

The Tree Of Life

In Revelation, after the apostle John describes the river of life, he mentions another striking feature: "On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (**Revelation 22:2**).

The tree of life is mentioned three times in **Genesis 2**, in Eden, and again four times in Revelation, three of those in the final chapter. These instances seem to refer to Eden's literal tree of life.

In Eden, the tree appears to have been a source of ongoing physical life. The presence of the tree of life suggests a supernatural provision of life as **Adam and Eve** ate the fruit their Creator provided. Adam and Eve were designed to live forever, but to do so they likely needed to eat from the tree of life. Once they sinned, they were banned from the Garden, separated from the tree, and subject to physical death, just as they had experienced spiritual death. Since Eden, death has reigned throughout history. But on the New Earth, our access to the tree of life is forever restored. (Notice that there's no mention of a tree of the knowledge of good and evil to test us. The redeemed have already known sin and its devastation; they will desire it no more.)

In the New Earth, we will freely eat the fruit of the same tree that nourished Adam and Eve: "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" (**Revelation 2:7**). Once more human beings will draw their strength and vitality from this tree. The tree will produce not one crop but twelve. The newness and freshness of Heaven is demonstrated in the monthly yield of fruit. The fruit is not merely to be admired but consumed.

The description of the tree of life in Revelation 22 mirrors precisely what's prophesied in the Old Testament: "Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing" (**Ezekiel 47:12**).

John also tells us that "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (**Revelation 22:2**). For the third time in Revelation 21-22, the inhabitants of the New Earth are referred to as nations. Nations will not be eliminated but healed.

But since we won't experience pain or disease in Heaven, what's the point of leaves for healing? Perhaps they, like the tree's fruit, will have life-sustaining or life-enhancing properties that will help people maintain health and energy. Our physical life and health, even our healing, comes not from our intrinsic immortal nature but from partaking of God's gracious provision in the fruit and leaves of the tree of life. Hence, our well-being is not granted once for all but will be forever sustained and renewed as we depend on Him and draw from His provision.

The River Of Life

From the throne flows a river of water of life which reaches out to all the corners of the city, flowing through the gates to reach everyone and bring them life (Rev. 22:1). This flowing river of water of life which proceeds from the throne is God dispensing Himself in His divine Trinity into us as the flowing water of life.

Throughout the Bible we see the river of water typifying God's dispensing of Himself as the flowing life into man, starting from Genesis 2 with the river which flows from Eden and waters the garden, then splits into four branches to reach the whole earth - all the way to Revelation 22.

Our God is a flowing God - He flows throughout the ages and onto the bridge of time to reach man, saturate man, and fill man with life. In time, God was incarnated to become a man, the Lord Jesus; then, He passed through death and resurrection and became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45).

The water of life is a symbol of God in Christ as the Spirit flowing Himself into us, His redeemed people, to be our life and life-supply. As believers in Christ we have been baptized in the Spirit and we were given to drink one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), and now we can drink of Him by calling on the name of the Lord and speaking to the Lord audibly. The more we speak to the Lord, the more we drink of Him!

We can experience the river of water of life proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb by first enthroning the Lord in our being and then speaking to the Lord, asking Him to give us a drink!

The River of Water of Life Signifies the Abundance of Life in its Flow

When we enthrone the Lord in our being and give Him the first place in all things, we will be richly supplied with the water of life proceeding from the throne of God in the center of our being (see Rev. 22:1). The redeeming God - God and the Lamb - is dispensing Himself as flowing water of life into those who enthrone Him in their being.

This river of water of life signifies the abundance of life in its flow and it is the life-giving Spirit, the consummation of the processed Triune God.

Throughout the Bible we see God's desire to flow as a river of water of life to quench man's thirst and supply man. In Gen. 2:10-14 there's a river flowing from Eden, watering the garden and then splitting into four branches which reach the whole earth.

In Exodus 17:1-6 God told Moses to strike the rock and water will flow to quench the people's thirst in the wilderness. Later in Numbers 20:11 God told Moses to speak to the rock and water will flow. In Psalm 46:4 there is a river that gladdens the city of God.

In Ezek. 47 we see a river flowing from the house of God, and as Ezekiel was measuring the depth of the river, it was increasing until there was "waters to swim in". We need to allow the Lord to measure us, judge us, and examine us so that He may possess us, and the flow of life in us will increase and will flow for God's glory.

In John 7:38 the Lord asked us to come to Him and drink, and rivers of living water will flow from our innermost being.

In 1 Cor. 10:4 Paul tells us that just as the people of Israel drank of the cleft rock which followed them, so Christ was cleft on the cross and we can now drink of Him, the cleft rock of ages!

In Rev. 22:1 we see that in the New Jerusalem there's a river of water of life flowing from the throne and reaching every side of the New Jerusalem, then flowing through the gates to reach everyone to supply them with life.

From eternity God is flowing as life forever; in time God flowed into a man, the Lord Jesus, and now as the life-giving Spirit He flows freely as the abundance of life for us to receive, enjoy, drink of, and reign in life.

All we have to do is simply open to Him and drink the abundance of life in its flow, and we will experience a foretaste of the river of water of life flowing in the New Jerusalem.

In the Gospels we see how God became a man, lived a perfect human life expressing God in every possible way, died an all-inclusive vicarious death on the cross, resurrected, and became a life-giving Spirit. Now God is a processed and consummated Triune God - He is "the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17).

On the cross the Lord Jesus was pierced and out of His side flowed blood and water (John 19:34) - this is the fulfillment of the type of Moses striking the rock so that water would flow for the people of Israel to drink in the wilderness.

Today Christ has been smitten, cleft, and out of His side flows blood for our redemption and forgiveness of sins, and water for our regeneration and for impartation of life. This water flowing from the Lord Jesus is the life-giving Spirit, and it becomes a river proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the New Jerusalem.

We can drink of God as living water by calling on His name and by speaking to Him. There's no need to "strike the rock" again; simply speak to the Lord, ask Him to give you to drink, and He will flow into you as water of life! Speak to the Lord out loud; open to Him, call on His name, let your voice be heard before Him, and He will flow into you.