

# THE TALE OF TWO TREES: FROM DEFEAT TO GLORIOUS VICTORY

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## NARRATOR

In this story we invite you to take a long view of Scripture. In our devotional study of Scripture, we tend to become immersed in the details, and we perhaps fail to recognize and properly reflect upon the big story, the overarching message, which is...

The Bible is the story of the Infinite Personal God manifesting his glory through his lavishly gracious acts of creating, providentially caring for, and redeeming a community of saints, a family of servant kings, who are being conformed to the image of his Son.



## Biblical Narrative

From the language of the Apostle Paul in the epistle to the Romans, it is clear that God has lifted two tree events out of time and imparted to them timeless significance. The first is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil of the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Genesis, and the second is the Roman cross on which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was crucified. On account of what happened at the first Tree, all mankind came under bondage to evil, sin, and death. On account of what happened at the second Tree, all mankind has gained access to release from that bondage.

Associated with the two Trees are two Men, two Adams. The First Man was formed from the dust of the ground; he is the man of the dust. The Second Man came down from above; he is the life-giving Spirit. By virtue of our natural birth, all of us are born into the family of the First Man, the first Adam. However, by virtue of a second birth, a spiritual birth, we can be reborn into the family of the Second Man, who is also called the last Adam. Everyone is in either of these two families, either that of the First Man or that of the Second Man. The First Man and his entire family is subject to bondage to evil, sin, and death. The Second Man and his entire family has been released from that bondage. <sup>1</sup>

So we invite you now to listen carefully as we share with you the *Tale of Two Trees*. Our story takes the form of a conversation between God the Father and God the Son. As we introduce God the Father, we will use the name of God employed by Moses in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Genesis, which is Yahweh Elohim. Yahweh is God's personal covenant name, and Elohim is an appellative name or title that signifies God's transcendence – he is the God of gods. Therefore, Yahweh Elohim is the Infinite Personal God. As we introduce God the Son, we will use the name Logos employed by the Apostle John in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of his gospel. This is another appellative name or title which signifies the fact that Jesus Christ is the visible representation of the Infinite Personal God.

In our enactment of the *Tale of Two Trees*, motion and body language cues will be displayed on the screen. We trust that these will enhance your visualization of the story as it unfolds.

### **FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

On the first day of creation, I, Yahweh Elohim, have already existed for an eternity. I have taken endless delight in my own glory.

### **SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

On the first day of creation, I, the Logos, was with you, Father. In fact, I am one with you, and you are one with me.

Our power is infinite. We give definition to reality, truth, and existence.

Our knowledge is infinite. We know past, present, and future perfectly.

We are the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending.

We are perfect, and in us is perfect order. Our love and compassion are without limits. We are full of grace, which combines our self-sacrificing and unconditional love, our absolute truth, and our uncompromising holiness. And we yearn to place our grace on display.

### **FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

My Son, let us create the heavens and earth. Let us make Man in our likeness. We will make him to be capable of enjoying fellowship with us, and to derive his life from us. We will provide for him all kinds of plants and animals for his enjoyment. And we will create for him a completer, a Woman for his companionship and to be his suitable helper in face-to-face relationship.

The Man and the Woman will be responsible for our creation and they will oversee it. We will place them in a beautiful garden with every kind of fruit. In this garden they will be able to choose fellowship with us, which is life, or rejection of that fellowship through disobedience, which is death.

In the garden you are to place the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Warn them that if they eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they will surely die.

My Son, knowing the craftiness of the evil one, Lucifer, he will attempt to destroy the work of our hands, and he will deceive the Man and the Woman into disobedience.

In fact, I see an entire race of sinful people spreading throughout the whole earth. None is righteous, and none will seek us; each will turn to his own way, and each will worship the work of his own hands.

They will surely die. First they will die spiritually; then their bodies will die and decay, returning to the dust of the ground from which you made them; and finally, they will die eternally, lost in separation from us.

Yet it is my desire to save them from eternal death, thereby putting our glorious grace on display.

We will need to buy them back from the evil one by means of a ransom. Son, will you pay the price with your life? May I lay upon you the sins of this wicked race? By this means sin will not go unpunished, and our absolute righteousness and justice will be vindicated; yet we will redeem a people unto ourselves, and our glorious grace will be manifested.

## **SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

Yes, Father, I will. And it will bring great joy to my heart for you to receive glory and honor in this way.

[The Son walks to the earth.]

Let there be light.

Let there be a separation between the waters called sky.

Let the dry lands and the seas appear. Let the land bear vegetation.

Let there be a sun to rule the day and a moon to rule the night.

Let there be creatures in the sea.

Let there be creatures on the land and birds in the air.

Father, let us make man in our likeness, spirit soul, and body.

[The Son forms man, breathes into him the breath of life, then speaks to him.]

Adam come forth!

This earth is for you to enjoy. This garden is for you. Take care of it and the animals.

[The Son returns and faces the Father.]

Father, it's beautiful! Everything brings glory to your name!

**FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

Yes, Son, it is beautiful. I am very pleased. But it is not good that man should live alone.

**SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

I will make a helper for him.

[The Son returns to the man.]

Adam, you may not understand what I am about to do, but trust me.

[The Son puts the man to sleep.]

Eve, come forth! Adam, wake up!

**NARRATOR**

When the Man opens his eyes and beholds his wife, he exclaims...

“Wow! This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh! She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man.”

**SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

I join the two of you together in Holy Matrimony. You shall be one flesh. What God has joined together let not man separate. Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over all the creatures that I have created for you. These trees will provide food for you.

But remember, you **MUST NOT** eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for if you do, you will surely die!

[The Son returns to the Father.]

**FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

This is so good my Son, perfect and complete in every way. I am very pleased.

**SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

It brings me great joy to share fellowship with the Man. He, like us, is so capable of love, and he enjoys the earth so much.

The woman is so perfect for the man. They work together in such harmony.

**FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

But look, just as we expected. Lucifer is in the garden! He has deceived the woman and they have both eaten the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Go, my Son. Find them, and remove them from the garden so that they will not eat from the Tree of Life and live forever in their fallen state.

**SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

[The Son returns to the earth to search for the Man.]

Adam, where are you? Why are you hiding from me? Have you eaten from the tree which I sternly warned you about?

Woman, because of your falling prey to the Serpent's deception, you will have great pain in childbirth. Your desire will be to rule over your husband, but he will rule over you.

Adam, because you disobeyed me, the very ground on which you walk will be cursed. Only through painful toil and by the sweat of your brow you will scratch an existence from the soil. Thorns and thistles will impede your efforts, and eventually you will return to the dust of the ground from which I made you.

Serpent, you are indeed cursed. You will crawl on your belly and eat dust all your life. There will be enmity between you and the Woman, and between your seed and hers. You will bruise his heel, but he will crush your head.

[The Son slaughters two animals.]

Adam and Eve, I am killing these two animals and spilling their blood for you. This death was meant for you. These animals are dying so that you might live and cover your shame. Apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

Now, leave the garden and never return! Our fellowship cannot be the same.

[The Son returns to the Father.]

**FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

Sin has taken hold of the people. Wickedness and evil is multiplying. What was once so beautiful is now so ugly. It grieves me that we have created man. The race has become polluted, and I have determined that we must destroy mankind.

**SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

Father, there is one who believes in us and who seeks our face. Noah and his family still walk in our way.

**FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

Therefore we will destroy the earth with water, yet save Noah and his family in an ark of safety. This ark will be very much like you, my Son. You will provide an ark of safety for those who have placed their trust in us and who walk in our way. They will be saved from the outpouring of our wrath at the end time.

**SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

Let it be as you have determined, Father.

[Pause. The Son bows his head in a display of sadness.]

Look, the people have multiplied through Noah's family. They remain oppressed by sin and rebellion. If they could only know us and walk in our way as they did in the beginning.

**FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

Abraham hears our voice and walks in our way. Through him we will bring into being a special nation – a nation through which we will reveal ourselves to all the nations of the world. This will take place first through a perfect Law, which they will be unable to obey. Then you, my Son, will clothe yourself in human flesh to live among them, perfectly fulfilling the Law. By this means, you will place on display what the way of Yahweh looks like. But then you will give yourself as an atoning sacrifice for their sin. Thus, you will be

the Seed of the Woman of whom you spoke in the Garden. Whereas the Serpent will bruise your heel, you will once for all crush his head. By means of your death, you will deliver all those who, through fear of death, are subject to lifelong slavery. Through your life and ministry, and especially through your atoning death, you will be the radiance of our glory and the express representation of our personality.

**SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

[The Son addresses himself to the earth.]

Issac, Jacob, Judah, Boaz, David. You will be our promise to Abraham. I, the Son of God, will become flesh through the family line of King David.

**FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

Just as sin entered the world through the First Man, Adam, and so death came to all, our gift of grace through you, my Son, as the Second Man will overflow to many. Just as sin resulted in death, so our grace through our gift of righteousness will result in eternal life.

**SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

[The Son kneels with his head bowed. Then he rises, looks at his arms and hands, and feels his body.]

Father, sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.

I can touch people. They are like sheep without a shepherd. I must teach them our way and that we are able to meet their deepest need.

They don't seem to understand. They want me to conquer the Romans and establish an earthly kingdom. The teachers of the Law are simply whitewashed tombs. They don't know us, they don't walk in our way, and they have led many astray.

**FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

**SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

Father, I have chosen twelve men to help me preach the gospel of the kingdom. They are ready to conquer the world for us, but they need our direction through your Spirit.

I have now had my last meal with them, Father. I have explained our new covenant in my blood, but they seem perplexed about my impending death. I empathize with their fear. Please guard them by your Spirit, Father, so that none will be lost except the son of perdition, who is my betrayer.

[The Son kneels in agonizing prayer.]

Father, I am in anguish because you and I are about to be separated. I am in anguish to the point of death over the prospect of becoming utterly corrupt and full of iniquity in your sight, Father. If there is any way, Father, let this cup pass from me. But may your will be done, not mine.

[The Son rises. He raises his hand in a direction away from the Father. His speech increases in intensity.]

An armed band is coming. One of my twelve is about to betray me. I am being convicted of false charges. They don't know who I am. My friends have left me, and I am alone with my enemies!

They are beating me. They are driving nails through my hands and feet. I am being nailed to a cross, a tree. I am being suspended between heaven and earth on a tree. Yes, a tree! A tree that will reverse the death curse that came from The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

### **FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

My Son, we determined in the counsels of eternity that I would lay upon you the iniquity of all mankind. When I do, I will turn my back upon you, and you will be utterly alone. Then you will experience the equivalent of eternal hell for the entire race of the First Man, Adam. But remember this: I will not leave your soul in hell, nor will I allow you to see corruption in the grave.

You, being in the very nature of God, did not consider your equality with me something to be grasped and held onto all costs, but rather you utterly emptied yourself, taking on the form of a bond servant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, you have humbled yourself to the extreme, becoming obedient to the point of death – even such a death as that on a tree. For it is written, “cursed are those who hang on a tree.”

You are being despised and rejected by men, you are a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Like one from whom men hide their faces, you are despised, and they esteem you not. You are being pierced through because of their transgressions, and you are being

crushed on account of their iniquities; the chastening that is for their well being is falling upon you, and by your scourging they will be made whole.

[The Father lays his hand on the Son's shoulder.]

I lay upon you the iniquity of them all.

[The Father bows his head, displaying the extreme pain of separation, and turns his face away from the Son.]

## **SECOND READER – GOD THE SON**

[The Son displays the extreme anguish of separation and screams...]

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel.

[Pause for transition. The Son displays increasing weakness because of approaching death.]

But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: "He trusts in Yahweh; let Yahweh rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."

Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast. From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near, and there is no one to help. Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.

They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. But you, O Yahweh, be not far off; O my strength, come quickly to help me.

Father, please forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.

Yet in all my agony, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you allow your Holy One to see decay.

## **FIRST READER – GOD THE FATHER**

You were oppressed and afflicted, yet you did not open your mouth; you were led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so you did not open your mouth.

By oppression and judgment you were taken away. And who can speak of your descendants? For you were cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people you were stricken.

Though you had done no violence, nor was any deceit in your mouth, men assigned you a grave with the wicked; however you were actually with the rich in your death.

Yet it was my will to crush you and cause you to suffer; and though I make you like a guilt offering, I will see your offspring and prolong your days, and my will shall prosper in your hand. By your knowledge as my righteous servant, you have justified many, and you have borne their iniquities.

Therefore, because you poured out your life unto death, and you were numbered with the transgressors, I will assign you a portion among the great, and you will divide the spoils with the strong. After the suffering of your soul, you shall see the light of life and be satisfied.

Moreover, on account of your supreme act of self-emptying, I will exalt you to the very highest place and rank, and confer upon you THE NAME that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow – of those in heaven, of those upon the earth, and of those beneath the earth – and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is Yahweh, to the glory of God the Father.

## **NARRATOR AND TWO READERS IN UNISON**

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, and who redeemed us unto God by His blood, and made us a kingdom of priests unto our God, to receive blessing and glory and honor and might and power and riches and strength and wisdom.

Amen!

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1. The Apostle Paul designates the Second Man as the last Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:45. What is the implication of this designation? I assert that it is this: Jesus Christ, through his death, has brought to an end – a terminus – the family line of the first Adam. In fact, I believe we can assert that the family line of the first Adam is extinct in the eyes of God. In effect, it no longer exists. All who insist upon remaining in the family of the first Adam are destined to suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of Yahweh and from the glory of his might [2 Thessalonians 1:9]. Thus, the fact that Jesus Christ is not only the Second Man but also the last Adam intensifies the life-critical importance of our facilitating the transfer of persons from the family line of the First Man into the family line of the Second Man.