

Revelation 22:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Analysis

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life (ξύλον ζωῆς, *xylon zōēs*)—John's vision completes Scripture's arc from Genesis to consummation. The tree of life, lost in Genesis 3:22-24 when God barred access after the Fall, is now freely accessible in the New Jerusalem. The Greek *xylon* (tree/wood) is the same word used for Christ's cross (Acts 5:30, 1 Peter 2:24), suggesting the Cross is the means by which we regain the tree.

Twelve manner of fruits (δώδεκα καρποὺς, *dōdeka karpous*)—The twelve monthly harvests signify perpetual abundance and satisfaction. Unlike Eden's single tree bearing one kind of fruit, this tree produces continuously, each month yielding different fruit. The number twelve echoes the twelve tribes and twelve apostles (21:12-14), symbolizing the fullness of God's redeemed people from both covenants.

The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν, *therapeian tōn ethnōn*)—Not healing from disease (21:4 says no more pain), but *therapeia* suggests ongoing health and wholeness. The curse of Babel's scattered nations (Genesis 11) is reversed—the nations walk in the light of the Lamb (21:24), no longer divided but unified in worship. Ezekiel 47:12 prophesied this very image of healing leaves.

Historical Context

John wrote from exile on Patmos (circa AD 95) during escalating Roman persecution under Domitian. His apocalyptic vision drew heavily from Ezekiel 47:1-12, which depicts a river flowing from the temple with trees bearing fruit monthly and leaves for healing. Jewish readers would immediately recognize this imagery from prophetic literature promising restoration after judgment.

The tree of life appears only three times in Scripture: Genesis 2-3 (access forbidden after sin), Proverbs 3:18, 11:30, 13:12, 15:4 (wisdom metaphors), and Revelation 2:7, 22:2, 22:14 (access restored). This literary inclusion brackets redemptive history—what was lost in Adam is restored in Christ, the Last Adam.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the restoration of the tree of life demonstrate that God's redemptive plan not only forgives sin but fully reverses the curse of Genesis 3?
2. What does the continuous twelve-month harvest reveal about eternal life—is it static perfection or dynamic abundance and ongoing discovery of God's goodness?

Interlinear Text

ἐν	μέσῳ	τῆς	πλατείας	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	τοῦ	ποταμοῦ
In	the midst	G3588	of the street	of it	and	G3588	of the river
G1722	G3319		G4113	G846	G2532		G4215
ἐντεῦθεν	καὶ	ἐντεῦθεν	ξύλου	ζωῆς	ποιοῦν	καρπὸν	
side	and	side	of the tree	of life	which bare	fruit	
G1782	G2532	G1782	G3586	G2222	G4160	G2590	
δώδεκα	κατὰ	μῆνα	ἕνα	ἕκαστον	ἀποδιδόν	τὸν	καρπὸν
twelve	every	month	G1520	G1538	and yielded	G3588	fruit
G1427	G2596	G3376			G591		G2590
αὐτοῦ	καὶ	τὰ	φύλλα	τοῦ	ξύλου	εἰς	θεραπείαν
of it	and	G3588	the leaves	G3588	of the tree	were for	the healing
G846	G2532		G5444		G3586	G1519	G2322
τῶν	ἐθνῶν						
G3588	of the nations						
	G1484						

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 22:1 (Parallel theme): And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

1 Peter 2:24 (Parallel theme): Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Revelation 2:7 (Parallel theme): He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Genesis 2:9 (Parallel theme): And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Revelation 22:14 (Parallel theme): Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Proverbs 3:18 (Parallel theme): She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Revelation 22:19 (Parallel theme): And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Revelation 21:24 (Parallel theme): And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

Ezekiel 47:1 (Parallel theme): Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

Revelation 21:21 (Parallel theme): And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.