



WEEK 22: The Tree of Life..... Revelation 22

• **Last week**

- God destroyed the old heavens and the old earth
- He creates a new heaven and new earth
- He makes all things new, including all of creation
- And the New Jerusalem or heaven
- Heaven is marked by...
 - ... unsurpassed beauty – the city itself
 - ... undiminished satisfaction – the water of life
 - ... unblemished holiness – no wickedness
 - ... and the absence of sin, sorrow, tears, pain, suffering, or fear

• **The river of the water of life**

- John's vision of the New Jerusalem or heaven continues
- He sees the river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb
- This topic came up in chapter 21:

*"It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of **the water of life** without payment."* – Revelation 21:6 ESV

- A reference to a prophesy found in Isaiah

"Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink--even if you have no money!" – Isaiah 55:1 NLT

- All who hunger and thirst for righteousness in this life will one day receive it in the next
- Completely and perpetually
- God and the Lamb are the source of eternal life
- It flows from them and then throughout the city
- When tend to equate eternal life with salvation
- This is not talking about salvation, but **sustenance**
- God the Father and God the Son will be the sustaining power behind it all
- The source for all life will flow from their presence
- A never-diminishing source of spiritual refreshment

*“...whoever drinks of the water that I will give him **will never be thirsty again.**” – John 4:14 ESV*

***Life will flourish** wherever this water flows. – Ezekiel 47:9 NLT*

***With joy you will drink deeply** from the fountain of salvation! – Isaiah 12:3 NLT*

- Divine sustenance unlike that offered by false gods

*“For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me – **the fountain of living water.** And they have dug for themselves **cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!**” – Jeremiah 2:13 NLT*

- There will be no other sources of sustenance
- We will no longer seek satisfaction elsewhere
- We will no longer suffer from dissatisfaction

*At the Lord’s command, the whole community of Israel left the wilderness of Sin and moved from place to place. Eventually they camped at Rephidim, **but there was no water there for the people to drink.** So once more the people complained against Moses. “Give us water to drink!” they demanded. – Exodus 17:1-2 NLT*

***...tormented by thirst,** they continued to argue with Moses. “Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Are you trying to kill us, our children, and our livestock with thirst?” – Exodus 17:3 NLT*

*“I will stand before you on the rock at Mount Sinai. Strike the rock, and **water will come gushing out.** Then the people will be able to drink.” – Exodus 17:6 NLT*

*Israel argued with Moses and tested the Lord by saying, “**Is the Lord here with us or not?**” – Exodus 17:7 NLT*

- Water is about sustenance
- The Israelites doubted God’s ability to meet their needs

- **The tree of life**

- John describes seeing the tree of life growing in abundance
- It will grow in either bank of the river of life
- Reminiscent of Psalm 1, which describes the righteous man
He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. – Psalm 1:3 ESV
- And reminiscent of Genesis 1-3
Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food.” – Genesis 1:29 NLT

*And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up **every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.** – Genesis 2:8-9 NLT*

*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “**You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**” – Genesis 2:16-17 NLT*

- The tree of life was fair game
- It was most likely the key to their very existence
- But they disobeyed God
- They became dissatisfied with His provision
- They wanted more
- They ate of the one tree God had put of limits
- They had free and unlimited access to the source of eternal life
- But they weren't satisfied to be *with* God, they wanted to be *like* God

*“You won't die!” the serpent replied to the woman. “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and **you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.**” – Genesis 3:4-5 NLT*

- Now they were marred by sin
- They had rejected “the fountain of living water”
- For the “cracked cistern” of self-rule

- Notice what happens next

*Then the Lord God said, “Look, the human beings **have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!**” So the Lord God banished them from the Garden of Eden.*

– Genesis 3:22-23 NLT

- They were banned from the garden
- And man lost access to the tree of life
- And slowly, man's longevity began to diminish

*Adam lived **930 years**, and then he died. – Gen 5:5*

*Lamech lived **777 years**, and then he died. – Gen 5:31*

- After the flood, God greatly diminished man's lifespan

*“My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be **no more than 120 years.**” – Gen 6:3*

- The tree bore 12 kinds of fruit – one for every month of the year
- The leaves had healing properties
- This tree will be a source of blessing

To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. – Revelation 2:7

- It will be a source of **healing** to the nations
 - o There will be no sickness, pain, or suffering
 - o So, to what is this referring?

therapeia – life-giving, health-giving, therapeutic

- **Be prepared!**

- Jesus repeatedly drives home the reality of His coming
- He talks of “what must soon take place”
- He repeats, “Behold, I am coming soon!”
- The angel confirms that “the time is near”
- And Jesus once again says, “Behold, I am coming soon!”
- Two groups of people are mentioned:
 - o The unbeliever
 - Described as an **evildoer** – their actions
 - And as **filthy** (defiled) – their condition
 - o The believer
 - Described as **righteous** – their behavior
 - And as **holy** (set apart) – their status
- o The persistently rebellious will remain so
- o So will the faithfully obedient

- **An invitation**

The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come. – Revelation 22:17 ESV

*“Come, everyone who thirsts, **come to the waters...**” – Isaiah 55:1 ESV*

- **A warning**

- Do not take away or add to these words
- This is not about matters of interpretation
 - Premill, postmill, amill, rapture, no rapture, etc..
- It’s about diminishing or embellishing the importance of what is being said
- This is **prophecy**, not **opinion**
 - o You are not allowed to discount or dismiss it
 - o You are not allowed to impose your will on it
 - o You may not like what it says, but you are not allowed to make it say something else

- All that John has seen and heard is **trustworthy** (believable) and **true** (reliable)
- **An assurance**
 - Jesus states one more time for emphasis:
“Sure, I am coming soon!” – Revelation 22:20 ESV

- **A reaction**
 - John responds enthusiastically and eagerly:
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! – Revelation 22:20 ESV

*Now you have every spiritual gift you need as **you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ**. He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns.* – 1 Corinthians 1:7-8 NLT

*But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And **we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior**.* – Philippians 3:20 NLT

*But by faith we **eagerly await** through the Spirit the hope of righteousness.* – Galatians 5:5 BSB

*...**we wait eagerly** for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* – Romans 3:23 ESV

- Are you eagerly awaiting the coming of Jesus?
- Are you ready for Him to return?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is it that keeps us from wanting Jesus to come back? What kinds of things prevent us from saying, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”?
- If you do desire for Jesus to come, is that desire motivated by:
What you hope to escape? Give examples.
Or by what you hope to gain? Give examples.
- End your time in prayer, thanking God for all that He has shown you in this incredible book. Ask to help you live with the end in mind.

What is the meaning of the tree of life?

The tree of life, mentioned in the books of Genesis and Revelation, is a life-giving tree created to enhance and perpetually sustain the physical life of humanity. The tree was planted by God in the Garden of Eden: “The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:9). The centrally located tree of life would have been easily accessible to Adam and Eve from any point in the garden.

More details concerning the tree of life come after Adam and Eve’s sin: “The LORD God said, ‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever’” (Genesis 3:22). In his disobedience, Adam lost his eternal life. The tree of life in Eden must have had some role to play in maintaining the life of Adam and Eve (and possibly the animals). Adam would “live forever,” even in his fallen condition, if he had eaten the tree of life after his sin. God placed a sword-wielding cherub at the entrance to the garden specifically “to guard the way to the tree of life” (verse 24). It seems access to the tree of life would have prolonged Adam’s physical life indefinitely, dooming him to an eternity in a cursed world.

It was a mercy that God kept us from the tree of life. By barring access to the tree of life, God showed compassion in His omniscience. Knowing that, because of sin, earthly life would be filled with sorrow and toil, God graciously limited the number of years men would live. To live eternally in a sinful state would mean endless agony for humanity, with no hope of the relief that comes with death. By limiting our lifespan, God gives us enough time to come to know Him and His provision for eternal life through Christ but spares us the misery of an endless existence in a sinful condition.

In His great love, God provided One who would redeem fallen mankind. Through one man, Adam, sin entered the world, but through another Man, Jesus Christ, redemption through the forgiveness of sin is available to all (Romans 5:17). Those who avail themselves of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross will be resurrected to see the tree of life again, for it stands in the middle of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, where it bears “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). In the eternal state, the curse will be no more (verse 3), access to the tree of life will be reinstated, and darkness will be forever banished (verse 5). Eden will be restored.

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