



The **TREE** of the **KNOWLEDGE** of **GOOD** and **EVIL**

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is food laced with addictive deception formulated to keep you feeding from it. The knowledge from this tree does not give you the ability to **distinguish between good and evil**.

“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! **Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by CONSTANT USE have TRAINED THEMSELVES to DISTINGUISH GOOD FROM EVIL**” (Hebrews 5:11-14).

The Apostle Paul was disappointed with the poor spiritual development of some Christians in his time. He urged them to try harder to understand God’s word. Without his perpetual prodding, these weak Christians remained “infants” unable to distinguish between good and evil, for it takes a spiritually mature person who is constantly eating “solid food” **from the tree of life** to be able to distinguish between good and evil. The “milk” from the tree of life is not rich enough to give Christians the ability to distinguish between good and evil.

21st century Christians rarely consider the words of Apostle Paul in Hebrews 5. After all, we all understand the commandments that condemn murder, stealing, lusting and committing adultery. Identifying evil appears to be obvious. But then, what about the fuzzy areas to mention only a few: some commandments have been “nailed to the cross”, God’s Sabbath is meant only for the Jews, Christian holidays though laced in pagan roots are God-approved days of worship, God is one person—two—or three, the Old Covenant has been replaced by the New, the Millennium is now, sacrifices are done and finished, the Israelites are scattered—forever lost, scriptures are inspired—scriptures are inerrant. From all of the many fuzzy areas, hundreds of theologies have surfaced. Such is the result of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and only nibbling from the tree of life.

Christians are given a commission.

“But **grow in the grace and knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18).

Growing spiritually is entering “the race” that Apostle Paul described. A race that requires dedication and conviction to a greater purpose. A demanding race that drives a Christian to study the scriptures, test and prove as the Bereans did. A passionate race where the love for God burns so intensely that the finish line into God’s kingdom is always visible and foremost.

A race is set before Christians. TRAIN, MASTER THE SKILLS and RUN!

The Apostle Paul understood the race. “Let us **run with endurance** the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1).

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us **throw off everything that hinders** and the sin that so easily entangles. And **let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us**. Let us **fix our eyes on Jesus**, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

This race is an Olympian-style race. It requires full-time training, discipline and skill. “Therefore **I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight like I am beating the air**. No, I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that after I have preached to others, **I myself will not be disqualified**” (I Corinthians 9:26-27).

This race requires endurance, a clear and unwavering focus that survives extreme testing that is possible only through faithfulness and love for God and His word. “We want each of you to **show the same diligence to the very end**, so that your hope may be fully assured” (Hebrews 6:11).

The winners of this race, run to the finish line with the same passion and conviction as when they heard the sound of the starting gun. Physically exhausted, kicked, punched and pushed along the way, through torrents of rain and burning sun, though bleeding and muscles paining these athletes keep their focus on the prize, which they highly desire; its value is beyond any suffering.

“I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. **I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him**” (Philippians 3:7-9).

“**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus**” (Philippians 3:14). The Apostle James assures Christians, “Blessed is the one who **perseveres under trial** because, **having stood the test**, that person will receive **the crown of life** that the Lord has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).

The rules of this race are designed to test the athlete’s faith. “**Fix our eyes** not on what is seen, but **on what is unseen**. For what is seen is temporary, but what is **unseen is eternal**” (11 Corinthians 4:18), then, you will secure your crown. “An athlete is not crowned unless he **competes according to the rules**” (11 Timothy 2:5).

Why do Christians step out of the race?

But, why have some Christians remained “infants”? Why have whole churches, their leaders and congregations remained “infants”? Why do some Christians fall away?

“You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? THIS PERSUASION IS NOT FROM HIM WHO CALLS YOU” (Galatians 5:7-8).

These people are eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Knowledge from that tree takes Christians away from God. Without daily eating from the tree of life, Christians will wither into “infants” not being able to distinguish between good and evil. They will wander off the narrow road and buy the lie to join the masses on the broad road to destruction.

“Go in through the narrow gate, because broad is the gate and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are finding it” (Matthew 7:13, 14).

“But Jesus said to them again, ‘Children, **how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!** It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom God’” (Mark 10:24-25).

God uses trees and the different types of trees to image leaders in His government.

King David declared, “But as for me, **I am like a green olive tree (a priest) in the house of God; I trust in the loving kindness of God forever and ever”** (Psalm 52:8).

21st century Israel will surprise the world when they will repent, listen and obey. God foresees their spiritual growth in the near future. Tall trees (great leaders) will rise out of Israel, for God “will be like the dew to Israel, he will blossom like a lily. **Like a CEDAR of Lebanon (a leader in God’s headquarters),** he will send down his roots, his young shoots will grow, **His splendor will be like an OLIVE TREE (a priest),** his fragrance like a **CEDAR OF LEBANON**. Men will dwell again in his shade. He will flourish like the grain... blossom like a vine and his fame will be like the wine from Lebanon” (Hosea 14:5-7).

“How fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel! ‘Like valleys that stretch out, like **GARDENS beside the river, like ALOES planted by the LORD, like CEDARS beside the waters”**” (Numbers 24:5-6).

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil in God’s garden—His government, is Satan—the devil.

Genesis 3:1 states that it was the “serpent” that great dragon of Revelation 12:9 who will be thrown down to earth. He is, “the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

Eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is imagery for listening to Satan and acting on what he says. Satan whispers to mankind daily and most of the time, they act on it.

The tree of life in God's garden—His government is Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind.

One Son of God willingly paid the price for the sins of mankind. His perfect sacrifice has opened the door again for mankind that they may have **ETERNAL LIFE**. Jesus Christ is that Son; God's only heir. "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. **My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all**; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (John 10:28-30) and "This is how God showed his love among us: **He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might LIVE through him**" (I John 4:9).

From the beginning, God planned that Christ would be the cornerstone of His new government, which is forming. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). In the end, God and Christ will reside together in the new capital city—the New Jerusalem. "I did not see a temple in the city because **the LORD God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple**. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for **the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp**" (Revelation 21:22-23). Christ is the instrument through which God's glory will radiate.

Eat from the tree of life—Christ's body is imagery of listening and acting on the words of God through Christ and his example—following Christ wherever he goes.

"While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, 'Take it; this is My body'" (Mark 14:22) and "**He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life**, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:54).

"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him" (John 6:56).

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; **if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever**; and **the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh**" (John 6:51).

The imagery of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood is to listen to his teachings, which are God's teachings and act on them—live by every word of God. Don't buy into the lies and deceit of the world who listen to Satan. "For My flesh is **true** food, and My blood is **true** drink" (John 6:55).

Eating from the tree is imagery for **both listening** to the Word of God and **doing** what it says. "But don't just listen to God's word. **You must DO what it says**. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves" (James 1:22).

"Therefore everyone who **hears these words** of Mine **and acts on them** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).

At the time of Christ, the Jews did not understand the imagery of eating from the tree of life. They said, "**How can this man give us His flesh to eat?**" (John 6:52)

Christ has been teaching us that we need to listen to the teachings of God. Christ is the Word of God; he is rich in God's knowledge, understanding and wisdom. **But, not only listen, Christians must DO—LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY**. "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' **but not do what I say?**" (Luke

6:46) and “For it is not the hearers of the Law who are righteous before God, but it is **the DOERS of the Law who will be DECLARED righteous**” (Romans 2:13).

To all Christians around the world, re-enter the race set before you and feast on the tree of life.

Listening to Satan and acting on his deceptive words will keep you from distinguishing good from evil. There is no other time in history so crucial than today. For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." **Indeed, the ‘right time’ is now. Today is the day of salvation**” (II Corinthians 6:2).

Nibbling on the tree of life is only “milk.” Today, is the right time to start feasting on the word of God. Study the scriptures with an open mind, test the words of those who teach the word of God, prove all things while remaining humble and teachable, without a closed heart or righteous indignation. **“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways ACKNOWLEDGE HIM** (earnest penetrating cognizance), **and HE WILL MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT**” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Most of all, stir up your appetite for God’s knowledge, understanding and wisdom and go to our Creator to be filled. The veil is rent, direct access through Christ is open to you. **“The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.** He drives out the enemy before you, giving the command, ‘Destroy him!’” (Deuteronomy 33:27).

As alluring the tree of the knowledge of good and evil appears, whether in its grand appearance or through its intriguing scientific logic and fascinating technology, it will keep you from knowing the real world—our spiritual destination. Satan is destined for destruction, but Christ, the tree of life, has been anointed King of kings and Lord of lords and **he has been given an eternal kingdom—a dominion.** “I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. **He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an every-lasting dominion that will not pass away and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed**” (Daniel 7:13-14).

Ruling with Christ will be the saints.

“But **the court will sit,** and his power [the power of the fourth beast] will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then **the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His [Christ’s] kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him [Christ]**” (Daniel 7:26-27).

Whether you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or feast on the tree of life, the choice will always be yours. God urges Christians to choose life.

Compiled by Janette Andrejowich