

There Is Life in the Seed

In the *Montgomery Advertiser*, dated Friday, June 13, 2008, there was an article about a date palm that had been growing since the year 2005. While this alone would not have been noteworthy, the real story was to be found in the fact that it was growing from a seed that was estimated to be 2,000 years old! “The little tree was sprouted in 2005 from a seed recovered from Masada, where rebelling Jews committed suicide rather than surrender to Roman attackers. Radiocarbon dating of seed fragments clinging to its roots, as well as other seeds found with it that didn’t sprout, indicate they were about 2,000 years old—the oldest seed known to have been sprouted and grown.” Dr. Sarah Sallon said that “She hopes there’s a chance to use it to restore the extinct Judean date palm, once prized not only for its fruit but also for medicinal uses.”

This is an amazing story worthy of our sincere consideration. Think about it. A seed preserved in that arid area of the world and planted 2,000 years later and the same results occur—a tree, a date palm began to grow. How can that be? Believers in the Genesis’ account of creation understand the natural law of propagation in the vegetative kingdom. Moses wrote in Genesis 1:11-12: “Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind whose seed is in itself, on the earth,’ and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good” (NKJV). God placed life in the seed in order that it might produce after its kind. Time does not affect this law of reproduction in the vegetative kingdom. Regardless of how old the seed might be, if life is still present, the seed will germinate and produce after its kind if it is placed in a suitable environment favorable for growth. In this instance, it was a date palm.

In Luke 8:4-15, Jesus presented a parable regarding a sower who went out to sow seed and the four different soils where the seed fell. When the seed fell in the good ground it produced “some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13:8). In His interpretation of this parable, the Lord stated that “The seed is the word of God” (V.11). The law of producing after its kind regarding a seed is also true concerning the Word of God. When it is planted in a heart that is sincere and one of integrity, it will produce after its kind; that is to say, when the Gospel of Jesus Christ is received in an honest heart and is believed and obeyed, it will produce a child of God, a Christian, nothing more and nothing less.

Jesus said “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). The apostle Paul declared, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16). The writer of the Book of Hebrews spoke of the power of the Word of God when he wrote, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). James in his epistle wrote that “the implanted word” is “able to save your souls” (1:21). In 1 Peter 1:22-23, we read the following, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of god, which liveth and abideth” (ASV).

The power to produce and in the matter pertaining to converting a heart to Christ is found in the seed (Word of God) and not in the sower. The apostle Paul put it this way, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

Another matter that is essential to our understanding of the power of the seed (Word of God) to produce is this, it does not matter when the seed (Word of God) is planted in the soil (heart of man); it will produce after its kind. As in the story regarding the date palm, the Word of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will produce Christians in this century as it did in the first century when it was first preached on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). As the Spirit enabled Peter, this apostle, along with the other eleven, preached the good news relative to the Christ who had been sent by the Father to die for the sins of mankind (John 3:16-17; Romans 5:8; Hebrews 2:9).

Peter’s sermon dealt with the facts that Jesus Christ was crucified, rose from the dead and that He ascended to His Father (Acts 2:22-33). Many of the hearers were moved by this sermon and inquired of the apostles what they should do (Acts 2:36). They were instructed by Peter to “Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (V. 38). About three thousands souls responded in a positive manner to these commands and were baptized that very day (V. 41). Luke records that the early disciples praised God and had favor with all the people. “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (V. 47).

When the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached in its purity and simplicity, it will produce Christians today as it did two thousand years ago. There is no need to place a prefix or a suffix to the name Christian. This was the name that was divinely given by the Lord to the early disciples (Acts 11:26). Christians collectively comprise the church of our Lord

Jesus Christ. It is neither a sect nor a denomination; rather, it is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23).

When individuals believe the facts of the Gospel and obey its commands, Jesus Christ saves them from their sins and adds them to His church. It is only when the Word of God is mixed with the doctrines of men that the results are different from what the pure Gospel (seed) will produce. And that is the main reason why there are thousands of denominational bodies today. If the pure Gospel was preached and if the same seed was planted in the hearts of men today, there would only be Christians and one church.

As children of God, we should be busy sowing the seed (Word of God) in the hearts of men and women so that they also could know the Savior and the joy of salvation. "Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:5-6).

By Raymond Elliott