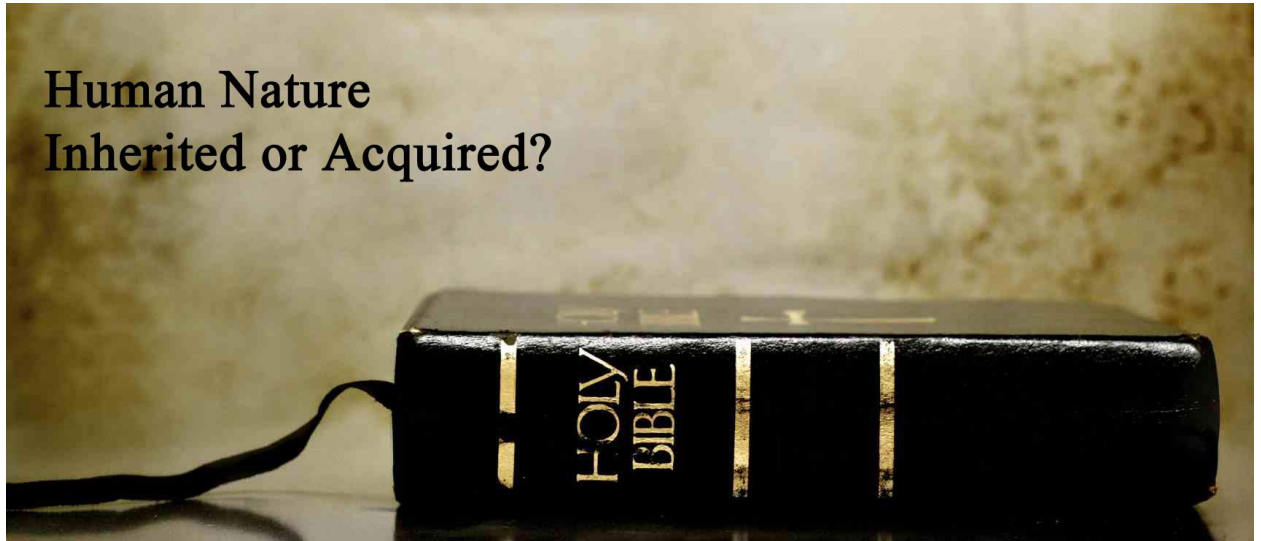


Human Nature
Inherited or Acquired?



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Human Nature Inherited or Acquired?

The Bible says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer 17:9). Does this mean that Babies are born with wickedness already inside them? Do we inherit the evil nature of our first parents? Or is it acquired? What does your Bible say?

What a paradox! The Human mind can produce wonderful things in this world. Humans have produced incredible things like the computer, the automobile, airplanes and other machinery that have propelled man to produce everything in our society at an alarming rate.

Yet, these same human minds cannot solve the problems of this world, to bring the world peace, even though man has tried time and again.

We have wars, sickness, disease, deformities, wars, poverty etc...why? Why the paradox? All this is due to human nature. But where did human nature come from? Did God put this nature in us? Are we born with it? Why does the Bible say, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? Did God create in us a nature that "is enmity [hostile] against God"? (Rom. 8:7.).

The answer requires a knowledge of the composition and nature of the human mind-accessible only by revelation. This revelation comes from the creator of human kind, God, and what he has revealed to us from the Bible. WHY does such wonderful MIND power work so much evil?

The Creation of Adam

So why is man filled with vanity, jealousy, lust and greed? The answer comes from the book of Genesis, and the beginning of the creation of man and let's see what is revealed about the first man, Adam, and his nature at the time of his creation.

The Bible reveals only the most brief high points of human history for the first two thousand-plus years-a third of all the time from the creation of man to now! Only eleven chapters are devoted to the history of that span of time. The account of the first created couple is merely the briefest possible summary.

It says, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:
"So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen 1:26-27). Man was made after the image of God, but out of physical matter. God created in man a MIND like God's, though of course inferior, because it was composed of physical brain, empowered with intellect by a human spirit (essence) in each.

Then He "bless them" (v.28), and said that what he made was "good" (v.31). Did He *bless* them by creating in them an *evil sinful nature*, utterly unable to be subject to God's *right* way of life? If the first humans-as God had created them-were VERY GOOD, could it include a hostile and evil nature that was very BAD? *something to think about!*

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No Rebellious Spirit

Now what does the Bible reveal to us about Adam's nature at the time just *after* he was created?

Prior to the temptation from the Devil, there was no hostility towards God or any rebellion on Adam's part, the Bible says, "And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

"And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; *and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.*

"And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, *and brought her unto the man.*

"And Adam said, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

"*And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*" (Gen 2:18, 19, 22, 23, 25). In these passages one sees the harmony between God and man. God brought the creatures to Adam, and Adam called them by their names. When the woman was brought to Adam, Adam took her and accepted the perfect help mate from God. He did not say to God, "I don't want to name these animals," or "I don't want this woman," he accepted and did *not* rebel. Both man and woman were "not ashamed" because they were not rebellious in God's sight.

So prior to the temptation by Satan, we have only the revelation that Adam's NATURE, as God created him, was *not* evil, hostile and diabolical. Nor, on the other hand, does it reveal a nature filled with the Spirit of God. Adam was neither one or the other, Why?

In order that man may have personality and individuality as independent beings, it was necessary that they be provided with faculties for knowing, thinking, reasoning, and making their own decisions and choices. God made man a free moral agent! God wants man to love him as he says, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut 6:5). Holy and righteous CHARACTER is something that *cannot* be created in one *instantaneously by fiat*. It must be *developed* in an independent entity through a process in which one comes to recognize the right way from the wrong, to *choose* the right and reject the wrong even against self desire.

When God created Adam, it was a newly born creature made in God's image. God says about new born Babies, "Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day *had no knowledge between good and evil*, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it." (Deut 1:39). The Pulpit commentary says these "little ones" their children means, "*i.e.* children beginning to walk (הָלַךְ, from הִלְכָהּ mo, to trip, to take short and quick steps)" Obviously these are children not even a year old, they are babies.

Then after giving several examples from the Bible the Pulpit Commentary goes on to say about good and evil, "Hence to know good and evil came to mean to *be intelligent, and not to know good and evil to be unintelligent, as is a babe. The children here referred to knew nothing, and consequently could not be held as morally responsible*; comp. Isa 7:15; Homer, 'Odyssey,' 18.228" (emphasis added). This is how Adam was-an empty slate, a blank page, and so not

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morally responsible as of yet, but when he was ready, as Isaiah says of children, "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to *refuse* the evil, and *choose* the good." (Isaiah 7:15), was confronted by Satan. Although the holy and righteous CHARACTER to be developed within man must actually come from God, each human must make his own decision. He must make his own choice to reject Satan's WAY, and to obey God's way of life.

Adam given a choice

Like a new born baby, eventually when Adam was ready, because God prepared him for the choice he had to make. God told the Israelites about their children who did not know good or evil, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

"*And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*" (Deut 6:5-7). This is what God was doing, preparing Adam for the final test. Then God presented to Adam a choice-two ways. The way of Life, and harmony with your maker, or the knowledge of Good and evil.

Why this choice? God wanted man to have "dominion" over the earth (Gen 1:28), and administer the government of God. Before that time Lucifer was supposed to do this but rebelled against God. When he turned to rebellion, it left ONLY GOD Himself who could be utterly relied on NEVER to deviate from God's way-God's GOVERNMENT. It is impossible for God to sin-because he WILL NOT! This why he made man after his image and likeness, it was God reproducing himself through man. To put in man his holy righteous character, so the family of God can rule the earth and the universe (*Read our booklet the Purpose for Human Life for details*).

God said to Adam, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen 2:16-17). In that garden was also the "tree of life" (v.9). God did not stop Adam from partaking of that tree!

One must remember we are just getting the highlights of what happened in the garden, so these events do not necessarily happen in the order that we are reading them. Could it be that Adam and Eve were about to partake of the tree of life, when Satan the devil came and directed them to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? This could be a possibility.

God himself before Satan got to him instructed man in his way, teaching him the law of God, the way of life, and all Adam had to do to continue in this way forever was to partake of the tree of life. The scriptures say, "*...lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:*" (Gen 3:22). Taking of the tree of life would have given Adam eternal life being instructed God's way, but-before that happened Satan got to him first.

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What changed after the Temptation?

In the Garden of Eden, God placed Two special trees in the middle of the garden; one called "the tree of life," the other "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Actually, it is not important to know the identification of the forbidden fruit. *The spiritual principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the more important point to consider.*

Those two special trees in the midst of the garden in Eden had symbolic meaning. Those two trees represented two differing life-styles and accompanying knowledge and attitudes to go along with them. The tree of life represented God's way of life, the way of giving, of loving one's neighbor keeping his law. It symbolized the spiritual understanding God makes available to live a happy, peaceful life, and, above all, it stood for God's eternal life. Notice what Jesus says, "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, *that they may have right to the tree of life*, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev 22:14). Those that choose God's way will live "for ever," "...but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17). God's way leads to life and the tree of life gives us eternal life," "and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:" (Gen 3:22).

Many believe that the tree of life has nothing to do with knowledge, but it has everything to do with knowledge, Solomon wrote of wisdom, "Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom, and the man *that* getteth understanding... She *is* a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy *is every one* that retaineth her." (Proverbs 3:13. 18).

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented the way of disobedience, reasoning apart from God, outright rejection of God's revealed knowledge. But it even goes deeper than that! Notice what God says about this tree, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen 2:17). Now God *himself* has this knowledge, "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as *one of us*, to know good and evil:" (Gen 3:22). Yet God lives forever. What is the difference? Why is it God has this knowledge and lives, yet tells man that he will die is he partakes of this tree? **The difference is choice!**



The tree of life represented God's way of life and, above all, it stood for God's eternal life. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented the way of disobedience and outright rejection of God's revealed knowledge.

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The "wages of *sin* is *death*" (Romans 6:23). Isaiah 7:15 clearly shows what God means when he tells Adam not to partake of this tree, "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may *know* to *refuse* the evil, and *choose* the good." As noted above, Adam was like a new born Baby, *without* knowledge of good and evil, not morally responsible until he was ready to make a choice. Now confronted with that choice, he could choose the tree of life, and the knowledge of Good and evil and "refuse evil and choose good" *continually* LIKE GOD, or choose the knowledge of good and evil, and CHOOSE EVIL CONTINUALLY like the Devil.

Notice the two trees, one brings life (God's law) the other brings death (breaking the law of God, see Deut 30:19). The tree of life is a choice to *choose* good over evil *continually* like God, or the tree of knowledge of good and evil which is to *choose evil over good continually* like Satan.

After the partaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil God says, "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" Man is like God to know good and evil *but* he choose to do evil *continually* instead of good whereas God chooses good over evil *always*. God's nature cannot and will not sin, sin is against God's nature.

Man on the other hand continually chooses evil, "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*" (Gen 6:5). Once the thought of rebellion entered in, dwelling on the thought turns to action, and then one will do it again and again till it becomes habit and natural to the person, and the mind becomes corrupted, Paul says " But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, *so your minds should be corrupted* from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Corinth 11:3). So human nature takes over the mind of man, and man chooses evil *continually*, and even justifies his actions.

James writes how sin is conceived, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (James 1:14-15). One is confronted with the choice ("tempted") between good and evil, then "lust hath conceived" meaning, "and instead of resisting and rejecting the motion made, he admits of it, and receives it, and cherishes it in his mind; he dallies and plays with it; he dwells upon it in his thoughts, and hides it under his tongue, and in his heart, as a sweet morsel, and forsakes it not, but contrives ways and means how to bring it about; and this is lust's conceiving." (Gill's Commentary). Then it brings forth "sin" " into act, not only by consenting to it, but by performing it:" (ibid). Then death. This is what happened to Adam and Eve. When confronted with the choice chose evil over good. This is what man is confronted with everyday in this world today! God says we have a choice.

All men have the knowledge of good and evil in their hearts, we just have to make the choice. Paul says "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, *do by nature the things contained in the law*, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

"Which shew the work of the law *written in their hearts*, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;" (Romans 2:14-15). This is what is called by some "inner ordinances" or an "inner check." Basic values that all of mankind has, but when one is confronted between the choice of good and evil everyday-man

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continually chooses the evil instead of the good. Jesus said, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, *and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*" (John 3:19). This is why "the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:19) because of the choices man has made.

Now it becomes clear why God says of man's mind, his spirit, "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer 17:9). Man continually chooses to do evil, his mind has become corrupt, and man justifies what he does convincing himself that the evil he does is good and not the other way around, "Woe unto them that call *evil good, and good evil*; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20). This is the cause of all the worlds evils, Human nature.

Indeed, Adam and Eve's choice set the pattern for all their offspring-all mankind and the record lists mistake upon mistake, war after war.

In addition, "time and chance" does happen to all of us, as the Bible reveals in Ecclesiastes 9:11 . Other people's mistakes can also affect us depending on time and circumstance. But the majority of our difficulties we bring on ourselves by wrong choices, carelessness and bad judgment.

Like Adam and Eve we've all made mistakes. Worse, like them, we've all been guilty of breaking God's law, and of continually breaking it, maintaining an attitude of rejecting God. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). We've all sinned! We've all broken God's law! "For sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).

But what are the origins of human nature?

Satan is the influence

Satan the Devil is called the "god of this world [age]" (2 Corinth 4:4). Satan the Devil has provided us with a world of vanity, jealousy lust and greed. You and I are born into a *readymade world*, and it's up to us to *accept* it or *reject* it. God says, "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, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:15-17).

To the church at Ephesus, God said through the apostle Paul (Ephesians 2:1-2): "And you [who] ... in time past... walked according to the *course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. . . .*"

Notice, Satan is here called "the prince of the power of the AIR!" This is how Satan influences mankind! communication by sound and by picture can be broadcast instantaneously through the air.

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Wherever you are as you read these words, chances are there are voices and perhaps music *in the air* around you. A radio or television set tuned to the right wavelength would make them audible to you.

Paul said, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to *quench all the fiery darts of the wicked* ["one" Barnes Commentary]" (Ephesians 6:16).

"The fiery darts of the wicked, του πονηρου, or devil, are evil thoughts, and strong injections, as they are termed, which in the unregenerate inflame the passions, and excite the soul to acts of transgression." (Clark's Commentary). Satan broadcasts in ATTITUDES. He broadcasts in attitudes of self-centeredness, lust, greed, vanity, jealousy, envy, resentment, competition, strife, bitterness, and hate.

When Eve was tempted, it says, "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..." (Gen 3:6). Satan tempted her with desire, hunger, lust, and Eve chose to follow those desires and fell into sin. And all of these lusts which break the tenth commandment caused her to break the commandment against stealing, and to take the fruit that did not belong to her and that had been forbidden to her and her husband. In so doing, she obeyed Satan-she had ANOTHER god BEFORE the true God, and she dishonored her ONLY parent, so she broke the first and the fifth commandments.

Eve did not have a mind that was evil *before* Satan came along and confronted her. But Satan, by subtlety, deceived Eve. Then, the minds of Adam and Eve-the eyes of both of them were opened (Gen. 3:7). What happened was that their eyes were opened as a result of it-now the KNOWLEDGE of evil had come. "They KNEW," it says. The spirit and attitude of rebellion had entered their minds. Their minds (hearts) now had become perverted-deceitful and desperately wicked. To have the knowledge of evil is to know evil--to participate in it-and that means to rebel against God and to break His Commandments. They came to the wrong knowledge. Man's knowledge is mostly a mixture of good and evil. Human nature is a MIXTURE of good and evil. There's good in all people, and there's also evil in every one of us that we need to recognize. And THAT EVIL IN THEM CAME FROM SATAN, NOT FROM GOD! They were NOT created with this evil nature. Satan tempts man, and man chooses the evil over the good

Acquired not inherited

Adam and Eve chose *and acquired* the "nature" or attitude of sin from Satan. It was not passed on by heredity. Jesus Christ called their second son "righteous Abel." (Matthew 23:35). Abel when he was ready to make his choice. chose to obey God, and not the devil, therefore was "righteous." Cain on the other hand chose evil.

Notice the episode of Cain and Abel, "And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

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"And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that *Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*" (Gen 4:6-8). God gave Cain a choice, to do well or, if not "sin lieth at the door." Cain chose evil Abel sacrifice was accepted because he obeyed God and chose not to rebel.

Yet what of what Paul says in Romans 5:12,14?, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; *and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them *that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*"

Does this mean that we inherited Adam's sin? Absolutely Not! Notice what it says, sin entered the world because of Adam, and "death BY SIN" The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). Those who commit sin the penalty is death. Righteous Abel repented of sin, this is why he brought sacrifices to God (Gen 4:4), so his sin would be cleansed. Abel sinned in ignorance (Lev 4:2), and God showed him his sins, and so he made a choice, he believed God, God was his savior, obeyed and did not rebel, whereas Cain did. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, *by which he obtained witness that he was righteous*, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Heb 11:4).

Notice what this commentary says about sinning in ignorance, "That is, if any man shall do what God has forbidden, or leave undone what God has commanded, *through ignorance of the law relative to these points; as soon as the transgression or omission comes to his knowledge, he shall offer the sacrifice here prescribed, and shall not suppose that his ignorance is an excuse for his sin. He who, when his iniquity comes to his knowledge, refuses to offer such a sacrifice, sins obstinately and wilfully, and to him there remains no other sacrifice for sin [like Cain]- no other mode by which he can be reconciled to God, but he has a certain fearful looking for of judgment - which shall devour such adversaries; and this seems the case to which the apostle alludes, Heb 10:26, etc*" (Clarke's commentary, emphasis added). We all have the knowledge of Good and evil; as noted above, the apostle Paul says we all have (Romans 2:14-15) with or without the law. People know it's wrong to kill with or without God's law, but people do it anyways. People know it's wrong to steal with our without the law, but people do it anyways. God then shows them their sins, then they have to make a choice, as in the case of Cain and Abel, Abel made his choice, therefore was "righteous."

Those Old Testament Patriarchs now await Jesus coming as it says, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, *for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*" (Heb 9:15). Old Testament people are saved by Jesus Christ. They kept the 1st commandment in the law to believe on their savior, and died "in faith" awaiting the resurrection.

Paul then says, "*and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*" Death passed on all men, not because of Adam, or that we inherited Adam's sin, but because "all have sinned." Men chose to disobey God, and rebel against him.

Notice verse 14, "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them *that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression*" Death came upon them also who DID NOT sin as Adam

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did, meaning *knowing* what was good and evil and *chose* the evil instead of the good (Isaiah 7:15), not ignorance but "knowing," like Cain and others. Abel fell into this category of not partaking in Adam's sin when confronted with the choice yet Abel and others they still died. These are the righteous like Abel. But why did they still die?

We were born from our parents, and so on, back to Adam who was created MORTAL-formed of the dust-composed of FLESH and BLOOD. IN Adam-as long as we are his children-born of him-we all die this FIRST death. 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, says, "For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the *resurrection of the dead*."

"For as in *Adam all die*, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Jesus the second Adam will make all people alive again and they will receive their first chance for salvation in the Kingdom of God at the second resurrection (Rev 20:5, 12, 1 Corinth 15:40). *The only thing we inherited from Adam is mortality, dying this first death*. God said to Adam and Eve, "...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen 2:17). The Pulpit commentary writes, "literally, dying, thou shalt die. That this *involved death physical, or the dissolution of the body, is indicated by the sentence pronounced on Adam after he had fallen* (Gen 3:19). *That the sentence was not immediately executed does not disprove its reality*. It only suggests that its suspension may have been due to some Divine interposition. Yet universal experience attests that permanent escape from its execution is impossible. *In the case of Adam it was thus far put in force on the instant, that henceforth he ceased to be immortal*. As prior to his fall his immortality was sure, being authenticated for him by the tree of life, so now, subsequent to that catastrophe, his mortality was certain." (emphasis added). Adam died in this world, a mortal death which is passed on to us for we are mortal, eternal death will come to those who refuse to keep the law of God and remain rebellious. The wages of sin is death "So the Jews (a) interpret this of death, both in this world and in the world to come. (a) Tikkune Zohar, correct. 24. fol. 68. 1. correct. 54. fol. 90. 2. correct. 66. fol. 100. 1." (Gill's Commentary).

IN Christ we can be BORN AGAIN and have IMMORTAL life so that we never can die. That comes through the first resurrection in which all the righteous who chose to follow God "refuse" evil and "chose" the good will inherit life, partake of the tree of life.

The Second Adam

Adam and Eve were given the opportunity to choose life by taking of the tree of life. They chose not to and mankind has followed the path of wrong choices ever since.

The Second Adam, Jesus (see 1 Corinth 15:45) an Adam who chose correctly every time, walking with God, a very Son of God. He was tempted by Satan just like Adam and Eve and us, but he did *not* obey the devil. He never sinned (Heb. 4: 15). He resisted the devil, gave him orders and proved he could be subject to the government of God and administer it. It is through this Adam that we can obtain eternal life (the tree of life).

God didn't put man on this earth to live in misery and suffering. We were made in God's very image. We were put on this earth to choose to, share in God's existence, with God, AS God. Can you grasp it? God's plan for man is for man to become like God-in character, in mind, in very nature. This tremendous potential is explained in our free booklet *What is the Purpose of Human*

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Life? Fully understanding this knowledge can change your life! Godly character must be built and established first. It cannot be created by divine fiat. Godly character must be built through a process of choosing, and willingly, knowingly, choosing what is right as opposed to what is wrong, according to God's own standard of right and wrong-*his law!*

That's why Adam and Eve were given a choice. That's why Satan was allowed to enter the garden in Eden and pull them the other way. God required that Adam and Eve resist the devil and overcome his wiles, and in so doing establish right character. They didn't, as we have read. Nor has mankind since.

So God allowed them to make wrong choices, if that was what they wanted to do. The results are heart rending suffering and misery. God chose not to force man to build godly character. If he forced us to choose correctly, we wouldn't be building character! We would be like robots. Man therefore has had to learn the hard way, through suffering and disobedience-and we have not learned the lesson yet. But that time will come! Sooner for some, later for others.