

Message Four

Job and the Two Trees

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9, 17; Rev. 22:1-2, 14; Job 1:1; 2:3; 4:7-8; 42:1-6; Rom. 8:5-6

I. According to the divine revelation in the Scriptures, there are two trees, two sources, two ways, two principles, and two consummations:

- A. The tree of life signifies the Triune God as life to man in man's relationship with Him; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan, the devil, the evil one, as death to man in man's fall before God—Gen. 2:9, 17; Psa. 36:9a.
- B. The tree of life is the source of men who seek God as life for their supply and enjoyment; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the source of men who follow Satan as their poison unto death and eternal perdition—John 1:4; 15:1; 8:44.
- C. The first way is the way of life, the constricted way, for men to seek God, to gain God, and to enjoy God in His eternal life as the supply; the second way is the way of death and of good and evil, the broad way, for men to follow Satan to be his children—Matt. 7:13-14; Acts 9:2; 1 John 3:10a.
- D. The first principle is the principle of life—the principle of dependence on God; the second principle is the principle of death and of good and evil—the principle of independence from God—Gen. 4:3-4; Jer. 17:5-8; John 15:5.
- E. The two consummations are the final outcome of the two trees, the two sources, the two ways, and the two principles:
 - 1. The consummation of God's way of life is a city of water of life, the New Jerusalem—Rev. 21:2, 9-11; 22:1-2.
 - 2. The consummation of the way of death and of good and evil is a lake of fire—19:20; 20:10, 14-15.

II. God's intention was not to have a Job in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but a Job in the line of the tree of life:

- A. The logic of Job and his friends was according to the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; they were devoid of the divine revelation and of the experience of the divine life—Job 2:11—32:1.
- B. Job, like his friends, was halted in the knowledge of right and wrong, not knowing God's economy—4:7-8:
 - 1. Neither Job nor his friends were in the line of the tree of life as God ordained man to be—Gen. 2:9.
 - 2. Their concept concerning man's relationship with God was built on good and evil, right and wrong, absolutely according to the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and absolutely according to the human, ethical concept of fallen man—Job 8:1-20.
- C. Job and his friends were in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; God was trying to rescue them from that realm and put them into the realm of the tree of life—1:1; 2:3; 19:10.
- D. God's purpose in dealing with Job was to turn him from the way of good and evil to the way of life so that he might gain God to the fullest extent—42:1-6.

III. We need a vision of the tree of life—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:1-2, 14:

- A. The tree of life signifies the Triune God in Christ to dispense Himself into His chosen people as life in the form of food—Gen. 2:9.
- B. The tree of life is the center of the universe:

1. 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; hence, the universe is centered on the tree of life.
 2. Nothing is more central and crucial to both God and man than the tree of life—3:22; Rev. 22:14.
- C. The New Testament reveals that Christ is the fulfillment of the figure of the tree of life—John 1:4; 15:5.
- D. All the aspects of the all-inclusive Christ revealed in the Gospel of John are the outcome of the tree of life—6:48; 8:12; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6.
- E. The enjoyment of the tree of life will be the eternal portion of all of God's redeemed—Rev. 22:1-2, 14:
1. The tree of life fulfills for eternity what God intended for man from the beginning—Gen. 1:26; 2:9.
 2. The fruits of the tree of life will be the food for God's redeemed in eternity; these fruits will be continually fresh, being produced every month—Rev. 22:2.

IV. The two trees in Genesis 2:9—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—represent two principles of living:

- A. The two trees show that a Christian can live according to two different principles—the principle of right and wrong or the principle of life—1 Cor. 8:1.
- B. Job and his friends pursued something in the realm of ethics, but we, the believers in Christ, should pursue something in the realm of God—15:28; Eph. 3:16-21.
- C. Being a Christian is not a matter of the principle of right and wrong, the principle of good and evil, but is a matter of life—1 John 5:11-13, 20:
1. When we received the Lord Jesus and gained a new life, we obtained another principle of living—the principle of life; if we do not know this principle, we will set the principle of life aside and follow the principle of right and wrong.
 2. In our practical living we may not be in the line of the tree of life but in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—Prov. 16:25; 21:2.
 3. In our daily living we should not be in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but in the realm of the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2.
 4. In order to live according to the principle of the tree of life, we need to follow the inner sense of life—v. 6; Eph. 4:18-19; Isa. 40:31:
 - a. The sense of life on the negative side is the feeling of death—Rom. 8:6a.
 - b. The sense of life on the positive side is the feeling of life and peace, with a consciousness of strength, satisfaction, rest, brightness, and comfort—v. 6b.
 5. When we live according to the principle of the tree of life, we will care not for good and evil but for life, and we will discern matters not according to right and wrong but according to life and death—Gen. 2:9, 16-17; 2 Cor. 11:3.

V. Every genuine believer in Christ is a miniature garden of Eden, with God as the tree of life in his spirit and Satan as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in his flesh—Gen. 2:9; Rom. 8:2, 5-6:

- A. We are a miniature garden of Eden because the triangular situation involving God, man, and Satan is now within us—Gen. 1:27-29; 2:9, 16-17:
1. Before man fell, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life were outside of man—v. 9, 16-17.

2. Through the fall the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is in us, and through regeneration the tree of life is now in us.
 3. Our spirit is mingled with the Triune God, and our body, which has become the flesh, is mixed with the sinful element of Satan (1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 5:12; 6:6, 12); this makes the Christian a miniature garden of Eden.
- B. As those who were represented by Adam in Genesis 2, we have the tree of life in our spirit and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in our flesh—v. 9; Rev. 2:7b; 22:14:
1. Whenever we contact the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we become dead; whenever we contact the tree of life, we gain life—Rom. 8:5-6, 10.
 2. If we stand on the side of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and contact Satan, we will live out the life of Satan, the devil, and the result will be death—2 Cor. 11:3; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 3:4.
 3. If we stand on the side of the tree of life and contact God, we will live out God, and the result will be life—John 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 4-5.
- C. Romans 8:5-6 shows a miniature garden of Eden, with the flesh and death on one side, the spirit and life on the other side, and the mind in the middle:
1. We learn from Romans 8 that we need to turn our being to the living One who dwells in our spirit and stay one with Him—v. 6b; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 2. When we set our mind on the spirit, we have life, peace, light, comfort, and strength; our thirst is quenched, and our hunger is satisfied—Rom. 8:5, 6b; John 4:14; 7:37-38; Matt. 5:6.
 3. When we set our mind on the spirit, our mind is full of life and peace—Rom. 8:6b:
 - a. We have peace because there is no discord between our outward behavior and our inner being—v. 6b; Isa. 9:6-7; 26:3.
 - b. When we speak with our mind set on the spirit, life is embodied in our words because we are one spirit with the Lord—Prov. 18:21; John 6:63; Eph. 4:29.