

Dr. August Konkell, Proverbs, Session 6, Wisdom as a Tree of Life, Proverbs 3:13-20 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Konkell, Proverbs, Session 6, Wisdom as a Tree of Life, Proverbs 3:13-20, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Dr. August Konkell's Proverbs series explores the biblical concept of wisdom as a "tree of life," referencing Proverbs 3:13-20. Konkell connects this imagery to the trees of life in Genesis and Revelation, highlighting the concept of blessedness as a characteristic of those who possess wisdom, fearing the Lord, and following God's teachings. He emphasizes that true wisdom leads to a life pleasing to God, contrasting it with the pursuit of knowledge without God's guidance. The lecture uses the menorah, a symbol of life in Jewish tradition, to further illustrate this concept of wisdom as a path to life, ultimately stressing the importance of choosing God's way for a fulfilling life.

2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Konkell, Session 6 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Psalms & Wisdom → Proverbs).



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3. Briefing Document: Konkel, Proverbs, Session 6, Wisdom as a Tree of Life, Proverbs 3:13-20

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. August Konkel's lecture on Proverbs, Session 6: "Wisdom as a Tree of Life."

Briefing Document: Proverbs 3:13-20 - Wisdom as a Tree of Life

Main Themes and Key Ideas:

1. **Wisdom as a Central Concept:** The lecture focuses on Proverbs 3:13-20, where wisdom is depicted as a "tree of life." This section is presented as an "interlude" within the larger book of Proverbs, related to themes that will be further developed in future chapters (specifically, chapter 8).
 - **Quote:** "These talks are interrupted by various interludes. One of these interludes happens in Proverbs chapter three, and it's verses 13 to 20, where wisdom is called a tree of life."
1. **The Tree of Life: Past, Present, and Future:** Dr. Konkel explores the concept of the "tree of life" as it appears across the biblical narrative:
 - **Past:** Referenced in Genesis 2, the tree of life in the Garden of Eden symbolized that God is the source of all life. It was a reminder that life is not innate to humans but a gift from God. The tree of knowledge represents the desire to be like God, which leads to straying from God's path.
 - **Quote:** "Now the tree of life was to always tell us that God is the source of life, all life."
 - **Future:** Depicted in Revelation 22, the tree of life signifies the culmination of God's plan and accessible eternal life for the redeemed. Access is granted to those who have followed "the words of truth."
 - **Quote:** "And the conclusion of all of our revelation essentially is the fulfillment and the completion of that which God began...there is a river and beside the river is the tree of life."
 - **Present:** In Proverbs 3, wisdom is presented as the present-day "tree of life," which brings blessing to those who grasp it. This blessing is not a reward, but a description of the kind of character developed through choosing wisdom.

- **Quote:** "But in the present, we have a blessedness described there as you see it by the Hebrew word, *asherah*... it's describing a kind of person... who chooses the Torah."
1. **The Meaning of "Blessed" (Asherah):** The Hebrew word *asherah*, translated as "blessed," is explored as a description of character rather than a simple state of happiness or fortune. It refers to a specific type of person, one who avoids the path of scorners and delights in the teachings of God. Jesus uses a similar idea in His Beatitudes.
- **Quote:** "So, what is *asherah*? What is that blessedness describing? It's describing a character. It's describing a kind of person... whose delight is in the instruction of the Lord..."
1. **Wisdom and Understanding God's World:** Verses 19-20 of Proverbs 3 highlight that it is wisdom that allows us to understand God's creation. Wisdom is the principle through which God ordered the world.
- **Quote:** "it is wisdom that enables us to understand God's world. It is in wisdom that the Lord laid the foundations of the world that he established the heavens in understanding."
1. **The Menorah as a Symbol of the Tree of Life:** The menorah, the lamp used in the temple, became a symbol of the tree of life. It represents the provision of life and the wisdom of knowing how to live in God's ways. The Arch of Titus depicts this symbol as a representation of the Jewish people and Jerusalem
- **Quote:** "So really this tree symbolized what Jewish people believed gave life...it's a representation of this tree of life or a representation of what Proverbs here says is wisdom, the wisdom of knowing how to live."
1. **The Loss and Redemption of Access to the Tree of Life:** The lecture recognizes that humans lost access to the tree of life when they tried to be like God. However, God has provided redemption, as revealed in Revelation, and a path of wisdom in the present. It presents two paths: life through wisdom, and death through straying from wisdom.
- **Quote:** "We no longer have access to that tree of life, but God has found a way to redeem us, wash our garments, and bring us back to that tree of life as we see in the book of Revelation. But in the meantime, there is a tree of life and it's found right here."

Implications and Takeaways:

- The concept of wisdom is presented not just as intellectual knowledge, but as a way of living aligned with God's order, which provides access to life in the present and future.
- The lecture establishes a connection between the "tree of life" symbolism throughout the Bible, linking Genesis, Proverbs, and Revelation.
- The understanding of "blessed" moves beyond simple happiness or good fortune to emphasize the character of those who follow wisdom.
- The menorah functions as a tangible symbol of wisdom and the pursuit of a life that is in line with God's instruction.

Conclusion:

Dr. Konkel's lecture positions wisdom, as portrayed in Proverbs 3:13-20, as a present-day access point to the life represented by the tree of life. This concept provides a powerful call to the listener to make choices rooted in God's teachings and to strive for character, which has implications for both the present and eternal life. The lecture ties the ideas of the text to its wider biblical context, creating a strong understanding of its meaning.

4. Study Guide: Konkel, Proverbs, Session 6, Wisdom as a Tree of Life, Proverbs 3:13-20

Wisdom as a Tree of Life: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Proverbs 3:13-20, what makes a person blessed?
2. What is the significance of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2)?
3. How does the Tree of Knowledge relate to the concept of wisdom, according to the lecture?
4. Where does the Tree of Life appear in the future, according to the lecture, and what is its significance?
5. What Hebrew word is used in Proverbs and Psalm 1 to describe blessedness, and what does it signify?
6. How does Jesus use the concept of "blessedness" in the New Testament, according to the lecture?
7. How is wisdom connected to God's creation of the world in Proverbs 3:19-20?
8. What is a menorah and what does it symbolize in relation to the tree of life?
9. How does the Arch of Titus relate to the tree of life symbol and the Jewish people?
10. According to the lecture, what is the "tree of life" in the present?

Quiz Answer Key

1. A person is blessed if they have learned wisdom and developed the kind of character approved by God, valuing wisdom more than earthly riches and grasping hold of it. These people are described as knowing the fear of the Lord.
2. The Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden served as a constant reminder that God is the source of all life, and life is not something humans inherently possess or control. It showed life as a gift from God.

3. The Tree of Knowledge represents the desire to become like God, knowing good and evil, which leads people astray. The lecture contrasts this with true wisdom, which comes from God.
4. The Tree of Life appears in the future in Revelation 22, where it is located beside a river and yields fruit continuously, representing the completion of God's plan and the accessibility of eternal life for the redeemed.
5. The Hebrew word is *asherah*, and it signifies a blessedness that describes a person of good character who chooses the teachings of God and avoids the ways of the scorner.
6. Jesus used the concept of blessedness to describe the character traits of those who are part of His kingdom, such as the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, and those who hunger for righteousness.
7. Wisdom is presented as the foundation of God's creation of the world, with the Lord establishing the heavens and forming the deeps through wisdom and understanding.
8. The menorah was the lamp in the temple that had seven branches. It symbolizes the tree of life, signifying the provision of life and a representation of the wisdom of knowing how to live.
9. The Arch of Titus depicts the menorah to represent the Jewish people and Jerusalem, and symbolizes the tree of life, which was taken by the Romans. This represents a loss of the true path that leads to life.
10. In the present, the "tree of life" is found in the teaching of the wise, which sets before people a path of life, with the end result being life, and a path of death, which is the result of straying from that path.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Respond to the following prompts in well-structured essays.

1. Discuss the significance of the Tree of Life as a recurring symbol throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. How does its meaning evolve, and what does it teach about God's relationship with humanity?
2. Compare and contrast the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge in Genesis, and explain their implications for human understanding of wisdom and the human condition.
3. Explain how the concept of wisdom in Proverbs 3:13-20 relates to the "blessedness" described in the beatitudes of the New Testament. How do these concepts reflect a common understanding of the path to a fulfilling life?
4. Analyze the symbolism of the menorah in the context of the Tree of Life, and how this symbolism has been used to represent Jewish identity and spirituality.
5. Discuss the concept of the "present" tree of life found in the teaching of the wise and the significance of choices to remain on the path or stray from it. How does understanding this concept impact one's relationship with God?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Wisdom:** In Proverbs, wisdom refers to a deep understanding of how to live in accordance with God's will, leading to a life that is approved by God.
- **Tree of Life:** A symbol of eternal life and God's provision of life, first appearing in the Garden of Eden and recurring in Revelation as a symbol of redemption.
- **Tree of Knowledge:** A tree in the Garden of Eden symbolizing the desire to know good and evil and to be like God, which led to the fall of humanity.
- **Asherah:** A Hebrew word meaning "blessed" used in Proverbs 3:13 and Psalm 1:1, describing a person of good character who adheres to God's teachings.
- **Torah:** Generally refers to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible; in this context, refers to God's teachings and instructions.
- **Menorah:** A seven-branched lampstand that symbolized the Tree of Life and represented Jewish identity and spirituality, especially in the Temple.
- **Arch of Titus:** A triumphal arch in Rome commemorating the Roman victory over Jerusalem, which prominently depicts the menorah as a symbol of the Jewish people and the loss that occurred.
- **Blessedness:** A state of being favored by God, often linked to wisdom, righteousness, and a life lived in accordance with God's will.
- **Makarios:** The Greek word for "blessed," used by Jesus in the Beatitudes to describe those who are part of God's kingdom.
- **Scorner:** A person who mocks or ridicules the teachings of God and those who follow them.

5. FAQs on Konkel, Proverbs, Session 6, Wisdom as a Tree of Life, Proverbs 3:13-20, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Wisdom as a Tree of Life (Proverbs 3:13-20)

1. **What does it mean that wisdom is called a "tree of life" in Proverbs 3:13-20?** In Proverbs, wisdom is portrayed as a "tree of life" symbolizing its life-giving and sustaining nature. It represents the way of life that aligns with God's order for creation and our existence within it. This imagery echoes the original Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, where God is the ultimate source of all life. The tree of life as wisdom provides access to the life that God intends for us, a life of blessing, fruitfulness, and long life. It suggests that true life and flourishing are found by embracing God's wisdom.
2. **How does the "tree of life" concept connect to the past, present, and future as discussed in this session?** The "tree of life" serves as a connecting thread across time. In the past, the literal Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden represented God as the source of life, a reminder that life is not inherent to humans but is a gift from God. In the future, the tree of life appears in Revelation as a symbol of eternal life and redemption for those who follow God's truth and are washed in his blood. In the present, wisdom, as described in Proverbs, is also a "tree of life", offering blessing and life to those who embrace it. This means that choosing wisdom in our daily lives is a pathway to the abundant life God has always desired for us.
3. **What is the significance of the Hebrew word *asherah* in relation to this passage?** The Hebrew word *asherah*, which is often translated as "blessed," is the first word in Proverbs 3:13 and also in Psalm 1:1. It describes a specific type of character or person - one who avoids the path of the wicked and delights in the teachings of God. This blessedness isn't just a feeling but a state of being that results from consistently choosing the way of wisdom. It's the state of someone who lives in alignment with God's instruction, resulting in a life that's both fruitful and blessed. Jesus also uses a word related to *asherah* to describe who is qualified to be in his kingdom.

4. **How is the "tree of knowledge" different from the "tree of life", and why is it important to understand the difference?** The "tree of knowledge" in Genesis represented the desire to be like God, knowing good and evil, and was tied to our attempt to seek autonomy and self-determination which led to our separation from God. This is knowledge divorced from submission to God's authority. In contrast, the "tree of life" is a symbol of dependence upon and obedience to God's ways, the path of wisdom. The distinction is important because pursuing knowledge independently of God leads to a path that ends in death, while pursuing God's wisdom leads to true life, the life God intended from the beginning. Seeking to become "as God" through knowledge rather than through wisdom and submission is the way of destruction.
5. **What does it mean to "grasp" wisdom, and what are the characteristics of someone who has done so?** To "grasp" wisdom involves a deep commitment to learning, understanding, and living according to God's teachings. Those who grasp wisdom are described as "blessed" and exhibit characteristics such as the fear of the Lord, a hunger for righteousness, meekness, and a recognition of their own limitations. They understand they do not have access to all knowledge and are not able to determine good and evil for themselves. These characteristics demonstrate a posture of humility and submission to God's authority and a desire to follow his instructions.
6. **How does the image of the menorah relate to the concept of wisdom as a tree of life?** The menorah, the seven-branched lampstand in the Jewish temple, became a symbol for the Jewish people of the tree of life and a representation of wisdom, which leads to life. The menorah with its multiple lights symbolized the totality of life and the provision of light to the world. The symbolism underscores the idea that wisdom is central to life, just as the menorah was central to the temple and that it was to light the way for people who were in the dark. This connection is further emphasized by the fact that the menorah is prominently featured on the Arch of Titus, representing Jerusalem and the Jewish resistance, which is further represented as the pathway of wisdom.

7. **How does the concept of the tree of life help us understand the path to life as presented in Proverbs?** The concept of the tree of life represents that the path to life is not something we find within ourselves or in our own understanding but is instead found in adhering to the way of wisdom, the pathway which God has instructed us to follow. It reinforces that life and blessings are tied to pursuing a path of obedience, submission, and dependence upon God's teachings. Straying from this path will result in a path that ends in death. The wisdom in Proverbs is presented as the pathway to the tree of life and therefore it is the means to the best life.
8. **If we have lost access to the original Tree of Life, how can we access it today?** While we may have lost access to the literal Tree of Life in the Garden, the way to life is found through the redemption found through Jesus, and in the present we can find a "tree of life" in the pathway of wisdom as described in Proverbs. This means engaging with God's word, pursuing righteousness, and avoiding the ways of the world. The tree of life is not lost, but found in the knowledge that God has found a way for us to be redeemed. By living according to wisdom, we can experience the blessedness that is inherent in the life God intended for us and eventually participate in the ultimate fulfillment of life that is revealed in Revelation.