

## TREES

One of the most rewarding methods of Bible study is what I think of as a "free-wheeling", shotgun approach. Take a word. Almost any word. Then get yourself a Strong's Concordance & follow that word all the way through the Bible & see what you come up with. Sometimes you may be surprised. Pleasantly! Other times take a word & let your mind stroll through the Bible & see what similarities or differences you can come up with. This is what we have done here. We think of the word "tree". Now, there are literally hundreds of references to trees in the Bible. Some more prominent than others. Some trees were used in the making of the ark in Noah's day. Others were used in the various temples constructed over the centuries. Some were used in the building of the ark of the covenant or the gates of Jerusalem.

But two trees really stand out. These two trees have probably had more effect on the course of human history than all the other trees put together! I am referring to "the tree of the knowledge of good & evil" & the cross of Calvary. We find the first mentioned in Gen. 2:9

**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 the knowledge of good and evil.**

You remember how God had made man & placed him the Garden of Eden, Gen. 2:15-17

**15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.**

**16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 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.**

It was after this that God formed Eve out of Adam's rib & they became as one & set up house in the garden. Adam & Eve were placed in an environment that it's very name is synonymous with perfection on earth. And it was! The garden of Eden. The very name evokes feelings & stirrings of the soul that draw us like a moth to the flame. It reminds us of a time before the fall. Before sin. Of a time when we could literally walk & talk with God. Face to face! Before we had to contend with the fruits of sin, disobedience, alienation from God & all that those terms imply. It was a place that was planned, organized & made by the very hand of God himself! Gen. 2:8

**8 And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.**

We cannot emphasize how little human nature has changed over the years. When the serpent makes his appearance a little later he harps about the fact that God is being 'stingy' & want's to make Adam & Eve suffer & not let them have 'all the trees' in the garden. When, in fact, God had given them every single tree in the garden, save one. One little measly tree! That's all they could not eat of. All the rest, maybe hundreds or even thousands, they could freely eat from. Only this one single tree could they not eat. By the time the serpent gets done with Eve she has "added" to the word of God by adding the phrase "neither shall ye touch it" & has "taken from" the word by stating "lest ye die". I refer you back to vs. 17 above, God said: "thou shalt not eat of it" & "thou shalt surely die". (Nothing said about touching it or maybe dying!) Eve has added the word 'touch' & changed 'surely' to 'lest'. Typical. Darwin's super-highway of evolutionary

perfection to a higher & higher consciousness leaves something to be desired, doesn't it? Rom. 3:10-18, 23

- 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:  
11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that  
seeketh after God.  
12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become  
unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.  
13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they  
have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:  
14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:  
15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:  
16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:  
17 And the way of peace have they not known:  
18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.  
23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**

The tree was a test. Adam & Eve had been formed in innocence. They, on their own, had never confronted evil. They had never been put in a situation where they had to make a "choice" for, or against, the command of God. The tree of the knowledge of good & evil represented that choice. They failed. And in their failure we fell too. Rom. 5:12, 18

- 12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death  
by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:  
18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgement came upon all men  
to condemnation; ...**

But there is another tree in scripture. This tree has more fame & noteriety than even the tree of the knowledge of good & evil. And, whereas the first tree was a virtual disaster in the ramifications of it's influence down through the centuries, the second tree is even more glorious & far-reaching in it's influence which will resound to the glory, love & majesty of God throughout eternity. I speak of the cross of Calvary!

Where the first tree represented all that was sinful, vile, hateful & ugly in mankind, the second tree represents the epitome of all that is good, loving, holy & sacrificial, Jn. 3:16

- 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,  
that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have  
everlasting life.**

God's plan of redemption did not begin in the garden of Eden. God could see down thru the centuries & see man's failure. He knew when He placed Adam & Eve in the garden that they would fail. None of this caught Him by surprise! See Job 38-39. In the mind of God, the cross of Calvary did not take place around the year 33 A.D. Rev. 13:8

- 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not  
written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

Again, we read in 1 Pet. 1:18-20

- 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things,  
as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from  
your fathers;**

- 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:**
- 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in these last times for you,**

And, once more in Eph. 1:4

**According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love;**

The second tree, rather Jesus, on the second tree, undid everything that the first tree did. The bondage, the alienation from God, death, a life in subjection to sin, the flesh & the devil. It was all paid for on that second tree. Col. 2:13-14

**13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all your trespasses;**

**14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;**

We read in Gal. 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:**

So we have two trees. One represented all that is sin. The other paid the price for all sin. One represents our failure. The other represents God's triumph, Col. 2:15.

The first tree was planted by God - in Eden, Gen. 2:8-9  
The second tree was planted by man - at Calvary, Lk. 23:33

The first tree was in the midst of the garden, out of the way, Gen. 2:9  
The second tree was set on a hill, for all to see,

- The first tree was pleasant to the eyes, Gen. 3:6  
The second tree was horrible to behold, Ps. 22

The first tree God forbade us to eat, Gen. 2:17  
The second tree we are told to bear, Mt. 10:38

The first tree Satan tempts man to take, Gen. 3:4-6  
The second tree Satan tries to keep man away, 2 Cor. 4:4

The first tree puts man out of a garden, Gen. 3:23  
The second tree puts man in the city of God, Rev. 3:12

Have you tasted & partaken of that sweet fruit that leads to everlasting life? Or are you still walking this planet, alone & without God, your mouth reeking from the foul odor of the fruit that is left from the first tree. The tree of the knowledge of good & evil. Ps. 34:8

**8 O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.**