

THREE SIGNIFICANT TREES

I love to view the wondrous beauty that surrounds us each day, to see the beautiful flowers and trees that reflect the magnificence of our Creator (Psa.19:1). The natural world around us is a constant reminder that there is a Supreme Ruler of this world (Rom.1:20). How anyone could glance around them at the splendor and grandeur that we see each day, and deduce that it just happened by chance, is beyond me. As I ponder the beauty of God's creation and the vast multitude of trees that I am able to see each day, I can't help but think of the significance of trees in the history of man. I am not speaking of the timber used to build houses, or the myriads of other products that are produced from trees. I speak of three trees in particular that have a very important role as they relate to man's spiritual well-being.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil. God, in His goodness, created man and woman, and placed them in the midst of paradise in the Garden of Eden. All that man needed God provided. There was ample food and shade to be found. God allowed Adam and Eve to eat of every tree of the Garden, save for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were prohibited from eating the fruit of it (Gen.2:16-17). So strong was the warning that evidently Adam added that Eve was not even to touch it lest she be tempted to partake of it (3:2-3). Satan soon tempted Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit, and she in turn enticed her husband to engage in sin with her. For their rebellion against God's commands, Adam and Eve saw shame in their nakedness (3:7), Eve was made to experience pain in childbirth (3:16), Adam was made to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow against new enemies [thorns and thistles] (3:17-19), and both were cast out of the Garden, separated from the tree of life (3:23-24). On this sad day Adam and Eve died both physically and spiritually, having ushered death into the world by means of sin. No longer would they be physically immortal, having been cut off from the tree of life. This day they began the process of physical death. But a far worse death began that day for them. Their souls were in jeopardy for their disobedience, but God intervened on their behalf so that they would not have to die spiritually and be eternally separated from their Creator and Provider.

The tree of the cross. On the day that Adam and Eve sinned, God put into motion His plan for the redemption of man. Through the seed of woman (Gen.3:15), which seed is Christ (Gal.3:), God enacted the process of reconciling man unto Himself. The atrocity of sin had to be met with an equally terrible price—the only begotten Son of God (Jn.3:16). Though the Bible pronounced a curse upon any who hung upon a tree [i.e., were crucified, and considered cursed because they suffered for their own wrongs] (Gal.3:13; Deut.21:23), Jesus willingly bore the ridicule, the agony, the shame and the suffering for our sins upon the tree of the cross (Heb.12:2). Having done no wrong (1 Pet.2:22), he became the scapegoat upon which the sins of the world were placed (2 Cor.5:21). The instrument of human cruelty, torture, shame and reproach became the means of deliverance from bondage and death for those who would put their faith and trust in him who was lifted up from the earth (Jn.12:32).

The tree of life. With the entrance of sin into the world, God separated man from the tree of life, transplanting it from its origin in the Garden of Eden into heaven. So long as man remains separated from the tree of life, he experiences death.

However, man can regain the life-giving nourishment of this tree upon entering into the realm of eternal day. In heaven, the faithful child of God will have access once again to this precious tree (Rev.2:7; 22:2, 14). Through man's transgression in dealing with the tree of knowledge, God sent His Son to the tree of the cross, so that we might once again have access to the tree of life.

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