

The **TREES** in **GOD'S GARDEN**

“Either make **THE TREE** good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit” (Matthew 12:33).

“He will be like **A TREE** firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers. How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night” (Psalm 1:1-3).

“The fruit of the righteous is **A TREE** of life, and he who is wise wins souls”
(Proverbs 11:30).

Outline

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 - The story of King Amaziah of Judah and King Jehoash of Israel: the thorn-bush and the cedar tree
- Types of trees referenced by God:
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- Excite critical thinking.

WHY DOES GOD AND JESUS SPEAK USING CODED LANGUAGE?

“When he [Jesus] was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, the secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But **to those on the outside** everything is said in parables so that they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!” (Mark 4:10-12)

God has a plan. God has an order within His saving plan. Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24). Yet, with all that has been preserved for them in the Bible, many are still determined to do their own thing. If repentance is considered by these people, it is still a selfish desire to do anything to save themselves in that moment of crisis. So, those people remain on the outside, blinded from the truth. God intentionally keeps them there until the day of judgment. He will hold them accountable for their stubborn, selfish and self-determined direction to remain in sin. Hence, God's coded language is used and understood by His God-fearing and God-serving servants.

THE STORY OF ABIMELECH

After Abimelech's father, Gideon, died he sought to be the sole ruler of his people. He killed 70 of his brothers but the youngest brother escaped and returned when Abimelech was about to be crowned king under **the great tree at the pillar** in Shechem (Judges 9:6)

"Listen to me [Jotham, youngest son of Gideon], citizens of Shechem, so that God may listen to you. One day the **trees [citizens]** went out to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the **olive tree**, 'Be our king.' But the **olive tree [a priest]** answered, 'Should I **give up my oil**, by which both gods and men are honored, to go **waving over [ruling over]** the trees?'"

"Next, the trees said to the **fig tree [productive, benevolent leader]**, 'Come and be our king.' But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to go waving over the trees?'"

"Then the trees said to the **vine [productive, benevolent leader]**, 'Come and be our king.' But the vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and men, to go waving over the trees?'"

"Finally **all the trees** said to the **thorn-bush [an inexperienced, bumbling leader that causes trouble]**, 'Come and be our king.' The thorn-bush [wicked leader] said to the trees [the civilians], 'If you really want to anoint me king over you, come and **take refuge in my shade** [take refuge under my leadership]; but if not, then let **fire come out of the thorn-bush [the thorn-bush will go to war against a powerful and highly experienced nearly invincible leader—the cedars of Lebanon]** and **consume the cedars of Lebanon!**" (Judges 9:7-15)

On a side point, both the "vine" and "olive tree" reference their fruit enjoyed by both "gods and men." This is a topic of its own. Ancient Israel understood the existence of gods; 21st century Israel has mythicized the gods.

THE STORY OF KING AMAZIAH OF JUDAH AND KING JEHOASH

"So King Jehoash of Israel sent this message to King Amaziah of Judah: '**The thorn bush in Lebanon** sent this message to **the cedar in Lebanon**: "Give your daughter to my son in marriage." But just then a wild beast from Lebanon wandered by and trampled down the thorn bush. You have indeed defeated Edom and now you are arrogant. Glory in your victory, but stay at home. Why ask for trouble and cause your own downfall and that of Judah also?" (II Kings 14:9-10).

Notice, both houses were considered by the king of Israel to be in Lebanon—in the core of God’s government. The ancient Israelites understood the imagery of Lebanon. Amaziah, a young king of Judah defeated 10,000 men of Edom in the Valley of Salt; he was proud of his conquest. In his pride, he sent a message to the king of Israel with an invitation. The king of Israel declined and responded with a comparison of their rulership. The king of Israel viewed his own rulership as strong and accomplished compared to the young Jewish king who he considered to be rough-around-the-edges and inexperienced.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF TREES ARE REFERENCED IN THESE STORIES.

In the story of Abimelech there is descriptors of the great tree, the fig tree, the olive tree, vines, and the thorn-bush and in the story of King Amaziah of Judah and King Jehoash there is the thorn-bush and the cedar.

Different types of trees are the imagery God uses to describe all members of God’s royal, ruling family and the roles they hold on earth and those in heaven.

The great tree in the story of Abimelech is likely representative of God Almighty, the kingdom of Israel’s King. The great tree at the pillar is describing a powerful ruler by a sound structure—the pillar.

The olive and fig trees as well as the vine are representative of productive, benevolent leaders, while the **thorn-bush** images an inexperienced, bumbling leader that causes trouble. The **cedar tree in Lebanon** is a very specific powerful ruler who is full of God’s Holy Spirit, highly trained and experienced. The individual is knowledgeable of God’s Way and His plan and full of understanding and wisdom. **Non-specific trees in general** are representative of the ordinary citizens.

In the story of King Amaziah of Judah and King Jehoash of Israel, the king of Israel describes the king of Judah as a “thorn-bush”, while he elevates his leadership to that of a “cedar tree”— a master ruler with prodigious power.

GOD REFERENCES MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF TREES IN THE BIBLE.

“I will put in the desert **the cedar** and **the acacia**, **the myrtle** and **the olive**. I will set **pin**es in the wasteland, and **the fir** and **the cypress** together, so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it” (Isaiah 41:19-20).

The scripture in Isaiah 41 is not referring to physical trees that were created on the third day of creation as food for man (Genesis 1:11, 29). Although, the providing of food from physical trees does have a spiritual parallel of spiritual food from different types of spiritual leaders. The different trees described in Isaiah 41 refers to a prophecy when God will raise up for his people who are crying out for help, benevolent righteous leaders of varying roles. He promises that He will hear their cry and in the “desert” [the place where there is no righteousness and truth] and

in the wasteland [the place totally void of God's ways], God Almighty will raise up leaders—all different types of God-fearing and God-serving leaders, well rooted in God's truth who will care for and comfort God's people. This prophecy lies still in the future during a dark, very wicked time. Wickedness will take hostage of planet earth. God's people will be enslaved and during those desperate times, they will cry out to their God and He will hear and rescue them. The people will then know that these God-fearing and God-serving leaders were established by God Almighty.

While God promises to care for His people and provide righteous leaders, God battles the rogue rulers in heaven.

GOD'S GARDEN OF EDEN IN HEAVEN, HIS CEDARS OF LEBANON AND HIS DENSEST FORESTS ARE UNDER ATTACK.

God talking to the heavenly ruler over Egypt is predicting his fate. “Consider **Assyria, once a cedar in Lebanon**, with beautiful branches overshadowing the forest... The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it, nor could the pine trees equal its boughs nor could the plane trees compare with its branches—**no tree in the garden of God could match its beauty**. I made it beautiful with abundant branches, the envy of all the trees of Eden in the garden of God... Because it towered on high, lifting its top above the thick foliage, and because **it was proud of its height, I handed it over to the ruler of the nations... to deal with according to its wickedness**. I cast it aside... **Then all the trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, all the trees that were well-watered, were consoled in the earth below... Yet you too, will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth below**; you will lie among the uncircumcised [wicked], with those killed by the sword. **This is Pharaoh and all his hordes**, declares the Sovereign LORD” (Ezekiel 31:2-18).

This story reveals the arrogance of the heavenly ruler who was given authority over the nation of Assyria at the time of Babel, when God divided the nations and set the boundaries. Israel became God's inheritance and the nations received their inheritance—heavenly rulers (Deuteronomy 32:8-9). Unfortunately, these heavenly rulers referred to by the people throughout the Old Testament as “gods” became proud and arrogant, loving and encouraging worship from the nations they ruled over.

God shared with us His conversation with the heavenly ruler of Assyria. “Through your servants you have taunted the Lord and you have said: ‘With my many chariots **I have ascended to the heights of the mountains [mountains are descriptive of the supreme ruling structure—the most authoritative level of God's governments], to the far recesses of Lebanon [God's Holy Council]. I have cut down its tallest cedars [God's most knowledgeable and trained members of His Holy Council], the finest of its cypress trees [the highly experienced and once loyal rulers]. I have reached its farthest outposts, the densest of its forests [the locations where many of God's most vulnerable heavenly beings reside].**’” This arrogant heavenly ruler believed that his many conquests in the heavens were achieved by his strength and tactical genius, but God, his Creator informed him, “Have you not heard? **Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities**

into piles of stone" (II Kings 19:23, 25). God used this wicked heavenly ruler to test and overthrow the wicked, weaker heavenly rulers in heaven. The battles on earth between the nations at that time were extensions of the battles in heaven, as the rogue heavenly rulers also battle on earth for world dominance. Their objective is to obtain supreme power on earth and in heaven and overthrow our Creator, the Almighty God.

God cannot be overthrown. Their final day is soon coming.

"O inhabitant of Lebanon, nestled in the cedars, how you will groan when pangs of anguish come upon you, agony like a woman in labor" Jeremiah 22:23. Those rogue heavenly rulers holding top leadership positions anointed by God, will fall and feel the intense pain of their destruction.

"The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled), for all the CEDARS of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the OAKS of Bashan, for all the towering mountains [their heavenly-controlling governments] and all the high hills [their federal and local governments], for every lofty tower and every fortified wall, for every trading ship and every stately vessel, the arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, and the idols will totally disappear" (Isaiah 2:12-18). **God is talking to both the heavenly and earthly rogue rulers.**

"In that day the LORD will punish THE POWERS IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE and the KINGS ON THE EARTH BELOW. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days" (Isaiah 24:21-22).

Some members in God's family in heaven live in fear of these rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities.

"Even the cypresses and cedars of Lebanon exult over you [referring to the king of Babylon when he is finally stripped of his power and authority]: 'Since you have been laid low, no woodcutter comes against us'" (Isaiah 14:8).

GOD IS PURGING HIS GOVERNMENT OF REBELS.

"Wail, CYPRESS tree, for the CEDAR has fallen while the STATELY TREES are destroyed. Wail, OAK trees of Bashan, for THE OLD GROWTH FOREST HAS BEEN CUT DOWN" (Zechariah 11:2).

"The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD shatters the cedars of Lebanon" (Psalm 29:5).

"Behold, the Lord GOD of Hosts will lop off the branches with terrifying power. The tall trees will be cut down, the lofty ones will be felled" (Isaiah 10:33).

"He will clear the forest thickets with an ax, and Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One" (Isaiah 10:34).

“Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may consume your cedars” (Zechariah 11:1).

“The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and **consume his [the king of Assyria] thorns and his briars**. The splendor of his forests and fertile fields it will completely destroy, as when a sick man wastes away. And the remaining trees of his forests will be so few that a child could write them down” (Isaiah 10:17-19).

LEBANON WILL *again* BECOME FERTILE

All is not lost. God’s Holy Council and government is being rebuilt. This NEW government will include righteous, repentant mankind.

“In a very short time, will not **Lebanon be turned into a fertile field** and the fertile field seem **LIKE A FOREST?**” (Isaiah 29:17)

“Instead of the thorn bush will **grow the pine tree**, and instead of briars the **myrtle will grow**” (Isaiah 55:13).

God Almighty is seeding a new government. He selected a son from His heavenly family. This son was not in the past, part of His Holy Council. He didn’t have a significant role until God, himself, selected him and shared with him His secret plan of mankind’s salvation and the overthrow of His rogue sons. This loyal son, humbly put his life on the line to bring all of God’s plan into fruition and work until all things are restored, as they were prior to the first time iniquity was found. He was the only son of God to be successful and so, he is the only heir who will rule with God. **He is the splendid cedar of Lebanon**. God shared with Daniel another body of people, who too, will rule with this splendid cedar; these are the saints, the people of God. Satan and the rogue sons of God don’t like the news of this **new three-some**; they are prepared to fight to the death.

THE RISE OF THE SPLENDID CEDAR OF LEBANON:

“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **I MYSELF will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it, I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots** and plant it on a high lofty mountain. **On the mountain heights of Israel, I will plant it**; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a **SPLENDID CEDAR [Christ]**” (Ezekiel 17:22-23).

God chose this son, not the “great eagle” of Ezekiel 17:1-4. “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **A great eagle** with powerful wings, long feathers and full plumage of varied colors came to Lebanon. Taking hold of the top of a cedar, he broke off its topmost shoot and carried it away to a land of merchants, where he planted it in a city of traders.”

The “topmost shoot” from a cedar that the great eagle took was a son from God’s royal, ruling family. God, our Creator can see deep into our hearts. He too chose a shoot from the topmost of a cedar and that shoot grew into a splendid cedar.

In a prophecy, God foretold the sufferings of Christ. “See, **my servant will act wisely; he WILL BE raised and lifted up and highly exalted.** Just as there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness... **He grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of dry ground.** He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering... he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 52:13-15, 53:2-6).

This son will stand with the great! He remained loyal to Almighty God while he suffered both in heaven and on earth. Our enemy is not flesh and blood, but those rogue heavenly powers, those rebellious rulers in heaven (Ephesians 6:12).

“After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life, and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will give him a portion among the **GREAT**, and **he will divide the spoils with the strong** [the saints will rule with him], because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:11-12).

Jesus Christ is so respected by God Almighty that God, himself honors him as if he were an equal. “But about the Son he [God Almighty] says, ‘Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; **therefore God**, your God has set you above your companions, by anointing you with the oil of joy’” (Hebrews 1:8-9).

THE KINGDOM WILL BE GIVEN TO 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 kingdom will be everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him” (Daniel 7:26-27).

What the sons of God who were given authority to rule over the nations wanted was rulership of God’s kingdom. But, they became proud and lofty, relishing in self-worship. God is seeking the humble God-fearing and God-serving people. Christ will share his rulership with the saints. The ordinary people who will rule with Christ have his same beginnings: a low tree, a dry tree that God will water with His Holy Spirit and they will grow tall. These saints do not love their life to be afraid of death. They are loyal, serving in love and obey the ALL MIGHTY God, our Creator.

“The righteous man will flourish like the **PALM TREE**; he will grow like a **CEDAR in Lebanon**; planted in the house of the **LORD**, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, ‘The **LORD is upright; he is my Rock**, and there is **no wickedness in him**’” (Psalm 92:12-15).

“The trees of the Lord flourish, the **CEDARS of Lebanon** that He planted” (Psalm 104:16).

JERUSALEM WILL BE ADORNED WITH THE GLORY OF LEBANON.

“The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,’ declares the LORD... Though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion... **THE GLORY OF LEBANON WILL COME TO YOU, the PINE, the FIR and the CYPRESS together, to adorn the place of my sanctuary and I will glorify the place of my feet...** all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you **The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel**” (Isaiah 59:20, 60:10, 60:13, 14).

“I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. I will put in the desert the **CEDAR and the ACACIA, the MYRTLE and the OLIVE**. I will set **PINES in the wasteland, the FIR and the CYPRESS together**, so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that **the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it**” (Isaiah 41:19-20).

THE RIGHTEOUS WILL BE PART OF THIS NEW GOVERNMENT.

“**I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring**, and my blessing on your descendants. They will spring up **like grass in a meadow, like POPLAR TREES by flowing streams**. One will say, ‘I belong to the LORD,’ another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, ‘The LORD’s,’ and will take the name Israel” (Isaiah 44:3-5).

“He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners... to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called **OAKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor” (Isaiah 61:1-3).

21st century Israel will surprise the world. They will repent, listen and obey. “I will be like the dew to Israel, he will blossom like a lily. **Like a CEDAR of Lebanon**, he will send down his roots, his young shoots will grow, **His splendor will be like an OLIVE TREE**, 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).

CHALLENGE TRADITIONAL THOUGHT.

Who is the tree—the being who is the knowledge of good and evil? 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.

Who is the tree—the being who is life? 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 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). Revelation states that the Word of God is the rider on the white horse who is called Faithful and True. “He has a name written on him that no one but he himself knows. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and **his name is the Word of God**. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean” (Revelation 19:11, 12-14).

Eat from the tree of life—Christ’s body.

“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).

“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 but do.** “Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' **but not do what I say?**” (Luke 6:46).

“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).

CAN MANKIND BE A TREE OF LIFE?

“**The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,** and he who is wise wins souls” (Proverbs 11:30).

“Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will **save his soul from death** and cover over a multitude of sins” (James 5:20).

Righteous mankind are people who give life to others by their teachings and their example; they win people over to God. Righteous mankind can also be a palm tree, someone who is spiritually reviving in places where there is so little truth and they can grow into a cedar in Lebanon, too. With God's Holy Spirit flowing within them, they are people who are deeply rooted in the word of God, tested and purified, faithful and true. They are people who will hold a position in God's new Holy Council—a cedar in Lebanon.

“The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon” (Psalm 92:12).

EXCITE CRITICAL THINKING.

The Garden of Eden is the place where God's heavenly government is located. When Adam and Eve were created, God established a place for His government on earth with the same name.

“The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed” (Genesis 2:8).

“Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:9).

Central in God's government are two beings: Satan and Christ. Who do you listen to and act on?

When Adam and Eve sinned, God barred them from being in His government on earth, which had they not have sinned would have made ruling on earth easy and beautiful because they would have ruled in love, living the ways of God. Instead, they were thrust into Satan's selfish style of government, which has led mankind down a painful, difficult pathway of hatred and war. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil image the two leaders of two entirely different gardens; two entirely different leadership styles.

God is totally in charge. It is He who "cuts cedars for himself, and takes a cypress or an oak and raises it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a fir, and the rain makes it grow" (Isaiah 44:14).

Yet, the option to listen and obey remains the choice of the individual. What will you choose?

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

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