

Message Six

**The Tree of Life and  
the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9, 16-17;  
John 5:39-40; 2 Cor. 3:6b

**I. The tree of life signifies Christ, who imparts life to man and who pleases and satisfies man—Gen. 2:9; John 14:6a; 10:10b; 6:63; 1 Cor. 15:45b; cf. John 15:1; Exo. 15:25:**

- A. The tree of life is the center of the universe; according to the purpose of God, the earth is the center of the universe, the garden of Eden is the center of the earth, and the tree of life is the center of the garden of Eden.
- B. We must realize that the whole universe is centered on this tree of life; nothing is more central and crucial to both God and man than this tree.
- C. God's placing man in front of the tree of life indicates that God wanted man to receive Him as man's life by eating Him organically and assimilating Him metabolically so that God might become the very constituent of man's being—John 6:35, 57.
- D. According to John 1:1 and 4, life is in the Word, who is God Himself; this life—the divine, eternal, uncreated life of God—is Christ (11:25; 14:6a; Col. 3:4a), who is the embodiment of God (2:9).
- E. The tree of life grows along the two sides of the river of water of life (Rev. 22:1-2), indicating that it is a vine; since Christ is a vine tree (John 15:1) and is also life, He is the tree of life.
- F. Christ was processed through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection so that man may have life and live by eating Him—10:10b; 6:51, 57, 63.

**II. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan as the source of death to man—Gen. 2:9, 17; Heb. 2:14:**

- A. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil also signifies all things apart from God, for anything that is not God Himself, including good things and even scriptural things and religious things, can be utilized by Satan, the subtle one, to bring death to man.
- B. Even the Scriptures inspired by God and the law given by God can be utilized by Satan as the tree of knowledge to bring in death—John 5:39-40; 2 Cor. 3:6.

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**III. God's first commandment to man concerned man's eating, not man's conduct—Gen. 2:16-17:**

- A. Eating is critical to man, a matter of life or death; man's outcome and destiny before God depend altogether on what he eats.
- B. If man eats the tree of life, he will receive God as life and fulfill God's purpose; if he eats the tree of knowledge, he will receive Satan as death and be usurped by him for his purpose.
- C. God's forbidding commandment, given as a warning to man (vv. 16-17; cf. Eph. 2:1), indicates the following:
  - 1. It indicates God's greatness in creating man with a free will so that man may choose God willingly and not under coercion.
  - 2. It indicates God's love for man.
  - 3. It indicates God's desire that man would eat the tree of life to receive God into him as his life.

**IV. The tree of life causes man to be dependent on God (John 15:5), whereas the tree of knowledge causes man to rebel against God and to be independent from Him (cf. Gen. 3:5):**

- A. The two trees issue in two lines—the line of life and the line of death—that run through the entire Bible and end in the book of Revelation.
- B. Death begins with the tree of knowledge (Gen. 2:17) and ends with the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 14); life begins with the tree of life and ends in the New Jerusalem, the city of the water of life (22:1-2).

**V. We need to see the line of the tree of life throughout the Scriptures:**

- A. Abel contacted God in God's way—Gen. 4:4.
- B. Seth and Enosh called upon the name of the Lord—v. 26.
- C. Enoch walked with God—5:22, 24.
- D. Noah walked with God and worked together with God—6:9, 13-14.
- E. Abraham lived in the appearing of God and called upon the name of the Lord—Acts 7:2; Gen. 12:7-8; 17:1; 18:1.

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- F. Isaac lived in the appearing of God and called upon the name of the Lord—26:2, 24-25.
- G. Jacob lived in the appearing of God and called upon the name of the Lord—35:1, 9; 48:3.
- H. Moses lived in the appearing and the presence of God—Acts 7:30; Exo. 3:2, 16; 33:11, 13-15; 34:29; 25:9.
- I. The children of Israel journeyed in the presence of the Lord—13:21-22; Num. 14:14.
- J. Joshua lived and worked in the presence of the Lord—Josh. 1:5-9.
- K. Gideon fought the battle in the presence of the Lord—Judg. 6:12, 16.
- L. Samuel prayed and called upon the name of the Lord—1 Sam. 12:23; 15:11; Psa. 99:6; Jer. 15:1.
- M. David trusted in God, looked to God, and enjoyed God as life—1 Sam. 17:37, 45; 30:6; Psa. 27:4, 8, 14; 36:8-9.
- N. Daniel prayed to God constantly and contacted Him continually—Dan. 6:10-11; 9:2-4; 10:1-3, 12.
- O. Jesus as the Son of God lived by God—John 5:19; 6:57; 14:10.
- P. The New Testament believers live by the Lord and enjoy the Lord—15:5; 6:57; 14:19; 6:35; 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 1 John 1:4.
- Q. Paul lived out the Lord—Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-21a.
- R. The church as the Body of Christ lives by Christ as life—Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 3:4.
- S. The New Jerusalem is sustained by the river of water of life with the tree of life—Rev. 22:1-2.

### **VI. We need to see the line of the tree of knowledge throughout the Scriptures:**

- A. Cain presented an offering to God in his own way, not in God's way; he murdered his brother and went out from the presence of the Lord—Gen. 4:3-9, 16.
- B. Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord, was a person who was absolutely independent of God, building a kingdom for himself, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel—10:8-11.
- C. The people at Babel held a council, and the result was the construction of a high tower for man's name and the formation of a city for his possession—11:3-4.

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- D. Lot drifted away from the line of life by making a choice according to his own sight—13:10-13, cf. vv. 14-15, 18.
- E. Esau, for the purpose of satisfying his appetite, sold his birth-right—25:30-34.
- F. Pharaoh was rebellious against God, and his heart was hardened toward God—Exo. 5:2; 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:34-35.
- G. Aaron listened to the people and acted independently to make a golden idol—32:1, 4, 24.
- H. Nadab and Abihu offered “strange fire” to God—Lev. 10:1-2.
- I. Miriam and Aaron were opposed to Moses, not as a result of their contacting God but because of their own motive—Num. 12:1-2, 9-15.
- J. The ten spies failed because they looked at the situation in the land by their own sight; they failed because they relied on their knowledge and refused to trust in the Lord—13:28, 32-33, cf. v. 30; 14:6-9.
- K. Korah and his company attacked God’s deputy authority—16:1-3.
- L. Saul acted independently and did not follow the Lord; rather, he dealt with the enemy according to his preference—1 Sam. 15:8, 11, 22-23.
- M. Absalom rebelled against his father, King David—2 Sam. 15:10-13.
- N. Ahab was an evil king who married Jezebel, a devilish and idolatrous woman, and built a temple for Baal, the most famous idol of the time—1 Kings 16:30-32.
- O. The chief priests and the scribes knew the letter of the Bible but not the life of the Bible—Matt. 2:4-6.
- P. Nicodemus was seeking knowledge, but what he needed was a new life—John 3:1-3.
- Q. The Jewish religionists searched the Scriptures thinking that in them they had eternal life, yet they would not come to the Lord for that very life—5:39-40.
- R. The scribes and Pharisees held the knowledge of the law but were still under the slavery of sin—8:5, 9, 34.
- S. The disciples who were with the Lord still held the traditional knowledge of religion when they saw a man blind from birth—9:1-3.

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- T. Martha was occupied with the line of knowledge, holding the knowledge of the sound teachings regarding the resurrection in the last day—11:23-25.
- U. Peter, after receiving the revelation from the heavenly Father, turned to his mind and was utilized by Satan to frustrate the Lord from going to the cross—Matt. 16:17, 21-23.
- V. Judas, who was always occupied with thoughts of money, opened himself to the devil and betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver—John 12:4-6; 13:2, 27; Matt. 26:15; 27:5.
- W. The unbelieving Jews kept their law and sentenced the Lord Jesus to death according to it—John 19:7.
- X. Saul of Tarsus, a foremost religionist, persecuted the church until God revealed His Son in him—Gal. 1:13-16; 2:20.
- Y. The Corinthian believers were enriched in all knowledge but were puffed up and still infants in Christ—1 Cor. 1:5; 8:1; 3:1.
- Z. The Gnostic philosophy distracted and spoiled many believers from enjoying Christ as their life—Col. 2:8, cf. v. 6.
- AA. The dissenters in the church make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching of God's economy—Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 1:4.
- BB. The teaching of Balaam, the teaching of the Nicolaitans, and the teaching of Jezebel deceived the early churches, who turned away from the eating of and feasting with the Lord—Rev. 2:14-15, 20, 24, 7, 17; 3:20.
- CC. Antichrist will be the man of lawlessness, the son of perdition; he will be the giant on the line of knowledge, and his destiny is to be cast into the lake of fire with Satan, the source of death—13:5-8; 2 Thes. 2:3-4; Rev. 19:20; 20:10.
- DD. "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life"—2 Cor. 3:6b:
  - 1. The Bible in dead letters, which belongs to the tree of knowledge, kills, but the Spirit, who belongs to the tree of life, gives life.
  - 2. Besides the line of knowledge there is the line of life (cf. Deut. 30:19-20); praise the Lord for the choice of life!