

NORTHEAST HOUSTON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sermon – The Inerrancy of The Bible, Pt 4

Choose Life or Choose Death

Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:15–20

03-18-2012

Deuteronomy 30:15–20 (NKJV) ¹⁵ “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; **therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;** ²⁰ that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

I promised last week to cover the question concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

In researching for this message, I came across an article written by and atheist

a-the-ist - a person who **denies** or disbelieves the existence of a supreme being or beings. On how one practices doctrine of atheism

Atheism **1.** the **doctrine** or belief that there is no God. **2.** disbelief in the existence of a supreme being or beings.

It is the purpose of the non-believer to cause believers to doubt. to doubt the existence of God, Jesus and the foundation of our faith, the Word of God.

We have spent the last few weeks discussing some of the more difficult passages in the Bible. As a result, the question came up regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

Why did God put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden? (this is our question today).

He refers to the temptation theory but discounts it by the word of God in *James 1:13*.

James 1:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

I believe that is true. The question still remains. Why did He put the tree in the garden?

The whole premise for the doubt, a favorite dart of Satan, is,

If an all-knowing God knew Adam and Eve would sin then why did he give them the tree to sin?

The answer to this question is not as hard as it seems but explaining it has its challenges. It all centers around the concept of "choice."

Let me ask you, can you make a choice where there is nothing to choose between? How often have we said or heard it said, "I have or had no choice."? This is not true; we always have a choice. A choice occurs when there are two or more options to take. Even when there seems to be only one choice there is the choice to accept or reject it.

Having a choice is one of God's greatest gifts and properly exercising that choice brings glory to God and blessings to us.

The tree was a test of obedience. They did not have to eat of the tree. God did not want Adam to die after all there was also in the garden the tree of life.

They didn't eat of the tree until the devil introduced doubt into the equation. I know in my lifetime there are some things I would never have done on my own, but being influenced by another I made the wrong choices.

Someone may ask, why give them a choice in the first place. Without the tree there would be no chance for them to eat of it.

Answer: God put the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden to give Adam and Eve a choice to obey Him or disobey Him. Adam and Eve were free to do anything they wanted, except eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If God had not given Adam and Eve the choice, they would have essentially been robots, simply doing what they were programmed to do. God created man in His image to be "free" beings, able to make decisions, able to choose between good and evil. In order for Adam and Eve to truly be free, they had to have a choice.

God created the angels and they disobeyed on more than one occasion because they had that same choice, obey or disobey.

Jude 6 (NKJV) ⁶ And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

Revelation 12:7-9 (NKJV) ⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Let me address the question about the all-knowing power of God, His omniscience.

1. having infinite knowledge or understanding
2. having very great or seemingly unlimited knowledge

This is going to be a little different than what we have been taught in the past. It is often said that "in God's omniscience, He knows the end from the beginning".

If that is a rigid and unwavering statement then there are more questions that arise. If that is the case then why put the tree in the garden in the first place? Why send anyone to hell if God knew man would sin and He didn't do anything about it.

I can't blindly believe that in its entirety.

Imagine this scene in heaven where God says let's make man who I will command not to eat of this tree and knowing he will I will let sin and bring death into the world and let sin contaminate all mankind requiring me to send my only begotten Son to die on a cruel cross to save some. The others I will send to hell.

If this were true then God owes an apology to all the people and all the cities He destroyed for disobedience. I can't believe that the loving God I serve had it all planned that way. Nor do I believe that my God ever lost control of the situation.

Well what do I believe? I believe that God truly knows the end from the **beginning of our choices**,

I thought that our focus passage would give us deeper insight into the concept of "choice."

We are looking into the book of Deuteronomy which is the last book of the Pentateuch written by Moses. It records the farewell address of Moses to the children of Israel. The words Moses are from God in the form of a commandment.

Deuteronomy 30:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ "For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off.

The commandment given to Adam and by proxy to Eve was not a mysterious one, quite the contrary it was very simple. **Verse 15 outlines what the choice of the people were, Life and good, death and evil.**

It goes on to outline other commands to choose.

^{V16} in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, (blessings) that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess

A list of blessings has been laid before the people.

^{V17} But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them,

Now look at the first two words in verse 17, "But if".

But = 1. on the contrary; yet:

If - 1. in case that; granting or supposing that; on condition that:

This verse could be translated: ¹⁷ (On the contrary), (in case that, (or) on condition that) your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them

We see here a choice given to the listeners. Just as a choice was given to Adam and Eve and the same choice given to us.

With each choice, God knew the predictable consequence attached.

God gives many blessings

^{V17b...}, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.

We choose to receive the curses

^{V18} I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.

Let's review the pattern:

1. Choice one - to choose to obey the command and be blessed with (life and good)
2. Choice two - to disobey and be cursed.

God gave the people a warning of the consequences. He gave Adam and Eve a warning. He has given us a warning.

3. both choices had consequences, Either good or bad.

Isn't this the same pattern used regarding the tree? *Genesis 2:16–17 (NKJV)*

1. A choice was to obey with a blessing

Gen 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;

2. A choice to disobey with a curse

Gen 2:17 but (on the contrary) of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

^{v19} I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing;

The heavens and the earth are witnesses because they are not going away anytime soon. This means that the commands are forever. Even to our generation.

The answer to the, why" question is found right here:

^{v20} that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Definition: "Cling" - Translated from the original word that means 1 to cling, stick, stay close, cleave, keep close, stick to, stick with, follow closely, join to, overtake, catch. 1A (Qal). ^{1A1} to cling, cleave to. ^{1A2} to stay with. 1B (Pual) to be joined together. ¹

God wants a great relationship with us but it begins with loving him, obeying Him, sticking close to Him. These in their truest form can only glorify God if they are the result of a choice not without having one.

The choice spoken by Joshua still rings loud and clear today.

*Joshua 24:15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, **choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**"*

Choose between the almighty God that desires the best for you and eternal life or the multiple gods of the world.

It is true that God **tempts** no man that's what the devil does, but god does **test** every man.

It is the same choice for us today, "Choose life eternal or choose death and damnation.)

God has given us all the freedom to choose. But (on the contrary) me and my house will choose to serve the Lord.

END

¹ Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.