

Knowing The Tree!



By Philip E. Busby

Just a while back, I heard a preacher talking about the idea of what the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil really was. He was propagating the idea that the Tree did not actually have any kind of miraculous properties to it, but that the Tree was simply a normal tree in which God pointed to specifically and told them not to eat of. This philosophy says that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil taught Adam and Eve the difference between good and evil, in that, good was to leave the Tree alone; and evil was to disobey God by eating from it. It is to say that the Tree was God's way of teaching them right from wrong. Therefore, the first sin changed nothing more than the fact that for the first time, man had disobeyed God. This brings up so many issues that I hardly know where to start!

If there was nothing particularly special about the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, then one has to ask why Adam and Eve, after taking of the Tree, suddenly understood that they were naked? Not only did they realize they were naked, they realized they needed to do something about it, and were compelled to sew fig leaves together in an attempt to cover themselves. Are we to believe that simple guilt caused them to begin to realize things like this?

If we are going to believe this Tree was nothing more than an object lesson, then shouldn't we believe that the Tree of Life had no special power as well? Is it

called the Tree of Life because God arbitrarily decided to call it that? And if that is the case, then why did God go to such lengths to keep man from eating from it after the fall? (Gen. 3:22-24)

When you say the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was just a tree, you are saying that God was not really giving man a chance to change his world and go at it for himself: a chance to reach out and take something more than he had been given at creation. God gave man a free will, and a chance to exercise that will. He gave us the choice between an innocent life of growing as he taught us, or the chance to obtain the knowledge and see what we could do ourselves. God did not just pick a tree and say not to eat of it because He decided to put that particular stipulation on us. He said not to eat of it because He knew that we could not handle the responsibility that would come with the knowledge! Because man could not handle this knowledge, he would be separated from God and His free gift to them - The Tree of Life!

Simply stated, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was called that because it had the power to instill exactly that: knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. It gave them not only the simple knowledge that things like killing and stealing are wrong, but a sense of responsibility to do something about the things in their lives that might affect others. They realized they were naked, and that might cause others to fall into temptation. "Because I was naked," is why they told God they hid from Him. God points out to them that the fact they are bothered by their nudity is a sign they had been given this knowledge from somewhere, and there was only one source for that kind of knowledge, the Tree He had told them not to eat of! (Gen. 3:10-11)

Once again, we have an example of another philosophy raised by men who are so carnal minded, (Rom. 8:1-8) they can't believe in anything spiritual. These men are always trying to boil things down to tell us the Bible is nothing more than physical events that can be explained by carnal thoughts. To many, this is very comforting! The idea that there is a simple physical explanation for every miraculous event in the Bible. Beware of these teachers, who come to you and say they are of God; one day they have you believing that there was nothing special about the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; and the next, they have you believing that there was nothing special about the shed blood of Jesus Christ! As you think on this, remember another scripture which says, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."! Matthew 7:16