their doctrine. However, the Scripture is plain there is no "universal salvation," but that salvation is universally available.))

Therefore we can plainly see that Eve was under Adam's dominion, and that Adam, as the "governor" of the race, and of all the earth, is solely responsible for all that happens. As an additional note, we do see that Eve was "in Adam" before she was created, even as we were all in Adam. Thus, all that Eve is and we are, comes from Adam by inheritance. By this, we can understand that no fall will occur unless and until Adam himself disobeys the express instruction of God.

There is an additional point to address before continuing: there are those who would argue the point that Satan entering earth prior to the fall, and Eve partaking of the tree, somehow corrupted the environment and introduced sin. However, as Romans, chapter 5 is express:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; . . . (*Romans 5:12a*)

To argue the point is to say, by way of parallel logic, that heaven is corrupted, and the throne of God is corrupted by sin

when Satan stands before the LORD and disputes about events and persons. This is manifestly not so, and the LORD God retains His righteousness and His dominion, and cannot be corrupted by the presence of the Devil. We must remember that it is only those portions the LORD God has given to others, i.e. Adam, that can be corrupted, if the individual having dominion over that portion falls.

So then, what is it that is offered unto Adam, by way of Eve? It is the knowledge of good and evil. This knowledge is made to be attractive by the appeal that one could be wise, if one only partook. Moreover, like all things the LORD God creates, it too, is beautiful and desirable:

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

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 3:1-6*)

Now, in answering the question put at the first by our Calvinist friend, we must first look at what he asks:

In order for Adam to voluntarily chose to sin against God, he would need to have the desire to do so. If Adam was born without the desire to sin (sin nature), where did this desire to sin come from?

And again in his comments, he asks later:

To be created in God's image meant, among other things, that we were to mirror and reflect God's character. Adam was created with this character and does not have a sin nature. So how can Adam make a choice to do evil without having the desire for evil?

And yet again:

Yea, Adam was born perfect spiritually and physically without sin. I see what your trying to say, but rebellion is sin. It is evil. For Adam to sin against God, he would need the desire to do evil. That desire to do so, only comes from a sin nature, which Adam does not have.

It is impossible for a human being to make a choice without having a desire for that choice. Can't happen. That is like making a choice for no reason. No desire, No choice.

In all these comments and questions there is a failure to understand the most critical point of all, which I mentioned earlier:

One of the things that is often overlooked in the above passage, that we must be careful about, is the naming of the tree. It is not, as is often referred to, the tree of good and evil, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Hence, to eat the fruit of it, does not bring about evil, other than the direct disobedience to God, but brings about an understanding of what constitutes good, and what constitutes evil. Moreover, it is not an analytical kind of understanding. Rather, it is knowing, in which we instinctively recognize when something is good, and some other thing is evil. It is the ability to instantly distinguish the difference between the two.

This ability to distinguish between what is good, and constitutes good, and what is evil and constitutes evil, is completely missing in Adam and Eve. It simply is not there. Adam cannot recognize and distinguish the difference between good and evil. This is strongly testified to by witnesses that are in opposition: The LORD God, and Satan.

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: . . . (*Genesis 3:22*)

And:

. . . For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (*Genesis 3:5*)

In each case, the clear testimony is that, prior to the fall, Adam could not distinguish the difference between good and evil. Now, we say that hindsight is 20/20 and that we can see clearly after the fact. However, in this case, our hindsight is hindered by the fact that we know good and evil and cannot divorce ourselves from that instinctual knowledge. Hence, everything we view, we view through that lens and cannot see any other way. To us then, our Calvinist friend's view is the norm, and not at all unusual. Nevertheless, we are not left without recourse in the word of God, and we must look at this strictly from the Scripture, since we have no understanding at all of what it is like to be truly "innocent."

What we are told is strictly this, that the tree is a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and Adam has yet to partake of it. Hence, to Adam, there is no cognizance of any choice he makes being anything other than a choice with consequences that are unknown, except what he has been told. He does not know what death is, as he has never seen death, and has nothing to compare it to. We cannot, as some suppose, assume

that the LORD God explained death to him, as the Scripture does not tell us that. Even if "death" were explained to Adam, we could easily ascertain that he still had no real understanding of it, having never seen any such thing as there is no death in the world. Adam has likewise never experienced what we would know as "wisdom" in the sense of knowing that thinking and making decisions in certain ways would be "wisdom" and in other ways would be "foolishness."

Moreover, we must understand that the "knowledge of good and evil," to "know good and evil," and "knowing good and evil" all speak of a lack of discernment concerning the distinction between the two. We, the descendants of Adam, instinctively know good and evil as the Scripture plainly testifies:

(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;) (*Romans 2:13-15*)

The parenthetical statement above sets forth the fact and principle that it was not instruction in the law, and subsequent failure to keep it, that condemned the Jews and everyone else. Rather, it is the fact that when Adam fell, the law was written into his heart and became an instinctive knowledge in all his descendants, of which we all are. And, since it is instinctive, we view everything through the law, automatically assigning values of good and evil to every thought and every action of both ourselves and others. Thus, to understand Adam's failure, we have to know that "the knowledge of" is what he lacks.

This lack of "the knowledge of good and evil" means that Adam could not assign any relevance to what he chose to do. He could not see it in the light of being "against" God, as that

was not known to him as being “evil” or wrong. All Adam knew was that he was instructed not to partake of the fruit of this tree. Moreover, when Eve approaches him, having already eaten of the fruit, he sees no change in her, as he has yet to succumb and thus lose dominion and the righteousness that is his. The Scripture illustrates this in the following passage:

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*)

Here we see that Eve partook first of all, and yet there was no effect on her. However, it is when she “gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” that the fall occurred as it described in the following verse:

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (*Genesis 3:7*)

We can now see that when the ruler of the dominion is conquered, that all the dominion is affected, as we are reminded in the passage from Romans, chapter 5 referenced above:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; . . . (*Romans 5:12a*)

However, it wasn't the “sin” that specifically killed Adam, insomuch as it was the opening of the eyes to the knowledge of good and evil – the law. Though the act of disobedience is sufficient, the act of disobedience comes from simply choosing one thing over another, and was done in innocency. Adam doesn't know that choosing to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is wrong and sin, he just knows that he has been instructed that “death” will occur if he does. Yet, he has another evidence telling him there is no

consequence, as he has seen Eve partake, and nothing happened to her. In short, Adam is blind, and does not know the law. Adam saw Eve partake at the suggestion of the serpent, and in opposition to the LORD the serpent told Eve that knowing good and evil brought wisdom, and such wisdom was a thing to be desired. Here then we have a situation where Adam cannot understand or comprehend that disbelieving the LORD is sin, as he does not know and cannot recognize and distinguish between that which is good and that which is evil. Thus, when it states:

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; . . .(*Genesis 3:7a*)

By this act they became cognizant, or aware, of the ramifications of the expressed will of God, as the Scripture also tells us:

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (*Romans 3:20*)

Thus, it was not as when we set about to sin, wherein we know what we are about to do is wrong. Rather, it is much like a little child that cannot comprehend things they do are dangerous or wrong. All the child knows is that it wants to do this or that thing, and cannot comprehend any moral ramification to their thinking and actions. The understanding and perception of good and evil came after Adam partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In this the Scripture is express when it states "and" and then continues with "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew. . ." It then necessarily follows that they did not know prior to Adam eating of the fruit, but only after.

This leads us to examine what we mean by the words "knowing" and "to know" concerning good and evil. We ought to examine this, as it is critical to understanding how Adam could be

bereft of what we live with daily, and indeed take for granted. Now, the “knowing” we speak of here is not simply ‘having knowledge of, or information about,’ but is to be instinctively certain of something. It is to understand without question what something is, and what it means. When the Scripture speaks of “knowing good and evil” there are three basic points that we can express about it:

- To “know” is to understand on an instinctual level.
- This “knowing” precludes thinking.
- The “understanding” involved is the ability to comprehend the significance of information, actions and events.

Therefore, Scripturally, to “know,” in the sense spoken of in Genesis, Chapters 2 and 3, is to instinctively understand information, actions and events and their significance. We do not have to think about a thought or action being good or evil, we know without question whether it is or isn’t, as Romans, Chapter 2 reveals. Neither do we have to consider the significance of such thought or action. We do know that the end of evil thought and action is destruction, and the end of good thought and action is peace. The Lord Jesus Christ verified this during His earthly ministry with the following statement, when he testified that, although we are evil, without question we know what beneficial or good gifts are, and how to bestow them upon our children. Why? Because we have the knowledge of good and evil.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (*Matthew 7:11, Luke 11:13*)

It is this “knowing” that Adam lacked. Adam could not assign any significance to what he was about to do beyond the consequences he was instructed about (“death” which was unspecified as to its effect). He could not see how his

actions would affect him, or Eve, or the creation over which he had dominion. He was incapable of understanding the law of God, and could not understand that the creation he inhabited was "very good" and that he was righteous. All Adam knew was that he lived in a place that was as it is, meaning he had nothing to compare it to, and no means whereby he could understand that it was good, and that he was good. That is why the statement is made "And the eyes of them both were opened, . . ." which in principle, is very much like the opening of the eyes of the disciples after the resurrection:

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, . . . (Luke 24:44-45)

To be continued . . .
