



## E1. Q.1&2. Regarding the two Trees and Man

The man (Adam) was free to eat from any tree in the garden except the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, which was taboo. God made a woman (Eve) from a rib of the man to be a companion for the man. In Genesis 3, the man and the woman were seduced by the serpent (Satan) into eating the forbidden fruit, and they were expelled from the garden to prevent them from eating of the *tree of life*, and thus living forever. (Wikipedia, parentheses and italics mine)

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The above encyclopedia account very simplistically summaries the cataclysmic events in creation that had gone drastically wrong. However, there is a far greater and more ominous significance to this account than that portrayed here that turned light into darkness, innocence into sin, and life to death. From the glory of creation there was a sudden downward spiral into abysmal darkness for all the earth. As the Biblical account goes, Adam and Eve were placed into the Garden of Eden, a land of paradise, as its stewards. In the midst of the garden were two trees which were its centerpieces: the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, and the *Tree of Life*. Adam and Eve were told they may eat of any of the fruit of the garden but to never eat of the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*; for in the day they would eat of it they would surely die. In disobedience they both ate of the fruit of the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, a sin that infected every man, woman and child born in all the generations to follow, thereby, establishing the need for a savior to save man from death and separation from God.

Even this brief synopsis gives a most elementary account of events that took place. It would be as a story told to little children. They could understand with their innocent minds that a great evil took place and that they, and all mankind, need a savior, who is Jesus Christ. But, for the mature of thought, there lies in great depths an understanding of these events that reveals a foreboding cataclysm for all mankind on the one hand and a glorious rescue out of the jaws of sin and death to an eternal hope on the other. As the approach of towering black clouds foretell an ominous weather condition about to strike, the story of what really happened unveils the darkness that came upon the earth and all mankind.

Let's explore these events more closely, unveiling the truth of what happened in the Garden of Eden; considering both the natural and the spiritual realms. To do so there

needs to be laid a foundation of understanding that is to be built upon, a foundation of some key ideas and Biblical concepts. This introduction into Series 5, “What Really Happened in the Garden” is too much to be discussed in a single setting. Thus, it is divided into a three Episodes, Parts 1,2, and 3, each part set to answer specific questions. This Episode, Part 1, attempts to address the following questions:

1. What is the significance of the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* and the *Tree of Life*? Are they really trees with potent fruit or are they symbolic of something spiritual?
2. If man is body, spirit, and soul, how has the fall affected the total man?

**Question 1. What is the significance of the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, and the *Tree of Life*? Are they really trees with potent fruit or are they symbolic of something spiritual?**

Man is given a “free will,” meaning he has the freedom to make certain choices in life. Note, I said “freedom to make certain choices,” not “all choices.” One has the freedom to choose not to sit any longer but to get up and walk across the room, that is, under certain conditions. He has to remain in his seat if he is told to do so by someone in authority. If he still insists to do so, he must suffer the consequences for his or her actions. In today’s world *free will* is taken as a license to do whatever one wishes in defiance of consequences—and quite often escaping any consequences for his actions. Why, because today’s generation has this false sense of tolerance and forgiveness. They prefer to live in gray areas intentionally avoiding black and white issues.

And so, even if one has a free will, he is not entirely free to exercise it, or to do so without adverse consequences. For instance there may be physical constraints of being crippled or being in jail, or there may be prohibiting laws enforced by those in power. I am free to choose how fast to drive my car, but only up to the posted speed limit; to this I must obey or be fined. A free will is always exercised in compliance with these restrictions—and/or willingness to accept the consequences prohibiting such actions. Sometimes the consequences are devastating\_a significant loss of well-being.

So just what are these two trees and what do they symbolically represent, and how do they relate to the free will? Let’s begin with the premise that man is a three-part being: soul, body and spirit. This will be discussed in more detail below. But for now consider the **soul** to be the key component of who you are, meaning your mind with its intellect, memory, and reasoning center, your emotions, conscience, will, etc. This forms your character and personality. There are two realms that surround the soul, the physical and the spiritual realms. The physical is limited to things in time, space and matter and consists of all the tangible and visible universe, including all life on earth. The spiritual

realm is limitless, intangible and invisible, and is absent of time and space limitations; it consists of all things in the heavenly realm including God and the angels and the realm of Satan and demons.

Man has a **body** with senses, such as the ability to see, hear, smell, taste and feel; these sensing organs are necessary so his soul can relate to and interact with the physical realm. Man is also given a **spirit** with its own senses such as its intuition, discernment, and insight. These are necessary so his soul could relate to and interact with the spiritual realm. In addition, Adam was created with a **free will** to choose his core ideology, that is how he wants to develop and mature, to organize his life in determining how and to what degree to interact with his surrounding environments, and to find meaning to his life. The two trees represent two vastly different ideologies, determining one or the other invokes consequences, either ominous or glorious.

If he were to choose the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, he is choosing to focus his attention on using his soul to seek knowledge, understanding, and revelation through his body in the natural world, and decide for himself what is best or least desirable, what is good or evil, right or wrong, what to become, and what kind of character he wishes to have. He will be the master of his own fate in life, meaning he would have the power and responsibility to determine his own destiny through his own choices and actions using his senses, intellect, emotions, and personal affections

If, however, he were to choose to eat of the *Tree of Life*, he will then focus his attention on development through his spirit in seeking the will and purpose of God for his life and give, or yield himself to the moral righteousness of God and to grow up and mature in the image of God. He will not be the master of his own fate, but God would become the master of his fate, being that source of power and life and will that works in Adam to do and to will of God's own good pleasure.

The key element of deception Satan offered Eve was a promise of eternal life and being like God Himself, Gn. 3.4-5 reads, "*4Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. 5For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'*" Satan said the falsehood, "you will not surely die," but Eve heard and believed, "you will have everlasting life." Satan falsely said, "you will be like God, knowing good and evil," but Eve heard and believed the promise of being god-like, "you will be like God Himself in the largeness of your knowledge of everything good and evil, of everything occupying both the physical of all the universes and the spiritual dimension of the heavens of God and the underworld of Satan.

And so these two trees in the Garden are not tangible fruit trees, like an apple tree, but actually represents the choice of the individual's most fundamental decision in determining his course in life; and by this I mean to choose between living this life on earth utilizing all the intelligence, insight, and moral understanding of mankind gained

from his relationship with his natural environment, OR to have a spiritual relationship with God to guide him in making future life decisions. This is an either/or situation, although many “think” they live life in a gray area blending the two together.

In reality, Adam and Eve, in their walk of life, came to a “Y” in the road and had to make a choice of ideology, to eat of the “natural” tree of independent decision making and relying on their own intellect, emotions, and strength, OR to eat of the “spiritual” tree from which future “exercises of the will” will flow out from a Divine relationship. The former way is outward, visible and tangible, while the latter way is inward, intangible and invisible requiring an inward sensing. Before considering Adam and Eve’s fateful decision, let’s explore Question 2 first...

**Question 2. If man is body, spirit, and soul, how has the fall affected the total man?**

Gen. 2.7 *“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”*

1 Thes. 5.23 *“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Jot this important statement down mentally, and keep it for future reference, “man was, and is, created body, soul, and spirit to live on the earth, and the believer will eternally be body, soul, and spirit to live as such on the “new earth.” Let’s look more closely at Gen. 2.7:

*“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground,”* thus forming the “body” through which man could have a relationship and with the tangible world around him.

*“breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,”* forming man’s “spirit,” through which man could have a relationship and fellowship with the intangible and invisible spiritual world.

*“man became a living being,”* forming the soul of man, the key component of what forms the individual with thoughts, emotions, memory, conscience and free will; the soul seeking input and communication with the world through his body and input and communication from the spiritual world through his spirit.

Therefore Adam’s vital link to his entire natural world is through his body; he can see, hear, smell, taste and touch elements of this world, interacting with things and people. If the body dies, his soul continues on but he ceases to have this interaction with the natural world.

Adam's link to the non-tangible spiritual world, which includes God and the Kingdom of God, is through his spirit; here he is able to commune with God, angels, even Satan and demons of darkness. If the spirit is cut off from God, man becomes spiritually dead to God, but still receptive to the spiritual realm of darkness, the vast kingdom of Satan.

And this is exactly what happened. God cautioned Adam and Eve, as it is written, Gn. 2.17 *"but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall **surely die**."* It is interesting to note in this verse that both words, **surely** and **die** are the exact same Hebrew word, *muth*. A more literal translation would read, *"but from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you do not eat from it, for in the day of your eating from it—dying you die,"* thus indicating a double death—first of the spirit towards God, then of the body towards the world. This leaves the soul in an ominous condition, without a body, and a spirit dead to God but alive to Satan and his dark kingdom. This is not a good way to enter eternity.

Adam would first die spiritually under the guilt and power of sin—the sin of disobedience. Biblically, sin is considered any action, thought, or attitude that violates God's law and will; it strongly emphasizes the abhorrence of sin which causes a separation from a holy God. Rm. 12.9 urges believers to, *"**abhor** what is evil."* This word *"abhor"* conveys a strong sense of repulsion, an intense hatred and dislike and utter rejection of sin and unrighteousness. Even under the Law of Moses with its sacrifices and atonement for sin, Isaiah speaks the word of God to the nation of Judah, Isa. 59.2 *"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear."*

Oil will not mix with water, darkness cannot exist in light, and sin cannot exist in the presence of holiness. These are all diametrically opposed to one another. In addition, sin brings forth death, an unacceptable and rejected condition to a living God. To those in this condition God *"dwells in unapproachable light."* Unbelievers are without hope, subjected to a future world of sin, death and darkness. Thus the stage was set for Satan to exalt himself over all the world because all mankind also became defiled by this original sin of Adam, as it is written, Eph. 4.17-18 *"...as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."* What a terrible sentence...spiritual death, followed by physical death.

The earth is now the domain of Satan; his ambition to exalt himself and sit on the throne has not varied an iota. Satan flagrantly held this before Jesus in the hour of His temptation, as it is written, Mt. 4.8-9 *"the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9And he said to Him, 'All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.'" Jesus did not challenge*

him on the boast of having all the kingdoms of the world, but only said to him, “*You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.*”

This forethought must be kept in the minds of all believers, that, 1 Jn. 5.19 “*We know that we are of God, and **the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.***” This means that every corner of this earth, every nation, tribe and culture, is under the shadow of the devil and his domain. The only exception, the only presence of the Kingdom of God, in all the earth, is in His church; where believers of the church gather together, there is the Kingdom of God. Where the church and the believer is not, there is the kingdom of Satan. Today, according to 1 Pet. 5.8 “the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” He has never lost his original ambition, 2 Thes. 2.4 “*who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*” Satan was, and is a liar, deceiver, accuser, tempter, opposer and slanderer. Godly spiritual discernment reveals and makes plain to believers this insidious evil being.

The other tree in the Garden, the *Tree of Life*, does not produce magical fruit that if one eats of it he will live forever. No, *life* is much more than mere *vitality*, the ability to be active with lots of energy. To have *life* is first of all is to have a *nature*, an inherent character of the soul that gives identity to the person. Secondly, relationships are a key factor to *life*, because our souls thrive in a relationship with God, and with others, and of course with our environment, whether natural or spiritual. Jesus said, Jn. 10.10 “*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*” The *abundant life* of which He speaks does not refer to an augmented soul life he is born with, but the life of which He speaks is “*zoe*” life, Divine life, eternal life, a life in which one is born again. Yes Christ is the *Tree of Life*.

And so, as a result of Adam’s sin, he and all mankind to follow, born of his seed, needs a savior to regenerate his spirit to reconcile man back to God. Every “unsaved” soul in the entire world wishes for salvation of some kind, whether it be in a savior or in their own good deeds. But the “saved” soul, those who are “in Christ Jesus” confidently look back in life to their regeneration in Christ, and then forward again to the promise of the resurrection of his body. To these souls sin and death have no power over them. But it is written of the believer, Rm. 8.2 “*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*” (See also Rm. 5.17, 1 Cor. 15.57)

***Freedom from the law of sin and death.*** The power of sin is the corrupt element in our fallen nature, acting upon our souls as a law or force to do evil; to transgress the law and will of God. The result of this reign of sin is death, first spiritual death, then physical death. If unbroken, it is the pledge of eternal death, whereas, to be free from it is life eternal.



### S5.E1. Questions for Discussion

1. Man is said to have a “free will.” What does this mean? How free is it? Are there any consequences in exercising it?
2. Explain the relationship between man’s soul to his body and soul. What are their purpose? How do they function? What effect does sin have on them?
3. What is the effect of the two trees in the Garden, the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* and the *Tree of Life* on man (beginning with Adam) exercising his free will to form his ideology of life--how he desires to acquire knowledge, the way to live his life, to mature physically and intellectually, how he wants to interact with both his natural and spiritual environments and to find meaning to life?
4. Lying is a chief universal sin in that it stands alone in deceiving one another of certain truths as well as being a partner of all other sins, such as a murderer denies murdering, a homosexual denies being gay, etc. How did Satan artfully employ lying and deception in the Garden? What were his motives for lying? How was Eve (and Adam) deceived?
5. Did man (Adam and Eve) actually die when they committed the sin of disobedience? Explain. What are the long term implications of this death down through the ages? How does it affect you, today?
6. Discuss Satan: his character, goals and ultimate objectives. To what extent does he have influence in the earth? Where and how extensive is his kingdom, compared to the Kingdom of God?
7. What really is the *Tree of Life*” Explain.