

Heaven: The Tree of Life

When God created the Garden of Eden, He intended it to be like heaven. It has always been God's desire for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, and God has always desired to put heaven on this earth. Even in the midst of the devil's world today, God keeps trying to put pieces of heaven here on Earth. God's desire is to save people, to fill them with His Holy Spirit, to pour His divine health into them and to prosper them. God's desire is to establish His kingdom on this earth in the hearts of mankind even while we are yet in the midst of the devil's world.

Right now, this is the devil's world. Satan took over when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and aligned themselves with Satan by eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. At that time, Satan set up his kingdom on the earth. For now, this earth is dominated and run by Satan himself but a day is coming at the end of the Church Age when his lease is up. At the beginning of the Millennium, God will remove Satan and this earth will shift back to its proper owner, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Adam and Eve were placed here, the proper owner—Jesus Christ—was in charge of this earth but God gave Man the authority to govern it. Adam and Eve turned around and gave their authority over to Satan and it became the devil's world. Satan is called the god of this world and the prince of this world, but in the midst of all of it, God has established His kingdom here on this earth.

It is important to talk about what the Garden of Eden was like and how God set it up because when we are in heaven we're going to get glimpse of what the Garden of Eden was like here on this earth.

And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.
Genesis 2:8

The Lord God is Jesus. Whenever it says the "Lord God," understand that to mean Jehovah is the manifested member of the Godhead. Jehovah is the Old Testament name for the Lord Jesus Christ. It is speaking of Jesus Christ.

And out of the ground made the Lord God 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.
Genesis 2:9

All the trees that were good for food were in the Garden of Eden. I believe they are the same trees we have today, including apple trees, pear trees, and other fruit trees.

They had all types of fruit that were good to eat, but there were two other trees in the midst of the garden. First, it mentions the Tree of Life. God gave them access to the Tree of Life and said they could eat of that one, but we're never told anywhere in the Book of Genesis that they ever partook of that tree. The one that was forbidden to them to partake of was the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In the midst of the Garden, everything was perfect. Man and woman were also perfect because they were made in God's image. God created man in His image to be perfect and with a will. But what good is a person's will if there is no test for that will?

There was no way man and woman could have sinned. Could they have gone out and committed adultery? No, there was no one to commit adultery with. Could they steal? No, everything belonged to them, given to them by God. Could they bear false witness? Could they lie? No, they could not do any of these things because there was no such thing as sin in the Garden. Therefore, God had to place something in the Garden to test their will. What tests us every day? Sin and righteousness. We have a choice between the two, but they had no sin, all they had was righteousness. There was no choice there. God had to place something in the Garden to test their will and He placed a tree called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and told them what would happen in the day that they ate of that tree.

He said in the day that you eat of that tree, you will die twice. (*Genesis 2:17*) The first death they experienced was spiritual death. The King James says *in the day that thou eatest therefore thou shalt surely die*. The Hebrew says *die, die*. It's mentioned twice. That is why the King James says *surely die* because *die* is mentioned twice in the Hebrew and it means *in the day that thou eatest thereof dying*, present tense, *thou shalt die*, future tense. *Dying* present tense is spiritual death. It is a separation from God and it entered into them immediately, which set up a

process in them that eventually caused physical death. The Lord told them when you eat of that tree, you're going to set up a double death inside of yourself; first a spiritual death and eventually a physical death.

If everything was good in the Garden, the only way they could be tempted was toward evil, and that was why the tree was set up. How stupid would it be to go toward evil if everything was perfect? You say, "I never would do that." Well, you just don't know, you weren't there. It was Adam and Eve who were there. They were perfect. Everything around them was perfect, but they used their will against God and followed after Satan himself. Everything was positive in the Garden so the only way they could be tempted was toward the negative.

Let's bring it around today. Satan came in, tempted them, and took away the authority God had given to them. Therefore, the earth today has become polluted and perverted through Satan's tactics. Just as Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden, you are placed in this garden. I didn't ask for this world to be this way; I was just born into it. I was born into an imperfect world dominated by Satan and his forces. Ephesians 2:2 says this world is dominated by the prince of the power of the air, that's Satan. I could read the Word of God and find out his days are numbered, but in the meantime I was born into this mess. In other words, we were born into a negative world. Therefore, the only way to be tempted now is toward the positive and that's why Jesus, in the midst of our garden today, puts another tree here, which is the Cross.

At the first tree He said, "Don't." But with the second tree He says, "Do." When they ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they were cut off from the Tree of Life. If, however, you partake of the Cross, the way to the Tree of Life is opened again. Today, we can partake of the Tree of Life because of the Cross.

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is 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 for ever:

Therefore the Lord 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 Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Genesis 3:22-24

It is amazing to me that people read verse 22 and can't see there is more than one person in the Godhead. If He says, *they have become as one of us*, there's bound to be more than one. There are at least two, and we know there are three: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

God drove Adam and Eve out so they could not eat of the Tree of Life, because if they were to eat of the Tree of Life, they would have lived forever in that sinful condition. This may sound a little contradictory, but when they ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, physical death became a blessing because it prevented them from living forever in that fallen condition if they had then eaten of the Tree of Life. Physical death frees us from these death-doomed bodies until the day when that curse will be removed totally from the earth. Physical death will be removed on the day we enter into heaven.

I heard a story one time about a Sunday school teacher who had asked all the kids in the class to draw pictures of what they had learned that quarter from stories in the Old Testament. As the kids were all drawing pictures, she walked by one little boy's desk and he was drawing a picture of a man building a big boat.

She said, "Oh, that's the Ark, isn't it?"

He said, "Yeah, that's Noah's Ark. I remember that most of all."

She walked by another child and he was drawing a picture of people building a big tower into the air. She said, "That's the Tower of Babel, isn't it?"

He said, "Yes, that's what I remember most of all."

She came along to another boy and he had a big picture of a red convertible Cadillac with an old man in the front seat with gray hair and two people in the backseat with no clothes on. She asked, "What is this?"

He said, "That's God driving Adam and Eve out of the Garden." At least he thought God would own a Cadillac. That's what I like about it.

God drove them out of the Garden to keep them away of the Tree of Life. He placed Cherubims at the east of the Garden of Eden and a flaming sword, which turned in all directions to keep and to protect the way to the Tree of Life. After this verse, we don't hear about the Tree of Life until we come to the Book of Revelation and suddenly the Tree of Life is brought up again. I want you to understand that although man has not been able to come back to the physical Tree of Life as it existed in the Garden of Eden, we will be able to one day because it has been transplanted in heaven. Since that time it's reproduced itself many times. We're going to find out in this scripture that there's only one type of tree in heaven and that's the Tree of Life, but it lines the middle of the street all the way down. It's on both sides of the river of life in heaven. It's everywhere and it produces two things: fruit and leaves. The fruit is for everlasting life and the leaves are for the healing of people.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:7

This isn't talking about physical ears; it's talking about spiritual ears. This is the first mention of the Tree of Life after the Garden of Eden. We will have the opportunity to partake of it. The "overcomers" are those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior — those who have overcome the world and believe that Jesus is the Christ. All believers in heaven are going to partake of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. Why will we get to eat of the Tree of Life? Because we have accepted the tree called the Cross, and the Tree of the Cross opens up the way to where we can now come to the Tree of Life.

But we don't have to wait until we get to heaven to eat of the Tree of Life. God has given us a tree of life on Earth and it is called the Word of God. The Word of God is our Tree of Life. The only thing that keeps a person from approaching the Tree of Life is to reject the cross. But if you accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, you accept the fact that He hung on the cross and He was raised from the dead for your justification, then you can partake of the Tree of Life.

Adam and Eve never partook of the Tree of Life. How sad it is today for believers that come by the way of the cross and never partake of the Tree of Life. Our garden is the evil, crooked, perverse generation that surrounds us, or as Galatians 1:4 calls it, "this present evil world." As in the Garden of Eden, in our garden, this evil world, stand two trees. One of them is the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who accept it can step right over to the Tree of Life and begin to partake of the fruit and the leaves of it. Sadly, many people today accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, but never find out what the Word really has to offer them. I imagine when we taste of the Tree of Life in heaven, we're going to say, "Hmm-m-m, tastes a lot like the Word of God." Some people probably get there and say, "Hey, this tastes pretty good. I've never tasted anything like it before." Those people never got into the Word. But those who have lived by the Word and walked by the Word are going to taste the Tree of Life and say, "Hmm-m-m, tastes just like the Word of God."

Which is more important: the fruit of a tree or the leaves of a tree? The fruit is more important. You don't see too many people munching on the leaves, you see them munching on the fruit. That is what the Tree of Life is. The fruit is the real salvation, the life; but the leaves are for the healing, which tells us that the most important thing God gives us is eternal life. The most important thing He gives us is salvation. We could talk all we want to about divine healing and miracles, and although these things are wonderful the most important miracle that could ever happen in a person's life is to come out of the kingdom of Satan and come into the kingdom of God — out of darkness and into light.

The disciples came to Jesus and were saying, "All the devils are subjects to us. Oh, in Your name we can cast out devils."

Jesus said, "Don't rejoice because devils are subject unto you. He's already defeated. I saw him kicked out of heaven a long time ago. You should rejoice because your names are written in the Book of Life."

Glory to God! It's good to know your name is written in the Book of Life. Hallelujah! You should get up daily rejoicing not that you're going to get to cast the devil out, but that your name is written in the Book of Life. That makes everything else a whole lot better and then you can really have fun casting out devils and laying hands on the sick. If your whole life revolves around anything else, you have missed the point. The greatest thing about the tree is the fruit, not the leaves. The greatest thing in life is for your name to be written in the Lamb's Book of Life. When you get

to heaven, you will gain entrance into the kingdom of God because your name is written in the Book of Life and you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.

A description of heaven is given throughout all of Revelation 21 and in the first five verses of chapter 22. John had a tremendous vision in chapter 21 of what heaven is like, and in chapter 22, he gives two descriptions of eternal life: the River of Life and the Tree of Life. Both are descriptions of the eternal life which is inside of us

And he [the angel] showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Revelation 22:1

The water represents the flow of eternal life. Once eternal life came into you, it started flowing from that moment on, and the flow of eternal life continues. The source of eternal life is the throne of God.

We have the Arkansas River running through Tulsa. Although it's a wide river here in Tulsa, if you follow it all the way to where it begins in the mountains you will see just a small stream. It begins as something small enough to step over, but as it travels further down and catches more of the snow and rain and joins other small rivers, it becomes a larger river until it eventually dumps into the Mississippi.

The same thing is true with the flow of eternal life. We are on the receiving end of eternal life, but one day God is going to take us all the way to the source and we're going to find out that it starts at the throne of God.

One commentary I read said the river flows for the entire length of heaven, probably some fifteen hundred miles long. Right along by the river is the road, the one we often refer to as the streets of gold. The Bible refers to the street that runs all the way through heaven, paved with transparent gold that can be seen through so the light of God can go through it. But the river in heaven is the flow of eternal life, and it starts from the throne of God.

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.

Revelation 22:2

The Greek actually says it this way: *The Tree of Life bare twelve manner of fruits, one particular type each month.* One fruit was born each month so the Tree of Life would have a different fruit on it every month throughout the year.

The word *nations* means *people*. In heaven, we will walk in perfect righteousness and in perfect health throughout all of eternity. Do you wonder why there aren't two trees in heaven? Because one tree, the Cross, was taken care of down here. There are not two trees in heaven because once you get to heaven, it's too late to make a decision. No decisions are made in heaven. The decision for the cross is here in this lifetime, and once you partake of the cross you have the Word in this life, along with the Tree of Life, to look forward to in heaven that you can partake of forever and forever. Hebrews 9:27 says it's appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment. Therefore, when we get to heaven, we can partake of the Tree of Life.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

Revelation 22:3

The curse is the nature of the flesh. When he sinned in the Garden of Eden, the first thing that entered into Adam was the nature of the flesh. Through that nature, spiritual death entered into Mankind.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Romans 5:12

The word *sin* is in the singular referring to *the nature of sin*, or the *nature of the flesh*, which drives men toward sin. Paul expounded on this and said, "When I want to do good, I find evil present with me." (*Romans 7:21*) Do you find evil present with you when you want to do good? When you want to do something right, the devil is always tempting you to do something wrong. When you decide to walk in righteousness, there's always a temptation to walk in unrighteousness. Your flesh rises up and says, "Oh, let's don't do that. It's not easy. It's too difficult." Have you noticed the flesh always wants to do the easiest thing? The flesh is undisciplined. If you just leave it alone, it will go

in every direction because it will always follow the path of least resistance. But in that day there will be no more curse because the nature of the flesh will be gone. There will be no tendency and no desire at all to move away from God. Your only desire will be to move toward God.

The nature of flesh entered Adam and through that doorway came spiritual death. First of all, Adam died spiritually. The nature of the flesh entered into him and spiritual death resulted. In other words, Satan moved into Adam from the outside in and killed his spirit.

But Jesus begins to heal that from the inside out. The first thing Jesus gives is spiritual life when we accept Him as Lord and Savior. Then, on that day the nature of the flesh will be gone entirely, completely removed.

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.
Revelation 22:4

What's so important about seeing His face? No man has ever seen His face! When Moses asked to see the face of God, he only got to see His backside, and even that was enough to knock Moses off his feet. We cannot see God face to face because the nature of the flesh cannot stand in the presence of God, and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. However, once the nature of the flesh is entirely gone, we can look directly into the face of God throughout all of eternity.

When it says, *And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads*, this goes back to biblical customs. In the Old Testament, the Jews wore the phylacteries on their head which was a small scroll wrapped up into a piece of leather that they placed right on their head, and it symbolized what is a New Testament reality — the renewing of the mind. But after awhile they began to worship the phylacteries, and they began to brag on the phylacteries. Jesus commented on this in Matthew 23.

But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.
Matthew 23:5

They made them bigger and bigger, trying to impress people, and He was saying that it is not the word *on* the head that's important. It's the Word that gets *into* the head that is important. All these outward signs do no good unless you understand the reality of them. All the outward things we do in church, such as raising our hands and partaking of communion, can become empty if you don't understand the reality of what it means. What does a cup of juice at communion mean? It means the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has made you righteous. What does a little piece of bread mean? It represents the body of Jesus that has healed us and we can walk in that health because in His body He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. When we understand that, then we properly understand what the communion elements mean; but if we don't understand what it means, it's nothing more than a cup of juice or a piece of bread.

When a person is water baptized, if they don't understand that it means we have been buried with Christ and risen with Him to newness of life, then the act of baptism becomes for them nothing more than a person going down dry and coming up wet. There is going to come a day when no longer will we need to keep putting the Word of God into us because His name is going to be written in our foreheads. In that day, our minds will be renewed forever.

We will have no more problems with the flesh. Your spirit is not giving you problems today. We often say, "I have a spiritual problem." What we really mean is we have a head problem. If you are having problems in your spirit, you need to be born again and the Holy Spirit will come to live inside of you and you won't have any more problems with your spirit.

The real test of the Christian life comes after the new birth — renewing your mind, changing your thought patterns, and learning to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of Him. In heaven, there will be no more battle with the flesh and no more battle with the mind. All battles will be over and all struggles will be gone. Satan, who is the author of all battles, will be banished forever and ever into the Lake of Fire, and we'll live with the Lord forever and ever. We'll be able to look upon His face for eternity and His name will be written in our foreheads.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.
Revelation 22:5

The word *candle* means *lamps*. We won't need lamps in our homes. Do you fully realize *you will reign in heaven with God forever and ever*? But I want you to understand that it won't start when you get there. It should have started right now. When you get there, you will reign forever and ever, but why wait until you get there. Why not start now? The Bible declares that He has made us a kingdom, a priest unto our God, and today we can rule and reign on this earth with the Lord Jesus Christ. Why wait until we get to heaven to experience our eternal life? We can experience it now. Many people have it; they've just never experienced it. They don't know the full benefits of it. No need to wait until to heaven to enjoy the benefits of the eternal life we already have within us.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
2 Peter 1:4

It's one thing to have the divine nature; it's another thing to partake of it. It's one thing to have eternal life; it's another thing to partake of it. God doesn't want us to wait until we get to heaven to partake of eternal life or to partake of the divine nature. He wants us to partake of it now. Why should we wait until then to rule and reign? Why not start right now? In fact, we have the devil to rule and to reign over. We have been given authority and dominion over the works of Satan, so rise up Church and take your place! Jesus didn't say, "I'm going to build heaven and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Obviously, the gates of hell are not going to prevail against heaven. He said in the midst of this world He is going to build His *Church* and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

We are members of the Church, the Body of Christ. We ought to start acting like it. We are members of God's army. Don't you want to be more than a water boy in the army? Don't you want to be more than just a private? I want to be a general. I want to come up to the highest rank. I want to get right on the front lines. You say, "Why? You might get killed out there." No, when you're walking in the things of God, you can't get killed. He said a thousand could fall at one side and ten thousand at the other, but it shall not come nigh you. (*Psalms 91:7*) I want to get right out there in front where I can see the devil fall and see his kingdom come down, so when I get to heaven, I'll have a whole lot more to rejoice about.

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