



The Camden Companion

"COME LET US REASON TOGETHER, SAYS THE LORD"

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The Tree Of Life

The first three chapters of Genesis contain the account of creation, the first man and woman, and their sin against God. There are also many subjects discussed that we know nothing about and can only speculate. Is there a gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 when the earth was without form? There is actually no reason to assume this as many have. Just what was the light God created in Genesis 1:3 when the sun is not created until the fourth day? When did it begin to rain (Genesis 2:5?) Probably after the vegetation was created.

A garden was planted in Eden and Adam and Eve lived there in perfect peace with God. Based on the description given in Genesis, it is reasonable to conclude that the garden was located somewhere in what is now the country of Iraq. Eden was a large area and the garden was specifically planted for Adam and Eve to live in. They had everything they needed from a loving God and lived in fellowship with Him. Ultimately, this is what all human beings long for or should long for.

Two trees are specifically mentioned as being in the garden. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life are said to be in the middle of the garden (Genesis 2:9.) When Adam and Eve sinned, they were forced to leave the garden and in Genesis 3:22 the reason is given "lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." Many read this statement about the tree of life and conclude that eating of this tree is what allowed man to live forever. The question is - - Did God put the power of eternal life in the fruit of a tree? There can be no doubt that there was a real tree in the garden but did it harbor the power of eternal life? Adam and Eve were to replenish the earth but what would all the future generations have to do to have eternal life - go back to the garden periodically to eat its fruit? (Con't pg 2)

Perhaps thinking about the other tree can help. Did the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil contain the power to give Adam and Eve the ability to know right from wrong? Did God put that ability in the fruit of a tree?

God said to Adam, "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you do you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17.) God did not tell them what would happen if they ate of this tree - He only told them the consequences if they did. In other words, the tree stood for a test of their faith and desire to serve God. They had the freedom to choose since they were not mind-numbed robots and this was their test. There was nothing in the tree's fruit that gave them miraculous knowledge. They learned right from wrong because they made the choice to do what pleased them instead of pleasing God. It is nothing more than all human beings have done ever since.

But what is a command without a reward? That's where the tree of life came in. As long as the choice was made to follow God's command, they had a reward. They had fellowship with God indefinitely and that is what the tree of life stood for. God gave them their life and He would take it away for their disobedience, not the absence of some fruit.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they could not remain in sin and have access to the reward for not sinning. Thus they had to lose access to God's presence in the garden. But this was more than just a punishment. There is also mercy in Genesis 3:22. We see the curses put on man and woman as a result of sin. Think of living forever with sickness, toiling, suffering, and disease. This is what they were spared by leaving and could look to going home to be with God when this life was over. Today, Christ is our tree of life.