

MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Trees Of Righteousness

Dear Friend,

In our recent letters, we have been discovering how God used His interaction with the children of Israel to paint a picture within a picture of what God has accomplished for all mankind by sending Jesus to be our deliverer. The words recorded by Moses paint a picture of Israel's natural deliverance out of Egypt, their wanderings in the wilderness, and then into the Promised Land, while simultaneously painting a spiritual picture of our deliverance.

As the Holy Ghost began unfolding another "picture in picture" image, to my surprise He proceeded to use part of that picture to reveal something completely new. We will begin by looking briefly at the waters of Marah, because that is where the Holy Ghost drew my attention to God's use of trees in illustrating man's redemption. (Exodus 15:22-24)

"So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. (23) And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. (24) And the people murmured against Moses, saying, 'What shall we drink?' "

Then, the deliverance came. (Exodus 15:25)

"And he (Moses) cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them,"

The Holy Ghost first drew my attention to the water and how it was changed from bitter to sweet. The bitter water is undoubtedly an image of spiritual death and the sweet water is an image of spiritual life. From here it would be easy to teach an entire message about "water", which I may do in the future. But, for this letter,

let's focus our attention on the "tree" cast into the water because this is what the Holy Ghost used to reveal another picture.

God instructed Moses to take what was apparently a live tree, uproot it from the earth and cast it into the bitter waters. Once uprooted, the tree was separated from its source of life. After being thrown into the bitter waters, the waters were made sweet. With that in mind, look at how Jesus is identified by the prophet Jeremiah as "The Branch". (Jeremiah 33:14-16)

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. (15) In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. (16) In those days shall Judah be saved and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, 'The Lord our righteousness.' "

Now, notice what Paul said about how Jesus sacrificed Himself on our behalf, or in other words, He was uprooted and thrown into our spiritual death. (Galatians 2:20)

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

It is safe to say that the tree that was placed into the waters at Marah represents the "Branch", which Jeremiah identified as Jesus. The substitutionary work of Jesus on the cross enables us to identify in His death, which is pictured by the tree being uprooted from the source of life and cast into the bitter waters. When we are born again we receive His life in us. The bitter waters of our spiritual death are turned to the sweet waters of life when we choose to make Jesus our Lord. Hallelujah!

That is only the beginning. This is where the Holy Ghost began painting a whole new picture in my understanding. Besides the waters at Marah, we can see the thoroughness of our heavenly Father by looking at all the various ways He has utilized trees in the message of our redemption. The reason for the tree's important place in mankind's deliverance seems to have its roots (pardon the pun) in a tree involved in mankind's fall. Let's begin at the beginning. (Genesis 2:16-17)

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden thou may freely eat: (17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eat thereof thou shalt surely die.’ ”

What other tree was identified as being in the midst of the Garden?
(Genesis 2:9)

“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the Garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”

Adam was allowed to eat of the tree of life freely, along with all other trees except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Once man fell, what did God immediately do with the tree of life? (Genesis 3:24)

“So 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.”

We need to pay attention to how trees were used in these examples. First, man freely ate of the tree of Life until their transgression brought spiritual death and cut them off from life. Then, in Exodus 15, Moses cast a tree into the bitter water of Marah, representing spiritual death, to make it sweet, representing spiritual life. Later, in Jeremiah, Jesus was identified as a tree “Branch” that was to grow up unto David. But, it doesn’t stop there. Take a look at another tree used to secure our deliverance. (Galatians 3:13)

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, ‘Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.’ ”

The natural event at Marah foretold another event; both natural and spiritual. Jesus, the Branch, was hanged on a tree, the cross of Calvary, by which He was effectively cast into the bitter waters of spiritual death. In so doing the water was made sweet for anyone who wills to drink freely by making Jesus Lord of their life. Jesus became a tree of life to any one choosing to partake.

*(Note: There are **so many** verses regarding trees.)*

In case you desire further proof, consider the following. Are you familiar with the times God used a wooden rod to first convince Moses, then Pharaoh’s court, as well as, the children of Israel, of HIS intentions to deliver Israel? God’s use of a wooden rod with Moses began during his original encounter with God.

(Exodus 4:2-4)

“And the Lord said unto him (Moses), ‘What is that in thine hand?’ And he said, ‘A rod.’ (3) And He (God) said, ‘Cast it on the ground.’ And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. (4) And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail.’ And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand.”

Next, God used a wooden rod when Moses and Aaron were told to go to Pharaoh and again ask him to free the children of Israel. Here the rod used is identified as Aaron’s rod. (Exodus 7:8-10)

“And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, (9) ‘When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, ‘Show a miracle for you’: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, ‘Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.’ ”

When Moses and Aaron did as God told them to do the rod became a serpent. But, not to be outdone, Pharaoh’s wise men and sorcerers and magicians made all manner of enchantments and they cast down their rods and they also became serpents. Don’t think that the devil isn’t able to put on a pretty convincing show if a person is willing to watch. Although, God most certainly had the last word, as He always does. (Exodus 7:12)

“For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods.”

All the rods became serpents, **illustrating spiritual death**, indicating that Jesus became spiritual death in order to destroy death. However, notice that it **did not** say Aaron’s serpent swallowed up the other serpents, but rather Aaron’s **rod** swallowed up their rods. (*I have preached that like everyone else I heard, that the serpent swallowed the other serpents.*) The point to be made is that it was the **rod** that God was drawing attention to here as the **source of deliverance**, not the serpent. The serpent represented that Jesus became sin, but the rod swallowing up the other rods illustrated our deliverance. (II Corinthians 5:21)

“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

What’s also interesting to see is how Aaron’s rod was used so many times before and after the exodus to demonstrate deliverance to Israel. The rod was stretched over the waters of Egypt causing the plague of frogs. (Exodus 8:5) The

rod was stretched to heaven causing the plague of hail. (Exodus 9:23) The rod was stretched over the land causing the plague of locusts. (Exodus 10:13) The final act of deliverance in the wilderness came for Israel when the rod was stretched over the waters of the Red Sea and it divided. (Exodus 14:16)

Keep in mind; deliverance from Egypt is only a picture of deliverance from spiritual death. If that's all that happened to us then how in the world do we ever drink of the water of life? Being delivered out of one thing means that you must be delivered into something else. In other words, when you go out of your house you step **out of** the house and **into** the outside world, correct?

When we make Jesus Lord of our life we step out of spiritual death by entering into His payment of our debt in our place. Subsequently, we must step into something, which Jesus explained like this. (John 10:9)

“I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”

We step out of death and into life. By making Jesus Christ the Lord of our life we are identifying ourselves in Him, He is the “tree”, placed into the bitter waters of our spiritual death and we who were bitter are made sweet **when we are reborn as children of God.** (Galatians 3:26)

“For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”

What we have been studying is how God repeatedly used a tree, symbolically, in demonstrating man's redemption. Let's look at one more example of Aaron's wooden rod and see how the following event supports the picture of death being changed to life. (Numbers 17:8)

“And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.”

I love this picture. A dead, wooden rod budded. Glory be to God. What was dead was reborn and produced fruit. It is the picture of a spiritually dead human spirit being born again, beginning with Jesus who was the first to make this journey. Jesus was spiritually alive with the life of God, and then died the death of the cross and entered into spiritual death. After which He was raised to life again, as John noted. (Revelation 1:18)

“I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

By Jesus being hanged on a tree, the cross, HE became the curse and died in our place. Another way of looking at this would be to say that the “Branch” died on the tree. But, like Aaron’s rod that budded, that which was dead once again budded with life when Jesus was raised from the dead. Now, the “Branch” continues to produce the fruit of salvation and life to every person who freely partakes of its fruit. By making Jesus Christ the Lord of our lives we who were dead enter into His death and are made alive. Praise God.

This message would not be complete without this last verse from the book of Isaiah. (Isaiah 61:3)

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.”

Glory to God! Once we partake of the fruit of the “Branch”, by making Jesus Lord of our lives, we become “trees of righteousness”. (I Corinthians 1:30)

“But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

In conclusion, what a wonderful picture we can now see and appreciate about God’s use of trees to help explain our redemption. What’s even more special is how the Holy Ghost started with elements of one picture to help reveal another. We will see in future messages how God continued to present one picture after another to Israel of the salvation that was to come. While, their spiritual blindness made it impossible for them to see, God knew that one day a people would walk the earth who, once born again, could look back at those events and finally understand their significance. We are those people!

~ Grace be with you

Mark Jenkins

You may be interested in hearing [“Aaron’s Rod That Budded” \(RM\)](#) (10.30.2014)