

The Significance of a Tree
David Meek

In the beginning there was a tree. It was created in the blink of an eye, yet in possessed the stature of one that had stood for innumerable centuries. Its branches formed a labyrinth that towered over all of the other trees, and its roots teemed through the soil. Though the entire garden radiated beauty, this particular tree possessed the greatest splendor and power of all. This lone tree presented man with an opportunity of choice: the choice to obey or the choice to disobey, perish and end what was so marvelously begun.

There was a disingenuous serpent who lurked beneath the vast shadow of the leaves. He approached his victim, the first mother, as she passed beneath the great tree of forbidden fruit, and coaxed her into tasting of its excellence. She consumed the fruit quickly and invited her husband to join her. Filled with lust, they ravished all of the fruit within arm's reach. Then, the before-happy couple realized the meaning of sin and its consequence of mortality, and the pair fled to the woods where they awaited their sentence of death.

* * *

“Timber!” the Jewish workman yelled as the crew hewed down an ancient tree. It fell with a bang that could be felt for miles, and the men hovered over the remaining stump. The crowd was awed by the thousands of exposed rings that measured the tree's life.

“Who is this man to call himself the King of the Jews anyway?” one crewman questioned as the rest joined in with wild laughter and mockery. And so they continued throughout the afternoon with countless puns and jibes as they cleaved the colossal tree trunk.

“Let's see him lift this one!” another roared as a massive plank fell to the earth. The cross was fashioned at the site where the martyr would be brought to bear the load alone and carry it to His crucifixion. The very next day the rood met its barer, and the two were physically joined. The Jews scorned and spat upon Him as He walked through the streets; they laughed hysterically when He stumbled and fell. Nevertheless, He carried the toothed, splinter-filled timber up the hill of Golgotha where more disparagement and ridicule anticipated His coming. It was there, on Mount Calvary, that the tree was again “planted” for the world to watch and laugh.

It was there that a tree, the door by which sin entered the world, held the Lord, Jesus Christ so that sin might leave the world. And this tree also put forward an opportunity of choice for man: the choice of obedience or disobedience, because after six grueling hours of suffering Jesus died on that cross.

And in the beginning there was a tree.