

The
Teaching Tools
of
Scripture

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Christine Miller

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That which has been is that which will be,
And that which has been done is that which will be done.
So, there is nothing new under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 1:9

THE TEACHING TOOLS *of* SCRIPTURE

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Study the Bible
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Genesis 1 *through* 4 *and the* Teaching Tools

God wants to be known and understood, and has revealed truth about Himself to man. This truth is contained in the text of His Word, the Bible, into which He has also embedded teaching tools that both Jewish and Christian scholars have brought to light.

Don't give that which is holy to the dogs, neither throw your pearls before the pigs, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. Mat 7:6.

God wants to be understood, but He does not throw His pearls before swine.

My son, if you will receive My words, and lay up My commandments within you; so that you make your ear attend to wisdom, and your heart incline to discernment; yes, if you call for understanding, and lift up your voice for discernment; if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you shall understand the fear of YHVH, and find the knowledge of God. For YHVH gives wisdom, out of His mouth comes knowledge and discernment. Pro 2:1-6.

His gold and silver requires some digging, but treasure is just under the surface for those willing to look for it.

This list is not comprehensive, but they are those tools easily identified from Scripture, and have been the most help to me in my personal Bible study.

The opening chapters of Genesis introduce the teaching tools. Let's quickly note them from the first chapters here, and then examine each of them in greater depth with examples from all of Scripture.

PLAIN MEANING *of the* TEXT

God's word means what it appears to mean, upon the simple reading of the text.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Gen 1:1.

In the very first verse of Genesis, the teaching tool of plain meaning tells us that the heaven and earth is a product of special design by an intelligent Creator, and not a product of random chance.

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PATTERNS *and* REPETITION

The Scripture often establishes patterns in the narrative. The repetition draws our attention to the fact that it cannot be coincidence; Scripture is trying to make a point about something.

And God said, "Let there be light;" and there was light.

Gen 1:3.

And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters ..." Gen 1:6.

And God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together ..." Gen 1:9.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, herb yielding seed ..." Gen 1:11.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven ..." Gen 1:14.

And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures ...” Gen 1:20.

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind ...” Gen 1:24.

In Genesis 1, each day begins with the same phrase, “And God said,” day after day, exactly the same. The patterns and repetition teaching tool is teaching us that God brought into being that which did not exist by speaking His Word. The truth of this teaching is then confirmed by other Scripture:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him. Without Him was not anything made that has been made. Joh 1:1-3.

Sometimes the pattern previously established is broken, to draw attention to the break.

And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed **after its kind**, and tree bearing fruit, within which is the seed, **after its kind**; and God saw that it was good. Gen 1:12.

And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that creeps, with which the waters swarmed, **after its kind**, and every winged creature **after its kind**; and God saw that it was good. Gen 1:21.

And God made the beast of the earth **after its kind**, and the cattle **after their kind**, and everything that creeps upon the ground **after its kind**; and God saw that it was good. Gen 1:25.

A pattern is revealed once God began filling His creation with life. Everything living was made after its kind. Grass, herbs, fruit-bearing trees, sea creatures ... all the way to the beasts of the field.

And God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the winged creatures of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Gen 1:26-27.

But then when God creates man, He seems to break the pattern, for nothing is said of “after its kind” for the first time, even though everything has been “after its kind” up until this point. The break in the previously established pattern draws our attention to look more closely.

And God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, **after Our likeness;**” Gen 1:26.

Man is also made after his kind: He is in God’s own image, after His “kind!” The teaching tool of patterns and repetition, via a break in the previously established pattern, teaches us that man is likewise an eternal spiritual being, created to be the seed or children of God from the beginning! Oh my goodness ...

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NATURAL PICTURES

The next teaching tool introduced in Genesis is the tool of natural pictures. Yeshua made heavy use of this tool by teaching us many spiritual truths using parables. He often began a parable by saying, “The kingdom of heaven **is like ...**” and then proceeded to tell a story about seeds, crops, harvests, landowners, fathers and sons, or some other aspect of normal human existence or the natural world with which His audience was well aware. That picture in the natural world was meant to teach us something

about the spiritual world, or God, or the kingdom of heaven, that we might not otherwise understand.

And God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. ” Gen 1:26.

The natural picture in this case, is man. God created man in His own image. By seeing and understanding the natural picture of man, we can better see and understand something about God that we could not otherwise see and understand. The nature of man revealed in Scripture is of a being as a single, unique and unified individual existing in three intertwined parts of spirit, soul, and body.

And you shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Deu 6:5.

May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 The 5:23.

Deuteronomy 6:5 expresses man’s three parts as heart, soul, and strength. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 expresses man’s three parts as spirit, soul, and body. Both agree that man is a triune being, of heart or spirit, of soul, and of strength or body.

Hear, O Israel: YHVH our God, YHVH is one. Deu 6:4.

Man made in God’s own image, using the teaching tool of natural pictures, reveals that God is a single, unified, and unique Being existing in three intertwined parts of Father (*Psa 89:26, Mal 2:10*) Son (*Psa 2:7, Isa 9:6*), and Holy Spirit (*Gen 1:2, Exo 31:3*).

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS

God's paragraph divisions, when He has concluded one topic and is ready to go on to the next, are present in the original Hebrew text of the Scripture. These paragraph divisions have been preserved by the Hebrew scribes who faithfully copied every letter of Scripture without variation. They were discarded by the English translators, because admittedly, they sometimes do not make sense to human logic. But that is the point! God has divided His paragraphs the way He has for a reason: He is trying to teach us something. Where the paragraph divisions **aren't** are often just as instructive as where they are. There are two kinds of divisions, a weak division and a strong division.

A weak division is called a *parsha stumah*, meaning, a paragraph followed by a *stumah* break. I mark the end of *stumah* or weak paragraphs with **{s}** since the Hebrew word for it begins with the 's' sound. The *stumah* indicates the conclusion of one facet of a continuing theme.

A strong division is called a *parsha p'tuchah*, meaning, a paragraph followed by a *p'tuchah* break. I mark the end of *p'tuchah* or strong paragraphs with **{p}** since the Hebrew word for it begins with the 'p' sound. The *p'tuchah* indicates a conclusion of an overarching theme.

Many years ago when I first began studying Scripture with the teaching tool of Hebrew paragraph divisions, I made outlines of each book with its divisions marked, and wrote out the single topic for each paragraph. I would encourage everyone to do this for themselves, because the process of discovering each paragraph's topic taught me a great deal about Scripture and God's way of thinking.

Gen 1:1-2:3 Hebrew paragraph divisions

Gen 1:1-5 {p} First day of Creation: space, time, matter, energy (light).

Gen 1:6-8 {p} Second day of Creation: firmament of the heavens.

Gen 1:9-13 {p} Third day of Creation: dry land, plant life.

Gen 1:14-19 {p} Fourth day of Creation: lights in the firmament of the heavens.

Gen 1:20-23 {p} Fifth day of Creation: birds, sea life.

Gen 1:24-31 {p} Sixth day of Creation: animal life on land, man.

Gen 2:1-3 {p} Seventh day of Creation: rest.

The divisions make it apparent that the *days* of creation are significant. There are Hebrew words for other lengths of time, such as years or eons, if those units of time were meant. But God chose the Hebrew *yom* – “day” – the regular 24-hour day. It sometimes comes as a shock to realize that a day as a unit of time, is one of the few that do not depend on the sun, moon, or stars for marking it. The 24-hour day is the time it takes for the earth to revolve on its axis one revolution; no sun or moon is needed.

The teaching tool of paragraph divisions, then, teaches us the origin of the seven-day week, serving as a reminder every week that God is our Creator.

The very next paragraphs of Scripture, following the Creation account, are:

Gen 2:4-3:15 {s} Disobedience to YHVH’s command is sin.

Gen 3:16 {s} Consequences for the woman.

Gen 3:17-21 {p} Consequences for the man.

Two weak paragraphs are followed by a strong paragraph. I grouped these three paragraphs together in my notes, since the strong marker at the end of Genesis 3:21 indicates the conclusion of an overarching theme, begun in Genesis 2:4. The nature of weak and strong paragraphs in Scripture, then, introduces another teaching tool.

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STRONG THEMES

The Scripture not only divides itself into its paragraphs by its markers, but it also divides itself into what I call strong themes. Recall that a strong paragraph marker **{p}** indicates the completion of a theme or topic, while a weak marker **{s}** indicates another facet of the same theme or topic.

We saw that Genesis 2:4 opens a series of weak paragraphs, concluded by a strong paragraph from Genesis 3:17-21.

Gen 2:4-3:15 {s} Disobedience to YHVH's command is sin.

Gen 3:16 {s} Consequences for the woman.

Gen 3:17-21 {p} Consequences for the man.

weak facet + **weak facet** + **concluding facet**;
Gen 2:4-3:15 {s} + Gen 3:16 {s} + Gen 3:17-21 {p}
= **strong theme** from Gen 2:4-3:21 {s+s+p}.

What is that strong theme? We have to consider all the text of the section together as conveying a single topic. What I have in my notes:

Gen 2:4-3:21 {s+s+p} Disobedience to God is sin, and carries the consequence of painful toil and death.

It only makes logical sense that Genesis 2:3 concludes its own strong theme teaching a single overarching topic.

Gen 1:1-2:3 {px7, seven concurrent strong facts} God is our Creator.

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CHIASTIC STRUCTURES

A chiasmic structure is a passage with a central point that is **the** key point of the passage, and the Scripture points to it as the narrative around it zeros in on it like an arrow. Let's say there are four ideas in a passage that lead up to the central point. Following the central point, the same ideas will be repeated in some way, but in reverse order. There can be any number of ideas, but that they repeat in reverse order around a central point is the key characteristic.

Gen 1:1-2:3 {px7} chiasmic structure

1a) Gen 1:1 In the beginning **God created** the heavens and the earth;

1b) Gen 1:2 **Earth** was without form/ **void of life** + darkness on the deep + Spirit of God hovered over **the waters**;

1c) Gen 1:3-8 {p+p} **God created light** and the **firmament of heaven** on the first and second days;

1d) Gen 1:9-10a **God caused the dry land** to appear;

central axis) Gen 1:10b **God saw that it was good**;

2d) Gen 1:11 -13 {p} **God filled the dry land** with grass + herbs + and fruit bearing trees on the third day;

2c) Gen 1:14-19 {p} **God filled the heaven with lights** to rule over/ divide light from darkness on the fourth day;

2b) Gen 1:20-30 {p+p} **God filled the waters + earth with living creatures** on the fifth and sixth days;

2a) Gen 2:1-3 {p} **God rested from His work of creation** on the seventh day.

Notice that the paragraph divisions help define the elements of the structure. You can see that besides the central point – that God’s creation was good, not one full of predation and death – the repeating elements then make matching pairs, which bring even more clarity to the text. In this case, the teaching tool of chiasmic structures reveals that God first formed the universe, which was void, saw that its form was good, then filled the universe that He had prepared with life.

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HEBREW ROOT WORDS




The majority of the Old Testament Scripture was penned in ancient Hebrew, God’s beautiful language. In particular, God gave the Torah to Moses face to face on Mount Sinai. Moses wrote it in Hebrew, every word in its place as dictated by God. As one studies Hebrew, it becomes more and more apparent that not only are the themes of Torah and Scripture God-inspired, but every word, even every letter, is in the place pre-ordained for it by God.



Hebrew words come from three-letter roots, with each letter originally a picture character, such as a house, a hand, or a sun. The three-letter roots themselves are more than just a name for an action; each root “paints” a picture which tells a story, through its characters. This Hebrew root word parable gives deeper meaning to the translated written message.



In the beginning, **God** created the heaven and the earth.
Gen 1:1.



We trace the Hebrew word back to its primitive origin, in order to find the ancient three-letter root which tells the parable. In this case, Strong’s tells us that the Hebrew for “God” here is *Elohiym*, meaning, “the true God,” Strong’s







H430. We see that this word is not a primitive root itself, but is the plural of Strong's H433, *elowahh*, "any god, a false god." Continuing to trace back, *elowahh* is the emphatic form of Strong's H410, *el*, meaning, "god, god-like, mighty one, hero." However we are not yet at the primitive root. Continuing to trace back, *el* is the shortened form of Strong's H352, *ayil*, meaning, "ram, capitals (of columns), noble, strong tree." We find that *ayil* is derived from Strong's H193, finally the primitive three-letter root, *uwl*, meaning, "to roll, to have power."

We have traced *Elohiym* back to its primitive root. The three letters are:    *aleph + vav + lamed*.

The *aleph*, , in the ancient Hebrew pictographs, was originally the picture of the ox head, . Its meaning, then, is "strength, power, leader."

The *vav*, , in the pictographs, was originally the picture of the tent peg, . Its meaning, then, is "to add, to secure, to hook," because it is the tent peg that secures the tent to the ground.

The *lamed*, , was originally the picture of the shepherd's staff, . Its meaning, then, is "to teach, to yoke, to bind," as well as the preposition "to," because it is the shepherd who guides and leads his flock.

aleph ,  = the ox head, thus strength, power, leader
vav ,  = the tent peg, thus add, secure, hook
lamed ,  = the shepherd's staff, thus teach, yoke, bind

How do we find the parable being told? Think of those *Highlights* magazine picture stories, where words in the story were replaced with its picture, to help pre-readers get involved in the reading process. We are going to look at the progression of the pictures, just as if God was telling the story to His five-year-old children. If we overthink it we have most likely missed the parable.

ע י ש

The story told by this three-letter root is the **sovereign** (*aleph*, the ox head, i.e., powerful leader) **linked to** (*vav*, the tent peg, i.e., added) the **shepherd** (*lamed*, the shepherd's staff, i.e., he who teaches and guides the flock).

Right away in the very first verse of Genesis, God reveals of Himself that yes, He is awesome in His great might and power, but it is not arbitrary might or tyrannical power; it is intrinsically secured to the heart of the Good Shepherd.

Why were so many steps needed to evolve this primitive root, *uwl*, “to have power,” to *Elohiym*, “God, the true God?” In order to arrive at a word which can even come close to adequately describing the Being whose preeminence, greatness, might, and glory is indescribable, the word for “strength, preeminence, nobility, leadership,” *ayil*, first had to be made emphatic, *elowahh*, then that result had to be magnified by making it plural, *Elohiym*.

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COMPARISON and CONTRAST

Scripture is loaded with real and seeming opposites, which draw our attention and invite us to make a closer examination. Examples from the opening chapters of Genesis are light contrasted with darkness, and to be void contrasted with to be filled.

Let's use this tool by comparing the consequences suffered by the woman and the man.

To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply your **pain** and your travail; in pain you shall bring forth children; and your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.” Gen 3:16.

And to Adam He said, “Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it;’ cursed is the ground for your sake; in **toil** you shall eat of it all the days of your life.” Gen 3:17.

Our English translations generally use two different words to describe the woman’s painful travail and the man’s sweat-inducing toil. Looking up both words in Hebrew, we find that they are instead the same word, Strong’s H6093, *itstsabon*, a concrete noun meaning, “painful toil.”

The traditional understanding of the woman’s painful toil of Genesis 3:16, is that she will experience pain in child-birth. But I think the Hebrew makes it clear that her labor of bringing forth children does not stop with just bearing them, but also raising them. The husband’s painful toil is similar in that it is also lifelong (“... in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life”).

The teaching tool of comparison and contrast is teaching us that the man and woman both experienced the same consequence of life-long painful toil for their sin, only expressed in different arenas.

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LEARNING *from the* NARRATIVE

Let’s take a closer look at what we have just learned from the teaching tools we have studied so far. If we then meditate on Genesis chapters 1 through 3 that we have just read, and consider the topics of the Hebrew paragraphs, and why the paragraph divisions might fall out the way they have, we come to a startling conclusion.

Mankind’s daily labor, *itstsabon*, is a daily consequence of sin. But God in His grace extended mercy to man and

woman before they ever sinned, when He set aside the seventh day as a day of rest from labor from the foundation of the world. Every seventh day, men and women can lay down the consequence of their sin, their painful toil, burden, and responsibility, and enjoy a respite. God, who is great and powerful but with a shepherd's heart, has gifted mankind with a gift of undeserved grace in seventh-day rest.

The teaching tool of learning from the narrative has corrected our thinking, because now instead of seeing the command to rest on the seventh day as an obligatory chore, we can see it as it truly is, a gift of grace from our gracious, generous, and loving Father.

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HISTORY *that* PROPHECIES

The history recorded in Torah and the Old Testament is not merely simple history, but it is a history which prophesies of things to come. The Genesis 1:1-2:3 history tells of God's labor of Creation for six days followed by the seventh day of rest.

But at the end of the Bible we learn that the rest the earth will enjoy under the kingship of Messiah will last one thousand years, a full millennia (*Rev 20:1-4*). Taking the biblical account of the history of the world as authoritative (as the teaching tool of the plain meaning of the text teaches us we ought), we next realize that man has been on the earth laboring under the burden of sin for six thousand years or six millennia.

God labored for six days and then rested on the seventh. The teaching tool of history that prophesies teaches us that the earth has labored under the bondage of corruption re-

sulting from sin for six millennia and will rest on the seventh (*Rom 8:19-22*). The history of Creation week prophesies concerning the length of the ages of the earth and the coming millennial reign.

Furthermore, thinking back to what we have just learned about labor and Sabbath rest, the teaching tool of history that prophesies now reveals that Sabbath rest is the first teacher of the gospel of grace in Scripture.

Painful toil is our earned consequence for that sin whose wages leads to death, but the undeserved free gift of God is eternal life in Messiah Yeshua our Lord, not by work, lest any man should boast. Instead, He has graced us with rest from works.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast. Eph 2:8-9.

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PROPHETIC TYPES

In particular the Torah, since the purpose of Torah was to write about Messiah (*Joh 5:46*), we find, not only historical events that prophesy of the gospel or of Messiah, but persons whose lives strangely contain amazing elements that mirror Messiah Yeshua's life and ministry.

Scripture tells us that Messiah shall be the Seed of the woman:

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” Gen 3:15.

Then in the very next chapter, Scripture identifies the Cain and Abel incident as an incident involving enmity between seeds:

And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have gotten a man with the help of YHVH." And again she bore his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought as an offering to YHVH, of the fruit of the ground. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of its fat. And YHVH had respect for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had not respect. And **Cain was very angry** ... And Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that **Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.** Gen 4:1-5, 8.

And Adam knew his wife again; and she bore a son, and called his name Seth, "for God has appointed to me **another seed instead of Abel**; for Cain slew him." Gen 4:25.

So we see Scripture identifying Abel as a Messianic type. Later Scripture confirms Abel as a Messianic type:

But you have come to Mount Zion ... to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better than that of Abel. Heb 12:22-24.

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SIGNS of MESSIAH

God has placed signs, markers, and identifying guideposts in His Word to help us recognize when a person or passage is prophetic of Messiah. These signs of Messiah are consistently used, especially throughout Torah.

And God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas; and God saw that it was good. And God said, "Let the earth bring

forth grass, herb yielding **seed**, and fruit tree bearing fruit after its kind, within which is the **seed**, on the earth.” And it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding **seed** after its kind, and tree bearing fruit, within which is the **seed**, after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a **third** day.
Gen 1:9-13.

One prominent sign of Messiah in Torah is the number **three**. Not every occurrence of three is a sign of Messiah, but so many are that I always look into them when I find them.

The Genesis 1:9-13 passage describes the work of creation on the **third** day. This is the first occurrence of the concept of **seed** in Scripture, which repeats four times in this paragraph alone.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” Gen 3:15.

The first prophecy of Messiah in Scripture is as the Promised Seed of the woman. The sign of Messiah, the number three in the text of Genesis 1:9-13, shone a spotlight on the concept of seed as a prophecy of Messiah. Later Scripture confirms the number three as a sign of Messiah.

But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Mat 12:39-40.

We can also say that **seed** may act as another sign of Messiah in Scripture, as we saw with Abel.

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COMMON THEMES

When multiple passages reveal the same theme or topic, even if they seem dissimilar at first glance, a comparison of those passages often reveals amazing insight, instruction, and wisdom.

One simple example is the theme of the tree of life.

And out of the ground YHVH God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the **tree of life** also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Gen 2:9.

And YHVH God said, “Behold, the man has become as one of Us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the **tree of life**, and eat, and live forever”—Therefore YHVH God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the **tree of life**. Gen 3:22-24.

The tree appears overtly in the opening chapters of Genesis, in Genesis 2:9 and Genesis 3:22-24. It also appears overtly:

She [*Wisdom*] is a **tree of life** to those who lay hold of her, and happy is everyone that holds her fast. Pro 3:18.

The fruit of the righteous is a **tree of life**; and he who is wise wins souls. Pro 11:30.

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

A soothing tongue is a **tree of life**; but perverseness in it wounds the spirit. Pro 15:4.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from

the **tree of life**, which is in the Paradise of my God. Rev 2:7.

He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On this side of the river and on that was the **tree of life**, bearing twelve kinds of fruits, yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Rev 22:1-2.

By the teaching tool of common theme, we realize that the tree of life appears perhaps not so covertly, even if not explicitly named, elsewhere in Scripture:

And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither; and in whatsoever he does, he shall prosper. Psa 1:3.

And by the river on its bank, on this side and on that side, shall grow every tree for food, whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall its fruit fail; it shall bring forth new fruit every month, because the waters issue out of the sanctuary; and its fruit shall be for food, and its leaf for healing. Eze 47:12.

The repeating themes of the tree, every tree good for food (*Gen 2:9* and *Eze 47:12*), the garden of Eden and Paradise (*Gen 2:9*, *Rev 2:7*), yielding fruit in season (*Rev 22:2*, *Psa 1:3*, *Eze 47:12*), leaf that does not wither (*Psa 1:3*, *Eze 47:12*), leaves for healing (*Rev 22:2*, *Eze 47:12*), and prosperity, happiness (*Psa 1:3*, *Pro 3:18*, *11:30*, *13:12*, *15:4*), point out that even though 'tree of life' is not always mentioned by name, upon consideration of the passages in their entirety, it becomes clear that they all share a common topic or theme of a life-giving tree. Comparison, then, of these passages will be instructive.

PaRDeS is an acronym for *pashat*, *remez*, *drash*, and *sod*, the four levels of Scriptural interpretation according to Jewish scholars (and we will see, according to Scripture as well).

And God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; and the stars. Gen 1:16.

P or *pashat* (“simple”) refers to the plain or direct meaning of the text. We have already seen that the plain meaning of the text is a Scriptural teaching tool.

The *pashat* or direct meaning of this text is that God made two great lights, one to rule the day and one to rule the night.

R or *remez* (“hint”) refers to the implied or inferred meaning of the text.

The *remez* or inferred meaning of Genesis 1:16, is that since the sun is the greatest light we see, and shines in the daytime, God made the sun to rule the day. Since the moon is the next greatest light we see, lesser than the sun, and shines in the nighttime, God made the moon to rule the night.

The text does not specifically name the sun and moon as the lights, but that they are meant is inferred by the text.

D or *drash* (“search”) refers to the allegorical, typological, or thematic meaning of the text, not readily apparent from its *pashat* or direct meaning.

The *drash* meaning of Genesis 1:16 might be that it is God who creates greater and lesser rulers, applying this passage to encourage honor and obedience to kings or other authorities as an acknowledgement of our Creator’s sover-

eignty. I am not saying this is necessarily the most accurate *drash* interpretation of the text, but merely an example of how a *drash* interpretation would be made.

S or *sod* (“hidden”) refers to the hidden meaning of the text, usually only understood through knowledge of Hebrew or by revelation.

Taking Genesis 1:16 as an example, we find in prophetic Scripture the following amazing proclamation:

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. Rev 6:12.

Since a black sun and a blood red moon are the colors of the sun and moon in eclipse, applying the *sod* teaching tool, the prophecy is saying that the power of the greater and lesser kingdom rulers to rule will be in eclipse. The *sod* interpretation is that the sun and moon, described as rulers in Genesis 1:16, depict specific kingdom rulers.

The foundational rule in applying the PaRDeS teaching tool, is that none of the higher levels of interpretation, to be correct, can ever violate or contradict the *pashat* or direct meaning of the text. The idea is that all the passages of Scripture can be understood at each of these four levels, so at any one time there will be four interpretations of the same text.

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