

# The Tree of Life

Tree of knowledge of good and evil

**Of knowledge:** Gen 2:9; Gen 2:17; Gen 3:3-6; Gen 3:11-12; Gen 3:17

The Tree of life

**Of life:** Gen 2:9; Gen 3:22; Gen 3:24; Rev 22:14

and

“the way to the tree of life”

## Tree of Life

(γυ δ'απ, 'ēc ḥayyīm; ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς, xúlon tēs zōēs):

The expression “tree of life” occurs in four groups or connections:

- (1) in the story of the Garden of Eden,
- (2) in the Proverbs of the Wise Men,
- (3) in the apocryphal writings [2 Esdras 2:12; 8:52-54], and
- (4) in the Apocalypse of John.

## We need to untangle the trees

The question is often asked, ‘if before Adam sinned, they were restricted from eating of the tree of life why would God post the Cherubim to guard the way to the Tree to keep it open after Adam sinned’.

***(Gen 2:15-17) And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.***

It was not the tree of life that was forbidden to Adam and Eve – it was the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And, it was not that they couldn’t approach the tree of knowledge of good and evil or handle it, they were forbidden to ‘partake’ of it; to ‘eat of it’.

But, they did eat of it.

And that day, they died – not physically but spiritually.

(Adam and Eve physically lived long after that day. When they sinned they had no children as yet. Scripture says that Adam lived 930 years.)

# We need to untangle the trees

Apparently, once they sinned, the tree of life – and all its symbolic and spiritual significance - was their only hope for continued life and God posted a guard to insure that the 'way to the tree' was 'kept'.

***(Gen 3:22-24a And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: [23] Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. [24a] So he drove out the man; ...***

Man – Adam and Eve – were put out of the garden so they wouldn't seal themselves in their current condition; eat of the tree of life and remain in their sinful state forever.

I'm not sure what or how that would be done at that time but it was enough of a possibility and concern to God that He put them out of the garden and set two of the most powerful beings in His creation to guard the way of the tree of life.

***(Gen 3:24) ... and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.***

Notice: When God placed the guarding Cherubim and flaming sword:

1. Adam and Eve (mankind) were already put out of the garden
2. Where was the Tree of Life located - in the midst of the garden.

Who was God guarding 'the way of' the tree of life' against ???

## Can't see the trees for the forest...

The tree of life was available to them both before and after they sinned.

They were told and knew where it was.

***(Gen 2:9) 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.***

Notice: The Tree of Life and The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil grew out of the ground 'also'

They were pleasant to the sight 'also'

They were good for food 'also'

Like every tree God caused to grow out of the ground...

# Follow the path through the forest

God had a plan to redeem and restore man to fellowship but He had to work through His plan – He had to protect or keep the way open until He and mankind were ready for the plan to be fulfilled.

*(John 14:6) Jesus said, I am the Way, the truth and the life.*

*(Gal 4:4-7) But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

Until Jesus came and died for us and rose again from the dead, God set a guard to protect His plan – the way to the tree of life.

He had to protect us from continuing in our fallen state forever by continuing to have access to the Tree of Life. ***The wages of sin is death .... Rom 6:23***

For a quick light read – go over the whole Old Testament again. It's really all about 'keeping the way to the tree life' for mankind.

## Satan did everything in his power to block the way to the “tree of life”.

He tried to corrupt all mankind in Gen 6 and again later when Israel was taking Canaan.

Once Abraham and his elect off spring were identified, Satan moved against them at every opportunity.

Once Israel became a nation, Satan set the world against them for no logical reason. This hatred continues yet today.

He did everything he could do to destroy David's line once it became known the Messiah would be of David's lineage.

When Jesus was born, Satan destroyed the every man child in a 15 mile radius in an effort to destroy Him.

When Jesus came of age, Satan tried over and over again to entrap Him, beginning with the wilderness temptations.

Finally, he got the Jewish leadership of Jesus day to falsely accuse Him and Jesus was crucified.

It was only afterward that Satan realized what a mistake He had made in doing so...

***(1Co 2:7-8) But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.***

**The true, once and for all, eternal “Tree of Life” for the now redeemed mankind.**

# The symbolism and the spiritual side of these events is undeniable.

Whether you believe there was a literal tree in a literal paradise or not, it is clearly symbolic of 'the way of salvation through Jesus Christ' who died on a 'tree' for the sins of the whole world.

The 'way' that the Cherubim were protecting was to assure that Satan (another Cherub) did not hinder or block man from God's 'way' and that men, in God's timing and in God's way, would have free access to God's way of restoring a right relationship (righteousness) between God and man;

That man would not continue to live sealed in his fallen condition before his redemption had been 'paid in full' and was fully available to him through Jesus Christ our Lord's death and resurrection on our behalf.

## Ezekiel saw the Tree during the Millennium visions

Ezekiel's pictures the ideal Messianic age with a life-giving river flowing from the sanctuary of God. There are trees on its banks on either side, yielding fruit every month.

The leaf of this tree would not wither, nor its fruit fail, because that which gave moisture to its roots flowed from the sanctuary.

This fruit was for food and the leaves for medicine to the world, supplied freely to all that all may enjoy the highest possibilities of activity and blessedness which can come to those who are in right relationships with God and Jesus Christ.

**Ezekiel 47:9-12** *And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. [10] And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. [11] But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.*

**[12] And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed** [run out, be exhausted] **: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.**

This is very similar to John's picture in Revelation: **"To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God" (Rev 2:7).**

# The symbolism and the spiritual side of these events is undeniable.

If I'm reading my Bible correctly, there was a literal tree in a literal paradise.

The Lord promises the overcomer that he will be able to eat of it in the midst of the paradise of God.

For those of us who believe in Jesus as the Christ and own Him as Lord, live to obey, please and honor Him, will eat of that tree "which is in the midst of the paradise of God"

***(Rev 2:7) 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.***

***(Rev 22:2) 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.***

***(Rev 22:14) 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.***

All the possibilities of a complete and glorious life are open and available to those that overcomes this world and the pulls of this life and have prepared themselves for eternity with God and our Lord Jesus.

John announces a blessing on those who wash their robes, who lead the clean and pure Christ life, for they thereby have the right and privilege of entering into the gates of the City and partaking of the tree of life.

This means not only immortal existence, but such relations with Jesus Christ and the church that each has unrestricted access to all that is good in the universe of God.

## The Tree of Life is appears in other scriptures:

Wisdom (our knowledge and understanding) is a source and supply of life to man.

***(Pro 3:18) She [wisdom] is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.***

***(Pro 11:30) The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.***

***(Pro 13:12) Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.***

***(Pro 15:4) A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.***

Good words are a power for good, and hence, produce good living.

The meaning seems to be that the satisfaction of good and lawful desires produces those pleasures and activities which make up life and its blessings.

Everything we know (or think we know) about the Trees and the Garden and Paradise is only known in part. Today our understanding just scratches the surface. But, there will come a time when we will know as we are known.

***(1 Co 13:9-12) For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.***

# The Trees as symbols in other scriptures:

Figurative of the Tree of Life:

*Psalm 1:3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

*Jeremiah 17:8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*

Symbolic of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, rule and kingdom:

*Daniel 4:10-12 Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. [11] The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: [12] The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.*

The Mustard tree in Jesus' parable

*Mat 13:31-32 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.*

# The Trees as symbols in other scriptures:

**Fig Tree**

**In an allegory:**

*Judges 9:11 But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?*

**Jeremiah's parable:**

*Jeremiah 24:2-3 One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. [3] Then said the Lord unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.*

**Barren, parable of:**

*Luke 13:6-9 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. [7] Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? [8] And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: [9] And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

*Luke 21:29-31 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; [30] When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. [31] So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.*

**Figurative:**

*Matthew 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:*

*Rev. 6:13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*

# The Trees as symbols in other scriptures:

***Luke 23:31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?***

Jesus spoke these words to the women weeping for him as he was led to Calvary. It was a commonly used in Jewish proverbs referring to good righteous men as green trees and evil unrighteous men as dry trees

In the green tree (en hugrōi xulōi).

Green wood is hard to burn and so is used for the innocent.

In the dry (en tōi xērōi).

Dry wood kindles easily and is a symbol for the guilty.

Also see other specific types and references to trees:

eg: Olive, Date, Cedar, etc. ...

## **Beginning and the End**

***Rev. 22:2 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.***

The harmonious unity of Scripture is herein exhibited.

In the beginning we found Adam and Eve in innocence in Paradise,  
then tempted by the serpent, and  
driven from the tree of life, and from the pleasant waters of Eden,  
yet not without a promise of a Redeemer who should crush the serpent;

At the end,

the old serpent cast out for ever by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven,  
who appears with His Bride, the Church,  
in a better Paradise, and amidst better waters ([Rev 22:1](#)):  
the tree of life also is there with all its *healing* properties,  
not guarded with a flaming sword,

but open to all who overcome ([Rev 2:7](#)), and there is no more curse.

## ***In the midst of the street of it [the New Jerusalem]***

***Rev. 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there a [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.***

John sees a river running through the whole city; then of streets parallel to it on either side; and then, on the banks of the river, between the water and the street, the whole stream is lined on either side with two rows of the tree of life."

Along the streets of the city, as well as on the banks of the river, the tree(s) of life was planted.

It abounded everywhere.

The city not only had a river passing through it, but it had streets, and all those streets were lined and shaded with this tree.

## ***On either side - lit: on this side and on that.***

***Rev. 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there a [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.***

In this large and spacious city, one fountain was not sufficient to provide water for it, therefore a river is mentioned; a great river, by which it was sufficiently watered.

In the midst of the street of it (the city) and of the river, on one side and on the other"

In the first Paradise was only *one* tree of life; now there are "very many trees at the bank of the river, on the one side and on the other."

Compare [Eze 47:12](#), the millennial type of the final Paradise; there are several trees of the one kind, all termed "a tree of life."

***Ezekiel 47:12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: ....***

There were many trees 'of life'; many trees of the same kind, as in Ezekiel's vision

If we are talking about one tree the sense might be clearer, "between the street of it", the city, "and the river, on this side, and on that side";

that is, the street on one side, and the river on the other side of the tree of life; as the wording is used in [Joh 19:18](#).

***John 19:18 Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.***



# there was a [the] tree of life

*Rev. 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there a [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.*

The definite article “the” is not in the original, “a tree of life;” for there were three trees; one in the street, and one on each side of the river.

*Rev 22:14, Rev 2:7; Gen 2:9, Gen 3:22-24; Pro 3:18*

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Tree

Of life	<u><i>Gen 2:9; Gen 3:22; Gen 3:24; Rev 22:14</i></u>
Of knowledge	<u><i>Gen 2:9; Gen 2:17; Gen 3:3-6; Gen 3:11-12; Gen 3:17</i></u>
Figurative	<u><i>Psa 1:3; Jer 17:8</i></u>
Symbolic	<u><i>Dan 4:10-12</i></u>

## twelve manner of fruits: lit – twelve fruits

*Rev. 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there a [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.*

*Ezekiel 47:1-12 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. [2] Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. [3] And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ancles. [4] Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. [5] Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.*

## twelve manner of fruits: lit – twelve fruits

*Ezekiel 47:1-12 [6] And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. [7] Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. [8] Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. [9] And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. [10] And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. [11] But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. [12] And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.*

*Joel 3:18 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim.*

*Zech. 14:8 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.*

## twelve manner of fruits: lit – twelve fruits

*Rev. 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there a [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.*

Some translate this as twelve *crops* or *harvests of fruit*.

The idea is not that there are twelve kinds of fruit on the same tree,

That is not implied in the language used by John.

The literal rendering is, “producing twelve fruits

The word “manner” was introduced by the translators without authority.

The idea is, that the tree bore every month in the year, so that there were twelve fruit-harvests each year.

It constantly bore fruit - every month.

The idea is that of abundance, not variety.

The supply never fails; the tree is never barren.

There is one class of tree referred to, and the tree is everywhere;

it is constantly producing fruit.

# yielded her fruit every month:

**Rev. 22:2** *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there a [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.*

The word “and” is also supplied by the translators, and introduces an idea which is not in the original, as if there was not only a succession of harvests, which is in the text, but that each one differed from the former, which is not in the text.

The proper translation is, “producing twelve fruits, yielding or rendering its fruit in each month.”

There is a succession of fruit-crops, but it is the same kind of fruit.

This does not limit the variety we will enjoy in the occupations and the joys of the heavenly state; there will be ample diversity in the employment and in the sources of happiness, in heaven;

The thought expressed here is, that the means of life will be abundant:

the trees of life will be everywhere, and they will be constantly yielding fruit.

## the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

**Rev. 22:2** *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there a [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.*

Some think that by this tree of life the Gospel is indicated; the twelve fruits are the twelve apostles; and the leaves are Gospel doctrines by which the nations - the Gentiles, are healed of the disease of sin. But this seems to be a fanciful interpretation.

### **And the leaves of the tree**

Not only the fruit will contribute to give life, but even the leaves will provide benefit. Everything about it will contribute to sustain life.

### **Were for the healing**

They contribute to impart life and health to those who had been diseased.

Do not suppose that there will be sickness, and a healing process in heaven, for that idea is expressly excluded.

**Rev. 21:4** *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

The life and health of that blessed world will have been imparted by partaking of that tree; and the writer says that it was owing to it that they who dwell there had been healed of their spiritual maladies, and had been made to live forever.

the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

**Rev. 22:2** *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there a [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.*

**Of the nations** assembled there,

**Rev. 21:24** *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.*

There is a close resemblance between the language used here by John and that used by Ezekiel 47:12.

**and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations;**

These leaves will be for the preserving and continuing the health of the people of God in this state, as the tree of life in Eden's garden was for the preservation of the health and life of Adam, had he continued in a state of innocence; and it denotes that everything in Christ will contribute to the comfort, health, and happiness of the saints.

**Was there death before Adam fell ???**

**Was there sin before Adam sinned ???**

**What are the wages of sin ???** *Rom 6:23a*

**Had Adam already eaten of the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden prior to his sinning ???**

**Was it the reason he lived long (930 years) sustaining him even while in the garden ???**

**Was that why his access to it was removed after he sinned personally ???**