



Scriptures and Doctrine :: The Significance of the Tree of Life

The Significance of the Tree of Life - posted by couch (), on: 2005/6/22 12:35

I felt it good to start a separate discussion about this topic, since the "Did Adam Lose the Holy Spirit" thread became a discussion about the Tree of Life.

Why did God say -

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever--" therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 2:22-24

I used to think that God guarded the Garden of Eden with a flaming sword, in fact I believe I was taught it in Sunday school, but it's quite obvious that the tree of life is what was angelically guarded.

Thoughts?

Re: The Significance of the Tree of Life - posted by couch (), on: 2005/6/22 12:49

Dan wrote:

Quote:

philologos wrote:

Oswald Chambers has a thought that if God had allowed man to eat of the tree of life in his rebellious state man would have become an incarnate devil.

The first few times I read the bible, my impression was similar to that of Mr. Chambers - that is, I imagined that the fruit of the tree of life, if eaten would immediately imbue to the eater eternal life - that is, one nibble would be good enough, you would never need the tree again. But as I meditated on this one day, I realized that my conclusions rested on the fact that Adam and Eve died. I reasoned that since Adam and Eve died, they could not have eaten from the Tree of Life - but that conclusion is only valid if fruit from the Tree of Life gives "everlasting life" from just one bite.

In my meditation, I considered another possibility - that the fruit from the Tree of Life didn't give instantaneous and irrevocable life - rather it sustained life (Not a tree of eternal life - but a the tree of continuing life) If this were the case, and I believe it is, then Adam and Eve (and all their progeny) were/are cut off from the tree of life (from which Adam and Eve formerly ate).

If I understand it that way - then "original sin" makes more sense - we are all born into a living death - that is, we are born cut off from the Tree of Life - and until/unless we come to Christ we remain cut off from that "olive" tree.

I am over simplifying it of course, but I have to admit, understanding the Tree of Life in this way explained so much of what I had already come to believe through scripture.

Thoughts?

Dan

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Re: The Significance of the Tree of Life - posted by dann (), on: 2005/6/22 15:39

The reference is actually found in Genesis 3 :-)

What is certain is that men no longer enjoy access to the tree of life; that this access was severed by Adam's sin; and that unless one eats of the fruit from the Tree of Life one cannot have eternal life.

Literally the text reads (in Hebrew)

"And He is saying, Yahweh Elohim behold! the-human he-becomes as-one from-us to-know good and-evil and-now lest he-is-stretching hand-of-him moreover from-tree-of-the-living-ones and-he-eats and-he-lives for-eon"

Instances where the same Hebrew word is translated into more than one English word I have connected the English renderings with a dash (-).

the KJV may read, "...and take -also- of the tree..." – but the sense of that rendering (because of the addition of the superfluous "also" in the English rendering) implies a spatial or temporal separation that isn't implied in the original language. This "also" imbues the English rendering with a cumulative sense – that being, that on top of eating the forbidden fruit, Adam might now –also- add to his crime by eating from the tree of life. This "cumulative" inference does not come to us directly through the Hebrew – but it is felt inherently because of our English bias.

Not that the Hebrew makes the case plain or simple – but it does reveal a possible bias that given no reign could easily influence us. Even ignoring the Hebrew text for a moment, we should still see clearly that we are typically reading more into the text than we are getting out of it. The text doesn't say that one nibble of this fruit grants eternal life – it simply says that if Adam is stretching his hands to eat he will have eternal life.

The text therefore doesn't discount the possibility of my interpretation. Yet, like most people, I am careful to examine any opinion I come to on my own when that opinion seems contrary to the common weal. In this case, I found I was in good company (see John Calvin's Commentary on Genesis (Banner of Truth Trust, 1965).

Dan
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Re: The significance of the Tree of Life, on: 2005/6/24 23:23

Quote:

-----we are born cut off from the Tree of Life - and until/unless we come to Christ we remain cut off from that "olive" tree.

That 'olive' tree - I have never heard this connection made before, tho' it is a good one. Am still thinking about it.

Re: The Significance of the Tree of Life - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2005/7/1 23:35

couch,

I have never noticed that, but it does say, "a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

This is my take spur of the moment: I do believe that Eden is symbolic of heavenly paradise, as Heaven in Revelation 21 and 22 reflects many things of Eden, such as: a fountain of life, a great light that is the glory of God, nothing that is defiled will be allowed, and the tree of life, etc.

So I would have to say the while the tree of life was guarded, and may even be the main item to be guarded, to be very specific, it was the "way of the tree" that God guarded. So if this is God's paradise, he would have to guard the entire premises, as no murderer or idolator would be allowed to partake of the other aspects of the garden.

Re: The Significance of the Tree of Life, on: 2005/7/2 14:36

Quote:
-----I used to think that God guarded the Garden of Eden with a **flaming sword**, in fact I believe I was taught it in Sunday school, but it's quite obvious that the tree of life is what was angelically guarded.

Quote:
-----So I would have to say the while the tree of life was guarded, and may even be the main item to be guarded, to be very specific, it was **the "way" of the tree** that God guarded.

The thing I noticed here, is the references, right back there in the beginning, to phrases which have been identified in the New Testament, as referring to Jesus - the Word, the sword, the Way. It shows up how much more Adam lost than we realise, perhaps, if 'the way to the tree' was always there in Eden, for Adam and Eve to walk in.

Re: Some ideas - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2005/7/3 16:12

Try run with this scripture:

Blessed is the man

Â Â Â Â Â who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked

Â Â Â Â Â or stand in the way of sinners

Â Â Â Â Â or sit in the seat of mockers.

Â Â Â 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

Â Â Â Â Â and on his law he meditates day and night.

Â Â Â 3 **He is like a tree planted by streams of water,**

Â Â Â Â Â which yields its fruit in season

Â Â Â Â Â and whose leaf does not wither.

Â Â Â Â Â Whatever he does prospers.

Psalm 1:1-3 (bold mine) Is the tree spoken of here the same as the one in Revelations?: Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

2 in the middle of its street. **On either side of the river was the tree of life**, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Revelation 22:1,2 (bold mine)

If it is, then we can track down the root causes in the first part of the psalm

Re: What is the significance of the Tree of Life re- ZekeO, on: 2005/7/3 18:01

Good post, ZekeO.

The key seems to be in verse 2. It reminds me of the New Covenant promise (He will put the law in our minds) and Psalm 119's preoccupation with the word and, these verses in Psalm 19.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul:

the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. {converting: or, **restoring**}

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart:

the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever:

the judgments of the LORD are truth and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold:

sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. {the honeycomb: Heb. the dropping of honeycomb}

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned:

and **in keeping of them there is great reward.**

(Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, **Fear not**, Abram: **I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.**)

Might verse 2 (Psalm 1) be talking about Jesus, because it says 'his delight is in the law of the LORD'? Or, as Paul said

Romans 7

22 For I delight in the law of God **after the inward man**:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then **with the mind I myself serve the law of God**; but with the flesh the law of sin.

There may be a link between 'after the inward man' and the *restoring* of the soul (Psalm 19:7).

The more I look at this, the more I see the suggestion of *healing* in the Tree of Life. We don't often stop to ponder about the way our bodies heal so easily after cuts, scrapes and bruises, but it's because they are made to self-repair. This is a *function* of LIFE.

Health is a natural function of LIFE. Living forever was not just living, (being alive) or everlasting (eternal) it was *healthy* in the sense of *doing a soul good*. I've said a lot more than I was thinking at the beginning of answering. Very thought provoking. Thank you.

Re: The Significance of the Tree of Life - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2005/7/7 16:24

More thoughts,

Here are some scriptures that have the same words tree of life in them. It is interesting to see when they are applied and in what situations it manifests itself.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls. Prov 11:30 Interesting to note that *the fruit of the righteous* is a tree of life. My mind is thinking very much along the lines of *I am the vine and you are the branches* and the fruits of the spirit spoken of in Galatians 5:22,23. the last sentence of verse 23 paints an even more striking picture when tied to the thoughts of Dorcas, *against such things there is no law*

How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding...**She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her**, And happy are all who hold her fast. Prov 3:11,18

Here wisdom and understanding is tied together with the tree of life.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/7/8 6:08

ZekeO writes

Quote:

-----Is the tree spoken of here the same as the one in Revelations?:

No, but they may well have similar 'natural' characteristics.