

Sermon Mark S. Aites
THE THREE TREES
(Some Material Borrowed)

INTRODUCTION:

1. The Bible is a remarkable book; a library or collection of 66 books; 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the new.
2. It was written by 40 men over a 1600 year period; yet maintains harmony and truth.
3. The reason for this, is that it is the product of God (**2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 1 Cor. 2:12-13**).
4. The Bible is the most translated and the best seller. Why? Because it has spiritual content and also the history of man.
5. If asked, could you give a summation of its contents?
 - 1) Your response is important (**1 Pet. 3:15**).
 - 2) To give a summation of its contents, I suggest to you that the story of the Bible revolves around three trees.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE (GEN. 2:15-17).

- A. The tree brings to our mind man's sin.
- B. The first two chapters convey all was well.
 1. Creation: "very good" (**1:31**).
 2. Innocence existed: *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed (2:25)*.
 3. One author has suggested: "Genesis chapters 1 and 2 set forth man in perfection and innocence; the last 1,187 chapters set forth man's sin and the need for redemption."
- C. All appears well until the serpent arrives on the scene: *more subtil than any beast of the field (3:1)*. -- "crafty, sly sharp-witted, shrewdly skillful."
 1. Evident in his methods of deception: confronted Eve when she was alone (most vulnerable).
 - 1) When we are alone, we are more vulnerable (example--Jesus, **Matt. 4**).

- 2) This should remind each of us of the great benefits we derive in assembling with the saints; the daily ties; close friendships.
 - 3) Jesus told His disciples: *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (Matt. 10:16).* (Note: He sent them out by twos; not by themselves.)
 - 4) Early church: *They continued daily with one accord in the temple (Acts 2:46).*-- spent time together.
 - 5) Paul warned Corinthians: *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve thru his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3; cf. 1 Pet. 5:8).*
2. Next method he used, doubt: *And the serpent said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*
- 1) In other words: "Is it really so that God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"
 - 2) Satan cannot stand in direct opposition to the word (**Matt. 4**); so he seeks to cast doubt on the word.
 - 3) Today: he is still working, getting people to ask, "Are you really sure..."
 1. "...One must be baptized for the remission of sins" (**cf. Acts 2:38**)?
 2. "...One must partake of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week?"
 3. "...One can't use instruments of music in the worship service?"
 4. "...That there is a hell?"
 - 4) Doubt is a stepping-stone to transgression.
3. Note that his question (**3:1**) implies that they were being treated unfairly.
- 1) His effort appears to convince Eve she has been deprived of something.
 - 2) He uses that method against people today: he seeks to convince Christians that they are mistreated; they have too many restrictions.
 - 3) All too often I have heard complaints from children of God; "Why can't I dance? drink? dress in short shorts and halter tops?"
 - 4) People spend more time complaining about what they can't do rather than what

- they can!
- 5) His strategy was to place emphasis upon the one thing forbidden; rather than all of the things they were permitted! (And he successfully continues that strategy today.)
4. Next method was to lie! *Ye shall not surely die (3:4)*.
 - 1) He added a negative, the word *not*, and changed the meaning of God's statement completely.
 - 2) He is the *father of lies (John 8:44)*.
 - 3) Notice: in his lie he sought to convey that God was hiding something from Adam and Eve. *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil (3:5)*.
 - 4) Today: his servants are still adding the negative to his commands:
 1. "It is not necessary to be baptized for the remission of sins."
 2. "It is not necessary that faith be accompanied by works."
 3. "The Bible is not the inspired word of God."
 - 5) It is a sad note that even today, through those who appear righteous, he continues to deceive souls. *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14)*.
 5. His most noted method: temptation -- *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 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 (Gen. 3:6)*.
 - 1) John tells us how he worked in this situation:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, 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).
 - 2) Lust of the flesh - good for food.
 - 3) Lust of the eyes - pleasant to the eyes.
 - 4) Pride of life - make one wise; as gods.

5) Used it also on Jesus (**Matt. 4**); continues to use it on man today (**1 Cor. 10:12**).

D. The fall of man involved these steps: Man heard a lie; believed a lie; obeyed a lie.

E. Steps necessary to be a Christian today: man must hear the truth; believe the truth; and obey the truth!

F. As a result of this action in Genesis:

1. Adam and Eve lost their home in paradise.
2. They lost their innocence: realized they were naked (**3:10**).
3. They reaped the consequence of death (**Rom. 5:12**-- passed on to all man).

G. The tree of knowledge reminds us of:

1. The entrance of sin into the world.
2. The craftiness of Satan; danger for us today.
3. The consequences; paradise lost; death.

II. THE TREE OF CALVARY (ACTS 5:30).

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree (Acts 5:30).

A. This tree conveys the need for man's redemption.

B. Such was in the purpose of God even before man was created.

1. *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world... (Eph. 1:4).*
2. Speaking of the church: *According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:11).*

C. Even at the transgression, at the time of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God was beginning to draw attention to Calvary: *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Gen. 3:15).*

1. The seed of woman would deliver the crushing blow to Satan (**Gal. 4:4**).
2. Satan did bruise the Lord's heel; caused Him to suffer a cruel and agonizing death; but death could not hold the Lord.

3. Through His triumphant resurrection, Jesus destroyed *him that had the power of death, that is, the devil* (**Heb. 2:14**).
- D. Through the seed of Abraham, a descendant of Noah, God raised up a great nation (**Gen. 12:1-3; verse 3** -- prophecy of Christ; *nations of earth blessed*).
1. Israel: chosen of God (**Deut. 7:6**).
 2. Through that nation, under the leadership of Moses, the law was given (**John 1:17**).
 - 1) The law had a purpose: brought the knowledge of sin (**Rom. 3:20**).
 - 2) *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law* (**1 John 3:4**).
- E. Another purpose of the law, to point to Christ: *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith, but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster* (**Gal. 3:24-25**).
- F. The prophets preached of Christ: giving vivid prophecy of the vicarious death of Christ (**Psa. 22; Isa. 53**).
- G. The focus of the Old Testament message was to bring men to Christ; to speak of God's love for man through His great plan for redeeming man from sin.
- H. The focus of God's love is seen though in Calvary.
1. *He that is hanged is accursed of God* (**Deut. 21:23**).
 2. *Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree* (**Gal. 3:13**).
 3. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him* (**2 Cor. 5:21**).
 4. Remember too: it was Calvary that made the church possible.
- I. Redemption was the theme of the cross, and still is!
- J. With sin unleashed in the world, men were made slaves to sin (**Rom. 6:17**), without hope (**Rom. 3:23**). Redemption was therefore necessary:
1. It is sin which separates us from God (**Isa. 59:1-2**).
 2. Jesus' shed blood bought us back from sin.

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14).

3. You are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot (**1 Pet. 1:19**).

K. The cross then becomes the focus of our message today.

1. Paul writes: *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:23-24).*
2. That message is at the heart of the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation (**Rom. 1:16**).

III. THE TREE OF LIFE (REV. 2:7).

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Rev. 2:7).

A. This tree tells of the eternal home of the faithful.

B. The promises in the scriptures of an eternal reward of life and rest, are many.

1. Lawyer/ruler--Jesus: *Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? (Luke 10:25; 18:18).*
2. Jesus spoke of the future (**Matt. 25:46**).
3. Promise: *Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16).*
4. *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:54).*
5. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life... (John 10:27-28).*

C. Not only in the gospels, but throughout the New Testament, the message of eternal life was preached (**John 16:13** -- apostles were guided into all truth).

1. Gentiles: *And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed (Acts 13:48).*
2. Paul: *free gift (Rom. 6:23).*

3. Peter: *He hath called us unto His eternal glory (1 Pet. 5:10).*

4. All of these scriptures tell us plainly of the reality of eternal life.

D. As the Bible draws to a close, it reveals...

1. ..that Christ will come a second time (**1 Thess. 4:13-18**).

2. ..that there will be a great resurrection (**John 5:28-29**).

3. ..that there will be a judgment (**2 Cor. 5:10**).

4. ..that there will be punishments and rewards (**Rev. 20:15**, some cast into the lake of fire).

E. For the righteous: eternal reward (heaven):

1. Holy city: extremely beautiful: as a bride adorned for her husband.

1) No tears or sorrow or pain or death.

2) Light emanates from the city, as clear as crystal.

3) Gates of pearl, streets of gold, adorned with precious gems and stones.

4) The glory of God lightens the city; and the Lamb and God is the light.

5) *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:27).*

2. Tree of life (**Rev. 22**).

1) There is a river which emanates from the throne of God; on either side was *there the tree of life.*

2) The tree bears the fruit for the healing of nations.

3) The tree of life existed at the beginning, but man lost his right to it; because of Christ, we see that right and privilege restored in Revelation.

3. With the tree, again man is in the presence of God (**Rev. 22:4-6**).

F. Remainder of the book contains a plea or warning:

1. Plea: from the Spirit and bride to come.

2. A warning not to add to or take away from His holy word (**Rev. 22:18-19**).

CONCLUSION:

1. The story of the three trees contain a summary of the contents of the Bible.
2. Jesus has made it possible for you to reap of the tree of life.
3. Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the bride (church) say, "Come."