

The Tree Of Life

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Preface

The tree of life is a fascinating topic. Man has always hoped to find something he could do or eat to extend his natural life and if possible, even live forever. The Holy Bible talks about a tree of life in the very beginning and why it has been removed, as well as this tree showing up again in the last book of the Holy Bible. Man originally is not supposed to be created to die but because of sin entering into the world due to Adam's transgression, the search for immortality has become more urgent and critical. As such, the tree of life is being sought by fallen man in one form or another hoping to prolong his longevity as well as his posterity. However, it is true that there is a literal tree of life that could offer man his desires for immortality in the very beginning but the full expression of eternal life has to come from the very Maker and Author of eternal life Himself after the fall of man. This truth is confirmed in no uncertain terms by the apostle John in 1 John 5:11-13: **And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.**

While the study on the tree of life is focused on this physical object concerning what it could offer, the eyes of the child of God should never be taken away from the Most High God who created this tree of life in the first place to fulfill its purpose according to God's perfect will. The power to confer eternal life is still held in the hands of Almighty God. Hence, it is simply refreshing and exciting to witness the events that took place in time and history on the role this tree of life has on man in God's all wise and exceedingly gracious plan for man in time past and also in eternity. The tree of life no doubt is the object of affection and desires for fallen man. However, the entrance into immortality is only possible by abiding by God's terms during the time in which man is living according to God's revealed will via His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Ever since man fell a long time ago in the Garden of Eden, fallen man has been in search for immortality. This is natural because no sane man would want his life on earth cut short even for a minute. Man likes to believe others are mortal while the thought of death for him is furthest from his mind. He lives as though he is going to live forever. But fallen man also knows full well that one day the inescapable appointment of death will come for him to be taken away from the earth. If he could afford it, he would live in constant search for ways and means to prolong his earthly life. In ancient times, the search for eternal life rests mainly on superstitious beliefs and practices based on the weak and beggarly elements on earth. This includes religious faiths hoping for the best for deliverance from ill fortunes and to be kept out of harms way. In modern days in which we live, this search for immortality is just as urgent as it was in the past. The technique to produce the means to prolong a man's life is more sophisticated than the past but it is just as pagan in nature as God never once enters into the equation from their search for eternal life. This mystery of life is still as far away from discovery as they started though these modern men called scientists refuse to acknowledge this fact. A lot of resources and moneys have been invested in this race to discover the means to enable man to live longer and if at all possible, forever, through DNA research, genetic engineering, biomedical sciences and many other fields of research. By whatever names sinners called their fields of professions, the attempt to live apart from God is just as devilish because fallen man refuses to acknowledge Almighty God as the Creator and Giver of life.

The truth about fallen man having to die is an appointment no man can miss: **And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (Hebrews 9:27)** The fact that fallen men did not sin the same way as Adam did could not escape the judgment of death is explained in Romans 5:12-14: **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: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.** So every man born in Adam has to die for his own sins and this truth is also recorded in Ezekiel 18:4&20: **Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so**

also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. So death is a present reality. Man is condemned to die and he is simply waiting for the day of his execution. No wonder man lives in constant search for ways and means to prolong his natural earthly life and self-preservation is the natural trait of fallen man.

In the Holy Bible, God reveals Himself to be the Creator and Source of life. No creatures can live apart from God's power to allow him to live and no man can live a day longer when God decides that the days of his life are up and his life is terminated at a moment's notice. So fallen man has an expiry date. He has no way to decide how long he could live. His life is in the hands of his Maker according to Job 12:10: **In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.** It is the Spirit of God that keeps him alive: **The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. (Job 33:4)** The Psalmist also confirms this truth in Psalm 33:6: **By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.** There is no life outside of the power of God and when the Almighty decides to end a creature's life, there is no power for it to retain a single breath for a moment: **Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. (Psalm 104:29)** So God recalls the breath in men and beasts alike and they die according to Ecclesiastes 3:19: **For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.** The prophets of old also speaks of this undeniable truth concerning the breath of man that comes from God: **Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. (Isaiah 42:5, Ezekiel 37:5&6)**

So is there any way to retain the breath in man that he should not die? Is there anything he could do to keep breathing and live? Is there any food he could eat to keep himself alive forever? In the Bible, it is revealed that there is this tree of life in the Garden of Eden that could offer partakers eternal life. After the fall of man, this tree has become a forbidden fruit. During Noah's flood, the tree of life is permanently removed from this present earth. However, this tree once again shows up in eternity in the last chapter of the Holy Bible. The author hopes this book is more than a devotional study on the tree of life from the Holy Bible. The ultimate source of eternal life comes from the Creator God who is pleased to confer such power onto an object in this tree in the account of the history of man. The child of God is exhorted to cling unto the Author of Eternal life where death has no power to sever him from the Almighty God who has graciously given us the way to life eternal through the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden

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)

In the Garden of Eden, the tree of life is originally planted in the midst of the garden as well as the forbidden tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The proximity of these two trees is of interest here where life and death are closely placed together for Adam and Eve to choose between obeying God to live or disobeying God to die. These two trees are not separated by vast distances between the corners of the garden as if when tempted to partake of the forbidden tree, there is no tree of life to remind the tempted to rethink his course of action and the consequences that follow. Life and death are separated by a very fine line. Though invisibly demarcated, there is no mistaking the one for the other. The walk between life and death is aptly pointed out by the wisest man ever lived as recorded in Proverb 12:28: **In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.** The way of righteousness is obedience to the commandment of the Lord God whose pathway never leads to death.

So in the beginning of time where sin has not yet entered into the world, the value of tree of the life might be conveniently underestimated by the first couple living in the garden. What is the value of life when there is no death? In the absence of death, life is taken for granted, as Adam and Eve could not die unless they disobey God by partaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Among the great number and variety of trees that are pleasant to the sight, and good for food, eating is not a means to keep one alive. Eating is simply a gift for the enjoyment of this couple in that perfect and harmonious environment where the fellowship with the Lord God is the primary means of peace and joy where death is unknown and pains and sorrows as well as guilt are never etched in thoughts of the first man and woman all the days of their life living in this wonderful garden of habitation. There is no fear, no worries, no wants of anything in the garden for the Lord God was all their source of enjoyment and fellowship. They are indeed children before God, completely innocent, free from molest of sins and death. As such, the tree of life at that point might very well have been underestimated for its power and efficacy for which it is placed in the midst

of the garden within reach of the first man and woman on planet Earth.

How long did Adam and Eve live in the garden in constant communion with the Lord God, no one really knows. The tree of life is simply one of the many trees in the garden. Did Adam know which tree was the tree of life? Did the Lord God reveal to Adam which tree was the tree of life? As far as Scriptural records shows, it appears that Adam did not know which tree was the tree of life. The only commandment given to him as far as eating of the tree is concerned is simply the forbiddance of eating of one particular tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. As for the rest of the trees, they may eat of them freely. There is no restriction as to how much they can eat and permission is not required to eat of any of these trees whenever they so desire. It is indeed a joy to eat not to stay alive but simply an enjoyment and a blessing bestowed upon them by the gracious Creator God.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:16&17)

This commandment simply but clearly forbids Adam to partake of one particular tree where the particular location is also clearly given. It is in the midst of the garden as revealed by Eve when tempted by the serpent according to Genesis 3:2&3: **And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.** There is no shadow of a doubt as to which one is the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There will be no excuse for partaking of this tree. There can be no accidental partaking of this tree as well. There is no misleading signage or signpost or mislabeling of this tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tree of knowledge of good and evil is not camouflaged by other edible trees in the garden. Adam and Eve know exactly which tree is the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They can never accidentally stumble upon the tree of knowledge of good and evil and mistakenly partake of the fruit of this tree. As such, there will be no alibi for disobeying the Lord God.

Thus, there is no reason for Adam and Eve to deliberately partake of

this particular cursed tree. The first couple was alive. They had never experienced death. What is death? Who really cares? They were happy and content to simply enjoy the wonderful habitation given to them and eat to their hearts content for all the fruits of the trees freely except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Why bother to even go near the tree of knowledge of good and evil? Life is good and the Lord God is good. They could have taken all the time in the world to eat of all the fruits of all the trees present in the garden, including the tree of life, which would guarantee life without death ever touching them. The incapacity of death could be their portion if they obey the Lord God where one day, the tree of life would be a reward for their obedience. But then again, what is the incapability of dying when death seems to be so remote and beyond their comprehension in that perfect and harmonious state? While Adam and Eve have not eaten the fruit from the tree of life, the possibility of death hangs like a sword threatening to take away life from this paradise and forever change the course of history of man.

Before partaking of the tree of life, the possibility of death is present though the probability is very slim. The chances of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil by accident if they do not know of which is the cursed tree is just one out of the entire population of the tree out there in the world. Under such a condition, the probability of eating the tree of knowledge of good and evil by Adam and Eve consecutively is the square of the result of the previous ratio. So if there are one thousand trees, the chances of such an occurrence where the couple partakes of the cursed tree by accident one after another is one in a million chance. Not forgetting Adam and Eve were the only humans in the entire earth, the size of Garden of Eden and beyond would be great beyond measure and the number of trees would surely be much greater than a simple assumption of one thousand. Moreover, the chances of eating of this cursed tree is made almost improbable where it has been clearly identified and explicitly forbidden by the gracious God who has given them a wonderful life in paradise. What more would they want when the environment is not parsimonious towards them before the fall! There are no toils, no burdens, no pains, no sorrows, no troubles of any kinds to force them to look for a greener pasture where perhaps the tree of knowledge of good and evil could be the way out of the economic trap is a mitigating factor for disobeying the Lord God. The odds are clearly not against them in any way, form and shape and the reward of the tree of life is always there through obedience of faith trusting the Lord

God not to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. How long does it take to even stumble upon the tree of life as a reward, what does it matter in the absence of death and living in enjoyment of the presence of the Lord God would be good enough motivation to stay away from that cursed tree.

The Lord God is just and can do no wrong to put the first man and woman on probation to test their obedience though there is no need to bring salvation to this couple before the fall. Adam and Eve could have lived forever and ever even though they had not partaken of the tree of life if they had stayed away from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life back then was not a priority to Adam and Eve under such a perfect and wonderful set up with abundance of provisions and joy of fellowship with their Maker. What is the hurry to search for the tree of life even if they had been told of the existence of such a tree? The need to stay alive was absent before the fall. While the tree of life might take an extremely long time to seek out, there is no compelling factor to drive Adam and Eve to search for this precious fruit of life. Every day is a brand new day for this couple to ravish in this paradise under the abundance of blessings from above. Every day is a day of discovery of the goodness of the Lord God and to indulge in the blessings bestowed upon them. It is simply indulgence without sin and approaching the Lord God without fear. It must have been a marvelous paradise where man and God can commune in holiness and purity. Sin is unknown and guilt is unheard of and death is not part of the domain of the creation of the Most High in this paradise.

Meanwhile the tree of life is still in the midst of the garden awaiting for its discovery and enjoyment of immortality by the rightful and lawful recipient of God's grace. This tree of life stands in contrast to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is also located in the midst of this garden. One tree begets life and the other brings forth death. The choice for Adam and Eve to choose between life and death is offered though the tree of life is kept from the eyes of man. The way to life is to turn from the pathway of death. This way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death. This way of righteousness is earned by obedience through faith trusting in the spoken words of the living God. No other words though spoken by angels must be entertained. Hence before the fall of man, man shall not live by the fruits of the tree alone even though there is no death, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord God. Had

Adam and Eve taken heed to this precept and had not partaken of the forbidden fruit, immortality would be theirs as a reward for their obedience.

The tree of life is set in the same garden together with the tree of death for the probation of man created after the image of God. The source of eternal life is in the hands of the living God vested in one particular tree. The power of the tree of life cannot be underestimated. Though in the absence of death, there is no need of regenerative power of the fruits of all the other trees, the tree of life stands above all other trees in this respect where the partaker of this tree is given life and shall live forever. This is indeed the pearl of great price to be found in the garden. No one could imagine what it would be like for Adam and Eve to have eaten of this tree and live forever and ever carrying out the express commandment of the Lord God to subdue all things and replenish the earth. The population of the earth would be filled with the descendants of Adam and Eve where immortals beget immortals. Unlike the angels which are created as spirit beings as males, man is created from the ground as male and female where they could reproduce to replenish the earth. Such reproductive powers are not given to other spirit beings who are created as males only. As such, the tree of life holds sway to the future of the world depending on the choice of man. What joy unspeakable and full of glory had Adam and Eve chosen to live in obedience to the only forbidding commandment of the Lord God and inherit eternal life as a reward to bring forth a world of descendants all living in obedience and giving glory to the Creator. Such a world is beyond the comprehension of fallen men living in time and history in this fallen world. Indeed what a world it would be like had the tree of life been discovered by Adam and Eve which is to be eaten freely? The tree of life is not kept away in locks and keys. The gracious commandment to eat of all the trees freely stands. The tree of life is no exception. The promise of God is certain and shall stand forever.

It is interesting to note that Creator God who is the source of all life should vest the power of immortality in one particular tree, the tree of life. The Lord God is indeed the Giver of life as Job also claimed in Job 33:4: **The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.** So is the Psalmist who gave God the glory for being the source of life in Psalm 36:9: **For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.** Thus, the Lord God in His infinite wisdom, chooses to bestow the source of eternal life on a physical tree and places it in the

midst of the garden within reach of Adam and Eve. There is no obstacle and condition to partake of this tree of life. Moreover, this tree of life is also offered free to them to be eaten. Hence the tree of life has the privilege to be conferred as this fountain of life on earth at that point in time. It is unfathomable the source of immortality is so easily available and it is placed right there on earth. There is no need to go up into heaven to reach out for immortality. For living in the paradise of Eden is as the days of heaven upon the earth. Heaven and earth are in harmony in this perfect world of bliss where man and God are in close communion and the joy of the whole earth magnifies the greatness and goodness of Almighty God.

Though the tree of life may be typified as a type of Christ, this however, is not a perfect type of Christ in the sense where Christ gives lives to sinners in need of salvation and redemption in order to obtain eternal life and live forever. The tree of life in this garden is not a cure from sin and offers the partaker restoration and redemption so that the partaker might live after the fall of man. This tree of life in fact is the source of blessing to be bestowed upon the partaker as overcomer for obeying the Lord God to keep one and only one commandment not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. While life in the perfect world and wonderful garden was already extremely good, partaking of the tree of life would make it infinitely better where the sting of death could never touch Adam and Eve. As long as the tree of life is left undiscovered and uneaten, the tree of knowledge of good and evil remains a snarl to this couple where death could become a permanent reality should they rebel against the commandment of the Most High. So the reward of the tree of life under such a setup cannot be forced to become a perfect type of Christ offering eternal life to fallen sinners greatly in need of grace and mercy from Almighty God. For before the fall, Adam and Eve were not in any need of restoration and salvation. The tree of life in such a case is indeed a reward and a blessing for man formed from the ground to become immortals where death can no longer molest. Hence, the life giving power of this tree of life awaits the partaker to be empowered with immortality having passed the probation of God's test worthy of inheriting eternal life.

The Tree of Life Ignored

The tree of life is ready to be claimed by the faithful followers of Creator God. This utmost prize of immense treasure, which confers eternal life on the winners, still awaits its rightful and loyal subjects of Almighty God. While it is kept unnoticed to the first man and woman on earth in paradise, the usurper of the divine throne from ancient time is busy plotting the ruin of this blissful world. The scheme is indeed simple. It is a plot carried out in subtlety. Since life without death is taken for granted by the first man and woman, the tree of life is probably far from the thoughts of this pioneering couple on paradise earth. The days of heaven on earth are the norm and fellowship with the Lord God in the cool of the day is the usual program of uninhibited communion of divine order. With the backdrop of perfect peace, joy and bliss in paradise, a direct instigation by the archenemy of the Almighty to recruit Adam and Eve to rebel against their Creator God would never succeed. There is no reason whatsoever for Adam and Eve to rebel against the Lord God, their benevolent Progenitor. To cause Adam and Eve to come into a state of direct confrontation with their Maker is simply impossible. The battle of old that led to the downfall of Lucifer in the past could never repeat itself under such present circumstances. Though the scheme by Lucifer to usurp the throne of the Most High failed in disgrace and resulting in the tragic lost and destruction of the former Kingdom before the history of man, this enemy of old has never ceased to attempt to recover lost ground.

With the usual traffic of spirit beings, the sons of God and the hosts of heaven present under the same heaven where the Almighty Himself also visits this first man and woman on paradise earth, this ancient enemy craftily paid a visit to the woman in the absence of her husband, Adam. This rendezvous with the ancient enemy proves to be costly beyond measure. The simple conversation which took place that day forever changed the course of history of mankind and culminated in the lost of paradise given for the possession of Adam being crowned the king over all the earth as the first man to inherit this estate graciously given to him by the Lord God. The presence of the tree of life in the garden could not prevent the doom of man that day. The fate of Adam and Eve is sealed the moment the one and only commandment from the Lord God concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil is violated. With the tree of life being the fountain of life on earth hidden from the eyes of man, the devil capitalizes on the forbidden

tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, to continue this conflict of all ages drawing man into this war against the Most High. Eve's dangerous liaison with the third party of this love triangle between God and man results in the lesion in the love affair with the Lord God who created Man in the first place. The intrusion of the affairs of man by this deceiver of old proves too much for Adam and Eve to bear causing them to betray the trust of this benevolent God who has given them everything under their care, custody and control being the head of all things on planet Earth. The cause of the fall of man should be examined in detail and the future of the tree of life should be studied under this new circumstance where paradise has lost its glory.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (Genesis 3:1) Subtlety is the game plan of Satan seeking to turn the table on the Most High by taking hostage of man in his innocence. His approach is one of a premeditated stratagem calculated to create maximum malice to achieve his own purpose of seducing man to join him in his war against the Most High. His devilish wiles in speaking only to the woman in the absence of her husband speak volume of his deceit and his method of taking on a weaker vessel is most despicable to say the least. His years of experience in mastering the numerous companies of angels that rebelled with him in time past is simply too much for the woman to fend for herself in this devilish onslaught clothed with the finesse of a master orator. There was no rough and unruly behaviour to arouse the suspicion of the woman. The woman is obviously no match for this master of deception. It was a classic condescending attitude of a helpful friend, offering a few words of wisdom arousing the woman of a forbidden dream, an adventure which could bring immense rewards and treasures, transporting her into a brand new world which could satisfy all her desires beyond her wildest dream.

The assault starts off with a question, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" It is simply a question instead of a direct pouring of scorn on the one and only commandment laid down by the Lord God given to them to keep. It might look like just an innocent question concerning what the Most High has ordered them to perform. However, the moment the serpent opens its mouth, poisonous thoughts are emitted designed to afflict the unwary and naïve in the most crucial faculty of the person's reasoning capability vis-à-vis her relationship with regards to the

spoken commandment of Almighty God. This poisonous question is aimed at drawing the hearer to the pit of her downfall. It instigates a response that will allow the questioner to probe further with the intended victim to identify her point of weakness, waiting in the wing to launch a full-scale attack once that weakness is exposed. It is a question where the questioner deliberately skewed the answer in such a way to provoke a response in his favour. It is a question where the goodness and benevolence of the Most High are called into question. The devil knowing full well there is no such commandment as to forbid the man and woman not to eat of every tree of the garden and so this devilish question is intended to corrupt the mind of Eve and to plant poison into her thoughts to question the veracity of the words of the living God. It is a question designed to cause the hearer to doubt the true intent of the words of the living God. Hence, since time immemorial, this strategy of questioning what Almighty God has said and written is the standard means whereby the words of the living God are being undermined. "Yea, hath God said" is the standard banner adopted by the devil and his cohort to corrupt and pervert the spoken and written words of the Most High down through the ages. It always starts off with a question to challenge the hearer on the promises of the God of heaven whether He would keep to His words. So the battle has just begun and the ball is now in the court of Eve while Adam is nowhere in sight to assist in fending off this spiritual assault of this wicked question posed by the enemy of all righteousness. The devil has come fully prepared for this encounter while Eve simply walks into this trap unprepared for such an eventuality where life and death are now held at stake by this unexpected conversation.

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (Genesis 3:2&3) The state of Eve being unprepared is clearly evident here. Her reply simply gave her away. The focus is now on the cursed tree. This is the trap the serpent has laid all along and Eve has been led to the place of temptation without even being aware of the wiles of the devil. The serpent must be overjoyed with her reply. This is exactly what he would want to hear from her concerning the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil. Any other tree is of no interest to the serpent especially the tree of life, which could offer the partaker immortality. It is a purposed laden plan to direct the woman to talk about the one and only tree that is forbidden by the Lord God with the intended goal of arousing the desire of

the woman with regards to the power of this cursed tree. No doubt the question posed by the serpent has achieved its desired end with the woman now candidly talking about the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This is indeed a masterstroke of highly skilled diplomacy where the victim willingly obliged to follow the piped piper to her own doom. Had the serpent taken a direct assault by questioning the tree of knowledge of good and evil itself, Eve would very likely have contended with him with a defensive response of, “Thus saith the Lord, thou shalt obey the Lord thy God and Him shalt thou serve” and then assuming an offensive position ready to strike off this offender with the commandment of the Lord should he continue his next move.

But then again, the subtlety of the serpent proves too much for the woman to deal with where this enemy of old is no novice in the warfare with the Most High. Furthermore, the woman’s state of readiness for such a confrontation with this enemy is almost nonexistent. Her reply was in fact an inaccurate version of the commandment the Lord God had given to Adam as found in Genesis 2:16&17: **And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.** Comparing this original commandment issued by the Lord God with her own version of what the Lord commanded, it is evident that there are addition as well as subtraction from the spoken words of the living God. The commandment to eat of every tree freely except the tree of knowledge of good and evil is no longer the case. They are actually given commandment to eat of every tree freely except one but the implication now is that some sort of permission might be required which calls into question the benevolence and generosity of the Creator God. It suggests a careless estimation of the goodness of the Lord God rendering an implicit effect of tarnishing the character of the Most High. Besides, the addition of not touching the tree of knowledge of good and evil is by no means an added procedure of internal control which will prevent one from getting into harm’s way. It is obviously not the case whereby once the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is touched, the sentence of death is meted out. It is a clear cut misrepresentation of the law of the Lord God and accountability will come according to what the Lord laid down in no uncertain terms, that is, the day when anyone eats of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the person will die. Thus, the response from Eve is pathetic. It is full of loopholes where the serpent

could take advantage to make his next move to corner her in this dangerous game of spiritual brinkmanship.

Now the master of deceit has taken the lead with the first round and the next move is the defining repositioning ambush that will draw the woman towards the objective in disobeying the one and only commandment of the Lord God. The full colour of this enemy of the Most High will be revealed in the next move. Questioning by casting doubt on the spoken words of the living God is no longer necessary. Eve has been won over by his spell of noble intention to show her something that she thought might be good for the family. She would soon be checkmated in no time in the next round and the serpent would be reeling with delight to witness the downfall of men and thumb Almighty God in the nose to prove a point or two. This will be a new beginning for the devil to start a war where men would become his pawns to challenge the supremacy of the Most High in all His undertakings as well as to thwart his future doom.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:4&5)

There is no need to exercise discretion at this point when the woman has already been bought over to consider another point of view. His sales pitch has done its trick. Since the conversation has already begun and good progress has been made, it is so much easier to whisper a few more words that will drive the woman to her own conclusion when the serpent has indeed become a trusted friend with her best interest at heart. There is no need to hard sell the general idea that the tree of knowledge of good and evil is actually good for food. The gloves have been removed this time and the serpent can afford to go direct to the point concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil. So the outright lie is now spoken. The devil is now lying through his teeth. He assured the woman that the threat issued by the Lord God is not true. It is simply an empty threat for a selfish reason to keep her away from her self-actualization. It is a direct assault on the most holy attributes of the Lord God for lying to them all along because God is afraid they might become gods. It is a slander of the worst kind to suggest that Creator God would lie and keep the man and woman away from something that would be really good for them. So here is the record of the first lie recorded in the Scriptures and no doubt, the devil is worthy to wear the title as the father of lies. The true manifestation of iniquity is seen in these few

words spoken by the devil.

With the opening statement issued that the woman shall not die and that the Lord God is actually bluffing, the serpent goes on to bait the woman into action, which will turn her against her God. The subsequent points raised by the serpent are in fact undeniable truth. However, the trouble is that, once she partakes of this tree, she will surely die for disobeying the Lord God. The most important truth that the serpent withheld from the woman is that once she has eaten of this fruit while it is true that her eyes shall be opened knowing good and evil, she shall have no power to do good but she is prone to do evil. There is no remedy to this sick malady and not even the tree of life would be efficacious in this regard to remove the sting of doing evil and for having no power to consistently do good. The devil did not play with a full deck putting all the cards on the table. There is something up his sleeves and this slide of hand at the moment of weakness when the woman has been opened to suggestion of an alternative point of view, he makes his final move. With the masterstroke of moving the last piece on the chessboard to corner her to a checkmate scenario, the serpent walks out of the game to watch Eve commit spiritual suicide from the sideline.

This conversation between the serpent and the woman probably did not take place right in front of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In reality, it does not actually matter. What the serpent sought to achieve has almost been accomplished. The thoughts of discontentment have been sown in the mind of the woman. The woman has a choice to believe the Lord God or to entertain devil unaware. While before the fall of man, the reasoning faculty of man whose thoughts are not evil to begin with, the man and woman are capable of making choices. They can choose to do God's will or choose to disobey God with regard to the forbidden tree. Man is not predestined to fall because this is not God's will to cause man to fall and then punishes the human race as a result. Man is given a free will that comes with reasoning capability. So the woman here is reasoning within herself after this encounter with the serpent. It is not known how long she reasons with herself whether to believe what the serpent told her before she approaches the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It is not known how many times she approaches the tree of knowledge of good and evil and turns back at the last moment when the spoken words of the Lord God rings out loud and clear to her. For how many days she entertains the thought of

partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, no one knows. Unfortunately, she eventually succumbs to the wiles of the devil and partakes of the forbidden fruit from that cursed tree.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (Genesis 3:6)

Finally, having entertained the wicked suggestion of the devil, the woman is brought to the place of temptation on her own will. The indoctrination during that secret meeting with the serpent proves to be fatal. It is simply either believing what the Lord God said about eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge and good and evil or rationalize on the consequence and the possible rewards of partaking this forbidden fruit with the help of the devil. In the end, a decision must be made. The judgment call is in her court with both sides of the story, one version from the Lord God and an alternative view from the serpent. The process of justification has to come to an end. The woman eventually believes that there is no harm in partaking of this forbidden fruit but there is wonderful opportunity to become gods knowing good and evil. The sentence of death issued by the Lord God is viewed as an empty threat. The persuasion by the serpent to eat of the forbidden fruit is becoming more convincing and desirable as time goes by. The woman has been completely bought over by this cunning salesman from hell. She believes the devil more than she believes in the Lord God. Hence the Scripture proclaims that the woman was deceived by this master of deceit according to 1 Timothy 2:14: **And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.** Her desires to become god knowing good and evil have become so strong that the spoken words of the living God has become ineffectual to her.

All this while rationalizing over the issue and justifying her decision to partake of this forbidden tree, her husband is not consulted one time to authenticate the alternative puts forth by the serpent. She operates outside of the headship of her husband and acts of out her own will for having been deceived by the devil. The moment has come as she steps nearer and nearer the tree of knowledge of good and evil. With her eyes staring longingly on the fruit and with all those words of wisdom from the devil lingering on her mind and urging her on, she finally reaches forth and lays her hand on that

fruit. Perhaps, she has conveniently forgotten what she told the serpent sometime ago concerning touching this forbidden fruit. She forgot that she might die even if she touches this fruit. So her hands are now on this fruit and nothing apparently happens which proves that the serpent was right. Nothing actually happens and the Lord God must be bluffing and issuing an empty threat to keep them away from this delightful fruit. The Lord God must be selfish in not allowing them to become gods like others knowing good and evil. The longing look on this fruit leads to the touch and then the fruit is plucked and held in her hands. Indeed this fruit is pleasant to the eye as well as good for food. Why would the loving and gracious Creator God withhold this fruit from them? The fragrance of this fruit is now permeating the air around the woman even as she brings the fruit towards her face. She smells the fruit and she indulges in thoughts that her dream of becoming god is finally coming true, thanks to the serpent for such a gentle reminder. The hosts of heaven frown even as the woman is about to commit this act of treason while devils are getting ready to cheer. She sincerely believes that she is making the right decision and she believes this fruit could make her wise, like the serpent. Then at last, she takes the first bite and another and she completely devours the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The hosts from hell are now clapping for winning the first round even as the serpent watches from a distance to witness Eve commits spiritual suicide. There is no turning back now even though nothing much has happened after the first bite of this cursed fruit.

So the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil has been consumed despite the commandment from the Creator God not to partake of this fruit. Things cannot be the same anymore after this law of God has been broken. When the woman committed this transgression of partaking the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the man was unlikely to be present. It is unlikely that the woman drags the man before the tree of knowledge of good and evil and reaches forth for the fruits and eats of it and then hands one to Adam who also immediately eats of this fruit. For the Scripture clearly pronounced that the woman was deceived and not the man, reckoning would come depending on the response of Adam. The whole episode of this transgression begins with an innocent conversation with the serpent where the woman has been led to believe that it is good for her and her husband to eat of this forbidden fruit. This dangerous liaison where the woman entertains devil unaware without consulting her husband is the initial step to this tragic downfall. The trouble with the woman's logic is that she trusted

on her senses, her perception capability from her eyes and ears as well as her mind to make this decision to eat of the forbidden fruit. The words of the living God has become secondary and not one time was her husband consulted to verify the veracity of the spoken words of the Lord God. The woman is too naïve to believe the serpent more than the Lord God and the spoken words of the Lord God communicated to her by her husband. Hence now having eaten of this forbidden fruit, she is taking this same fruit to her husband.

When her husband realizes what Eve had done when she brought him this forbidden fruit, he must have been left in a dilemma. He is deeply aware of the consequence of this rebellion against the words of the living God. He is sure the words of the Lord stands fast forever and the transgressor must die for rebelling against the Lord God. So Eve would have to die for this act of rebellion and he ponders what he should do next. The commandment of the Lord has been broken and there is no reversal to this act of disobedience and sooner or later, the Lord God will find out and judgment must come. Looking at the forbidden fruit in the hand of his wife, he must be a worrying man. What is he going to do? Should he approach the Lord God and tell Him about what has happened? Or should he join his wife in rebellion and eat of this same forbidden fruit? Adam is clearly not deceived and he very likely has questioned the woman what led her to this sorry state of disobedience against the directive will of the Lord God. Perhaps the woman is still arguing with him that this fruit could make him wise and that he too could become gods knowing good and evil. Or maybe she is pleading with her husband to help her having realized that she had been deceived by the serpent. The ball is now on the court of Adam and he must do something. He must come to a decision whether to report the matter to the Lord God in which his wife would certainly die or to join her in rebellion against God's will on this matter and die with her. This is the most difficult decision he has to make living in paradise with no wants of anything. This is troublous time indeed! His mind must be racing to find a solution on how to resolve the matter hopefully amicably with the Lord God but the perfect answer is beyond him. He knows that God would surely keep His words because He is God and he will be sure to lose his wife. Would he let her die for her transgression? It is God who has given him this perfect helpmeet and life together has been wonderful and great until now where parting would seems to be almost inevitable. Could he bear to let her go?

The wiles of the devil have poisoned the mind of Eve that leads to this present dire circumstance. It is a masterpiece in chess movement. This is really a checkmate situation. Adam is now forced into a corner where either way, he would lose. There is no way out and this is definitely a no win situation. He could not bear to let his wife die and he could not disobey this benevolent Lord God who has given him everything and has crowned him above all other creatures on earth. He knows full well the consequence should he eat of this forbidden fruit now in the hand of his wife. Peace under heaven will be shattered and they will die the moment he joins her in rebellion against Almighty God. He is left in a quandary now that his wife has acted on her own will being deceived by the devil to eat of the forbidden fruit. Did the woman plead with him to help her? Did the woman ask him to forget about her and let the Lord God execute judgment upon her? This is a troublesome time and the painful decision must be made soon. While Adam carries and ponders over his options, the hosts of heaven must be holding their breath and devils cheering for the next round of victory. Yes, one is down and another is soon to go!

Pacing around in desperation not wanting to let Eve die as well as not to offend the Lord God at the same time, Adam must be at his wits end. What should he do in such a situation? He could not fathom the consequences he would bring to the whole world under heaven if he should join his wife in this rebellion against the gracious and loving Creator God who has made him the head over all the creatures on earth. The commission given to him to be fruitful and multiply to replenish the earth with blessings from heaven would have to be withdrawn. He would have to abdicate from his kingly throne over all the creatures on earth should he rebel against the Lord God. The loss would be simply too great and the odds are now definitely against him. This is a hopeless situation where this utopian world would never be the same again after this episode. This is undoubtedly a dead end and a completely hopeless case. There is no way to reverse the situation and confronting the serpent would be of no avail. The urgency in attempting to help his wife and to placate the Lord God is driving him up the wall. But there is just no way out of this devilish trap craftily set up by the arch enemy of the Most High. Man has simply become an unwilling pawn in this game of brinkmanship between the God of Creation and the fallen Lucifer. What else could Adam do to salvage the situation? There is simply no light from the other end of the tunnel. Should there be a ray of light of hope, it might very well turn out to be an oncoming train. Who could he turn to for help? For

the first time in paradise, he has become truly helpless and hopeless where the testing of his obedience and allegiance to Almighty God could be such a monumental task. Had he ever thought about death? Had he consider the possibility of dying?

There are so many trees in the world and why would Eve choose to eat of that cursed tree? Has he not heard about the tree of life where immortality is the rewards for partaking of this fruit? Could the tree of life save Eve from this transgression? If so, which one is actually the tree of life from among the multitudes of tree out there in paradise? Surely Eve would not survive till the tree of life is found. The fountain of youth, the fountain of life in this tree of life is hopelessly beyond reach. There is no way to start out on an expedition in search for this tree now. Regrets must have filled his heart where life has been taken for granted for so long living in paradise where death is the furthest thing on his mind. But now the inevitable parting must soon arrive and no doubt the pains are unbearable where this wonderful woman in his life is his only love, his only wife. He has known of no other woman on earth and his love for her is perfectly understandable. How could he bear to see this fair woman be taken away? He could even be blaming himself for failing to protect her from the wiles of the devil. Has he offered her all the protection she needed? But then again, how could there be any danger in God's paradise? The gods on earth are also God's creatures and how could these subjects turn out to be traitors? The previous war where Lucifer's attempt to usurp the throne of the Most High was probably hidden from the first man and woman. Now they have fallen prey to the devil's deception. What can he do now to correct the situation? He is forced to come to the end of himself and the choice is truly up to him.

There are only two options. Allow God to execute judgment on Eve and trust God who can do no wrong to take care of the situation and see where it goes from then on. This decision, though would certainly result in the death of his only wife, would save his own skin. He will come out of this situation guiltless before God having kept the one and only commandment originally given to him to keep. He might even be rewarded for loving the Lord God more than his own wife for exercising judgment on his own kin for righteousness sake. The other option is to join his wife in open rebellion against the spoken commandment of the Lord God. Taking this route, he would surely die with Eve. This act of treason betrays his allegiance to God where he demonstrates that he loves his wife more than this Great

Benefactor who has given him life and everything under heaven for his inheritance. Choosing this option shows that there is very little meaning left in his life should his wife be taken away from him. His love for his wife must have become so great and so deep that death could not keep them apart. **Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. (Song of Solomon 8:7)** So he must be willing to give up his kingdom under his care as well as give up his own life to follow his wife to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The loss would be so much greater than simply losing one woman, his wife. Could God give him a better wife, someone more worthy to inherit this kingdom with him than Eve being presumptuous and operates outside of his headship? Was he not angry with Eve for getting into this quagmire where there could be no win for him? But then again, Eve is no ordinary human to him. According to Scriptures, Eve is actually a part of him. **And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (Genesis 2:21-23)** Could Adam live without his other half? Could he bear to let his other part die? After all, Eve is bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. This is simply too much for him to give up. He would rather give up his kingdom including his life to be with her. What a beautiful love story but what a tragic ending!

Alas, Adam having considered all the options available and the consequences that would follow, takes the forbidden fruit from Eve. Did Eve try to stop him? Did Eve persuade Adam not to be foolish for God can certainly give him a better wife in the future? With his mind already made up, he enters this joint rebellion with Eve with his eyes wide opened for he is not deceived by the devil nor is he having reservation on the threat that hangs like a sword concerning the commandment of the Lord God. The climax is now gravitating towards the most crucial moment where the history of paradise will depend on the decision of this first man, king over all the creatures on earth. The atmosphere is pregnant with anxiety and uncertainty. The hosts of heaven are watching in horror while the fiends of hell are cheering Adam on to eat of this cursed tree. As Adam brings the cursed fruit towards his mouth, he looks at Eve for one last time before

entering into a different world together with her where the unknown could change his love and attitude towards this beloved wife he has known all this while until now. So he finally eats of this fruit of the knowledge of good and evil as the devils from hell clap and cheer and shriek in devilish delight for this victory over the Most High and for their mission accomplished to thwart their own doom. They have succeeded to enlist man to become the enemy of Almighty God just like they had fallen in the past. The warfare with the God of Creation is now taken to another level. The hosts of God in heaven watch in disbelief for what happened on this day when Adam sinned. Where is the Most High during this time? Why Almighty God did not prevent this tragic event from taking place and allow sin to enter into the world. Paradise is now lost and the future once again become uncertain. The effect of the cursed fruit will manifest immediately after Adam's willful disobedience against the spoken words of the living God.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (Genesis 3:7) Ah, how quickly death descends upon this couple where they were living in bliss in paradise in the past and now the knowledge of good and evil becomes part and parcel of their lives. The process of degeneration has begun. The death of innocence is felt and guilt immediately sets in. There was no problem in the past with regards to their previous state of nakedness but now it has become an issue. There is no way to relive those lives of innocence once innocence has died. It is forever lost and irrecoverable. What is the problem of being naked? But now there is guilt and their conscience bothers them. The immediate remedial action is to cover up where there was no such need in the past but now it has become a burden. The best solution they could come up with is to sew fig leaves as aprons to provide a partial cover to some essential parts of their bodies where now they have become embarrassingly shameful with each other unlike in the past. In that desperate moment, almost any type of leaves would do to cover their nakedness. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is now no longer an issue. The tree of life is probably not in their mind during this time of crisis. So this is the beginning of death. How sad and tragic! The full burden of sin is yet to be felt but it will have to come soon when the day of reckoning in facing up to the Lord God is about to begin.

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the

presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. (Genesis 3:8-10)

Just when they have managed to temporarily solve the first problem they face in the new fallen world, their nightmare is coming sooner than they expect. The voice of the Lord God is heard. Unlike the delights and joy of visitation by the Lord God in the past, they have to go into hiding. Their hearts are palpitating in fear and they could not face up to this gracious and loving God for having rebelled against God's directive will. Indeed the way of transgressors is hard. Now they could not even approach the Lord God and the Most High has to personally seek for them. Here is the death of their relationship and fellowship with the Lord God. Death is in the air and their sweet communion in the past has been severed. Fear, which was once absent, is now another present reality. This fear drives them away from their God. Isn't the voice of the Lord God music to their ears in the past and now it has become a source of terror. Thanks to the fruit of knowledge of good and evil. The effect of this cursed fruit is potent beyond estimation. Adam once innocent before God, he has now found himself naked before God. His physical state has not changed but his mind has been corrupted and his eyes have been opened to know of this naked state, which in the past did not prevent him from fellowshiping with the Lord God. Conscience is now accusing him and guilt is overwhelming and he could not face up to his most noble Benefactor who has given him life and everything under heaven. Things cannot be the same anymore. There is no turning back but moving forward on death's path as a natural consequence of sin.

And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will

greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. (Genesis 3:11-20)

The terrible consequence of rebellion has now really begun and the unimaginable judgment meted out. There is no room for negotiation with the Lord God whom they have sinned against and there is no alibi for sin. The horrendous effect of sin is manifested through the game of blame-shifting from the man to the woman and eventually to the serpent. Even the Lord God is indirectly blamed by Adam for the cause of his own willful disobedience. No one wishes to be held accountable for his or her action. This is indeed an eye opener for all the hosts of heaven as the Lord God sits in judgment on what transpired in the Garden of Eden. The deceitfulness of sin is now taking its toll on the first man and woman. All the trouble on earth is to follow as the earth is now cursed. In the past, the only curse was placed in one particular tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now, the curse is placed on the ground all over the earth. The serpent becomes the first creature to be cursed and the woman has to be demoted to a subservient position in relation to the man. But thanks be unto God for the prophecy of a future restoration and redemption for the fallen race of Adam concerning the Seed to come. The Lord God has allowed this event to take place and only the Lord can undo this evil and bring all creatures and His subjects into a future state of infinite bliss. This first promise of redemption is seen in Genesis 3:21: **Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.** The self-righteous covering of fig leaves is not good enough to warrant God's acceptance. It is only in the death of the innocent for the guilty which can satisfy God's holy demand for His holiness and righteous law. This animal must die to provide clothes for the sinful man and woman. This animal no doubt is a lamb which points to a time in the future where John the Baptist could finally proclaim: **The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of**

God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29) This tragic love story between Adam and his wife where the man is willing to die to save his wife also foretells of the Son of God who is God Himself who will manifest in the flesh and gives His life to purchase His Bride, the Church, the Body of Christ. This picture is penned perfectly by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:23-27: **For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**

Since the tree of knowledge of good and evil has been partaken, the tree of life has ceased to be the source of eternal life originally meant to be a reward for the first man and woman had they kept the law of the Lord God. Now this tree of life has also become the forbidden tree. The rationale is given in Genesis 3:22: **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:** and hence the subsequent step is to keep Adam and Eve away from this tree of life. **Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. (Genesis 3:23)** As such the original paradise in the Garden of Eden could no longer be the home of Adam and Eve as fallen creatures. In their fallen state, they are not permitted to partake of the tree of life. It is not as though the tree of life has lost its efficacy in granting immortality to its partaker. However, God does not allow these two sinners to become immortals in their fallen state, which would render them irredeemable like Satan and his fallen angels. Here the story of paradise lost is come to a close even as the tree of life has become a forbidden fruit to the human race. While the original intent of the tree of life is to offer eternal life but now, the plan has to change and eternal life cannot come via this fruit but through the person of the perfect Lamb of God, the only sinless Being who could satisfy God in redeeming man back to God. This plan is infinitely better and while God foreknew of the fall of man and did not act to prevent this tragic event from happening, this will nevertheless, cost the God the Father His only begotten Son to die for the guilty to redeem Adam's lost and helpless race. This is the only way to

restore man back to a future paradise to whosoever would receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. **Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:10-12)** The horror that the hosts of heaven witnessed that day will be turned into rapturous jubilation when the God of Creation exacts vengeance on all those who rebel against Him.

This is the salvation of which even the angels in heaven desire to look into of which they will understand when it comes to pass. The celebration by the devils is actually premature though for the time being man has fallen from grace but the glorious future restoration will be the time when these devilish beings will face their doom according to Scriptures as revealed in 1 Corinthians 6:2&3: **Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?** While the Lord God allows the fall of man, it is through the vicarious sacrifice of His only begotten Son to undo the work of evil and this is the way the Most High demonstrates His goodness to Adam's fallen race according to Ephesians 2:7: **That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.** From now on, the tree of life must take on a secondary role. It must be kept away from fallen man so that they might have a chance of salvation, which depends on how they will respond to the subsequent commandments laid down by the Lord God from time to time. It will not be only one commandment not to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil anymore. For man has acquired the knowledge of good and evil but this does not prevent them from committing evil. From then on, the Lord God will deal with Adam's fallen race differently and fallen man must obey God accordingly as required during that time in which they live.

The Tree of Life Forbidden

Now that Adam and Eve have fallen and that they have been driven out of the Garden of Eden, the tree of life however, remains within this garden. As the purpose of this tree of life is to give eternal life to its partakers, this tree must now be kept away from fallen man. Hence, preventive measures have to be put in place to protect this tree from unauthorized access. **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 3:24)** The power of the tree of life is not to be underestimated. This tree is of such grave importance that the premise where this tree is grown cannot be left to ordinary angels to safeguard. While it is true that fallen man would have no way to breakthrough to steal this fruit and obtain immortality through this tree even though the tree of life is guarded by ordinary angels, the risk involved would be too high to leave this tree to angels. The previous war where Lucifer betrayed the Most High and turned some of his hosts in heaven to join him in that coup that resulted in the destruction of that ancient kingdom is one possible reason why angels are not given the task to safeguard the tree of life. More importantly, as revealed in Scriptures, the attitude of the Lord God towards these hosts is anything but excellent. **Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. (Job 4:18 & 15:15)** There is an unseen war going on and the deployment of these cherubims to guard the tree of life is understandable. Who knows some angels might collude with the devil and secretly offer the fruit of the tree of life to Adam's fallen race rendering them irredeemable like the fallen angels only waiting to be sentenced to the lake of fire to be punished for all eternity! The love of God is manifested even in this regard in the choice of agents to keep the tree of life out of reach from fallen man.

Cherubims are no ordinary spirit beings. They are mentioned fifty-six times in the Old Testament and one time in the New Testament. They are depicted to be guardians of the mercy seat in the holy of holies in the Tabernacle as well as in the Temple in Jerusalem. The understanding of the prophets and kings in Israel also point to these creatures of God as guardians of the holy throne of Almighty God. When king Hezekiah prayed, he claimed that the God of Israel dwells between these mighty creatures in 2

Kings 19:15: And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. The Psalmist also proclaimed the same concerning these creatures: **Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. (Psalms 80:1&99:1)** Even prophet Isaiah collaborated with the other writers on these cherubims when he recorded king Hezekiah's prayer: **O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. (Isaiah 37:16)** The deployment of these mighty creatures to guard the way to the tree of life is no small matter. The mind of the Creator God is made up and no one is permitted to have access to this tree. The way to immortality through the tree of life is sealed and achieving eternal life from an object on earth would be impossible though fallen man would never give up hope to seek after the mystery of immortality via the weak and beggarly elements in this fallen world. The message is clear and no devils will dare attempt to take on these mighty beings to reach the tree of life. In fact, it would be a good idea for the devil to provide access for fallen man to the tree of life so that they would become immortal sinners not available for redemption. Furthermore, these immortal fallen men will reproduce exponentially in times to come and the devil's camp of rebels would become a formidable force to be reckoned with in the warfare against the Most High. For now, the fallen angels that join the camp of Satan though great in number, they are however not infinite and they are incapable of reproducing among themselves. The enlistment of fallen man to their cohort of rebels would be an excellent strategy in their eternal struggle against the God of heaven. Hence, if fallen man were to partake of the tree of life, he would be turned into an immortal devil in his sinful fallen state that is beyond redemption and thus join the ranks of fallen angels waiting for eternal punishment.

The Creator God is indeed a God of mercy, grace and love and though Adam willfully sinned against Him yet the Lord offers a way for his redemption. Death indeed has set in where Adam died spiritually the moment he partook of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. His relationship with God is no longer that of a son though he was created after the image of God as a son of God. This experience is best illustrated in the

suffering Saviour when he was on the cross crying out to God, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” The Son of God has never severed his relationship with God the Father until that moment when this sinless Saviour who knew no sin but was made sin for fallen man. For with God is life and God could not die but Adam could not live forever in this present fallen state. The status of Adam is no longer the same as that of his previous state. The process of degeneration has commenced and the days of Adam are numbered where in the previous state before the fall, there was no wants of anything and death had no power over him. Adam is dying by the day though the process of physical death is gradual. However, the most significant impact on Adam is the severance of his relationship with God for this is indeed death in every sense of the word because Adam is no longer with God, the fountain of life according to Psalm 36:9: **For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.** It is as though God has forsaken him and cast him out of his home in paradise after his rebellion. In fact, it is Adam who has forsaken the Lord and it is no longer possible for him to live in the presence of the Lord God which is evident in his fear of the voice of the Lord when he went into hiding. Adam had no choice but to leave the wonderful home in paradise he once knew. Now perhaps, he understands the true value and importance of the tree of life and the deception of the curse on the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But now it is too late. There is no way to go back to the previous state and the way forward is certain physical death yet to be experienced. The pains and loss he has to endure from now on till that day of physical death will be a burden he has to carry to remind him of his decision to eat of that cursed tree and bring the whole human race with him unto condemnation. In the future, physical death would serve as deliverance for him where the resurrection through the blood of the animal killed to provide for his cover over his nakedness pointing to a perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God is his hope of restoration to a future paradise to be brought in at God’s own perfect timing. That sacrifice of the animal indeed alludes to a future Redeemer who will take the place of the guilty sinner. So the effect of sin is now set in motion according to Romans 5:12: **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:** and very soon Adam has to experience the pains of parting of one of his sons in physical death.

While the words of promise after the fall recorded in Genesis 3:15 **(And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy**

seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.) offer hopes of consolation for Adam and Eve, the joy of the arrival of Cain and Abel turns out to be short lived. The celebration was rather presumptuous when Eve thought salvation has come as when she proclaimed she has gotten a man from the Lord in Genesis 4:1: **And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.** She naively thought this is the seed of the woman promised them. Little did she realize this man is the murderer from the beginning who murdered his brother, Abel. The quarrel was over the acceptance of sacrifice that has to become part and parcel of the lives of fallen man after the fall. Abel's animal sacrifice was accepted while Cain's bloodless sacrifice was rejected by God. So quickly after the fall, the divinely ordained method by which fallen man is to be redeemed is challenged at this infant stage of history of fallen man. The deceitfulness of sin has set in and with the instigation by the forces of darkness, the whole human race is doomed to perdition and would soon incur God's judgment. Even as Adam and Eve stood at the grave of Abel, the truth of physical death is now perfectly realized. This is the first time a human has died physically and no longer exist on earth. Will Abel live again, they probably ponder! No amount of tears would bring Abel back now where his righteous blood had been shed. Their sorrows and pains over the death of this son must have touched heaven and the hosts above sigh in helplessness, as they could do nothing to help. While everyday on earth where the physical life of Adam and Eve has not been terminated, their hearts must have been filled with regrets and despair. So their own salvation has to be postponed when this man Eve so quickly claimed to be from the Saviour turns out to be a false alarm. Hence, this man Cain is more like a man she has gotten from the devil than from the Lord.

How long more should they wait for another man who is truly from the Lord, they might wonder. Their disappointment is understandable and their disillusionment is not surprising. Do they have faith to wait upon God to give them this seed of the woman? It must be too difficult if not humanly impossible. What about acquiring eternal life from the tree of life itself? This could prove to be the shortcut and bypass God's plan of redemption for man. It seems that God's plan will take too long though they could live for more than nine hundred years on earth. Life is now hard and the earth is parsimonious where they have to eat their bread through the sweat on their face. It seems that the ground is blaming them for bringing the cursed to the

earth. But how can they ever break through the cherubims to reach the tree of life? It is simply a mission impossible. The descendants of Adam and Eve must have heard of the paradise the other side of the world before the fall and they must have also heard about the tree of knowledge of good and evil as well as the tree of life. For hundreds of years, no man ever could come up with a plan to storm the Garden of Eden and obtain the fruit of the tree of life. The most they could do would probably be paying a cursory visit to the place from whence Adam and Eve had fallen. This is the closest they could get to view the Garden of Eden from afar where the tree of life is located and closely guarded by the cherubims of Almighty God. This tragic story of the fall of man no doubt has been passed down from generation to generation. The physical evidence is still there on earth where they could relate and verify the physical location of the Garden of Eden. The tree of life is still closely guarded and no man has ever broken through to steal of the fruit of eternal life. This is the closest they could get back to paradise man has lost.

After the death of Abel, Adam and Eve have another son according to Genesis 4:25: **And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.** This is consolation indeed because through the seed of this man, it is recorded that men begin to call upon the name of the Lord: **And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD. (Genesis 4:26)** This is blessing indeed when men begin to call on the name of the Lord after the first murder case that took place on earth. This is like a revival for the fallen world that fallen man would still desire the blessings from God and seek after the face of the Most High. As the years passed where men are born and died, the woman's seed as promised still did not appear during this time and eventually it is time for Adam to die. **And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. (Genesis 5:5)** So Adam died for his transgression and the process of death that first began in the Garden of Eden comes to a closure for this man created from the ground as a son of God. He died without seeing the actual Seed of the woman as promised but the hope of resurrection remains from the day where the innocent animal was killed for his sin that provided him with a cover for his nakedness. The magnificence of his glory in paradise where he named all the animals as a king over God's creation on earth had come to this tragic end having been expelled from the

Garden of Eden and now buried in the ground from whence he was taken. This is the beginning of the history of man that went awry and fallen from grace while death has welcomed this human race into its bosom where they would be held hostage till the Son of Man, born of the Seed of the woman, comes to rescue this fallen race from its clutches and set them free again. So the tree of life designed to provide Adam immortality is left untouched. The offer of the gift of eternal life through this tree is not taken up by the first man while the tree of knowledge of good and evil has ensnared all his descendants unto condemnation. Thus Adam would not die alone. All his sons and daughters will die with him in his act of transgression. **Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (Romans 5:14)** Hence all man has to die though they did not transgress against God the same way, as did Adam. Here the entire chapter five of Genesis documents the death of the human race though they were allowed to live over nine hundred years of age. They die because of sin that has been passed on from Adam where all of them were born after the image of Adam.

Interestingly during this history of the death of man, one particular man was singled out where the sentence of death had been waived: **And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. (Genesis 5:23&24)** This is indeed amazing here that this man Enoch is not listed among the dead. He simply vanished from their generation and it must have been an incident much spoken of during that time. How can it be that Enoch took a walk with God and did not return to them! While it is true that the Lord God still visits men after the fall where blood sacrifice from animals is the way where God will commune with fallen man, this man however, is an exceptional case. More information is available from the New Testament writer which has this to say about this man: **By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (Hebrew 11:5)** Here is shown that this man Enoch is a man of faith. Ever since the fall, man has to live by faith too. The faith between Cain and Abel brought to a confrontation where Abel was murdered by his brother Cain. The doctrine of vicarious sacrifice is called into question. Both men believe in offering a sacrifice in order to approach the Lord God. But the substitutability of that sacrifice is the point of contention. Cain's

sacrifice is bloodless, the work of his own hand while Abel's sacrifice follows the pattern laid down from Almighty God when an innocent animal was killed with shedding of blood to cloth the nakedness of Adam. Cain's sacrifice is patterned after Adam's own effort after the fall to cover himself with fig leaves and no doubt this method of self-righteous effort must be rejected outright.

So here the man Enoch is a man who has a testimony of walking with God in the similitude of Adam before the fall where there is no fear and no need to hide from the voice of the Lord God. He is a man who is said to have pleased God. One wonders where Enoch and God have walked on the face of this earth. The vestige of the fall is still present with the cherubims guarding the entrance to the Garden of Eden keeping fallen man away from the tree of life. What did they talk about all those years when they walk together? What did the Lord God show Enoch all those days on earth during his earthly life? Like any son of Adam, Enoch has this sentence of death hanging over him. Until this time, the only physical death of man Enoch has heard of is that of Abel and probably another man killed by a wicked man Lamech, a descendant of Cain. No other fallen man has physically died on record as far as Scriptural revelation is concerned. Before Enoch is taken, almost all his peers are with him where his ancestors Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel and including his father Jared are still alive during that time. The translation of Enoch must be the talk of town during that time. All those fallen men have lived for many years now and Adam has come to the end of his life of 930 years. All these men are anticipating death that has been passed down from Adam. Apparently, none of them has been recorded to have died physically except Adam and they could not understand what it would be like to die and leave the body of flesh. All these fallen men are also familiar with the approach required of them in order to please God. The doctrinal matter of a blood sacrifice has long been settled in the death of Abel and the banishment of Cain. But this man Enoch is unique in the sense that he has a testimony that far surpasses his peers where the Lord God is very pleased with him. All those men know the source of immortality from the tree of life which is kept by the cherubims in the Garden of Eden. They certainly know the location of the Garden of Eden as well. However, no man is ever permitted to enter the Garden of Eden after Adam fell. Did the Lord God bring Enoch to this place where Adam once lived? Did God show Enoch the tree of life that is now a forbidden fruit for fallen man? Did the Lord God offer immortality to Enoch via the tree of life whereby he is

translated into paradise escaping the sentence and the pains of physical death? Nevertheless, the power of life and death is in the hands of the Creator God of life. By whatever means, Enoch is documented to have escaped death and entered into the presence of the Lord God where death shall have no more power over him. So Enoch did not die like other fallen men. This incident must have sparked an uproar among the living as to what has happened to Enoch. Perhaps a search party was sent to locate the lost Enoch but to no avail. Adam was only 622 years old when Enoch was born. Forty-seven years after Adam died was Enoch translated. So for three hundred years before Adam died living in bondage of sin living for nearly a century now, had he witnessed this translation of his great grandson, it surely would have caused him to reflect upon those days when he could walk with the Lord God without any inhibition and now he finds in Enoch a man whom God has been pleased to allow him an endless walk with the Lord.

Still the tree of life remains in the Garden of Eden closely guarded by the cherubims while fallen men wax worst and worst. The removal of Enoch from the earth signals the changes to lives on earth soon to come.

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. (Genesis 6:1-7)

The inevitable must come when fallen men intermix with angelic beings. The corruption of fallen men due to indwelling sin is already a tragedy where men have to contend with for the rest of their earthly lives.

Now with the introduction of a mixed race of sons of God mingling with the daughters of men that resulted in the birth of a strange breed of giants, divine intervention is sure to come. The devil having succeeded in beguiling Eve to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and cause the fall of man through Adam, he is not going to sit by to wait for the promised Seed of the woman to bruise his head. Having used Cain to cause the death of Abel trying to pervert the mind of fallen man in the form of acceptable approach to please God and having observed the activities of fallen man for the past one thousand over years, the next plan is to corrupt the seeds of men. This will certainly thwart his own doom if the Seed of the woman is prevented from coming to earth. This strategy is in part due to the failure of getting fallen man to partake of the tree of life and live forever in this fallen state to reproduce immortal devils to be engaged in the eternal struggle against the Most High. Since devils and angels cannot reproduce among themselves, the next best option is to get those sons of God not created from the ground like Adam to cohabit with the daughters of men. The outcome of this perverse union is astounding. Through this evil scheme, the daughters of men bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. No man born by natural fallen man and woman is ever said to be mighty man as well as giant and man of renown. This is a different race of people perhaps hoping for one day in breaking through to the Garden of Eden to reach for the tree of life.

So as the warfare intensifies, the battle between forces of good and evil becomes more intriguing. The fall of Lucifer in the past is simply not just one isolated incident where other spirit beings that had not followed him in that rebellion will not fall in the future. The fall of angels is taking place in time and history of heaven and earth. As such, the task to safeguard the tree of life only specifically given to cherubims demonstrates the fallibility even of angels. These sons of God are not the sons of fallen men. They are spirit beings from creation's morning when they join in unison in the praise and worship of the Most High before they fell as revealed in Job 38:4-7: **Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?** The description of this group of sons of God shows that they are a different race of people. The passage here described a previous creation

before the history of man. They are definitely not the children of Adam. Hence with the interference of the affairs of man by these sons of God, this present heaven and earth invite divine intervention of such a scale that even the devil could not understand how Almighty God would still be able to keep his promise of the arrival of the Seed of the woman in preparation for the day to exact vengeance on all rebels be they angels or men. The promise of destruction upon men and the earth is certain and that day of judgment hastening to a climax when the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in. And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days. (Genesis

7:10-24)

When the hundred and twenty years given for men to repent are over, judgment finally comes upon the earth. With only selected lives of beast and men preserved to be fruitful and multiply to replenish the new world after this time of judgment is over, all other life forms on earth are destroyed, including the fallen sons of God and their offspring of giants. The decision to wipe the slate clean on the earth also signified the eventual removal of the former paradise of the Garden of Eden and the tree of life. Thus the tree of life whereby the power of eternal life rest cannot be left on earth for the next generation of fallen man to look forward to for immortality. While in the past when this tree of life was still present of earth, there perhaps might be the hopes by some that one day they might be given the right to this tree of life should they eventually become accepted by the Lord God. The translation of Enoch in less than 1000 years after the fall might tempt some to believe that there is hope in the Lord God where they might be accepted back to paradise again and be rewarded with this fruit of the tree of life. The universal flood destroyed all vestige of the former world and no one could point back to exactly where is the location of the Garden of Eden and the thoughts of acquiring eternal life through this tree is to be completely eradicated from the mind of fallen man. With this removal of the tree of life on earth, it is replaced with something far more superior as the promised Seed of the woman comes on schedule where whosoever that eats of the bread from heaven and drinks from the Rock, which is Christ, will become worthy recipient of eternal life.

Wisdom From the Tree of Life

Though the physical tree of life has been completely removed from the face of the earth, manifestation of the power of this tree is found in four different places in the book of Proverbs, which is the book on wisdom.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her. (Proverbs 3:13-18)

The mention of the tree of life since its departure more than a thousand years ago from the time of writing of this book, the usage here concerns wisdom. The tree of life is likened to wisdom where fallen man can still acquire though not the physical aspect of this fruit in itself. It is the intangible qualities of this tree where fallen man can still have a taste of its life giving power to those who have found it. This wisdom from the tree of life will keep a man happy and will grant him understanding as well. True happiness cannot be a permanent possession of fallen man. Even when a man enjoys the moment of happiness for a season, it is soon discovered to be so transient in nature. This is due to the fact that man does not have eternal life and he is already sentenced to death when Adam brought the whole human race unto condemnation. The only difference is that while he is still alive and that while he may enjoy some degree of happiness from time to time, he is simply passing his time waiting for the executioner to take away his life. How then can fallen man be truly happy when he is scheduled for execution at a moment's notice? So true happiness here is associated with the tree of life when in ancient time this tree has the power to grant its partaker immortal life. Now this side of heaven after Noah's flood, a foretaste of true happiness tracing back to the source of life giving power of the tree of life is possible pointing to a future day where death will be vanquished.

This happiness that the tree of life confers also comes as a package with understanding. There can be no true happiness in any form of lack of

understanding. The happiness that derives from a lack of understanding is a false sense of happiness deceiving its owner and damning him to hell. Such form of false happiness is described by the prophet Jeremiah: **Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? (Jeremiah 12:1)** These treacherous sinners are said to be happy and they are happy for the wrong reason. They know not they are set on slippery path happily sliding to the pit of hell for their iniquity. Even the last book of the Old Testament records of such a false sense of happiness: **And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. (Malachi 3:15)** This is no doubt counterfeit happiness that comes from hell. The state of happiness is subjective to the person experiencing it. However, the true source of happiness emanating from the tree of life is ordained from heaven that comes with understanding on the will of Almighty God. Hence true happiness cannot be defined by the subjective experience of fallen man with vested interest of self-preservation that skewed towards his benefits that is be contrary to the law and will of the living God.

Since this tree of life is the source of all true happiness, such a commodity of infinite value is compared to other precious substances on earth where fallen men are hell bent in acquiring, sometime to the detriment of their own well being. The wisdom that comes from this of tree if it is ever procurable as a merchandised product, it is said to be far more superior to that of silver and fine gold. What are more desirable to fallen man than silver and gold that symbolize the wealth, power and honour of man living in this sin cursed world? Fallen man will not hesitate to fight over such precious metals and yet when compared with wisdom from the tree of life, they are completely outclassed and counted as nothing altogether. So the folly of fallen man will spend their time and effort in this short earthly life waiting for the day of execution to acquire some form of prestige through the means of silver and gold believing that this is the way to happiness is actually climbing up the wrong tree. They should have gone to the tree of life instead of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Likewise, this wisdom stemming from the tree of life is also considered to be much more precious than precious stones. Deep red translucent rubies on earth are highly valued precious stones. When place

together with this wisdom from the tree of life, it is absolutely pale beyond compare. So these precious rubies that bring delight to the eyes of fallen man are altogether nothing in value for what they can do for him as far as the superior wisdom from above is concerned. Not many fallen son of man has come to this important conclusion concerning the wisdom from above. Nevertheless, Job during his severe affliction made this remark with regards to wisdom when compared to rubies: **No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. (Job 28:18)** It is indeed a rare honour to be given this wisdom from above associated with the tree of life to conclude that wisdom of a truth is infinitely more superior to rubies. So the writer of the book of Proverbs reinforced this truth one more time as follows: **How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver! For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. (Proverb 16:16 & 8:11)** In fact this wisdom from the tree of life also testifies itself that matches the comparison of itself with precious metals and stones found on earth according to Proverb 8:19: **My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.** Moreover, this wisdom also testifies of the rewards it offers to its partakers as recorded in Proverb 8:18: **Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.** Hence, fallen man should desire to reach out for this wisdom from the tree of life even though the literal tasting of this fruit is no longer possible in this earthly life.

The benefits from this wisdom are in fact much greater than silver and gold as well as rubies. The possessor of this wisdom is promised length of days as well as riches and honour. While precious metals and precious stones could offer some degree of riches and honour in the eyes of fallen man, though such value is not actually intrinsic in those elements themselves, length of days can never be said to be associated with those who possess such merchandises. For wisdom indeed is better than all these silver and gold as well as rubies, which could give the recipients length of days as well as true riches and honour in the sight of God. Now even though fallen man cannot physically eat of the tree of life to become absolute possessor of this wisdom, a foretaste of the goodness of this peaceable fruit is still possible in the spiritual sense. This fruit is now transferred to the person of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. According to the apostle Paul, the Lord Jesus Christ is the true wisdom of God: **But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom**

of God. (1 Corinthians 1:24) Hence those who have been born again and have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour are now in possession of this wisdom from above: **But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (1 Corinthians 1:30)** and hence this collaborates with the words of wisdom from Solomon concerning this fruit from the tree of life: **Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. (Proverb 3:16)** After the fall, fallen man cannot rely on the tree of life to obtain eternal life. Man must now come to the Lord Jesus Christ to eat of this fruit that He offers to obtain eternal life.

So when there is true wisdom from above associated with the tree of life, there is also this counterfeit wisdom from below associated with the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The apostle Paul writes concerning this wisdom from the world as follows: **For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. (1 Corinthians 3:19)** James also describes this wisdom from below this way: **This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. (James 3:15)** So there is wisdom from above and another form of wisdom from below. This wisdom from below teaches fallen man to acquire physical silver and gold as well as rubies that could not offer them any length of days. This worldly wisdom offers fallen man a false sense of riches, which in the sight of God is absolutely nothing but spiritual poverty. In contrast to this wisdom from below, James also shows how superior is this wisdom from above: **But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. (James 3:17)** Hence James aptly elaborates what Solomon claims concerning this wisdom associated with the tree of life: **Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. (Proverb 3:17)**

As such, the first manifestation of the fruit of the tree of life is wisdom that indeed confers on its partaker long life, true riches, peace and happiness. This fruit definitely far surpasses the riches this world could offer through silver, gold and rubies that are transient in nature. This counterfeit riches from the world is designed to blind the eyes of fallen man from acquiring true riches from the wisdom associated with the tree of life. For there is no true life saving power from the riches on earth: **Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death. (Proverb**

11:4) The Psalmist also concludes this truth in the following manner: **They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. (Psalm 49:6-9)** Indeed like Solomon writes: **She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her. (Proverb 3:18)** Hence fallen man should take heed to his advice: **Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. (Proverb 4:7)** However, eternal life is now no longer obtainable from the tree of life. Eternal life is only available from a person and this person is the blessed Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ: **And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:11-13)**

Fruit of Righteousness from the Tree of Life

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise. (Proverb 11:30) The second manifestation of the power of the tree of life is found as a fruit from those who have tasted of the life given power of this tree. There is a unique feature of this tree of life in that there is reproductive power from the influence of this blessed tree itself. The seed of this tree of life finds itself into those who have eaten of its life changing power from whence this seed will germinate and reproduce itself via the vessel from which it has resided. Those who have eaten of the fruit from the tree of life will become a tree of life in the sense that he will also bear fruit after its kind that is patterned after the fruit of the tree of life. This fruit from the partaker will in turn offer the same life saving fruits to other fallen man so that the process of reproduction of this tree will continue from generation to generation. Even though the physical tree of life is no longer on earth, the life giving influence of this tree has by no means diminished in any sense over the history of fallen man.

So after the fall of man, it is inconceivable that with the tree of life having become a forbidden fruit for fallen man and eventually relocated from the face of the earth that this tree still finds itself infecting fallen man with its life giving fruits. This viral effect of the fruit from the tree of life reproduces itself within the vessel of those that it has possessed. Through this invisible work of reproduction, it infuses life into its recipients and the process of multiplication continues day and night without ceasing to save a remnant to glorify the God of Creation. Hence even though man has fallen prey to the devil through his wiles, the tree of life stands in the midst of fallen man to rescue them from the clutches of hell. The life saving power of the tree of life is still available to whosoever would believe the Lord and obey God and keep His commandments. Its influence is still felt from generation to generation though at times it looks so bleak that divine intervention would once again unleash its destructive power on fallen man when the whole world becomes corrupt before God where His prophets and servants are killed. The Lord God still graciously raises up servants to stand in the gap and hold forth the fruits of the tree of life to turn fallen man back unto the Lord.

It is now a fact that the righteous will produce fruits. One of the most important fruits of the righteous is the fruit of the tree of life. This fruit will

cause the righteous to seek to win souls in this sin cursed world. It only takes a spark from this fruit of the tree of life to get the fire of soul winning going. Those who engage in this soul winning activity are said to be wise. This has to be the natural correlation of process of multiplication effect from the fruit of the tree of life. For the first manifestation of the tree of life is associated with wisdom. The character of the tree of life is such that the wisdom from this tree is imparted to its partaker and as a result, those who have eaten of its fruit will be wise to the way of righteousness in winning of souls.

The primary means by which soul winning is carried out is through the mouth of those who have eaten of the tree of life and have tasted of its wonderful life giving power. The fruit of the tree of life eaten by these people has power to produce fruits to share of this same life giving power to other sinners that they might also enjoy of this enriching experience of the gift of eternal life. Once tasted of this life changing power of this fruit, there is no better satisfaction than to tell others of this wonderful fruit of life with his mouth: **A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him. (Proverb 12:14)** There is no shortage of this fruit of life and there is always more than enough to share of this fruit, which can reproduce on its own and multiply itself to meet the needs of all the sinners in the world. The satisfaction derived from the fruit of the mouth is immense and its rewards are eternal in value. So the advertisement of this tree of life is usually by word of mouth. Those who have tasted of this fruit have a penchant to talk about this wonderful tree of life and the influence of the fruit from this tree will attract others to taste of this delightful fruit to see whether eternal life is indeed true.

When those who share with others about the tree of life, the wisdom through this tree will bear testimony on its own to reveal the way of righteousness: **All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. (Proverb 8:8)** While the partaker will open his mouth to talk about this tree of life, the actual work of conversion is the function of this tree of life itself. There is absolutely no saving power in mouth of a converted sinner. It is the actual words of wisdom from this tree of life that preaches righteousness that will impart life to its hearer. Thus the converted sinner might be a mouth piece to trumpet the saving power of the tree of life, it is the actual influence from the

fragrance of this tree of life that draws the sinner to taste of its life giving fruit. Someone has to bring the sinner to this tree of life but the tree of life has to manifest its saving grace and power to the sinner in order to get him to come forward and eat of its fruit to obtain eternal life. Such is the wonderful redeeming grace through this tree of life and in this present time, it is found only in the person of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

The converted sinner has the tree of life within him and the fruit produced by this tree must be made manifest to others to come and taste of this fruit of righteousness. The active labour of this soul winner is reckoned as sowing righteousness: **The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. (Proverb 11:18)** This is in contrast to the wicked that go about working a deceitful work. This deceitful work by the wicked is patterned after the serpent's deceitful work that beguiled Eve and caused her to sin. The wicked man is going about doing a deceitful work in hopes of deceiving sinners to acquire the wisdom of this world by seeking after silver, gold and rubies which could not offer them length of days. On the other hand, the wise soul winner is going about sowing righteousness by pointing others to the tree of life. The worker of righteousness will attempt to lead sinners away from the tree of knowledge of good and evil from which sinners have been afflicted by its cursed fruit that damned the human race to depravity, death and hell fire. The soul winner will sow righteousness because he knows that his labour is not in vain in the Lord in this work of righteousness: **Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)** Furthermore, the sower of righteousness knows that there is reward for his work of righteousness: **And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. (Isaiah 32:17)**

Hence girded with wisdom from this tree of life, the soul winner actively engages in activities of sowing righteousness for the purpose of winning souls. He, being imparted with eternal life from the tree of life, is spreading himself as part of the tree of life itself drawing others to him when he abides in this life giving tree: **He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch. (Proverb 11:28)** The soul winner being wise trusts not in worldly riches from silver, gold or rubies but he acquires true riches through wisdom from the tree of life itself and is now

flourishing as one of its branches extending the fruit of righteousness to lost sinners in the world. Such a picture of the converted sinner who has inherited eternal life and is now serving as an extension to this tree of life is perfectly illustrated by the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (John 15:1,2,4,5,7&8)

The Psalmist also paints a similar picture of a blessed man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly as follows: **And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psalm 1:3)** Hence the tree of life is manifesting itself in different ways and here it is depicted as having perfected its work of grace in the life of the sinner and causes him to bear fruit of righteousness for the benefit of other sinners to offer them the gift of eternal life. This extension of the tree of life in the life of the saved sinner is also likened as a tree while abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ as the true vine. He obtains his true source of nourishment from the tree of life to continuously and consistently bringing forth fruit of righteousness for the lost world. It is in this way he is sowing righteousness where the fruit of righteousness is dispersed abroad to whoever would believe in the tree of life, which is the Lord Jesus Christ in time and history of fallen man to redeem them back to the God of Creation. This is the wise vocation he has chosen to win souls and having obtained eternal life, this is the way of righteousness he will walk all the days of his earthly life: **In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death. (Proverb 12:28)**

The Hope of the Tree of Life

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. (Proverb 13:12) The third manifestation of the tree of life concerns hope. Before the fall of man, the tree of life is the hope of rewards for keeping the one and only commandment of the Lord God not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. After the fall, the tree of life is kept away from fallen man and it has become a forbidden fruit replacing the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The hope of partaking of the tree of life to live forever is perhaps always present in the mind of Adam's fallen race. They probably live in hopes of one day, they could return to paradise where the gate of Eden would be once again opened to welcome them home. There the tree of life they have so long hoped for would heal the sickness of their heart after so many hundreds of years living in exile from the favour and blessings of Almighty God. While this hope of partaking the tree of life is held alive, unfortunately, when the seeds of fallen man become corrupted with the sons of God reproducing giants in those days, the whole world is destroyed permanently uprooting the tree of life from the earth. After the flood, fallen man still lives in hopes of restoration to God's favour. From generation to generation, the hope to live forever is still the desires of fallen man. Fallen man looks to God for answer and rest in hope of a future restoration and resurrection even according to the faith given to man like Job: **For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. (Job 19:25-27)**

So the hope of eternal life did not die out with the removal of the tree of life on earth. The tree of life then finds its way to manifest this desire in the hearts of the fallen sons of man. When this hope of eternal life comes true to fallen man, it is indeed a tree of life in every sense of the word. When being harassed and falsely accused by his friends who were physicians of no value, Job likens all the afflictions that came upon him as the destruction of his hope like the removal of a tree: **He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree. (Job 19:10)** It is interesting to note that when hope is gone, it is connected with the removal of a tree. In the Garden of Eden, man has eaten the wrong tree. The tree of life by which Adam and Eve could have eaten of freely is then

removed. So the hope of living forever is gone when the first man and woman were driven out from paradise where the tree of life was then kept by the mighty cherubims. The removal of the tree of life sparks the beginning of the hope of ever coming back to this tree and partake of its fruit. It is no wonder that Solomon writes about the tree of life in this manner where man originally has access to the tree of life: **Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. (Proverb 13:12)**

Moreover, Job also contrasts the false hope of trusting in the wisdom from the tree of knowledge of good and evil in going after worldly riches: **If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom: Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended. (Job 31: 24,25,33,40)** Job is very well acquainted with the tragedy that took place in the Garden of Eden. Putting confidence in gold and wealth is really hopeless which is tantamount to the strategy of Adam covering up his transgression by his self-righteous effort of fig leaves. If this were the kind of hope Job hoped for, the full force of the curse of thistles and cockle would become his lot. Those who put their trust in the wrong kind of hope are actually despising God's word like Cain: **Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. (Proverbs 13:13)** This is the verse that comes immediately after the deferring of hope that makes the heart sick. They will no doubt be destroyed and those who fear God's words shall be rewarded. Had Adam feared God's words by refusing to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he would be rewarded with the tree of life. Apparently, the hope of fallen man and the tree of life are closely intertwined which has its history from the beginning in the Garden of Eden. Even nature itself is subject to the same hope when it was made to subject to corruption and vanity when the world plunged into sin because of the transgression of Adam: **For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we**

ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:20-23) So when this hope is realized, eternal life in man would become a permanent reality and paradise would be restored with the arrival of the tree of life.

Down through the history of fallen man is this hope of immortality. There is this hope of living forever in the presence of God in paradise, in a world of bliss under the blessings from above. There is this hope of salvation and the yearning of a perfect world to come. This longing is described as a hope that with patience will one day become a reality. **For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. (Romans 8:24&25)** The hope of restoration and redemption when it comes is indeed like the arrival of the tree of life. So the hope of seeing the tree of life again, which is no longer present on earth but with patience wait for it, will no doubt be rewarded when it finally comes. Hence, **Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. (Proverb 13:12)**

Notwithstanding, to exercise patience in waiting for the fulfillment of this desire is not easy but with the Lord, all things are possible. The promise of assistance from above will certainly make this waiting in patience an exercise of faith in the words of the living God. **Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:13)** So saints are not left alone in this waiting exercise to be turned into a game of despair: **For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (Galatians 5:5)** This hope of righteousness by faith is vested in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ just like the life giving fruit from the tree of life. While waiting for this hope of righteousness by faith to come to fruition, the saints are given a glimpse of the reward from this hope of righteousness: **To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (Colossians 1:27)** by which the saints are encouraged to exercise patience in waiting for this hope of glory to come into full manifestation in its glorified state: **Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. (1 Thessalonians 1:3&4)**

This hope of glory in the believer does produce the fruit of righteousness from the tree of life in reproducing itself in other lost sinners that all may rejoice together in that day of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: **For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? (1 Thessalonians 2:19)** The multiplier effects from the fruit of the righteous in soul winning do bring about great rejoicing in that day of the appearing of Christ, like the arrival of the tree of life. Meanwhile, the truth is that: **Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. (Proverb 13:12)** The withholding of the desire of seeing the arrival of the day where the hope of glory manifest in person does make the hear sick. More encouragement is given to calm the pining hearts to contrast with those who have no hope: **But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (1 Thessalonians 4:13)** The word of encouragement is concerning the certainty of the coming of the Lord like the replanting of the tree of life back in the Garden of Eden in the new paradise: **For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:14-18)** So when this day comes, it is indeed like a tree of life.

Hence the apostle Paul gives this exhortation for those who are partakers of the tree of life waiting for complete fruition in the day of harvest: **But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. (1 Thessalonians 5:8)** This refers to those whose hope is in the person of the Seed of the woman, the Lord Jesus Christ: **Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; (1 Timothy 1:1)** because this concerns the hope of eternal life from the tree of life now vested in a person: **In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But**

hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; (Titus 1:2&3) and as such, the patience of hope is required to look for this hope of glory also known as the blessed hope: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 2:13&14, 3:7) When this hope of eternal life comes, it is no doubt the tree of life.

This hope of glory in the believer is unmovable and steadfast like an anchor to secure the soul according to Hebrews 6:19: **Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;** which the apostle Peter called a lively hope concerning salvation ready to be revealed in the last time: **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)** Because of the sure words of the living God, the believer is expected to be ready to produce the same fruit from the true vine as an extension of the tree of life: **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: (1 Peter 3:15)** since he has this hope in him, the hope of glory waiting for the arrival of the blessed hope where the hope of eternal life becomes a permanent reality.

The sum of the hopes of all those who are partakers of the tree of life are expressed in the following passage: **In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of**

**death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. (1 Corinthians 15:52-56)
Here the hope of glory, the blessed hope and the hope of eternal life
align into full manifestation of the restoration of the tree of life.
Meanwhile, the saints has to exercise patience because: Hope deferred
maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.
(Proverb 13:12)**

Wholesome Tongue from the Tree of Life

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. (Proverb 15:4) The fourth manifestation of the tree of life has got to do with the tongue. This issue of the tongue is of such gravity that the power of life and death are vested in this little member of the body of fallen man according to Proverb 18:21: **Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.** The magnitude of the consequences from which the words that proceed from the tongue is inconceivable. The extremity of the range between life and death shows the awesome power of the tongue of man. It is indeed unbelievable that the effects of the words that come forth from the tongue can oscillate between two extremes, life and death. This is no small laughing matter. From the very beginning, the fall of man is caused by the tongue where deceptions coming from the serpent beguiled Eve to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. So here a wholesome tongue is likened as a tree of life and the conversely an unwholesome tongue is the source of perverseness that result in breaching of the spirit. These extremities of the results from the tongue are depicted throughout the book of Proverbs. The constant comparison between good and evil, life and death, wisdom and folly is made regarding this tongue of fallen man.

The contrast in value of the tongue is clearly given in Proverb 10:20: **The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.** This contrast is also recorded in the gospel by the words which the Lord Jesus Christ spoke in Matthews 12:35: **A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.** The evil man has a wicked heart that brings forth evil things which is of little worth. This evil things that proceed from the tongue of the evil man is amplified in Matthews 15:19&20: **For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.** Obviously, these things that come from the tongue of the wicked is of little worth to say the least while the tongue of the just is of choice silver bearing the fruit of the righteous which is a tree of life. This is because the tongue of the just brings forth wisdom as wisdom is one such manifestation of the tree of life: **The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out. (Proverb 10:31)** As such, the tongue of

the just has to bring forth wisdom because he is a partaker of the tree of life but the wicked has a froward tongue which shall be cut off according to Proverbs 13:13: **Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.**

The tongue of the just is not only as choice silver that brings forth wisdom, it is also a tongue that embodies health according to Proverb 12:18: **There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.** This is a tongue that brings forth the fruit of the righteous, which comes with healing power of life while the tongue of the wicked once again in contrast is a sword that causes destruction and brings forth death. Health and harm are now shown to be the two extremes from two very different kinds of tongues. This constant comparison between two ends are fixed truth just like the two trees in the Garden of Eden, one forbidden and the other is meant to be a reward of eternal health. The tongue of the wicked has its origin from the father of lies back in the Garden of Eden: **A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue. (Proverb 17:4)** This is an accurate portrayal of the wicked that bears false witness beginning from the serpent that plants the seed of deceit and corruption through its naughty tongue via his false lips. This serpent is condemned to lick the dust for all generations because of its evil deeds.

With the absence of the wholesome tongue of the just, the partakers of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil manifest perverseness because of their perverse tongue: **He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief. (Proverb 17:20)** The forward tongue indeed finds no good and the perverse tongue will surely result in mischief. The froward tongue is also one that bears false witness and utters lies according to Proverb 14:5: **A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.** A wholesome tongue from the tree of life and a naughty tongue from the tree of knowledge of good and evil very clearly produce very different kinds of fruits. This naughty tongue first appears in the Garden of Eden as a lying tongue that caused man to seek after treasures of knowledge of good and evil in an attempt to become gods which resulted in death: **The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death. (Proverb 21:6)** So the exact opposite of a wholesome tongue, which is a tree of life, is a lying tongue that leads to death. Since fallen man has been afflicted by the fruit

from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he must be healed by partaking of the fruit from the tree of life that gives him this wholesome tongue. There are two manifestations from the two different trees. One is life and the other is death.

Even the New Testament writer, James, acknowledges this tongue of fallen man where the power of destruction is unimaginable. So he writes: **If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. (James 1:26)** Fallen man can hardly keep his mouth shut. The three friends of Job turned out to be physicians of no value the moment they opened their mouth. They had trouble controlling their tongues. Those who are not able to control their tongue are actually deceiving themselves. Their religion is an exercise of vanity having had their heart deceived by their unbridled tongue. They may seem to be religious but when they open their mouth, they give themselves away.

James continues to describe this unbridled tongue of fallen man. **My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. (James 3:1&2)** This fallen tongue of man has an urge to teach and to aspire to be a master having eaten of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, unlike the wholesome tongue, which is a tree of life, they offend all in many things and receive their just recompense of rewards for the kind of fruits they produce, which is of little worth. It is really past finding out that many things under the sun have been subdued from animals to equipment but the tongue of fallen man is untamable. **Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! (James 3:3-5)** It is astonishing indeed that even mighty and destructive forces of nature can be brought under control by a relatively small device but this extremely small little tongue of man remains out of reach of ever hoping to be tamed under the sun. This little member of the body has a tendency to be boastful. It is extremely proud relative to its size in the body of man. Though small in

nature, the pride in this small little member is capable of kindling fires in strives of words in its boasting of great things.

It is frightening indeed when James continues with such sordid details of the capability of this untamed tongue of fallen man: **And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. (James 3:6)** Indeed, this tongue is a fire. But the word of the living God is also a fire: **Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. (Jeremiah 20:9)** So this tongue of man is a counterfeit form of fire that has its origin from hell. It is a fire that defiles instead of a fire from the words of the living God that purifies the object under which it is put through the test. This fire from the tongue of fallen man is utterly corrupt that defiles the entire body because this tongue of fire is a world of iniquity. It is the poison from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tongue of fallen man leads to war and set on fire the course of nature because it is first set on the fire of hell. Hell is a fiery place where its fire does not purify the sinners. On the other hand, the word of God is also a fire where the partaker of the tree of life is put through the furnace of this fire to purify the dross of the old man so that choice silver is produced to become the fruit of the tongue of the just where a wholesome tongue springs forth.

For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. (James 3:7-13)

The tongue of fallen man is totally hopeless. It has been poisoned the moment it tasted of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Unlike animals in the animal kingdom, this tongue of man cannot be tamed. This tongue is full of deadly poison from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It is indeed an unruly evil because of its untamable nature. Hence, there is this constant irony of double mindedness and inconsistencies even from those who have partaken of the tree of life via the person of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the source of eternal life. The evil fruit of the tongue of the natural man is present even though the wholesome tongue is being formed for those who have eaten of the tree of life. Perverseness from this untamed tongue that breaches the spirit does manifest itself if the forming of wholesome tongue is being suppressed: **Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. (James 3:10)** This indeed ought not so to be when the wisdom from the tree of life is imparted to the partaker to produce a different kind of fruit to counter the evil fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. **Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. (James 3:13)**

Hence, after the fall of man, the tongue of man has become a constant scourge that has brought upon this world untold misery. Those who have partaken of the tree of life from the Lord Jesus Christ have been constantly exhorted to tame his tongue on many things that have no bearing to spreading the fruit of righteousness because of this untamed tongue of fallen man: **Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles. (Proverb 21:23)** This is the constant exhortation with regards to the tongue of fallen man having been poisoned by the fruit from the wrong tree: **Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him. (Proverb 29:20)** The tendency of fallen man is to open his mouth and use his tongue too soon. Unfortunately his untamed tongue, which is usually hasty, is the source of all sorts of trouble. The power of the tongue is amazing and simply inconceivable for: **The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook. (Proverb 18:4)** So it depends very much on the kind of fruit this tongue has tasted whether it is from the tree of life or from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The wholesome tongue is the result of partaking of the tree of life while the naughty, lying and hasty tongue is manifesting the natural traits of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The Psalmist displays this wholesome tongue in Psalm 119:172: **My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.** This is the effect of the tree of life from which wisdom is

imparted and produces the fruit of the righteous whereby the partaker is given hope for the full manifestation of the tree of life to become a permanent reality.

Overcomers and the Tree of Life

With the departure of the tree of life after the fall of man when the earth was destroyed by the flood during Noah's time leaving with four different manifestations of the tree of life in the middle book of the Old Testament, this particular tree once again, is mentioned in the closing of the Bible. There are only three more occasions where the tree of life is recorded in the book of Revelation. The tree of life indeed has come full circle and entered into its proper place to carry out its preordained function in eternity. The manifestations of the tree of life in the book of Proverbs will become a permanent feature in eternity. This time, there will be no more abrupt removal of the tree of life because of the sin of man for the Son of God has destroyed the work of the devil according to 1 John 3:8: **He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.** The tree of life will be planted again as the power of death is permanently eradicated: **Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2:14&15)**

Interestingly, the first mention of the tree of life in the New Testament is connected with a message meant for the church in Ephesus according to Revelation 2:7: **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.** This tree of life is again located in the paradise of God where in the past it was a forbidden fruit for fallen man. Now this tree of life is open for consumption to the sons of man in the future. However, the promise here given to the believers in Ephesus calls into question the doctrinal issue on the salvation of man in the church age where the born again believer is promised eternal life in and through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ instead of a physical tree of life. For it is recorded that: **Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)** But then over here, this promise of the right to the tree of life is given to those overcomers in Ephesus. In fact, a careful study on the promises given to all the overcomers in all the seven churches addressed in the book of Revelation defers according to their unique situation where their

faith in God is put to the test. The other promises given to the rest of the six churches are as follows:

To the church in Smyrna:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. (Revelation 2:11)

To the church in Pergamos:

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 hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Revelation 2:17)

To the church in Thyatira:

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: (Revelation 2:26)

To the church in Sardis:

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (Revelation 3:5)

To the church in Philadelphia:

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. (Revelation 3:12)

To the church in Laodicea:

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as

**I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.
(Revelation 3:21)**

So does it imply that only the believers in the church of Ephesus are reserved the privilege of having access to the tree of life to obtain eternal life while the rest of the believers in other churches are less privileged than these believers in Ephesus? This is obviously not a reasonable conclusion and it contradicts many Scriptures in the New Testament concerning the promise of eternal life promised before the world began given to the believers in Christ as a gift. As such, a closer look at the book of Revelation is in order as this is the last book of the Holy Bible and its contents are prophetic in nature. The Lord Jesus Christ confirms that the book of Revelation is a book on prophecy: **Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:7,10,18&19)** The requirement to understand prophecy is given in Revelation 19:10: **And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**

As far as salvation for church age saints is concerned, the gift of eternal life is not vested in a tree but in a person and this person can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. **For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8&9) And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:11-13)** These Scriptures make it crystal clear that salvation and

eternal life is found in only one person, the Lord Jesus Christ, and not from a tree after the fall of man, and it can be obtained as a gift and not as a reward. So the reward of eating from the tree of life given to those believers in Ephesus in Revelation 2:7 needs to be examined from a different angle where a different perspective is given in the seven letters addressed to each of those churches during that time.

The church is simply a called out assembly of believers and it needs not mean the Body of Christ which is His Bride also known as the Church. The gathering of the people unto Moses is also called a church according to Acts 7:38: **This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:** and this church in the wilderness is not the same church in which we live as we are the Bride of Christ being members of His body. The church in the wilderness is a nation and this church existed before the incarnation of Christ. This is simply a type of the New Testament Church as a called out group of believers from the world. The functions given to the church of the wilderness during the time of Moses and to the Church, which is the Bride of Christ, are different. In fact, the “church” led by Noah comprises of his own family of only eight persons. His salvation required him to build an ark, which is one of its kinds peculiar only to the set of circumstances during his time. Thus, the entire sixty-six books in the Holy Bible do not apply to the believers in Christ, which spans a period of only two thousand years. The drama of redemption as revealed in the Holy Bible weaves through time and history, nations and languages, kingdoms and governments, the nation of Israel and the Church and they are not meant to be the same in all aspects in God’s dealing with fallen man from the beginning to the end. The term “church” needs not apply solely to the Body of Christ, His Bride.

While the seven letters addressed to the seven churches in the book of Revelation are literal churches in existence with their peculiar set of circumstances in their trials and tribulations during that time, these seven churches also represent the seven periods of church history where believers look back in history could very clearly identify. These seven churches are also literally present in types during the entire two thousand years of church history in different parts of the world going through all those trials and tribulations as recorded in the book of Revelation. Being a prophetic book, all those promises for the overcomers are not necessarily applicable to the

Church age saints in the Body of Christ. For the Holy Bible does make it very clear that there are distinctions between the Church and the nation of Israel. In fact there are three categories of people in the Holy Bible where the Lord will deal with differently as mentioned by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:32&33: **Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.** The promises and inheritance given to the nation of Israel and the Church are not the same. The Old Testament very clearly revealed that there is a time of Jacob's trouble from which the Lord will deal with this nation again in the future when the Church, the Bride of Christ, is removed from the earth to prepare to come back to earth to reign and rule with Christ for one thousand years. **Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. (Jeremiah 30:7)** Jacob's trouble obviously is not the Church's trouble. Jacob's trouble concerns the nation of Israel geographically located in Israel that will also affect the whole world during such a time of trouble. It is political and concerns the Kingdom of Heaven where Israel is slated to reign as the head of nation over all the nations of the world. The Church's trouble is transnational and is not demarcated across national boundaries and political affiliation to any governments on earth.

The prophecy concerning Jacob's trouble from the following Scriptures makes it abundantly clear that this is a time where Jehovah God will deal with Israel and it has nothing to do with the Church, the Bride of Christ. **For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. (Jeremiah 8-11)**

During the first coming of Christ, the nation of Israel rejected their

Messiah but during His second coming, the children of Israel will acknowledge Him and receive Him as their King. Hence, when the Church, the Body of Christ is translated to meet the Lord in the air, the time of Jacob's trouble will begin. During this time, believers will still congregate together and the term "church" would still apply to them but they are obviously not part of the Body of Christ and they do not belong as members of the Bride of Christ. As such, the rewards for the overcomers in those seven churches during that time will literally come into full force when trials and tribulations of believers which will be exceedingly hard during such a time.

However, as far as the Church age saints are concerned, all saints are overcomers in Christ. No one will be left behind. **For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4&5)** No one during this age can be a Christian unless he is also an overcomer. He cannot be an overcomer on his own but he must be an overcomer in Christ. Since the gift of salvation comes with eternal life in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the reward promised to overcomers in Revelation 2:7 cannot be literally and doctrinally applicable to Christians during this age. Otherwise, the threat of second death issued to the church at Smyrna could also be meant for the Church age saints: **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. (Revelation 2:11)** The Christian does not need to partake of this tree of life to obtain eternal life because this life is in the Son of God. He that has the Son has this eternal life and he that has not the Son of God does not have this eternal life. While the tree of life is not a means to obtain eternal life for the Church age saints, this tree of life is revealed again in the last days where its role will become prominent again just like in the beginning in the Garden of Eden. This brings the condition of partaking of this tree into the forefront just like in the past where the condition for the overcomers in the Garden of Eden is to overcome temptation not to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The reward of the tree of life is simply one among the seven promises given to the seven churches during the time of Jacob's trouble. This will be a time of exceedingly severe trials where many believers will lose their lives for they love not their lives unto the death according to Revelation 12:11:

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. These are the overcomers where many will become martyrs when the Bride of Christ has been taken to heaven in preparation for the return with Christ to reign with the Lord Jesus Christ on earth for a thousand years. The tree of life and other promises of honour are reserved for these saints who are overcomers during this troublous time of Jacob's trouble that will befall the whole world. During such a time like this, the Church, the Bride of Christ has already been transported to heaven to make herself ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb: **Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (Revelation 19:7-9)** So the promise to partake of the tree of life is not given to the Church age saints but to the saints who will go through the time of Jacob's trouble in the future.

As for the believers during this Church age, they are already complete in Christ where Christ is already their tree of life in every aspect, which is a much better portion than a physical tree itself. **For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (Colossians 2:9&10)** This promise given to the Church age saints is much better than the tree of life given to the saints of other ages because in Christ is found the fullness of the Godhead which is the head of all principality and power. The believers in Christ are also told that they are complete in Christ in all the fullness of Christ in power. In such a case, what is the tree of life to the saints during this age where eternity is a glorious future promised to them!

During this age, sinners are not to labour for physical meat from a physical tree that will grant to them eternal life. Sinners should heed what the Lord Jesus Christ told them in John 6:27: **Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.** The physical meat from a physical tree is of no eternal value. The solution is conveyed to sinners when they asked how and what they must do in order to obtain eternal life which the Son of God promised to give to them

in John 6:28&29: **Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.** This is the promise given by the Son of God to sinners before His death, burial and resurrection. They simply have to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God. After His ascension back to heaven, His promise of partaking of the tree of life and other promises of honour for overcomers shifts the drama of redemption fast forward into eternity in the future where other saints not of the Church age would also receive their rewards of honour besides eternal life from the tree of life.

Hence, the term “church” does not necessarily mean the Body of Christ, which is His Bride. The promises given to the Church and the promises given to saints of other ages are not the same. The apostle Paul speaks of the whole family in heaven other than just the Church: **For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; (Ephesians 3:14-16)** as well as the writer of the book of Hebrews reveals that God has saints other than the Church as well: **To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12:23&24)** The general assembly and the Church of the firstborn are distinct entities and this shows that Almighty God has different ways of dealing with sinners throughout the ages to bring the drama of redemption to a final closure according to 1 Corinthians 15:24-26: **Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.** Therefore, when death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed, the tree of life will rise to its elevated state to offer eternal life to its partakers just like it was intended back in the Garden of

Eden.

When God has become all in all reverting back to the state of union of the Godhead in eternity past, the tree of life no doubt will once again play a prominent role in the plan of God to reward men who have responded to God's dealing with them during their life time according to God's prescribed law and requirement peculiar to them. The appearance of the tree of life in the last book of the Holy Bible signifies that victory is at hand. The return of the tree of life is part of the plan of Almighty God to restore the paradise once lost to exceed its former glory. The tree of life is set to take its rightful place in paradise when death is no more and the tree of knowledge of good and evil is no longer required to test the obedience of the sons of man. The tree of life will have no competing attractions. Its eminence in eternity will testify of Almighty God's gracious dealings with His subjects and to reward those who would pledge their allegiance to worship this Most Benevolent God of Creation, the Source, Creator and Giver of Life.

The Tree of Life in Eternity

When time and history of man are wrapped up in eternity, now is the time for the tree of life to show up again. Indeed eternity past and eternity future have become one again where the conflict of the ages has been resolved where the mystery of God has come to an end. The end of the mystery of God is indeed prophesied in the Scriptures: **But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. (Revelation 10:7)** Besides, the mystery of God is a present possession of the saints in Christ as revealed by the apostle Paul: **That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2&3)** For in God are all things, the beginning and the end: **And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. (Revelation 21:6, 22:13)** The entire fulfillment of prophecy and bringing an end of all things are performed according to the counsel of God's own will where no mortals and immortals have the privilege of imparting any counsel to alter any events that happen in time and history: **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)** Adam and Eve could have gotten to this side of eternity without having to plunge the whole world into sin but what happened in time and history is foreknown of God and allowed by God to show the riches of His grace to the saints: **That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:7)**

Hence, in the final chapter of the revelation of the mystery of God, the tree of life is mentioned two more times. This time, the tree of life is firmly planted in paradise functioning according to its divine order as the life producing fruits in that Kingdom. This revelation written in time and history

of man is simply a glimpse of the glorious future of that Kingdom whose splendour is beyond the wildest imagination of mortals this side of heaven. In the midst of this paradise is the tree of life displayed prominently offering its fruits and leaves to those who inherit the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven now merged into one. **And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 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 22:1&2)** This tree of life is watered by the water of life proceeding from the throne of God where God is the true Source and Creator of life. This time, the tree of life is not located together with the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the midst of paradise. This time, the tree of life is also not blended with the multitudes of trees like the time back in the Garden of Eden where man would not know which tree is indeed the tree of life.

Here the tree of life is nourished by the water of life proceeding from the throne of God. This indicates that its delegated authority and power actually come from God. There is absolutely no power from the physical tree itself unless it is given from above. Like in times past where the tree of life could offer its partakers eternal life, this function is restored again in the new paradise of God. When it was once forbidden for fallen man to partake of its fruit, this tree is once again flourishing and made available to a redeemed race. The picture of a blessed man in Psalm 1:3 (**And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**) is now a permanent reality in eternity. This tree of life planted by the rivers of water of life will no doubt bring forth its fruit in its season where its leaves shall never wither and shall prosper those who have the privilege of partaking its fruits. This tree of life is far better than the tree pictured in Psalm 1:3 being watered by the rivers of water, for the tree of life is watered by the crystal clear water of life coming from the very throne of God. The blessing from this tree of life is increasing even with further revelation of this tree where in the beginning, nothing much is said about this tree other than it was a forbidden tree for Adam to prevent him from living forever after his transgression.

Back in the Garden of Eden, the description of the tree of life is rather

limited. Not much has been revealed about this tree back then. The tree was then planted in the midst of the Garden where a river watered the Garden and separated into four heads flowing to the respective lands. The tree of life can certainly offer its fruit of eternal life to its partakers according to divine plan with its delegated power and authority. The nature of its fruits and leaves were not revealed. However, in the new paradise, the reproductive power of the tree of life is described as well as the purpose of its leaves is not left to the imagination of man. The tree of life in eternity is extremely unique in that it can produce twelve different kinds of fruits every month. This is unheard of and indeed very fascinating to say the least. The time of harvest for this tree of life is just one month for each type of fruits. This is definitely amazing where the redeemed of the Lord can eat of all these fabulous fruits, which is a different type every month. It appears that the tree of life has embodied all the different kind of trees and in eternity, there is but one kind of tree, which is the tree of life. In fact, this is very likely the case according to Revelation 22:2: **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.** This tree of life is mentioned to be in the midst of the streets and not in the Garden. It is also said to be located on either side of the river, which implies that the tree of life is not just one tree but also many in number. This is clearly a departure from the first tree of life originally planted in the Garden of Eden, which gives the impression of only one tree like the one tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Actually, in the previous era during the reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years, the prophet Ezekiel is given a vision of this reign quite similar to the setup in Revelation chapter 22 concerning the tree of life.

Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ancles. Again he measured a

thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine. (Ezekiel 47:1-12)

The passage here shows that water is coming forth from the house, which is the temple from which the Messiah will reign in Jerusalem. This water is also a type of the water of life that will cause regeneration of nature and live forms on earth. The healing properties of this water are not to be underestimated. On the bank of this river are grown many trees on either sides. On both sides of this river will grow all kinds of trees for food where their leaves will not fade. This is like living in a perpetual spring. The fruits also will not be consumed away in the sense of a drought or eaten up by worms and locusts. These trees shall bring forth new fruits according to its month, which is very interesting to note. This is due to the efficacy of the healing waters coming from the sanctuary of God. No doubt, these fruits here are delightful fruits for the consumption of man. Moreover, the leaves of these trees also have medicinal properties. The blessings during

this Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ over all the earth is definitely a time of great blessings and rejoicing. So the Millennial reign setting gives a picture of the eternal state of the tree of life in paradise.

While in time and history of man, trees and the lives of fallen man are closely related. The children of Israel are given specific instruction how to treat trees during the time of war: **When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege: Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued. (Deuteronomy 20:19&20)** Though trees are important which they require to employ in times of battle, they have to be careful what types of trees they could use and what trees they should preserve. This is because the tree of the field is man's life, which is talking about the tree where the fruits are more than simply meant for human consumption but even the air that man breathes. This is a scientific fact. They need not attend a science lesson concerning how trees will remove carbon dioxide from the environment and produce oxygen for man. They simply have to believe God and obey His law and all will be well with them. Nevertheless, during times of judgment when the children of Israel rebel against Jehovah God, even the trees would not cooperate with man by refusing to produce fruits no matter how hard they labour: **And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. (Leviticus 26:20)**

Another picture of a blessed man who trusts in the Lord is given in Jeremiah 17:7&8: **Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.** This picture collaborates with that of the Psalmist in Psalm 1:3: **And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.** The Lord God being a Husbandman is extremely interested in cultivating a crop that will please Him. Actually, the redeemed of the Lord is

also likened as plants and trees of righteousness according to Isaiah 61:3: **To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.** It is not uncommon for man to be likened as trees. In fact during a healing session, a blind man saw men as trees during the process of healing as recorded in Mark 8:24: **And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.** The Psalmist also shows that the righteous is also likened as tree in Psalm 92:12-15: **The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.**

As such, the tree of life in the new paradise in eternity will have an eminent role to play. The twelve different types of fruits that will be yielded from the tree of life are a many fold magnification of the blessings during the Millennial reign of Christ. It will be a fascinating sight in glory land. These twelve kinds of fruits will surely be very desirable. They will no doubt be pleasant to the eye and good for food. Moreover, this time there will be eating without sinning. It will be an eternal feast in that eternal day in glory. This wonderful privilege is given to the redeemed of the Lord that do God's commandment. All these qualified individuals are worthy to inherit eternal life by the grace of Almighty God. They are called blessed of the Lord who graciously grants them this right to the tree of life according to Revelation 22:14: **Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**

These ransomed sons of Adam who have waited for thousands of years are finally welcomed home to enter into the city through the gates of pearly white to walk on streets of gold. The tree of life is another added dimension to their eternal bliss in that celestial shore where death is abolished and life is eternal. The prophecy in 1 Corinthians 15:24-26 has come to a close: **Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.**

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. The drama of redemption has finally ended and eternity has begun and God has become all in all. The water of life coming forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb is available to all and to eternally nourish the tree of life to bring forth the twelve manners of fruits months after months without fail. This is indeed the eternal spring on that eternal day. The glory of that celestial land far surpasses any splendour in any settings on earth this side of heaven under the present sun. All these words of prophecy are given and sealed by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself: **I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:16&17)**

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (Revelation 22:20&21)

If you have been blessed with the reading of this book and you wish to contact the author, you may write to him at charles@kjb-asia.com.