



Of Men and Trees

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*And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every **tree** that is pleasant to the sight, and **good** for food; the **tree** of life also in the midst of the garden, and the **tree** of **knowledge of good and evil**. Genesis 2:9 KJV*

Trees in Scripture are much more than scenery! They are a metaphor for God's and mankind's ways. We can learn much about what it means to grow toward or away from godliness as we consider them. Trees teach about maturity, wise and unwise counsel, important both for those who lead and those who are led.

¹ *Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;*
² *But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.*
³ *He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.*
⁴ *The ungodly are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.*
⁵ *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*

⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.
Psalm 1 NKJV

*For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river,
And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in
the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.
Jeremiah 17:8 NKJV*

Isaiah tells us that our God is one who tells the end out of the beginning (Is. 41:26-whole chapter for context) confirming Job's entire message of submission to the One who created all things which is once again confirmed in John. (John 1:1-5,14) To understand the message of trees, let's begin at the beginning.

Tree is "etz" in Hebrew, Strong's #6086 which refers to its "upright firmness". Elders of a tribe are said to be like trees, firm and upright in their wise counsel. "Etzah" Strong's #6097 is derived from etz and means "counsel" and could be either wise or unwise. Ancient Hebrew letters show a further connection to "cover" -- the wings of a bird covering young or a tree providing covering.

This sense of "covering" is the use of authority to protect and keep something, as in the picture of the original intent for Lucifer, the covering cherub.

¹¹ Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹² "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

*" You were the seal of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*

¹³ *You were in Eden, the garden of God;*

Every precious stone was your covering:

*The sardius, topaz, and diamond,
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,*

Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.

The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes

Was prepared for you on the day you were created.

¹⁴ ***" You were the anointed cherub who covers;
I established you;***

You were on the holy mountain of God;

You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.

¹⁵ *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created,
Till iniquity was found in you.*

¹⁶ *" By the abundance of your trading
You became filled with violence within,
And you sinned;*

Therefore I cast you as a profane thing

Out of the mountain of God;

And I destroyed you, O covering cherub,

*From the midst of the fiery stones.
17 “ Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor;
I cast you to the ground,
I laid you before kings,
That they might gaze at you.
Ezekiel 28 NKJV*

The concept of “covering” is pictured many times in Scripture, both when it was provided and when not. The King of Egypt is likened to a tree in this sense, too; beginning with goodness of intent, and eventually falling in pride.

1 Now it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 “Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude:

*‘ Whom are you like in your greatness?
3 Indeed Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon,
With fine branches that shaded the forest,
And of high stature;
And its top was among the thick boughs.
Ezekiel 31:1-3 NKJV*

see SAM teaching on “Restraint” and “Nakedness” for more information pertaining to this sense of “covering.”

In rebellion these leaders “covered” themselves. Our adversary covered for himself rather than Creation and thus lost his position. **He desires others to follow in this same unwise counsel, as first happened under a tree.** The King of Egypt is another example of the same process.

In the Garden there were two trees of importance; the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2 & 3) The tree of life is a picture of our Messiah, confirmed in imagery from Isaiah 11:1-2; which speaks of the spirits of God resting on Him—three pairs of a total of six, resting on the central governance of the Holy Spirit.

*1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,
And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.
2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
NASB*

This picture can be seen in the golden lampstand, one piece yet 6 branches with a main stem. A lampstand, or menorah, is a picture of a tree of life, too; and is connected with the wise counsel of His spirits. Although the way to it is now protected, it is referred to many times throughout Scripture right up to the assurance that those who keep the commandments of God will once again have the right to it.

¹⁴*Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to **the tree of life**, and may enter by the gates into the city.*

Rev. 22:14 NASB

Proverbs 1 lists these spirits as characteristic of one who is wise, learning God's ways, and then notes the opposite.

¹*The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:*

²*To know wisdom and instruction,*

To discern the sayings of understanding,

³*To receive instruction in wise behavior,*

Righteousness, justice and equity;

⁴*To give prudence to the naive,*

To the youth knowledge and discretion,

⁵*A wise man will hear and increase in learning,*

And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel,

⁶*To understand a proverb and a figure,*

The words of the wise and their riddles.

⁷*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;*

Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 1: 1-7 NASB

Psalm 1, cited earlier, compares a man who honors the commandments of God with a tree planted by water while one who does not is unrooted chaff blown away. We see a direct comparison of the 7 characteristics in opposition to Messiah's wise counsel in Solomon's words:

¹⁶*There are six things which the LORD hates,*

Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:

¹⁷*Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,*

And hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸*A heart that devises wicked plans,*

Feet that run rapidly to evil,

¹⁹*A false witness who utters lies,*

And one who spreads strife among brothers.

Proverbs 6:16-19 NASB

Haughty eyes, lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans... Line them up under Isaiah's words and see how each of these is contrary to reliance on the 7 spirits of Messiah. (Haughty eyes vs. wisdom; lying tongue vs. understanding... The heart lines up under the central Holy Spirit.)

Although the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is never mentioned **by name** again its presence is indirectly or subtly found in this group of behaviors God hates. . Subtlety is related to nakedness and cunning, being uncovered. (Strong's #5903) In blunt summary, they represent the same thing that happened in the Garden, when satan caused Eve to doubt God's good character and led her to use her own reasoning, which led to eating of that **other** tree; what I have come to see as the tree of death.

Paul confirms this in Romans 1:18-32 which identifies these traits once again as characteristic of those who do not draw on wise counsel, but unwise counsel or "fruit" from this tree of death.

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. NKJV

Self sufficiency, when we see our own reasoning ability as first in importance over and against God's Word, is a fruit of this tree of death. Solomon confirmed this in Proverbs 1:29-33 as he described both those who reject the leading of YHWH and those who listen to it. Do you see the parallel with the message of the two trees here?

²⁹ Because they hated knowledge
And did not choose the fear of the LORD,
³⁰ They would have none of my counsel
And despised my every rebuke.

³¹ Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.

³² For the turning away of the simple will slay them,
And the complacency of fools will destroy them;

³³ *But whoever listens to me will dwell safely,
And will be secure, without fear of evil.”*
NKJV

Shepherds: which “tree” counsel are you eating from? What kind of counsel do you offer those who look to you for covering?

People: which “tree” counsel are you eating from? What kind of counsel do you receive from those you look to?

May we be found under the wise counsel and covering of the tree of life, our Messiah!