

## The Tree of Life, the Wisdom of God and the Holy Spirit

I recently was asked the following questions:

*“Did Adam and Eve know of this Tree or one that they might discover if left in the Garden? Maybe they were told at another time not to eat of the Tree of Life. If they had eaten of the Tree of Life and lived forever, would that have interrupted the plan of salvation and would their children have also lived forever? I couldn't find anything that elaborated on the Tree of Life beyond what is said in Genesis.”*

I will answer the second question first. I would have to say, based upon what the Scriptures tell us in Genesis 3:22-24 [RSV], the answer would be “Yes”: **22. Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever” – 23. therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. 24. He drove out the man; and at the east of the Garden of Eden He placed the Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the Tree of Life.**

What appears to be an easy answer becomes much more complicated when one answers the first question and digs a little deeper into the study of the Tree of Life. It would seem the answer to the second question is *Yes, they would have lived forever without physically dying, but they would have remained forever spiritually dead.* Just as it is the Spirit Who gives our spirits life in Christ (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4), so, too, is it the Spirit Who gave life to the dead body of Jesus Christ when He was resurrected from the dead (Romans 8:11). Each one of us is also promised a new, resurrected body when Jesus comes to claim His own (Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 John 3:2). Had Adam and Eve had access to the Tree of Life after the Fall, then they would never have been given the opportunity to obtain life eternal in a glorified, resurrected body and be with the Lord. In a very real sense, they would have lived forever as a zombie.

To answer the first question, I believe Adam and Eve knew of this Tree before their sin, and that they did, indeed, eat of it. I say this because the Tree of Life was in the Garden (Genesis 2:9) and God told them they could eat of all the trees in the Garden of Eden except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:16-17).

It is interesting that the next time the Tree of Life appears in God's word after Genesis is in Proverbs 3:13-18 [RSV], and this is a reference to Wisdom being the Tree of Life, and Wisdom is given a feminine characteristic.

**13. Happy is the man who finds Wisdom, and the man who gets Understanding, 14. for the gain from it is better than gain from silver and its profit better than gold. 15. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing**

***you desire can compare with Her. 16. Long life is in Her right hand; in Her left hand are riches and honor. 17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all Her paths are peace. 18. She is a Tree of Life to those who lay hold of Her; those who hold Her fast are called happy.***

Now what makes this even more notable is what follows on the heels of this in the next few verses (Proverbs 3:19-22 [RSV]):

***19. The Lord by Wisdom founded the Earth; by Understanding He established the heavens; 20. by His Knowledge the deeps broke forth, and the clouds drop down the dew. 21. My son, keep sound Wisdom and discretion; let them not escape from your sight, 22. and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck.***

It is interesting to note that the word "Spirit" in the Greek language is masculine, but the word "Spirit" in the Hebrew language is feminine. Assigning "masculine", "feminine" or "neuter" to words may seem strange to English speaking people, but in many of the languages spoken around the world it is common practice. The words "Wisdom", "Understanding" and "Knowledge", too, all are considered feminine in the Hebrew language. But do not make the mistake of thinking that just because "Spirit" or "Wisdom", when denoted as being feminine in the Hebrew, that we are supposed to believe that the Holy Spirit is female. That is not what is being said here. The Holy Spirit is one part of the Godhead. But because of *how* the Hebrew language uses the word "Spirit" and "Wisdom" as feminine, it is also spoken of in feminine terms as we have seen here in the *Book of Proverbs*.

What is being stated here in Proverbs is also what was being stated in Genesis 1, with Wisdom and Spirit being synonymous. It was with God's Spirit that the world was created.

***"And the Earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."*** (Genesis 1:2 [RSV])

We also have the Tree of Life mentioned in Proverbs 11:30 [RSV], once again associated with Wisdom (Spirit?): ***"The fruit of the righteous is a Tree of Life; and he that is wise winneth souls."***

Here are a couple more passages in Proverbs [RSV] where the Tree of Life is encountered:

Proverbs 13:12: ***"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire cometh, it is a Tree of Life."***

Proverbs 15:4: ***"A gentle tongue is a Tree of Life; but perverseness therein is a breaking of the spirit."***

For further evidence that Wisdom is synonymous with the Holy Spirit, listen to what Jesus says in Luke 11:49-52 [RSV]: ***49. "Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' 50. that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation, 51. from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it shall be required of this generation. 52. Woe to you lawyers! for you have taken away the key of Knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering."*** It was the Holy Spirit Who sent the prophets of God to warn the people and proclaim His word, and the lawyers were blasted for withholding the Knowledge, the Wisdom of God, from the people, and ***"teaching as doctrines the precepts of men"*** (Matthew 15:9 [RSV]).

The next time we see the Tree of Life we find it in Revelation 2:7 [RSV]: ***"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. 'To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, Which is in the Paradise of God.'"***

Revelation 22:2 [RSV]: ***"And on this side of the river and on that was the Tree of Life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the nations."***

Revelation 22:14 [RSV]: ***"Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the Tree of Life, and may enter in by the gates into the city."***

Revelation 22:19 [RSV]: ***"and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Tree of Life, and out of the Holy City, which are written in this book."***

Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 that we must be born of water and the Spirit. We must be reborn if we are to obtain eternal life: ***5. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*** (John 3:5-6 [RSV])

In the very next chapter in the *Gospel of John*, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman at the well that only those who worship in Spirit and in Truth can worship the Father: ***21. "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will***

**worship the Father in Spirit and Truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him. 24. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and Truth.**" (John 3:21-24 [RSV]) We receive the Holy Spirit of Christ when we come to Him in obedient, saving faith and are immersed into His body (Acts 2:38), and clothed in His holy garments (Galatians 3:27). The Holy Spirit is our down payment, or God's guarantee, of our eternal salvation as long as **"we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin"** (1 John 1:7 [RSV]). The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:13-14 [RSV], **13. In Him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14. Which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.** When was the promise of the Holy Spirit given, and Who gave it? It was Jesus Christ, Who promised in John 14:15-17; 26 [RSV], **15. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 16. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, 17. even the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; you know Him, for He dwells with you, and will be in you. 26. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.** Jesus Christ tells us He **is** Truth: **"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but by Me"** (John 3:16 [RSV]). Therefore, when Jesus said we must worship in Spirit and Truth He was saying we must worship the Father *through* Him and *in* Him.

We must partake of Christ and His Spirit if we are to obtain eternal life. Jesus told the disciples in John 6:53-58 [RSV], **53. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you; 54. he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me will live because of Me. 58. This is the Bread Which came down from Heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this Bread will live forever."** Whenever we gather around to partake of the emblems of His body and blood in communion with our Lord and each other, His body and blood given in sacrifice for our sins, we are symbolically doing what we will do in Heaven throughout eternity. **"For our sake He made Him to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God"** (2 Corinthians 5:21 [RSV]). Jesus said in Matthew 26:26-28 [RSV], **26. "Take, eat; this is My body." 27. And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; 28. for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."**

Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:7-10 [RSV], **7. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8. which He lavished upon us. 9. For He has made known to us in all Wisdom and insight the mystery of His will, according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ 10. as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in Heaven and things on Earth. It is the Holy Spirit Who reveals the mystery of the Lord's will to us through the word of God, whereby our faith derives** (Romans 10:17). Once again, Wisdom is synonymous with the Holy Spirit. We have redemption in His blood for life is in the blood: **"For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life"** (Leviticus 17:11 [RSV]). And only in the shedding of the blood is there forgiveness of sins, and only through the sacrifice of Christ is atonement, or reconciliation, made for our sins: **22. without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. 10. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. 21. And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22. He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before Him, 23. provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which has been preached to every creature under Heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.** (Hebrews 9:22; Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21-23 [RSV])

Let us now go back once more to the *Book of Proverbs*, but this time we will look in chapter 8 for more enlightenment on god's teaching us that Wisdom is the Holy Spirit. The Wise Writer states,

**1 "Does not Wisdom call? Does not Understanding raise Her voice? 8 All the words of My mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. 9 They are all straight to him who understands, and right to those who find Knowledge. 10 Take My instruction instead of silver, and Knowledge rather than choice gold, 11 for Wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with Her.**

**12 "I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find Knowledge and discretion. 15 By Me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; 16 by Me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly. 17 I love those who love Me, and those who seek Me diligently find Me.**

**22 "The LORD possessed Me at the beginning of His work, the first of His acts of old. 23 Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the Earth. 24 When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, 26 before He had made the**

**Earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world. 27 When He established the heavens, I was there; when He drew a circle on the face of the deep, 28 when He made firm the skies above, when He established the fountains of the deep, 29 when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the Earth, 30 then I was beside Him, like a master workman, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always, 31 rejoicing in His inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.**

**32 “And now, O sons, listen to Me: blessed are those who keep My ways. 33 Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. 34 Blessed is the one who listens to Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting beside My doors. 35 For whoever finds Me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD, 36 but he who fails to find Me injures himself; all who hate Me love death.”**  
(Proverbs 8:1; 8-12; 15-17; 22-35 [ESV])

Wisdom is given attributes of God in these passages. Wisdom is spoken of as being from everlasting, existing even before the creation of the universe, and participating in the creation process. Everything we see the Holy Spirit doing in Genesis 1 is here referred to as Wisdom. As we read earlier from Luke 11, even Jesus Himself referred to Wisdom as having the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, in that He said Wisdom sent forth the prophets and the apostles to guide the people.

Therefore, from these passages we have seen, I believe that the Tree of Life *is* the Spirit of Christ, It *is* the Wisdom of God. Only those who have the Spirit of Christ are His, and only they will be privileged to continue to partake of His Spirit, the Tree of Life, throughout eternity. Listen to what the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8:12-17:

**12. So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – 13. for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. 14. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16. it is the Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17. and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.**