

Knowledge of Good and Evil

Key Verse: *“The LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.”*
—Genesis 3:22,23

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 3:8-17

being with an immortal soul living inside the body which would return to God upon death of the physical body. The Scriptures clearly teach, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” (Ezek. 18:4) Second, by teaching that the supposed immortal souls of good men return to God, Satan

OUR LESSON TODAY IS

that of obedience. Adam was created perfect, in the image of God, with free will to make choices for himself. He could have lived forever in his perfect Edenic home with one condition. “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 these words are two principles Satan has twisted to blind mankind from understanding God’s plans to eventually bless all the families of the earth. First, Adam was a living soul created by God (Gen. 2:7), not a

has twisted God's promise to bless all the families of the earth by the false claim that those who disobey will be tormented forever in a burning hell. Such a doctrine is contrary to the love of God, and no such thing is taught in this warning to Adam. The warning was simple: If you obey you will live—if you disobey you will die.

Our Key Verse shows forth the love and wisdom of God's plan for his human creation. Through his love, God knew that gaining a knowledge of good and evil would, in the long term, enrich man's life more than if he had been created with only an instinctive tendency to obey. Such a life would be more robotic than life with a natural curiosity and an earnest desire to worship his Creator. Therefore, in his wisdom, God designed a plan where mankind's acquisition of the knowledge of good and evil could be achieved through the initial experience of one perfect man, Adam, and restored through the ransom price of one perfect man, Jesus.—Rom. 5:14-18; I Cor. 15:21,22

In God's grand plan, all will have to prove their obedience to him. In this plan to create a loving family possessing free will, God has permitted evil to reign while man has had time to fill the earth. During this time, God has been calling out a small number of those who love him the most, those who desire to become like his Son and serve in the heavenly places with God and the glorified Jesus. (Eph. 1:3-6) These are proving their obedience even now during this present evil world, just as Jesus did while on earth during his ministry, to become the ransom price for Adam. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."—Heb. 5:8

The test of obedience for the rest of mankind will come at the end of Christ's thousand-year kingdom, through which they will have been taught righteousness. (Zeph. 3:9) They will then be able to choose to obey or disobey God with full knowledge of both good and evil. For those who pass this final test of obedience, God has promised to dwell with them and be their God forever.—Rev. 21:3 ■