

Pastor's Letter February 7, 2020

Do I have to be a Sequoia Tree?

...Maybe so...



"Sequoia trees in winter" by [Azzazello](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)

What is more majestic than an enormous Sequoia tree? Perhaps nothing. Sequoia trees uniquely grow in California between the 5,000 and 7,000 foot level and weigh almost 3 million pounds each. Some have trunks that measure **35** feet across with limb diameters of 8 feet across and are taller than a **26** story building, making them the **skyscrapers of the natural world.**

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But more significantly, Sequoia trees parallel key Christian attributes. For example:

Sequoias have a **thick outer skin**. Their bark is 3 feet thick. They tend to not get rattled by things that bother other plants and animals in nature. *We should be equally thick skinned.*

Sequoias never stop growing until the day they die. *Neither should we.*

Sequoia trees support each other with their roots that intertwine with nearby Sequoia trees. *We are to support each other in spiritual interdependency.*

Sequoia need forest fires - **controlled ones**, that is. Forest rangers purposely set and conduct **controlled burns** to unclutter the forest floor and generate enough heat to crack open the Sequoia pine cones that contain the seeds for future Sequoias.

God allows us periodic trials or “controlled burns” to open up new levels of Christian growth in our lives. Indeed they are “controlled” as He promises to never allow anything more than what we can handle with His help. (I Corinthians 10:13).

Sequoias are not simply trees unto themselves. Instead they indeed are pillars in the forest community as they reach out to others. They provide wildlife with shade plus water retention with their root systems; and as a result, they are blessings to the other plants and trees around them. *As Christians, we should be “pillars”(Revelation 3:12) with an outward focus to be of benefit to those around us.*

Psalm 1 reminds us that valuable trees should bear good fruit in season with verdant green leaves by growing along sources of water – which is symbolic of God’s Holy Spirit



From our hymnal:

*Blessed and happy is the man, who does
never walk astray ...*

*He shall be a **tree** that grows, planted
by the river's side, which in season
yields its fruit, green its leaves abide.*

*All he does, prospers well, but the
wicked are not so; they are chaff
before the wind, driven to and fro*

Psalm 1

The tree to the right may be the oldest living
thing on earth, the General Sherman tree.



A Sequoia cone only releases its seeds under fire or other extreme heat.

TALLAHASSEE

Tallahassee was the first location for the 2nd round of this year's public presentation on the future of Jerusalem. A mail out was being generated in the Tampa area for that purpose. The theme for the 2nd presentation is "Jerusalem in Prophecy".

FORT MYERS

It has been a delight to have elders John White and Jim Kocher in the area for December, January and part of February. It is also nice to know that one of our Ft. Myers people, Lisa, was a top 5 finalist for "Teacher of the Year" in Charlotte County. Being extremely modest, Lisa would never volunteer any of this information but it happened and it is what it is and so we add it here.

VERO BEACH

We ask that you pray for the success of the public presentation in round #2 on February 22. Roughly 250 letters have been mailed out to our local subscribers.

By the time you read this we will have had an interactive Bible study at Carol Lynn's home and a study this evening at the Waggoners. Virtually everyone that could come was there.

OCALA

In spite of 3 of our regular attendees not there two Sabbaths ago, we had a record crowd of 40 people! There were multiple reasons which contributed to that including a pot luck meal. However, we expect

attendance to gradually trend upwards. Our previous high was 32 people. Increased attendance is not necessarily the yardstick of righteousness but it is encouraging.

Recently one of our deacons, Stan Bramuller helped out in the Caribbean work by visiting and speaking with brethren in Trinidad.

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