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All people have an original mind which inclines them to reject evil and pursue goodness. Yet, even without our being aware of it, we are driven by evil forces to abandon the goodness which our original mind desires and to perform evil deeds which, in our innermost heart, we do not want to do. As long as these evil forces assail us, the sinful history of humanity will continue unabated. In Christianity, the master of these evil forces is known as Satan. We have been utterly unable to liquidate the forces of Satan because we have not understood Satan's identity or how he came to exist. To extirpate evil by its root, and thereby end sinful history and usher in an era of goodness, we must first expose the motivation and origin of Satan and recognize the destruction he has wrought in human life. This explanation of the human Fall will clarify these issues.

## **Section 1 The Root of Sin**

No one has known the root of sin, which lies deep within and ceaselessly drives people toward the way of evil. On the basis of the Bible, Christians have held to a vague belief that Adam and Eve's eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the root of sin. Some Christians believe that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the fruit of an actual tree, while others believe that the fruit is a symbol, as much of the Bible is written in symbolic language. Let us consider the Bible's account of the human Fall and its differing interpretations in order to arrive at a complete explanation.

### **1.1 THE TREE OF LIFE AND THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL**

Adam and Eve fell when they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Many Christians to this day have thought that this was the fruit of an actual tree. But would God, the loving Parent of humanity, make a fruit which could cause the Fall to look so attractive? Genesis 3:6. Would He place it where His children could reach it so easily? Furthermore, Jesus said, "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." Matthew 15: 11. How, then, can a food which one eats cause one to fall?

Humankind is beset by the original sin, which has been inherited from our first ancestors. Yet how can something one eats cause a sin which can be transmitted to one's descendants? The only way something can be inherited is by being passed down through the lineage. The temporary ill effects of eating something cannot be perpetuated through the long descent of lineage.

There are those who believe that God made the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and commanded Adam and Eve not to eat it in order to test their obedience to Him. We may ask: would the God of love test humans so mercilessly by a

means that could cause their death? Adam and Eve knew they would die the moment they ate the fruit, for God had told them so. Yet still they ate it. Adam and Eve did not lack for food. They would not have risked their lives and disobeyed God only to obtain some delicacy. Therefore, we can surmise that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil could not have been an ordinary fruit. Rather, it must have been something so extraordinarily stimulating that even the fear of death did not deter them from grasping it.

If the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not a material fruit, then it must be a symbol which represents something else. Why should we stubbornly adhere to a literal interpretation of the fruit when so much of the Bible makes use of symbolism and metaphor? We would do well to abandon such a narrow and old-fashioned attitude of faith.

To learn what the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents, let us first investigate the tree of life, which stood next to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden.<sup>3</sup> Gen. 2:9 When we grasp the meaning of the tree of life, then we can also understand the meaning of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

### 1.1.1 THE TREE OF LIFE

According to the Bible, the hope of fallen people is to approach or attain the tree of life: “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” Proverbs 13:12. Thus, the Israelites of the Old Testament Age looked to the tree of life as their hope. Likewise, the hope of all Christians from the time of Jesus until today has been to approach and partake of the tree of life: “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.” Revelation 22: 14. Since the ultimate hope of humankind is the tree of life, we can infer that the hope of Adam was also the tree of life.

It is written that when Adam fell, God blocked his path to the tree of life by stationing the cherubim with a flaming sword to guard it. Genesis 3: 24. From this we can also deduce that Adam’s hope before the Fall was the tree of life. Adam was cast out of the Garden of Eden without having attained his hope, the tree of life. For fallen people ever since, the tree of life has remained a hope unfulfilled.

What was the hope of Adam during the time he was immature and growing toward perfection? He must have hoped to become a man who would realize God’s ideal of creation by growing to perfection without falling. The tree of life in fact symbolizes a man who has fully realized the ideal of creation. Perfected Adam was to be this ideal man. The tree of life thus symbolizes perfected Adam.

Had Adam not fallen but attained the tree of life, all his descendants could also have attained the tree of life. They would have built the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. But Adam fell, and God blocked his path to the tree with a flaming sword. Ever since, despite the best efforts of fallen people to restore the ideal of creation, the tree of life has remained an unattainable dream. Burdened by the original sin, fallen people cannot complete the ideal of creation and become trees of life by their own efforts alone. For this ideal to be achieved, a man who has completed the ideal of creation must come to the earth as a tree of life. All of humanity must then be engrafted with him, Romans 11: 17, and become one with him. Jesus was the man who came as this tree of life. The tree of life for which the faithful people of the Old Testament Age longed, Proverbs 13: 12, was none other than Jesus.

Ever since God blocked Adam's path to the tree of life by guarding it with the flaming sword, the tree could not be approached without first clearing the path. On the day of Pentecost, tongues of fire descended upon the saints, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 2: 3-4. This event marked the clearing of the path and the moving aside of the flaming sword, which appeared as the tongues of fire preceding the rush of the Holy Spirit. It opened the way for all humanity to approach Jesus, the tree of life, and be engrafted with him.

Nonetheless, Christians have been engrafted with Jesus only spiritually. This is why the children of even the most devout Christian parents still inherit sin, which must be redeemed. Even the most faithful saints have not been free of the original sin, and thus cannot help but transmit it to their children. For this reason, Christ must come again on earth as the tree of life. By engrafting all humankind with himself once more, he is to redeem their original sin. Christians thus impatiently await the tree of life, which in the Book of Revelation symbolizes Christ at his Second Coming. Revelation 22: 14.

The purpose of God's providence of salvation is to restore the failure to attain the tree of life in the Garden of Eden by realizing the tree of life mentioned in the Book of Revelation. Due to the Fall, Adam could not fulfill the ideal of the first tree of life. Genesis 2: 9. In order to complete the salvation of fallen humanity, Jesus, the "last Adam," 1 Corinthians 15: 45, must come again as the tree of life in the Last Days.

### 1.1.2 THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

God did not create Adam to be alone; He also created Eve to be Adam's spouse. Just as there was a tree in the Garden of Eden which symbolized a perfected man, there also should have been a tree which represented a woman who has fully realized the ideal of creation. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, standing beside the tree of life, Genesis 2: 9, was this tree which, by fulfilling its good purpose, represents the ideal woman, perfected Eve.

The Bible refers to Jesus using the metaphors of a vine (John 15: 5) and a branch. Isaiah 11: 1; Jeremiah 23: 5. Likewise, to give us a hint about the secret of the human Fall, God provided the symbolism of two trees to represent perfected Adam and Eve.

## 1.2 THE IDENTITY OF THE SERPENT

In the Bible we read that a serpent tempted Eve to commit sin. Genesis 3: 4-5. What does the serpent symbolize? Let us investigate the true identity of the serpent, based on the Genesis account.

The serpent described in the Bible was able to converse with people. It caused the Fall of humans, who are spiritual beings. Furthermore, the serpent knew the Will of God, which strictly forbade human beings to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is compelling evidence that the being which the serpent symbolizes was a spiritual being.

It is written:

The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world – he was thrown down to the earth. Revelation 12: 9.

This ancient serpent is the very serpent which tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden. Having lived in heaven before it was thrown down, this Devil or Satan must be a spiritual being. In fact, ever since the time of the human Fall, Satan has been continually turning the hearts of people toward evil. Since Satan is a spiritual being, the serpent which symbolizes him must also represent a spiritual being. These strands of biblical evidence confirm that the serpent who tempted Eve was not an animal but a symbol for a spiritual being.

The question arises whether the spiritual being symbolized by the serpent existed before the creation of the universe or was created as a part of the universe. If this being existed before the creation of the universe and had a purpose contrary to that of God, then the conflict between good and evil in the universe would be unavoidable and perpetual. God's providence of restoration, then, would be in vain. Moreover, monotheism, which holds that everything in the universe was created by one God, would be unfounded. We are left with the conclusion that the spiritual being represented by the serpent was originally created with a good purpose, but later fell and became Satan.

What kind of spiritual being in God's creation could have conversed with people, understood the Will of God, and lived in heaven? What kind of being, even after it had fallen and become degraded to an evil being, could transcend time and space to

dominate the human soul? There are no beings endowed with such characteristics other than angels. The verse “God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of nether gloom” (2 Peter 2-4) supports the conclusion that the serpent, which tempted human beings and sinned, is an angel.

A serpent has a forked tongue. It depicts someone who utters contradictory things with one tongue and lives a two-faced life with one heart. A serpent twists its body around its prey before devouring it, a metaphor for someone who ensnares others for his own benefit. For these reasons, the Bible likened the angel who tempted human beings to a serpent.

### 1.3 THE FALL OF THE ANGEL AND THE FALL OF HUMAN BEINGS

It is clear that the serpent who tempted the human beings to fall was an angel, and that this angel became Satan when he sinned and fell. Let us now investigate what kind of sin the angel and the human beings committed.

#### 1.3.1 THE CRIME OF THE ANGEL

And the angels that did not keep their own position but left their proper dwelling have been kept by him in eternal chains in the nether gloom until the judgment of the great day; just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise acted immorally and indulged in unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Jude 6-7

From this passage we can infer that the angel fell as a result of an illicit sexual relationship.

Fornication is a crime which cannot be committed alone. With whom did the angel commit the illicit sexual act in the Garden of Eden? In order to unveil this mystery, let us examine what kind of sin the human beings committed.

#### 1.3.2 THE CRIME OF THE HUMAN BEINGS

We read that before they fell, Adam and Eve were both naked, and were not ashamed. Genesis 2: 25. After the Fall, however, they felt ashamed of their nakedness and sewed fig leaves together into aprons to cover their lower parts. Genesis 3: 7. If they had committed a crime by eating some actual fruit from a tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then they certainly would have covered their hands or mouths instead. It is human nature to conceal one's faults. Thus, the act of covering their lower parts shows that these parts, and not their mouths, were the source of their shame. In Job 31:33 it is written, “If I have concealed my transgressions like Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom.” Adam concealed his lower parts after the Fall; this

indicates that his blemish was in his lower parts. Adam and Eve's sexual parts were the source of their shame because they were the instruments of their sinful deed.

In the world before the human Fall, what act would one be willing to carry out even at the clear risk of one's life? It could be nothing else but the act of love. God's purpose of creation, described in the blessings "be fruitful and multiply," (Genesis 1: 28) can be achieved only through love.

Accordingly, from the viewpoint of God's purpose of creation, love should be the most precious and sacred act. But because the sexual act was the very cause of the Fall, people often regard it with shame and even contempt. In conclusion, human beings fell through an act of illicit sexual intercourse.

### 1.3.3 THE ILLICIT SEXUAL ACT BETWEEN THE ANGEL AND THE HUMAN BEINGS

Thus far, we have explained that an angel seduced human beings to fall, and that both the angel and the human beings fell due to illicit sexual love. Human beings and angels are the only spiritual beings in the universe who are capable of having love relationships. We can deduce that the illicit sexual relationship must have involved the angel and human beings.

Jesus said, "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires." John 8: 44. Since the Devil is identified as Satan, Revelation 12: 9, we can assert that human beings are descendants of Satan, the "ancient serpent" who tempted human beings. Through what circumstances did humankind become the descendants of the fallen angel, Satan? There was an illicit sexual relationship between the angel and the first ancestors. As the fruit of that relationship, all humanity is of the lineage of Satan. When St. Paul wrote, "we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies," Romans 8: 23, he was acknowledging that we fallen people stem from the lineage of Satan, not the lineage of God. John the Baptist reproached the people, calling them "a brood of vipers," Matthew 3:7, that is, children of Satan. Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees, "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?" Matthew 23:33. These verses affirm that we are the offspring of an illicit sexual relationship involving the angel and our first ancestors. This, in fact, lies at the heart of the human Fall.

### 1.4 THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was shown earlier to symbolize Eve. What does the fruit of this tree represent? It signifies the love of Eve. As a tree multiplies by its fruit, Eve should have borne good children through her godly love. Instead, she bore evil children through her satanic love. Eve was created in an immature state; she was



to reach full maturity only after going through a period of growth. Thus, it was possible for her to bear either good fruit or evil fruit through her love. This is why Eve's love is symbolized by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and why Eve is symbolized by the tree.

What did eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil signify? When we eat something, we make it a part of ourselves. Eve was to have eaten the fruit of goodness by consummating her God-centered love. Then she would have received the essence of God's divinity and multiplied a good lineage. However, she ate of the fruit of evil by consummating her evil love centered on Satan. Hence, she received the essence of his evil nature and multiplied an evil lineage from which our sinful society descended. Accordingly, Eve's eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil denotes that she consummated a satanic love relationship with the angel which bound her in blood ties to him.

God cursed the fallen angel, saying, "upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life." Genesis 3: 14. "Upon your belly you shall go" means that the angel would become a miserable being, unable to function properly or to perform its original service. To "eat dust" means that ever since the angel was thrown down from heaven, Isaiah 14:12; Revelation 12: 9, he has been deprived of life elements from God. Instead, he has had to subsist on evil elements gleaned from the sinful world.

## 1.5 THE ROOT OF SIN

We have learned from the above elucidation of the Bible that the root of sin was not that the first human ancestors ate a fruit, but rather that they had an illicit sexual relationship with an angel (symbolized by a serpent). Consequently, they could not multiply God's good lineage but instead multiplied Satan's evil lineage.

There is ample evidence which helps us recognize that the root of human sin stems from sexual immorality. We know that the original sin has been perpetuated through lineal descent from one generation to the next. This is because the root of sin was solidified by a sexual relationship that binds one in ties of blood. Furthermore, those religions which emphasize the need to purge sin regard fornication as a cardinal sin, and they have taught the virtues of chastity and restraint in order to curb it. This is an indication that the root of sin is found in lustful desires. The Israelites performed the rite of circumcision as a condition for sanctification. They qualified themselves as God's chosen people by draining blood, because the root of sin lies in having taken in through an unchaste act the evil blood which permeates our being.



Sexual promiscuity is a principal cause of the downfall of numerous heroes, patriots and nations. Even in the most outstanding people, the root of sin—illicit sexual desire—is constantly active in their souls, sometimes without their conscious awareness. We may be able to eradicate all other evils by establishing moral codes through religion, by thoroughly implementing various educational programs, and by reforming the socio-economic systems that foster crime. But no one can prevent the plague of sexual promiscuity, which has become increasingly prevalent as the progress of civilization makes lifestyles more comfortable and indolent. Therefore, the hope of an ideal world is an empty dream as long as this root of all evils has not been eradicated at its source. Christ at his Second Advent must be able to solve this problem once and for all.

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