The Book of Beginnings

Chapter 1
The Generations of the Heavens and the Earth (2:4–4:26)

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The Probation (2:4–25)

1. The Command

(1) "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden."

The word *Eden* means *delight*.

- It's a *real* place. (1) God planted it "in the east" (v. 8). (2) God planted it near "four rivers" (v. 10).

- It's an *ideal* place. (1) It's beautiful: "pleasant to the sight" (v. 9). (2) It's useful: "good for food" (v. 9).

- It's a *satisfying* place. The tree of life stands at its center (v. 9). For Adam, the tree was "a sign, token, and symbol to him of his dependence on God; that he received his life from Him; and that this was preserved by His blessing and providence" (John Gill). God walks in the midst of Eden, fellowshipping with Adam. A river flows out of it to water the garden (v. 10). See Ps. 46:4–5; Rev. 22:1–2.

(2) "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat."

There's no ethical reason behind God's command. (1) There's nothing wrong with eating. (2) There's nothing wrong with the tree. God doesn't give any explanation as to why Adam shouldn't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God has revealed that He's exceedingly good. He can be trusted! Will Adam trust what God says simply because He said it?

> "It was precisely the purpose of the probation to raise man for a moment from the influence of his own ethical inclination to a point of choosing for the sake of personal attachment to God alone" (Geerhardus Vos).

God permits Satan to tempt Adam. Satan argues that God isn't good. He argues that God has lied. At that moment, there's a collision of good and evil in Adam's *psyche*. Good is what God says. Evil is what opposes what God says.

- If Adam chooses the good, he attains to the knowledge of good and evil. And he lives, having chosen the good.

- If Adam chooses the evil, he attains to the knowledge of good and evil. And he dies, having chosen the evil.

2. The Curse

"For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

The tree of life stands in the midst of the garden. And so, it's central to God's dwelling place. It's central to God's fellowship with Adam. As in the case of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree of life is something to which Adam is to attain. It's a higher life in terms of his fellowship with God, which he will attain if he passes the test.

Adam fails the test. As a result, he dies. He doesn't attain to the final state. God banishes Adam from the garden so that he has no access to the tree of life. After Adam's sin, God declares – "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (3:19).

When we speak about Adam's body, we need to discern between two states of immortality. (1) In the first state, death is a *possibility*. In this sense, Adam is immortal. He can live indefinitely. However, he's changeable in terms of his relationship to God – the author of life. (2) In the second state, death is an *impossibility*. In this sense, Adam isn't immortal. He will attain to this immortality if he passes the test. He will be unchangeable in terms of his relationship to God.

By the fall, Adam lost what he had and what he could have had. He became mortal. There was something in him that would cause him to die – sin. And to dust he returned.

Covenant Theology (Rom. 5:12–19)

- Adam stands at the head of the old humanity.
- Christ stands at the head of the new humanity.

- Adam is tested. He's in the garden. He's surrounded with plenty. He has every advantage. He has every reason to trust God.
- Christ is tested. He's in the wilderness. He's surrounded with poverty. He has every disadvantage. He has every reason not to trust God.

- Adam disobeys. He chooses not to trust God. He chooses not to delight in God. He chooses to ignore God's Word.
- Christ obeys. He chooses to trust God. He chooses to delight in God. He chooses to follow God's Word.

- Adam acts for the old humanity. By his disobedience, his people are condemned.
- Christ acts for the new humanity. By His obedience, His people are justified.