

You Must Eat the Fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil To Inherit Eternal Life

The Eternal God "...planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and **good for food; the tree of life** in the midst of the garden, and **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**" (Genesis 2:9). God commanded the man, "...of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **you shall not eat of it**: for in the day that you eat thereof **you shall surely die**" (Genesis 2:17).

The true meaning of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has been misunderstood by nearly everyone. We are going to see what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents, and why it is necessary that we eat of it if we are to inherit eternal life.

The Creation of Man

On the sixth day of creation, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). The man and the woman were created in the physical image of God, but they were not yet a finished product because they did not have the mind of God. Their physical creation was just the first step in God's process of creating man into His spiritual image, having His "...**divine nature**..." (2 Peter 1:4).

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a life giving spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, made of dust: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy [5517, *made of dust, temporal, transient*], such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. **And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly**" (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). Man does not yet bear the image of the heavenly.

The Need for a Heart Transplant

God created man with a carnal mind that is the antithesis of the mind of God. *Webster's* defines carnal as: given to sensual pleasures and appetites, earthly rather than heavenly or spiritual. "For they who are after the **flesh do mind** [5426, *to seek one's interests or advantage*] **the things of the flesh**; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. **To be carnally minded is death**; but to be spiritually minded **is life and peace**. Because the **mind of the flesh is hostile to God: for it is not subject to the law of God**, neither indeed can be. **So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God**" (Romans 8:5-8).

The carnal mind brings forth death, and the spiritual mind is a mind of “life and peace.” The carnal mind must be changed, i.e. man needs a heart transplant. “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do *them*” (Ezekiel 36:26, 27).

The Sinful Flesh

In the garden, “...the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:25). Being “naked and not ashamed” has often been misinterpreted as representing the purity and innocence of the man and the woman, but the reality is that their nakedness represents their sinful nature.

An example of this is the church at Laodicea. Jesus said of the church at Laodicea “...you are ...poor and **blind** and **naked**” (Revelation 3:17). Jesus said to them, “...buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, **and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear**; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see” (v. 18).

Like the man and the woman, the church is oblivious to its nakedness, and it is therefore not ashamed. Because of its spiritual blindness it does not see that it is not walking with God, but is walking in darkness. Therefore Jesus says, “...I will spew you out of My mouth” (v. 16). “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 17:9, 10).

Sin Enters Into the World

“Now the serpent was more shrewd than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, Did God say, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Genesis 3:1). What God had actually said was, “...Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof **you shall surely die**” (Genesis 2:16, 17).

The serpent is the deceiver of all of mankind. “...[T]hat old [744, *that has been from the beginning, original, primeval, old, ancient*] serpent, called the Devil [1228, *false accuser*], and Satan [4567, *the adversary*], **which deceives** [4105, *to lead astray*] **the whole world...**” (Revelation 12:9). Satan has led the whole world away from God by his lies, “...for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).

The woman represents all of the people of the world, for all people have descended from her. “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve [2332, *life*]; because **she was the mother of all living**” (Genesis 3:20). The deception of the woman by the serpent represents Satan’s deception of the

entire world. Satan, as "...the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine [826, *shine forth, see clearly, discern*] unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The serpent began his seduction of the woman with a lie. The woman responded to the serpent, saying, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, **lest you die**" (Genesis 3:1-3). The serpent counters with another lie and says, "...**You shall not surely die**: for God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (vv. 4, 5).

The serpent lured the woman into a trap by playing on the pride and covetous nature of her carnal mind. "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 [2530, *to covet*] **to make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6).

Now the woman has sinned. What is the Biblical definition of sin? "Whosoever commits [4160, *make, do, practice*] sin transgresses also the law [458, *contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness*]: **for sin is the transgression of the law** [458]" (1 John 3:4). The definition of sin is the breaking of God's law.

Strong's #2530 is found in Exodus 20:17. "You shall not covet [2530]..." By coveting, the woman was also guilty of idolatry, for "...**covetousness...is idolatry**" (Colossians 3:5). She also broke the eighth commandment, "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15), by taking that which was not hers,. She broke the fifth commandment by dishonoring her parent. When all is said and done, she broke all ten of the Ten Commandments.

Satan put the idea into the mind of the woman, but she did not have to act on it. She was overcome by her pride and covetousness nature. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God...But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of **his own lust** [1939, *desire for what is forbidden, covetousness*], and enticed [1185, *entice a victim into a moral trap, luring them in through their own selfish impulses*]. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, **brings forth death**" (James 1:13, 14).

Pride and covetousness is the way of the world. "Love not the world, neither the things in the world...For all that is in the world, **the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world**" (1 John 2:15, 16). The woman fulfilled the description of the way of the world perfectly.

What does the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil Represent?

After eating the fruit of "...the tree of the knowledge [1847, *intelligence, understanding, wisdom*] of good [2896, *right, proper, moral*] and evil [7451, *bad, wickedness, malice*]" (Genesis

2:9), "...the eyes of both of them were opened, **and they knew that they were naked...**" (Genesis 3:7). Their sin was revealed to them when they ate the fruit of the tree of the **knowledge** of good and evil. God's law defines the difference between good and evil. (Note that the tree is not called the tree of good and evil, but rather the tree of the **knowledge** of good and evil.) **The tree of the knowledge of good and evil revealed their nakedness (sin) to them; therefore the tree represents the Law of the Eternal.**

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? **God forbid. No, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, You shall not Covet.** But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, **produced in me all manner of covetousness.** For without the law sin was dead" (Romans 7:7, 8). When there isn't any law, then there cannot be any sin, because sin is the breaking of the Law.

Now that their sin had been revealed to them they were subject to death, "For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23). "For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. **For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived [1818, *to seduce wholly, deceive*] me, and by it slew me" (Romans 7:9-11). **It was sin that deceived—not the Law!****

"Wherefore the law is **holy** [40, *sacred, pure, set apart*], and the commandment **holy**, and **just** [1342, *correct, righteous, by impl. innocent*], and **good** [18, *inherently (intrinsically) good*]. **Was that then which is good made death to me? God forbid.** But sin, that it might **appear** [5316, *to bring to light, to cause to appear*] sin, produced death in me by that which is good; that sin through the commandment might **become** [1096, *to come into existence, begin to be*] exceeding sinful" (Romans 7:12, 13). The law is a light that reveals sin, and it is the sin that produces death.

The Law is like a Mirror

A mirror is defined as "a true representation." The fruit of the tree revealed to the man and the woman a true representation of their nakedness, and they were ashamed. The Law provides us with a true representation of who we are, and what we can become if we obey it.

"But be you doers of the word, and not hearers only, **deceiving your own selves.** For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man beholding his **natural** [1073, *origin, birth*] face **in a mirror:** for he beholds himself, and goes his way, and immediately **forgets** [1950, *neglecting, no longer caring for*] what manner of man he was" (James 1:22, 23). This man chose to continue in his own way rather than to follow the way defined by the Law.

"But whoso **looks** [3879, *to stoop to look, to look intently*] **into the perfect law of liberty**, and continues therein, he not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the **work, this man shall be blessed in his deed**" (v. 25). The law gives us correction that is of a positive nature, because its correction directs us away from actions that are detrimental to ourselves and others, and towards conduct that is beneficial to ourselves and others.

Looking into the mirror shows us that we need to make changes to bring ourselves into conformity with the Eternal. “But we all with unveiled face beholding **as in a mirror** the glory of the Lord, **are changed** [3339, *to change into another form*] **into the same image from glory to glory by the Lord the Spirit**” (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is the work of God, “For we are His workmanship, **created** [2936, *create, form, shape, make, always of God*] in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained **that we should walk in them**” (Ephesians 2:10).

You Must Eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

The Law of the Eternal is a necessary part of the conversion process that brings us into conformity with our Creator. “**The law of the LORD is perfect** [8549, *complete, sound*], **converting** [7725, *to turn back, restore*] **the soul**: the **testimony** [5715, *the code of law in general, as a testimony of God*] of the LORD is sure, **making wise the simple**. The **statutes** [6490, *a mandate (of God; plural only, collectively, for the Law)*] of the LORD are **right** [6490, *that which is right, pleasing in the eyes of God*], rejoicing the heart: the **commandment** of the LORD is pure, **enlightening** [215, *to be or become light*] the eyes” (Psalm 19:7, 8).

Conversion is not instantaneous, but it is a process of growing that takes place when we eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and put it to use. “For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs **to them that are of full age** [5046, *full-grown, adult; of full age, mature*], those who by **reason of use** [1838, *habit, practice*] have their **senses** [145, *perceive, discern through the senses*] **exercised** [1128, *to use, train, discipline*] **to discern** [1253, *the act of judgment*] **both good** [2570, *morally good, noble, proper*] **and evil** [2556, *what is contrary to law, either divine or human, wickedness*]” (Hebrews 5:13, 14).

Through partaking of God’s Word and putting it into practice, we learn to “Not be overcome of **evil** [2556, *what is contrary to law, either divine or human*], but **overcome** [3528, *conquer, be victorious, prevail, subdue*] **evil with good** [18, *what is upright, honorable, and acceptable to God*]” (Romans 12:21). Thus it is required that we “...be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the **renewing** [342, *a renewal, renovation, complete change for the better*] **of your mind, that you may prove** [1381, *put to the test, examine*] **what is that acceptable, and perfect will of God**” (v. 2). What is God’s will? It is defined by the law.

He who “...**overcomes** [3528] shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21:7). Those who choose not to overcome evil will die for eternity. “But the fearful, and **unbelieving** [571, *without faith or trust*], and the abominable, and murderers, and sexually immoral, and **sorcerers** [5332, *a poisoner, magician, one who deals in drugs*], and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: **which is the second death**” (v. 8).

Those who eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and overcome evil with good, will inherit eternal life. Those who choose to not overcome evil will die an eternal death.