

Christians At Texas State Bible Study--Genesis #1

Introduction to the Line of Life in Genesis

Genesis 2:9, 16, 17, 3:11b

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. **16** And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely, **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.

3:11 And He said, Who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?

Revelation 22:1, 2

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. **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.

John 5:39, 40, 11:25

5:39 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. **40** Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

Colossians

3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

1Timothy

6:19 Laying away for themselves a good foundation as a treasure for the future, that they may lay hold on that which is really life.

1John 5:11, 12

5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. **12** He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

The Line of Life in the Bible

The line of life in the Bible begins with the tree of life and consummates with the New Jerusalem. The line of life is the flow running from the tree of life (Gen. 2:9) all the way through the scripture into the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:2). However, there is another line that runs throughout the Bible—the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This line consummates in the lake of fire. It is significant that the Bible shows us that two kinds of streams are flowing out of the throne of God. Daniel 7:10 speaks of a river of fire that proceeds out of God's throne, a river that will deal with everything on the line of the knowledge of good and evil. Revelation 22:1-2 speaks of another river—the river of water of life that flows eternally out of the throne of God to supply and nourish God's redeemed with the tree of life for eternity. Although we will not pay much attention to the line of the knowledge of good and

evil, we need the stream of fire to flow in order to deal with all the lingering effects of that line so that we can be absolutely on the line of life. In this series of messages, we will limit ourselves to consider the line of life in the book of Genesis.

The Two Lines in the Bible

The principle of the tree of life and the principle of the tree of knowledge of good and evil are realized throughout the whole Bible. All the negative things in the Bible are on the line of the tree of knowledge, and all the positive things are on the line of the tree of life. I call the first line the line of knowledge and the second line, the line of life. If we follow these two lines, they carry us through the entire Scripture.

Firstly, man was induced to eat of the tree of knowledge. As a result, man fell. The descendants of fallen man did not depend upon God at all. They relied upon their knowledge. According to Genesis 4, the first human culture was invented, and this culture developed until it became the corrupted world of Noah. During the time of Noah, God judged the earth by the flood. Noah's descendants became another race, but this race still did not depend upon God. Eventually, the second human culture came forth, the culture which erected the tower and city of Babel. Then God called Abraham out of that fallen race. By this we can see the development of the two lines. Strictly speaking, the line of life began with Adam, who was fallen and redeemed, and continued through Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and so many Israelites. On this line of life we have the tent of Noah, the tent of Abraham, the tabernacle, and the temple. The line of knowledge began with Cain and continued through all the ungodly people. On the line of knowledge we have the city of Enoch, Babel, Sodom, the treasure cities of Pharaoh, and Babylon, which captured the things on the line of life.

We find the same two lines in the New Testament. Although the Old Testament and the law were originally on the line of life, the Jewish religionists treated them as mere knowledge and put them on the line of knowledge. The Pharisees used the Old Testament in the way of knowledge. When the Lord Jesus came, the religious leaders were altogether on the line of knowledge. Only the Lord Jesus Himself was on the line of life. Then He brought His disciples to the line of life. On the day of Pentecost, His disciples put many other people on the line of life. Thus, at that time, there was the Jewish religion on the line of knowledge (Jn. 5:39-40) and the church on the line of life. However, not long afterward, the church was degraded, falling from the living Christ to dead scriptural knowledge, and became religion. The church should be on the line of life. The overcomers among the Christians through all the centuries never have shifted from the line of life to the line of knowledge. They will remain on the line of life until the end when it ultimately issues in the New Jerusalem. All things apart from God will be swept away by the stream of fire (Dan. 7:10) into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 14-15; 21:8). All the positive things in the Bible throughout the ages will be carried on by the river of the water of life (Rev. 22:1) into the New Jerusalem. In opposition to the lake of fire will be a city of water, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10—22:4). At the end of the Bible we see a lake and a city: the lake is the lake of the thirst-creating fire as the ultimate consummation of the line of knowledge; the city is the city of the thirst-quenching water as the ultimate consummation of the line of life. Thus, at the end of the book of Revelation we find the harvest of the seed of the tree of knowledge and of the tree of life.

Which line are you on—the line of life or the line of death? Remember that God is frank. Because life is God, life also is frank. Death, on the contrary, is subtle. Death does not appear manifestly as death; it appears as knowledge. Life is simply life: its contents, nature, and results are life. Death is knowledge. Everyone likes knowledge. Even the little children hunger for it. They weary us with question upon question. If you answer one question, they respond with several more because there is a craving for

knowledge within man. Man covets knowledge. Even many Christians are greedy for it. Although the word "knowledge" itself may be a good term, at the back of knowledge and underneath knowledge is death. The letter kills but the spirit gives life (2 Cor. 3:6). The letter of the Bible kills whenever the Bible is separated from the living God. Religion has separated the Bible from the living Christ. Thus the Bible can kill and spread death.

Death is concealed under so many good things, even lurking under our best intentions. Many dear Christians have been killed by the good intentions of other people. Although your intention may be excellent, Satan lurks beneath it, and Satan is death. Everyone knows that death hides behind evil things. For example, the gambling casinos in Las Vegas are manifestly evil and deadly. However, attending a cathedral seems to be good, much better than visiting a casino. Nevertheless, death can be found in both places. The difference is in the appearance, not in the actuality, for death is present and prevailing in both good and evil things. Death is subtle.

Now we know on which line we should be. We must take the line of life.

The Record of Life in Genesis 1 and 2

We should remember that Genesis 1 and 2 are a record of life. There are four categories of life in Genesis 1 and 2: the vegetable life, the animal life, the human life, and the divine life. The vegetable life, the animal life, and the human life are lives created by God. Only the divine life is uncreated and eternal. It is the life from eternity unto eternity. With all the other categories of lives there is a beginning and ending because they are created lives, but only one category of life, one unique life, the divine life of God, is eternal and uncreated with no beginning or ending.

In Genesis 1 and 2 all the lower lives are for the higher lives. The plant life is for the animal life, the animal life is for the human life, and the human life is for the divine life. Only the human life is qualified to be for the divine life. Why is only the human life qualified to contain the divine life? The best illustration of this marvelous divine reality is that of a glove and a hand. A person's hand cannot fit in a handkerchief because it does not have the image or form of the hand. Because a glove is in the image, the likeness, and the form of a hand, it is able to contain the hand. A glove is made in the form of a hand for the purpose of containing the hand. The human life was created according to the likeness of the divine life so that God could dispense Himself as the divine life into the human life. Only the human life is qualified to contain the divine life because the human life is in the likeness of the divine life. God created us in His likeness because His purpose was that we would contain Him. To fulfill this purpose, God created us with a human spirit. Our human spirit is the organ for us to receive God and contain God. Thus, the human spirit is the means and the organ to fulfill God's divine purpose.

What Life Is

Now we need to ask what life is. Life is God Himself; life is God in Christ; life is God in Christ through the Spirit; life is Christ with God; and life is the Spirit with all the riches of Christ in all the fullness of the Godhead. John 1:4 says, "In Him was life." The One in whom there is life is the One who was the Word in the beginning, who was with God in the beginning, who was God in the beginning, and through whom all things came into being. In this One was life. This life was the light of men (John 1:4). John 10:10b tells us that the Lord Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly. This is the purpose of Christ's coming. First Timothy 1:15 says that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He came into the world to save us from our sins, to deal with the negative side (Matt. 1:21). The positive purpose of Christ's coming, however, is that we may have life and have it abundantly.

This life is life with resurrection power. The life we have received from God through Christ is a resurrection life. We have to differentiate life from resurrection. Resurrection is life that has been tested by passing through death. The life that we possess is a life with resurrection power. This life has been tested by being put into death and by passing through death. Christ is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25). Because Christ is the resurrection, it was not possible for Him to be held by death (Acts 2:24). Death cannot hold the resurrection life. If we have the Son, we have this life. If we do not have the Son, we do not have this life. Because we have received the Son, we can declare that we have this life. We can say, "Christ is our life" (Col. 3:4a).

The Goal of these Messages

We need to learn in every situation whether life or death is involved. As certain ones talk with us, we should be aware of what is happening to us, of whether we are being enlivened or being deadened. When we do a certain thing, we should know whether life rising up and flowing forth (with the feeling of brightness and peace) or whether there is a feeling of death. One of the principle objects of these messages is that we would learn to know life and to live according to the principle of life.