



The Genesis Narrative

By Robert A. French

About the Author

Robert (Bob) French has been in the ministry for over fifty years and during that time he has been an evangelist, a pastor, and missionary and has ministered in many countries and islands of the sea. He is now pastor of Balanced Life Christian Fellowship in the city of St. Charles, Missouri. Through the years Brother French has conducted tent and auditorium meetings as well as speaking in hundreds of churches. He has pioneered ministries in several places including the island of Puerto Rico where he and his wife spent three years in the San Juan area. Brother French has spent a great deal of time working in Mexico along with his oldest son Brian French. He spends most of his time these days ministering to his local congregation and writing.

Because of our lack of understanding of the original language, which was written in symbols, we have missed the real meaning of what took place in the garden between the first couple and the adversary. Because the early translators were heavily influenced by Greek philosophy and Roman myth, they used some very poor word choices for translation. When reading the book of Genesis, it is difficult for people to understand or accept some of the stories being related. For instance, the trees mentioned in the third chapter that are in the Garden of Eden. They have caused many to say it is just a myth. It reads like the myths of the Greeks, Romans and others. Many theologians have stated that they don't believe Genesis has any validity. However, I have often wondered what fruit it might have been. The common thought is an apple, that when eaten would make one wise. Admittedly, it does sound mythical, but the Jehovah of the Bible did not use any mythical means in dealing with Israel or the saints of the New Testament. How do we resolve this story in a logical way that makes sense, and that we can understand?

In my studies, I ran across a web-site that talked about ancient Hebrew and how it was a very concrete language written in symbols. The man's name is Jeff Benner and he had devoted many years of his life studying the ancient language. As I began to read what he said about ancient Hebrew, and read some of the verses that he had translated from the original language, I became more fascinated and my curiosity aroused, I began to peruse through his ancient Hebrew lexicon and was amazed at what I found. Many scriptures that I had no understanding of became understandable. One verse that stood out is the one where God said he breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living soul. Correctly translated, it says: "...and God breathed into man his shadow, and man became a living creature." This is in exact agreement with the scripture that says, "let us make man in our image and after our likeness." God breathed into man his shadow, or his image and likeness, which caused the man he had formed out of the clay, to live.

Returning to the subject of the trees, the question is, were they really trees or was this a poor translation, a misunderstanding of the original language, or a metaphor? The word in the ancient language I will include here from Benner's lexicon: A) "The upright and firmness of the tree. The elders of the tribe were the upright and firm ones making decisions and giving advice. I. Tree: II. Counsel: As the firm support of the community. [Hebrew and Aramaic] [freq. 90] KJV: tree, counsel, purpose, advice. Wood: a tree or the wood from the tree. [Hebrew and Aramaic] [freq. 333] KJV: Tree, wood, timber, stick, gallows, staff, stock,

branch, helve, plank, stalk.” Notice the underlined definition and look at Roman Numeral II where one of the meanings is counsel and advice. After reading this I began to see clearly, in a way that I could understand the real meaning of the story of the trees. For the first time, it made sense and was logical and simple. What was the adversary doing on his encounter with Eve? He was giving counsel and advice. It was always a stretch for me to think a piece of fruit would make one wise, or for that matter, give eternal life. I also do not think this is presented in the form of a miracle, meaning that if eaten it would miraculously give instant knowledge or eternal life. We have to remember that the stories in the Bible are abbreviated. For example, it says Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived and bore Cain. However, it said nothing about the nine months it took for it to happen. It is a common experience when reading any kind of history to disregard the amount of time involved in what we are reading. Sometimes the writers are guilty of the same thing, going from one event to another as though no time had passed between the two. More often than not, for the sake of space, stories are shortened. I believe this is the case, or we might have a Bible we could not carry around. There is a verse of scripture that bears this out. “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.” John 21:25 (NIV). How big of a New Testament do you want? My point being, we have just one or two little verses that describe the conversation the adversary had with Eve. I think it was much more than that. I believe the adversary had many conversations with her until he finally wore her down and convinced her that his counsel was right. To establish my contention on this I refer to Genesis 3:13 “And the Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou has done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” The word beguiled, as it is used here, is the key to this verse. Jeff Benner’s ancient Hebrew Lexicon gives us this definition: (Strong’s number 5377 Benner’s number 1320) ac: Loan co: Debt ab: Deception: The pictograph is a picture of a seed representing continuance. The next one is a picture of teeth representing pressure. Combined these mean “continual pressing.” An imposition such as a debt or deception which causes oppression. (Eng.: gnash) Notice the words in quotation marks: “Continual pressing.” This denotes the passage of time in which the adversary continually talked to her. I believe “Hath God said” or in modern English, did God really say, was said to her many times over until she finally capitulated to the pressure. All this did not happen in the space of a few minutes or hours, it took some time to accomplish.

So, what really happened in the garden God prepared for the man and woman he had made? Was it just a matter of eating or not eating a piece of fruit? First, we know that Jehovah is just in all his ways. He does not bring judgement upon anyone without first instructing them in what He expects. He did this with Adam and Eve, telling them that they could not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the consequences if they did. I would like to include here the mechanical translation of Genesis 2:17 by Jeff Benner: “And from the tree of the discernment of function and dysfunction you will not eat from him given that in the day you eat from him a dying you will die.” I find it interesting that the word used in the original, when referring to the tree, is him and not it, as it is translated in the KJV and NIV. Why would the tree be referred to as him? I know of no instance in language, where a tree would be referred to as him.

The scripture tells us that Jehovah came walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Adam and Eve had hidden themselves as they now knew they were naked and did not want God to see them in that condition. God evidently was looking for them, because he called out to them asking them why they had hidden themselves. Although it doesn’t expressly say it, I believe this was something Jehovah had

been doing all along. He would come and instruct Adam, or in modern terms, educate him in how to exist in the earth that He had made for him and the woman He gave him. Jehovah was speaking to Adam his unalterable word. All Adam had to do was obey it and he would have entered into a place with God that we can only imagine. Paul echoed this several thousand years later, when he said, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, or ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Co 2:9 (KJV)

Sadly, Adam's condition is still being repeated in the world today. As never before, the Bible or word of God, is being attacked from every side. From outright denial of its validity, to changing or tweaking it to fit whatever they want it to say. Leaning from one extreme to the other, in order to keep men from the truth. We are being continually pressed on every side just as Eve and Adam were in the garden. I was watching the news the other day and saw the report on how the Boy Scouts of America finally gave in to the pressure and are now going to allow homosexual men to be scout leaders. It seems men care more about what other men think about them than what the Father thinks about them. On the other side, there are still a few that are willing to take the heat and stand up for the truth of the gospel. The baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a same sex marriage is one that comes to mind. Every accusation the devil can make against true believers is being hurled at them from every direction. From television, radio, the media, movies, political arenas, newspapers, publishing and you name it. If you open your mouth against homosexuality, same sex marriage, abortion, pornography, allowing girls as young as twelve, as was reported in one state, to be implanted with IUD's without parental consent and the list goes on and on, you are immediately assailed, not with rational argument, but rather with insults. Such as, you are intolerant, bigoted, ignorant, stupid, uneducated, Bible thumper, old fashioned, and etc. The reason for this is they have no rational argument. Sadly, the ones who are doing this are not the majority yet, but they are gaining ground fast. How can such a small part of the population have such sway over the rest? I believe it is because Satan is behind it and he is still breathing out the words "Hath God said." He is successfully changing the narrative from what Jehovah said, and continues to say, to what men want to hear in order to justify the darkness of their minds. This is exactly what Jesus meant when he said, "men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, or dysfunctional." Many of our oldest denominations of religion have given in to the pressure and are accepting behaviors that would not have been acceptable just a few years ago. What is the underlying mantra of today's society? God didn't really say that or the Bible is old and outdated and after all it was just written by men or we don't believe in God in the first place. Believe it or not this subject is well covered in scripture, for example: "And he said unto them, ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:15 (KJV)

Another thing that began in the garden was a war. Not between men, although men have fought thousands of them down through the centuries, it was between Jehovah God and Satan. Man is the cause of the conflict because of what he was given. Satan acted out of jealousy of what man had been given and became the adversary of, not only God, but of man. The apostle Peter said it in his first epistle: "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things." 1 Peter 1:12 (NIV). We really do not understand what we have been given. God's desire is that he wants to save mankind and restore him to his first estate and complete the process with eternal life. Satan's desire is to enslave mankind and

bring him to complete and utter destruction. The war is not brother against brother, man against man, but it is between Jehovah and Satan. Jehovah offers life and Satan offers death. Jealousy over man is the object of the war, however, he is given a choice, choose whose side you are on, or as Joshua put it long ago: "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Jos 24:15 (NIV). And God said to the people, recorded in the book of Deuteronomy 30:19 "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you, life and death, blessings and curses. Now chose life, so that you and your children may live." (NIV). And lastly, the apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans these words: "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Rom6:16 (KJV). So, the only question put before mankind is this, do you want life or death? The choice is yours.

Ministry

Robert A. French established RAF Ministries to bring the light of the good news of Jesus the Christ, not built on tenants of an organization or denomination, but from the Word of God alone. Our goal is to work with those of likeminded followers of Jesus in bringing the message of life in the hope of our salvation while we are reconciled through Jesus to the one true Father of creation. We will use every forum available to bring the message of Jesus to the lost and to those searching for truth and fellowship to bring fulfillment to their lives.

Brother French has worked in and out of the United States throughout his ministry and we are committed to helping those who continually bring the message to people in other countries, including his great friend for many years Brother Jack Harris. Everything we can do to help men reach out into the world, we will put our hands, prayer and resources to further the gospel in these countries.

RAF Ministries is focused on spreading the Gospel of Jesus the Christ. Not on our personal views of God and scripture but based on the life and teachings of Jesus and his work of reconciliation and salvation.

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