

Bite Size Bible Study

The Tree #205 By Pastor Lee

The other morning as I was waking up, these verses were floating through my head – about how this world became so corrupted.

¹⁵ Adonai, God, took the person and put him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it. ¹⁶ Adonai, God, gave the person this order: “You may freely eat from every tree in the garden ¹⁷ except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You are not to eat from it, because on the day that you eat from it, it will become certain that you will die.”

Genesis 2:15-17 CJB

Now the serpent was more crafty than any wild animal which Adonai, God, had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You are not to eat from any tree in the garden?’” ² The woman answered the serpent, “We may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden, ³ but about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, ‘You are neither to eat from it nor touch it, or you will die.’” ⁴ The serpent said to the woman, “It is not true that you will surely die; ⁵ because God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it had a pleasing appearance and that the tree was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her; and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves loincloths.

⁸ They heard the voice of Adonai, God, walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, so the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Adonai, God, among the trees in the garden. ⁹ Adonai, God, called to the man, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ He answered, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I ordered you not to eat?” ¹² The man replied, “The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Adonai, God, said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman answered, “The serpent tricked me, so I ate.”

¹⁴ Adonai, God, said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all livestock and wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and eat dust as long as you live. ¹⁵ I will put animosity between you and the woman, and between your descendant and her descendant; he will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pain in childbirth. You will bring forth children in pain. Your desire will be toward your husband, but he will rule over you.”

¹⁷ To Adam he said, “Because you listened to what your wife said and ate from the tree about which I gave you the order, ‘You are not to eat from it,’ the ground is cursed on your account; you will work hard to eat from it as long as you live. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat field plants. ¹⁹ You will eat bread by the sweat of your forehead till you return to the ground — for you were taken out of it: you are dust, and you will return to dust.”

Genesis 3:1-19 CJB

Here are some of my thoughts as I contemplated these verses. You may take them with the preverbal “grain of salt” or ponder them yourself.

First, I wondered why they would do something that God had said not to do. Then I remembered that doing what we are not supposed to do is always more enticing than what we are supposed to do. It seems to be a proclivity of all of mankind.

But they were already living in a world of everything “good”. Was there “evil” out there and they were not able to see it or experience it? It seems that the answer must be, YES, because this serpent was not acting for the good of the man and woman. He was a liar and a twister of the truth – two of the many things generally considered not “good”.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any wild animal which Adonai, God, had made.

They already had knowledge of good. They were living it. So, did eating the fruit of the forbidden tree just add the knowledge of evil, so that they would be able to live and experience evil as well?

If that were the case, then by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, they, and we, can experience both good and evil. But looking at the world we are living in, it seems that there is more evil than good. World history also seems to record more evil than good as well.

Certainly, when we experience evil the good looks so much better in the long run, but not necessarily at that moment.

When they realized what they had done, it says that *they realized that they were naked*. The Hebrew word here is “*êrôm*” which can mean just naked or utterly naked and helpless. The latter definition seems to be more appropriate here because they try to overcome the

helplessness by making a covering for themselves. And, later by accusing each other for the insurrection.

There are many such stories (myths) in other cultures, of the events of how the world began and why there is evil in the world. These myths rarely imply the same beginning. Some of the more widely known are, Enuma Elish, of the Babylonian culture; and Eridu Genesis, from the ancient Mesopotamian culture; and others from Greeks and Egyptians.

A myth is a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining some natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events.

When we use the word myth in our culture, we usually think of it as a false teaching or something to be ignored. But the purpose of a myth is not to tell a historically accurate account of the event but to convey a spiritual truth. Often the myth is couched in the culture of the people of a specific time and place.

Here in the Genesis account, we find this story. Is it a historically accurate account or is it trying to tell us a spiritual truth? It happened so long ago that our archeology friends cannot find any evidence of it. That in and of itself is not proof of it being or not being a historical fact.

However, in my mind, it makes no difference as to whether it is historically accurate or not. For me, it is the spiritual truth that it conveys that is important.

So, what spiritual truth is here in this story? What we are to learn from the myth.

Some of the truths might be:

1. God created everything and it was “good”. It served its intended purpose. The Hebrew word is “*tov*” and means “functional”.
2. The original humans lived for a time in a completely functional world.
3. God was pleased to live with them in this world.
4. The humans chose to disobey the instructions that God gave them and in doing so caused dysfunction to enter their world.
5. This dysfunction caused repercussions that were undesirable, but they were unable to reverse them and caused the rest of mankind to inherit a world that was no longer completely functional.
6. Many more truths can be teased out of this story, but I leave them for you to find.

Looking ahead many millennia we see that God was not caught off guard but had planned to put our world back into a functional state.

**AND IT IS ALL POSSIBLE THROUGH
JESUS THE MESSIAH.**

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