

### **THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

We have seen that after God created man, He put him in front of the tree of life. God's intention was that man would partake of the tree of life, which signifies God in Christ through the Holy Spirit as life to us in the form of food. Man did not contact the tree of life, however, because the enemy of God, Satan, came in to seduce man from the tree of life and deceive him to take another source, the tree of knowledge. With this tree of knowledge there is not only evil but also good. It is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil resulting in death. Man was seduced, tempted, to partake of this tree of knowledge, and man fell.

### **THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

After the fall of man, the first thing God did for man was to provide a sacrifice. Adam enjoyed and partook of that sacrifice (Gen. 3:21). Following Adam, Abel partook of the same sacrifice (4:4). Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices (8:20). Later, Abraham followed the same steps: he built an altar and offered a sacrifice (12:7-8). Isaac (26:24-25) and Jacob (35:1, 7) also followed in the steps of their forefathers to build an altar and offer a sacrifice. The first major aspect of Christ the children of Israel enjoyed was the passover lamb (Exo. 12:3-7). From Adam to the children of Israel, the people who were chosen, elected, by God enjoyed the same sacrifice.

From Exodus 12 the children of Israel began to enjoy the lamb, which is a type of Christ. Christ Himself is the unique sacrifice, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The lamb in Exodus 12 has two aspects—the blood for redeeming outwardly and the meat for nourishing inwardly. The blood is the redeeming aspect of the lamb, and the meat is the nourishing aspect of the lamb. It was through Christ as the Lamb of God that we were brought back to enjoy Him as the tree of life once again. With the sacrifice of the passover lamb, the children of Israel enjoyed the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs (v. 8). Then they enjoyed the pillar of cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night (13:21-22), the heavenly manna (16:31), and the living water from the cleft rock (17:6). Eventually, they enjoyed all the offerings (Lev. 6:8—7:34), the priesthood (Exo. 40:13-15), the tabernacle (25:9), and all the riches of the good land (Deut. 8:7-10), and finally in the fullest way they enjoyed Christ as the temple (1 Kings 7:51). The passover lamb, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, the heavenly manna, the living water, the different types of offerings, and the rich produce of the good land are all different aspects of the tree of life. Remember that the entire Old Testament tells us one thing—that God first presented Himself as the tree of life to us that we may partake of Him as food and that we may enjoy Him as our life and everything. After man fell, God provided the lamb for man to be redeemed, and eventually, God became the very temple to man.

### **CHRIST AS THE LAMB OF GOD AND THE TEMPLE**

One day the Triune God, who is the reality of the tree of life and of all the other positive items in the Old Testament, came to be a man. He was incarnated. The Gospel of John tells us that in the beginning was the Word, the Word was God, and the Word became flesh (1:1, 14). John 1:29 tells us that this One is the Lamb of God. In John 2 the Lord reveals that He is the temple (vv. 20-22).

In Psalm 23 we first enjoy the Lord as the living pasture (v. 2), and finally we enjoy the Lord as the temple. The psalmist says, "I will dwell in the house of Jehovah / For the length of my days" (v. 6). The temple is not only the dwelling place of God but also a dwelling place to us, God's seeking ones. In John 15 the Lord Jesus told us that we have to abide in Him; then He will abide in us (vv. 4-5). We become an abode to Him, and He becomes an abode to us. This is a mutual abode. He is our abode, our dwelling place, our temple (Rev. 21:22). In John 14 He told us that in His Father's house are many abodes (v. 2). The Lord is our abode, and we are His abodes. This mutual abode indicates the mingling of the Lord as the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17) with us in our spirit. "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). The divine Spirit and the human spirit are mingled together as one spirit,

and this mingling is the mutual abode. We are the Lord's abode, and He is our abode; He and we are mingled together.

### **THE SON BEING THE FATHER**

We need to read the Gospel of John again to find out all the items that the Lord Jesus is to us. John tells us that the Word, who was God, became a man of flesh. Who is this Christ? This Christ is the very God incarnated as a man. He is the complete God and the perfect man, the God-man. Isaiah 9:6 says, "A child is born to us, / A Son is given to us; / And the government / Is upon His shoulder; / And His name will be called / Wonderful Counselor, / Mighty God, / Eternal Father, / Prince of Peace." Christ as the very God incarnated to be a man was a child born to us and a Son given to us. The Gospel of John tells us clearly that Christ is the very Son of God, but Isaiah 9:6 does not only tell us that a child is born to us whose name is called Mighty God. Isaiah 9:6 also tells us that a Son is given to us whose name is called Eternal Father.

In John 14 Philip asked the Lord Jesus to show the disciples the Father, and then they would be satisfied. Jesus responded to Philip, "Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how is it that you say, Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?" (vv. 9-10). The Father is in the Son, and the Son is the very expression of the Father. The Son cannot be separated from the Father.

Because of the limitation of our human language in describing the mystery of the Divine Trinity, we may say that the Son and the Father are two persons of the Godhead, but we cannot say that They are two separate persons. These are two persons in one reality. You can never separate the Son from the Father. If you do not have the Son, you do not have the Father (1 John 2:23). If you have the Son, you have the Father because the Father is in the Son, and the Son is the very expression, the very embodiment, and the very reality of the Father. In John 10:30 the Lord Jesus said, "I and the Father are one."

### **THE LORD BEING THE SPIRIT**

John 14 reveals that the Son is the Father and then goes on to reveal that the Son is the Spirit. The Lord told the disciples that He will ask the Father to give them another Comforter and that this Comforter is "the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you" (v. 17). The Lord continued in verse 18, "I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you." The very "He" who is the Spirit of reality in verse 17 becomes the very "I" who is the Lord Himself in verse 18. This means that after His resurrection the Lord became the Spirit of reality. First Corinthians 15:45 confirms this. In dealing with the matter of resurrection, it says, "The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit." Isaiah 9:6 is a strong verse to prove that the Son is the Father. A Son is given to us, yet His name is called Eternal Father. Another strong verse to prove that the Son is the Spirit is 2 Corinthians 3:17, which says, "The Lord is the Spirit." Second Corinthians 3:6 says, "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." Thus, the Lord is the Spirit who gives life, the life-giving Spirit.

In John 20 the Lord Jesus came to His disciples after His resurrection, breathed into them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (v. 22). The breath out of the Lord is the very Holy Spirit. Christ was incarnated to be the embodiment of the Triune God, and He became the Spirit who is the transmission of the Triune God. By the Spirit, the Lord transmits all that He is into our being. The word for *spirit* in Greek, *pneuma*, can also mean "wind," "breath," or "air." The Spirit today is like the air that we breathe. Without air, our life would be over in a matter of minutes. The air is marvelous. Its expanse is so great, yet it is so available. The Lord Jesus to us is just like the air. He breathed into the disciples and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. Our Christ is not only the Savior, the Redeemer, the Lamb who was slain, crucified, on the cross, but He is also the very God in the Son,

with the Father as His reality and the Spirit as His transmission. He comes into us as the Spirit like the air, so vast and yet so available and real. This Spirit as the air is the full reality of the Triune God.