

# A Tale of Two Gardens

Genesis 1-3, Matthew 26:36-46

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In the beginning, God made everything and it was very **good**. God **loved** it all.

And all the things he'd made, stars, moon, and the sun, the land and the sea, animals of all sorts, trees and plants and last and best of all, two people, sang for joy at the **goodness and love** of God.

But there was one thing God said they mustn't do. Don't eat the fruit of that particular tree. One day Eve was near the tree and the snake appeared and whispered in her ear. "God doesn't really **love** you". Otherwise, he wouldn't keep the fruit for himself.

She listened and thought how happy she'd be if she ate the fruit. But she was happy already! Excitedly happy chasing the animals in the garden and playing with them or quietly happy watching the sunset - she was always happy. But she let the thought sink deep down inside her. **The big lie - "God doesn't love you."** She took the fruit and ate it and everything went dark, frightening and bad. **The fruit wasn't poison. It was the lie that was poison.** God was so sad. The world he'd made, the people he'd made that he **loved** so much was going bad and would get worse and worse and worse.

God had to send them out of the garden. He cared for them. He clothed them, but they couldn't stay there in that perfect place where nothing broken could live. They had to go, But he told them one day, one day, "I will come back and make everything good again."

Long time passed. Jesus came. Jesus, God's son, God in Jesus. He is all one. God came and lived upon the earth, just like you and me. He went about **doing good. Being good. Being the best of friends, to all sorts of people, helping, healing, teaching, comforting.**

But the best thing he had come to do was also the hardest and the most terrible. Jesus and His Father in heaven had made the plan long, long, long ago that Jesus must take the blame for all the badness, all the sin, all the brokenness that had come into the world, all the poison. It must all be dumped into Jesus' heart, into God's heart. He would have to die carrying the weight of all that badness and brokenness and wickedness.

When the time had come, he went to a garden that he loved with his friends and said, "stay and watch with me, stay awake and pray with me." But they were so tired and so upset that they all fell asleep.

Then Jesus prayed and said, "Papa!", the way we might talk to our father, when we are very young, to the Daddy we love. "Papa, is there any other way to get your children home again, back to you, back to happiness? To heal their hearts and get rid of the poison?" But he knew the answer. It was "no". There was no other way. Jesus knew that He must lose His Father, which broke His heart in two. He cried huge tears, with sobs that shook His whole body.

Then he became quiet, like a lamb. "I trust you Papa" he said, "Whatever you say I will do." And so Jesus, the Son of God, our good Lord Jesus, gave himself up to be arrested and taken and put to death, for you and me, that God could wrap us up in His love and welcome us home.

He's a wonderful God. God does love us and wants all his children to come home to him. That is the message of the Bible. God wants us back. God loves us and cares for us, everyone.

I hope you will never forget that. No matter what happens in your life, God loves you and sent His Son to be the Great Rescuer.

Thank you Jesus for what you have done for me.

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Inspired by the wonderful ["The Jesus Storybook Bible"](http://www.jesusstorybookbible.com/) by Sally Lloyd-Jones.  
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