**To Eat of the Tree of Life**

 by Doug Kashorek

Those made in His image walked with God until sin separated us and cherubim blocked the way

to the tree of life in the paradise of God, the paradise where Jesus would be that He promised to

the thief who died next to Him. In the last chapter of the last book of the Bible, we discover that

access to the tree of Life is for those who “wash their robes” (Revelation 22:14) in the blood of

the slain Lamb (5:9-10).

So, what happened at Ephesus? A coastal launching point for Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles

where he had spent two years proclaiming the gospel from the hall of Tyrannus, by the end of

the first century Christians there were being persecuted terribly by Emperor Domitian when

John wrote Revelation. Having survived Nero decades before, society had spiraled downward,

outreach had ground to a halt, and those who remembered better days were a quarter of a

century older.

Jesus spoke to them directly and commended their past efforts and projects done in His name,

even acknowledging how hard it had been to patiently endure while not growing weary and

giving up completely. Yet, He had this against them: that they had “abandoned the love [they]

had at first.” The harder it had become to live their faith, the more they had withdrawn—to the

point where Jesus threatened to remove their lampstand if they didn’t “repent and do the works

[they] did at first” (2:2-7).

Sound familiar? Today, the seasoned saints who fill our pews recall better days of the past for

the Lord’s church—though it wasn’t always easy in the decades before. They huddle within the

walls of their church buildings and miss the generations below them while the storm of

persecution rages outside—and they are tired.

The church at Ephesus no longer meets today, and churches twenty centuries later are

constantly closing their doors. Jesus promises, however, that “to the one who conquers I will

grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.” Are you hungry enough to

conquer?

AM “To Eat from the Tree of Life” from Revelation 2:5-7

PM Jim Shuman has this lesson