

**TWO TREES  
CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO-PT 1  
GENESIS 2:16-17; JOHN 3:14-15**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Bible has many interesting stories involving trees:

- 1) Elijah sat under the Juniper tree wanting to die after the victory at Mt. Carmel because Jezebel was on his trail.
- 2) Absalom got his head get caught in the boughs of an oak tree and was slain by Joab.
- 3) Jesus walked by a barren fig tree and cursed it so that it died.
- 4) Zacheus, who was short, climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus.
- 5) Many other trees mentioned in Scripture.

However, **there are two trees that are mentioned in Scripture that stand out more than all the rest! These two trees have had more of an impact on mankind than any and all of the other trees combined!**

**These two trees stand in contrast to each other:**

- 1) **The Tree Of Knowledge Of Good And Evil.**
- 2) **The Cross Of Christ.**

**I want to begin sharing with you the contrasts we find in these two trees:**

**1A. THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL WAS A TREE FORBIDDEN FOR MANKIND! (*Genesis 2:16-17*)**

Of course there are folks who want to question even that one limitation that God placed on Adam and Eve! So why did God limit man?

**A. That Tree Represented God's Rightful Authority Over Mankind As A Creature That He Had Created In Innocence Who Possessed Both The Ability To Reason And The Freedom Of Will To Choose!**

1. **Mankind Is Unlike Any Other Living Creature That God Created!**
2. **Mankind Was Created In The Very Image Of God! (So with that came *Intellect, Emotions, and Will!*)**

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**3. God has a right to rule mankind who is His creation!**

**God has a right to set limitations and set boundaries on mankind! It is His prerogative to say whatever He wants about what we can and cannot do!**

**That is what we mean when we say that God is the LORD over all His creation!**

**The Apostle Paul anticipated the objections that the Church in Rome would have to his teaching them about God's ways:**

*Romans 9:20-21*—“. . . Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, **Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay?**”

**Yet, that is precisely what many folks have done and continue to do since the beginning of creation! They question God's ways and what God has done and why He didn't do things differently and think that they are justified in doing so! But no one is!**

**Then in *Romans 11:33-36*, Paul had this to say about God:** “33 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*”

*That Tree Not Only Represented God's Rightful Authority Over Mankind...*

**B. That Tree Represented God's Allowance Of Liberty To Mankind. (*Genesis 2:8-9*)**

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**God was good to Adam and Eve in giving them freedom even though He placed that one single limitation on them!**

**1. ALL of the trees that God created were good, even the Tree Of Knowledge Of Good And Evil!**  
*(Genesis 1:11-12; 2:8-9; 3:6)*

**2. EVERY other tree in the garden was available to Adam and Eve!** *(Genesis 2:9, 16-17; 3:2-3)*  
The LORD's words to Adam were **NOT** ambiguous!  
In fact, Eve's conversation with the serpent shows she understood the **LIBERTY** they had in the LORD to eat from **ALL** the other trees!

Just think of all the various sort of fruit trees that we get fruit from today! **And we still enjoy the fruit of ANY of them we want to today!** (Except for the **TREE OF LIFE** and **THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL!**)

**ALL** of the fruit from those fruit trees was available to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden **except for this single ONE that the LORD prohibited!**

**3. Even the TREE OF LIFE was available to man!**  
*(Genesis 2:9, 16-17; 3:22)*  
*Both the opening and closing chapters of the Bible contain references to the tree of life (Gen 2-3; Rev 22). In the Bible, the tree of life symbolizes the fullness of life and immortality available in God. The menorah and other decorations of the temple and tabernacle contain symbolic representations of the tree of life, representing God's presence in the holy place.*

*In Proverbs, the tree of life is associated with the life-generating properties of wisdom, righteousness, and hope!*

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**4. But listen to me closely here, though the TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL was GOOD and was in the garden, the LORD gave man a CLEAR COMMANDMENT to NOT eat of that tree!**

**It was not the FRUIT that was EVIL, it was the EATING of the FRUIT which was disobedience!**

*THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL WAS A TREE FORBIDDEN FOR MANKIND...but because of man's disobedience...*

**1B. THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS A TREE REQUIRED FOR MANKIND!**

*John 3:14-15—"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."*

*Turn to Numbers 21:4-9...Jesus explained the simplicity of being born again by using this Old Testament story that Nicodemus would have been familiar with.*

*Verse 4* indicates that the children of Israel were **discouraged because of the way of their journey**. The word translated "*way*" here means "*path, road, or highway.*"

**Now, if you read the previous chapter (20:14-29) you will find that some of Israel's kin folk (Esau's seed a/k/a Edom which would have been their cousins!) refused to let them travel the short route across their land even when they promised not to eat or drink on the route but just go straight through to the Promised Land!**  
So that made the journey longer and harder on them!

*Verse 5* indicates that **the people began to speak against God and against Moses—by the way, speaking against God is a sin!**  
**Be careful of how you speak of God and His Word!**

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Also, speaking against the *man of God* who is under the direction of God, (which Moses was) is also a sin! Moses was NOT perfect, but he was nevertheless, *God's man*!

Verse 6—As a result of the people speaking against God and Moses, **God sent fiery serpents among the people. People were being bitten and ALL of those that were being bitten were dying.** (*We are not told how soon after they were bitten that they died, but all were dying!*)

Verse 7—So we see that the people came to Moses and confessed their sin and they asked Moses to pray to God for them that God would take away the *fiery serpents*. **Moses interceded on behalf of the children of Israel and God gave Moses a remedy!**

Verse 8— Here we see that the LORD told Moses to erect a *fiery serpent* and set it on a pole and tell the people to look on that serpent if they wanted to live!

Verse 9—We see here that Moses made a *serpent of brass*, and put it upon a pole. What is the significance of the serpent being of *brass*? *Brass* speaks of both *judgment* and *justice*! Jesus both bore our *judgment* and satisfied the *justice* of God on our behalf on the cross! (He is the “*propitiation*” or “*atonement*” or “*satisfaction*” for our sin!

We are not told how Moses made this “*serpent of brass*,” which the **LORD told him to make a “fiery serpent”** (i.e. One that was like the one biting the people! ) But we know Moses had to do it quickly to keep more people from dying. We are not told, but he could have killed one of the “*fiery serpents*” and then dipped it in brass or he could have killed it by dipping it in *brass* in order to make the *brazen serpent*!

In the same way **Jesus died by taking our sin!** The **JUDGMENT** He bore, was **OUR JUDGMENT** to satisfy God's **JUSTICE!** That's a further picture of what Jesus did on our behalf on the Cross of Calvary!

Those who obeyed God's Word by the mouth of Moses, lived!

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Jesus told Nicodemus that just as Moses *lifted up the serpent in the wilderness* as God's remedy for the people's sin against Him and from those *fiery serpent* bites of judgment, **so Jesus would be lifted up to be the remedy for sin and its deadly consequences!**

So, the message in Moses day to those who were bitten by a serpent was “*Look and live!*” They first had to believe the **Word of God delivered by the mouth of Moses the man of God that it was that simple!** (There were no snake bite kits distributed...no other instructions were given...it was as simple—“*Look and live!*”)

**How do we know who believed? ALL of those who OBEYED by LOOKING on the *fiery serpent* of brass, LIVED! It was that simple!**

**The message for the sinner today is still the same as it was for Nicodemus's day—“*Look and live!*” Look to the cross where Jesus Christ was lifted up to pay the price of mankind's sin, believe on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved and live!**

**In my almost 13 years of pastoring here at this Church there has been one constant that HAS NEVER CHANGED and MUST NEVER CHANGE! —that is THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST as given to us in the Word of God!**

**Peter touted the power of the Gospel of Christ in his preaching recorded in the book of Acts!**  
(*Acts 2:22-24, 32-33, 36-41; Acts 3:18-19; Acts 4:12*)

**Paul declared his confidence in the Gospel to the Church in Rome!**  
*Romans 1:16-17—“16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”*

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**Paul declared the Gospel to the Corinthian Church!**

*1 Corinthians 15:1-4—Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved...For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”*

**Paul warned the Galatian Church against changing the Gospel!**

**Galatians 1:6-9**—“6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

**Listen, if I or any other preacher stands in this pulpit and proclaims some DIFFERENT Gospel, just know that it is NOT ANOTHER Gospel! The word “Gospel” means “good news” and there can be no “good news” in something that offers you NO true remedy for death!**

**Conclusion**

*THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL WAS A TREE FORBIDDEN FOR MANKIND!*

And listen, we **ALL** are partakers of that tree, in Adam! You may not think that is fair, but you are on the losing end of your argument!

*Romans 5:12— “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: ”*

And because of man's disobedience by being partakers of that tree...

*THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS A TREE REQUIRED FOR MANKIND!*

*1 Corinthians 1:18—“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”*