

THE TREE OF LIFE

God's Word:

Revelation 22:1-9

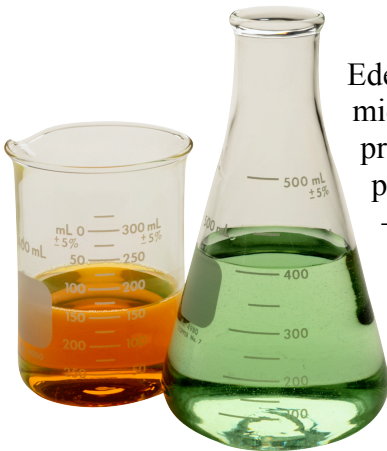
Key Verses:

"AND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE RIVER WAS THE TREE OF LIFE, BEARING TWELVE KINDS OF FRUIT, YIELDING ITS FRUIT EVERY MONTH; AND THE LEAVES OF THE TREE WERE FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS."

REVELATION 22:2

Breaking It Down:

Revelation 21:10-26 gives a vivid description of the holy city to come, the New Jerusalem. It is the perfect city. There, everything follows the number 12. And here, in Revelation Chapter 22, we have the city of Perfect Life with the Tree of Life on either side. This tree bears 12 varieties of fruit, one for every month of the year. And the leaves of the tree were like aloe – for the healing of the nations.



The background for this week's passage is a new beginning: a new Eden after Genesis 2:8-10 and Ezekiel 47: 1-12. The tree of life is in the middle of the city and the river goes out of Eden to water the garden. The prophet Ezekiel sees it as the stream that issues from under the temple and proceeds eastward and is too deep to ford. There is no hydrological cycle – the water of life symbolized by an eternal flow.

The leaves of healing cure the ills of the nations. The curse of Eden is lifted. God will never have to judge sin again because the disobedience is finished. Unglorified humans could not look on the face of God. But now, in the heavenly, glorified bodies they have received, they shall see Him face to face and reign in glory and majesty forever and ever.

Living It:

Imagine driving across the plain of the state of Kansas at night. Imagine crossing Interstate 169 from Lewisburg to the western edge of the Metcalf region of Kansas City at the I-435 interchange. Suddenly, your car crests a hill and a blaze of light hits upon the near horizon. The intensity of the light, the suddenness of the blaze, is disorienting, yet magnificent and inspiring with its awesomeness.

The majesty of the New Jerusalem will be more powerful and glorious than this. And flowing from its center will be a river that is peaceful and serene. There will be a tree growing on both banks that provides a different fruit every month; the fruit is eternally replenished.

The river is too deep to cross. Yet, it does not divide the city. The inhabitants can move freely from side to side without difficulty. This is the effortless peace that is being experienced in that Holy City.

If you have heard the majesty of the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's "Messiah," or the full orchestral compliment with "These are the Days of Elijah," you're familiar with something awesome. But neither of these songs begins to touch the awe that derives from the peace provided by the leaves of this amazing tree. Where once there was strife, pain and fear, there is now majesty, peace, and healing.



The ability to enjoy peace is God-given. The tranquility of a river flowing from deep inside God's holy temple is the desire of the heart. We can move to a peaceful resolution in the roughest times by knowing that peace is within if we are in communion with our Savior and Lord. Like the blessing of the Sabbath, peace cannot be stolen, even when we our lives are out of control. It can only be given up when we move away from the love of God.

Understanding it:

1. What is the importance of the Tree of Life to peace?
2. How does God's glory bring peace in your life?
3. Who will benefit from the fruit of the Tree of Life?
4. Have you remained silent about the river and the tree?

Doing It!

In your notebook describe your vision of the Holy City. How is this going to change the way you interact with others in the old world?

Make this your prayer list for this week. See if your vision can help you demonstrate the love of God in your daily life. Hopefully, someday you will get back to that page and remember this lesson.

