

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying

Message Four : Job and the Two Trees

I. Overview:

There are two trees; the tree of life signifies the Triune God as life to man in man's relationship with Him, while 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. Two sources: the tree of life is the source of men who seek God as life for their supply and enjoyment, but 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. Two ways: 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, and 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. Two principles: the first principle is the principle of life—the principle of dependence on God, and the second principle is the principle of death —the principle of independence from God. The two consummations are the final outcome of the two ways; the way of life is a city of water of life, and the way of death and of good and evil is a lake of fire. The logic of Job and his friends was according to the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not in the line of the tree of life, neither knowing God's economy.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound there being two trees in the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures.

In the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures, there are two trees, two sources, two lines, two principles, and two ends. In Genesis 2 there are two trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, in Revelation 21 and 22 we see only one tree—the tree of life—in a holy city. In the center of this city is the throne of God and of the Lamb (22:1), indicating God's administration.

B. Explain that we have seen the two ends in Revelation 22.

All the evil things in Revelation 22 are involved with the lake of fire. Thus, the two ends are the city of water and the lake of fire. Between the two sources and the two ends are two lines, which become two ways. Each source issues in a line that becomes a way consummating in an end. The Bible, as a full record of the divine revelation.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the purpose of the two trees.

The two trees are not for producing materials but for man to eat their fruit, the fruit of the tree of life becoming food to man for nourishing, for the dispensing of life, and the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil becoming poison to man for killing. To eat means to take in something that is outside of us and then digest and assimilate it. We must be careful concerning what we eat.

B. State the first way being the way of life.

These two sources issue in two lines. The two lines, as the two ways, originate from the two sources. The first way is the way of life, the constricted way, the

Way, the straight way, the way of righteousness, the way of salvation, the way of God, and the way of the Lord for men to seek God, to gain God, and to enjoy God in His eternal life as the supply.

Day 3 —

A. Expound the destination of these two way.

The destination of God's way of life is a city of water of life, the New Jerusalem, God's eternal dwelling, as the best and most glorious goal for all the men who walk in the way of life according to God's desire and for God's pleasure, that they may participate with God in all the blessings of God as the eternal life for eternity.

B. Explain the two ends.

The New Jerusalem, as the best and most glorious end of God's way of life, is a dynamic incentive for us to seek God until we gain Him to the fullest; and the lake of fire, as the worst and most miserable end of Satan's way of death and of good and evil, should be a solemn warning to the men who follow Satan in his way against

God's economy, to turn from his way of death to God's way of life that they may escape Satan's eternal judgment and eternal perdition.

Day 4 —

A. State the most important item in the garden being the trees.

In the Scriptures the concept concerning the tree is crucial. When the Scripture mentions man, both in the beginning and at the end, it also mentions the tree. Whether man will have life or will die, will live eternally or will perish, all depends on how man deals with the tree. The concept of the tree is absolutely vital to man's destiny. Genesis 2:9 says that the trees were good for food.

B. Explain why the tree of life is the center of the universe.

The tree of life was in the middle of the garden. If we study the record of Genesis 2, we will realize that, apart from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, no tree is mentioned by name except the tree of life. This shows that the tree of life was the center. 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.

Day 5 —

A. Expound the words in Revelation 22:2.

Revelation 22:2 says, "On this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life." That the one tree of life grows on the two sides of the river signifies that the tree of life is a vine that spreads and proceeds along the flow of the water of life for God's people to receive and enjoy. This tree fulfills for eternity what God intended from the beginning. Today the enjoyment of Christ as the tree of life is the believers' common portion.

B. Fellowship the tree of life being Christ as our life supply.

First, Christ was the Lamb of God for our redemption and then the tree of life for our life supply. Christ's redemption is for imparting Himself into us as the life supply. The tree of life grows on the two sides of the river of life. It does not go up but spreads like a vine. Hence, it is available along the flow of the water of life.

Day 6 —

A. State after God creating Adam, whom He placed in front of two trees.

He placed Adam in front of two trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God then charged Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for if he ate of that tree, he would die. God wanted Adam to eat of the tree of life. If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, this tree would have entered into him and then would have grown within him. However, Adam ate instead of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree was thus sown into Adam.

B. Explain our practical, daily living.

Before we were regenerated, we were in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When we were regenerated, Christ planted Himself into us as the tree of life. However, in our practical, daily living, are we in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or in the line of the tree of life? We need to remember Paul's word in Galatians 2:20—"It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me."

III. Conclusion:

Whenever we open the Bible and read the scriptures from a passage in the spirit of prayer, we receive nourishment at once. The best way is to read and pray, without striving to understand. The Bible is given not primarily for us to comprehend and gain knowledge, but for us to taste and enjoy God as our food in Christ. God's Word is not the tree of knowledge, but the tree of life. God stripped of Job so that He might work Himself into him. As a result, the divine element in Job increased; when people encountered him again, they saw not only that he feared God, but also the God whom he feared. What God wants us is not to turn us from evil to good, but to fill us with Himself. He must have the work of breaking done upon us before He can build Himself into us. Those who have undergone such breaking are those who have been mingled with God; these are the God-man.