

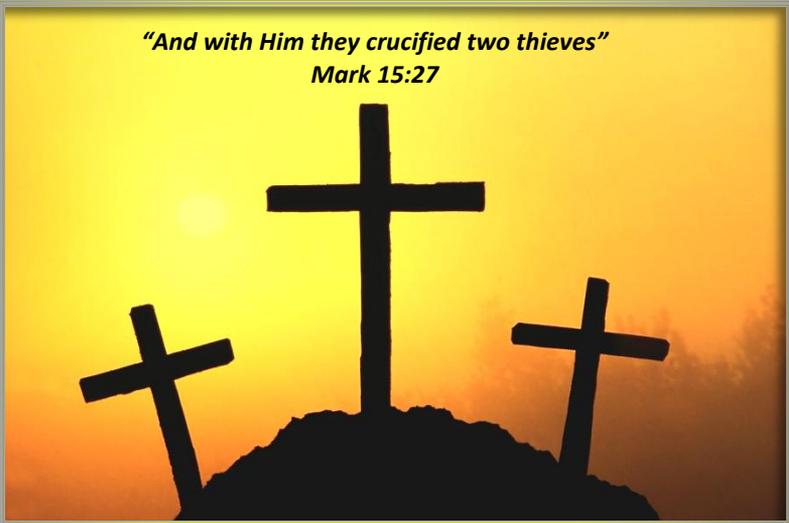
TREES

An Instructive Allegory

In

GOD'S WORD

"And with Him they crucified two thieves"
Mark 15:27



"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"

Gal. 3:13

AN INSTRUCTIVE ALLEGORY

From Genesis to Revelation “TREES” are used by God to give us truth in an allegory that can be understood by the spiritual mind. In this little meditation it is hoped that each of us can learn these precious truths and store them deeply in our hearts for it is only there that it can be used of God for our blessing.

OUTLINE:

- **CHRIST THE TREE OF LIFE – GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSES**
Genesis 2:8-9; Revelation 2:7; 22:1-2
- **SATAN AND HIS APPOINTEES CONTINUE TO OPPOSE GOD’S PURPOSES**
Judges 9:7-21; Matthew 21:19, 20; Mark 11:13, 20-21; Luke 13:6, 7
- **MAN ONLY PERCEIVES HIS TRUE CONDITION AND SEES THE GLORY OF CHRIST WHEN ANOINTED WITH SPIRITUAL EYESALVE**
Mark 8:22-25
- **THE CONCLUSION OF THE TRIAL OF MAN UNDER LAW (ISRAEL, REPRESENTATIVE MAN)**
Isaiah 5:1-7
- **THE JUDGEMENT OF GOD ON MAN**
Isaiah 1:28-31; 2:11-12; 6:13; 10:33-34
- **CHRIST THE MAN AFTER GOD’S OWN HEART (OUR PERFECT PATTERN)**
Psalms 1:1-3; Jeremiah 17:7-8
- **CHRIST - MAN’S ONLY HOPE**
Job 14:7-9; Isaiah 11:1-2; 53:1-5; Galatians 3:13
- **OUR LIFE IN CHRIST AND OUR INHERITANCE**
1 Kings 21:1-16
John 15:1-8
- **Forever with The Lord**
Rev. 21:1-7, 27; 22:1-5

CHRIST THE TREE OF LIFE

Genesis 2:8-9; Revelation 2:7; 22:1-2

In the Garden of Eden God planted two **TREES** - *"the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."* (Gen. 2: 9)

God the Holy Spirit has made reference to these two trees at the very beginning of God's Word as the creation itself in Genesis is God's picture, in type and shadow, of the purpose of God's heart concerning **CHRIST** - a purpose *hidden* in the past ages but existing there from all eternity, long before the foundation of the world, and now made known to faith. (Eph. 1: 9, 10; Eph. 3: 9-11)



What a fitting way to begin and end the precious Word of God!

From their *position* in Paradise, *"in the midst of the garden"*, we learn that **CHRIST** has always been God's centre. Also along with the Tree of life is found the *"tree of the knowledge of good and evil;"* and its place too is *"in the midst of the garden."* (Gen. 3: 3; Rev. 2:7)

These two trees bring before us the two men of whom we read in **1 Cor. 15: 47** - *"The first man [Adam] is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."*

It is clear from **Rev. 2:7** that the *"tree of life"* could only refer to Christ. Around Christ, as the tree of life in the eternal state, God will group, as He did in type in Eden, *"every tree that is pleasant to the eye, and good for food."* (Gen 3:6; Rev. 22:1-2)

Just as there was for Adam, one Eve of himself, also for Christ there will be one bride, the Church, purchased by His own most precious blood. She will be there to enter into and to share with him all that he has and administers in His Kingdom - all things both in heaven and in earth.

We read that God *"breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"* and man lived.

As long as he ate of every tree of the garden, save the one forbidden, he continued to live in that state in which God had at first created him - innocence. He was responsible to *live* in that state; that is, he was to know neither good nor evil. With this was responsibility and demanded obedience, and on this ground, when man disobeyed, all was lost. Sin entered and the law given by God only proved man's inability to change, and showed how complete the ruin was. Death was upon all.

We will see throughout this meditation that Satan, the wily serpent, is ever present trying to subvert God's purposes for Christ, His beloved Son.

Ezekiel appears to refer to Satan's original fall before God refashioned the earth and also gives the reason for the fall. He was active in the Garden of Eden and he is active now!

"Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more. (Ezekiel 28:13-19)

After man's disobedience God then speaks and says, *"The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden" (Gen. 3:22, 23a)*

To eat in that state of innocence in which God had *first* created him according to God's command would have been simple obedience; but to eat, and live for ever in the garden, with the knowledge of good and evil - good to which he could never attain, and evil to which he was always prone - in misery therefore, God would not have; *"so He drove out the man; and 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."* (Gen. 3:24)

Man had acquired the knowledge of evil, and along with that a nature always prone to follow it. He had now a conscience and knew what was evil but no ability to resist in. He could also discern that which was good to some degree (the conscience is not a perfect guide to that which is right – only God's Word can do that) but had no strength to do it. The apostle Paul summarizes this in Romans:

"But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 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. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:8-24)

It is true that all was over for the *first* man, for all the race of Adam and that life in innocence is thus refused to every one on *that* ground. The "*flaming sword*" is the sword of judgment to any advancing to take of life without Christ.

It is a relief to the heart to expand, and thus to turn away from self, and to see God working for the glory of His beloved Son, to whom we are the Father's gift, and a part of His glory and inheritance (**John 17:6; Eph. 3: 21**) and to see thus everything established on an immutable basis.

The first man no longer exists as before God, but rather through grace, we are eternally united to Him (as the apostle John says) "*This is the witness, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*" (**1 John 5:11 JND**) and "*He that hath the Son, hath life.*" (**1 John 5:12**)

It is wonderful to look back along the dim vista of the ages, and to see God's purpose shining brightly in the "*garden of delight,*" which sin spoiled, and to look forward to what it will yet be, when all shall be in divine order around Him who will be for all eternity 'the centre as the Tree of Life' in the midst of the "*Paradise of God*". (**Rev. 2: 7; 22:1, 2**)

We owe it all to Christ's work on Calvary where He satisfied the claims of God's righteous throne and also gave full joy to the heart of our God and our Father.

This first scene gives deep and important lessons for man:

- Have we learned the impotence of the natural man in Adam?
- Do we realize that all depends on Christ, a Man after God's own heart, and His finished work?
- Do we realize Satan is ever opposing God's plan or are we ignorant of his devices?

The establishment of the Law was God's way of convincing man regarding His answers to these important questions.

As we pass on in this instructive allegory relating to TREES may we have ears to hear what God is saying to us, beloved!

SATAN AND HIS APPOINTEES CONTINUE TO OPPOSE GOD'S PURPOSES

Judges 9:7-21 (The Reign of the Bramble)

Gideon's youngest son, Jotham, escaped the massacre by Abimelech and boldly declared the parable 'The Reign of the Bramble' in the hearing of the men of Shechem. This chapter introduces us to such a dark and sorrowful phase of declension, that at first sight, it does not seem to contain a single refuge for faith. Man under trial reaches a low level and he had no power to change.

In **Judges 8**, the congregation of Israel, wishing to confer authority on their leader, sees a wolf usurp the Shepherd's place attacking the flock in order to devour it. Satan as he was in the Garden of Eden was still lurking and active!

Like Abimelech, the arbitrary authority of the evil servant, and appointee of Satan, in the absence of his lord, began to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. (**Matt. 24: 48, 49**)

The wretched Abimelech energized by Satan sought a more exalted position and proclaimed himself king (**v. 6**). In order to usurp this place, he resorted to thoroughly human expedients. Through the brothers of his mother, the concubine of Gideon, he beguiled the men of Shechem under the guise of fraternity. They placed confidence in this traitor; their moral state being so low, that they even forgot the bond that united them to all Israel.

The influence of this man was sustained by treasure taken from the house of a false god. The usurper appealed to the pockets of the people, and did not despise the unholy source from which the money came. This silver served to accomplish the devil's work. *Baal's treasure* took the place of Jehovah's power, and furnished the usurper with the means of persecuting and cutting off the posterity of faith, the chosen of God (**v. 5**). But in this darkest hour, Jehovah in His grace caused a ray of light to shine in the midst of the darkness for *He never leaves Himself without a testimony!*

Jotham was the only one, (no doubt a picture of Christ) the youngest of all Gideon's sons, a poor insignificant creature escaped and concealed himself.

Abimelech was successful; the evil spirit triumphed, but it could never provide a spirit of peace among men. The violence of Abimelech troubled the camp of Israel when the testimony of God had left it and it became a scene of sorrow, of slaughter, and of hatred. What a word for us beloved.

Moses in the past had decreed that six tribes should stand on *Mount Ebal* to curse, and six on *Gerizim* to bless and Joshua had remembered this when the people entered Canaan. Israel had morally chosen *Ebal* the place of cursing.

The despised Jotham, the last of all, stood steadfast for God and was preserved by the providential goodness of Jehovah, "*he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim*" (v. 7) and chose Gerizim, the place of blessing, and he stood there alone as God's witness in face of the whole people. He lifted up his voice and spoke a fable in their ears, proclaiming the blessing of faith and also the consequences of the unfaithfulness of the people. Jotham is, in his own person, the representative of the blessings of the true Israel of God; as to himself, feeble and persecuted, yet able to enjoy the favour of God and testify for Him, bearing fruit to His glory. What a beautiful picture of Christ this is beloved.

In his recital, three trees refuse to be promoted over the other trees but the fourth does not refuse.

They depict, according to the word, *the different characteristics of Israel* under the blessing of Jehovah. Israel was not willing in the days of Christ's flesh that He should reign over them. Israel in a future day will allow the antichrist to reign. "Come thou and reign over us" is the reply of man's heart just as in the past - Barabbas and not Christ.

The **OLIVE TREE** said: "*Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?*" (v. 9)

The Olive Tree along with the Oil answers to Christ in the unction and the power of the Holy Spirit by which God and men can be honoured. The Israel of God could only realize this power, the power of the Holy Spirit in Christ, when in thorough separation from the nations (the trees) and their sinful practices. They could not perform it. They pronounced "*we will not have this man to reign over us.*" (Luke 19: 14)

The **FIG TREE** said: "*Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?*" (v. 11)

The fig tree speaks of Israel nationally. They were God's chosen testimony and they could only bear fruit for God when holy and in separation from the nations. This they failed to do so the fig tree could not lead them.

The *fruit* of the fig tree is produced before the *leaves*; so that leaves being found, there should have been fruit on the fig-tree but the Lord finding no fruit for God cursed it. (**Matt. 21: 19, 20; Mark 11: 13, 20, 21**)

This is an instructive picture of Israel (and man being tried and found wanting) which brought forth "*its first-ripe figs*", **Hosea 9: 10**; but when the Lord views it from God's perspective, He saw plenty of leaves, professing to be God's favoured people, but producing no real fruit to Him. (**Luke 13: 6, 7**) As a nation in the flesh no fruit will ever be found on it. Thus this tree also was not a suitable leader for Israel or man in the flesh.

In another parable the Lord Jesus told His disciples to "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees". (**Luke 21: 29**) He drew their, and our, attention to the revival of the nation (which we have been able to see in recent years), and to know that the day of grace is coming to an end, to usher in a day of terrible judgment. In **Revelation 6: 13** we read of those coming events, when the very stars of heaven will fall to earth as "*a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind*". We need to remind ourselves that "*now is the day of salvation*". (**2 Corinthians 6: 2**)

The VINE said: "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

New wine is the joy found in the mutual communion of men with God, and this enjoyment — the highest that could be desired — was lost to Israel when they adopted the spirit and ways of the nations.

What lessons for us! The world is to the church, what the nations were to Israel. If we yield to its solicitations, we abandon our oil, our fruit and our new wine — that is to say, our spiritual power, the works which God has prepared for us (**Eph. 2: 10**), and the joy of communion.

Are we able to refuse all the offers of the world? Should I leave that which is my happiness and my strength, for fruitless turmoil, or to satisfy the lusts and ambitions of the heart of men?

Jotham, like his father Gideon (**Judges 8: 23**), appreciates these treasures of the Israel of God, and set himself apart on *Gerizim* for blessing, retaining his blessed position. In the presence of all these apostate people he is the true and last bud of faith and the sole witness for God. What honour for the young and feeble son of Jerubbaal (Gideon)! Spurned by all, his lot was the only enviable one, for he glorified God in this sorrowful world.

May we too, like him, be found in the path of separation from evil and there we shall taste all that the trees of God yield.

The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, just before He went to the cross, *"I am the true Vine"* and *"I am the Vine, ye are the branches"*. (John 15: 1, 5)

The time was not yet right for Christ to reign – not until His death and resurrection.

The last of the four trees in Jotham's parable was **THE BRAMBLE**.

This seems to have been a specially thorny tree and by some is thought to have been the sort of tree from which the crown of thorns was made. This tree is pictured as saying *"come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon"*. (Judges 9: 15)

We remember that thorns and thistles came into the world as a result of Adam's sin and many times in the Bible thorns are used to picture wicked people and, just as thorns are burned in the fire, so the prophets spoke of the wicked being punished by a righteous God. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples *"every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes"*. (Luke 6: 44) On another occasion He told them that *"by their fruits ye shall know them"*. (Matthew 7: 20)

Satan, as seen in Abimelech-the Bramble- reigns today as religious head, *"the god of this world"*, 2 Cor. 4:4, and also as the political head as *"the prince of this world"*, John 12:31; 14:30. Will we allow him to reign in our lives beloved?

MAN ONLY PERCEIVES HIS TRUE CONDITION AND SEES THE GLORY OF CHRIST WHEN ANOINTED WITH SPIRITUAL EYESALVE

Mark 8:22-25 (Men as trees)

This case of the blind man clearly sets forth the difference between the nation Israel and the disciples. The nation, as such were in total blindness. The disciples, though true believers in the Lord, at that time lacked spiritual intelligence. They saw but dimly His Divine glory. They recognised and owned Him as the true Messiah, but their Jewish prejudices and habits of thought hindered them from seeing fully His further glories as the Son of Man and Son of God. For this they needed to be wholly separated from the nation; and hence the significance of the Lord's act in leading the man out of the town.

At the first touch the man's sight was received, but he had not at once the skill to use the sight. He said, *"I see men as trees walking."* The disciples were in like condition spiritually. They were hindered from discerning the glory of the Lord by having an exalted sense of the greatness and importance of man.

We need, not only the grace that gives sight, but the further grace to use the sight that we may see *"every man clearly"* — to see men as they really are, and to see ourselves in all our weakness, and then above all to see Jesus in all His perfection.

In Christ's words to Laodicea He says; *"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. (Revelation 3:17, 18)*

THE CONCLUSION OF THE TRIAL OF MAN UNDER LAW

(ISRAEL, REPRESENTATIVE OF MAN WITH EVERY PRIVILEGE)

Isaiah 5:1-7 (The Vine of God)

Isaiah 5 begins with what may be called, The Song of Isaiah. Israel had been Jehovah's vineyard, and He had ordered everything in their favour. A very fruitful spot had been their location with all necessary equipment. The law, given through Moses, had fenced them about, so as to protect them from contamination from outside, if they had observed it.

Moreover they were a *"choicest vine,"* for they had descended from Abraham, one of God's choicest saints. Thus everything had been in their favour. What was the result?

There were results, but of a wholly worthless and evil sort. Where judgment should have been, oppression was found: where righteousness, only a cry of distress.



Isaiah's song ends with the prophet giving figurative language for the hard, plain facts of Israel's sin.

Six times over does he utter a "Woe" upon them in **verses 8-25**, listing their moral evils that stirred the Divine wrath.

- The **first** woe is flung at the men for grasping after covetousness, who aimed at monopolizing houses and lands for themselves.
- The **second** woe condemns them for drunkenness and being given to pleasures.
- The **third** woe speaks of sinfulness in defiance of God who sees all things.
- The **fourth** woe speaks of perverting good and evil.
- The **fifth** woe condemns their pride and having confidence in themselves and not God.
- The **last** woe speaks of false judgments giving reward to the wicked. Therefore judgment in the form of desolation for both houses and lands would fall upon them.

Do not these sins speak to our consciences? Our hearts are most definitely the same! We have been given more light and are thus more responsible.

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD ON MAN

Isaiah 1:28-31; 2:11-17; 6:13; 10:33;

Isaiah has much more to say using the allegory of the tree about God's judgement on man according to the flesh.



“And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen. For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water. And the strong

shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.” (Isaiah 1:28-31)

“The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.” (Isaiah 2:11-17)

“But a tenth part shall still be therein, and it shall return and be eaten; as the terebinth and as the oak whose trunk remaineth after the felling: the holy seed shall be the trunk thereof.” (Isaiah 6:13 JND)

“Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.” (Isaiah 10:33)

CHRIST THE MAN AFTER GOD’S OWN HEART

Psalm 1; Jeremiah 17:7-9

The godly man in the midst of an ungodly world is pictured waiting for the government of God to deal with the wicked, and bring the righteous into blessing.

The moral character of the man who will inherit earthly blessing, through the government of God, is pictured. This has practical instruction for us now as we follow in His footsteps.

The psalm sets forth Christ in all of His perfection and the principles that are true of those who fear God at any period during the rejection of Christ.



Nevertheless, in its strict interpretation, the psalm has in view the godly Jewish remnant who find themselves in the midst of a nation in public revolt against God and His Anointed. It sets forth the moral traits of this godly remnant in Christ, and the governmental dealings of God, by which the wicked will be judged, establishing the godly in blessing upon the earth.

This moral character was seen in all its perfection in Christ Himself, who identified Himself with the godly remnant of the Jews.

(v. 1) The ungodly are viewed as in the ascendant. They have their counsels; their way of carrying out their plans; and they sit at ease in the place of power, scornful of the authority of God. As well in these circumstances we have depicted the outer life, the inner life, and the prosperity of the godly man. His outer life is marked by complete separation from the world around. He has no part in its counsels, its ways, or its godless ease.

(v. 2) His separation, however, is not merely outward and formal; it is accompanied by an inner life of devotedness to God. His delight is in the law of the Lord; and the Word that he delights in becomes the subject of his meditation day and night.

(v. 3) Further, his life is one of dependence upon the unfailing sources of supply in God like a tree drawing its sustenance from the rivers of water. Moreover, this separation from evil, devotedness to God, and dependence upon God, leads to a fruitful life. It develops a beautiful character that is fruit in the sight of God. Further, before man, his profession of godliness, set forth by the "*leaf,*" is not marred, or withered, by any inconsistencies. Finally, he is blessed in all that he does.

(vv. 4-5) It is far otherwise with the ungodly. They may appear to be established in the place of authority, sitting at their ease. Nevertheless, in the government of God they will be driven away like the chaff before the wind. For the present the wicked may prosper, and the godly suffer, and thus the government of God may appear to have failed. This manifests the important principles that, for the full display of God's holy government, whether in the blessing of the godly, or in the dealing with the wicked, we must await God's intervention in judgment in the day to come.

Then it will be seen that the ungodly will not stand in the judgment; whereas the godly will be established and come into display, and blessing, in the congregation of the righteous.

(v. 6) In the meantime the godly soul has the comfort of the secret approbation of the Lord. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, and that which the Lord approves will abide — all other will perish.

CHRIST, MAN'S ONLY HOPE

Job 14:7-8; Luke 23:31; Isaiah 53:1-2, 3-12; 11:1-2; 61:3

Our responsibility in Adam has been taken up and met in Christ and by Him while upon the accursed tree for *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."* **Gal. 3:13**



But now, with all responsibilities met, with the first man ended in God's sight and the bringing in of a second Man, *"the Lord from heaven,"* God has been glorified. He only, the second Man, now stands before God; and He Himself has met all the **claims** of justice for the responsible man. He who has also, as man, perfectly met the **heart** of God, has it as His right to take of the *"tree of life"* and to give it to all who come to God, through Christ's work, in faith. He is the *"tender plant," "the root out of a dry ground."* **Is. 53:2**

In **Psalm 16:11**, Christ thus speaks: *"Thou wilt show me the path of life;" and again, "I lay down my life that I might take it again."* (**John 10: 17**)

Thus we see God's one central thought - to establish everything in heaven and earth upon CHRIST. *"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him."* (**Eph 1:10**)

God will have Christ as the centre of all His ways of grace to man throughout eternity.

All therein are for His enjoyment and He, in perfect grace hands these things to us associating us with Himself; as Eve was co-sharer with Adam.

In **Psalm 21:2, 4** Jesus is before us as the One who has acquired, as Man, the right to life: *"Thou hast given Him His heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of His lips . . . He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it Him, even length of days for ever and ever."*

To this the apostle refers also in **Heb. 5: 7** and being heard, **Psalm 22:21b, 22**, *"from the horns of the unicorns,"* He associates us in all that blessing into which He then enters as Man.

"I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee" - fulfilled in **John 20: 17**.

In *that* song grace God gives us the privilege to join.

We can see the perfect place of rest, before God, into which our Lord has entered now, along with those for whom He has secured it. God is now our Father!

OUR LIFE IN CHRIST AND OUR INHERITANCE

1 Kings 21:1-16; John 15:1-8

"And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." Vs 1-3

"And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died." Vs 11, 12

During the tribulation period the godly remnant (the seed of Jehovah) will learn from the Scriptures about their Messiah and turn to Him who they once rejected. In doing so they will be terribly persecuted, even unto death, as indicated in the story of Naboth whose name means "Seed of Jehovah". Although he is killed he is with his Lord like the martyrs in **Revelation 11**.

He valued his inheritance and would not give it up just as the godly remnant during the tribulation along with their brethren. They will be brought back from the four corners of the earth at the very end of the tribulation and will enter into the earthly millennial kingdom. What a day it will be for Christ!

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." (John 15:1)

The Lord, when He was upon earth, said He was the true Vine and His disciples were the branches. There could not and cannot be any fruit-bearing but by abiding in Him. We must be saved and also be in communion with Him to bring forth fruit for God.

When the Lord Jesus spoke of Himself as "the true Vine," the minds of His disciples perhaps turned back to Isaiah chapter 5, as ours also may do. Israel was the picked sample of humanity in which the trial of the whole race took place. The condemnation of Israel is the condemnation of all of us. We learn that nothing for God can come out of the activity of the flesh and that in the cross of Christ the old man was formally condemned root and branch.

If we are to bring forth fruit for God's glory and the glory of our Lord Jesus we must abide in Him by the Holy Spirit. We must be in communion with Him so that our actions are righteous and according to the Word of God and our motives are pure, produced by love for Christ.

The first man and his race are condemned and rejected and the Second Man, and those who are of Him and in Him are accepted and established forever.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved... In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." Eph. 1:4-6, 11, 12

FOREVER WITH THE LORD

REV. 21:1-7, 27; 22:1-5 (THE HEAVENLY PARADISE OF GOD)

Those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will enter the holy city where we learn the everlasting provision for the sustainment of the life. The life of believers is indeed eternal life, but none the less it is a dependent life; it is not life apart from Christ. *"The river"* and *"the tree"* are symbols that very blessedly bring Christ before our souls. Further, they speak of Christ in connection with *"life,"* for the river is the *"river of water of life,"* and the tree is *"the tree of life."*

Christ is not only the fountain of life through whom we receive life, according to His own touching words, *"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,"* but, as the river of life He is the One that sustains the life He gives. The Apostle Paul can say, *"Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me". Gal. 2: 20)*

The new life is sustained by Christ in all His wondrous love as the object before the soul. Alas! it may be but feebly that we keep our eyes on Christ, and thus feebly live the new life we have. In the day of glory the new life will be sustained and enjoyed to the full as, without let or hindrance, we shall have Christ before the soul and thus drink of the river of water of life.

Moreover, the river of life is *"clear as crystal."* Any little reflection of Christ seen in one another will help to sustain the new life; but, in ourselves, the stream is often fouled and muddied with the things of earth, and hence reflects little of the loveliness of Christ. In Christ the river of water of life is *"clear as crystal."* *"He is altogether lovely."* **Song of Solomon 5:16**

The river proceeds from *"the throne of God and of the Lamb."* God is the blessed source of this life, for it is the *"eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began."* But it comes to us through Christ as the Lamb — the One who was *"lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

If the life in us is a dependent life, it is also a fruitful life.

If Christ is the *river of life* from which we drink to sustain life, He is also **the tree of life** on which we feed in order that our lives may be fruitful.

Even now, if like the bride of the Song, we sit down under His shadow, we shall find His fruit sweet to our taste, and abiding in His love we shall bear fruit as in our little measure we reflect His excellencies.

In the day of glory there will be nothing to hinder our souls delight in feeding on Christ. No longer will there be "*Cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life,*" for the tree will be "*in the midst of the street,*" open and free to all in that fair city.

The fruit, too, is not only free; it is always available, for the tree of life "*yielded her fruit every month.*"

Thus, as we look on to this glorious city, we see that it is God's eternal purpose that the saints shall find in Christ the One that sustains life, and makes the life beautiful with the comeliness that He has put upon us.

If this is His purpose for us in glory, it is His desire for us even now.

Oh! may we may drink of the water of life now, feeding upon the tree of life, for very soon it will be our eternal portion.

Little Flock 216 Stanza 3

O cross of Christ ! O glorious tree !

What place can be compared with thee,

Where God's own Son was crucified,

And for our sins a ransom died ?

J. D. Deck

