

## The Tree of Life

The tree of life shows up primarily in three places in the Bible; in the early chapters of Genesis, in a few passages in Proverbs and in Revelation.

1. The tree of life was in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9)
2. Man was cast out of the garden of Eden after the fall. He had the ability to recognize good and evil and God protected man from everlasting life by keeping him away from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22–24). Man has been preoccupied with a fountain of youth, a tree of life and in our fallen state, rather than face death, almost any man would take from the tree of life to prolong his life. How long life would be perpetuated seems to be forever.
3. Wisdom, God's Word, a thread throughout much of Proverbs, is said to be a tree of life to those who take a hold of her. This would indicate that life is perpetuated by knowledge of doctrine. Prov. 3:18
4. The production of righteousness also seems to extend the life in Proverbs 11:30
5. Correct desire fulfilled is a tree of life (that is, it increases one's life span) in Prov. 13:12.
6. Using one's words to heal becomes a tree of life in Prov. 15:4.
7. To the man who overcomes false doctrine, God will give to him from the tree of life in His garden in paradise (Rev. 2:7).
8. The tree of life will be found in the new Jerusalem (Rev. 22:2).
9. Eternal life by the tree of life will be among the rewards for those who wash their robes (this is regeneration). They will also be able to enter into the new Jerusalem (Rev. 22:14).
10. The tree of life as found in the passages in Proverbs is not a literal tree but it indicates that life will be extended or increased under certain conditions. However, the tree found in Genesis and in Revelation appear to be literal trees with just exactly that effect; when one eats from the tree, their life is extended; forever (Gen. 3:22).
11. Man, in innocence, was given free access to the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. In our fallen state we are given free access to a different tree of life. In Revelation, the phrase *tree of life* is ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς (*xulou tēs zōlēs*) [pronounced *zoo'-lou tās zō-ās'*]. The same word translated *tree* here is found in I Pet. 2:24, where Christ bears our sins in His own body on the *tree*. When Peter appears before the high priest and the Sadducees as a prisoner, he tells them "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross" (literally, *tree*—the same word used in Revelation) (Acts 5:30). Peter uses the same word to refer to the cross in Acts 10:39. Paul uses the same word when referring to Jesus Christ being crucified in Gal. 3:13. Our tree of life, therefore, is Jesus dying for our sins on the tree and He has told us to take of Him and freely eat to obtain eternal life: "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh...He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:51,54). So man was driven from the Garden of Eden to prevent him from eating from the tree of life, which would perpetuate our miserable lives in a fallen state of sin; but God, in His matchless grace has provided for us a better tree of life from which we may take freely: the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.