

FRAGMENTATION

In the midst of the garden was the tree of “good” and “evil”. The Hebrew word for “good” is “tuwb”. This is the word used in Ps. 133:1 to explain how “good” it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. The Hebrew word for “evil” is “ra”. It comes from the root “ra.a” which means to “break” or “shatter”. Adam and Eve rejected good and unity for evil and fragmentation.

Recently I was in a meeting with missionaries to the Philippines. They were working with a small tribe back in the mountains but that one small tribe was fragmented into several warring groups that actually killed one another. I immediately thought of the Huaoranis in Ecuador which was also a small tribe divided into warring factions that killed one another. Then I thought of the hatred between the Hatfields and the McCoys in Kentucky, who also killed one another. Then of our own Civil War where more American soldiers died than in any other conflict in our nation’s history.

Then, with increasing force, it dawned on me how horribly fragmented our world is. It seems that all families, tribes and nations have fought civil wars. Consider Rome, for example. Wikipedia lists 12 Roman civil wars from 91 B.C. to 30 B.C. The first was called the Social War (91 - 88 B.C.) and the last of the 12 was the war between the Western provinces under Octavian and Agrippa, and the East under Mark Antony and Cleopatra (32 - 30 B.C.)

- In 30 B.C. the Republic was unified under Octavian and became known as the Roman Empire. The next civil war would not be fought until after the suicide of Nero in 68 A.D.
- In 69 A.D. Rome had four emperors (Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian).
- In 193 A.D. Rome had five different emperors, and in 238 A.D. they had six.
- From 284 - 285 A.D. there was another civil war between Diocletian and Carinus.
- From 306 - 324 there was a lengthy civil war which was ultimately won by Constantine.
- From 350 - 351 A.D. there was another civil war between Constantius and Magnentius.
- From 360 - 361 A.D. another civil war between Constantius and Julian the Apostate.
- From 387 - 388 A.D. another civil war between Theodosius 1 and Magnus Maximus.
- In 394 A.D. there was another civil war between Theodosius 1 and Arbogast.
- By 1453 A.D. there had been 7 more civil wars.

The Good News is that God has a cure for war and a fragmented world. The plan was in His mind before creation. This remarkable unity was to come through Jesus Christ. Unity, as you know, is achieved by surrendering our personal preference to an authority outside of ourselves. Unity in the family comes when all family members surrender to the father. Unity in the clan comes when all the fathers submit to a tribal chief. Unity in the state comes when local leaders surrender to the governor. Unity in the nation occurs when all the governors submit to a president. The plan of God is for every person, family, tribe, and nation to surrender to Jesus.

The initial call of Christ is voluntary, but the commitment must be absolute. Even to love our father or mother more than Christ insures our rejection (Matt. 10:37). In fact, we must not only give up everything we have to follow Christ, we must be willing to give up our own lives also (Lk. 14:26 - 33). Those who answer this call experience unity that transcends all earthly barriers. In this blessed fellowship there are no Jews or Greeks, bond or free, males or females (Gal. 3:26 - 29). The ultimate unity, however, will not be voluntary. Those who rebel against Christ will be destroyed. Anyone whose name is not found written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). So the history of the universe can be briefly summarized under five basic headings.

- Initially there was complete unity for God was all there was.
- With Creation came rebellion and fragmentation.
- Those who surrender to Christ are called out and separated from those who do not.
- At Judgement, all who rebel against God will be sentenced to destruction.
- Ultimately, God will again be “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28).

“We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20)