

The Three Trees

Introduction.

- I. The most remarkable book in the world is the Bible.
 - A. It is a library of 66 books - 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books.
 - B. It was written by about 40 men over a period of about 1542 years. (1446 B.C. to A.D. 96).
 - C. It is the inspired word of God and tops the best seller list every year.
 - D. The Bible is God's book and equips us "for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:21).

2TI 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2TI 3:17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2PE 1:21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

- II. Giving a summation of its contents could be done in a very lengthy fashion or it can be done in a simple fashion.
 - A. One of the simplest ways to summarize this grand book is to discuss "The Three Trees."
 - B. The story of the Bible revolves around "The Three Trees."
- I. **The Tree Of Knowledge** - The first tree is "the tree of knowledge of good and evil"
 - A. This tree is mentioned in Genesis the 2nd chapter.
 - B. After God created man, He placed him in the garden of Eden.
 1. Here is what the Bible says. (Gen. 2:7-17).

7 Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. 8 And the Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. 9 And out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing 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. 10 Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. 11 The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 And the gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. 13 And the name of the second

river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. 14 And the name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. 15 Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die. "

2. Moses tells us here of the creation of the first man and woman and of them being placed in the beautiful garden of Eden. (1 Cor. 15:45, 47).

1CO 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. See Gen. 2:7. "Became" is in italics in the original Greek, and literally should be translated "The first man, Adam, a living soul." The last Adam [Christ] a life-giving spirit." In the case of Christ it implies a false teaching. Christ has always existed (Jn. 1:1-3), and He is the Spirit who created "all things." (Jn. 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15-17).

1CO 15:47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

- a. There were many kinds of trees in the garden of Eden as suggested by the words "every" and "any." (Gen. 2:9,16).

GEN 2:9 And out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow **every tree** that is pleasing 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.

GEN 2:16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From **any tree** of the garden you may eat freely;

- b. Adam and Eve were permitted to eat of "every" or "any" tree in the garden, but not "from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

- 1) This tree was "in the midst" of the garden. (Gen. 2:9).

GEN 2:9 And out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing 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.

- 2) The various trees were good for food. (Gen. 2:9).

- c. They were absolutely forbidden to eat of "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," lest they die. (Gen. 2:17).

- d. This was an actual tree in the garden that Adam and Eve were clearly warned not to eat of it. (Gen. 3:4).

C. Later Satan came to them in the garden and insisted they would not die if they ate of this forbidden tree.

1. Adam and Eve ate of the tree and sinned. (Gen. 3:6).

GEN 3:6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

- a. It is made very clear they committed sin when they ate of this forbidden tree.

b. Some have attempted to make their sin sexual intercourse, but this is utter foolishness.

c. God had commanded them to have children. (Gen. 1:28; 2:24).

GEN 1:28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

GEN 2:24 For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

d. See 1 Cor. 7:1-5; Matt. 19:4-6.

2. As a result of their action of eating of the forbidden tree, they sinned and were separated from God as sinners.

a. This was the first sin. (Rom. 5:12). It came into the world through Adam.

ROM 5:12 Therefore, just as **through one man sin entered into the world**, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned--

b. Not eating of the tree was the only revealed limitation placed on the father and mother of humanity.

c. God had made them creatures of choice, and they chose to break God's law.

3. They did not die physically that day, that is, the day they ate of the forbidden tree. (Gen. 2:17).

a. Adam lived a long life of 930 years. (Gen. 5:5).

GEN 5:5 So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

b. It is not known how long Eve lived.

c. She and Adam were 130 years old when Eve bore Seth. (Gen. 5:3,4). See "the sixth day" Gen.1:27-31.

GEN 5:3 When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.

GEN 5:4 Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters.

d. She did live long enough to have "other sons and daughters." (Gen. 5:3,4).

e. It is not clear if some of these children were born after Seth.

1) It is possible some were born after Seth, but in view of what is said of Sarah centuries later it does not seem probable that many were born in her advanced years.

2) Sarah was convinced she was past the age of child bearing at the age of 90 when she became pregnant with Isaac.

3) The birth of Isaac when she was 90 was a miraculous birth. (Gen. 17:17).

GEN 17:17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

4) Isaac was the only child of Sarah.

5) Abraham did have other sons after this through Keturah. (Gen. 25:1,2).

GEN 25:1 Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.

GEN 25:2 And she bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah.

a) Keturah only had the status of a concubine according to Genesis 25:6 and 1 Chronicles 1:32.

GEN 25:6 but **to the sons of his concubines**, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.

1CH 1:32 And the sons of Keturah, **Abraham's concubine**, whom she bore, were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan were Sheba and Dedan.

b) Sarah died at the age of 127. (Gen. 23:1, 2,19).

GEN 23:1 Now Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.

GEN 23:2 And Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

GEN 23:19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field at Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

c) This means Abraham was 137 when Sarah died since he was 10 years older than Sarah.

6) Abraham was then at least 137 years old when he had children through his concubine Keturah.

7) This makes Abraham quite old when he fathered these additional sons.

8) Apparently Abraham found new potency after the birth of Isaac. (Gen. 17:17; Rom. 4:19).

GEN 17:17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

ROM 4:19 And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

f. The fact there were many people on earth when Cain was punished for killing Abel indicates many children had already been born to Adam and Eve. (Gen. 4:14-17).

GEN 4:14 "Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Thy face I shall be hidden, and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, **and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me.**"

GEN 4:15 So the Lord said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord appointed a sign for Cain, lest anyone finding him should slay him.

GEN 4:16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

GEN 4:17 And Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son.

1) It is noteworthy that Cain fears he will be killed.

2) This refers to others who had been begotten by Adam and Eve or their children.

g. The Bible does not record Eve's death.

h. She is called "the mother of all living." (Gen. 3:20).

1) This simply means that all human beings derived their origin through Eve.

2) How the races developed is not revealed but they must have come about through genetic changes that occurred in some humans.

3) It is possible these genetic changes came into existence by genetic differences in Adam and Eve.

3. They died spiritually when they sinned and were separated from God as sinners.

4. Before their sin, they were in a state of innocence and complete sinlessness. (Gen. 3:11).

GEN 3:11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

a. They were as small children not having awareness of nakedness.

b. As God had earlier revealed, they could only sin by eating of the forbidden tree.

5. After their sin, they were sinners and stood in need of a Savior.

6. These sinners were driven from the garden of Eden less they partake of the tree of life in the garden and live forever. (Gen. 3:22). **The fall of man involved 3 steps.**

a. They heard a lie from Satan who is the "father of lies." (Jn. 8:44).

JOH 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

b. They believed the lie and obeyed the lie.

7. One author has suggested that Genesis 1 and 2 set forth man is perfection and innocence, but the last 1187 chapters set forth man's sin and need for redemption.

8. Just as Adam and Eve sinned, all of their accountable descendants, those knowing right from wrong, have also sinned and stand in need of a Savior.

9. Paul wrote these words in Romans the 3rd chapter. (Rom 3:9-23).

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; 11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; 12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one. " 13 "Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving," "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 paths, 17 And the path of peace have

they not known. " 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." 19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. 21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

10. Paul emphatically declares that all men (Jews and Gentiles) are sinners.
 - a. This sin began with the eating of “the tree of knowledge of good and evil” and was followed by every conceivable sin.
 - b. This sin was not and is not inherited, but occurs when each accountable person violates the law of God.
 - c. Men are not born sinners.
11. The wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23).
 - a. “Death,” in Romans 6:23. is not physical death.
 - b. All men must die even if they never sinned. (Eccles. 3:2; Heb. 9:27).
 - c. It is spiritual death. (Eph. 2:1,2).

EPH 2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

EPH 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

- d. We die physically because of Adam’s sin (1 Cor. 15:22), but no person will stand in the judgment because of Adam’s sin.
 - 1) It is person or soul that sins that dies spiritually. (Ezek. 18:20).

EZE 18:20 "**The person who sins will die.** The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.

- 2) Each person will give account for the things he/she has done. (Matt. 16:27; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

MAT 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.

ROM 14:12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

2CO 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

II. The Tree Of Calvary - This brings us to the tree of calvary.

- “Calvary” is from the Latin and comes from the Greek “kranion” [krah **nee** ahn] meaning “ skull.”
- The Greek is a translation or interpretation of the Hebrew “Golgotha” meaning “skull.”
- Matthew, Mark and John all use the word “Golgotha” to refer to the place where Christ was executed. (Matt. 27:33; Mk. 15:22; Jn. 19:17).

MAT 27:33 And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull,

MAR 15:22 And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull.

JOH 19:17 They took Jesus therefore, and He **went out**, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.

- “Calvary” only occurs one time in the New Testament. (Lk. 23:33, KJV.). NIV & NASB give the meaning of the Greek “kranion.” The place where Jesus was crucified was called “Skull.”
- “Calvary” refers to the place where Jesus Christ was crucified.
- It is not known why it was called the place of the “skull.”
- It may be because of the shape of the mound or its elevation.
- It is possible it was called by this name because it was a place of execution.
- Its exact location is not known and has no importance.
- We do know it was outside the city of Jerusalem evidently on a public road by the words “and those passing by.” (Mk. 15:29).

MAR 15:29 **And those passing by** were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,

- Executions were not allowed within the walls of the city. (Num. 15:35). See Acts 7:58.

NUM 15:35 Then the Lord said to Moses, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp."

ACT 7:58 And when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

- The book of Hebrews shows Jesus was crucified outside the city. (Heb. 13:11,12).

HEB 13:11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp.

HEB 13:12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

- See Matt. 27:33; Mk. 15:22; Lk. 23:33; Jn. 19:17.

ACT 5:30 "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross.

NASB

ACT 5:30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead-- whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.

NIV

A. The "cross" is sometimes referred to as "a tree."

B. The Greek, in this verse, literally has "xulon" [**zoo** lahn] which means "wood, tree, pole, stock, cross."

- The word "tree" is used several times in the scriptures to refer to the cross. (Acts 5:30; Gal. 3:13).
- Here are a few references to the cross of Jesus in the New Testament. (Lk. 23:26; Jn. 19:17, 19, 25, 31; Acts 2:23; 5:30; 10:39; 13:39; 1 Cor. 1:18).
 1. The cross had various shapes in ancient times, such as, a X shape.
 2. Most believe the cross of Jesus was a T-shaped or t-shaped cross near the ground.
 3. They placed above His head some kind of plaque with these words to mock Jesus. (Matt. 27:37; Mk. 15:26; Lk. 23:38; Jn. 19:19).

MAT 27:37 And they put up above His head the charge against Him which read, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

MAR 15:26 And the inscription of the charge against Him read, "THE KING OF THE JEWS."

LUK 23:38 Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

JOH 19:19 And Pilate wrote an inscription also, and put it on the cross. And it was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

4. The synoptic writers abbreviate the full statement, but John gives basically the full statement.

5. The full or total statement appears to be this, "**This Is Jesus Of Nazareth, The King Of The Jews.**"

C. There was no way man could be saved on his own. (Eph. 2:9).

1. There was no way he could regain what was lost in the garden of Eden on his own.
2. He was a sinner and was helpless to save himself.
3. Nothing a human could do would make atonement for sin.
4. Salvation comes by Jesus' vicarious death on the cross. (Isa. 53:4-6).
 - a. The blood of animals could not atone for sins. (Heb. 10:4).
 - b. The blood of a sinful man could not save.
 - c. No amount of education or money or fame could atone for sins.

D. **Man needed a Savior.**

1. This Savior could not be just anyone.
2. This Savior was chosen by God before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:4, 5).

EPH 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love

EPH 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

- a. God did not predestine the individuals who would be saved or lost.
 - b. He predestined that those saved would be saved through Jesus and His atoning blood.
 - c. God is not a respecter of persons and wants all to be saved. (Jn. 3:16; Acts 10:34,35; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
 - d. Men are free moral agents who can choose to do right or wrong, to accept or reject the will of God.
3. This Savior did not automatically become our Savior by coming into the world.
 4. It was necessary for Him to live a perfect (sinless) life and then to die on a “tree” (cross) for the sins of man.
 5. Our sins were laid on Jesus. (Isa. 53:4-6).
 - a. It is significant to point out that our sins were laid on Him.
 - b. He did not rub some of His goodness on us.

E. Moses wrote these words long before Christ’s death. (Deut. 21:23).

DEU 21:23 his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance.

1. Later Paul wrote. (Gal. 3:13).

GAL 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"--

2. He also wrote,

2CO 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

3. Yes, on the tree on Calvary’s Hill, Jesus became a curse for us. The Righteous One died in our places and because of His atoning sacrifice we who accept Christ are justified [made right] before God. (Isa. 53:4-6).
4. Jesus, on the tree on Calvary’s Hill, became our sin sacrifice and we are saved through the shedding of His precious blood. (Matt.26:28; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:22; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 1:5).

5. Jesus shed His precious blood that we might be cleansed of all our sins and might have eternal life with God.
6. It was His blood shed in His death that saves.
 - a. If this is not correct, it was not necessary for Jesus to die.
 - b. He had shed much blood when they scourged Him and drove the crown of thorns into His head.
 - c. Scourging basically mutilated the one receiving it. There would be great loss of blood.
7. It is also important to recognize that Jesus dying on the cross [the tree] was not an accident or surprise to either the Father or the Son.
 - a. The all-knowing Father knew exactly what would happen to His beloved Son.
 - b. Jesus frequently spoke in advance of His death on the cross. (Jn. 3:14-15; 12:32, 33; Matt. 16:21; 26:2).
 - c. It is utter non-sense to contend Jesus did not know what was going to happen to Him.
 - d. The fact He came to die on the cross for us should motivate us to love Him and live for Him. (1 Jn. 4:19).
 - e. John wrote "We love, because He first loved us." (1 Jn. 4:19).

III. **The Tree Of Life** - This brings us to the tree of life.

- A. This tree was first mentioned as being present in the garden of Eden. (Gen. 3:22,23). See Gen. 2:17.

GEN 3:22 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"--

GEN 3:23 therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.

1. Adam and Eve were driven from the garden lest they have access to the tree and eat and "live forever."
2. What happened to the tree after they were driven from the garden is not revealed.
3. It is most probable that after a time it was removed or ceased to exist in the garden.

- B. This tree is now present in heaven.

1. Jesus tells us that the "tree of life" is for the faithful. (Rev. 2:7).

REV 2:7 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.'

2. A careful examination of the book of Revelation reveals the "tree of life" in heaven is not a single tree, but is a kind of tree.

REV 22:1 And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of

the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3. Observe John said, “And on either side of the river was the tree of life.”
4. The righteous will have access to this tree and thus will live forever in heaven.

C. Heaven is the eternal home of the righteous.

1. This is stressed in the scriptures. (Jn. 3:16; 6:54; 10:27, 28; Matt. 25:46; Rom. 6:23; Tit. 1:2).
2. It is also emphasized in the last chapter of the Bible. (Rev. 22:3,4).

REV 22:3 And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; 4 and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever.

Conclusion.

- I. Yes, the Bible is summarized by the story of the “The Three Trees.”
- II. Adam and all his descendants were separated from “the tree of life” because Adam and Eve ate of “the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”
- III. We were separated from “the tree of life” through no fault of our own, but we are lost because of our own sins.
- IV. We can now have access to “the tree of life” by accepting the One who died on the tree on Calvary for us.

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