

The Commencement of Eternity
“THE TREE OF LIFE”
Revelation 22:1-5

Theme: The environment of Heaven will be one filled with eternal life and the glory of God.

I. THE LIFE STREAMING FROM GOD’S THRONE – 22:1-3a

A. *The Flow of Eternal Life – v.1*

1. John’s tour of Heaven continues as the eternal New Jerusalem is explored by John – *“Then he showed me a river of the water of life...”*
2. This section deals with the environmental aspects of Heaven – what will it be like in environment?
3. These verses essentially identify that God provides the saints with an environment in Heaven that will be an intensified Garden of Eden.
4. Like the description of the Garden of Eden, one of the predominant features is a *“river”* that flows through the midst of it – cp. *Genesis 2:10,14*
5. This *“water of life”* is a life-giving resource that assures the residents of heaven of the everlasting life given to them freely by God.
6. Some believe that this is not actual water because of the absence of a hydrologic cycle in heaven without seas and rain, etc...
7. However, it is best to see this as actual water that will be freely enjoyed with limitless supply since it is *“... coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb.”*
 - a. This water was promised to the innumerable multitude back in *Revelation 7:17*
 - b. It was also promised by Christ when He was offering eternal life to those who would come to Him – cp. *John 4:11,14; 7:37-38; Revelation 21:6*
8. A *“river”* is used repeatedly in Scripture to represent both pleasure (*Psalms 36:8*) and prosperity – *Psalms 1:3*
9. The *“water of life”* that flows is described as *“clear as crystal”* – which represents the total purity of the water – shimmering with the glory of God as it *“... comes from the throne of God and of the Lamb.”*
10. Here the two Persons of the Godhead are seen as sitting on one throne – emphasizing the unity of God in the provision of eternal life – cp. *John 10:30*

B. *The Fruit of Eternal Life – v. 2-3a*

1. This river is seen as flowing *“... in the middle of the street”* – indicating that the avenue directly before the throne of God contains in it a central canal flowing with

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the water representing eternal life that is able to be tasted at any time by any body as they worship and enjoy the Lord and His glory.

2. There is a single tree that apparently has an intricate root system that causes a hedge-type growth on either side of the river of life – *“On either side of the river was the tree of life...”*
 - a. This brings the history of God’s redemption full circle – having started in the Garden of Eden with a reference to the *“tree of life”* – cp. *Genesis 2:9*
 - b. It was this *“tree of life”* from which Adam & Eve were mercifully banned from eating after their fall – for had they eaten, they would have lived forever in a state of alienation from God – cp. *Genesis 3:22-24*.
3. This single *“tree of life”* was *“on either side of the river”* – drawing up the *“water of life”* as the fuel that produced such fertile and life-giving fruit to be enjoyed by the saints.
4. This tree provides for those who are immortal with a never ending supply of fruit that is constantly presenting a variety of flavors and delights – *“...bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month”*
5. Apparently every part of what is produced by this tree is valuable in the preservation and sustaining of eternal life – *“...and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”*
 - a. *“healing”* does not imply that there are illnesses that need rectifying – but can be translated “health-giving” in the sense of preserving health.
 - b. *“...of the nations”* – refers generally to all peoples enjoying heaven
6. The result of the presence of eternal life is that *“there will no longer be any curse”* – hindrance to fellowship with God is removed and Paradise is restored with great glory.

II. THE LORD SITTING ON THE THRONE – *22:3b-4*

A. *The Sovereignty of God – v. 3b*

1. We are told that the environment of Heaven is dominated not by the river or the tree of life, but by the central throne of God from which these other details come – *“and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it.”*
2. Nothing will bar the saints from enjoying access to the throne of God which is described for us in *Revelation 4:2-11*.

B. *The Service to God – v. 3c*

1. The immediate result of being in the presence of God is the desire to serve Him – *“...and His bond-servants [slaves] will serve Him.”*

2. The saints will spend eternity – not sitting on clouds with harps, but executing the infinite variety of tasks that the limitless mind of God can conceive.
3. The term “*serve*” [λατρεύω] – conveys the idea of service of worship – carrying out religious duties – cp. *Revelation 7:15*.

C. *The Security in God – v. 4*

1. We are told that “*they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads*” – a reference to the security that the saints will enjoy.
2. This security is emphasized in two ways:
 - a. First, by the freedom and safety experienced in being able to “*see His face*” – evidencing that we will be perfectly holy and righteous – seeing Him without being consumed – cp. *Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; 6:46; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 4:12*
 - b. Second, that “*His name will be on their foreheads*” – leaves no doubt to whom we belong – He claims us and marks us as forever belonging to Him as His righteous ones.

III. THE LIGHT SHINING FROM THE THRONE – 21:5

A. *The Delight in the Light – v. 5a*

1. The description of the environment of heaven closes with a reiteration that there will be no darkness there – “*And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun ...*”
2. Instead, we are told that the saints will bask in the glory of God – “*... because the Lord God will illumine them*”
3. The emphasis here is on the delight that we will know as we enjoy the warmth of God’s undimmed presence.

B. *The Devotion to the Light – v. 5b*

1. This delight will energize us without need of rest for the purpose of serving God – “*and they will reign forever and ever.*”
2. Details are not provided as to what it will mean to “*reign forever and ever*” – but it seems that in our service of God, we will advance the purposes of God’s glory and in this sense participate in the sovereign rule of God as He eternally manifests His glory – cp. *Revelation 3:21; 2 Timothy 2:12*.