

DOCTRINE OF TREES

1. Definition:
 - a. A woody perennial plant having a singular and usually elongated main stem or trunk, generally with only a few or no branches on its lower part. (Webster)
 - b. Something in the form or resembling a tree, such as a diagram or graph that branches, usually from a single stem or any multi-branched system. (Webster)

2. Vocabulary:
 - a. δένδρον - dendron - (Greek noun) - tree (Matt.3:10)
 - b. ζύλον - xulon - (Gk. n.) - wood, tree, cross (Gal. 3:13)
 - c. עץ - 'etz - (Hebrew noun) - tree (Gen. 2:9); wood, stick (Ezek. 37:16ff)
 - d. אילן - 'ilan - (Aramaic. noun) - tree (Dan. 4:10ff)

3. The word “tree” is used in the Bible three ways:
 - a. Literal:
 - (1) trees - (Gen. 2:9; Rev. 7:1)
 - (2) objects of wood - (Rev. 18:12)
 - b. Metaphoric:
 - (1) of men - (Jer. 5:14; Mark 8:24)
 - (2) of a king - (Dan. 4:10-22)
 - (3) of nations - (Ezek 31:3-18; Hosea 9:10; Joel 1:7)
 - c. Technical:
 - (1) “*tree of life*” (TOL) - (Gen. 2:9b)
 - (2) “*tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” (TOTKOGAE) - (Gen. 2:9c)
 - (3) the tree of Calvary, “*the cross*” - (lit. “wood” - Acts 5:30; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24)

4. There are (4) categories of trees mentioned in the Bible. (Gen. 2:9)
 - a. Trees that are “*pleasing to the sight*”
 - b. Trees that are “*good for food*”
 - c. “*...the tree of life*” (TOL)
 - d. “*...the of the knowledge of good and evil*” (TOTKOGAE)

5. There are over (20) specific species of trees mentioned in the scriptures besides the TOL and the TOTKOGAE. Some of these have specific symbolic and/or spiritual significances.
 - a. Example #1 - the **cyprus** and the **myrtle** are to “be a memorial to the Lord” during the millennial kingdom and “for an everlasting sign.” (Isa. 55:13)
 - b. Example #2 - the **fig tree** and the **olive tree** are used by the Lord to depict the nation of Israel. (the “fig tree” - Jer. 8:13; 24:2-10; 29:17; Hosea 9:10; Joel 1:7, 12; and the “olive tree” - Psa. 52:8; Hosea 14:6; Zech. 4:3-14; Rom. 11:17, 24)

6. Trees and the wood thereof are used for many things:
 - a. The Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:5, 10; Deut. 10:1)
 - b. Weapons (Num. 35:18; 1 Sam. 17:7)
 - c. Idols (Deut. 4:28; 28:36, 64; 29:17; Isa. 44:19; 45:20; Jer. 10:3ff)
 - d. Musical instruments (2 Sam. 6:5)
 - e. Building materials (1 Kings 6:31ff; Neh. 2:8)
 - f. Gallows (Esther 5:14ff)
 - g. Furniture (Song of Solomon 3:9)
 - h. Alter of wood (Ezekiel 41:22)

7. There are three great **extended metaphoric passages** in the Old Testament:
 - a. The **“stick of Joseph”** and the **“stick of Judah.”** (Ezek. 37:15-28)
 - b. The **nation of Assyria** is like “a cedar (tree) in Lebanon,” similarly, “so is Pharaoh and all his multitude!” (Ezek. 31:2-18)
 - c. The tree which represents **Nebuchadnezzar** and **his kingdom** both historically and prophetically in his dream from God. (Dan. 4:10-26)

8. Jesus uses certain trees as **metaphors in His parables**:
 - a. **Green tree** -figurative for life and prosperity, used of Jesus Christ and Israel in prosperity in their own land. (Luke 23:31 with Ezekiel 20:47; Hosea 14:8)
 - b. **Dry tree** - figurative of guilt and death, used of the horrors of the Roman devastation in AD 70. (Luke 23:31; Isa. 56:3-5)
 - c. **Mustard tree** - figurative of very small, almost insignificant things that have great value and produce large and long term growth and results, used for the kingdom of God. (Luke 13:18, 19; Matt. 13:31, 32)
 - d. **Fig tree** - figurative of prosperity and special purpose, used of the nation, Israel. (Jer. 8:13; 24:4-10)
 - (1) Israel’s rejection of Messiah - (Luke 13:6-9; Matt. 21:18-21; Mk. 11:12-14)
 - (2) Israel in “the tribulation” - (Matt. 24:29, 32-34; Mk. 13:28-30; Lk. 21:29, 30)
 - e. **All trees** - figurative of many nations (Luke 21:29)

9. Trees that are good for food are utilitarian in that they produce fruit. (Matt.7:17; Luke 6:44) Each tree produces its own fruit. (James 3:12a)
 - a. Fruit bearing trees are used metaphorically:
 - (1) Believers producing divine good. (Matt. 7:17; 12:33; Luke 6:43, 44; Psa. 1:3; Jer. 17:8)
 - (2) Carnal believers and unbelievers producing rotten fruit or no fruit at all. (Matt. 7:15-17; 12:33; Jude 12)
 - b. Fruit, of course, is metaphoric for divine production resulting from the ministry of God the Holy Spirit in the life. (Psa. 1:3; Jer. 17:8; John 15:2-8, 16; Gal. 5:22)

10. Cutting down a tree is metaphoric for God's divine judgment of people. (Ezek. 31:12; Dan. 4:14, 23; Matt. 3:10; 7:19; Luke 3:9; 13:7)
11. Trees are worshipped and used in worship among the pagan cultures.
 - a. For the idols of worship. (Isa. 44:9-19; Jer. 10:3-8)
 - b. For the places of worship. (Isa. 1:29-31; 57:5; Ezek. 6:13; 20:28; Hosea 4:11-13)
12. The trees in the garden of Eden: (Gen. 2:9)
 - a. In the "Age of Innocence" or perfect environment (P.E.), the man and the woman lived in Eden, a garden spot on Earth filled with trees provided by God.
 - b. The man and the woman had a perfect relationship with God in this place.
 - c. They were given a perfect environment in which to live.
 - d. They were given the first three categories of trees for:
 - (1) Pleasure - trees pleasing to the sight (Gen. 2:9a)
 - (2) Food - trees good for food (Gen. 2:9c)
 - (3) Capacity for enjoying life - TOL (Gen. 2:9b)
 - e. The man and the woman had perfect freedom, that is, "free will." (Gen. 2:16)
 - f. Perfect life and perfect environment in the garden, as well as the perpetuation of these things in time and eternity, were contingent upon man's decision with regard to the fourth tree. (Gen. 2:9; 3:22)
 - g. The man and the woman were forbidden to eat of the fourth tree, the "TOTKOGAE." (Gen. 2:17)
13. The last two categories of trees in Eden, the TOL and the TOTKOGAE, set up a test of man's "free will" (volition) in human history.
 - a. Positive volition is expressed by the TOL (Gen. 2:9; 3:22, 24)
 - b. Negative volition is expressed by the TOTKOGAE (Gen. 2:9, 17)
14. When the woman sinned first through ignorance (Gen.3:6; 2 Cor. 11:3), and then the man sinned through cognizance (Rom. 5:12, 19; 1 Tim. 2:13, 14), they were driven out of the garden of Eden and they were separated from the "Tree of Life", so that they would not live forever in their fallen state (Gen. 3:22, 24).
15. The "Tree of Life" is not seen again until the eternal state. (Rev. 22:2, 14, 19) (Possibly in the "Millennium," see Ezek. 47:7, 12)
 - a. All believers are promised access to the Tree of Life. (Rev. 2:7 with 1 Jn. 5:1-5)
 - b. "The Tree of Life" is now in the "Paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7) probably in the 3rd heaven i.e., the throne room of God.
16. The "Tree of Life" after the fall is **related to the cross** which becomes the only way of eternal life (everlasting life).
 - a. In perfect environment (PE) , man could eat of the TOL without compromising the integrity of God; that is, God is perfect; man was created perfect.

- b. But after the fall of man, God could not permit man to eat of the TOL without compromising His integrity because of man's sin (i.e., the sin barrier); that is, God is perfect, man is imperfect; and therefore, perfect God could not have fellowship with imperfect man.
- c. Because of God's integrity a **new tree** was put into existence, "The Cross."
 - (1) σταυρός (stauros) - 1 Cor. 1:17, 18; Gal. 6:12, 14; Eph. 2:16; Phil. 2:8; 3:18; Col.1:20; Heb. 12:2;
 - (2) ξύλον (xulon) - Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24
- d. The cross satisfied the perfect character of God - reconciliation (2 Cor.5:18, 19):

<u>Barrier</u>	<u>Solution</u>
(1) Sin (Rom 3:23; 5:12c)	Redemption (Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col.1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19)
(2) Penalty of Sin (Rom. 5:12, 23a)	Expiation - "payment for sins" (1 Cor. I 6:20; 7:23; 15:3 Col. 1:20; 1 Pet.1:19; 2:24; Rev. 1:5)
(3) Physical birth (I Jn. 3:5-7)	Regeneration - new birth (Jn. 3:7; Titus 3:5b)
(4) Relative righteousness (Isa. 64:6b; Rom. 3:10; Ro. 9:30-33; Titus 3:5a)	Judicial imputation of righteousness, (+R) result: justification (Rom.4:3-5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:9, 16, 19)
(5) God's integrity (Ps. 11:7; Isa. 30:18; 46:19; Rom. 8:8)	Propitiation - satisfaction of God's (+R) (1 Jn. 2:2; Heb. 2:17)
(6) Position in Adam (Rom. 5:18, 19; 1 Cor. 15:22a)	Position in Christ - positional truth (1 Cor. 15:22b; 2 Cor. 5:17)

17. The **contrast** between the TOL and the TOTKOGAE becomes the contrast between the **cross** and the **TOTKOGAE**:
- a. The TOL was cut off at the fall of man, and in its place is the cross. (Gen. 3:22-24)
 - b. The TOTKOGAE represents the total manifestation of Satan's policy of evil, that is, "*kosmos diabolikus*" (KD).
 - c. The cross represents the **only alternative** to sin and evil and is the manifestation of God's grace.
 - d. While the TOTKOGAE was pleasant to the eye (Gen. 3:6; Prov. 14:12; 16:25; Heb.11:26), the cross is repugnant to:
 - (1) Israel (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:22, 23)
 - (2) Rome (Matt. 27:27, 35, 38-44)
 - (3) Disciples (Jn. 6:51, 56, 61)
 - (4) All who view it (Heb. 12:2; 13:13; 1 Cor. 1:23; Gal. 3:13; 5:11; 1 Pet. 2:7, 8)

18. When God forbid man to eat of the TOTKOGAE, Satan put all of his power and craftiness into getting man to eat from that tree. (Gen. 3:1)
19. Once man ate from the TOTKOGAE, God prohibited him from eating of the TOL in the garden but provided instead a new tree of life, “the cross”. (Gen. 3:22-24; Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29)
20. Now God commands man to eat at the cross by faith (positive volition), while Satan seeks to hinder such eating. (2 Cor. 4:4 with 1 Cor. 1:18, 19, 20)
 - a. Eating of the TOTKOGAE brought sin and spiritual death to the human race. (Gen. 2:17; 3:6; Rom. 5:12; 6:23a)
 - b. But eating of the second tree “the cross” brings salvation and eternal life. (Jn. 6:29-58, esp. vs. 28, 29, 33-35, 47-50, 58, 60, 63; Rom. 6:23b)
21. Eating of the TOTKOGAE was a tactical defeat (as it were), but the “cross” is the strategic “victory” in the angelic conflict. (1 Cor. 15:54-57; Gen. 3:15)
22. When anyone believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is eating of the TOL, i.e., “the Cross;” and he possesses everlasting life **instantly**. (Jn. 6:47-51; 20:31; 1 Jn. 5:11-13)
 - a. **NOTE:** Both “**believe**” and “**faith**” must have a working object in Greek.
 - (1) Believe - πιστεύω - pisteuo - (vb), with ἐπι, “believe **upon**”- the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31; cf. Rom. 9:32); with εἰς, “believe **into**” (Jn. 3:16; 14:1)
 - (2) Faith - πίστις - pistis (noun), with ἐν, “to have faith **in** ...”(Col. 1:4)
 - b. The object of “believing or having faith” has the merit rather than the one believing.
 - c. Faith, then, is a non-meritorious system of perception as contrasted with:
 - (1) Empiricism - perception by examination or experimentation or
 - (2) Rationalism - perception by logic, reasoning
 - d. In (Jn. 6:29-58) our Lord Jesus Christ uses “**eating**” as a metaphor of non-meritorious volition.
 - (1) Again there is no merit in the eating.
 - (2) The merit is found in what is eaten, whether it is nutritious or not.
 - e. This metaphor is carried over into the ritual memorial of the communion service. (1 Cor. 11:23-27)
 - f. Therefore, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is non-meritorious positive volition which is the only system of perception compatible with grace. (Eph. 2:8, 9)
23. When anyone rejects Christ as Savior throughout his entire life, his negative volition, perpetuated to the point of physical death, converts spiritual death into the 2nd death and the lake of fire (Jn. 3:18 with Heb. 9:26, 27; Rev. 20:13-15), and of course no access to the “**tree of life.**” (Rev. 22:15, 19)

24. Positive volition is related to the “tree of life.” (Prov. 11:30; 13:12)
- a. A positive decision for Christ as Savior is a **tree of life(s)**. That is, fruit born of witnessing “the fruit of righteousness” is a **tree of life(s)** (Prov. 11:30); therefore, positive volition toward the Lord is a TOL.
 - b. Hope postponed (extended waiting) makes the heart feeble (sick), but the object of desire or longing having been fulfilled is a **tree of life**. (Prov. 13:12)
25. Bible Doctrine (B.D.) is related to the “tree of life” in Proverbs.
- a. **B.D. believed** and stored in the soul of a believer is a **tree of life**, giving inner happiness and great capacity for life! (Prov. 3:18)
 - b. A refreshing tongue is a **tree of life**. (Prov. 15:4 James 3:2, 5a)
NOTE: Control of the tongue is the single most evident **sign of maturity** which is produced by maximum intake of B.D.
Control of the tongue is used as an example of **divine production** of the mature believer and demonstrates inner happiness and capacity for life.