

Between Two Trees

Genesis 2:8-9,16

What does it mean to live as God created you to live? Do you believe that God's way is the best way to live? Are you convinced? In what areas of your life do you act like you are not convinced? In what areas of your life does your speech and behavior demonstrate that you are convinced God's way is the best way to live? It appears that God has placed us in a world and given us a choice between two destinations. The way that we choose appears to have consequences today as well as for eternity.

God planted a paradise for man to live in.



Genesis 2:8-9 states, "Now the LORD [Jehovah] God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed, and the LORD [Jehovah] God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground--trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (NIV, Literal translation added, Green, p.3). God created us to live in a paradise with all of our needs met including living in fellowship with him forever. But mankind had a choice to make.

God gave man freedom and responsibility.

Genesis 2:16. And the LORD [Jehovah] God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (NIV, Literal translation added, Green, p.3).

Jehovah encouraged man to freely partake of the tree of life and enjoy the benefits. The other tree could have been called the "Tree of Death" (for it was, for God said, "For when you eat of it you will surely die").

Brian Anderson states, "By calling the tree, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, God was requiring man to deny himself something (knowledge) which he had every reason to believe would be good for himself. Thus, God was testing man, calling him to obey not merely out of respect to his own self-interests, but out of reverence for God."

Perhaps obeying God could be called wisdom, as opposed to just knowledge of God's commands, teachings, and promises (c.f. Proverbs 3:13-20).

The Choice We Face

Rob Bell (2005) states, "Maybe the truth of the Adam and Eve story, maybe the power of the story, is not so much that it happened, but that it happens" (p.7).

We also seem to be continually faced with denying our own self-interests in light of a higher reward as we act in regard to reverence for God. We are called to deny ourselves in order to follow the Great Jehovah God. Jesus said to his disciples "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" Matthew 16:24.

In what way do you face the same choices as Adam and Eve? Figuratively, are there two trees in our midst that we must choose between? Is there a tree of life that God says to partake of and live, and is there a tree of knowledge (or tree of death) that we are warned to stay away from or we will surely die?

Are we still making the same kind of choice between life and death? Between righteousness and evil? Between Spirit and flesh? Between God and Satan? Are there areas of your life where you are still curious about evil? In what you look at or listen to perhaps?

In the middle of it all, God said there are two trees. One leads to life and one leads to death.... Is this still true?

In Deuteronomy 30:19-20, Jehovah God gave the Israelites instruction before they were to enter into the Promise Land, "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD [Jehovah] is your life" (NIV, emphasis added).

Once again God was about to bless his people, yet his people had to choose who they would serve and obey, and ultimately decide their fate. It was as if they were between the two trees—one led to life and the other led to death.

Jesus is Life



Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" John 6:35 (NIV). Jesus went on to say, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" John 6:51(NIV). By partaking of Christ, we receive everlasting life, just as Adam might have received everlasting life by partaking of the Tree of Life.

Apostle John stated, "This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" 1 John 5:11 (NIV).

Jesus warns us of the narrow and broad roads (Matthew 7:13-14). One path leads to death and one leads to life. Jesus goes on to say that few find or choose the road that leads to life. Perhaps we are still between the two trees and are faced with which tree will we partake of today. Only one produces fruit that leads to life.

What's Your Next Step?



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