



THE TREE OF LIFE

At the center of the garden of Eden, man's first home, God planted the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve had open and unlimited access to all of the trees in the garden, including the Tree of Life, except for one tree. They could freely eat the fruits of all the trees but not the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God forbade them from eating this fruit, saying, *"If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die."* (**Gen. 2:17**)

Two trees. Humanity had a choice. One tree was humanity's free access to eternal fellowship with God and the other tree was the doorway to eternal death apart from God. Though God created man for an intimate and everlasting relationship with Him, He wanted man to love God freely. A loving God could only receive and enjoy fellowship that is not the product of obligation or coercion, but one that is born out of the creature's free moral choice.

We all know what man chose. Instead of choosing life and their destiny to rule the earth, Adam and Eve chose the pathway to disbelief and disobedience and death. And since that day, death has reigned over our world (**Rom. 5:17**). We are painfully reminded of this fact every time we lose someone we love to death. The human affliction of death is universal. All of us will die. No one is exempt from the grave (**Psalms 89:48**).

What happened to the Tree of Life? God made it inaccessible to humankind (**Gen. 3:22-24**). In His mercy, God did not allow sinful humans to live forever on an earth that was accursed with sin. If they lived forever in such condition, they would experience unimaginable evil and suffering. Yet, man continues to strive for a long life. Time and again, God's enemy would deceive man with false promises about immortality and eternal youth. In the end, all Satan could offer humanity is misery, death and destruction.

Jesus said that His enemy's purpose is *"to steal, kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness."* (**John**

10:10) In Eden, Adam chose to believe the thief, killer and destroyer of life instead of trusting the Life Giver. Jesus came as a man in order to give humanity a second chance to choose life instead of death. He declared, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."* (**John 14:6**)

The gateway to everlasting fellowship with God is Jesus. The Tree of Life is restored on earth in the person of Christ. He came to our world not to condemn us, but to give us eternal life (**John 3:16-17**). On Calvary, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was exposed to be what it really was – a Tree of Death. At the cross, the Life Giver accepted what man chose in Eden – utter separation from the Father. When Jesus cried out, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* it seemed that the Tree of Death had won over the Tree of Life once more. Calvary was enshrouded in darkness at noontime. Even the Father was unable to bear the sight of His Son's seeming defeat by the thief and destroyer of life.

But on the dawning of the third day, Christ ended the reign of death on earth by rising from the grave. His resurrection erased any doubt about His life-giving mission. Jesus proclaimed, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again. They are given eternal life for believing in me and will never perish."* (**John 11:25-26**)

Death is beaten! Victory over the enemy of life has been achieved for humanity. Jesus has done it. He has opened the way to divine fellowship with our heavenly Father. The Tree of Life is open for business once more. Now, God Himself invites you to come and enjoy intimacy with Him in His garden. Jesus has conquered death and His enemy with His death and resurrection. And now, the Spirit and the Bride can say to us all, *"Come."* (**Rev. 22:17**) Let the thirsty ones come – anyone who wants to. Let them come and drink the water of life without charge.