



# The Living God Ministries, Inc.

Montgomery & Spanish Fort, Alabama

July 24, 2020

## In the Midst of the Garden

Warm hellos to you dear brethren, co-workers, spiritual family on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and scattered children of God, from our offices here in Spanish Fort, AL.

My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Recently due to seasonal storms, we had some trees blown over and a lot of limbs and debris to pick up in the yard. I've often watched carefully (especially during high winds) how the different types of trees fair after a storm.

One thing I've noticed is that the trees that grow in this area are much different than those where we lived in North Carolina prior to our move here. In reflecting upon "trees", and what God created, we can glean some things from scripture.

Trees are introduced in Genesis 1 in a positive light as providing fruit for part of the food for mankind.

We understand from modern technical analysis that trees are part of the Creation mechanism for producing life-giving Oxygen in the atmosphere through the process of photosynthesis. The leaves of trees convert Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into Oxygen. CO<sub>2</sub> is needed to provide the raw material for this important function. Phytoplankton found in the oceans also produce Oxygen from CO<sub>2</sub> possibly up to half of the total Oxygen production. Here on the Gulf Coast I can smell the "coastal air" and appreciate having that experience. When walking in heavily wooded areas one can sense the concentration of oxygen and it is refreshing.

Anyway, God placed various fruit trees in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 2:8-9) We are told that *"The Tree of Life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."* (Genesis 2:9) The word "also" clarifies that these two special trees were located somewhere in the Garden of Eden, or like the other trees, in the midst of the garden, not outside of it. I'd say it must have been a beautiful garden indeed!

The Hebrew word translated "midst" can refer to "middle, into or among, etc." (Online Bible

Hebrew Lexicon) The garden was planted "eastward in Eden" (Genesis 2:8) and was only part of the territory termed "Eden." How big was this garden? We aren't told exactly. No doubt there was a large variety of fruit trees and bushes and other plants within the garden. The record does not specify that the Tree of life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil were both located at the exact same spot or right next to each other within the garden.

It appears that God pointed out the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" specifically to Adam. (Genesis 2:17) We can ascertain that Adam later showed the tree to Eve and told her about God's instruction *not* to partake of its fruit and eat of it. We are not told that God pointed out the "Tree of Life" in a similar way. Satan in the guise of a serpent spoke to Eve and questioned her about what trees she may eat of. His craftiness placed doubt in her mind about her relationship with God and whether she could trust God or not. In her discussion with the serpent she refers to "*the tree which is in the midst of the garden*" (Gen 3:3) She was obviously aware of this tree and its location. Maybe Satan appeared to Eve when she was walking or standing not too far from the tree? Who knows? In the next recorded event we are told that Eve "*saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes*" (Gen 3:6). Like so many things in this world, often those things God tells us to stay away from "look" great! Ah deception that started with our adversary continues does it not?

Why didn't Adam and Eve partake of the *Tree of Life*? Perhaps God designed it so that fruit was not yet present during the time that Adam and Eve were in the garden? Maybe the large size of the garden made it difficult to locate? We can only speculate although some try theorize to be exact. After expelling Adam and Eve from Eden, God "*placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the Tree of Life.*" (Gen 3:24) "The way" would in part be the path leading to the Garden of Eden. This does not mean that there was a path complete with a sign "This Way to The Tree" leading right to the tree of life!

The "Tree of Life" is mentioned again in the final book of God's revelation to mankind. ". . . *To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*" (Rev 2:7) We should ask, why did God block Adam and Eve from partaking of the tree of life? Here's the answer. "*And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever - therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden*" (Gen 3:22-23)

Partaking of the tree of life is symbolic of participating in the process of preparing for and receiving *eternal life* in the Kingdom of God. Christ's return and the "*times of restoration of all things*" will see a time of abundance and healing and well-being for mankind. (Acts 3:20-21).

The ultimate setting of the appearance of the Tree of Life is described in the closing chapter of the Book of Revelation. (Rev 22:2, 14) This is the time in the future when New Jerusalem will descend from the heavenly realm to the New Earth. Those who will be there and have access to the Tree of Life are described, "*Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life . . .*" (Rev 22:14) Unlike Adam and Eve, they will have resisted Satan's multiple complicated deceptions and held to obedience to God's instructions and commandments, and built that relationship with Him.

Just some thoughts to ponder, and share, as we seek the balance of God's truth in our lives.

Let's you and I stay strong, vigilant, and focused on the God who has called us, allowing Him to live in us, looking forward to that coming Kingdom of God! And, it IS coming! That is a promise.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

**-Scott Hoefker**

(Pastor, *The Living God Ministries Gulf Coast*)

The schedule for this Sabbath is:

**July 24<sup>th</sup> / Friday: Evening Praise Sacrifice to welcome God's Sabbath - 6:30 pm** (via *teleconference* live connect with Stephen Glover and Friends.)

**July 25<sup>th</sup> / Saturday: Spirit and Truth Worship Services - 10:15 am**, with services held in both **Montgomery** and **Spanish Fort** at our normal **10:15 a.m.** (with *Live Webcast* and *phone conference connection* available from Spanish Fort). A noon "potluck" meal will be enjoyed and shared in **Spanish Fort** shortly after worship services.

**July 25<sup>th</sup> / Saturday: Malachi 3:16 Sabbath Fellowship** (Interactive Bible Discussion) - **3:30 pm** from Montgomery. (Connecting live with all via *phone conference*).

Telephone Ministry (English): Call **1-712-770-4700**; then, when asked, enter Code **112165 #** to join.

(Note: All callers are muted and must press **\*6** to comment and **\*6** to resume mute.)

All times are listed in Central Standard Time zone.

Our Daily Bread Recordings

Sunday through Saturday / Our Daily Bread [listen anytime 24/7 to a recorded 15 minute message] Call 1-712-770-4709 (note this call in number is different and ends in "9"), then when asked,

enter code 112165# [reference code numbers are on “Spiritual Fellowship Opportunities” on this website <http://www.tlgministriesgc.org> or at “Resources/Archives” on <http://www.haggai114.net>]

### Daily Fellowship Opportunities

Sunday – Friday / **Morning Sacrifice** (Prayers & Scripture Reading) at 6:00 a.m.  
Sundays / **The Minor Prophets** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Whit, Logan & Friends]  
Mondays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Stephen & Moses]  
**Almond Branch Fellowship** at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) (Stephen & Friends)  
Tuesdays / **Haggai Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) [Stephen & Friends]  
Wednesdays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Stephen & Moses]  
1st & 3rd Wednesday / **Sons of God Fellowship** (Young men training) at 6:30 p.m. [Stephen & Friends]  
2nd & 4th Wednesday / **Lydian’s Fellowship** (Ladies) at 6:30 p.m. [Esther/Gayle/Laura & Friends]  
Thursdays / **Mt. Carmel Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Scott & Friends]

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