

She is a Tree of Life

Description

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STUDY AIM: To lighten the way of the tree of life, that all who will may eat thereof.

GEM THOUGHT: “Happy is the man who finds Wisdom... Length of days is in Her right hand. in Her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are the ways of pleasantness, and all Her paths are peace. She is a Tree of Life to those who take hold of Her, and happy are all who retain Her.” Proverbs 3:13,16-18.

INTRODUCTION

In days of old, Adam and Eve were driven from their home Eden because of their disobedience to God’s command to not partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

“By their transgression they had opened a way for Satan to gain access to them more readily, and it was not safe for them to remain in the Garden of Eden lest in their state of sin they gain access to the tree of life and perpetuate a life of sin. ... They had not preserved their integrity while they were in a state of holy, happy innocence, and they would have far less strength to remain loyal and true in a state of conscience guilt.” *The Story of Redemption*, p. 40-41.

Because of the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary, all things are now in the process of being restored to the state they originally were in the Eden home.

“In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored.” *Prophets and Kings*, 678.

Even access to the Tree of Life is to be restored through Christ – “I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger...” Ezekiel 34:29.

THE WAY BACK TO EDEN

“...he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” Genesis 3:24.

From a cursory reading of Genesis 3:23-24, it might appear that God was trying to prevent us from ever reaching the tree of life by stationing cherubim and a “flaming sword” between us and the tree to “keep” its way – a sort of impenetrable barrier, as it were.

“... Holy angels were sent to debar their way to the tree of life. Around these angels flashed beams of light on every side which had the appearance of glittering swords.” *The Story of Redemption*, p. 41.

The Hebrew word translated “keep” in this verse is the same word where it reads, “And the LORD God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and *keep* it” (Genesis 2:15), and, “Ye shall *keep* the Sabbath” Exodus 31:14. So if the “flaming sword” is *keeping* the way to the tree of life, then the thought is; the bad is kept out, but the good is allowed in. To *keep* the garden, is to keep out evil (Satan), and allow in good (heaven’s angels). To keep the Sabbath is to keep the good – the commandments of God (enter into His rest) – and to reject the bad – the commandments of men (do your own ways, find your own pleasure, and speak your own words [Isaiah 58:13]). For the angels to “keep” the way of the tree of life, then, is for them to give access to Her to those born of the Spirit, but not those who are born only after the flesh (John 3:6).

Though it is true that, “Not one of Adam’s family has passed that flaming sword and partaken of that tree; therefore there is not an immortal sinner” (*Early Writings*, p. 51), it is also true that through Christ, “Wisdom... is tree of life to those who take hold of her.” Proverbs 3:18.

When speaking of the workings of the Holy Spirit in His life, and that of John the Baptist, Jesus said, “Wisdom is justified of all her children.” (Luke 7:35). It was natural for Jesus to speak of *wisdom* in the feminine gender because the Hebrew word, *hookmah* (wisdom) is feminine. The same is true of the Hebrew word for Spirit, *ruah*.

At the time He made that revelation concerning the *Motherly* aspect of *Wisdom*, Jesus had been revealing much about God’s *Fatherhood* in order to clarify the misconceptions held by His people. One of the purposes of this was to establish the foundation whereby He could declare His *Sonship*. The things which He was teaching regarding Him being God’s “only begotten Son” seemed so strange to His hearers that they at times would seek to take His life for having spoken what they believed to be blasphemy (John 10:30-39).

Christ understood that those to whom He was sent (His people) were so full of misconceptions about God that they could be described as follows: “They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.” Isaiah 28:7, 8.

He also knew that only a few would be able to grasp the reality of what they were hearing. He understood, as did Isaiah, the question, “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?”, and its answer, “them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.” (verse 9).

Christ's followers also were aware that the believers were required to obtain a certain maturity in order to comprehend the deeper truths. It is written, "we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Hebrews 5:11-14.

So while Jesus confirmed in the minds of His hearers the *Fatherhood* of God, He (and His disciples) also sought to instill in their thinking the divine *Motherly* aspect. Peter, the apostle, wrote, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:" 1 Peter 2:2. Peter understood that "the sincere milk of the word" came through the Spirit of truth. He also naturally understood that a baby's milk comes forth from mothers.

In John 14, where Jesus is speaking of the Father sending us the Holy Spirit as a Comforter, He states that His reason for doing such is so that He "will not leave you comfortless" (verse 18). The Greek word translated "comfortless" literally means "orphans." What better way for Him to provide that we will not be left as "orphans" than to send us One who is as a Mother – even the same Mother from whom He and John the Baptist found instruction, Wisdom, the Holy Spirit.

He also, speaking to Nicodemus, compared the experience of being born of the Spirit to the experience of being born of a woman (John 3:3-6), and Nicodemus' response shows that he understood it as such (verse 4). This was a natural response, for in the Hebrew or Aramaic, which they were speaking, the words for Spirit are *feminine*, as are the words for Wisdom. Even the Greek words translated "born" in this passage are in the feminine form (*gennethe*). A prayerful reading of Proverbs chapters 1-9 will reveal that the works of Wisdom are identical with the works of the Holy Spirit.

When speaking of another reason for His leaving this world and sending the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to us, Jesus said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16:12. Also, the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, when speaking of Melchizedek, states, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing" Hebrews 5:11. And, again, the same writer, when speaking of the tabernacle and its furnishings, states, "of which we cannot now speak particularly." Hebrews 9:5. Therefore, as, to this day, there remains things yet to be revealed by the Father through the means of the Holy Spirit whom Christ sends in his name, we would be wise to keep our ears open to Her voice, lest we should, in our dullness, miss something of eternal import to us.

"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." Proverbs 1:20-23.

Jesus said that one of the things the Holy Spirit will do is “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” (John 16:8). He also said that the Holy Spirit “will lead you into all truth.” (verse 13). This is exactly what Wisdom says that She will do for us. She says that She will “pour out [Her] Spirit unto you, I will make my words known unto you.” (Proverbs 1:28). Also, when speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus says, “whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Her not, neither knoweth Her but ye know Her for She dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (John 14:7). We have used the feminine pronouns, in harmony with the language that Jesus was actually speaking (Hebrew, or Aramaic), rather than the English translation from the Greek. In this place, the English translation is not even accurate to the Greek, for the Greek word for Spirit is neuter – *it*.

Just as Jesus stated that the unregenerate world does not see or know the Holy Spirit, so Wisdom says that many do not see or know Her, either – “... I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof.” (Proverbs 1:24-25). Yet still, the promise to those who receive Her is that, “She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.” (Proverbs 4:9). Furthermore, She says, “I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment... Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.” Proverbs 8:20, 9:5. Therefore, if one hears Wisdom’s voice, and would give heed to Her “counsel” and “reproof,” then they would know and see the presence of the Holy Spirit with them, and find

THE WAY OF THE TREE OF LIFE

The Holy Spirit (Wisdom), Herself, by Her counsels, will show us the way to the tree of life.

“To all who believe, He [Jesus] is as the tree of life in the Paradise of God.” [Ezekiel 47:1, 2]. His branches reach to this world, that the blessings which He has purchased for us may be brought within our reach. ... He has given us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which will present to us the precious fruit from the tree of life. From this tree we may pluck and eat, and we may then guide others to it, that they also may eat.” *My Life Today*, p. 50.

Thus is how the way of the Tree of Life is *kept* for those who appreciate the fruits of the Paradise of God and the requirements set forth to preserve that way – they must receive the fruit of that Tree through the Comforter (the One who sees that we are not orphans), the Holy Spirit, the One Jesus sent in His name, by receiving in our hearts and minds Her (Wisdom’s) “counsel,” and “reproof.”

It has been said that, “To all who believe, He [Jesus] is as the tree of life in the Paradise of God.” This He is as the Son of God. Yet as a man He Himself had access to the fruit of the Tree of Life from a source we may access.

“They [the Jewish leaders] even regarded the precepts of men more highly than the word of God, and they were greatly annoyed at the clear penetration of Jesus in distinguishing between the false and the true. ... They recognized that His education was of a higher type than their own. But they did not discern that he had access to the tree of life, a source of knowledge of which they were ignorant.” *The Desire of Ages*, p. 86.

He, as a man, received the fruit from the Tree of Life the same way we do. “He has given us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which will present to us the precious fruit from the tree of life.” Speaking of the Comforter, Jesus said:

“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” John 14:16.

It is also written,

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” 1 John 2:1.

The above highlighted words, “Comforter,” and “advocate” are translated from the same Greek word, *Paraclete*. Thus we see that the Scriptures reveal two *Comforters*, two *Advocates*. This truth is further revealed in the book of Revelation:

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Rev. 22:1-2.

From these verses we see that the Tree of Life has its base “on either side of the river” – which would indicate that the Tree of Life has two trunks, one on each bank of the river. Though John did not comment on any details of the Tree of Life (especially on how it had a trunk on either side of the river), the Holy Spirit has been most gracious in shedding further light on the matter:

“Within the city we saw the tree of life and the throne of God. Out of the throne came a pure river of water, and on either side of the river was the tree of life. On one side of the river was a trunk of a tree, and a trunk on the other side of the river, both of pure, transparent gold. At first I thought I saw two trees; I looked again, and saw that they were united at the top in one tree. So it was the tree of life on either side of the river of life. Its branches bowed to the place where we stood; and the fruit was glorious, which looked like gold mixed with silver.” *Early Writings*, pg. 17

Therein she commented on what John did not. That is “that they were united at the top in one tree. So it was the tree of life on either side of the river of life.” Thus we see that Jesus is symbolized by one Trunk of the Tree of Life, and that the Holy Ghost is symbolized by the other. For as the Spirit of Prophecy has declared, “He [Jesus] is as the tree of life,” She has also said, “Happy is the man who finds Wisdom [The Holy Ghost]... She is a Tree of Life to those who take hold of Her, and happy are all who retain Her.” Proverbs 3:13-18.

This dual nature of the Tree of Life, and particularly the masculine and feminine natures is further revealed in the following:

“And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to **HIS** months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.” Ezekiel 47:12.

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded **HER** fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Revelation 22:2.

Thereby we see that Ezekiel saw a *masculine* Tree, “the leaf thereof for medicine,” and John saw a *feminine* Tree, “the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” As one of the purposes of the leaves of the Tree is to be used as “medicine,” for “the healing of the nations,” then the *masculine* Tree seen by Ezekiel and the *feminine* Tree seen by John are clearly united in their work and purpose. Such is true of Christ and the Holy Ghost. Thus, as the Tree of Life unto us, Christ and the Holy Ghost are seen as two distinct Root Sources (Trunks) which are “united at the top in one Tree.”

As Jesus, as a man, had access to the Tree of Life, the holy, prophesying Spirit, and as His sacrifice and its reward brought to us the same access to the Tree of Life, we too may eat of the fruit of that Tree with two Trunks and experience Wisdom’s (the Holy Spirit’s) feminine comforting, and “Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister;” (Proverbs 7:4). For us to be able to call Wisdom our “sister” we must be born into Her Family – the Family of the prophesying Spirit. “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit,” (1 John 4:13). Said Jesus to Nicodemus:

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” John 3:5, 6.

Thus through the Holy Spirit (Wisdom), in Her feminine work of bringing forth children (giving birth), we gain entry into the kingdom of God. And by the indwelling of the Spirit of truth which inspired the writers of the Bible, and which dwelt in Her prophets, we too have access to the Tree of Life, and are thereby their brethren. While it is said of Abraham that he was called “the friend of God,” (James 2:23), Jesus said of those whom He called “friends” before His death and resurrection (John 15:14,15),

“I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” Luke 7:28.

The reason why those born in the kingdom of God are greater than any of the Old Testament prophets is because of their re-creation, their rebirth by the Spirit – Wisdom. Though the Spirit rested in varying measures upon the Old Testament prophets and people, the birth of the Spirit brings a closer relationship (a family membership). It is written of Israel during their time in the wilderness:

“There remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD’S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!” Numbers 11:26-29.

Thus we see that it has always been God’s desire that all of His children have access to the way of the Tree of Life, the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Prophecy – the Testimony of Jesus – Rev. 19:10). And along with His/Her prophets we to have access to

THE FRUIT OF THE TREE YIELDED MONTHLY

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Revelation 22:2.

This yielding of the fruit of Wisdom, the Holy Spirit, every month was testified to in the monthly feast days of the law of Moses – the New Moons. Not only were the New Moons an appointed time of worship under the old covenant, and are also such under the New Covenant, but they will remain such throughout eternity, as it is written,

“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me saith the Lord ... It shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.” Isaiah 66:22-23.

“The word of God, like the character of its divine Author, presents mysteries which can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. It directs our minds to the Creator, who dwelleth ‘in the light which no man can approach unto.’ It presents to us His purposes, which embrace all the ages of human history, and which will reach their fulfillment only in **the endless cycles of eternity**. It calls our attention to subjects of infinite depth and importance relating to the government of God and the destiny of man.” *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 699.

As to how the Holy Spirit (Wisdom) will today yield Her fruits to us monthly we need only to look at what took place on the New Moons in the Old Testament times, and compare that with the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament times. It is written:

“And she [the Shunammite] called to her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God [the prophet, Elisha], ... And he said, Wherefore [why] wilt thou go to him today? It is neither new moon nor the Sabbath.” (2 Kings 4: 22-23).

By this we see that her husband understood that it was customary for them to go to the “man of God,” the prophet, on the new Moons and the Sabbaths. It was at these times that the Holy Spirit would yield her fruit (wisdom) through the prophets to the people that they may eat thereof, and grow spiritually. These times of instruction were accompanied by appointed burnt offerings and sin offerings (Numbers 28:11-15). As the great things of God’s law would come to the attention of those who came to the prophets, the sins which they committed through overt actions, or through a failure to do what was right when they could have, came to their minds and they found themselves in need of an Intercessor with God. Such a gracious provision was revealed symbolically in the appointed burnt and sin offerings of those times.

Thus the whole purpose of the day of the New Moon centered on the prophetic gift (the prophesying Holy Spirit of God – the Testimony of Jesus) working in concert with the ceremonial law. That the prophetic gift, the gift of Wisdom’s voice, is of prime importance to His people, God has declared:

“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7.

Though many sincere people believe that there is no more truth yet to be revealed, and that all they need to know is contained in the Bible, the Bible, itself, declares that there still remains truths to be revealed about things which God has hidden. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.” (Proverbs 25:2). “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna...” (Revelation 2:17). Wisdom invites us to eat of her “bread” (Proverbs 9:5). This promise of eating of the hidden manna is to those who “overcome.” What is there to overcome? – “simplicity,” “scorning,” hatred of knowledge, and dullness of hearing (Proverbs 1:22, Hebrews 5:11).

That these New Moons, these times of instruction and intercession, were appointed to be times of joy and thanksgiving we read:

“Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this *was* a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.” Psalm 81:1-4.

That they were to be sabbaths of rest from servile work we read:

“Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?” Amos 8:4,5.

That not only were they to be special times of spiritual rest and refreshing, but that they contained a prophetic symbolism (a “shadow of things to come” Colossians 2:17) we read:

“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month [New Moon], shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.” Leviticus 23:24.

“And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month [New Moon], ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.” Numbers 29:1.

And that the New Moons were special times of social bonding we read:

“And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third [day] at even. . . . Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. . . . So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.” 1 Samuel 20,5,18,24.

That this New Moon ordinance is to continue throughout eternity we read:

“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.” Isaiah 66:22,23.

Thus we see that the heavenly bodies which demarcate the feasts of the Sabbath and the New Moon, and which also symbolize our two heavenly **Intercessors**, Christ (the Sun) and the Holy Ghost (the Moon), will remain forever as sign posts and memorials to the glory of God. On those New Moons we will be eating of the Tree of Life as He (Ezekiel 47:12), as one Trunk of the Tree, and She (Revelation 22:2), the other Trunk of the Tree, jointly bring forth their fruits for our refreshing.

As we have also seen, we, as a body, may now have access to the Tree of Life through the presence of the Holy Ghost guiding the church. This gift of present truth brought through the ever-living Spirit of Prophecy in a timely manner is the access to the Tree of Life which alone can nourish and sustain the church. Yet, we, as individuals, must also feast upon the fruit of this tree that the gift of heavenly Wisdom may find reception in the hearts of the believers, and thus the church will “looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?” Song of Solomon 6:10.

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