

TWO MEN AND TWO TREES

Part 1

The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...(Genesis 2:9)

Ever since I was a child, I was taught, through various mediums, both consciously and subconsciously, that the great battle of history was that of Good against Evil. Every book, every movie, every tale of valor and courage, highlighted these Great Extremes, and I would admire the heroic as much as I despised the villainous. To be Good was to be desired above all, and, knowing even as a child that God is indeed Good, and Satan indeed most Evil, I took it for granted for a time that they were the Great Representatives of each camp, God being the more powerful and overwhelmingly victorious. It was only as I grew in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ that I began to understand that this belief, so thoroughly ingratiated into the mindset of humanity, was in fact erroneous. As I looked to the garden of Eden and it's symbolic portrayal of Christ I began to understand that the knowledge of 'Good and Evil', actually stands for one extreme, and the other end of the spectrum has a beautiful, wondrous name, and that name is....LIFE!!!!

THE FRUIT OF EACH TREE

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:1-5)

Those trees of Genesis have been bearing their fruit down through the ages, from the first bite of Eve's lips till now. For we must surely comprehend that the Knowledge of Good and Evil pertains to the carnal man, the first Adam, and the law of sin and death, and the Tree of Life to Christ Jesus, savior of mankind, and His Love. Though the Lord declared that eating of the forbidden tree would make man like He Himself, knowing Good and Evil, eating from that tree without also tasting the Life of God was a great curse, for even as man fell (in the full foresight and ordination of God, in the perfection of His divine plan), the fruit of the tree Man had eaten from began to hold him in it's sway. Indeed, the very first thing Adam and Eve did when they had eaten, was to perceive that they were naked, and to make a covering for themselves:

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

Saints, this is also a symbol - for Adam, by his transgression, had become naked and uncovered *spiritually* speaking, having no longer the righteousness of God. Therefore, the first action of he and his wife after having eaten was to *cover themselves* – to clothe

themselves in their own works and their own righteousness, so to speak. Thus, the curse had begun, and man's weary attempts at self-justification had a beginning. But hearken to what the Lord our God did when He looked upon Adam and Eve in their sin:

...for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. (Genesis 3:21)

As Adam fell, and as we all, being still in his loins, fell together with him under the curse, God was already displaying His mercy - and foreshadowing the cross and the Lamb of God, by *clothing them Himself* - taking their fig leaves, those symbols of their own works, and replacing them with *His* covering - *His* righteousness, spiritually speaking! He covered the corporate head of humanity, and thus symbolized his covering of us all, as our representative stood before Him. Thus, we see the first glimpse of the blessed hope in Christ, and the reality of the resurrection of the dead:

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

Christ, as the last Adam, has surely regained all of that which was lost in Adam by His obedience and perfect sacrifice. Here, at the very birth and curse of our race, we see the reality of the two trees, and the reality of the two men, side by side - the first of many such pictures throughout the scriptures.

CAIN AND ABEL

After the fall of Adam and Eve, The battle between the fleshly and the spiritual is immediately presented to us again in the story of their sons Cain and Abel. Cain here is the symbol of the first man, or Adam, and Abel the last, or Christ, and we see the fruit of the two trees evident in their manner of approaching God:

1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." 8 Now Cain talked with Abel his brother;^[a] and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. (Genesis 4:1-8)

The spiritual realities they represent are evident even in their occupations - Cain a tiller of the ground (working in the earth, which is the flesh), and Abel the shepherd

(which is also the spirit man Jesus Christ, the great shepherd and spotless Lamb). Cain, under the influence of the cursed fruit, brings the works of His own hands to the Lord, seeking to be justified by his own endeavors, much like Adam and Eve clothing themselves. Abel, however, brings the required sacrifice to God: the lamb, which shows forth the coming Messiah and His atonement. Cain's response is that of the carnal towards the spiritual, in that he kills his brother, thus signifying the great battle of the ages, which was to be shown forth again and again till there be no more death – the battle of the flesh against the spirit.

17 For the desires of the flesh are opposed to the [Holy] Spirit, and the [desires of the] Spirit are opposed to the flesh (godless human nature); for these are antagonistic to each other [continually withstanding and in conflict with each other], so that you are not free but are prevented from doing what you desire to do. (Galatians 5:17 – Amplified Version)

The Amplified version brings out this truth beautifully, and we see clearly the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, between the law of sin and death, and the Life of the Spirit. The old man is ever seeking to continue his dominion, but, as the sun rises, so is the new man rising triumphant in the hearts of the elect!

FAITH AND DOUBT

It is evident, and important to perceive, that both the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil bring forth their own particular fruit, inasmuch as both the flesh and the Spirit bear their fruit also:

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery,^[c] fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders,^[d] drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:19-24)

The fruit of the Spirit brings forth, among other things, Faith - the evidence of things unseen, and confidence in God. The flesh brings forth doubt, as man is tossed on the waves of his own instability and darkness. This faith and this doubt are tied to those two men and those two trees:

16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit.

19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them. (Matthew 7:16-23)

We see a great contrasting of those diverse fruits in the story of Noah, as he builds the ark of God, and even more so in the life of Abraham, who became known as the Father of the Faithful:

1 Now the LORD had said to Abram:

**“Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father’s house,
To a land that I will show you.**

**2 I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.**

**3 I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3)**

To Abram were imparted great assurances. A child of promise, a great nation - and indeed, a seed through which all nations would be blessed. Yet to receive those promises many things had to happen. The Lord commanded him to leave his father’s house to a land that God would show him – figuratively speaking, leaving the realm of flesh (Adam) and dwelling in the spiritual (Christ). Abram also received a new name (a new nature) from the Lord. Having done these things, God refined His faith pertaining to the birth of the promised Son (Isaac), who again came after the son of the flesh (Ishmael).

THE SON OF SLAVERY AND THE SON OF PROMISE

Paul, by the Spirit, enlarges upon the birth of Isaac and its spiritual significance in his letter to the church at Galatia:

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the^[d] two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written:

***“ Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!***

*Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband.*"^[e]

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. **29** But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. **30** Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "*Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.*"^[f] **31** So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. (Galatians 4:22-31)

Indeed, it might even be said that each son was the fruit of those two trees, for surely the conception of Ishmael came about through *doubt!*

1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no *children*. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. **2** So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing *children*. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. **3** Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. **4** So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. (Genesis 16:1-4)

Abram, though in possession of a great promise from God concerning the birth of a son by Sarah his wife, nonetheless heeded the voice of doubt and attempted in his flesh to deliver the promise of God. Now there is no doubt that the sovereignty of God shows forth in all of this, for these things are, as Paul said by the Spirit, symbolic, and therefore, ordained by God for our instruction (yea, even the disobedience and waywardness of man is under the Lord's firm control). And how symbolic! A son born of a slave woman, because of doubt in the faithfulness of God and His ability to deliver on His promise! What a striking picture of the first tree, the first Adam, and the carnal nature! But Isaac, in another foreshadowing of Christ, was born miraculously, by faith - opening the womb of an old woman, and revealing the power of God. Listen again to Paul:

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, **24** which things are symbolic. For these are the^[d] two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— **25** for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children (Galatians 4:23-25)

We here begin to see how the two trees, and two natures, also correspond to the two covenants, and indeed the two holy cities! For indeed the covenant on Sinai was a law for the carnal man, a schoolmaster and a pointer to Christ, but not the perfection of God:

11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise

according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 *For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.* 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.^[a] 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, *not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.* 17 For He testifies:^[b]

*“ You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek.”^[c]*

18 For on the one hand *there is an annulling of the former commandment* because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 19 *for the law made nothing perfect*; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. (Hebrews 7:11-19)

We see here the superiority of the new covenant, written in the blood of Christ, and the superiority of He Himself as our great High Priest:

23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever. (Hebrews 7:23-28)

So then, we see how the Lord God restrained the carnality of man through the law until such time as the Messiah came and offered Himself up for all. Since that new covenant has been ratified, we are under a new covenant, written in holy blood, and have become recipients of a new nature – a spiritual nature, and the right to eat from the tree of life – even Christ!

THE TREE OF LIFE

1 *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.* 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away,^[a] and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

5 “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will^[b] ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (John 15:1-8)

Christ truly is that tree of life, and as we abide in Him, His Spirit works in and through us to bear much fruit. If we do not abide in Him, we dry up, and must be burned (judged, disciplined). That fruit of the Spirit is the fruit of life, for to know God is life!

1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should^[a] give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.* (John 17:1-3)

Understand, saints, that though God is indeed Good, Christ never declared that He came so that we may be *good*, per se. He Himself declared that He came for us to know *life*:

10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. *I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.* (John 10:10)

The true ‘life eternal’ is to know God the Father and Christ the Son, and to have that life more abundantly! To grow in our apprehension and perception of Him, and indeed, to share in His own love. As we are drawn to Him more and more in His bond of lovingkindness, we are saved from the darkness of the old man and enter into the reality of the new man, which is also Christ, Head and body. This marvelous dawning of the new, piercing through the gloom of the old, was foreshadowed in the appearance of Jesus as the Messiah in a gloomy land:

**1 Nevertheless the gloom *will not be* upon her who is distressed,
As when at first He lightly esteemed
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
And afterward more heavily oppressed *her*,
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
In Galilee of the Gentiles.
2 *The people who walked in darkness*
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined. (Isaiah 9:1-2)**

Even as the Lord was revealed in a place of darkness in a literal sense, thus is He also revealed spiritually within the heart of man, tearing the veil of separation and blazing through the darkness of our carnality:

6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

What joy we have, as we perceive Christ Jesus arising in our hearts, burning away the chaff of our old nature and making all things new! Truly this is heaven come to earth, as the spiritual (heavenly), presides more and more over the flesh (earthly).

THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

It is so easy to think of our great hope as the traditional ‘Great Blue Yonder’, a celestial symphony of harp strumming saints that pluck away, even as the screams of those in hell below echo through the halls of eternity. Indeed, this perception (or rather, lack thereof), is part of the mindset that reduces the significance of Jesus Christ to either the distant past or distant future. For instance, He is either still that humble carpenter, ever climbing that hill of pain, or He is the one far ahead who will whisk us away to a rapturous escape and zap us into instant perfection. Brethren, we must always understand the moment at which time kisses eternity is NOW! Remember what the Christ said, when Martha declared her faith in her brother rising at the last day:

23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24 Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:23-26)

Jesus did not encourage Martha to see the resurrection and new life as a future hope, or coming event, as much as He declared that resurrection and that life to reside in

Consider again the parable of the vine. It is abiding in Him *now* that enables us to bear fruit, even as a failure to abide results in a drying up and withering. Thus, the life He gives, though no doubt set to increase in the future as His coming radiates yet more and more, is always to be enjoyed and conveyed in the present.

26 “...For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself...” (John 5:26)

Saints of the Most High, place your hope in the Son, who is also in Father, for where your treasure will be, there your heart will be also. Our ‘Treasure in Heaven’ and great inheritance is the Lord Himself, not some grandiose heavenly ‘mansion’, or celestial pot of gold. And the life that this blessed God gives is there for us all *now* – ever growing, ever awakening in us, ever being changed from one glory to another.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are

being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

Amen! Blessed be the name of the Lord!