

## The Tree of Life

### Why didn't God allow man to eat from the tree of life?

After Adam's fall the book of Genesis says:

*"Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. 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 to till the ground from which he was taken. 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."* (Genesis 3:22-24).

When man was created by God, he only knew good. When he fell into disobedience, he knew evil as well, and fell under its dominion. He became corrupt, and was judged by death, and was thrown out of paradise. This was the condition of man after the fall. Out of God's love, He didn't allow man to eat from the tree of life while he was in his deteriorating condition. If man had eaten from the tree while he was in the state of death and corruption, he would have lived forever in this state. So God said: *"And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"*. The word *"now"* refers to the period after death and corruption which affected man.

As a result of falling, man was judged with death which is deprivation of life. Consequently man was forbidden from eating from the tree of life which is in the midst of paradise. So God placed a Cherub with a flaming sword to guard the tree of life.

St John said in his first epistle about the Lord Jesus: *"the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us."* (1John1:2). Thus, man returned again to eat from the true tree of life through the sacrament of Eucharist, in which we eat the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we drink from His precious blood. Through this sacrament we receive salvation, forgiveness of our sins, and eternal life to those who partake from it.

The last book of the Holy Scripture, Revelation, mentions "the tree of life":

*"To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."* (Revelation 2:7).

*"Blessed are those who do His commandments, which they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie."* (Revelation 22:14-15).

The book of Revelation emphasizes that eating from the tree of life will be given only to those who obey God's commandments in their lives on earth to attain eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

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