

# Trees of The Bible

A study course for Lent 2021

## Week One : The Tree of the knowledge of good and evil (The Fig Tree)

*“The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground--trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”*

Genesis 2:9

### Introduction

In the beginning God created many trees, including the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said that all trees were good. In the Western Church, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has been associated with the apple tree. In the Latin Bible, the word for evil and the word apple is *malum*, and in the Song of Solomon the apple is an erotic symbol for sweetness and desire (Song of Solomon 2:3).

However, in Jewish and Moslem traditions, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has been identified with the **fig tree**. Genesis 3:7 says that Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves. This puts an interesting theological twist on Jesus cursing the fig tree at the start of Holy Week.



"The Fall of Man" by Lucas Cranach the Elder. (1472-1553)  
The Tree of Knowledge of good and evil

**READ** Genesis 3:1-8; Mark 1:9-13 and 1 Peter 5:5-8

**LOOK UP** Micah 4:1-7; Psalm 1; Mark 11:13-25; Hebrews 4:14-16

**REFLECT**

What tree in your opinion best represents the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

What is the spiritual significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

What good things cause you to be tempted and not follow God's will?

How can the story of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil help us resist temptation?

**RECITE - Psalm 1**

- 1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,
- 2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and who meditates on his law day and night.
- 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.
- 4 Not so the wicked!  
They are like chaff that the wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

*Silence*

**PRAY**

Give thanks for God's creation: plants, trees and all living things .....

Give thanks for the goodness of God's provision .....

For those who work at the forefront of scientific knowledge that it may be for the good of all.....

For those who are tempted to give up the faith.....

For ourselves, for grace to keep Lent faithfully.....

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made  
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent.  
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,  
that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness,  
we may receive from you, the God of all mercy,  
perfect forgiveness and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**Lord's Prayer**

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**