

Christmas Before Jesus Part 1 *Problem with a Tree*
Message to Conversation Guide

Genesis 3:1-24

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, **‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’**”
2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” 4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” 11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” 12 **The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”** 13 **Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”** The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” 14 **So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,**

“Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly

and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

**15 And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.”**

16 To the woman he said,

“I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;
with painful labor you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you.” (Also see **Ge. 3:17-20**)

Discussion Questions

1. Many people get ready for Christmas early. God, in the OT, prepared for Christmas early as well giving many prophetic signposts of the coming of the Messiah. Read and discuss the verse below:

Isaiah 42:9

*9 See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; **before they spring into being I announce them to you.** NIV*

2. *The Lord* made the trees in the garden both beautiful and good for food. Discuss that man has been created with the capacity to appreciate beauty.

“Beauty matters, dare I say, almost as much as spirituality and justice.” N.T. Wright

3. What is the difference between a sin and a mistake? How did the serpent try to undermine God’s authority in the life of Adam and Eve? (See **Proverbs 17:11**)

“Rebellion against God’s authority was humanity’s first sin (Genesis 3) and continues to be our downfall. Our sinful natures do not want to bow to the authority of another, even God. We want to be our own bosses, and that rebellion in the human heart is the root of all sin (Romans 3:23).

“Sin is not weakness, it is a disease; it is red-handed rebellion against God and the magnitude of that rebellion is expressed by Calvary’s cross.” Oswald Chambers

4. **Genesis 3:15** says that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. With that in mind what was the significance of Jesus being born of a woman?

Gal. 4:4

*4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, **born of a woman**, born under the law, NIV (See **Romans 16:20**)*

5. How is the hostility between the serpent’s seed seen in the Christmas story involving Herod the Great and the babies of Bethlehem? (See **Matthew 2:1-18, Rev. 12:1-6, Ge. 37:3-11**)
6. In light of Adam and Eve sinning with a tree and its fruit what is the significance of Jesus dying on a tree? (See **Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29, Deut. 21:22-23, Gal. 3:13**)