

# Apples

My granny used to say that an apple didn't fall far from the tree. I didn't know what she meant then, but age has a way of teaching.

I have seen generations of people grow up, and it is clear that they not only have physical characteristics that are unmistakable, they also behave and value many of the same things as their forbearers.

It is hard not to spout off all the apple things I have heard, like one bad apple spoils the whole barrel, the fact that Adam and Eve did not technically eat an apple, even though it could have been that famous fruit.

The legend of Johnny Appleseed planting apple trees all over the country, or an apple a day keeps the doctor away, I'm sure there are sayings just waiting to be said as you read these words.

God made apples to teach us a few things, so let's get to it.

Just like Jesus often observed to his disciples, we can use nature to tell us of holy things. Famous televangelist Robert Shuller threw this one out.

"Anyone can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the number of apples in a seed."

Now that, my friends, is epic! There are five pockets of seeds in an apple, but the number of seeds depends on sunshine, water, the variety of the apple, and other factors. We can easily count them when we slice it open.

But when God looks at the apple, he is the only one who knows how many apples are contained past, present, and future, in that seed. It's a little like God knowing how many grains of sand are at the seashore, or the number of hairs on our head. He knows us, he cares deeply about us. And as much as he must love apples, he loves us much more!

Martin Luther, German professor of theology, composer, priest, monk and leader in the Protestant Reformation in the 1500's, must have paused to examine

the apple effect. He once observed, "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree."

What did he mean? Faith is a curious mix of the present and the future. We want to go to heaven, but God has many great things in store for us on this earth before we leave here. It could be measured in the number of apples we eat, or the number of apple trees we see grow and bear fruit and spawn other apple trees.

Armenian folklore has it that three apples fell from Heaven, writes Nancy Willard: one for the teller of a story, one for the listener, and the third for the one who 'took it to heart.' What a pity Heaven awarded no apple to the one who wrote the story down.

All four characters are important to the apple story. Some tell stories, some listen, some believe them, and others write them down. At times we may play every part. Which is most important? They are all important at the time, and for different reasons.

Remember Isaac Newton. Born on December 25 in 1642, a premature baby so much so that he would have fit inside a quart mug, his mom said, became the one of the great thinkers of all time.

As he was sitting under the proverbial apple tree one day, one fell and hit him on the head. He discovered gravity, wrote about it, and now we know what to call it. We see the absence of it when we travel outside the earth in space journeys.

Here's the thing, says Bernard Baruch. "Millions saw the apple fall, but Newton was the one who asked why."

Waking up, seeing things God does, and appreciating apples and other matters for what they are, a blessing from God, and not just something good to eat. In fact, someone in the year 1761 thought so much about this that he wrote a poem titled Jesus Christ the Apple tree. Here are just three of the verses.

The tree of life my soul hath seen  
Laden with fruit and always green  
The tree of life my soul hath seen

Laden with fruit and always green  
The trees of nature fruitless be  
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel  
By faith I know but ne'er can tell  
His beauty doth all things excel  
By faith I know but ne'er can tell  
The glory which I now can see  
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought  
And pleasure dearly I have bought  
For happiness I long have sought  
And pleasure dearly I have bought  
I missed of all but now I see  
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

So find the beauty and insight in a simple, delicious apple given to you by God. Apples, like many other things, teach us of eternity, love, sharing, and faith.