

YOU CAN'T HANDLE THE TRUTH

By Jim Burks

The Serpent said, "For God knows in the day that you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil," Genesis 3:5 .

It was true what the serpent said, their eyes did open. Now, it's, "Decision time!" Adam and Eve saw their nakedness and made a decision to find something to cover them. They saw fig leaves and made a decision to sew them together for cover. I almost can hear Adam say, "Shhhh! I hear the voice of God. Be quiet." They saw a place to hide and made a decision to go, "amongst the trees of the garden" (3:8).

Deciding to distance himself from the forbidden tree, Adam deals with "evil" for the first time. He is coming up with some "good" ideas, but he's having a tough time handling the truth. And, he knows he can't hide from God forever.

The

"cool of the day" (3:8) begins to be uncomfortably hot for Adam. The heat really turns up when God's booming voice demands answers. "Where art thou, Adam?" "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" "Hast thou eaten of the tree, where of I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"

The "good" in the truth was, "Yes, I did eat." But, there is also "evil" in truth that attempts to deceive, in order to minimize the act. Adam started to say "I didn't eat that much, Lord." But, since God knows everything, he decided to shift the blame.

"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

"What is it that thou hast done?"

God says to the woman. Eve thought she might use the same tactic as her husband and shuffle the blame. "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat," (3:13).

Adam has come to know "good" and "evil," and he's not handling it very well, is he? This new knowledge opened the eyes of Adam, all right. For the first time, Adam saw his nakedness and was ashamed (2:25).

Adam no longer saw the garden as a place of experiencing God's fellowship. Animal husbandry and horticulture, once fresh in Adam's heart, have become difficult and laborious. His created position to subdue the earth, isn't the first thing on Adam's mind, now. With his eyes opened, Adam has a new venture. He has to try to make "evil" good or, he must make "good" of evil. He will sweat.

With eyes wide open, Adam doesn't see the same joy in Eden, as he once did. The garden is but a place of escape from God's presence. The pleasant fragrance is gone. It's peaceful domain is a struggle of evading God. Adam is in Edenic exile. He waits in terror, hoping not to meet the Lord. Where is the fellowship with the Creator? It is broken and Adam is shamefully aware of his disobedience to the LORD, GOD.

Abstinence is not an invention of man. It began before he was created. To have a pleasant Garden, man must stay away from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; not ask questions about it. Just do it, Adam. But, if you touch it, you'll desire it. Before long you will eat it and take it into your being. "You can't handle the truth. You will die"

For New Testament believers, we understand that created man can be tempted. The flesh desires, and it is capable of yielding to temptation. Certainly, if Adam lived in a perfect world, within a perfect body, and still disobeyed the LORD, we will, too. If he couldn't handle the truth, what makes us think we can?

Flesh, whether in the Garden or on a street corner, sees the tree the same way. It is good for food, pleasant to the eyes and produces wisdom. The flesh loves these things. Given two choices, man takes the one that satisfies the flesh.

But, God said,

"Thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen 2:17). The flesh, although loving the word of God, is also deceived into loving other things; usually first. Consequently, we disobey the Lord. Therefore, if God created a thousand Adams, the result of sin would be the same. Under the influence of another (wife, serpent) the flesh, somehow cannot withstand, but yields.

A thousand Adams, producing the same result, means that God, from the beginning, planned to bring man into a Father, son relationship. Another created man isn't what is needed. It will require a new birth, not from natural parents, but through the Holy Spirit.

But, since man brought sin, he must, also, pay the debt that sin owes. This is where Jesus, the God-man enters. In Christ, man will not be merely created, he will be regenerated. At the cross and dying with Jesus, man's spirit receives power. Because the flesh is crucified, the new life of the New Testament and its laws work within his spirit. Man, not only is freed from flesh, he overcomes it.

The new birth was accomplished by Jesus, Himself, the Second Adam. He took upon flesh, overcame sin of the flesh, nailing it to the cross. Now, separation is a bygone phenomenon. Man comes out of exile, leaping from the trees of the garden, ready to take charge. Angels applaud as he comes back to God, regaining his position of dominion of the garden.

Man is reconciled, serving God in spirit and in truth, taking in the sweet aroma of the garden.

Oh! How he misses this place. However, until man experiences the new birth, he remains within a flesh of separation, unable to answer God's questions of eternal consequences, unable to handle the truth.

The truth is about flesh and spirit. It is found everywhere within the pages of the Bible.

Truth can be handled when we know the meaning of what Jesus said in John 6:63. **"My words are spirit and life."** Further, Jesus wants us to know that, **"the flesh profited nothing,"** John 6:63.

Jesus, the greatest teacher, is to be learned from a spiritual perspective, not a physical one. Truly, this is what our Lord meant in Mt 6:24. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other."

Since the Fall of man, the garden scene is replayed by every person who hears God's questioning voice. The problem remains. Every person sees, not an answer for his sin, but his vision is fixed upon escape. His eyes dart over the landscape seeking a place to cover up, a place to hide.

Truly, every person sins. With eyes open, man's first view is for a place to cover up; a place of anonymity. But, God finds him, and hear the same story. It's no different in our day, than Adam's. Man shifts blame to others, while excusing himself.

Finally, rather than hide in the garden, man confesses his sin, falling at the foot of the cross. There, the Rock of ages covers him in righteousness. There, he finds a home of safety. There, he has the answer that God wants to hear. There he finds forgiveness. There, on the cross, man, once and for all, handles truth.

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