

Healing of The Nations

Eric Michael Teitelman

Pastor • Teacher • Worship Leader



House of David
MINISTRIES

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

We read about the New Jerusalem: *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations”* (Revelation 22:1-2, NKJV).ⁱ

What a beautiful picture of the Kingdom of God, but this verse also raises so many questions. Why is the tree of life still in the Kingdom? I thought that in the resurrection, we were raised to eternal life. And how does one tree exist in the middle of a street and on either side of a river? Or is it twelve trees? And why are the nations still being healed when I thought there was no sickness in the Kingdom of God?

While I am confident, there is a physical aspect to the New Jerusalem and Christ’s Kingdom. I believe this verse also presents a spiritual depiction of the future. Thus, some of the imagery is allegorical, while other details are material.

While described in Christian writings, the idea of a heavenly Jerusalem, specifically the Book of Revelation, also emerged in Jewish tradition following the destruction of the Second Temple.ⁱⁱ Rabbi Yochanan, a rabbinic leader in Tiberias, Israel, asserted in his third-century Midrashic discourse that the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem would be reunited as one in the future. His homily was based on an exposition from Psalm 122, where it is written, *“Jerusalem is built As a city that is compact together”* (Psalm 122:3).

The word “compact” (*Sh’chubra*—שְׁחֻבְרָה), feminine, singular, is more accurately translated as “knit together” (*“Jerusalem built up, a city knit together”*),ⁱⁱⁱ again suggesting the earthly and heavenly are more than connected—they are united and inseparably one. This uniting is Biblically referred to as a marriage, a covenant, male to female, husband, and wife. As it is written, *“You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah [as in married, feminine form]; For the Lord delights in you, And your land shall be married”* (Isaiah 62:4).

While this verse’s spiritual aspect affirms that God will no longer forsake Israel, our connection to the land promised to Abraham is also significantly a part of who we are as His people. If we

are rejected, then our land is desolate, and if we are reunited with God, then our land is blessed and will prosper.

Interestingly, in Greek philosophy, Plato surmised that every natural object draws its existence from a metaphysical world. In other words, if there is a Temple on earth, there must be a spiritual Temple. And if there is an earthly Jerusalem, there must be a spiritual one as well.

We know Biblically that all things on earth are patterned after a heavenly blueprint, as it is written, *“And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain” (Exodus 25:40). “For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain” (Hebrews 8:4-5).*

The belief in a heavenly Jerusalem is so entrenched in Jewish thought that the rabbis imagined it was created from the foundation of the world. Midrashic literature from the second century is filled with descriptions of the rebuilt Jerusalem—these fantasies taking on the form of a heavenly Jerusalem.

Rabbi Yochanan questioned whether the heavenly Jerusalem is merely a template or mirror image of the earthly Jerusalem, or is it a reality unto itself that one day will materialize on earth. Another rabbi surmised that the heavenly Jerusalem exists intact despite the temporal condition. In contrast, Rabbi Yochanan argued that the heavenly Jerusalem would only be fully realized when the earthly Jerusalem is restored.

Which view is correct? Well, we know the Biblical answer, as it is written, *“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2).* The heavenly is being prepared as we write, and in God’s appointed time, the two will be reunited as one. Hence our focus in this teaching is on the healing of the nations.

If we incorrectly assume this vision is of a spiritual nature, only. In that case, we eradicate the physical and wrongly conclude that the whole of creation is nothing more than a temporary shadow of the greater spiritual dimension to come. This type of thinking stems from Gnosticism which also refutes the bodily resurrection of Christ and His church.

Yeshua taught us to pray, *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).* And He appeared after the resurrection, declaring, *“Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have” (Luke 24:39).*

And Paul said: *“As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man” (1 Corinthians 15:48-49).* The implication

is that we have both a natural image inherited from Adam and a spiritual one received from Christ. Therefore, in the resurrection, the natural and spiritual are united. So, we understand that the healing of the nations is both individual and collective, and our healing is both physical and spiritual.^{iv}

The fall of man at the Garden of Eden is well understood in Jewish and Christian theology—the origins of sin and our sinful disposition. However, if we know God's progression of healing the nations, we must visualize the spiritual realm and see His cosmic restoration plan.

In the 16th century, a group of mystic Jews migrated from Germany to Israel, settling in the town of Safed located north of Tiberias. The leader of this community, Rabbi Isaac Luria, taught how the world could be restored from its fallen condition to the perfection of the Garden of Eden. The rabbinic perceptions of the spiritual realm are complex and difficult to correlate with scripture. However, in their prophetic wisdom, we find emerging patterns of Christ and His creation revealed and fulfilled in the New Testament.

Rabbi Luria explained that in creating the world, God first created ten vessels (*kelipot*) to contain ten independent points of the Divine light (*Sefirot*, called "light emitted from the eyes").^v These ten *Sefirot* reflect the individual qualities or attributes of God's nature, emanating from the realm of *Keter*, God's crown as He is King, and bringing life to the world. Each represents one aspect of the Godhead and one of the Names of the Holy One.^{vi}

Rabbi Luria then said that the vessels holding these emanations shattered and died because they were not strong enough to contain the Divine. How could God create a vessel destined to fail? There must be an explanation.

I believe these vessels represent the creation. They incorporate the angelic realm and the creation of man (earthen vessels) as we were made in His image, purposed to manifest His qualities and Divine attributes. And I believe these vessels were forcibly separated from God, and therefore, shattered because of our rebellion and consequent sin.

God did not fail in His creation, nor did He create evil. The state of separation or partition of light into distinct attributes introduced diversity into the creation.^{vii} This diversity allowed for the possibility of sin and allowed humanity to choose between good and evil, called "free will." In other words, something independent now existed in addition to God. And yet, nothing can exist apart from Him. We were created to be entirely dependent upon Him and in Divine unity and Holiness with His very being.

It was only in our willful disobedience and sin that we became separate from God. Thus, mankind and the fallen angels were forced to descend into the realm of unholiness, causing the universe to disintegrate. For it is written, *"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2)*. As the Lord spoke to Moses, we read, *"You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live" (Exodus*

33:20). And regarding the angels, it is written, *"His [Satan's] tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth"* (Revelation 12:4).

For the universe to be restored and returned to its natural order, God must restore these vessels.^{viii} However, we know that salvation was promised to the seed of Abraham, both Jew, and Gentile who believe in Christ (earthen vessels). It was not for the angels who sinned, as it is written, *"For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment"* (2 Peter 2:4).

In restoring humanity to our pre-fallen condition, God is also restoring the creation in the process. In Judaism, this cosmic restoration plan is called *"Tikkun"* and means rectification or restoration of the broken vessels. This restoration consequently brings about the restoration of the entire universe. And once repaired, these new vessels will be able to contain the light of God.

However, the rabbis incorrectly believe that humanity, specifically the Jewish people has the ability and the responsibility to gather these broken vessels and the scattered sparks of the Divine Light and reunite them through human action—namely, obeying the Law of Moses. They say: *"It is man's duty to elevate the 'sparks of holiness' from their fallen state."*^{ix} The rabbis also incorrectly believe that in fulfilling the Law, the Jewish people will build the heavenly Jerusalem, which, when complete, will manifest here on earth.

Contrary to their opinions, we know that the church has received a deposit of this Divine light in Christ. For it is written, *"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory"* (Ephesians 1:13-14).

God is healing and restoring a remnant of humanity to its pre-fallen condition. He is building the heavenly Jerusalem, or as we call it, the New Jerusalem, which is the restored creation and the Kingdom of God. As it is written, *"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit"* (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Biblically, we understand that our bodies (these earthen vessels) contain our soul and the Divine Spirit of God. This imagery is often associated with a clay pot or a tent made of animal skin. It is written, *"And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make"* (Jeremiah 18:4).

The rabbis believe the vessels that contain emanations of the Divine light act like a shell or the bark of a tree. These are analogous to a fruit surrounded by a peel that houses and conceals a spark of holiness. As it is written, *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and*

breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7). They say these shells exist and are sustained by the Divine sparks. As it is written, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). And they call this outer shell "Kelipah," which they use to describe evil and impurity (meaning "the other side") that opposes holiness.^x

Their description is comparable to the carnal or sinful nature of the flesh. Our bodies act as a shell, housing the soul, the Divine spark being redeemed through the blood of Christ. It is written, *"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish" (Galatians 5:17). "Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8).*

For these holy sparks to be released, the encumbering shell must be removed, as the Lord declared, *"By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). And "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24).*

Our flesh must die so that our redeemed souls can be permanently freed from our old nature and the sins of the flesh. And in the resurrection, our souls will unite with a new incorruptible body.^{xi} As Yeshua said, *"Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved" (Matthew 9:17).*

In the words of the sages (emphasis added), we read, *"When the sparks of holiness [our souls] are extracted from the kelipot [earthen vessels] and are rebuilt [resurrected] into the vessels of Tikkun [restoration], the lights that formerly illuminated the [creation] can once again be drawn down. But this time, the repaired vessels will be able to contain the [Divine] light."^{xii}* It is interesting to read how Pau said, *"That you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky" (Philippians 2:15).*

In returning to our original questions: Why is the tree of life still in the Kingdom of God? And how can one tree exist in the middle of a street and on either side of a river? We are reminded that the book of Revelation gives us both a physical and spiritual (mystical) picture of the Kingdom.

From the book of Proverbs, we learn that the tree of life represents wisdom and the law of the wise. It bears the fruit of the righteous of him who wins souls. And the tree of life is a wholesome tongue that speaks comforting words of the hope of our blessed Christ and His soon appearing.^{xiii}

In Jewish thought, the ten emanations of God (*Sefirot*) are linked and shaped in a spiritual sense into a complex human-like figure called the "Tree of Life."^{xiv} Specifically, the rabbis associate the wisdom of the Torah with the tree of life. Yet, we know that Christ is the word of God who was made flesh.^{xv} Therefore, the tree of life is a picture of Christ and all who are found in Him. As it is

written, *"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city [the New Jerusalem]"* (Revelation 22:14).

We now see the correlation between Christ, the tree of life, and His Holy City—the New Jerusalem—the church and ecclesia of God. For it is written, *"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"* (Revelation 21:2). This city whose builder and maker is God will come to earth in the Millennial Kingdom—our Sabbath rest in Christ.^{xvi}

Thus, at present, we are living in a "weekday" or "workday." Now is the time for us to work and prepare for our eternal rest, laboring with Christ to build a dwelling place for the Divine in this world.^{xvii} For it is written, *"In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit"* (Ephesians 2:22).

The ultimate healing of the nations and restoration of the world will occur in the resurrection and rapture, ushering in the Kingdom of God, and it will continue as we serve Christ in His Kingdom as kings and priests. Hence, we read, *"The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."* Yeshua said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing"* (John 15:5).

Yeshua is the tree of life in the midst of His city, for *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God"* (Revelation 21:3). And we are the branches that bear the leaves for the healing of the nations—the fruit of our labor.

And the Lord will remove the spirit of impurity from the world, and the Divine service will be elevated to the realm of Holiness—the Divine emanation of unity. And when the church is one, united and no longer separated because of sin and unholiness, all the world's people will live in harmony as one. Then the world will be healed, for we are the heart of the world.^{xviii}

Amen!

ⁱ All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

ⁱⁱ Rabbi Vernon, Art. *Jerusalem Day: The Heavenly Jerusalem*. My Jewish Learning.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sefaria.org.

^{iv} Matthew 15:19.

^v Miller, Moshe. *Shattered Vessels: Introduction to the Ari's Concept of Shevirat haKeilim*. Chabad.org.

^{vi} Robinson, George. *What are the Sefirot?* My Jewish Learning.

^{vii} Ibid. *Shattered Vessels*.

^{viii} Salvation is for the seed of Abraham, and all who believe in Christ, the spiritual descendants, and not for the angels who sinned, as it is written, *"For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment"* (2 Peter 2:4).

^{ix} Miller, Moshe. *Rectifying Sparks: Birur and Tikun—Extraction and Rectification*. Chabad.org.

^x Dubov, Rabbi Nissan Dovid. *Kelipot and Sitra Achra*. Chabad.org. Miller, Moshe. *The Other Side: To release the holy spark, the encumbering shell of evil must be removed*. Chabad.org.

^{xi} 1 Corinthians 15:42 & 53-54.

^{xii} Ibid. *Rectifying Sparks*.

^{xiii} Proverbs 3:18, 11:30, 13:12, 15:4.

^{xiv} Posner, Menachem. *Etz Chayim: The Tree of Life in the Bible and Beyond*. Chabad.org.

^{xv} John 1:14.

^{xvi} Hebrews 11:10-11.

^{xvii} Ibid. *Kelipot and Sitra Achra*. Hebrews 4:10-11.

^{xviii} Freeman, Tzvi. *We Can Heal the World*. Chabad.org.