

14. THE LORD'S SWORD

No one knows where the Garden of Eden was located. There are no maps. No landmarks. One Bible fact about The Garden is often overlooked: God actually placed two special trees in the garden. The first tree—the one everyone knows about—is called, the ***Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*** (*Genesis 2:9*). Satan slithered through this tree's branches to tempt Eve into eating the tree's fruit. We know what happened next.

A second tree gets almost no attention at all, though the Bible mentions it by name several times (*Genesis 2:9; Genesis 3:22; Genesis 3:24*). This tree is called, the ***Tree of Life***. Nothing important ever happens by The Tree of Life, which probably explains why it is so often overlooked. No one eats its fruit or talks to a serpent in its shade. It is possible that Adam and Eve did not even know where this tree was. Yet, dismissing this tree as unimportant would be a big mistake when we read the Bible's account. Read ***Genesis 3:22-24***.

Eating from The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil turned the lives of God's human creatures upside-down. In fact, it turned all of God's beautiful creation upside-down. Evil desires, hurtful words, and godless behaviors mingled with the humans' futile attempts to live in the light of God's goodness. The darlings of God's creation had become slaves to sin. Satan seemed to be in control. The sweet relationship between the human creatures and their Creator was over. The Garden was about to be closed. True, God had offered real hope by promising to send a Savior. But life outside of Eden's perimeter was not going to be anything like their garden experience.

The Trinity held another conference: "The humans have now become like us, knowing good and evil" (v. 22). The observation was filled with peril for the rebellious humans. Knowing good and evil presented a serious problem that had eternal consequences. God's view of good and evil and the humans' understanding of good and evil were at odds. God is good; he hates evil. Sinners love evil and hate God's goodness. If Adam and Eve remained in Eden, they would have access to The Tree of Life. Eating fruit from The Tree of Life would make them **immortal**. In their sinless state, living forever was a given. They would not—could not—die. But living forever in sin meant they would be separated from God's love for eternity ... That literally is hell.

In love, God intervened. Banishing Adam and Eve from the garden was not their punishment. God was saving them from staying in The Garden to look for The Tree of Life. God's love couldn't let that happen. God's decision was unpopular with his rebellious human children. Adam resisted. His will no longer aligned with God's. Moses says, God *drove* them out of the garden (v. 24). It was for their own good; so God's forceful action of banishing them from Eden should be understood as an act of his divine love.

When our ancestors finally exited their garden home, God placed an angel near the entrance. The angel brandished a flaming sword that blocked the way to The Tree of Life.

The angel's flaming sword is the Bible's first hint of the two great teachings of God's Word: **law** and **gospel**. On one hand, one edge of the flaming sword reminds humankind that God does not tolerate disobedience (law). On the other hand, the second edge represents a man who called himself, *The Way* (*John 14:6*). That person was Jesus. Jesus is the only *Way* to the tree that gives eternal life. He is the good news (gospel) that God's plan and promise to save us from our sin was fulfilled for us in his holy life, death, and resurrection. Over the course of several thousand years, that picture became our reality, as you and I look to Jesus for our eternal future in heaven.

END VIDEO. BEGIN CONVERSATIONS.

REMEMBER WHEN ...

Would you have left the Garden quietly, or would you have resisted God's command to leave?

WORD POWER: Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; Tree of Life; immortal; law; gospel

FROM THE TOUR

What probably would have happened if God had allow Adam and Eve to stay in the Garden?

LEARN MORE

Read *Hebrews 4:12-13*. How does God's law cut into a sinner's heart? How does the good

news of the gospel penetrate the heart of a repentant sinner?

Compare *Jeremiah 29:11* and *Romans 8:28*. How are they similar? How are they different?

What comfort can you take from both texts?

TAKE-AWAYS

Ask God to help each member of your family focus on Jesus, the only *Way* to eternal life in heaven.

Explain the effect that God's *law* has on our hearts. Explain how the message of God's *gospel* has affected your life.



Your word is a lamp for my
feet,
and a light on my path.

Psalms 119:105