



August 5, 2022

And All the Trees

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

We're busily preparing and planning with meetings and web conferences for the upcoming fall Feast Days and our Festival site in Orange Beach! The Feast of Tabernacles requires a large amount of time with preparing, but is inspiring and encouraging to do so. Here in the Northern hemisphere, having just returned from Minnesota, I'm also reminded that in the Southern part of the United States, it will soon feel a little like Autumn with the cooler nights. The leaves on some of the trees will also soon be turning color and on some trees falling. It's actually my favorite time of year. I anxiously look forward to His fall Holy Days especially!

Speaking of trees, for most of my life, I've always noted the condition of trees can be an indicator of seasonal changes and/or other factors. Jesus preached about the indicators of the *end of the age*. He used the example of a tree budding out. *"Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near."* (Luke 21:29-31).

I'm reminded that Abraham chose a location to set up his tent near some trees in Canaan. The Hebrew word 'elown is translated "terebinth trees" in the NKJV of Genesis 14:13 and 18:1. The word is translated "oaks" in the ASV and RSV translations. *"Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day"* (Genesis 18:1 NKJV).

Evidently the trees supplied some shade from the hot sun by their overspreading branches. I know that feeling all too well here on the Gulf Coast. There is some

uncertainty about what species of tree is referred to.

Trees are also associated with blessings and even healing. The bitter waters of Marah were healed and made sweet when the LORD directed Moses to cast a tree (evidently a small one) into the pool of water (Exodus 15:23-25) Then the Israelites were led to an oasis called Elim which had "*twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees*" (Exodus 15:27) The seventy palm trees certainly represent blessings of the location along with the wells.

There's also an interesting couple of verses in scripture in Revelation 22:1-2. *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

Since it appears there will only be spirit beings around at this time, the word healing could better be translated as "well-being".

God gave also special instructions concerning the planting of fruit trees and then harvesting the fruit:

"When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. It shall not be eaten. But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the LORD. And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase . . ." (Leviticus 19:23-25)

There is an interesting comment in the JFB Commentary that's instructive concerning these verses:

"Every gardener will teach us not to let fruit trees bear in their earliest years, but to pluck off the blossoms: and for this reason, that they will thus thrive the better, and bear more abundantly afterwards. The very expression, "to regard them as uncircumcised," suggests the propriety of pinching them off; I do not say cutting them off, because it is generally the hand, and not a knife, that is employed in this

operation"

By removing most of the blossoms the energy of the tree will be sent to developing the trunk and branches for supporting the fruit to be born in later years. Even after the trees mature past the fourth year, the bloom and the fruit that is set needs to be thinned to cause the fruit to size up and still be supported by the branches. The fruit of the fourth year is not labeled uncircumcised and must have been removed and presented to the LORD as an offering in some way.

We'll perhaps continue next time and begin with an examination of Leviticus 23:40-43. Just some thoughts to ponder and share, as we seek to closely examine and better understand the balance of God's truth in our lives.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hoefker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott Hoefker
Pastor, CGM

Church of God Ministries (CGM)
(Ministerios de la Iglesia de Dios)
tshoefker@cogministries.org
www.cogministries.org
P.O. Box 983
Daphne, AL 36526-0983
251-930-1797 Office