

# Two Trees

Genesis 3:22-23

**FOCAL Read Responsively** Genesis 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

**Genesis 3:22-23** And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: {23} Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

Have you ever thought about *trees*? Trees are important to humans because, as you well know, trees produce oxygen (which is good for us) while at the same time absorb carbon dioxide (which is also good for us). As humans we breathe out carbon dioxide and breathe in oxygen. Trees, on the other hand, breathe out oxygen while breathing in carbon dioxide. The lowliest tree is a great blessing from God. Some trees bear fruits or nuts, again something that we humans enjoy. Trees can be burned for heat, made into paper, and byproducts from trees are components in paint and household cleaners. Trees can be milled, and their wood used to build houses and furniture for our homes. I even use a tree limb as a cane to walk with when my old knee starts bothering me.

The Bible has a lot to say about trees. Jesus Christ saw a disciple named **Nathanael** when he was standing **under a fig tree**, prompting Nathanael to say to our Lord "**You are the Son of God, and the King of Israel**" (John



**Rock Hill Baptist Church**  
**605 Rock Hill Road**  
**Lexington, Tennessee 38351**

**Pastor David Buffaloe**  
**731-845-6104**  
**online at bibleteacher.org**

1:49). Nathanael saw in Jesus Someone Who cared for him when none other cared. Jesus called another disciple to His side called **Zacchaeus (Luke 19:4)**. When Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming his way that little tax collector **climbed up a sycamore tree**. The Lord saw him, and called him down by saying "**I must abide at your house today**". **King David's** wayward but proud son **Absalom** tried to lead a revolt against his father. This long haired young man led his army through an oak grove. The Bible says "**his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between heaven and the earth**" (2 Samuel 18:9). While he hung there helpless one of David's lieutenants, **Joab**, took **three dart, and thrust them through Absalom's heart (2 Samuel 18:14)**, effectively ending the revolt. There is a very strange command found in the law of the ancient Israelites that states:

**Deuteronomy 21:22-23** **And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: {23} His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) ...**

This is a strange law because the Jews did not, as a matter of course, **hang the guilty in a tree**. If the Law demanded the life of someone guilty of a capital crime that persons was to be **stoned with stones until they were dead**. Why God would speak of **hanging someone in a tree** confused many of the Rabbis and Teachers - that is, until our Lord Jesus Christ came. The Bible tells us that

**Galatians 3:13** **Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:**

Jesus hung on a tree - on a Cross made of wood - bearing your sins and mine. What a great love God must have for each and every one of us! Jesus **laid down His life for us (John 15:13)**, willingly going to Calvary to make payment for our sins. What a wonderful Tree the Cross of Calvary is!

But let's now go back to the beginning, back to the Book of Genesis. In Genesis we see a Garden that God makes **many trees that are pleasant to the eyes and good for food**. In the very middle of the Garden we see *two trees*. One tree is forbidden, the other tree is not. The forbidden tree is called **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, and Adam is simply told:

**Genesis 2:16-17** **... Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: {17} But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**

Adam could eat of **every tree of the garden** save one. He could eat from the **tree of life** as often as he wanted and be as full as he wanted - but he could not eat of the **forbidden tree**. Why was the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil forbidden?**

Because love cannot be developed without *a choice*.

True love *always* draws boundaries, and establishes barriers around that which is harmful. It is true that **God is love (1 John 4:8)**. But love does not mean to give and give and give without restraint. Love says "no" when something is bad for us. Love will not give the unequipped baby a razor knife to play with because the child screams to hold that which is shiny. Love sets boundaries for our own good.

Adam forgot that great truth and, failing to love, plunged this world into darkness.

### **1. God Made You To Love And To Be Loved**

**FOCAL** Genesis 2:9 And **out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.**

**ILLUSTRATE** A little boy and his dad were sitting on the front porch one evening when the mosquitoes started biting. After a few slaps dad looked at his boy and said, "Let's get inside where we'll be more comfortable". As they went through the screen door a few fire flies followed them inside. When the little boy saw that he said to his dad, "**We need to move faster, daddy. The mosquitoes are coming, and they've got flashlights!**"

God loved Adam so very much! Look how the Lord treated Adam. The Bible tells us that it was the Lord Who looked at Adam and said:

**CONTEXT** Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, **It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.**

God didn't give Adam a Game Boy<sup>®</sup>, an "X" Box<sup>®</sup>, or a four wheeler to show how much He was loved. *The Lord gave Adam a soul mate*, someone who would love him and follow his leadership. *The Lord gave Adam a family* when He gave him Eve.

God not only gave Man life, He gave man *quality* life and *eternal* life. Adam lived in a perfect environment, and was free to *eat of the Tree of Life* every day!

*The Lord gave Adam a perfect environment.* Prior to the Fall there was no ticks (don't you love finding a tick on you?), no mosquitoes, no sickness, no death, no thorns, nothing to harm or hurt in all the world. *The Lord loved to walk with Adam every day.* We read that the Lord **was walking in the Garden in the cool of the day when He called for His friend Adam (Genesis 3:8-9)**. Adam was loved by God.

But would Adam love God? As long as Adam loved God he was blessed. As long as Adam *trusted in the love of God* he was in a perfect environment with the perfect wife and the perfect job. All he had to do was keep on loving God. What happened? The Bible tells us that Satan - in the form of a serpent - came into the Garden and tempted Adam through Eve. When Satan asked "**has God really said that you can't eat of every tree in the Garden?**" Eve replied, "**See that forbidden tree. We**

can't even *touch* the fruit, much less eat it!" Then Satan played his trump card. He said:

**CONTEXT** Genesis 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods<sup>1</sup>, knowing good and evil.

**"God doesn't love you! He is withholding the best from you, Adam. Take of this fruit and you shall become like Elohiym, like the Eternal God".**

Satan tempts each and every one of us in exactly the same way. He comes to us and whispers, "Hath God really said ... *really*? God wants to rob you of your joy! Take - it's what you rightfully deserve. Eat - if the Lord loved you He would withhold no good thing from you. " When Satan comes and whispers sweet nothings in your ears you should lean toward the Scripture, knowing that

**Psalms 84:11-12 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. {12} O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.**

Trust in Him. The Tree is forbidden out of love, not because God would deprive you of any good thing. The sinful thing is forbidden because our Lord knows

<sup>1</sup> H430, אֱלֹהִים, 'ēlōhîym, *el-o-heem*', *gods* in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme *God*; occasionally applied by way of deference to *magistrates*; and sometimes as a superlative: - angels, X exceeding, God (gods) (-dess, -ly), X (very) great, judges, X mighty.

**Isaiah 46:10 ... the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:...**

He knows what is best for us - and knows what is best for our families. Trust in Him - and follow Him in love. God made Adam and Eve to love and to be loved. He made you to love and to be loved. You, as well as our first Parents, are cherished. Will you love the Lord?

## **2. Failure To Love God Brings Certain Destruction**

Following the first *two* Commandments that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai are these words:

**Exodus 20:5-6 ... I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; {6} And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.**

**God is jealous.** Jealousy is a word that is used when someone guards that which is rightfully his or hers. You see, envy is to desire that which is someone else's. Jealousy is to lovingly guard that which is yours. God made you to love HIM.

**When a person will not love God, everything they touch will eventually fall apart..**

Let's go back to the Garden. Adam and Eve have fallen prey to Satan's tactics, and have eaten of the forbidden tree. Look at the progression of sin.

**CONTEXT** Genesis 3:7 **And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.**

Adam and Eve are no longer operating under the direction of God. *Before* they ate the forbidden they were happy, loving, and being loved. **Before eating the forbidden they were not under self imposed laws.** Their lives consisted of loving God and spending time with Him. **After eating the forbidden they begin to make up laws by which they must live to be acceptable in their own sight.** Their failure to love God *destroyed the balance of love they had in the Garden.* What happened next? We read:

**CONTEXT** Genesis 3:8 **And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.**

Here we see the result of lovelessness toward God. Adam and Eve find themselves **hiding from God in the midst of great blessing.**

They find themselves the enemy of God rather than His friend. Though blessing is all around them they cannot

enjoy it - they are too busy trying to live by their self imposed laws, and too busy condemning themselves for their failure. And how did Adam's sin effect the family? Before he sinned he had a *perfect wife*, a perfect soul mate, someone to be cherished. When Adam first saw Eve he said:

Genesis 2:23-24 ... **This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. {24} Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.**

What beautiful words! These words are repeated in every wedding ceremony that I've ever had the joy of officiating. But once Adam sinned and departed from loving God we see a different man. When God asked Adam what happened our forefather said:

Genesis 3:12 ... **The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.**

Is Adam blaming God, or blaming the woman? I think he's blaming both. His lovelessness toward God has marred the love of the family. Because he did not love God the Lord said:

**FOCAL** Genesis 3:22-23 ... **and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: {23} Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.**

Failure to love God brought a terrible curse on Adam, and on each and every one of us. Children suffer from the sins of the parents.

Before God's Chosen Nation Israel entered the Promised Land of Canaan the Lord was careful to tell them this great truth:

**Deuteronomy 6:4-5** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: {5} And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Love God with all your heart. Trust God, for He loves you. When Israel remembered this lesson they were richly blessed.

**ILLUSTRATE** Do you remember Joshua and a place called Jericho? Joshua loved the Lord, and the Lord loved Joshua. The Lord told him:

**Joshua 1:3-5** Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. {4} From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. {5} There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: ...

What a great promise from a Great God! God told Joshua, "If you will trust and obey Me, you will be invincible". Dear old Joshua believed this, and obeyed

the Lord in all things.

**Then came Ai. No, I didn't misspell that - it's AI.**

When Joshua sent men from **Jericho to Ai** he expected an easy victory. God had told His nation Israel to **march around Jericho once a day for six days - then on the seventh day to march around it seven times**. God never explained *why* this was to be done - just that it was to be done. God told Israel:

**Joshua 6:18-19** And ye, in any wise **keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. {19} But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.**

True love always has boundaries! Why didn't God want Israel to have the treasures of AI? I don't know, and neither do the commentaries that I read when I researched this.

True love always has boundaries. There are times when God tells us "NO" and expects us, in love, to obey Him. The riches of Jericho were forbidden by God. But **Achan** didn't listen.

Achan took **the accursed thing - that which was forbidden - and hid it among his other "stuff"**. Though Joshua had no idea he did this God knew. When

Joshua sent his army to AI the enemy *cleaned his clock!* Joshua questioned God as to why this terrible thing happened. The Lord told him:

**Joshua 7:10-11 ... Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? {11} Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.**

Did you notice that the Lord *didn't* say **Achan hath sinned?** You see, Achan was a part of the family of God called "**Israel**", and when Achan sinned **God recognized that the sin passed on the whole family.**

Dear friends, when you fail to love God, when you chase after that which God has forbidden you *bring a curse on your whole family.* Achan took a Babylonian garment, 200 pieces of silver, and fifty pieces of gold. It cost him his life.

As the Apostle Paul said to both the **Corinthians** as well as the **Galatians**:

**1 Corinthians 5:6 ... Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?** (also see **Galatians 5:9**)

### **3. How Much Does God Love You?**

**FOCAL** **Genesis 3:22-23 ... and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and**

**live forever: {23} Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden,**

I am so grateful that our God is the God of second chances, and third chances, and fourth chances - I am so grateful that He is gracious above all else. God could have destroyed Adam and Eve for their sin, which, in turn, would have destroyed you and I. But God had greater plans.

Once Adam ate from the forbidden tree the Lord - because of His great love - would not allow him to eat from the Tree of Life. It is not life but *it is extended death* to live forever in a sinful state!

God sent Adam out of the Garden - and Eve followed - but He wasn't done. You see, our God is an *Elegant Savior*. Man disobeyed God at a certain Tree. The Bible tells us that

**Romans 5:12 ... as by one man {Adam} sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**

Sin entered the world - and death by sin - at a Tree. How will God choose to remove the blight of sin from His creation? We see in the Law of the Jews an odd statement:

**Deuteronomy 21:22-23 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: {23} His body shall not**

**remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) ...**

for the Jews *never* hung people on trees. This was a practice common among the Gentiles - we've been hanging people up for years - but not among God's Israel. Israel always took the offenders guilt of capital crime and **stoned them with stones until they were dead**. So why would God's Prophetic Word speak of **hanging someone on a tree**? Because God was speaking of the Coming Savior. The Bible tells us through the Apostle:

**Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:**

Adam broke God's Law in the Garden when he turned from loving God to loving another. This action brought the curse of sin on all of Adam's children - that's you and I. God - Who is holy and eternal - promised Adam "**in the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die**". Adam did die - he died *spiritually* - and we who are his offspring are born physically alive but spiritually death.

Jesus Christ **became a curse in our place**. God Himself took on human flesh and came to this earth to bear our penalty and our shame. Through Jesus Christ ...

**Ephesians 1:7 ... we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;**

Just as God *covered Adam and Eve's sin* by shedding blood,

**CONTEXT Genesis 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.**

God *covers the sin of the believer by the shed Blood of Christ*. The Bible says:

**Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; ...**

Jesus Christ gave Himself for you and for me. Dear friend, I beg you,

**Romans 13:14 ... put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.**

Turn from Satan's false love and toward God's true love. Adam had it all before he turned from the love of God. You will never have a satisfying life until you turn to Jesus. Do you have bitterness from past hurts? Turn to Jesus. Do you have guilt in your life that you, like Adam, have tried to cover up? Turn to Jesus. Do you fear death and dying? Turn to Jesus. He hung upon the Tree, bearing your curse and mine, so that we could have eternal life.

There were two trees in the first Garden. The Tree of Life was not forbidden until the Forbidden Tree was

tasted. If you would come to the Tree that Christ hung on, trusting in the love of God, then one day you will see the Tree of Life in a glorious afterlife. The Bible ends with this:

**Revelation 22:14-17 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. {15} For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. {16} I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. {17} And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**

Who is outside the blessed Heavenly City? Those who will not come to Christ. **If you will ask of Him, He will give thee freely of His Living Water. (John 4:10)**

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



Rock Hill Baptist Church  
605 Rock Hill Road  
Lexington, TN 38351

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**1. God Made You To Love And To Be Loved**

Genesis 2:9; Genesis 2:18; Genesis 3:8-9; Genesis 3:5; Psalms 84:11-12; Isaiah 46:10 \_\_\_\_\_  
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**2. Failure To Love God Brings Certain Destruction**

Exodus 20:5-6; Genesis 3:7; Genesis 3:8; Genesis 2:23-24; Genesis 3:12; Genesis 3:22-23; Deuteronomy

6:4-5; Joshua 1:3-5; Joshua 6:18-19; Joshua 7:10-11; 1 Corinthians 5:6 \_\_\_\_\_  
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**3. How Much Does God Love You?**

Genesis 3:22-23; Romans 5:12; Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 1:7; Genesis 3:21; Hebrews 9:28; Romans 13:14; Revelation 22:14-17 \_\_\_\_\_  
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