

SIN

... small act; big consequences
Genesis 2 & 3 Part 1
WEFC October 19, 2008

At the end of, what to us would appear to be six intense days of creating, God checks out His “universal studio” and with a critical eye investigates.

The concluding report:

**“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”
(Genesis 1:31)**

The world that God had established with the first man and woman was perfect to a “t”.

... perfect world, perfect people, perfect environment ... is the material reserved for fictitious novels.

The real world is imperfect, incomplete, awaiting an anticipation that one day things may get straightened out.

It takes little effort to convince us that we do NOT have a perfect existence. A perfect community would not need hospitals, jails, police forces, ambulances, lawyers, doctors, nurses, mediators, monitoring agencies, military forces, locksmiths, security personal ...

The very existence of these agencies and occupations indicates the prevalence of what God’s Word labels as SIN.

The reason I do not talk to you, you do not talk to me, we do not talk to them, is because of SIN.

SIN is simple and complex; big and small; visible and invisible; intense and laidback; internal and external.

SIN appears to have infiltrated every nook and cranny of God’s “universal studio”.

According to **Genesis 3** SIN is the reason we find ourselves in the pickle we are in.

Here is what went wrong in the beginning.

Genesis 2:8-9

Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.

And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food, in the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:15-17

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

After some time had passed we read in **Genesis 3:6**

... the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also

gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Key Thought:

God's restriction set us free.

God brought man into a garden ... a special place ... where he could experience God's rich goodness.

There in the middle of the garden two trees were distinguished from the rest. One was called **the tree of life**, the other, **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**.

The events that follow center on **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**.

Before we attempt to understand what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is, it is important to see that ...

1. God, who is always good and just, intentionally planted the crucial "knowledge tree" in the middle of the garden

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was God's idea.

It was one item that fit under the statement ... **"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."**

Since God put it there, and it falls under the "it was very good" label ... we conclude that God knew what He was doing and that what He did was good.

This was not a mistake that He made; nor was He baiting us to inevitable failure.

God has never regretted making that tree.

This "tree" was good.

It was a part of God's excellent work.

This is the backdrop, the necessary backdrop against which we must see the rest of the historical account.

Transition:

In Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, where we lived stands a historical building called the Diarama. It's outstanding feature (if I can recall the dimensions and the work itself) is a work of art recalling a battle between the Russian and German forces along the Dneper River not far from our city.

The picture is a curved ninety foot-long work by about two to three stories high. The painting features objects like a jeep that grow out of the picture on the wall to give it a three dimensional flavor.

So the back drop is there ... and then you have the real objects set against the river backdrop.

God's goodness, perfect goodness, is the backdrop ... the mural ... against which we need to see all the live, three dimensional things that are key to this account.

Remove the backdrop and we are left with a blank, bare look.

God's goodness stands as the backdrop to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

2. The "tree" is the clearest way to indicate that we are on

side, that we agree to God's position, role and character in relationship to ourselves

This tree stands in the garden of Eden representing the mind and design of God.

It is a stand out because it is the only part of creation that is off-limits for humanity.

Eat from all of the other trees, but not this one. This is the lone, single "Thou shalt not ..."

To make certain that Adam understood the message, God tacked on a line or two emphasizing that if Adam did choose to eat there would be immediate and severe consequences – death.

God COMMANDED.

Here, not just with the words of their mouth, but with their whole being, Adam and Eve would be able to indicate their YES or NO to God.

We conclude then that the tree was placed there for our advantage, not disadvantage.

As we said earlier, it was a good thing, not a bad thing.

The tree placed by God in the center of the garden is there for the following reasons:

[The Reasons for the Tree]

- **Central to our figuring out of life is God's Word.**

We tend to treat this a Mickey Mouse point ... one that is so obvious and simple that we slide over it.

... and that is the point of the tree.

We cannot ignore the straightforward, straight-up words of God.

They are different than our words. His words stick. They carry clout. They are words that "work" ... they inevitably come true and are effective. They are impossible to avoid or ignore.

Do not edit, reshape, erase, or ignore these words. These are God's words ... and as such they are in a category all of their own.

- **Point out that its full import is known only by God, not people**

God alone knows the "power" or the implications that have been invested in this tree.

There is something in this tree that is beyond humanity ... that if humanity gets a hold of, it will not be good for them.

Even when Eve and Adam ate of it, they did not figure it all out.

This tree was "loaded" with meaning and significance that neither of the first two people, nor we, understand their depth.

- **The tree represents the one and only correct WorldView and its reality (enforcement)**

Recall our WorldView Chart?

...that is what this tree is all about.

As we have filled in the WorldView Chart over the past five or so weeks, we have seen the varying basis by which people allow themselves to be shaped.

Start from one point and you end up in entirely different destination than if you started from a differing point.

Here is where God is coming from.

God made mankind in His own image ... a fact that caused one person to note ...

Psalm 8:3-5, 9

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

... O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

We are special ... special in God's eyes.

We do stand at the top of God's pecking order in creation.

We are important.

We are significant.

... but we are neither independent, nor do we know it all.

God is most special.

God stands not just at the top of creation's pecking order, but He stands at the top of everything.

God is most important.

God is most significant.

God is independent and knows it all.

When it comes to day to day operations, handling the affairs of the created world and relationships with God and each other ... God has ALL the answers ... we do not.

This tree points out to us that when it comes to knowing **good and evil** ... again recall **Genesis 1:1 ... heavens and earth** ... two extremes that are meant to include everything in between, or the totality of a matter ... that is what we have here ...

The area is WorldView, morality, defining what is right and is wrong.

God alone knows what advances life and that which derails it.

God alone knows everything ... we know partially.

God alone knows absolutely, each and all details ... we know relatively, a bit here and some there.

There is a large part of what is called knowledge that is appropriate only for God to know and handle as to what is good and evil.

Not all knowledge is off limits.

But there is a large restricted area of knowledge that is God's exclusive, sole domain.

Nobody else has the right to decide on these matters as to what does and does not go, except Him because being the wisest, the smartest, the sharpest, the Creator of His universal studio ... He knows how things work.

He knows what no one else knows.

He alone can handle this knowledge without perverting or twisting it for selfish ends.

Not only does God know more than we do, but for us think that we can walk into His territory, take over His desk, and write the laws of humanity is to display an arrogance and serious lack of knowledge and appreciation of God Himself as well as ourselves.

When it comes to knowledge, God has it all; we do not.

Go back a number of weeks and recall the concept of **DIVINE REVELATION**.

To pursue knowledge without reference to **God's divine revelation** is to place ourselves in a position of independence, responsible to no one.

To live as we alone called the shots is to live as an atheist, to live without reference or response to God ... the most arrogant statement that a person can make.

The tree of life is there to tell us that the way to tackle our many questions is accept God's limitations not as restrictions, but freedom ... to believe His limitations as good and not bad ... which will require from us a dependence upon Him.

It is this from this tree that they were commanded to not eat from, that Eve and Adam both ate ... and sin entered our world with devastating and disastrous results.

Knowledge, we might say, is like radioactive material. Used with control and proper parameters, is a very good, efficient and clean source of energy.

Fool around with it, treat it as insignificant, and you get burned bad.

On 26 April 1986 at 01:23:44 a.m. (UTC+3) reactor number four at the Chernobyl plant, near Pripyat in the Ukrainian SSR, exploded. Further explosions and the resulting fire sent a plume of highly radioactive fallout into the atmosphere and over an extensive geographical area. Four hundred times more fallout was released than had been by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Two people died in the initial steam explosion, but most deaths from the accident were attributed to fallout.

The Chernobyl disaster was the worst nuclear power plant accident in history and the only instance of level 7 on the International Nuclear Event Scale, resulting in a severe release of radioactivity into the environment following a massive power excursion which destroyed the reactor.

The plume of radio active material drifted over extensive parts of the western Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Northern Europe, and eastern North America. Large areas in Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia were badly contaminated, resulting in the evacuation and resettlement of over 336,000 people. According to official post-Soviet data, about 60% of the radioactive fallout landed in Belarus.

The accident raised concerns about the safety of the Soviet nuclear power industry, slowing its expansion for a number of years, while forcing the Soviet government to become less secretive. The now-independent countries of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus have been burdened with the continuing and substantial decontamination and health care costs of the Chernobyl accident.

It is difficult to accurately tell the number of deaths caused by the events at Chernobyl, as the Soviet-era cover-up made it difficult to track down victims. Lists were incomplete, and Soviet authorities later forbade doctors to cite "radiation" on death certificates.

The 2005 report prepared by the Chernobyl Forum, led by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and World Health Organization (WHO), attributed 56 direct deaths (47 accident workers, and nine children with thyroid cancer), and estimated that there may be 4,000 extra cancer deaths among the approximately 600,000 most highly exposed people.

That is what happened when Adam and Eve ate of the tree that God withheld from them.

The results were devastating not just for them, but for all that were left behind.

... in conclusion ...

Key Thought:

God's restrictions set us free.

As we look back on what happened back way back in history for the very first time we see the same things happening in our lives ... almost daily.

We know that God has REVEALED His word, given us His WorldView, but we want to go beyond the fence.

We think we can handle the radioactivity of life and get away with it ... impossible.

SIN is always personal.

It affects you or me. It is never a group act whose effects evaporate ... where no one ends up paying for it.

It is always attached to a person. It is always personal.

Just because something is available and accessible, does not mean it is there for the taking.

"Do not enter" signs are put there so that we would not need to experience the pain that is often associated with going to far with knowledge.

God is being good to us in commanding us to stay away and not take.

... a lesson we often grasp only after it is to late.

We do not have the right to create our own WorldView.

God has spared us the work and pain from not having to sin, to save us from blowing our lives, to get us on the right track without being maimed and mangled by our wrong choices.

God's divine revelation is the most accurate source of WorldView information ... but works for us only when we buy into it in our entirety.

We do not approach this as a course we take for credit, as optional material that is interesting and informative.

God requires that we buy in with all that is of us.

We step away from picking forbidden fruit.

We ask Him to forgive us for trespassing and taking what is not ours.

We ask Him to cleanse us from that which is spiritually radioactive and deadly ... our sin.

We ask Him give us a new life that is connected to God Himself.

... and this leads us to **another tree** ... not the kind that grows out of the soil of the ground, but a tree that was once constructed from rough timber ... two large pieces put together at right angles to one another ... forming a cross.

That tree gives us God's revealed knowledge ... plain and clear ... and brings us to the Lord's Table.

Jesus Christ died on that tree – **the Cross (the symbol of Jesus' Christ's death on our behalf).**

God has explained that what Adam and Eve's destructive work un-did in the garden can be undone or reversed by the accomplishments of Jesus Christ at the Cross.

That here, we can return to a right relationship with God by accepting God's parameters to our lives and God's solution ... not a principle, but a Person ... His Sinless Son, who never overstepped the boundaries set out for Him by His Father.

He understood His Father's WorldView, lived within it and discovered through all that He went, that God's way was the best way.

... a reality that we acknowledge as we participate in the Lord's Table.

...forgiveness and freedom found within God's restrictions.