

So, in the **Proverbs** passage said **Hope deferred makes the heart grow sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life**. So, how does this refer, what does it mean by **Hope deferred**? Hope deferred means to put off, something which is disappointed. So, you have a hope and then you don't actually receive it, and it makes the heart grow sick. Plenty of aspects of this actually have come about with the Covid situation. That people have hoped that we're going to get out of the lockdown, then you have a partial lifting of it, then it comes back again, a partial lifting, then, it comes back again, and we have people getting into a state of almost despair and despondency about it. And it says **it makes the heart grow sick**.

One of the things which happens if you have been continually offered some hope for something and then you don't receive it, is that you end up in some kind of despair and depression. One of the features of this whole situation which has happened in our society is that a lot of people have ended up in a state of depression and despair. I read that prescriptions of anti-depressants have grown dramatically during the lockdown, and antidepressants actually won't get you out of the hole which you're in if you're depressed. It's only the Lord who will put an end to it. We can see that this whole situation has caused people to get into a situation in which they become despondent: **hope deferred makes the heart grow sick**.

And we do need to have a hope. We have to have a hope in difficult circumstances and you could say, in some ways, what I've been saying on the subject of Bible prophecy is actually quite short on hope. I'm telling you that we're heading towards the Antichrist. That's not a very hopeful conclusion. But, of course, beyond that, we are hoping in the coming of the Lord which is a very hopeful conclusion. Now, from this present situation I think it is possible that we will see a partial end to the crisis and we may see that things may go back partly to normal. In which case, people will think: *'Hey! We've got our lives back! It's great!'* And they may be really trusting that things are moving towards a better world.

From our point of view, it will be the first of a series of crises which will get more intense as we get nearer to the Second Coming. So, it's not going to ever be going totally back to normal. And people today are looking for hope in a desperate situation. They may look also to someone who's offering them hope. But it's not a real hope and when we think about that is when the desire comes, it is a tree of life to those who receive it. You have to ask the question: **Is the desire which comes a good desire or a bad desire? Is it actually going to bring you truly to the tree of life or is it going to give you some kind of deception which will lead you, not to the tree of life but actually to death?** It's likely to me that the Antichrist, when he comes, will actually offer some kind of hope: that people have peace and safety. He'll come not offering destruction or dictatorship, he'll come offering something good. And that when he comes to give it, people will say: *'Hey! This is what we want! We've got our lives back! He's coming to give us something good and he's coming to give us peace and safety!'* It turns out to be bad but initially it looks like it's good. It offers a way to get their lives back: **When the desire comes, it'll be a tree of life**. They'll say: *'Hey! we've got what we want, we've got a tree of life. We've got our way back to life.'* If you go back to **Genesis chapter 3**, the enemy came, Satan came and indwelt the serpent and he said to Eve that she should take from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He said it was something desirable, something to cause a way to greater knowledge and to create understanding. **Genesis 3** says: **Then the serpent said to the woman you shall not surely die for God knows that in the day that you eat of it your eyes will be opened, you'll be like God knowing good and evil. Then when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of the fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her and he ate.** She saw it was a tree desirable to make one wise, it was something desirable. So, *'I'm going to give you something good'*. And she gave in to Satan's temptation. Did she find the way then to the tree of life? Actually, no. She found the way that brought them death, separation from God and caused the way to the tree of life actually to be barred; as they were cast out of the garden of Eden and the angel came in the way to stop them going to the tree of life.

So, there's a possibility for the desire to come, but it's not the right desire, and it's not going to lead to life. And one of the dangers out of this situation where people have been repressed and put down, and somebody comes along and says: *'Hey! You've got your lives back! It's good!'* And they give you something which actually turns out to be bad and that's one of the issues which seems to be coming in the last days. There'll be false prophets giving you a message which seems to be good but it actually turns out to be a bad message which leads to your destruction. When the desire comes in the good sense, it's the desired one who is the Messiah; who is the Messiah **Yeshua**. And when we come to Jesus, He's the one who's going to give you the real hope, the hope which will not be one which will let you down. One which will open the way to the tree of life, and the one who gives us the true hope, the hope for the future. And if we do what God tells us to do, not what Satan tells us to do, then we will know God, we will know the real hope in the resurrection of the dead and the hope for the future. And in the coming of Jesus, at his return, the way to the tree of life, the true tree of life which we find in **Revelation 22**, will be open to all those who enter into God's presence through **Yeshua**, Jesus the Messiah.

Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. James 1:15

Ephesians 4:22

in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit

Psalms 141:4

Do not incline my heart to any evil thing,
To practice deeds of wickedness
With men who do iniquity;
And do not let me eat of their delicacies.

Genesis 4:7

If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.