

One of the greatest treasures in my life is connection with fellow preachers. These close friends with whom we can share experiences and ideas. We talk a lot about Scripture and suggest books and help each other in many ways. Tonight's lesson is born out of a texting conversation with my friend Shane Millard. He had read a book some time ago that linked together a cool concept from Genesis to Revelation. I found it intriguing and dug right in and want to share it with you.

I'm enamored by concepts that tie the books of the Bible together. I think we sometimes forget that this is not one book, not even close. It is 66 unique letters, written by no less than 40 different men, in 3 languages, from three continents, and over the course of 1600 years! Can you imagine holding a book of 66 letters dating to various times like: 400 AD, 800AD, 1200AD, 1600, 2000... and by various men from various places, and then see consistent and complimentary ideas throughout? Awesome!

Our study tonight directly links the first letter (written by Moses in the Wilderness in 1500BC) with the last letter (written by John on the isle of Patmos in 100AD). And yet, they link beautifully. I'm talking about "The Tree of Life."

The Genesis Tree of Life

1. **Gen. 2:8-9** – One of two significant trees placed in the garden.
2. **Gen. 2:16-17** – It was approved of God for Adam and Eve to eat from it.
3. **Gen. 3:22-24** – After sin, God separated man from that tree, from eternal physical life.
 - a. It seems they had not yet partaken but if they had they would have lived forever here
 - b. An angel guarded it. There was no way back to it.
4. We hear no more of it. The flood came 1650 years later and engulfed the earth.
5. The Tree of Life was lost to man. Why?
 - a. Sin brought death. The Tree removed death. So sin demanded the removal of the tree, so that the consequence of death could be paid.
 - b. So this source of life was forfeited by man's choice to defy God.
6. And, it disappears. It is never mentioned again in the entire narrative of the Old Testament. It is lost to man for over 1600 years.
 - a. And just to be clear. It is gone forever. No man, no one will live here forever. This will never be a place free of sin and therefore never suitable for eternal existence.

The Proverbial Tree of Life.

1. Except, by way of a figure in Solomon's book of Proverbs. Solomon uses it four times in his letter. The only other four times the term is used in the whole Old Testament. But it must have held it's value in the story telling through the ages, for the Hebrews knew of it 3000 years after the garden, and 500 years after Moses wrote about it in Genesis.
 - a. **Proverbs 3:18** – It is used as a reference of the value of WISDOM (life saver!)
 - b. **Pro. 11:25-30** – The fruit of wisdom, good choices are life givers, savers!
 - c. **Pro. 13:12-17** – The produce of good choices, attained outcomes is life!
 - d. **Pro. 15:1-4** – All of this is possible if we watch what we say! It'll provide life!
2. SERMON! Wow. Wisdom, Wise Choices, Good Produce, Guarded Tongue... that is like... like... eating of the tree in the garden, being enriched with life that would have been forfeited otherwise. These things can improve and extend your physical life!
3. Again, these are not the recovery of the actual tree, but it is used to embolden points.

The Revelation Tree of Life

1. It isn't until Jesus speaks, not from his life, but from his throne – that we get to know about the further existence of the Tree of Life - and yes – our opportunity to access it again.
2. **Revelation 2:1-7** – Whoa. Okay, you have to understand this. This phrase has not been recorded since Solomon wrote it as a figure 1,000 years before. And to actually exist, well you have to go back 4,000 years for that.
 - a. It does exist, but it is not the same is it?
 - b. It is in heaven. It is with God in Paradise.
 - c. But it is there. It can be had again.
 - d. It did not require sinless living, which would eliminate us all.
 - e. But faith in Jesus, love for the Truth, and a willingness to Repent!
 - f. And then, in the eternity, we could reach up and partake of it!

3. Revelation 22

- a. In **Rev. 20:4** – John describes those martyred at the throne with Christ!
- b. In **Rev. 21:1-2, 20** – A city is described here. Not just in heaven, but coming down from heaven, and also called “the bride” of Christ (**v9**). I contend this letter does not end with just imagery of heaven, but imagery of the CHURCH, with it's spiritual blessings (here and forever) that extend down out of heaven.
- c. In that way, **21:22-27** – may certainly include illusions to heaven's glory, but for the first century reader, more depicted a city God established here on the earth. These are all blessings we have from God NOW in Him and will only see intensify into an indescribably eternity after this life is over.
- d. **Revelation 22:1-5** – I say that to say this – there it is! The Tree lives! The tree of which we may partake and live forever! It is in the garden as an extension of the city that has come down from heaven. At it's taste is access to eternal light and life.
- e. Folks, this tree is here! It is here, down from heaven, established by Christ, made accessible to you. At the very least, the way to it in eternity is right in front of you.
- f. Can you eat of it – now in His church and forever and ever in heaven? YES, but three things have to align, have to happen for this meal to take place:
 - i. You must Believe in Jesus – **Rev. 22:13, 16-17** – Jesus had to go first. He had to come and die and be raised and ascend and then become the light of it and then call you to come TO HIM, down the road He already traveled. And he did that.
 - ii. You must Wash your Robe – **Rev. 22:14-15 – 7:14** – be washed in the blood of the lamb. The washing of regeneration in the waters of baptism. And I would add **I John 1:7-9** – continue to go to Him for cleansing!!!
 - iii. You must Honor the Word – **Rev. 22:18-21** – While John is referencing the content of the book – first century Christians keep their robes white and have their part in the dining of the tree when they keep the Word as it is. But the same is true for us all, even centuries later. The Word is still Truth, the only Way.

Conclusion: What was sent down from heaven to the garden, the gift of eternal life, was taken away because of sin. For 4,000 years it was kept back from man, until it was extended down again once Christ had paid the price and ascended to the throne. Now, the tree is here for us again. It is right there in front on you, in Christ's Kingdom, in Christ's Church, and will be enjoyed forever in heaven. Who will repeat history and let sin keep you away? Who will make Christ's effort life for you?