



It all started with an apple?

Isaac Newton, sitting under a tree, his mind drawing a blank, supposedly was bonked on the head by an apple, and immediately realized the law of gravity at work. What happened to Newton could be called an epiphany: a sudden striking understanding of something.

Robert Frost seemed to have had an epiphany as he picked apples (see his famous poem, “After Apple Picking”). Not to upset the apple cart, but the basic apple gives us cause to be uneasy.

To put it gently, the orchard is blighted; the apples trees have apple scab, a disease caused by fungus. Put another way, when it comes to sin and when it comes to this old world, there is more than one bad apple in every barrel. Even in nonwestern thought we find the idea that “decay is inherent in all component things.”

It’s too easy to blame Adam and Eve for eating that one stupid apple. For this they got into trouble? Ah, but it was acting out in order to be like god that got them in trouble, not chomping on a red Delicious.

Being a bad apple comes natural to all of us. Think of it as a bad default a la mode. The core of sin is the placing of self at the center of the universe, making ourselves the measure of all things (Protagoras). And it was Aristotle who said “Vice is unconscious of itself.” When it comes to being bad, we’ve had a lot of practice biting into forbidden apples. After a while, we don’t bother reflecting on our actions, much less probing what might be wrong with our desires.

Does all this mean we’re hopelessly rotten to the core? You’ll have to answer that one for yourself. Let us say this, however. No man or woman knows how bad he or she is till he has tried very hard to be good. That goes for all sons of Adam and all daughters of Eve.

It might not be a bad idea to seek the One who can put our souls in apple-pie order. His salt applied may irritate and sting, but it also brings savor and preservation. If you cut into an apple core, you’ll find a star! Try it. Better yet, let Jesus put his redemptive star in the core of your being.