

What Is the Difference Between Man and the Angels?

Referring back to the discussion on the trinity of God and the trinity of man, we understand that God, although One, is a tri-part being. Being made in the image of God refers to being created after this pattern. The angels and all other creation were not. Man is distinct. Angels are predominantly created to be spirit beings, animals are created as predominantly soul beings. Only man is a tri-part being created in the image of God. Only man can be indwelt by the Spirit of God. Only man was created specifically for the purpose of relationship with God through his spirit. Angels and animals have specific and assigned purpose in their creation, but it was not primarily for relationship.

- The word angel (Hebrew: malak, Greek: angelos) = messenger or servant. (Hebrews 1:14)
- Created by God before the earth began (Job 38:4-7, Psalm 148:2, 5, Colossians 1:16)
- All angels were created good and holy (Genesis 1:31)
- They too had a free will, but were not human (Ezekiel 28:12-17; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:9)
- They were not made in the image of God (body, soul and spirit). (Matthew 22:30)
- They do not marry. (Matthew 22:30)
- They will never die (Luke 20:34-36)
- They should never be worshiped (Colossians 2:18, Revelation 19:9-10)
- They can temporarily appear in human form (Hebrews 13:2; Genesis 18:2,16; Genesis 19:1)

Have you ever seen a cartoon or a movie where a man dies and is then depicted as an angel with wings sitting on a cloud stroking a harp? Do you realize that after studying the Scriptural foundation of the uniqueness of man and the distinct creative purpose of the angels, that man does not become an angel when he dies?

Why Was Man Created?

It is always important when forming any theology or philosophy to be consistent in our understanding of the character and nature of God. *We therefore believe that man was created for the purpose of being loved by God and to have a relationship of love with God.* God is love by definition and nature. To have created man for the sole purpose of doing His work or to serve Him would not make sense as God can, with little effort, create or re-create anything He so desires. He does not need man or His help. One of His characteristics is omnipotence (all powerful). He did not create man solely to worship Him. He had the angels to do that. To create man primarily for worship would suggest an egocentric or selfish God, which is the antithesis of the nature of God. God gave us the choice of whom we could love and worship. The gift of free will, is a key principle in understanding the entirety of scripture. God gave the first commandment, “You shall have no other gods before me and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength”, and called it the *greatest*, because He knew that if we did not believe Him and put Him first, we would die because He alone is the source of life. Therefore, it would mean our certain destruction if we chose not to worship Him, not because He is egocentric. It is His character of love that demands our worship, not egotism, because He is inherently selfless. From the beginning of man’s creation, we have been engaged in a divine romance with God. He trains us and reveals His love to us as a Father. He brings us into maturity through His Holy Spirit and prepares us to be the Bride for His Son, Jesus Christ.

We have already discussed *why* man was created, but it is important to understand the aspect of free will that is central in this relationship between God and man. The very definition of love requires a free will for love to be possible. Therefore, free will is an essential doctrine of the church that cannot be overstated or underplayed. The understanding of the definition of free will explains the many questions non-believers ask regarding the allowance of sin and suffering in the world if God is truly a loving God. When He loved us (He has never broken His covenant) He desired our love in return for *OUR* good and benefit. That required giving man a free will, otherwise man could not choose to love. With this choice came the potential for hate and evil as well. Evil, by definition, is the absence of God and His holy, righteous attributes and already existed on earth before the fall of man because of the rebellion of Lucifer. Therefore, for love to exist, evil also had to be a choice. It is not God’s will for man to sin. However, God knew from the beginning that he would (God is omniscient - all knowing). The greatest display of the Father’s love for us is that in knowing we would betray Him and knowing what it would cost Him (**Revelation 13:8**) He created us anyway! *That* is love! Sin and suffering exist in the world because love exists - and that means choice. God deemed that love was more important and more powerful than any evil. As He said, “Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good” (**Romans 12:21**)!

God always gives us the choice; but He lovingly told us ahead of time what the consequences of those choices would be. He did not leave us ignorant or uninformed but warned us ahead of time. The issue then becomes the sifting of our hearts as to whether we will believe Him and obey. Before Adam and Eve disobeyed and sinned, they did not *know* evil (**Genesis 3:22**) and they had no shame (**Genesis 2:25**). The Lord said death would follow as a consequence of their decision to sin (**Genesis 3:3**). That death sentence was three-fold as man is three-fold. Man began the process of dying the moment he disobeyed. Because only God is the source of life, to be apart from Him is by definition death. Death immediately began in the spirit, progressed in the soul, and eventually would take the body. We will later discuss how this is the reverse of salvation and restoration to God.

The creation of man and the subsequent account of the “fall” of man through disobedience succinctly teaches the core foundational blueprint for life's questions. Ultimately, every basic “cause and effect” in all aspects of life, as well as the motivation for each, can be found in the basic life-primer of Genesis chapters one through four. The entirety of the gospel message is explained in these chapters. There are several absolute principals (core truths) contained in these chapters that if believed and applied, contain all the necessary elements for life, well-being, happiness and relationship with God. Not understanding these principles leads inevitably to never-ending theories, philosophies, religions, and false doctrines. The truth is really very simple. It is the consequences that arise from the original (and subsequent) disobedience (unbelief) that become intricately complicated.

Where It All Went Wrong

***Read Genesis chapters 1-4, focusing primarily on chapters 2 and 3.**

God alone is the sole source of; holiness, goodness, truth, love and life. Outside of Him, none of these things can exist. To be separated from God, by definition, leaves only evil, lies, hatred and death. These qualities do not exist because of judgment, but rather a natural consequence of not being “in Him”. The choice to believe (faith) that there is only one true God, and that His words alone are true, is the first and most basic principle of life (**Hebrews 11:6**). Without this most basic absolute, nothing else matters. That is why the first commandment is the greatest; “You shall have no other gods before Me, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength”. If you do not keep this commandment, you will not have the ability, access or power to keep the others. The most common erroneous assumption by mankind (including the majority of Christians and Jews) is that by simply acknowledging the fact that God *IS* God and that He *exists*, is the fulfillment of this commandment. Most people believe that this is the least frequently “broken” commandment because it is so “big and important” that it must take a MAJOR sin to break this one. Something like, “Be careful, because if you break enough of the other commandments, you might eventually end up breaking the big #1!” On the contrary, it is the most frequently broken and misunderstood commandment. You can easily believe in the concept of God, without making Him *YOUR* God. The scriptures say, “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe and tremble.” (**James 2:19**). Although the demons *know* that He is God, they do not contain the source of eternal life in them because He is not *their* God. Most of us would be shocked if we had a revelation of just how often we fracture the first commandment in both subtle and major ways on a regular basis!

Hebrews 3:18-19 tells us that the majority of the Hebrew “chosen people” of God were not able to enter the promised land because of two reasons: **disobedience and unbelief**. This directly correlates to the Genesis account of the first original sin in the garden. The first sin was not when Eve ate the fruit from the forbidden tree as is commonly taught and accepted. The first sin was when Eve did not *believe* God when He said that she would die if she did. By not believing God, which culminated in the sin of disobedience in eating the fruit, Eve separated herself immediately from the only complete source of truth, protection and life through her relationship with God. Notice that God did not say that He would *kill* her, but that she would die. Death (physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual separation from God) was not solely a matter of judgment, but rather the simple consequence of not believing and obeying God. To be

apart from God (life) is to choose death. Life or death are the only two choices. The defiance of these two principles, continue to be the core root reasons of all death and suffering in the world through either personal sin (individual), corporate sin (others) or original sin (Adam and Eve) and the resulting effects of a fallen, corrupt world.

If we grasp the concept of the underlying common thread and theme of the entire Bible, it will correct many man-made theologies of dispensations and anti-Semitic (as well as anti-Christ) doctrines. Salvation is, and always was, only possible by faith - old and new covenant. Mankind was not saved by the keeping of law in the Old Testament and then by grace in the New Testament (**Hebrews 11**). The connecting and common theme is this: Man was separated from God by unbelief and disobedience and is reconciled to God by repentance (returning to God and obeying) and believing Him. The concept is simple. However, the returning to God and believing Him must be based on His conditions and provisions and not our interpretation or understanding of those tenets. Salvation by faith in the Old Covenant was based on believing God's Word and His provision for redemption as revealed up to that point. Salvation in the New Covenant is based on believing God's *Word (Jesus Christ)* and the provision He provided for redemption – His blood. **Revelation 13:8** tells us that Jesus Christ was slain before the foundation of the world was laid; meaning that God's plan was already in place before man sinned. The plan and the provision were always there, but as time progressed, so did the fullness of this revelation.

We have briefly discussed the foundational principle of the doctrine of free will. A foundational principle means that it is always true and never subject to conditions or circumstances. It is important to understand that you will always have free will to believe anything you choose. God will not MAKE you believe. You must choose. Likewise, the enemy cannot MAKE you NOT believe. You must choose that also. The enemy's goal and strategy is to gain influence and ultimate control of our will by initial deception, which he hopes will be followed by our disobedience to God. The nature of sin is that it causes deception. Therefore, the more we sin (unbelief and disobedience) the more deceived we will become and the more difficult it will be to find our way back to faith.

Next, we are going to unravel the basic strategy of the enemy (Lucifer, Satan, the Devil) regarding his goal of permanently separating mankind and God that began in the garden of Eden. He has three dominant strategies. Every lie and counterfeit doctrine or religion is ultimately a derivative of one of these three.

The Three Essential and Effective Lies of the Enemy

- 1. Take away or leave out essential and qualifying aspects** of the whole word of God, thereby twisting or nullifying the absolute. (Compare **Gen. 3:1** and **Gen.2:16-17**.) God did indeed say they could eat from any tree in the garden freely, EXCEPT from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is the foundational lie of *liberal* theologies.
- 2. Add to** the word of God qualifications or details that He did not include in the original word, thereby twisting or nullifying the absolute. (Compare **Gen. 3:3** with **Gen. 2:16-17**.) God did not say “Don't touch it.” Eve added to God's original word. This lie is the foundation of *legalistic* theologies.

- 3. Complete contradiction and outright denial** of the word of God. This one really reveals the character of the enemy – outright rebellion and pride that places one in a position of judgment of God, His character and His truth, ultimately placing oneself in the superior position as god. Compare **Gen. 3:4-5** and **Gen. 2:16-17**. This is the foundational lie of humanism as well as atheism, agnosticism, occultism, paganism, Wicca, witchcraft, Buddhism, and all new age religions.

When blindly searching for truth, the plethora of religions can seem daunting. It could take a lifetime to just research and study the many spiritual precepts that have evolved through the centuries. But when condensed down, there really are only two choices - what God says and everything else. God said there were two trees in the middle of the garden. We can believe God and choose life, or we can pridefully assume that our human ability to spiritually and/or intellectually understand the concepts of life and the universe are lying within us just waiting to be unlocked, but that door *always* leads to death.

THE TWO TREES IN THE GARDEN: THE OLIVE TREE and THE FIG TREE

We were created by God to have relationship with Him through the spirit (source of life). This was typified by the **tree of life** in the garden. God desired that we would eat freely and frequently from it. When man chose instead to eat the fruit from the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, the consequences of that decision also banned us from the tree of life – our union with God in the spirit and thereby our source of life which obviously resulted in immediate spiritual and eventual physical death. Man was banished from the garden after eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the Lord stationed angels to the entrance of the garden to prevent man from accessing it again. Why would the Lord not allow man to eat of the tree of life again after their act of sin? It was a beautiful example of God’s love and plan for all of mankind. If man had eaten from the tree of life in their fallen state of sin and separation from God, he would have lived forever in that state without the potential to be redeemed and restored to relationship with God. So, banning man from the entrance to the garden was clearly the most loving thing God could have done.

Jesus said that if we want to worship God, it must be in spirit and in truth because God is spirit (**John 4:24**). If we attempt to reconcile our relationship to God by doctrine, religion, philosophy or good works, we are merely continuing to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and making up our own rules. To be reconciled to God, the spirit of man must be re-born from its formerly dead state and cleansed in order to qualify for “reinstatement” of relationship with a holy, spiritual God (**John 3:1-21**). Not surprisingly, the most common error in religion in general is thinking we can have a relationship with God through merely understanding the dogma or tenets of religion with our mind. We can know religion with our mind, but we can only know God with our spirit.

The witness of spirit and truth is another of God's foundational principles. If we keep this in mind when studying the Word of God, it should serve as a check and balance system that can help keep us in healthy relationship with God. Walking with God and maturing in our relationship with Him is not about knowledge versus truth. It is not an “either/or” concept, but rather the emphasis and importance of knowing in *both spirit and truth* (**Deuteronomy 19:15, John 8:17-18, I John 5:7-12**).

Another ongoing theme or thread that is woven throughout Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, is the contrast of the fruit of the tree of life and the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Although the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has most often been characterized as an apple, a closer study of Scripture reveals that it was in fact, a fig tree. The tree of life is revealed throughout Scripture to be the olive tree. Although it may seem at first to be an insignificant detail, the identification of these two trees can unlock a wealth of revelation through the study of their many references in God's Word.

The olive tree is always revered as a symbol of spirit, life, healing, and the true, spiritual Israel (to be defined later). The fig tree, in contrast, represents that which appeals to man's soul, senses and desires (**Genesis 3:6**). It is likened to man's perception and pride of knowledge as well as to the “natural”, non-spiritual Israel. The difference between the fig tree and the olive tree is the difference between religion and relationship; law and grace; man as god, or God as God; and the difference between life and death. ***The essence of this difference is the core of all Scripture.***

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

(The Fig Tree)

Study the following passages and note the consistency of the message of the Olive and Fig Trees. When taking notes, remember to write not just the obvious, but dig deeper into the underlying revelation, correlation and spiritual insight that comes through the more profound overriding principle of the “hidden treasures” of God's Word.

The following scriptures may not contain the words “fig tree”. The purpose is to develop an overall concept and definition of the characteristics of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:17

Genesis 3:1-5

Genesis 3:7

James 3:12

Hosea 9:10

Jeremiah 24:

Romans 7:8

Romans 8:2-14

John 6:63

Romans 14:23

Mark 11:12-24

John 1:48

Matthew 24:32-35

Luke 13: 6-9

Romans 9: 3-8

Tree of Life
(The Olive Tree)

Matthew 7: 15-20

Romans 11: 11- 24

Rev. 22: 1-3, 14

Ezekiel 47:12

Acts 1:12

Zechariah 4: 11-14

Matthew 21:1

Galatians 5:22-23

Exodus 27:20

Nehemiah 8:15

Gen. 8:11

Isaiah 17:6

Psalms 52:8

James 5:14-15

John 5:24

John 15:1-11

II Corinthians 11:3

Synopsis and conclusion of the Tree of Life/ Olive Tree: (Don't forget to include the references for the uses of olive oil such as; anointing kings, healing, baking bread, lighting menorahs and lamps, perfumes and anointing oils...)

It is interesting to note that immediately after God's command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He said, "...it is not good for man to be alone." (**Gen.2:17-18**). The Lord refers to Adam's mate as a "helper". This is a type and shadow of the Holy Spirit who is called our Helper (**John 14:16**). As you study Scripture, it is a good practice to begin learning to "connect the dots". The more of God's Word that we study and become familiar with, the more often we will discover the many hidden treasures and layers of God's revelations.

God's initial desire in His relationship with man was never to dominate or control, but instead to cultivate a holy relationship through the authority structure of man's willful submission to the headship of God. This mutually willful relationship of love and trust was to be directed and governed by the Father through the help of the Holy Spirit communicating with man's spirit. By design, man would have always held the position of authority and head of the family because the family was designed and patterned to reflect the nature of God and the authority structure of relationships. But before the fall, that structure would have purely reflected the loving, nurturing, protective and mutually desirable covenantal nature of God. Mankind's struggle with control and rebellion are directly traced to our choice to prefer the knowledge of good and evil over a relationship with God. In the marriage relationship, the closer man and woman come into fullness of maturity and relationship in Christ, the less desire there is for usurping authority, control and rebellion or abuse and dominance. Matters would be decided through the principles of love and truth as the sin nature is overcome by being transformed into the image of Christ. **This does not remove the authority structure because it is a pattern for us to learn God's truths. But it can remove the need or desire for rebellion, control, abuse or dominance when the relationship is based in love, truth and life.** Marriage is just one example of how life and relationships can be healed and restored through the reversal of the curse through salvation in Jesus Christ.

When Adam and Eve were in a state of innocence in relationship with God, it did not mean that good and evil did not exist. Remember Lucifer's rebellion and fall preceded the garden encounter. However, it did mean that they would not be held accountable for that which they did not know to be wrong or evil because they were covered by their faith and relationship with God. There is now only limited innocence (prior to the age of accountability or decreased mental faculties concerning the knowledge of right and wrong) because sin (unbelief and disobedience) entered the world and therefore every subsequent generational line.

When God gave the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai, His instructions were to give the law to the people and make God's requirements known. **Leviticus chapters 2-5** give several examples where the person had to be "told" their sin so that they understood their transgression before a sacrifice was necessary. We are held accountable before God when we understand the difference between right and wrong. We are all separated from God because of the generational curse of original sin that has contaminated the human race and the world. But our personal salvation and relationship with God, as well as our ultimate eternal judgment, is determined by our individual response to His remedy for sin. If we do not accept, believe and follow *His* remedy, we are by default choosing to be our own god according to our rules and understanding. This deception and rebellion is precisely the goal of the enemy as clearly stated in **Genesis 3:5**, "...and you will be like God...". The underlying pride and rebellion of man's fallen nature that consistently defies God's rule is ongoing proof of our desire to be our own god.

** Have you ever considered how profoundly (intellectually and spiritually) illogical it is for any mere mortal human of extremely limited knowledge, power and life to vote himself god over an omniscient, omnipotent, eternal and true God? The answer can only be that the deception of sin leads us to believe that we can trust our own corrupt motivations and understanding rather than the very source of truth and love. What other mortal human would you trust to be your god?*

The entire premise of the Christian faith lies solely in the absolute truth of spiritual reconciliation to God by faith (our choice) through the atonement of sin by the sacrifice of the life of Jesus Christ and His shed blood (Leviticus 17:11). Only the perfect and holy source of life, God Himself, could qualify to be that atonement. Therefore, God temporarily took on flesh and blood through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, to become the means of our redemption and restoration to Himself. This is God's perfect and ONLY remedy. Anything less than this is by definition, NOT Christianity.