

THE NARRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE, PART 2

“...you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or you will surely die.” (Genesis 2:17, NIV)

THE SEVENTH HOLE AT VALHALLA, host of the three PGA Championships and a Ryder Cup showdown, presents one of the most intriguing split fairway choices a golfer will ever face.

Option one is to send your ball to the right, where the fairway is more open but where the player must decide how much of the watery ribbon to cut across in order to gain yardage toward taking on the par-5 green in two shots.

Option two is to go left, between the water and the OB. It’s a narrowing swath of fairway, but it provides a shorter and more direct go at the green.

Tough call. Much like the decision many say must be made about the early accounts of Scripture. Is it for real—a true story about God and a man and a woman and serpent? Or is it a myth, a metaphor, not true really, but containing some truth?

The trouble in taking the latter path rests not with the beginning of Scripture’s narrative but with its end. Salvation, bought by the blood of Christ in God’s most merciful act, becomes a wasted display of cultic violence if it is not in fact necessary. If the disobedience of Adam and Eve was only metaphorical—and so also the sin passed through their line to every man and woman who has walked the earth—it would not require a literal atoning sacrifice. Indeed, such an act of God would not be merciful at all. Rather it would be, as some atheistic critics have noted, an act of abuse on the part of the Father towards his Son.

But the sin of the Garden was real, and the sinners too were real, and if the result of their sin is real (“just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned,” Romans 5:12), then the death of Jesus Christ was an act of supreme love. His willingness to do the work the Father had given him, right to the bitterest end, indeed purchased our salvation.

Yet beautifully, the love of the Father was most richly demonstrated in that his Son’s death was not the end! Jesus Christ was resurrected! And it is the very power that brought that resurrection that allows mercy to triumph. The death sentence for those who ate of the forbidden tree—and their descendants, right down to you and me—has been commuted. If we believe, we are saved. For real.

Opening questions What is the hardest decision for you to make on the golf course where you play? What is the hardest decision for you to make in deciding whether the Scripture is true?

READING Genesis 2:15-17, Genesis 3:1-19, Romans 5:12-21

The sin scenario
Why would God have given Adam and Eve the opportunity to choose to disobey him? How would this lead to God’s displaying his mercy?

The gravity of sin
As you read through Genesis 3 and come to the consequences of sin pronounced by God, how does this allow you to recognize the weight of sin?

The rescue for sinners
What contrast between Adam and Jesus did Paul present to the Romans? Where do you see the wonder of Christ’s work in the Romans 5 passage?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2015 Links Players International. A 6-minute video accompanies today’s study at <http://youtu.be/BSUWKedg1I>