

nothing wrong? On the surface nothing seemed to make sense. Yet there was something about that word He used, the word "paradise". It was vaguely familiar. Somewhere, sometime, somehow he had heard it before but where? He couldn't remember and almost gave up but then he thought, he hadn't heard it, he had felt it! And then with a sudden rush the memory returned to him as clear as a spring day. "Paradise" was the name for the way the world was supposed to be. Paradise was the way God had made the world in the beginning.

Now suddenly everything made sense. All the sadness, trouble and death in the world was there because of people's disobedience to God. Because of sin, death entered the world. But God sent His only Son into the world that day to die, to pay the penalty for that sin and start the process of restoring things to be the way they were supposed to be. Evan's last thought as he died was one of great happiness for he realized that God had chosen him to be the tree that his Son Jesus died on in order to save the world from death. He died knowing that there was a future.....A minute later he woke up in paradise!

When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to heaven to prepare a place for them...Thomas said "Lord, we don't know where You are going, so how can we know the way?"

*Jesus answered,*

***"I am the way and the truth and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me!"***

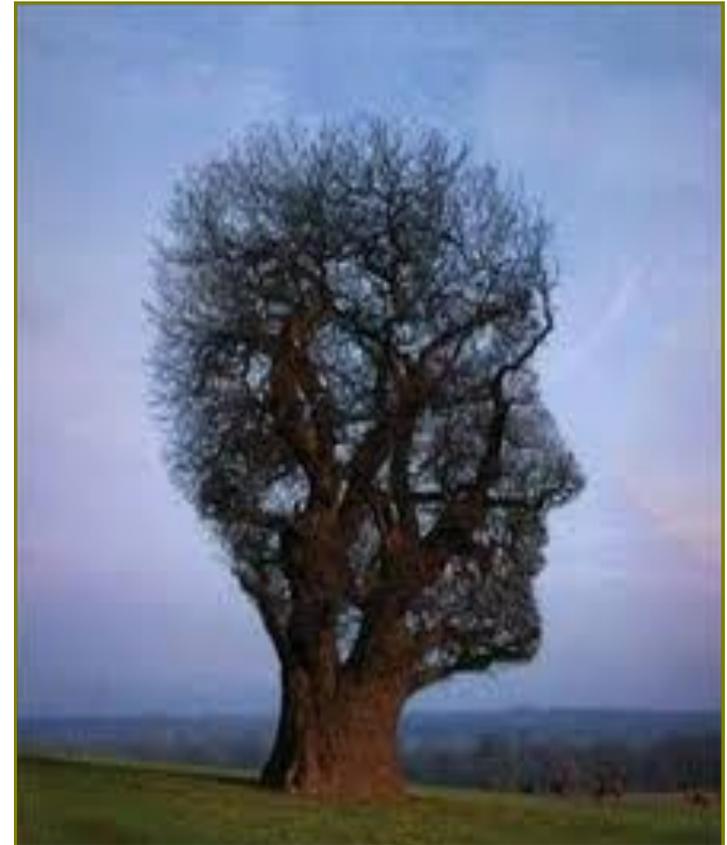
John 14:6



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"Evan"

***"The Tree that became the Cross"***



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# "Evan"

by David C. Klem

Once upon a time, many years ago, there was a tree named Evan. Now Evan grew along side a road near a town next to a small sea. The road he stood beside was a busy one on which many people of all types traveled. Now back in those days people had to walk since there were no cars yet and as they passed by Evan could hear their conversations. Now you might think Evan had fun listening to everybody but Evan really didn't. Why? ... Because it seemed like all the people were either angry, troubled or sad. Most of them were complaining, arguing or talking about how hopeless they felt. There was very little joy and happiness spoken of by anyone on that road.

Now this made Evan a very sad tree. He was sad not just because all the people were miserable but because somehow down deep he knew that the world was not supposed to be like this. See I think that trees have some kind of built in memory about how the world was in the beginning when God created it and Evan was sure that this world was supposed to be a place of joy and happiness. But instead he had learned that it was a world full of things that were slowly but surely dying. Each night as Evan went to sleep he would hope that the next day would bring something that could change the world back into a place of life and give the travelers on the road hope. But each day things just seemed to get worse. Oh how he wished he could do something to help.

Now one morning Evan woke up to find two soldiers holding axes looking up at him. This was not going to be a good day thought Evan as one of the soldiers swung his axe. As the axe cut into him over and over, Evan thought sadly, everything is dying and now I will die too. Now we all know that trees do live for a while after they are cut down and Evan was no exception. After being chopped down, Evan was taken into the town and there he was cut into two pieces, one longer than the other. His smaller piece was then nailed to his larger piece and Evan realized that he was being made into the worst thing a tree could ever be made into ... a cross, a Roman instrument of death. At this point, if trees could scream Evan would have. For not only was he dying but he knew that he would soon be used to kill someone else.

It was later that day, that Evan was taken to another road, a road that led to a small hill nearby called "the skull". There a man, wearing a crown of thorns, was being pushed along the road by soldiers. Two other men were also being pushed who appeared to be prisoners. The prisoners were carrying two other trees, which also had been made into crosses. The soldiers were spitting on the man with the thorny crown, laughing at Him and calling Him the King of the Jews. When they reached to the top of the little hill the soldiers nailed this man to Evan and then stood Evan up so the man hung by the nails in His hands. The soldiers then nailed the other two prisoners on their crosses and set one on either side of Evan.

Now as Evan listened, he heard people shouting at the man who they called King. One said "*Come down from the cross, if You are the Son of God!*" another said, "*He saved others, but He can't save Himself! He's the King of Israel! Let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him.*" Then the prisoner on the man's left asked Him "*Aren't You the Christ? Save Yourself and us!*" But the other criminal said. "*Don't You fear God, since You too are being crucified today. We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.*" And then he turned to the man on Evan and said, "*Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.*" The man called Jesus answered him saying, "*I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in Paradise.*" A few moments later He cried out in a loud voice and died. As He did darkness came over the land even though it was still daytime and there was a great earthquake...

Evan also was near death, and in his last moments he tried hard to understand what was happening. The man that had just died on him was a man named Jesus, a man who claimed to be the Son of the God. He was being killed as a criminal though He had done nothing wrong. He said He would be returning to someplace He called "paradise" and was glad to take with Him the one prisoner who believed He was the Son of God.

As Evan neared death himself, his mind struggled to make sense of it all. A King being killed even though He had done