

102. The Book of Revelation—22:1-21

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(12-7-22)

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The first five verses of Chapter 22 are really a continuation of Chapter 21.

As we come to Chapter 21, we have entered into the eternal state where we will live in the New Heavens and on the New Earth.

However, the focus of most of Chapter 21 is the New Jerusalem—the great city, the joy of the whole earth, coming down out of heaven like a bride adorned for her husband which John describes for us in great detail.

He tells us it is a gigantic city—a cube measuring roughly 1500 miles wide, high and deep. Its walls are also 216 ft. thick. It has 12 twelve gates—3 to the north, south, east and west—each made out of a single pearl.

John tells us that the city is sitting on 12 foundations each made up of a different kind of precious stone which he lists in verses 19 and 20 of Revelation 21.

The walls of the city are crystal clear like a diamond and the city itself along with its streets are made up of pure gold—so pure that it is transparent like glass. And right in the middle of it all—God's glory will light the city like a blazing sun—

Revelation 21:22–27 (NKJV)

²² But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. ²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Chapter 22 continues with John's description of the New Jerusalem—

Revelation 22:1 (NKJV)

¹ **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 Revelation 22:1–5, we move from looking at the outside of the city (Revelation 21:9-10) to the inside the city to discover that—it is like a beautiful garden, reminiscent of the Garden of Eden.

There were four rivers in Eden (Gen. 2:10–14)—but there is only one river that flows right thru the center of the New Jerusalem.

There are some questions that immediately come to mind—first of all, *'Is this river wet?'*

Is it made up of H₂O—in other words is it literal or symbolic? Is it contained in a riverbed—or does it flow through the air?—**Remember this is heaven!**

John tells us this is not just ordinary water—he says that it is a “**pure river of water of life clear as crystal** (absolutely free of any pollutants) **which flows directly from the throne of God and the Lamb.**”

Psalms 46:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ *There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. ⁵ God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved...*

Revelation 22:2 (NKJV)

² **In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life...**

What the Greek is apparently saying here is that—this River of Life flows down the middle of Main Street in the New Jerusalem. Right in midst of the river grows the Tree of Life which is so big that its branches extend over to each side of the river.

The first time we were introduced to the Tree of Life was in the Garden of Eden—

Genesis 2:9 (NKJV)

⁹ And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life *was* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Revelation 22:2 (NKJV)

² **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.**

“Tree of Life which bore twelve fruits”

This is meant to speak of variety of food in heaven (no meat because the curse has been done away with) even though we won’t need to eat with our glorified bodies—we will be able to eat for fellowship and enjoyment not out of hunger. (Jesus ate after His resurrection with His glorified body)

“Each tree (branch) yielding its fruit every month.”

One commentator explains—

*“The use of the term **month** does not refer to time, since this is the eternal state and time is no more. It is an anthropomorphic expression of the joyous provision of eternity couched in the familiar terms of time.”*

Although God can have months in heaven without time passing.

“The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

“Wait a minute,” you say, “If the leaves are for healing, does that mean there will be sickness in heaven?”

No, the Greek word translated “**healing**” is *therapeia*, from which we get our word “*therapeutic*” which does mean *healing*—but the Greek word could also mean “*life-giving*,” or “*health-giving*.”

It doesn't mean healing from sickness, but rather a maintaining of health—in fact, the original language also implies *exhilaration* and *invigoration*.

One author—

“The leaves of the tree can be likened to supernatural vitamins, since vitamins are taken not to treat illness, but to promote general health. Life in heaven will be fully energized, rich, and exciting.”

Revelation 22:3 (NKJV)

³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

“And there shall be no more curse”

The curse first imposed upon mankind in the Garden of Eden will finally and forever be lifted in the eternal state which means—no death, no decay, no growing old, or wearing out—no entropy!

“Behold I make all things new (forever new).” (Revelation 21:5)

“...but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.”

The word for “**serve**” is a form of a Greek word associated with worship—

Romans 12:1 (NKJV)

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service*.

Romans 12:1 (NASB)

¹ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship*.

This is consistent with the service of the Levites in the Tabernacle/Temple—their service was a form of worship.

We will be a kingdom of priests—and so our service to God will be a form of worship also. In heaven God will have plenty for us to do—but none of it will be tedious, boring or done grudgingly.

Everything we will do for the Lord will be done out of extreme joy as an expression of our worship to Him—and not even that will ever grow old!!

Revelation 22:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads.⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

Matthew 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Blessed *are* the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NKJV)

¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Psalms 17:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

“His name shall be on their foreheads”

You only write your name on what belongs to you—so does the Lord!

Revelation 3:12 (NKJV)

¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

Jeremiah 23:6 (NKJV)

⁶ ...Now this *is* His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. (“Jehovah Tsidkenu”)

➤ *“Won’t that be kind of strange for everyone to be walking around in heaven with God’s name on their foreheads?”*

People don’t think it’s strange to walk around with “Calvin Klein” on their jeans or shirts—we will wear the name of God with great joy as the One we belong to and forever want to be identified with!

"As the Bible opens with the story of 'Paradise Lost,' so it here closes with the story of 'Paradise Regained.'"
(Erdman)

It is a perfect consummation:

- **No more curse:** perfect restoration
- **Throne in their midst:** perfect administration
- **Servants shall serve:** perfect subordination
- **Shall see His face:** perfect transformation
- **Name on foreheads:** perfect identification
- **God is the light:** perfect illumination
- **Reigning forever:** perfect exultation

The rest of Revelation 22 is an epilogue—it is the other bookend that, along with the first bookend (the prologue in Revelation 1)—summarizes and closes John's vision.

It serves not only as an epilogue for the book of Revelation—but as a fitting conclusion to all 66 books of the Bible—both Old and New Testaments.

Revelation 22:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Then he said to me, "These words *are* faithful and true..."

This whole vision is a lot for anyone to swallow—especially a first century fisherman like John!

So, the angel showing John these final events assured him that it was all true and that God will be faithful to His Word in bringing it all to pass.

Revelation 22:6 (NKJV)

⁶Then he said to me, "These words *are* faithful and true." **And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.**

When it says here that these things must "**shortly take place**"—the Greek word means *rapidly*.

This is repeated again in verse 12 and verse 20.

The idea is that once these events are set in motion (Chapters 6-19) they will happen with rapid-fire succession in a short period of time (7 years).

Revelation 22:7 (NKJV)

⁷"**Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.**"

"**Behold, I am coming quickly!**"—is not only the theme of the Book of Revelation—but also for our lives as Christians—the implication being "*I can come at any time so be ready! Be watching!*"

Mark 13:32-37 (NKJV)

³² "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴ *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning-- ³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

What does it mean to "**keep the words of the prophecy of this book**"? (Revelation 22:7)

Basically, it means: to guard, to watch over, to preserve intact—and of course to obey!

This responsibility is especially great in light of Christ's return.

You realize that the Word of God is under greater attack in our country than ever before in our history—why?—Because we are coming to the end!

That being the case—the words of the Lord Jesus spoken in Luke 18:8 haunt me:

Luke 18:8 (NKJV)

⁸ "...when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith ['the faith'] on the earth?"

Revelation 22:8-10 (NKJV)

⁸ **Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ Then he said to me, "See *that you do not do that*. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God [alone]."** ¹⁰ **And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.**

“Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book.”

Daniel was shown many of the future things John was shown, but he was told to ‘*seal up*’ the words of his prophecy because of the long interval before the fulfillment of it—

Daniel 12:4 (NKJV)

⁴“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

But after receiving the prophecy of the Book of Revelation John is told—**“Don’t seal it the time is at hand.”**

The “*last days*” started with the first coming of Jesus—

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,
² has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son*, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

Revelation 22:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ **He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.**”

Does Revelation 22:11 suggest that God does not want men to repent and change their ways?

No, because that would be contrary to the message of Revelation in general and of the Gospel itself in particular.

The angel’s words must be understood in light of the repeated statement, **“Behold, I come quickly.”** (Revelation 3:11, 22:7, 12, 20), as well as his statement, **“For the time is at hand.”** (Revelation 22:10).

Jesus Christ’s coming will take the unbelieving world by surprise and once they see Him coming (Second Coming)—they won’t have time to repent or change.

Then everyone will be “*cemented*” for all eternity in whatever state of belief or unbelief; of holiness or filthiness that they were in when Jesus comes.

Harry Ironside—

“It is a divine emphasis upon the solemn truth that as a man is found in that coming day, so shall he remain for all eternity. In this world God is calling men to repent. Here, and now, He waits to renew, by divine grace, those who commit themselves to Him. But in the eternal world there will be no power that has not been in exercise here, to make the unjust righteous or the filthy clean.”

Revelation 22:12 (NKJV)

¹² **“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work.**”

I believe that Jesus is here talking to His Church that at the time of the Rapture we will be caught up to heaven as Christians and there stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive our rewards.

Revelation 22:13 (NKJV)

¹³ **I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning* [the active source of all creation] and *the End, the First and the Last.*"**

These are titles for God—and for Jesus used in the prologue of Revelation 1 as an introduction to the true Jesus Christ:

Revelation 1:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷ Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. ⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End,*" says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Jesus created all things, and He will bring everything to His desired conclusion because He is God.

Revelation 22:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ **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.**

As I said earlier, the Garden of Eden was the original location of the Tree of Life.

Genesis 3:22, 24 (NKJV)

²² Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"...

²⁴ So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

There are those that believe that after the Fall, God placed cherubim to keep fallen man from eating from the Tree of Life and living forever in 'his' fallen state. But God didn't need to put 2 cherubs (highest angels) to keep Adam and Eve away from the Tree of Life (any angel would have been sufficient for that).

No, I and many others believe those cherubs were placed there by God—to protect the Tree of Life from the devil who wanted to destroy it to remove from man the possibility of having eternal life.

J. Vernon McGee—

"Eden was a garden of trees among which was the Tree of Life. God kept the way open for man by the shedding of blood (see Genesis 3:24)."

Revelation 2:7 (NKJV)

⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." "

Revelation 22:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ **But outside** [Yes, way outside in the farthest area of outer darkness-hell, the Lake of Fire] ***are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.***

Dogs were scavengers in the ancient world they were considered unclean—Gentiles were referred to as 'dogs' (unclean); and Paul called the Pharisees (legalists) 'dogs'.

Revelation 21:8 (NKJV)

⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Revelation 22:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

As **"the Root... of David,"** Jesus Christ brought David into existence.

As **"the Offspring of David,"** Jesus came into this world, born a Jew from David's line.

Both the deity and the humanity of Jesus are evident here.

(For a parallel, see Matthew 22:41–46).

Warren Wiersbe—

"The "morning star" announces dawn's soon arrival. Jesus Christ will come for His church as "the Morning Star." But when He returns to judge, it will be as "the Sun of righteousness" in burning fury (Malachi 4:1–3). Because God's people look for their Lord's return, they keep their lives clean and dedicated to Him (1 John 2:28–3:3)."

Revelation 22:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

This is the final invitation in the Bible for sinners to come to Jesus and be saved.

Isaiah 55:1 (NKJV)

¹ "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters [the 'Living Waters'—Jesus Christ]...

John 7:37 (NKJV)

³⁷ On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

Matthew 11:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Salvation is a free gift so—*"Come and receive it before it's too late!"*

Revelation 22:18-19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

It's no small thing to mess with God's Word which is 'perfect' and 'pure' (Psalm 19:7-8).

Deuteronomy 4:2 (NKJV)

²You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:32 (NKJV)

³²Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

Proverbs 30:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him. ⁶Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

Heretics down through the centuries have added to; taken away from; and twisted the Scriptures to their own destruction.

No true believer would ever deliberately tamper with Scripture.

Those who know and love God will treat His Word with the utmost respect—they will say with the psalmist, “*O how I love Your law! It’s my meditation all the day!*” (Psalm 119:97)

Revelation 22:20 (NKJV)

²⁰**He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!**

A true understanding of Bible prophecy should both motivate us to obey God’s Word and to share God’s invitation with a lost world—for the time is short!

Revelation 22:21 (NKJV)

²¹**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.**

The last verse of the Old Testament contains a curse: “*Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.*” ([Malachi 4:6](#))—the last words of the New Testament speak of *grace*.

John Newton—
*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

The Book of Revelation isn’t a book glorifying judgment, death and destruction at the hands of a wrathful, vengeful God.

It is a prophetic warning given from the heart of a merciful God Who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth so He can deliver them from judgment.

Right now, is the age of grace—today is the day of salvation...

The time is short—Jesus said, “**Behold I am coming quickly.**”

Come and drink from the fountain of the water of life quickly before it’s too late!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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