

What Tree Did Eve Eat From?

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According to the Biblical account of activities in the Garden of Eden, Eve took fruit from a tree that was forbidden by the Lord God (Gen. 2:17; NKJV). Many have speculated about this tree in an attempt to determine what type it may have been and what kind of fruit it produced. The most popular idea seems to be an apple tree from paintings and pictures depicting this scene. But is this an accurate portrayal of what happened? Did the Lord God create a physical tree, and then tempt Adam and Eve with its fruit?

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone (Jas.1:13).

Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste (Sgs. 2:3).

From the above scriptural references, it is clear that the Lord God did not create a physical tree in order to tempt Adam and Eve. Nor would it have been an apple tree as we can see from the quotation in Song of Solomon.

It is important to note that the trees in the garden were created from the same substance as Adam and Eve.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (Gen. 2:7). And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food... (Gen. 2:9).

From the construction of Genesis 2:9, it can be inferred that the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were already present prior to the creation of Adam and Eve as well as prior to the creation of the other trees. This will become more apparent later.

At this point it is important to explain a Biblical truth regarding the interpretation of the word of God. Christ used various objects and concepts that were familiar to those he taught in order to convey important spiritual principles in his parables. The following section of scripture will serve as an example:

When any one hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside (Mt.13:19 ff; emphasis added).

Although Christ explained the meaning of this symbolic language to his disciples, the majority who heard Christ's teachings did not comprehend the spiritual meanings that were being portrayed. In fact, this is exactly what Christ said to his disciples in the following scripture:

And the disciples came and said to him (Christ), "Why do you speak to them (the people at large) in parables?" He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has (i.e. been given this understanding at this time), to him more (i.e. understanding) will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have (i.e. for various reasons as explained in the parable of the sower), even what he has (i.e. heard) will be taken away from him. Therefore, I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do

they understand (Mt.13:10-13; parentheses added).

Even for those who do understand various aspects of how God uses symbolic language, there is still a lot of work required in getting a more complete picture as the following scripture states:

“Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little (Isa.28:9-10 cf. 28:13).

In the scripture above, God repeats for emphasis how much effort is required to come to a correct understanding of any truth or doctrine. He also shows us that the Bible needs to be viewed in its entirety in order to piece together the truth on any given subject. In fact, the Bible will prove a truth when various scriptures are correctly organized and corroborate with each other.

On the other hand, some will misuse scriptural references to prove a pet theory, which more often than not is based on a misunderstanding of God’s will. For instance, many in Christianity believe that Christ came to do away with his Father’s laws. Therefore, they will interpret many of the Apostle Paul’s writings as reinforcing this position. Interestingly, the Apostle Peter commented on this proclivity.

Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless (i.e. not living in a sinful manner); and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation – as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these

things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures (2 Peter 3:14-16; parentheses added).

Going back now to the symbolic language used by God in the Garden of Eden account, we can apply the principles just covered, and see what is revealed. It has been assumed by many that the trees in the garden were literal physical trees, but is this correct? We will now gather together a number of scriptures to see what God has to say about this.

Beginning with the tree of life, here are a number of Biblical references for consideration:

And the people murmured against Moses saying, “What shall we drink?” So he (Moses) cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree; and when he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet... I am the Lord who heals you (Ex.15:24-26; parentheses added).

In this symbolic act, Moses had to kill a tree and toss it into the water in order to heal the water so that the people could live. By gathering some scriptures in the New Testament, it becomes more apparent who this tree symbolized.

Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give me a drink,” you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him (Christ), “Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that

I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn. 4:10-14; parentheses added).

“He who believes in me (Christ), as the Scripture has said, out of his heart (inner most being) will flow rivers of living water.” But this he spoke concerning the Spirit, which those who believed in him would receive, for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (Jn.7:3839; parentheses added).

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away (i.e. die and be resurrected); for if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send it to you (Jn.16:7; parentheses added).

To summarize the scriptures above, it was Christ’s willingness to lay down his life to pay for the sins of the world that resulted in the gift of everlasting life being imparted to those who repent of sin and begin living in newness of life (Ac. 2:38; Rom. 6:4, 7:6). Therefore, the symbolic tree of life in the Garden of Eden represented Jesus Christ whose death provided this healing and restoration. This was also pictured symbolically by the tree that was cut down in order to provide clean water for the ancient nation of Israel. Otherwise, they would have all died from thirst. This clean water represents God’s Holy Spirit. Conversely, the bitter water represents the spirit of the Adversary (i.e. Satan).

In 1 Corinthians 15:45 the Apostle Paul wrote,

So also it has been written, “The first man, Adam, became into a living soul. The last Adam into a life-giving spirit.

There is a cause and effect structure in this verse. For instance, due to the lawbreaking actions of the first Adam, he was changed to a

living, breathing being that would die. In other words, he was not originally created in a form (i.e. flesh and blood) that would eventually die.

Through this, indeed as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death also into all men, death came through upon all who sinned (Rom. 5:12; RNT).

1 Corinthians 15:45 also denotes cause and effect regarding the last Adam, Jesus Christ, who willingly gave up his life as a spirit-being (sacrifice), became a physical man and died (sacrifice) in order to pay for the sins of all fallen creation. Consequently, as a result of his law-abiding actions (Ps. 40:7-8; Lk. 6:9; Jn. 15:13; Rom. 8:2; Heb. 4:15; 9:28), Christ became a life-giving spirit (Jn.5:21; 6:57), the instrument through which mankind could have eternal life.

But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many (Rom. 5:15).

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. 19For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one the many will be made righteous (Rom. 5:18-29).

As Christ was willing to lay down his life and become the blood sacrifice necessary to pay for the sins of all fallen creation, from the moment the Adversary first rebelled against God (Rev. 13:8), he has always been the tree of life from whom all who wish to receive everlasting life must eat.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God (Rev. 2:7).

Now we can examine some scriptures that will help explain who was represented symbolically by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was the tree that Eve partook of even though God stated that it was to be avoided.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate (Gen. 2:6).

From this scripture, we see that there is a form of wisdom associated with the fruit of this tree. With this in mind, we can examine other scriptures that discuss a wisdom that may not be for the best (1Cor. 3:19).

You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom (i.e. a tree desirable to make one wise) and perfect in beauty (i.e. pleasant to the eyes). You were in Eden (i.e. with Adam and Eve), the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold (Ezek. 28:12-13; parentheses added).

You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity (i.e. sin) was found in you (Ezek. 28:15).

Your heart (inner most being) was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor (Ezek.28:17; parentheses added).

From Ezekiel 28:17, we can see why the Lord God wanted Eve to avoid the corrupted wisdom

of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree understood both good and evil, but chose to live contrary to the laws of the only true God. Therefore, it could not have been a literal tree. Instead, it represented Satan who was cast out from the position he held as the following scripture shows:

By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain (i.e. government) of God; (Ezek. 29:16; parentheses added).

The one represented by the tree of life (Christ) witnessed this event, which shows that he existed prior to becoming a sacrifice for the sins of the world (Jn.1:29; parentheses added).

And he (Christ) said to them (the seventy-two disciples), "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Lk. 10:18 cf. Isa. 14:12-15; parentheses added).

As we have begun to see, both Jesus Christ and Satan the Adversary are referred to symbolically in scripture as 'trees', but there is a an important distinction separating them.

Thus, every good tree makes good fruit, but the corrupt tree makes evil fruit. ¹⁸A good tree is not able to make corrupt fruit, nor can an evil tree make good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not make good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire (Mt. 7:17-19; RNT).

Regarding Satan,

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10).

But you are cast out of your grave Like an abominable branch, Like the garment of those who are slain, Thrust through with a sword, Who

go down to the stones of the pit, Like a corpse trodden underfoot (Isa. 14:19).

Regarding Jesus Christ,

In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious; and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing (Isa. 4:2).

Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth (Jer. 23:5).

In the book of Ezekiel, God uses the nation of Egypt with its Pharaoh as a type of Satan and those that have chosen to follow his rebellious way of living. In this symbolic language, it can be seen that Satan and some of the host of heaven were present in the Garden of Eden, and because of their rebellion they will die in the same manner as Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt even though both were great and strong in their own time and manner.

I made the nations shake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to the grave together with those who descend into the Pit (domain of the fallen host); and all the trees of Eden, the choice and the best of Lebanon, all that drink water (symbolic of God's spirit), were comforted in the depths of the earth. They also went down to the grave with it, with those slain by the sword; and those who were its strong arm dwelt in its shadows among the nations. To which of the trees in Eden will you (Satan) then be likened in glory and greatness? Yet you shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the depths of the earth; you shall lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with those slain by the sword (Ezek. 31:16-17).

Scripture indicates that all the trees in the Garden of Eden were spirit beings like the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These trees also made a wrong choice. This wrong choice seemed to take place at the same time that Adam and Eve chose to believe the word of the Adversary (Satan) rather than the word of God. This would explain why Adam and Eve felt comfortable hiding amongst them (Gen. 2:8). They were all in agreement, and all had made the choice to follow the way of the Adversary. According to Revelation 12:4, Satan managed to convince a third of the host of heaven to follow his way of living. If this were not the case, then the trees in the Garden of Eden would have prevented Adam and Eve from hiding amongst them in accordance with scripture (2Thes. 3:6; Eph. 5:11; 1Cor. 5:11).

As mentioned earlier, all the trees of Eden as well as Adam and Eve were made from the ground (Gen. 2:9). Therefore, they can all die if they sin, which is in accordance with the law of God.

"...The soul (individual living being) who sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4; parentheses added).

The question should come up regarding spirit beings dying. In other words if they are made from the ground how could they be regarded a spirit? Or put another way, how could a spirit being appear as if they were physical, and at some point in the future die? In Genesis 18, the spirit-being that became Jesus Christ appeared to Abraham and ate a meal with him. This is confirmed by scripture and because no one has seen or heard the only true God – the Father (Jn. 5:37), it had to be the spirit leader of the loyal host of heaven (Joshua 5:13-15), Jesus Christ, who appeared to Abraham. This same being would later become flesh and blood, die for the sins of the world, and then be resurrected from the dead.

After his death on the stake, Christ appeared to his disciples, and Thomas was told to,

Reach your finger here, and look at my hands, and reach your hand here, and put it into my side... (Jn. 20:27).

Therefore, when the term "ground" is used it is symbolic language depicting the building block for all the created host of heaven whether they are of a spirit composition or flesh and blood.

This now opens the possibility that Adam, who was made from the dust of the ground, was originally formed as a spirit-being. After committing sin, Adam would have undergone a change described in the symbolic language of Genesis 3:7. This change meant death in accordance with the word of God (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 2:12; 3:23). Once a created being becomes flesh and blood, they are going to die at some point. Satan said this would not happen in Genesis 3:4 but as Christ said, "You (Jewish leadership) are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him." When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it (Jn.8:44).

Because Satan is a liar, and because the only true God wants his created family to live a happy life, God advised Adam and Eve to avoid receiving instruction (fruit) from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Satan). They disobeyed God's word, and paid a heavy price.

Unfortunately, mankind as a whole, and one third of the host of heaven, has believed this liar from the time of Adam and Eve (Rev. 12:9). The immortal soul doctrine is nothing more than Satan's lie to Eve, "you shall surely not die."

Satan, as well as the spirit-beings who followed him, will one day become flesh and blood and die. God is not a respecter of persons and therefore His judgment will apply equally to all who have sinned. The Apostle Paul clearly stated that this is the case.

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen (Rom. 16:20).

It is possible that the trees in the Garden of Eden also became flesh and blood after they sinned. If this happened, it would explain who Cain was afraid of when he had sinned and was punished (Gen. 4:14). These could also have been those "sons of God" who started inter-marrying with the descendants of Adam and Eve (Gen. 6: 1-5).

In conclusion, the fruit of the tree that Eve partook of was a symbol representing fellowship (sharing fruit) with the Adversary, who is likened to darkness. Scripture encourages everyone to avoid this darkness because it leads to destruction.

In contrast,

God "has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13-14; RSV).

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