

Contents of Chapter 5

The Tree of Life

Introduction 2

Adam and Eve Lost Access to the Tree of Life Because of Sin 3

The Temple Menorah Link to the Almond Tree and Tree of Life 4

Aaron's Rod – A Branch from an Almond Tree 6

Jeremiah's Vision of the Rod of an Almond Tree 9

The Tree of Life, Aaron's Rod, and the Crucifixion Tree 10

The Tree of Life in the New Jerusalem 13

References 16

The Rod of an Almond Tree in God’s Master Plan (Online Edition)

by Peter and Christie Michas with Robert Vander Maten

Original Title *God’s Master Plan: From Aleph to Tav* © 1994

The Rod of an Almond Tree in God’s Master Plan © 1997, 2001, 2011-2014 (Online Edition)

Messengers of Messiah, 7231 Boulder Avenue #164, Highland, CA 92346 USA

Tel. 909-425-8751 – www.messengers-of-messiah.org - christiem@messengers-of-messiah.org

Revised July 2014

This publication may be freely copied and distributed provided it is copied in total with no alterations or deletions. The authors’ names, ministry name and website address, mailing address and telephone number, and copyright notice must be included. No charge may be levied on recipients of distributed copies. Brief quotations may be embodied in critical articles and reviews without breaching copyright. This publication is available for free at Messengers of Messiah’s website (<http://www.messengers-of-messiah.org>).

Chapter 5

The Tree of Life

Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” — therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken (Genesis 3:22-23).

As previously shown, God planted the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the center of the Garden of Eden, at the site of Jerusalem. When Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge in disobedience to God, they became spiritually separated from Him. As a result, God barred access to the Tree of Life, which endowed the partaker with eternal life.

So we see that one tree was the source of eternal life and the other tree became a source of spiritual death and separation from God because of man's sin. The choice between obedience to God that leads to eternal life with Him, and disobedience that leads to spiritual death and eternal separation from Him, was placed before Adam and Eve, as it is for each and every human being.

As the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is associated with humanity's sin and need for salvation, the Tree of Life is associated with humanity's redemption and spiritual restoration to God, as we will show in this and the following chapters.

ADAM AND EVE LOST ACCESS TO THE TREE OF LIFE BECAUSE OF SIN

After Adam and Eve disobeyed the one commandment not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, God sent them out of the Garden of Eden, and placed cherubim to prevent access to the Tree of Life:

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" — therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:22-24).

Note that God refers to Himself in the plural "Us", revealing the triune nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

As a result of their disobedience, Adam and Eve could no longer be in the direct presence of God. But God made the one and only way of salvation through His Son, Messiah Yeshua, for them and all humanity to be restored spiritually and to have eternal life with Him (Genesis 3:15; John 3:16). When Yeshua came into the world, He fulfilled the prophecy of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, a detailed description of the crucifixion. In this and the following chapters,

we will show how the fulfillment of this prophecy may link to the Tree of Life and a branch from it, referred to by various names: Aaron's rod, Moses' rod, and the rod of God.¹

THE TEMPLE MENORAH LINK TO THE ALMOND TREE AND TREE OF LIFE

As explained in the previous chapter, the Tabernacle and its furnishings were made according to the specific pattern God showed to Moses:

“According to all that I [the LORD] am going to show you, as **the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture**, just so you shall construct it” (Exodus 25:9, emphasis added).

This includes the Menorah:

“Then you shall make a **lampstand [menorah] of pure gold**. The lampstand and its base and its shaft are to be made of hammered work; its cups, its bulbs and its flowers shall be of one piece with it. And six branches shall go out from its sides; three branches of the lampstand from its one side, and three branches of the lampstand from its other side. Three cups shall be **shaped like almond blossoms** in the one branch, **a bulb and a flower**, and three cups shaped like almond blossoms in the other branch, a bulb and a flower — so for six branches going out from the lampstand; and **in the lampstand four cups shaped like almond blossoms, its bulbs and its flowers**. And a bulb shall be under the first pair of branches coming out of it, and a bulb under the second pair of branches coming out of it, and a bulb under the third pair of branches coming out of it, for the six branches coming out of the lampstand. Their bulbs and their branches shall be of one piece with it; all of it shall be one piece of hammered work of pure gold. Then you shall make **its lamps seven in number**; and they shall mount its lamps so as

¹ The prophetic pattern of God's Master Plan of Redemption as explained in this book is based upon the research, insight and understanding of Peter Michas. The first (1994) edition of this book was written by Christie Michas (Peter's wife) and Robert Vander Maten, based on Peter's research. Further research and subsequent revisions of this book have been done by Christie Michas.

to shed light on the space in front of it. And its snuffers and their trays shall be of pure gold. It shall be made from a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. And see that you **make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain**” (Exodus 25:31-40, emphasis added).

The Menorah is a seven-branched candelabrum. The Number Seven occurs throughout the Word of God and represents spiritual perfection and completion.

It is *seven*, therefore, that stamps with perfection and completeness that in connection with which it is used. Of *time*, it tells of the Sabbath, and marks off the week of seven days. ...

In the creative works of God, *seven* completes the colours of the spectrum and rainbow, and satisfies in music the notes of the scale.²

There are seven days in the week, the seventh day being the Sabbath day; seven years in the Sabbatical cycle, the seventh year for the land to rest; seven days in the Feast of Unleavened Bread; seven days in the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot); Seven Churches, Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and Seven Bowls in the Book of Revelation; and Seven Branches of the Menorah. This pattern of seven repeating in Creation and God’s Master Plan of Redemption reveals the Hand of the Creator, His prophetic pattern and design.

With regard to the Menorah, the understanding that it symbolizes the Tree of Life also has great prophetic significance.³ More than a mere symbolic meaning, it may be that the Menorah, placed in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle and later in the Temple on Mount Moriah, represents the actual Tree of Life that once existed in the same place – the one and only unique place God chose as His dwelling place on Earth.

If the Menorah does indeed represent the Tree of Life, then the pattern God gave to Moses of the

² E. W. Bullinger, *Number in Scripture: Its Supernatural Design and Spiritual Significance*, p. 168.

³ Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*, p. 106.

Menorah possessing features of the almond tree reveals that the Tree of Life was an almond tree. We will show more evidence that supports this understanding.

AARON’S ROD – A BRANCH FROM AN ALMOND TREE

When Korah led the rebellion against the authority of Moses, and Aaron as high priest, the Lord commanded each Tribe of Israel to bring the rod (staff – symbol of authority) of its leader, to be placed in front of the Ark of the Covenant (“the testimony” – Numbers 17:4). God said that He would give a sign to show and confirm the leader He chose by having his rod supernaturally sprout:

“And it will come about that **the rod of the man whom I choose will sprout.** Thus I shall lessen from upon Myself the grumblings of the sons of Israel, who are grumbling against you” (Numbers 17:5, emphasis added).

Now it came about on the next day that Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and behold, **the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds.** ... But the LORD said to Moses, “Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony [Ark of the Covenant] to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they should not die.” Thus Moses did; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did (Numbers 17:8, 10-11, emphasis added).

God confirmed that He gave His authority to Moses and Aaron by having Aaron’s rod supernaturally sprout buds, blossoms, and ripe almonds. God then commanded Moses to place Aaron’s rod before the Ark of the Covenant as a sign:

... it was then placed before the Ark in the Holy of Holies to be preserved as a witness against all who might rebel against his [Aaron’s] authority (cf. Heb 9:4).⁴

⁴ Merrill C. Tenney (General Editor), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 1, p. 5.

Very tellingly, Aaron's rod produced almond buds, almond blossoms, and ripe almonds, showing that it was a branch from an almond tree.

This was a very special almond rod, the same rod that belonged to Moses, also called the rod of God:

The rod referred to is very likely the same shepherd's rod which Moses was carrying at the time of his call (Exod 4:2 RSV), and when turned into a serpent, became a sign to Moses and Aaron, to Israel and to Pharaoh, of the divine mission and authority of Moses (v. 17). It is twice called "the rod of God" (4:20; 17:9), but usually either Moses' rod (e.g. 4:17) or Aaron's rod (e.g. 7:14-20). ...

All of these expressions are natural in view of the significance of the rod. It was called the "rod of God," for it was the symbol of His authority; it was Moses' rod, because it belonged to him; it was also Aaron's rod, because Aaron at times spoke and acted for Moses.⁵

God worked many supernatural signs through this unique almond rod, showing His power, authority, protection, provision, and redemption:

And the LORD said to him [Moses], "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff." Then He said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. But the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail" — so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand — **that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you**" (Exodus 4:2-5, emphasis added).

"And you shall take in your hand **this staff, with which you shall perform the signs**" (Exodus 4:17, emphasis added).

⁵ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 1, p 5.

“When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Work a miracle,’ then you shall say to Aaron, **‘Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.’**” So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as the LORD had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians [sorcerers with real demonic power] of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents. **But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs** (Exodus 7:9-12, emphasis added).

But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and **see the salvation of the LORD** which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. “The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent.” Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. “And as for you, **lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land**” (Exodus 14:13-16, emphasis added).

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and **take in your hand your staff** with which you struck the Nile, and go. “Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall **strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.**” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel (Exodus 17:5-6, emphasis added).

So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose men for us, and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill **with the staff of God in my hand.**” And Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. **So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed,** and when he let his hand down,

Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword (Exodus 17:9-13, emphasis added).

Aaron's rod was clearly a branch from an almond tree. Interestingly, there is a legend that Moses' rod, another name for Aaron's rod, came from the Tree of Life.⁶ In the following chapter, we show how it might be possible to trace Aaron's rod back through the generations of God's people to Adam, showing that this special and unique almond rod may in fact be a branch from the Tree of Life.

With this understanding, it is prophetically significant and meaningful that God instructed Moses to place Aaron's rod before the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle as a sign. When the Temple on Mount Moriah replaced the Tabernacle, Aaron's rod remained before the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, the place God dwelled – the same place where the Tree of life existed in the Garden of Eden on Mount Moriah.

JEREMIAH'S VISION OF THE ROD OF AN ALMOND TREE

God revealed the New Covenant that would be made by Messiah Yeshua to the prophet Jeremiah:

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when **I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will

⁶ Alan Unterman, *Dictionary of Jewish Lore and Legend*, p. 201. Legends – oral traditions passed down over the generations – often contain key historical facts. For example, Heinrich Schlegelmann used the oral traditions recorded in the *Iliad* to find the ancient city of Troy.

make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jeremiah 31:31-33, emphasis added).

Jeremiah was also given a vision of the “rod of an almond tree”:

And the word of the LORD came to me saying, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” And I said, “**I see a rod of an almond tree.**” Then the LORD said to me, “**You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.**” (Jeremiah 1:11-12, emphasis added).

Again, we see a reference to a branch or rod from an almond tree. With regard to this particular rod of an almond tree, the Lord says something of the greatest prophetic significance: “I am watching over My word to perform it.”

In Chapter 6 “The Rod of God”, we show how the almond rod that Jeremiah saw may be connected to the tree upon which Messiah Yeshua was crucified, a tree that may have grown from Aaron’s rod. If so, just as Aaron’s rod had been used as an instrument of God’s redemption for the Israelites during the Exodus and wilderness period, Aaron’s rod may have also been used as an instrument of God’s ultimate and final redemption in the crucifixion of Messiah Yeshua.

THE TREE OF LIFE, AARON’S ROD, AND THE CRUCIFIXION TREE

As explained in the previous chapters, the prophetic pattern shows that the Tree of Life existed in the place where God fellowshiped with Adam and Eve in the center of the Garden of Eden, on Mount Moriah. This is the place God not only chose to dwell with Adam and Eve, but also the place He chose to dwell in the Temple. And this will be the place where Messiah Yeshua establishes His Throne during the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:4).

Inside the Holy Place of the Temple was the Menorah, decorated with almond buds and blossoms, showing a connection to the almond tree. As previously mentioned, the Menorah

symbolizes the Tree of Life.⁷ Here we have a connection to the Tree of Life that existed on Mount Moriah, where God fellowshiped with Adam and Eve.

Aaron's rod sprouted almond buds and blossoms, and ripe almonds, clearly showing that it was a branch from an almond tree. God instructed Moses to place Aaron's rod before the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle. When the Temple on Mount Moriah replaced the Tabernacle, Aaron's rod remained before the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, the place God dwelled. We believe that this shows a connection of Aaron's rod to the Tree of Life.

Why did God choose to have the Temple Menorah decorated with almond buds and blossoms if not to show the special significance of the almond tree? God commanding that Aaron's rod, a branch from an almond tree, be placed in front of the Ark of the Covenant also seems to show and confirm this special significance of the almond tree. We believe that this shows that the Tree of Life was an almond tree and that Aaron's rod was a branch from it.

Significantly, Aaron's rod was the instrument of God's redemption during the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt. Jeremiah's vision of a rod from an almond tree connects to Aaron's rod and also has special significance in the fulfillment of God's Master Plan of Redemption, for the Lord said: "I am watching over my word to perform it" (Jeremiah 1:11).

"My word" refers to The Word, Messiah Yeshua (John 1:1-4). Father God was watching over the almond rod and His Son, Messiah Yeshua, to perform it, meaning to perform the act of redemption necessary to save humanity from its sins – the crucifixion. Psalm 22 is a prophetic picture of the crucifixion and ends with the words "He has performed it", referring to Messiah Yeshua (Psalm 22:31). This is what Yeshua meant when He said: "It is finished!" (John 19:30).

When Yeshua was crucified, He cried out: "My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). By stating the first words of Psalm 22, He was directing the attention of those who saw Him being crucified to Psalm 22, a detailed prophetic picture of the crucifixion. Yeshua's last words before He died also came from Psalm 22 (the last words of the

⁷ Frankel and Teutsch, p. 106.

Psalm), showing prophetic fulfillment not only of Psalm 22 but also fulfillment of what God showed Jeremiah. In the following chapters, we will show how the almond rod in Jeremiah's vision may link to Aaron's rod, and to the tree upon which Messiah Yeshua was crucified.

From one man, Adam, sin and death came into the world; from one man, Yeshua, the Son of God (and fully God with the Father), came redemption, the forgiveness of sin and eternal life:

Therefore, **just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned ...** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus [Yeshua] Christ [Messiah], abound to the many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus [Yeshua] Christ [Messiah]. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. **For as through the one man's disobedience [Adam] the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One [Messiah Yeshua] the many will be made righteous** (Romans 5:12, 14-19, emphasis added).

For since by a man [Adam] came death, by a man [Yeshua] also came the resurrection of the dead. **For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ [Messiah] all shall be made alive** (1 Corinthians 15:21-22, emphasis added).

According to the same type of prophetic pattern, from one tree, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, came sin and death; from another tree, the Tree of Life, came redemption, the forgiveness of sin, and eternal life with God.

THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE NEW JERUSALEM

The Word of God does not tell us what happened to the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. Perhaps its water source, likely the Gihon Spring, changed course, cutting off its water source. We can only assume that at some point in time, the Tree of Life was no longer present and the cherubim no longer required to guard and prevent access to it.

There is a Tree of Life in the New Jerusalem, as described in the Book of Revelation:

Then the angel showed me the river of **the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb** down the middle of the great street of the city. **On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.** No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever (Revelation 22:1-5, NIV, emphasis added).

The New Jerusalem is the Heavenly Jerusalem, the pattern for the Earthly Jerusalem. At the center of the New Jerusalem is the Throne of God and the Lamb of God, Messiah Yeshua. This corresponds to the Temple on Mount Moriah, and as we have shown, the Tree of Life on Mount Moriah in the Garden of Eden. In the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Tree of Life is also associated with the Throne of God.

The Tree of Life in the New Jerusalem produces fruit every month of the twelve months, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. In the Word of God, the Number Twelve:

is a perfect number, signifying *perfection of government*, or of *governmental perfection*. It is found as a multiple in all that has to do with *rule*. The sun which “rules” the day, and the moon and stars which “govern” the night, do so by their passage through the *twelve signs* of the [Biblical] Zodiac which completes the great circle of the heavens of 360 (12 x 30) degrees or divisions, and thus govern the year.

Twelve is the *product* of 3 (the perfectly Divine and heavenly number) and 4 (the earthly, the number of what is material and organic). ...

When we come to the New Testament we find the same great principle pervading the Apostolic government as we see in the Patriarchal and National, for we have:

The *twelve* Apostles.

The *twelve* foundations in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The *twelve* gates.

The *twelve* pearls.

The *twelve* angels.⁸

From the Throne of God in the Heavenly Jerusalem flows “the river of the water of life”, corresponding to the Gihon Spring in Jerusalem. The prophet Ezekiel describes water flowing from the ground on the south side of the altar of the future Third Temple (Ezekiel’s Temple), the Throne of the Lamb of God, Messiah Yeshua (Ezekiel 47:1 -12 – “house” refers to God’s House, the Temple). This water likely comes from the Gihon Spring, and its emergence at the surface by the Temple probably results from the major earthquake that will split the Mount of Olives at Yeshua’s Second Coming (Zechariah 14:4). The trees growing along this river, from water flowing from the Temple of God on Mount Moriah, will bear food every month; their fruit for food and their leaves for healing, like the Tree of Life in the New Jerusalem of Eternity.

⁸ Bullinger, pp. 253-254.

“And by the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. **They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing**” (Ezekiel 47:12, emphasis added).

To all those who trust in Messiah Yeshua for salvation, He gives “the right to the tree of life” and to drink from the “water of life”, eternal life with God:

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha [Aleph] and the Omega [Tav], the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. **"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.** ... “I, Jesus [Yeshua], have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.” The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” **Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life**” (Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, NIV, emphasis added).

In the next chapter, we trace the possible history of Aaron’s rod, the rod of God, as it passed through the generations of God’s people. Considering that its source may have been the Tree of Life, its possible function as an instrument of God’s redemption in the crucifixion is an amazing and powerful story.

REFERENCES

Scriptural quotations from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

Bullinger, E. W. *Number in Scripture: It's Supernatural Design and Spiritual Significance*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1967.

Frankel, Ellen, and Betsy Platkin Teutsch. *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1992.

Tenney, Merrill C. (General Editor). *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Five Volumes). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975, 1976.

Unterman, Alan. *Dictionary of Jewish Lore and Legend*. New York, NY: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1991.