

**HWMR: NOAH, DANIEL, AND JOB—PATTERNS OF LIVING AN
OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE TO FULFILL THE
ECONOMY OF GOD (Week 4)**

Job and the Two Trees

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9, 17; Rev. 22:1-2, 14; Job 1:1; 2:3; 42:1-6

- Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Gen. 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.
- Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- Rev. 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.
- Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.
- Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and this man was perfect and upright, and he feared God and turned away from evil.
- Job 2:3 And Jehovah said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job? For there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, though you have moved Me against him to destroy him without cause.
- Job 42:1 Then Job answered Jehovah and said,
- Job 42:2 I know that You can do all things / And that no purpose of Yours can be restrained.
- Job 42:3 Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge? / Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, / Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
- Job 42:4 Hear now, and I will speak; / I will ask of You, and You shall inform me.
- Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You;
- Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes.

Day 1

- Gen. 2:9 - And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*
- Gen. 2:17 - But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*

I. In the divine revelation there are two trees, two sources, two ways, two principles, and two consummations:

A. Two trees:

1. The **tree of life** signifies the **Triune God** as life to man in man's relationship with Him—Gen. 2:9; Psa. 36:9a.
2. The **tree of the knowledge of good and evil** signifies **Satan**, the devil, the evil one, as death to man in man's fall before God—Gen. 2:17.

The Bible is thoroughly consistent. It starts with a man in front of two trees, the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. Eventually, in Romans we see that the tree of knowledge got into man's flesh, and the tree of life got into man's spirit. The **two trees are within us Christians**. The problem today is not whether you behave yourself ethically. **The problem is whether you go to the tree of knowledge or come to the tree of life**. Day by day do you live, walk, and have your being according to the flesh or according to the spirit? If you do things according to the flesh, that means you are eating the tree of knowledge. To set your mind upon the flesh is death. Death is the issue, the result, of eating the tree of knowledge. But if you walk according to the spirit, you touch the tree of life. To set your mind upon the spirit is life, and life is always the issue, the result, of **eating the tree of life**.

We need to see that these two trees are within us. We are not in front of the two trees but **in between them**. Outwardly, we have the tree of knowledge in our flesh. Inwardly, we have the tree of life in our spirit. Now the whole situation **depends upon whether we would go to the tree of knowledge or turn to the tree of life**. Would we walk, work, and have the church life according to the flesh or according to the spirit? If we have the church life according to the flesh, the result will be death. Then our church life will kill the saints because it is not according to the spirit but according to the flesh.

My burden is that we would see that Satan is in our flesh and **Christ is in our spirit**. We have an enemy in our flesh and a dear **Savior in our spirit**. What shall we do? Would we turn to our enemy and go along with him? Would we coordinate with him or come to Christ and be one with Him? We may say, "Surely, I will not go along with Satan but go along with Christ." I know you would say this, but this is easy to say. Actually, we need a lot of defeats and failures which will force us to realize that there is no hope in the flesh. The flesh is good only to force you to turn to Christ in your spirit. (*The Flesh and the Spirit*, Chapter 2)

Day 2

Matt. 7:13-14 - Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it. Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

B. Two sources:

1. The **tree of life** is the source of **men who seek God** as life for their supply and enjoyment—John 1:4; 15:1.
2. The **tree of the knowledge of good and evil** is the source of **men who follow Satan** as their poison unto death and eternal perdition—8:44.
3. The outcome of these two sources is two kingdoms—the **kingdom of God** and the **kingdom of Satan**—Matt. 21:43; 12:26; Col. 1:13.

- C. Two ways:
 1. The first way is the **way of life**, the **constricted way**, for men to seek God, to gain God, and to enjoy God in His eternal life as the supply—Matt. 7:14; Acts 9:2; 16:17; 18:25-26; 2 Pet. 2:15, 21.
 2. The second way is the **way of death and of good and evil**, the **broad way**, for men to follow Satan to be his children—Matt. 7:13; 1 John 3:10a.
- D. Two principles:
 1. The first principle is the **principle of life**—the principle of **dependence on God**—John 15:5; Gen. 4:4.
 2. The second principle is the **principle of death and of good and evil**—the principle of **independence from God**—Jer. 17:5-6; Gen. 4:3.

We all are happy to be in the Lord's recovery and appreciate the recovery very much. But let me ask you this question: As one in the Lord's recovery, are you walking on the constricted way? We all must be able to say that we are not taking the way of Christianity, but the **way of constriction**. We are constricted on every side. Those in Christianity can use rock music or other worldly methods in their services, but we cannot, because **our way is constricted**. All young people desire to be free, that is, to put off all restriction. When the young people graduate from high school, they are like caged birds wanting to be free. However, many are so free that they have no constriction, no restriction. We in the Lord's recovery, on the contrary, are taking a constricted way. We must even have some restriction in the practice of pray-reading. In our pray-reading we should not be like worldly people at a ball game who have no restrictions. We in the Lord's recovery **must walk in our spirit**. Living in spirit and walking in spirit restrict us. Even when we are loving, rejoicing, and happy, we must be under restriction. We must not be like those who throw off all restraint in their excitement. Rather, we must be excited within the limit of the spirit. This must even be true in the meetings. Although we may fully release our spirit, we should be restricted as far as physical activity is concerned. In everything, we need to take the constricted way, not the broad way. (*Life-Study of Matthew, chapter 24*)

Day 3

Rev. 22:1-2 - And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street. And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life...

- E. The two consummations are the final outcome of the two ways men take in their relationship with God:
 1. The **consummation of God's way of life** is a city of water of life, the **New Jerusalem**—Rev. 21:2, 10-11; 22:1-2.
 2. The **consummation of the way of death and of good and evil** is a **lake of fire**—19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8.
- II. **God's intention was not to have a Job in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but a Job in the **line of the tree of life**:**
 - A. The **logic** of Job and his friends was according to the **line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**—Job 2:11—32:1.

- B. Job, like his friends, was **halted in the knowledge of right and wrong**, not knowing God's economy—4:7-8.
- C. Job and his friends were in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; God was trying to **rescue** them from that realm and **put them into the realm of the tree of life**—1:1; 2:3; 19:10.
- D. God's purpose in dealing with Job was to **turn him** from the way of good and evil to the way of life so that he might **gain God** to the fullest extent—42:1-6.

God hates to see man acting independently apart from Him. **God wants man to depend on Him**. The purpose for God to create and save man was **for man to depend on Him**. This is the meaning of the tree of life. God told Adam: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen. 2:16-17). Among all the edible trees, God specifically mentioned the tree of life in contrast to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "The tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil" (v. 9). We see from God's specific mention of the tree of life that it was the most crucial tree among all the edible trees. This was what Adam should have eaten first. What is the reason for this?

The tree of life signifies God's life—God's uncreated life. Adam was a created being; hence, he did not have this life. Although Adam was sinless, he was natural, one among all the animals; he did not have the divine life. **God's intention was for Adam to exercise his will to choose the fruit of the tree of life, thus establishing a life-relationship with Him**. This would transform him from something created by God into something born of God. God wanted Adam to refuse his created natural life, unite himself with God's life, and **live in dependence on His life every day**. This is the meaning of the tree of life. God intended that Adam would live according to a life that was not his originally. Here the significance of dependence or reliance is most obvious. When a creature lives according to his created life, he does not have to depend on anything, because life is independent and can exist by itself. But the minute a creature decides to live according to the Creator's life, he has to exercise dependence, because such a life is not in him; it is only in God. Hence, he cannot live independently from God but must depend fully on God and must have unceasing fellowship with Him. Since this life was not within Adam, he had to exercise dependence before he could receive it. Adam did not have the strength to live out this life. Hence, he had to continue to exercise a dependence on God so that he could be preserved. The condition to receive is the same as the condition to be preserved. **Adam had to depend on God every day so that he could have the life of God every day**. (*Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 1) Vol. 08: The Present Testimony (1), Chapter 6*)

Day 4

John 1:4 - In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 15:1 - I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.

III. We need a vision of the tree of life—a **vision of God in Christ as our food—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:1-2, 14:**

- A. The tree of life signifies the **Triune God in Christ** to **dispense** Himself into His chosen people as life in the **form of food**—Gen. 2:9.
- B. The **tree of life** is the **center** of the universe:
 - 1. According to the purpose of God, the earth is the center of the universe, the garden of Eden is the center of the earth, and the tree of life is the center of the garden of Eden; hence, the **universe is centered on the tree of life**.
 - 2. Nothing is more central and crucial to both God and man than the tree of life—3:22; Rev. 22:14.
- C. The New Testament reveals that **Christ is the fulfillment** of the figure of the tree of life—John 1:4; 15:5.

Day 5

Rev. 22:14 - Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

- D. All the aspects of the **all-inclusive Christ** revealed in the Gospel of John are the **outcome of the tree of life**—6:48; 8:12; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6.
- E. The enjoyment of the tree of life will be the **eternal portion** of all of God's redeemed—Rev. 22:1-2, 14:
 - 1. The **tree of life fulfills** for eternity what God intended for man from the beginning—Gen. 1:26; 2:9.
 - 2. The fruits of the tree of life will be the **food for God's redeemed in eternity**; these fruits will be continually fresh, being produced every month—Rev. 22:2.

Day 6

Prov. 16:25 - There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end of it is the ways of death.

John 11:25 - ...I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live.

Rom. 8:2 - For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

IV. When we were regenerated, **Christ planted Himself into us as the tree of life—John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5-6, 15; 11:25; 15:1, 5:**

- A. In our **practical living, we may not be** in the line of the tree of life but in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—Prov. 16:25; 21:2.

- B. Job pursued something in the realm of ethics, but we, the believers in Christ, should **pursue something in the realm of God**—1 Cor. 15:28; Eph. 3:16-21.
- C. In our daily living, we should not be in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but in the **realm of the life-giving Spirit**—1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2.
- D. God's intention is to **tear us down** and **rebuild us** with Himself as our life and nature so that we may be persons absolutely one with Him—2 Cor. 1:9; 4:14.

The same is true with God's demand on us today. In Genesis, figuratively speaking, God's life and man's life were only planted together in the midst of a garden. **Today God's life and man's life are both within us.** The saved believers are all regenerated, that is, we are all born of God and have established a life-relationship with God. The created life is within us and so is the Creator's life. The present problem is whether or not we live according to God's life and completely depend on God in our daily living. **As our physical body cannot survive without the created life, in the same manner our spirit cannot survive without the Creator's life.**

Brothers, God wants us to have **no activity apart from Him**. He wants us to die to ourselves. He wants us to attach ourselves to Him as if we could not even move without Him. God does not want us to initiate anything by ourselves, but He wants us to act according to His instruction in everything. **God wants us to realize that we are helpless and that we should depend on Him wholeheartedly.** We should reject any independent act apart from God. It is altogether of the self to do anything, try to do anything, or have done anything without praying, without waiting for God, without seeking His will and clearly understanding it, without recognizing the self's weaknesses and impotence, without helplessly turning to and depending on God, and without the assurance (through the inspection of the conscience) that nothing of the self is involved. In God's eyes, without this assurance, what we do just involves sins. Brothers, God does not care how well you have done something; He only cares about who does it. God will not be moved just because we have done something good. Besides His own work, God is not satisfied with anything else. You may act, work, labor, or suffer for Christ and His church, but unless you are certain that this is what God wants you to do, and unless you realize your own inability in fear and trembling and turn to God to work through Him, in God's eyes, you are sinning just like Adam. Brothers, stop your own work! Never think that you can do something just because it is good. God's view is not as small as ours! You can labor, and you can do something according to your own delights; but you will not have any spiritual usefulness at all. (*Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 1) Vol. 08: The Present Testimony (1), Chapter 6*)