

A Sermon on Eden

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for August 13th, 2023 (and beyond)

Today's sermon is in dialogue format and references Genesis from the Holy Bible.

DIALOGUE:

Adam: What's that?

Eve: I don't know. It kind of looks like the apple tree, the fig tree, and the pomegranate tree combined. But, not any, more like all a bit.

Adam: Like a chimera?

Serpent: Try one. The Lord can't bring himself to destroy it, but feels it is special because it is different so commands no one partake of it.

Eve: I don't think I should. What do they taste like?

Serpent: Try one and find out.

Eve: Adam, come try this with me. Aren't you curious?

Adam: I've never seen a tree like that and for all I know it is poisonous. That's probably why we're not supposed to eat from it. It could be ackee fruit. I don't know what they look like.

Eve: What's ackee fruit?

Adam: Hypoglycin A is a heat stable toxin found in high levels in the rinds and seeds of ackee, a tropical fruit that features prominently in Jamaican cuisine. Reactions to hypoglycin A can range from no symptoms, hallucinations/psychotropic effects and vomiting, to coma and death. Properly harvested and prepared ackee will have low levels of hypoglycin and is safe to eat. Do you know how to prepare it?

Eve: Maybe it is thorn apple? I've never seen one of those.

Adam: If it is thorn apple, they are very toxic and can cause hallucinations, euphoria, seizures, tachycardia and, in some cases, coma and death. Some species are cultivated for medicinal and ornamental purposes.

Serpent: Try one.

Eve: I'm going to try one. I want you to try it with me.

Adam: Are you nuts? The Lord of this land told us not to eat that fruit, period. We were having such a nice time. Why ruin it? Don't you like it here?

Eve: Not if I can't try one. I'd feel better if you had some too. Take a bite.

Lord: You ate from that tree, didn't you? Oh, I can tell. Cross-pollination happens throughout nature with varying results. Get out and don't you dare tell anyone about that tree. That tree is a monument to nature taking its course and is to be enshrined, not abused nor exploited. Be gone.

Eve: I think God is speaking to us. I see a glowing image of a winged man who appears to be louder than life itself.

Adam: I hear and see him too. We need to leave. Cover yourself. We're so sorry.

Lord: Never come back. And, if one of your kids brings me a gift of fruit or vegetables, I'm rejecting it flat out. If it looks okay and I'll know, I'll accept but still frown upon it because it will act as a reminder of what you did here tonight. You have no idea what you are doing and I don't trust the agricultural acumen of any offspring you may generate at least in terms of vegetation.

Eve: Let's put our first born in charge of the garden and our second in charge of shepherding. He couldn't possibly disrespect either. The first-born is the first.

Adam: Are you pregnant?

Eve: I feel euphoric and more satisfied than I've ever felt.

Adam: I'm having difficulty remembering last night.

Eve: That's okay. If you deflowered me, that makes me your wife according to laws of the day. I feel pregnant.

Cain in Utero: Am I the first baby that was exposed to narcotics or toxins in utero?

END DIALOGUE

An alternative to the dramatized theory above is that the tree was a manifestation of Venus (AKA Aphrodite) as fruit trees were considered manifestations of that Goddess in the Mediterranean historically. Often a single tree would be designated as such a manifestation and considered sacred as well as a site to offer tributes or sacrifices. The Roman Senate didn't outlaw human sacrifices until 196 BCE. Often a sacred tree would be accompanied by a sacred fountain or manmade pool where coins could be left to appease the local deities. Mars was often paired with Venus as a divine couple in Roman theology. Mars being the God of War and metal (of which coins and weapons were/are made) were considered the proper tribute for Mars (AKA Ares). Aphrodite was the

mother of Aeneas who was a Trojan and she sided with Troy in the Trojan War and reportedly saved Paris from Menelaus. Aeneas is considered the progenitor of all Roman people. While the oak tree is often considered a manifestation of the god Zeus (AKA Jupiter), Aeneas has also been associated with the oak, specifically in Virgil/Vergil's writings. In any case, if the fruit tree to be left alone was considered a manifestation of Venus, the orchard keeper/rural farmer was likely overall concerned with angering Venus and potentially incurring wrath from Venus or Mars where disrespected by wayfarers unfamiliar with local customs that disobeyed the landlord who would be punished having been charged with protecting the tree and fountain for peace or good favor rather than penalty from the gods.

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.