

You Can Access the Tree of Life Today!

Description

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A study related to the SDA
Sabbath School Lesson for 2021, 4th Quarter
Present Truth In Deuteronomy
Week 8
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This week's lesson is entitled, "Choose Life." Sunday's lesson is on the Tree of Life. The lesson notes that the tree of life is mentioned both in Genesis and Revelation.

One of the verses the lesson asks us to read is Revelation 22:2. It reads,

2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The lesson goes on to say,

"Perhaps the message is that though we were supposed to have access to the tree of life, because of sin we lost that access; then, at the end, once the sin problem had been ultimately and completely finished, thanks to Jesus and the plan of salvation, the redeemed, those who chose life, will have access to the tree of life as we were supposed to from the start." Sabbath School Quarterly Lesson, Sunday, November 14, 2021

So, today we are going to consider something you will no doubt find very exciting. While we may not be able to eat the literal fruit of a life-giving tree this side of the pearly gates, we will prove through the ancient scriptures and the writings of Ellen White that, in another sense, we can access the tree of life now, under certain conditions.

So, to start, let's read what Genesis says about the tree of life. Genesis 3:23-24 reads,

²⁴So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

The Hebrew word here translated 'keep' is just the simple Hebrew word for 'guard.' As an example, it's used in 1 Kings 14:27 to refer to those who guard the doorway of the king's house. Obviously, no one thinks that this implies that no one was ever allowed to enter the king's house. If that was the case, why even have a doorway? Building a wall in its place would serve that function much better. Having people guard the doorway to the king's house doesn't mean 'no entrance;' it just means 'selective entrance.' Potentially some could enter, but they have to be allowed. Likewise, having cherubs guarding the way to the tree of life doesn't mean no one could ever enter under any conditions; it just means that entrance isn't freely granted; one has to be allowed in. And Ellen White described how, through Christ and the Holy Spirit, we can actually gain access to the tree of life. She said,

“‘To all who believe, He [Jesus] is as the tree of life in the Paradise of God.’ [Ezekiel 47:1, 2]. His branches reach to this world, that the blessings which He has purchased for us may be brought within our reach. ... He has given us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which will present to us the precious fruit from the tree of life. From this tree we may pluck and eat, and we may then guide others to it, that they also may eat.” Ellen White, My Life Today, p. 50

So, here we see that today, through Christ and the Holy Spirit, we may pluck and eat of the tree of life! Christ has purchased for us blessings from the tree of life, He has brought the branches within our reach! But not everyone can eat from this tree. It is reserved for those who submit themselves to the work of the Holy Spirit, which as we know is to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). In other words, it is kept for those who are willing to be reproofed and corrected...

Ellen said,

“The true object of reproof is gained only when the wrongdoer himself is led to see his fault and his will is enlisted for its correction.” Ellen White, Education, 291.6

It is kept for those who are willing to learn and unlearn...

Ellen said,

“You have many things to learn, and much to unlearn. You will have to sit at the feet of the great Teacher and learn of him concerning themes that are higher and nobler than the themes which now engage your attention.” Ellen White, ST August 27, 1894, par. 6

It is kept for those who are willing to put away all preconceived ideas, and come to the tree with an unbiased mind...

Ellen said,

“You must lay yourselves and your opinions on the altar of God, put away your preconceived ideas, and let the Spirit of Heaven guide you into all truth.” Ellen White, 1 SM 412.3

We, as Laodiceans, think we have need of nothing. But we are blind and do not know it. We, as Laodiceans, are truly unwilling to learn and unlearn, we are inclined to hold on to our preconceived ideas, and do not like reproof and correction. This is just the truth – it is what Jesus, the true witness said about the SDA church, so, should we disagree with Jesus? Or accept His rebuke? Do we want to eat from the tree of life or not? To do so, we must accept the loving rebuke of Jesus.

Now Jesus, when he was on this earth, ate from the tree of life. Ellen said,

“They [the Jewish leaders] even regarded the precepts of men more highly than the word of God, and they were greatly annoyed at the clear penetration of Jesus in distinguishing between the false and the true. ... They recognized that His education was of a higher type than their own. But they did not discern that he had access to the tree of life, a source of knowledge of which they were ignorant.” Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 86

We can eat from the tree of life in the same way Jesus did if we are not ignorant of the source.

Gosh, are we ignorant of this source of knowledge? According to the True Witness, Jesus, in His rebuke of the Laodicean SDA church in Revelation 3, yes, yes we are. If you can concede that this is the case, you can then awake out of your slumber and follow the council of Jesus – you can buy eye salve so that you can see.

There are many things still hidden from our eyes. Scripture declares that there still remains truths to be revealed about things which God has hidden. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.” (Proverbs 25:2). “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna...” (Revelation 2:17).

Ellen said,

“The Lord is constantly giving. He pours down the rain and the sunshine. He promises to give to his people the privilege of eating of the tree of life, and the hidden manna.” RH December 17, 1889, Art. A, par. 3

We may now have access to the Tree of Life through the Holy Spirit guiding the church. How does the Holy Spirit guide the church? Through the prophets.

Acts 28:25 reads,

25 So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers...

Mark 12:36 reads,

36 For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: “The Lord said to my Lord,
‘Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

2 Peter 1:21 reads,

21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

And Paul, as a prophet, said that he spoke the wisdom of God, the hidden wisdom, by the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 2:7 and 13 read,

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory...**13** These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Are we being taught by mere men? Or are we receiving the hidden manna, the hidden wisdom, that comes to us through the gift of a prophet in our midst? The Holy Spirit gives us hidden wisdom from the tree of life through living prophets among us.

There is so much more to this subject. For example, Proverbs 3:18 tells us that Wisdom “is a tree of life to those who take hold of her.” Who is Wisdom in Proverbs, and why is She called a tree of life, and what does this have to do with the Holy Spirit sending truth through prophets? You can continue your studies to find the answer to these questions by reading “[She is a Tree of Life](#),” by Doug Mitchell, and “[What is the Spirit of Prophecy? SDA Edition](#),” by [Trent Wilde](#).