

The Garden of Eden Part 2: Rivers; Keeping Eden; Food and Mixing; Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Presented on 5/27/2017)

The following text is based on a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jc8piyG3xO0&list=PLm16y1h4ekf7tVF2QesERFGaWqKR3mTIB&index=2>

***Portions of this sermon message have been edited to better transcribe the message. All the Scripture verses are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted and are in red. Therefore, it is recommended that this document be printed in color.**

We are going to continue to traverse through the Garden of Eden story. I want to open up by going back to Isaiah 46:9; this is what we read—**Remember the former things of old.** This is a powerful statement because it's telling us to remember by telling us to go back to the former things. In the Hebrew, the words "former things" are רִשְׁוֹנִים *ri'shown*. It literally means: first, former, former things. In other words, go back to the first things.

Continuing with Isaiah 46:9-10—**for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning.** God has declared the end from the beginning. He wants us to go all the way back to the beginning. Well, there's no beginning like the Garden of Eden. That is the essence of beginning. If we take this principle and apply this to the story through the garden, what does that tell you? It tells you there are prophetic mysteries and spiritual realities that are embedded in this story.

The whole concept is that these mysteries and realities are there for us to unearth. The Lord has left them for us to go, seek out, and find. There are principles and concepts that are actually conveyed in the story that are going to equip us for battle. Some of the things are to understand the concept of sin and deception and how the adversary the devil moves about like a roaring lion seeking to devour those who follow the Lord. In the story of the Garden of Eden, we see all of these things. Ultimately, as we continue to dig into this, we are going to find that this story is a guidebook for war.

With that said, let's break into our story. Let's go to Genesis 2:9—**And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The Tree of Life was also in the midst of the garden.** When we covered part 1, we discovered something critically important. The more we continue in the story, the more important it's going to become. The reason is that Yeshua is the personification of the Tree of Life. He is the very image of that tree. The things that the Tree of Life did are the things Yeshua did. He even says—**I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).** The leaves on this tree were for healing; Yeshua went out and healed.

Now we're being introduced to another tree, and that is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. I'm going to tell you something: just as Yeshua is the very personification of the Tree of Life, we find that Satan is the very personification of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. When you start looking at this story, you can picture this vision in your mind: you have the Tree of Life in the center of the garden with the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil center stage. What we're seeing is the battle of the ages. It is the battle between good and evil; it is the battle between truths and lies; it is the battle

between Yeshua and Satan. This is mind blowing! We actually see it for what it is. This is what's on display in the Garden of Eden; this is what's in the midst of the garden. It is Yeshua against Satan. That's what's going on here.

Continuing in Genesis 2:10—**Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads.** We find that this is kind of a blessing. I say that because, with all due respect, we're not given a comprehensive list of elements describing what the Garden of Eden was like. We're dealing with fragments. And such is the case right here. So when you see a fragment, it's a blessing. You grab onto it with both hands, and you pay close attention.

So here we're told that there's a river that specifically waters the garden. What is it doing to the garden? This river is giving it life. That's what it's doing. It's actually, physically, giving it life.

This gets really interesting when you consider how Scripture talks about the Kingdom of God. Remember in the last message when I was telling you that it is the Kingdom of Heaven that is being described when you look at the Garden of Eden. We will only continue to build upon this reality.

Look at what Psalms 46:4 says—**There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God.** It is specifically talking about the city; it is talking about heaven or the Kingdom of God. And isn't it interesting that we're not told a whole lot about the Kingdom of God, but we are told that there is this river. What a coincidence because that's one of the fragments that we are given in Genesis in regard to paradise, in regard to the Garden of Eden, and the special river.

John takes it a step further in Revelation 22:1—**And he showed me a pure river of water of life.** He calls it the water of life. Continuing—**clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.**

So, I'm going to tell you that the more we look at this story and the elements that are found within, the more we're going to see this powerful and beautiful association between the Kingdom of God and the Garden of Eden. We are not looking at this one-dimensionally; we're going to look at this three-dimensionally.

Continuing on in Genesis 2:11-12—**The name of the first is Pishon.** We were just told in Genesis 2:10 that there's a River of Life in the Garden of Eden that broke into four river heads. Now we are actually going to learn the names of these river heads—**The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and the onyx stone are there.**

As you become a student of the Word, and you start studying passages like this, it is one of those that stop you dead in your tracks. Why? Because I recognize some things here. There are elements that are being described here, and I know these elements because I've read about them before. Where? In regard to the Temple.

Think about the Temple. The inner chambers are completely overlaid with gold. The menorah and the table of showbread are completely overlaid with gold. And what about the bdellium? Do you remember the pot of manna Moses was commanded to keep? If you look in Numbers 11:7, you find that the color of the manna is described as being the color of bdellium.

Let me take it a step further. Where do we find the onyx stones? The kohen gadowl, high priest, bore them on his shoulders, and they had etched in them the names of Israel, the twelve tribes. When you look at these elements, you realize that this picture of the Garden of Eden is sending you to the Holy Temple.

Look at 1 Chronicles 29:2 where we find that David is laying up all the articles and elements that will be needed for his son to build the temple—**Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might: gold for things to be made of gold, silver for things of silver, bronze for things of bronze, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood, onyx stones, stones to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs in abundance.**

What is really interesting about this list of the materials that are going to be used for the Temple is the glistening stones of various colors. This is going to come into play, but in a way you probably could not predict.

With that said, let's move on to Genesis 2:13—**The name of the second river is Gihon.** I just want to point out here that no one really knows where the first two rivers, Pishon and Gihon, are at. There is as much speculation with these two rivers as there is with the Garden of Eden itself. No one really knows where these things were. And again, I love it because the Kingdom of God is a mystery. So as we study the Garden of Eden, these things are going to come up.

Continuing—**it is the one which goes around the whole land of Cush.** ¹⁴ **The name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates (Genesis 2:13-14).** A note on the rivers Hiddekel and Euphrates: The Hiddekel River has been identified through the etymology as the Tigris River of today, and we have all heard of the Euphrates River. So here we have a map that shows you these two rivers in our modern day. You can see how they flow parallel to each other into Iraq and into Syria. However, if you want to drive yourself totally insane, try to figure out where these four rivers are broken up. The further you dig into this, the crazier you get. I can appreciate that because this is the Lord's doing. I know this: Scripture is accurate in what it is defining; yet, we look at it today, and it is puzzling. Well, welcome to the Kingdom of God!



Having said that, I will say this: I really believe there is a deeper underlying fundamental principle being conveyed in the fact that we're told that this river breaks into four river heads. Most of you know that as you go through Scripture, you will find particular numbers that repeat over and over again like the number 12. We have the 12 apostles and the 12 tribes of Israel. We could go on with more examples of the number 12. We could talk about the number 24 pertaining to the elders. We could talk about the number 7 in regard to creation.

Here's what's interesting: 4 is one of those numbers we find throughout Scripture. I want to share a list with you:

- 4 Corners of the earth
- 4 Seasons
- 4 Gospels
- 4 Beasts in Daniel
- 4 Living Creatures
- 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse
- 4 Parts to a day

Even today in Israel they divide their day into four parts: boker – morning; achar hatza harai'im— afternoon; erev – evening; and lailah – night. You also have the four watches of the night implied in Matthew 14:25. What does it mean? It is telling a story. It's talking about the wholeness of something. This fascinates me because we are given fragments of information to the Garden of Eden. However, we are given very specific information in regard to the number of rivers in the Garden of Eden. In other words, it indicates or alludes to the idea that at this time there was perfect wholeness to the earth and all of creation.

Now continuing on in Genesis 2:15—**Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.** This appears to be a reiteration from Genesis 2:8, which says roughly the same thing. Most people see this as just repeating. However, make no mistake, they are very different. What is being described here is very specific. We are told why Adam was put in the garden: to keep it, עָבַד *`abad*. In the Hebrew, it means he was in there to serve it.

When we read this, we like to come to the conclusion that Adam was there to tend or keep it; he was to labor in the garden and care for it. This is what comes to mind in regard to the word “labor.” But be very clear on something: the fall of mankind had not happened yet; the curse that God cursed Adam with in regard to—**In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread (Genesis 3:19)**—didn't exist yet.

So, what is it talking about? Context is everything, right? What does it mean that he would עָבַד *`abad*? The rabbis have beautiful discussions about this. And what is really amazing, and you find Scriptural support for this, is they talk about the way he served in the garden. He did what his master did; he did what his Creator did. Do you remember what the Father did through the Son? He spoke, and the world was created. For six days He spoke, and it was done. This is what they recognize: when Adam was put in the garden, he was to speak and it would be done.

We will look at the Scriptural proof of this in the coming weeks, but think about this: the Lord God puts Adam in the garden and brings all the animals to him that he might know what he would name them. Adam spoke their names, and that is what they were called. This is part of serving in the garden. This is the context by which Adam did serve, and this gets even more interesting when you look at the words “keep it.”

It is so important that we understand Adam's role in the garden: he was to keep it. What does that mean? When we go to the Hebrew, this is what it means: שָׁמַר *shamar*. It literally means to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; generally to protect.

Think about that. Adam was commissioned with the responsibility to guard and protect the garden.

Here is the big question: protect it from what? Evil. He was commissioned to protect it from evil. I'm going to say something: husbands, fathers, your job is to protect your garden. In your home, you are commissioned to defend it against evil. You are supposed to be the door so that no evil is going to get into your garden. Apart from you alone, evil can't enter. We are commissioned with this very same thing. This is powerful imagery. These are practical realities for us today.

Take it a step further. In Exodus 20, we read that they were given the Ten Commandments. We read them every Sabbath. In Deuteronomy 5, we are given them again almost verbatim; this is reiteration. But it's interesting that when you read the Fourth Commandment it says in the transliteration: *zākōwr eṭ yōwm haššabbāt laqaddāšōw*. What does that mean? Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. However, when you go to the same commandment found in Deuteronomy 5, it is not the word *zākōwr*; it is the word *šāmōwr*. It means that we are to protect; we are to guard the Sabbath. This is the Hebrew; this is what's being conveyed: we are to guard it. I don't have a problem with the translation of "keep" if you understand it as "protect or guard."

Let me take it even a step further in looking at this word *šāmōwr* (keep, i.e. protect, guard). The next time we find this word used is in the very last verse of our story of the Garden of Eden. We are going to jump ahead for a second to look at this—**So He drove out the man; and He 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.** So he drove out the man and he placed the 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 (Genesis 3:24; emphasis added). The word "guard" is the same Hebrew word: *šāmōwr*. It means to protect, to guard. None are to enter the garden; none are to eat from the Tree of Life. So understand that when we're looking at Genesis 2:15, and Adam is supposed to attend and keep it, now you understand his responsibilities so much more than you thought. This really means something when you understand whose responsibility it was to guard the Garden of Eden from evil.

Continuing on in Genesis 2:16—**And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat.** We are again going back to this reality that there are many trees, fruits, and foods in the Garden of Eden. And again, Scripture doesn't classify them for us because we're dealing with fragments; we're dealing with what God has given us. But one thing we can be certain of is that there is a lot of food in the garden.

Continuing—¹⁷ **but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17).** We are going to get into bringing meaning to the statement—**you shall surely die**, but we're not going to do it now.

What I do want to deal with is the fact that the very first commandment given to mankind is a food law. There are foods that are acceptable to partake of in the sight of the Creator, and there are foods that are prohibited to partake of by the Creator. The very first commandment commanded to man was all about food. The expectation was that Adam would actually identify with this. In other words, the things which God deems acceptable, Adam would identify with and say, "I can do these things and can eat these things; these things that are abominable, I will not partake of them; I will have nothing to do with them." And failure to make this distinction results in total death.

You want to talk about a real lesson for us today? When you understand that Adam was thrown out of the garden, that he was literally sentenced to death because of a food law, that makes you understand

Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 in a completely different light. Looking at the things that the Lord deems as clean and holy and the things that he deems as unclean and literally *שְׂמֵטָה sheqets*, abominable. They are totally prohibited. I'm going to say this again: the first law given to man was a food law. Breach of that was death.

Let me take you to Isaiah 66:15—**For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire.** I want to be very clear. You need to keep this in context: this is talking about the final judgment. You have to remember what point in time we're talking about: the final judgment. Moving on to Isaiah 66:16-17—**For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many.¹⁷ "Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, to go to the gardens after an idol in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together," says the LORD.** This is startling!

The very first law man was given that was not obeyed was a food law. This resulted in death. Now I see the results of death again explicitly in regard to food laws (Isaiah 66:14-15). The only reason I know that the swine or the mouse is prohibited is through the Torah.

I tell you again, do not think that it is a coincidence or an accident that the devil has gone after the Torah and stripped it from the Christians. This is very intentional and deceptive. The simple point I want to make here in regard to this Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is that the first law given to mankind was a food law, and failure to abide by that law resulted in death. I read Leviticus 11 a lot differently today; I take it very seriously.

Now let me add this: go to Acts 15 and read how the Gentiles are being grafted into the faith. Look at the commandments that they are commanded. There are only four specific commandments. One has to do with sexual immorality. Three are left; therefore, seventy-five percent of what was commanded to the Gentiles was food laws. Food was the very first thing that they were commanded to observe. You're not to eat the blood; you're not to eat food sacrificed to idols; and you're not to eat things that are strangled. Isn't it interesting that all three of these laws are explicit in regard to how clean food is defiled. But I suppose that's a coincidence.

Think about this reality: the first thing that is commanded to the Gentiles to do is to observe the food laws. That is mind blowing! Why would God command just the sexual morality law and these three food laws? We can find the answer in 1 Corinthians 6:18—**Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.** And the body is the temple. So what is being commanded upon the Gentiles is that they are to purify the temple. Before you do anything, you purify the temple, and then you move on. Think about that!

With that said, I want to talk about this Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil because the reality is that this tree produces death. But what you need to understand is that this is not the only characteristic that this tree possesses. There are other characteristics that this tree possesses. These are characteristics that you are going to need to know, and know them well, because they are going to equip you for war. They are going to give you eyes to see and ears to hear at a time when you need them. Since we are living in a very dark, deceptive, filthy, and corrupt age, you are going to need to know these characteristics; therefore, we're going to look at some of them.

The first thing I want to mention is that we need to look at the location of the tree. This is peculiar to me. Here we have the Tree of Life in the center of the garden, and right next to it we have the Tree of

the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Since it produces death, perhaps it should be called the tree of death. That's much scarier. And scary is good if it produces death. Call it what it is: it is the tree of death. If it had been called this, maybe Adam would not have done what he did.

So, why this name? It seems wired that you have the Tree of Life, which makes sense, but then you have the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And the answer to that is this: it is telling a story. There's a story to be learned from this name or title.

Think about how many times we've talked about how all the various titles of the Messiah tell of a characteristic of who He is. The "Son of God" tells me a lot about Him; the "Mashiach" tells me a lot; the "Son of David" really tells me a lot about the Messiah. The "Son of Man" tells me He came in the flesh. Each one of these titles tells me a lot about Him.

Now think about the title of this tree being the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Notice that it is not just called the tree of the knowledge of good. It's called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. What is it referring to? It is referring to a mixing of good and evil. You need to think about syncretism. This is a syncretistic tree that is taking the good and the evil and has blended them together.

It's interesting that, at this point in his life, Adam doesn't know anything about a perverted world. He knows nothing of hate, pride, discouragement, corruption, or sexual morality. He knows nothing of these things that exist behind the veil of this dark world, of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. All of these things have been concealed from him.

The one thing that you notice throughout Scripture is that God is constantly calling his people to separate. I was going to give you some examples of how the Lord has asked us to separate, and I chuckled because this was such a foolish thing to say. The entire book (Bible) is dedicated to the topic. I would have to take you from Genesis all the way to the end of Revelation to do this. It is everywhere; you cannot get away from it. And it's presented in all different fashions.

Think about Deuteronomy 7 when the children of Israel are coming into the Promised Land and are commanded not to give their sons and daughters in marriage to the people of the land. This was because the foreigners would corrupt the Israelites so they would walk away from the Lord. They were never to mix; they were never to blend.

Think about Deuteronomy 12 in that they were not to learn the ways of the Gentiles. They were not to apply the ways of the Gentiles to their Holy God. We are not to learn these practices and implement them in our worship to the Creator, to Yeshua.

Think about James 4:4 in regard to adultery— **Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** Again in Luke 16:15—**For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.**

Then we have 2 Corinthians 6:14-15—¹⁴ **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?** ¹⁵ **And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?** None! But yet that is exactly what the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is. It is the blending of good and evil. And what you're left with is complete defilement.

Let me show you a different way it presents in the Torah—**You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed (Deuteronomy 22:9)**. Don't do it! Isn't it fascinating that when you go to the New Testament, Yeshua talks about seed? He talks about the seed, and the Word of God is identified as the good seed.

In Matthew 13, Yeshua tells multiple parables about seeds. This is just fascinating because whether you are reading Deuteronomy 22 or the parallel verse in Leviticus, make no mistake, the deeper content here is deeply spiritual and profound.

Yeshua calls the Word of God “good seed.” What are we not to do? We are not to blend the voices of man, the words of Satan, with the words of God. We're not to do it. We are to be completely separate from the words of Satan or world.

Continuing on in Deuteronomy 22:9-10—**lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled. (a little leaven leavens the whole lump)** ¹⁰ **"You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.** An ox is clean; a donkey is unclean. It would make no sense because the ox is twice the size of a donkey. If you actually tried to yoke them together, the donkey would make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the ox to plow. It messes up the whole process. Don't do it! Don't mix that which is not intended to be mixed. Don't bring them together. And yet we live in an age of genetic modification. From genomes on forward, it is unbelievable what we're doing. This is totally perverse in the eyes of the Holy One. It has been conveyed over and over again throughout Scripture, through one warning after another: don't mix. So, when we look at the name of this tree, what do we discover? We discover that the name tells a very important story. Amen?

Now I want to take this to the next level because it's not just the name I'm concerned about. I am concerned about the other characteristics that we're given in regard to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And this is where the rubber really meets the road. This is where it gets really powerful!

We are going to get apocalyptic now. Again, I'm going to take you to the Book of Enoch. For those of you who were not here for Garden of Eden Part 1, the Book of Enoch is actually quoted in the New Testament (Jude 1:14) as inspired. It is a very fascinating book. It is outside of the Canon of Scripture, but this book was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls with all of the other Scriptures. So I'm not going to go any further than that.

Let's go to Enoch, but you need to pay very close attention to what is conveyed here—**And after these fragrant odours, as I looked towards the north over the mountains (Enoch 32:1)**. If you were here last time, you understand that the seventh mountain in the middle of the other three mountains is considered the throne of God. So we're talking about the Garden of Eden; we are talking about paradise; we're talking about heaven.

Continuing in Enoch 32:1-3—I saw seven mountains full of choice and fragrant trees and cinnamon and pepper. ² And thence I went over the summits of all these mountains far towards the east of the earth, and passed above the Erythrean sea, and went far from it, and passed over the angel Zotiel. ³ And I came to the Garden of Righteousness. There's no question here that we are dealing with the Garden of Eden. This time it is called the Garden of Righteousness; other times it is called the Garden of God, the Garden of the Lord, or the Garden of Eden.

Continuing in Enoch 32:3—and saw beyond those trees many large trees growing there and of goodly fragrance, large, very beautiful and glorious, and the tree of wisdom whereof they eat and know great wisdom.

Now, you might think, “Well, this is confusing; how is that possible?” Typically our knee-jerk reaction when we hear the word wisdom is to think about Godly wisdom. As believers that's natural.

There are multiple kinds of wisdom. There is the wisdom of God, but there is also the wisdom of the world, and the Apostle Paul made the distinction. For example, in 1 Corinthians 1:20-21—**Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?** Paul identifies this particular wisdom as the wisdom of the world, and God has made it foolish. Continuing—²¹ **For since, in the wisdom of God**—this is a different wisdom. This is the antithesis to the wisdom of the world. Continuing—**the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.**

Let me take it a step further. Go to the prophets in Isaiah 47:10—**For you have trusted in your wickedness; You have said, 'No one sees me'; your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you.** This is not God's wisdom; it is man's wisdom.

So, when we read about this tree of wisdom that Enoch is talking about, this is explicitly a corrupted wisdom; it's a corrupted knowledge. Remember that Adam was sheltered? He had no knowledge or understanding of pride, arrogance, covetousness, or sexual immorality. None of these things were on his radar. They were completely foreign to him. He was innocent.

Continuing on in Enoch, but first let me just say this: we were never intended to know the filthy things that we see today. The illicit images that are coming across your computer screen that men are being inundated and hunted with, we were never meant to experience these things. That was not God's will for us. We were supposed to be entirely concealed from that. We have no business messing around with this stuff whether it's pride, covetousness, idolatry, discouragement, hatred, or unforgiveness. None of these things belong in the faith.

Moving on to Enoch 32:4—**That tree** (the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) **is in height like the fir.** I want you to understand what Enoch is dealing with here. He is visually seeing this tree, and he is struck with its magnificence. It is towering over the other trees; the sheer size and the magnitude of it stuck out to Enoch. This is what he recognizes. So he says—**the tree is in height like the fur.**



He notices something else; he gets more specific. When you're looking at a grandiose, magnificent tree and its size, you are looking at an overall view. Now he draws his attention to the leaves, and he says—**and its leaves are like those of the Carob tree.** And so it has this grandiose height of the fur, but it has these beautiful and subtle leaves on it.

Continuing on in Enoch 32:4—**and its fruit is like the clusters of the vine.** Now, you need to start piecing this all together. This tree has these beautiful leaves, it's magnificent in size,



and now it bears this unbelievably beautiful fruit. This is the description of the tree. But we're not done yet. Look at the very last statement—**and the fragrance of the tree penetrates afar**. In other words, I don't need to get up next to the tree to experience its beautiful aroma. It greets you from afar. It meets you. You can smell it.

This is fascinating! Every single way you look at this tree in regard to its magnificence, its size, the beauty that it has with its fruit and leaves, and its fragrance, it is unbelievably intoxicating.

How does Enoch respond to this—**Then I said: 'How beautiful is the tree, and how attractive is its look!' (Enoch 32:5)**. This tree is intoxicating! When you experience this tree, it moves you. There are no other trees like it in the garden except the Tree of Life. It is like the Tree of Life only in this manner: just like there are no other trees in the garden like the Tree of Life, there are no other trees in the garden like the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They stick out, they are unique, you recognize them, and you smell them.

Now think about this: this tree breeds death, and yet everything that I am told about this tree seems absolutely wrong. Why does this tree smell so good? Why does it have to look so beautiful? If it's a tree that breathes death, shouldn't its leaves be dripping some nasty pus? Shouldn't the bark be infested with maggots? It should be giving off a smell that is so repulsive that it induces vomiting.

When I think about a tree of death, that's what I think of though. It is foul beyond any comparison; it is foul beyond any description. You can't get near it without vomiting.

However, that is not how it's described. It's described the exact opposite way, and this should terrify you. And if that weren't enough, don't forget the name itself. The name "the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" incites intrigue. It is inherent in us; we want knowledge, and we yearn for it. The only thing holding Adam back from eating the fruit of this beautiful tree is a command of God.

Here is what we need to take away from this: make no mistake, the character or the nature of this Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the very nature of Satan. It is the very nature of sins. In other words, the tree allures in every respect the way sin allures us.

Proverbs talks about the way a harlot allures her prey and captivates a man—**For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey (Proverbs 5:3)**—not maggots. You won't see any guy going over there for maggots. She tells him the things that he wants to hear. This also works vice versa: same thing happens when a man tells a woman who is in a fragile and volatile state the things she wants to hear.

We can look across the board at all the various sins we deal with: pride, covetousness, lust for the world, lust for money, and our lust to build our kingdom for ourselves here. All of these things may seem beautiful in appearance, and they may seem like the answer to our desires or problems. Alcohol may seem like the answer to kill the pain and sorrow that the world has instilled into you, but the only way that can be healed is through Yeshua. The only way we can be healed is through the Tree of Life. Yet we are tantalized and seduced to partake in a tree that in every respect smells perfect. It is intoxicating and beautiful; we can't help ourselves. This is scary.

Look at Hosea 10:12—**Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy**. To think that you have no role in salvation is deception. We are told to labor, to sow, in righteousness. The consequence of this is that we will reap the mercy and reward of Yeshua because of the price that He paid on the cross.

Continuing in Hosea 10:12-13—**Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the Lord, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.** ¹³ **You have plowed wickedness; you have reaped iniquity. You have eaten the fruit of lies.**

You need to understand something: when you look at the Tree of Life, you see pure, unadulterated truth. When you go to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and partake of its fruit, you are eating lies. Everything that emanates from this tree is a lie. From its scent, to its appearance, to the fact that it tells you that you will surely not die despite partaking of it and walking away from God and being independent of God is a lie. It tells you that you'll be just fine, actually, you're going to increase the knowledge if you partake of it.

This tree is the fruit of lies. There isn't a person in this room who hasn't been confronted by Satan, the devil, who keeps trying to penetrate into your mind and into your heart telling you all the lies to destroy you. And he's been far too effective in this country today.

This story is so powerful! It brings to remembrance the fact that the things that are alluring and seducing me are to my death. And I know this because I know His Word. His Word was spoken for us to follow.

Do you ever think about the prophet Samuel? He is in this situation, and he hears the voice of the Lord. He comes to Eli and says, "Yes, here I am." And Eli tells Samuel that he did not call him. Samuel did not know the voice of the Lord. He could not make a distinction between man's voice and the Lord's voice. He had to learn it.

Think about this: how many people do we have who sit in the churches today who are listening to a voice, and they don't know whose voice it is. They say it's God's voice, but they don't know. It may be man's voice. Why? Because they don't know the voice of the Lord; they don't know their Word. They don't know the Bible. We are in a spiritually and biblically illiterate society right now.

If you don't know the voice of the Lord, you're in trouble. That means you'd better get back into the Bible. You need to hear from Him personally. You don't get the luxury of just listening to me. I've told you this before; that would be death. What Yeshua did on the cross, and then His sending the Holy Spirit, was so that you can have an intimate relationship with Him. It was not so you could have a relationship with Him through another man. The Lord establishes teachers and shepherds to protect the flock, but you were intended to meet with Him personally.

That's why you pick up the Word and eat the Word. It is through the Word that you get to know His voice. It is through the Word that you can distinguish between man's voice and the Lord's. You will know that it is not the Lord's voice, and you will not follow the strange voice. Yeshua says—**My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (John 10:27).**

I am going to close with Enoch 32:6—**Then Raphael, the holy angel who was with me, answered me and said: 'This is the tree of wisdom, of which thy father, old in years, and thy aged mother, who were before thee, have eaten, and they learnt wisdom and their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked and they were driven out of the garden.**