

“THE GARDEN OF EDEN”

Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17

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INTRODUCTION

“God is so good!” God gave the first man everything that he needed for healthiness, happiness, and spiritual prosperity; and yet, man was not satisfied and rebelled against God’s holiness and goodness. Even though we are born fallen, yet we also personally rebel against the goodness of God.

As a believer in Christ, God gives you every delight that you need for complete joy and satisfaction.

YOU MUST BE THANKFUL TO YOUR CREATOR AND OBEY HIM COMPLETELY.

The *whole emphasis in the passage in on God’s provision and love for man. There is no excuse for man’s rebellion.*

I. THE PLANTING OF THE GARDEN (8-9)

A. The Place of the Garden (8)

- “Eden means “delight”.
- God’s tender care and personal concern is shown in the verb “planted”—yet the activity is **creative**.
- “Garden means “enclosure”—i.e. a sheltered, protected spot; place of care & protection.

B. The Provision of the Garden (9)

- To show that this is not an account of creation, only the trees are mentioned here, since they play a vital role in the temptation scene.
- Obviously they already bore fruit.

1. The Number of Trees: “every tree—lit. “The whole of trees”

2. The Quality of the trees: “pleasing to the sight”—attractive to man; “good for food”
*There was an infinite variety for man’s pleasure and well-being, **even the Tree of Life!***

In this passage we see the model of parental care—God for His created son:

- a. Man is sheltered—but not smothered.
- b. Provision made for man’s aesthetic needs [beautiful to his sight], his physical needs [good for food], and his spiritual needs [the Tree of Life].
- c. Discoveries and encounters awaited man in order to build his powers of discernment, choice, etc.: e.g. *naming of the animals, getting a wife, temptation of the tree*.
- d. Work is given for the good of man’s body and mind (15).

3. Two Special Trees:

a. The Tree of Life

- Purpose: to confirm man in life; no more possibility of death (cf. 3:22)
- Man could have eaten from it if he had won victory over the first temptation.

b. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

- The phrase is one idea: knowing both good and evil; having moral discernment between the two.

- Involved is the *whole range of the moral concept and the ethical contrast between the two*.
- Not to “know good and evil” is a sign of immaturity and infancy (Dt. 1:39) or senility of old age (II Sam. 19:35).
- To have such knowledge is a necessary gift for a king (I K. 3:9), is the wisdom of angels (II Sam. 14:17), and also of God Himself (Gen. 3:5, 22).
- Man needed full moral development of the freedom of choice.

WHAT THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE WAS NOT:

- 1) Experience of good and bad experiences
 - 2) Knowledge of everything—only God has omniscience (3:22)
 - 3) Sexual awakening—God instituted marriage; He did not forbid sex! (2:18-25). Besides, God does not have sex relations! Yet, He had the knowledge referred to (3:22).
 - 4) Poisonous; nor did the Tree of Life contain some kind of miraculous cure
 - Man’s life is rooted in his spiritual nature.
 - Man’s life of immortality can only come through the Word of God or through a special operation of the Spirit of God.
- c. These trees were Ordinances; cf. Baptism and Lord’s Supper; earthly things become the vehicles of divine powers.
- By exercising his freedom to do God’s will, he would have gained full development of the freedom of a deliberate and self-conscious choice of good.
 - Then, he could have eaten of the Tree of Life and have been confirmed in life.
 - **But, man learned about evil in the wrong way—by experiencing it!**
- d. These trees were “in the midst of the garden”—3:3 of Tree of Good and Evil. There was a sort of Sanctuary where God’s presence was.

II. THE PLACING OF MAN IN THE GARDEN (8, 15)

- A. Man created outside the garden, then put into it.
- B. God wanted man to be aware of the distinction between the garden and the land outside; he could understand God’s great goodness.
- C. The verb “put” does not merely mean to place him there; it also stresses the life of repose, rest, in fulfillment of His will.

III. THE POSITION—RESPONSIBILITIES—OF MAN IN THE GARDEN (15)

The **ideal** state is **not a workless state**; man had responsibility and had work to do!

Even in Heaven, “His servants shall serve Him” (Rev. 22:3).

- A. Dress it—i.e. “till, cultivate”; the literal meaning is “**to serve**” it.
- B. Keep it—literally “watch” or “guard” it; here the idea is to “have charge of, to look after.”

IV. THE PRECEPT—COMMANDMENT—OF GOD (16-17)

- A. Indications of God’s Mercy
 1. Only one precept—easily remembered
 2. Not grievous—only one tree prohibited;
 3. Man had a **broad permission**; he could eat of any tree of the garden—**FREELY**.

- a. Note that he did not say “every” lest it sound like permission for gluttony.
- b. “Freely” is the rendering of “eating you may eat”.
- c. One strong prohibition—“you surely shall not eat”
- 4. The Best possible moral test—a bare word
 - a. The choice had to be made for the sake of love for God alone, not because of the intrinsic wicked quality of the action—eating fruit—pure delight in obedience.
 - b. The tree represented the alternative to discipleship—i.e. to be **self-made, wresting one’s knowledge, satisfactions, and values from the created world in defiance of the Creator.**
- B. The Threat of Punishment
 - 1. The Time of punishment—“in the day”—instantaneous occurrence of penalty.
 - 2. The Certainty of punishment—“surely die”—literally “**dying you shall die.**”
 - 3. Cf. the freedom to eat—“eating you may eat”!

CONCLUSION

Later when man disobeyed and sinned, did God slacken His punishment? NO! God is not like a rash parent!

Man immediately died spiritually and was separated from God

He was also cast out of the garden.

His body also became mortal.

God gave man every opportunity, placed him in an amazing environment, and gave him ennobling responsibilities. He also made him morally accountable. Man rejected the amazing **goodness of God.**

As a believer, do you pass similar tests that He gives you today?

YOU MUST BE THANKFUL TO YOUR CREATOR AND OBEY HIM COMPLETELY.

Now, the Tree of Life is again available in the Paradise of God (Rev. 2:7)

John 14:6 shows that Jesus is the way!