**BETTER TOGETHER** in 2022

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**Reforesting Faith**

**Tree of Life** - Genesis 2:9; Revelation 22



Besides God and human beings, what do you think is the most mentioned thing in the Bible? If you said **trees** … you are correct.

When we think of trees in the Bible, we include parts of trees like fruit, seeds, roots, branches, leaves, vines, bushes and the things made from trees: walking sticks, staffs, wooden ladders and of course, the cross. Depending on the translation, the 1611 KJV has the most references at 967 times (tree, leaf, branch, root, fruit or seed).

**Trees are God’s favorite metaphor in scripture.**

*Christianity is the only religion that weaves trees from one end of its sacred text to the other.*  ***Reforesting Faith***, Matthew Sleeth, MD

*Trees are not randomly placed in Scripture. They make the most important events, including Creation, the Fall, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. This is not a coincidence. The Bible is one interwoven book, written by one God.* ***Reforesting Faith***, Matthew Sleeth, MD

*And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and* ***fruit trees*** *bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and* ***trees*** *bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.* Genesis 1:11-12

*The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.* Psalm 24:1–2

**Trees are amazing.** Trees grow older, taller, and bigger than anything else on the earth. There are over 73,000 tree species in the world.

They give with no expectations. They give just because they live.

*And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring* ***up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food****. The* ***tree of life*** *was in the midst of the garden, and* ***the tree of the knowledge of good and evil****.* Genesis 2:9

**What is the Tree of Life?**

The Tree of Life represents eternal life.

**Video from Bible Project** - <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/tree-of-life/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw3v6SBhCsARIsACyrRAnKOsyHkoopV0u8SHCfE5S3iqd_dwYoR0SNn4OxRfcfx48ZnWDusJoaAsE7EALw_wcB>

*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely* ***eat of every tree of the garden****, but of* ***the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*** *you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it* ***you shall surely die****.”* Genesis 2:16–17

The **Tree of Life** is accessible only through faith in **Jesus**.

*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.* John 6:47

*through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river,* ***the tree of life*** *with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* Revelation 22:2

***In him was life****, and the life was the light of men.* John 1:4

The **Tree of Life** is an invitation to a life with God at the **center**.

***Abide in me****, and I in you. As the branch* ***cannot bear fruit*** *by itself, unless it abides in the vine,* ***neither can you****, unless you abide in me.* ***I am the vine; you are the branches****. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for* ***apart from me you can do nothing****.* John 15:4–5

Back to the garden of Eden, the Tree of Life is “**a picture of forgiveness and consequent experience of God’s intimate presence.”**

***At the center*** *of the world that has been put at Adam’s disposal and over which Adam has been given dominion is* ***not Adam*** *himself but* ***the tree of divine life****.* Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall

The **Tree of Life** is an invitation to live in **faith**.

*Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have* ***the right to the tree of life*** *and that they may enter the city by the gates.* Revelation 22:14

The **Tree of Life** is an invitation to experience a life where God **provides**.

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.* ***I came that they may have life and have it abundantly****.* John 10:10

***But*** *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and* ***all these things will be added to you****. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.* Matthew 6:33–34

*In the creation narrative, the imagery of the tree of life is connected to life characterized by abundance, fullness, and provision.* The Lexham Bible Dictionary.

In Proverbs, the Tree of Life is associated with the life-generating properties of wisdom, righteousness, and hope.

*She is* ***a tree of life*** *to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called* ***blessed****.* Proverbs 3:18

*The fruit of the* ***righteous*** *is* ***a tree of life****, and whoever captures souls is* ***wise****. Proverbs 11:30*

***Hope*** *deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is* ***a tree of life****. Proverbs 13:12*

You have a **choice** … choose a **life** in Jesus.

*See,* ***I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.*** *If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.* Deuteronomy 30:15–16

***But*** *if your* ***heart turns away****, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that* ***you shall surely perish****. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess.* Deuteronomy 30:17–18

*I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that* ***I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse****. Therefore* ***choose life****, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for* ***he is your life and length of days****, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”* Deuteronomy 30:19–20

In rabbinic expression, heresy and disobedience of the Torah are likened to **the destruction of trees**.

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers* ***I will grant to eat of the tree of life****, which is in the paradise of God.’* Revelation 2:7

*For there is* ***hope for a tree****, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease. Job 14:7*

You have a **choice** … choose **life** in Jesus.

The Tree of Life leads to love for **God**.

*Hear, O Israel:* ***The Lord our God, the Lord is one****. You shall* ***love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*** *And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall* ***teach them diligently to your children,*** *and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.* Deuteronomy 6:4–7

The Tree of Life leads to the obedience of His **Word**.

*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.* ***The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life****.* John 6:63

The Tree of Life leads to you and I to sharing the **Gospel**.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,* ***he is a new creation****. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God,* ***who through Christ reconciled us*** *to himself and* ***gave us the ministry of reconciliation****; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.* 2 Corinthians 5:17–19

The Tree of Life leads to serving the **Cause**.

*even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* Matthew 20:28

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* Matthew 28:19–20