

## Christmas Trees

**Introduction:** Martin Luther was the first to use Christmas trees to decorate his church. He was inspired by reading Isaiah 60. The trees were to communicate to the people in his day that Christ has come as the Light of the world to bring everlasting life to all who would believe.

Trees are related to the Christmas story. Note three trees in the Bible that illustrate three truths related to the gospel and Christmas:

### I. The tree in the garden revealed man's pride and brought separation from God Genesis 3

In the midst of the garden of Eden God placed a tree with the only prohibition given to Adam (2:15-17). This tree was a test of Adam's love and obedience.

In Genesis 3 evil is introduced = not by God but by Satan. He caused Adam & Eve to doubt God's Word and question God's love. Adam & Eve ate from the tree and immediately lost their innocence. They also forfeited their fellowship with God and felt fear (3:8-9).

Before God expelled them from the garden He provided a covering for them with animal skins. God's penalty of death was diverted from Adam & Eve to an animal that died in their place. God then gave them a promise (3:15) related to the virgin birth of Christ and His suffering and death on the cross.

Because God is JUST – He demands punishment for sin.

Because God is LOVING & MERCIFUL – He provided for man's sin through the death of His Son.

### II. The tree of Golgotha revealed God's pardon and brought reconciliation Galatians 3:8; 1 Cor 15:3-4; Ps 22:16-18

The gospel is defined in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 as the death of Christ and His resurrection. It was a fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures.

- Micah foretold that Christ would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
- Isaiah prophesied of Jesus' virgin birth (Isaiah 7) and His crucifixion (Isaiah 53).
- David was given a prophecy that described the crucifixion in detail in Psalm 22.

God came back to this sin-cursed earth as a man to physically walk with men and reveal His glory. But His primary purpose was fulfill God's promise in Genesis 3:15 (Mark 10:45). Jesus came to die and He died on a tree (Galatians 3:13; Deut 21:23).

When Jesus hung on the cross He bore our sins and He bore our curse. He was born to die so that we might be free from sin's curse.

Crucifixion was repulsive to many but to the Christian it represents something glorious, because it is through the cross we are saved from sin's curse and are reconciled to God (Gal 6:14; Rom 5:8, 11).

- The base of the cross touched the earth to remind us that God has come to earth to touch man.
- The top of the cross points heavenward to remind us that it is through the cross that we have access to heaven.
- The arms of the cross stretch outward and cry out, "Whosoever will may come and have life."

### III. The tree of heaven reveals God's glory and will bring celebration Rev 22:1-2

In the midst of the New Jerusalem is a tree planted next to a river. God did not want man to live forever on a sin-cursed earth with a sin-cursed body. Revelation 21-22 is a picture of paradise restored (1 Cor 15:21-22).

**Conclusion:** These three trees give us the gospel:

- We have all become cursed because of the first tree (Rom 3:23; 5:12).
- We must run to the second tree where we find forgiveness and eternal life (Rom 5:18).
- If you have run to the second tree there will come a day when you will eat of the fruit of the third tree and enjoy the splendor of heaven and the celebration of the redeemed (Rev 22:13-14).

And He still invites anyone who seeks rescue from sin’s curse to come!

**Revelation 22:17 (ESV) — 17** The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

**Study Questions:**

1. What other Christmas traditions reflect the gospel (example, candy canes)?
2. Share how you use Christmas traditions to teach your children the gospel found in the story of Christmas.
3. Compare Genesis 3:1-7 with 1 John 2:15-16. How does Satan use the same tactics from the Garden of Eden to tempt us today?
4. Why do people so easily embrace the Christmas story yet reject the message of the cross? What is the danger of sharing the birth and life of Christ without including His death and resurrection?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:3-6. How does Satan blind men from seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus during the Christmas season when the story of His birth is so prevalent? And how can we make sure that we help people see the glory of God in the face of Jesus during the Christmas season?

December 2024				
Week 1 Starting Dec 2	Week 2 Starting Dec 9	Week 3 Starting Dec 16	Week 4 Starting Dec 23	Week 5 Starting Dec 30
Day 1: Mark 2	Day 1: Mark 6	Day 1: Mark 10	Day 1: Mark 14	Day 1: Luke 2
Day 2: Mark 3	Day 2: Mark 7	Day 2: Mark 11	Day 2: Mark 15	Day 2: Luke 3
Day 3: Mark 4	Day 3: Mark 8	Day 3: Mark 12	Day 3: Mark 16	Day 3: Luke 4
Day 4: Mark 5	Day 4: Mark 9	Day 4: Mark 13	Day 4: Luke 1	Day 4: Luke 5
Day 5: John 8:12-30	Day 5: John 8:48-59	Day 5: John 10:1-18	Day 5: John 10:22-39	Day 5: John 11:17-44
<sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup> he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup> to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. <span style="float: right;">Ephesians 1:7-10 (NIV)</span>				