

# **BOOK OF REVELATION**

## **Part 30 – The River of Life and the Final Address of the Angelic Messenger and the Lord Jesus Christ in Scripture. - Chapter 22**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In Revelation Chapter 21 we saw the creation of the New Heaven and the New Earth. We also saw the New Jerusalem come down from the New Heaven to either sit upon the earth or to levitate slightly above the surface of the earth. We saw the New Jerusalem described in detail. The New Jerusalem is 1500 miles long, wide, and high making it 13, 500,000 cubic miles in size. The wall of the New Jerusalem had three gates on each side for a total of twelve gates. The foundation of the wall of the New Jerusalem, which was 222 feet high, was composed of twelve foundations, each foundation with the name of the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, representative of the New Testament saint. The foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem were adorned with twelve different stones, representative of the Old Testament saint, and virtually identical to the stones in the ephod of the High Priest of the Jewish temple. The New Earth and the New Jerusalem did not need a star to provide light, as the glory of God coming from the New Jerusalem will provide light for the whole New Earth.

### **II. EXEGESIS – FINISHING THE DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM AND THE CLOSING ADDRESS**

#### **A. VERSES 1-5: THE RIVER OF LIFE, THE TREE OF LIFE, AND LIFE ETERNAL**

*VERSE 1: 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.*

The same angel that came to the Apostle John in Revelation 21 to show him the new city continues his "guided tour" of the New Jerusalem.

There is now a "river of life" that begins at the throne of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was not revealed or seen in Revelation chapter 4. The expression "clear of crystal" implies that this river, unlike the rivers on the earth of the previous creation that was destroyed in Revelation 20:11, just prior to the Great White Throne of Judgment, is a pure river. It has no impurities and is appropriately described being "clear as crystal. A river provides water that is necessary to sustain life. This is a wonderful way to show that all life is sustained by God and without him there is no life.

*VERSE 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.*

Now there is described here is a street that runs parallel to the river of life. On which side of the river of life, is not stated here in the scripture. However on each side of this "river of life" was the tree of life. This would indicate that the tree of life spanned over the river in some fashion and was very near to the throne of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps it had roots on the both sides of the river. This would be possible, being this the New Heaven trees may be somehow different in this new creation.

Some have had difficulty with the phrase "healing of the nations" in this verse and have drawn the conclusion that this part of Revelation applies to the Millennial Kingdom since the population of the earth are mostly saints but those still in regular human bodies will still have a sin nature, and therefore could sin, and at times will need chastisement and healing from that chastisement once given. That interpretation does not fit with the context here for two reasons: (1) Only the saints in their glorified bodies will be in the New Jerusalem and the New Earth and (2) The New Earth will not have a curse upon it, because there is no sin there. The word healing in the original language is the greek word "therapeia" from which we get our word "therapy". Therapy is often used to maintain health as much as it to restore health. It is possible that this phrase could simply mean that the leaves of tree of life are to simply maintain good health.

One other question that is asked by some, "Is this the same tree of life that was in the Garden of Eden?" We do not know nor does the scripture indicate any connection.

*VERSE 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:*

The curse that had been upon the earth of the previous creation will not be placed upon this creation. The earth had been cursed by God after the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The curse had been lifted, for the most part, during the Millennial Kingdom. However the New Heaven and the New Earth will have never been or even will be cursed by God. The tree of life will be very near the throne of God the Father and of Lord Jesus Christ that will be in the New Jerusalem. The saved of the all the ages will serve God and be able to serve God without fatigue or the need for physical rest.

*VERSE 4: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

Notice here the phrase, "and they shall see his face". In the New Heaven and New Earth, just like in Heaven during the Tribulation, and on the earth during the Millennial Kingdom, the saints will see the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is in amazing contrast to mankind not being able to see God face to face without the result being physical death. We see an example of this in the book of Exodus. Moses ask God to shew him his glory and the implication here is that Moses wanted to see God's face. However if Moses had seen God's face he would have died:

*Exodus 33:18-23 "(18) And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. (19) And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. (20) And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. (21) And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: (22) And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: (23) And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.*

However after God changes our bodies from "corruptible" to "incorruptible" we will be able to view the face of God, specifically the Lord Jesus Christ without having to be protected as Moses was protected and we will have sheer joy and happiness looking upon the face of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We will have the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in our forehead, which is a reminder of his redemption of us with His own sacred blood, and is in contrast to the Mark of the Beast in Revelation 13 which was in the forehead of those who sold themselves to serve Satan.

*VERSE 5: And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

All life on earth, including mankind, is designed to have periods of daylight and periods of darkness. Our sleep periods are regulated by the production of melatonin, that the brain produces to onset sleep when there is a lack of daylight perceived by our eyes. People that work in the arctic or anartic had difficulty adjusting to the long periods of daylight and conversly long periods of darkness and there are psychological and physiological effects from departing from a natural daylight and darkness cycles.

The New Earth and the The New Jerusalem will be quite different. There will be no periods of daylight and darkness in the New Jerusalem. It will be light continuously without a period of darkness as we know it in our current creation. Perhaps our glorified bodies will not need periods of sleep. The scripture does not definitely says this but it is entirely possible. This is first mentioned in Revelation 21:23

*Revelation 21:23 "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

## **B. THE FINAL ADDRESS OF THE ANGELIC MESSENGER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

*VERSE 6: And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.*

The angel that had been showing him the New Earth and New Jerusalem now concludes the "tour" of the New Earth and the New Jerusalem with an final admonition. What the Apostle John has been shown may appear to be more fantasy than reality but it is reality, just that of the future.

God had sent this angelic messenger to the Apostle John to show him the final destiny of the saved of all the ages. The phrase "which must shortly be done" carries the same meaning that the statement made by the Lord Jesus Christ when he said in Revelation chapter 2 and 3, "I come quickly". This is not referring to the timing but the manner. When these events in the book of the Revelation begin to come to pass they will happen very rapidly, just as the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be quick when it does happen.

*VERSE 7: Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

The Lord Jesus Christ adds to what the angelic messenger said and reminds the Apostle John and the reader that the manner of His coming will be quick. The reader is once again promised a blessings for keeping or "guarding" the words in this book. The church age saint is blessed when he reads in the book of Revelation that he will not be on the earth to go through the Tribulation and the Tribulation saints will be reminded that this period of time that he must go through will not be forever and to hang on for better days are coming.

*VERSE 8: And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.*

The visions of the end times came to a conclusion in verse 5. Remember the Apostle John is still in his earthly physical body on the isle of Patmos following the conclusion of the visions of the endtime. So he, is so overwhelmed by the experience that he tries to worship the angelic messenger.

*VERSE 9: Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not:  
for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets,  
and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

The angelic messenger immediately rejects this worship just as the angelic messenger that showed the Apostle John the vision of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

***Revelaton 19:10 “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”***

This angelic messenger knows the consequences of accepting worship that belongs to God. That is what Lucifer did when desiring to take the worship that belonged to God was: eternity in the Lake of Fire. The angel here is loyal to God and did not desire that which belonged to God.

*VERSE 10: And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of  
the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*

The angel here reminds the Apostle John to not put this book away and not disclose its contents. This book is prophecy for the end times and God meant for the saints to read it and to be blessed by it. The phrase "the time is at hand" carries the meaning to soon to commence. From God's perspective these things are not delayed in commencing but will come quickly.

*VERSE 11: He that is unjust, let him be unjust still:  
and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous,  
let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

This verse is a reminder that once decided the fate of the lost and the redeemed will be sealed once eternity has begun. At that point there will be no second chances. If one wishes to be saved, after hearing God's word and being convicted by the Holy Spirit and then choose to accept Him, they will be made righteous. The one who rejects eternal salvation offered by the Lord Jesus Christ, will be lost.

*VERSE 12: And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me,  
to give every man according as his work shall be.*

Now we see that the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking following the comments of the angelic messenger. He is reminding the Apostle John and the believers that will read this book that the manner of his coming will be quick, not the timing. This the same context that the Lord Jesus used in verse 7 and in Revelation chapter 2 and 3.

The phrase "every man" here is a reference to the believer, as the entire book is primarily to believers. The believer will receive reward according to his works after salvation. This saints of the Old Testament and the Church Age will receive their reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ that we have studied previously.

*VERSE 13: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is once again reminding the reader, now that the vision is complete of the end times and the scene of eternity is complete, that He is "all and in all". This is the fourth and final time in the book of the Revelation that the Lord Jesus Christ uses the phrase, "I am Alpha and Omega." The other places in Revelation that they are used is twice in Revelation chapter 1, right before and after his unveiling and once in Revelation chapter 21 following the creation of the New Heaven and the New Earth and the final and fixed state of eternity future is initially described. So it is appropriate that in His closing address that he uses that phrase.

*VERSE 14: Blessed are they that do his commandments,*

Now the angelic messenger is once again speaking and proclaims an eternal truth here in this verse and the next verse.

Who are the ones who do his commandments? The saints are the ones who do his commandments. The saints are identified in other places in the book of the Revelation with keeping God's commandments. Throughout scripture a characteristic of the saint, one who has accepted Christ as Saviour, was that he should endeavor to keep His commandments.,

***Revelation 12:17 "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."***

***Revelation 14:2 "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."***

*..that they may have right to the tree of life,  
and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

The saints will have the "right" to the tree of life. They have that right, not through keeping the commandments, but because of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and the One who kept the all the commandments of the law for them.

*VERSE 15: For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers,  
and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

Now the angel draws a comparison of the final state of the saints to the final state of the lost. At this point they are described as just "being without". Sadly, the lost, in torment in the Lake of Fire, following the Great White Throne of Judgment in Revelation 20 now have no hope to enjoy what the believer will enjoy in eternity: Being in a beautiful and perfect creation and most of all in fellowship with a loving God who created them.

*VERSE 15 - Continued*

According to the Noah Websters 1828 Dictionary, the first meaning of the word "dog" is "1. A species of quadrupeds, belonging to the genus Canis, of many varieties, as the mastiff, the hound, the spaniel, the shepherds dog, the terrier, the harrier, the bloodhound, &c.". This is a reference to the animal that is often described as "man's best friend" and a domesticated pet to many who provide comfort and companionship. However the the word "dog" has a fourth meaning of "4. A term of reproach or contempt given to a man.". Dogs are often used in today's society to describe people, and sometimes inanimate objects, who have very undesirable characteristics. These "dogs" are the lost who are in the Lake of Fire for all eternity. Notice also that the sins that God has the most to say about in the Old Testament are also there in the Lake of Fire with them. Sadly, these are without hope or redemption for all eternity as the time of their choice is long past.

*VERSE 16: I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.*

The Lord Jesus here is once again speaking and it is final address to the Apostle John in the book of the Revelation. The word "angel" is defined by the context as a messenger. The Apostle John here is the messenger, being that the vision has been given to him and he has been commanded to write down in a book what he has seen and then commanded to send it to seven churches in what is today Asia Minor, which is the nation of Turkey. This message was to be given to the churches about what was to come in the future, from the time perspective of the church age.

*Revelation 1:10-11 "(10) I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, (11) Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."*

*...I am the root and the offspring of David,  
and the bright and morning star.*

According to the Noah Webster 1828 Dictionary the word "root" means "That part of a plant which enters and fixes itself in the earth, and serves to support the plant in an erect position, while by means of its fibrils it imbibes nutriment for the stem, branches and fruit." Without a root, a plant has no life. In the Lord Jesus Christ, King David, and his descendants had their spiritual foundation: the covenant that God made with David.

*Romans 1:3 "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;"*

This is the only reference in the scripture to the Lord Jesus Christ being the "bright and morning star". This is in sheer contrast to Satan being called "Son of the Morning" in Isaiah 14. The Lord Jesus Christ will even brighten the New Heaven and the New Earth

*Revelation 21:23 "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."*

*VERSE 17: And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*

The angelic messenger now concludes the address to the Apostle John in the last few verses of the book of the Revelation. The angel testifies here that the Holy Spirit is inviting all men to "come", that is to accept Christ as Saviour.

*1 Timothy 2:3-4 "(3) For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."*

Not only is the Holy Spirit inviting all men to "come" but the bride is inviting them to come. This is a clear reference to the "bride of Christ", the saints of all the ages. The saints of all the ages want more to "come" and accept Christ as Saviour.

*Revelation 21:9 "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."*

*...And let him that heareth say, Come.*

The readers of the vision, especially after reading the vision laid out in the book of the Revelation, are even more motivated to say come and accept Christ as Saviour.

*...And let him that is athirst come.  
And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

Most of all, the lost are urged, with intensity, to "come" and accept Christ as Saviour. The reference "water of life" is a clear reference to the life offered by the Lord Jesus Christ by his finished work on the cross. He made reference to this when dealing with the Samaritan woman about Himself being the water of life.

*John 4:14 "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."*

Notice that this water cannot be earned by man. It is the gift of God to man!!

*VERSE 18: For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:*

This verse and the next verse are often some of the most controversial passages in the scriptures. The Bible, is God's word and contains the truth for all the ages and contains the greatest truth of all: Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ and his work on the cross alone.

***2 Timothy 3:14-17 "(14) But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; (15) And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (16) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.***

This is one of the strongest warnings given in all of the scripture. The key to understanding is the phrase, "prophecy of this book". The first part of the warning here in verse 18. If anyone reads the book of the Revelation and tries to add to it, God will add to them the terrible plagues written in the book of the Revelation. We do not fully understand this passage but suffice it to say that the penalty for tampering with the content of the book of Revelation, the close of the canon of the scripture, is very severe. Which plagues God will add to that one and in what severity only God knows.

*VERSE 19: 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.*

The second part of the warning is even more frightening and has greater consequences. It clearly states that if anyone removes anything out of this prophecy that God will remove their name out of the book of life, they will never dwell in the New Jerusalem, and will never enjoy the blessings promised in the New Heaven and the New Earth.

One may wonder if this passage is teaching that the believer would have his salvation taken away if he removes anything from the book of the Revelation. The answer has to be this: The true believer who has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, being that they have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, would not even have the desire to tamper with the contents of the book of the Revelation. Therefore only the lost who have not accepted Christ as Saviour, would wish to tamper with the book of the Revelation since they would be uncomfortable with its contents.

*VERSE 20: He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.*

Again as in previous passages, the phrase "I come quickly" refers to the manner not the timing and is the last time that phrase is mentioned in the book of the Revelation. The angel is quoting the Lord Jesus Christ here. When His coming finally commences it will happen with amazing speed and there will be no delay.

*...Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

The Apostle John here makes his brief closing remarks as the scribe for the book of the Revelation in this verse and the next verse. The Apostle John is in complete agreement with the angelic messenger: The Lord Jesus Christ will come and nothing will prevent it.

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

What a way to close the book of the Revelation and the canon of the scripture. God's grace is with the saint, not only by accepting His eternal salvation but in his life everyday. We have much to be thankful for with God's amazing grace.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

- Just as the tree of life will sustain life in the New Jerusalem and the New Earth, God is the source of our life in Christian walk.
- The temptations and weakness of our bodies that we have to endure now will not be forever. God will give us new bodies that will not get sick or wear out. Praise God.
- We should not do what the Apostle John did: want to worship God's messenger. We can appreciate our pastor, honor our pastor, love our pastor, and pray for him but we are not to worship or put him on a pedestal, so to speak.
- The lost will have their eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire. We should invite them to "come" and accept Christ before it is too late.
- The believer will have their eternal reward in the New Earth and New Jerusalem. We should want the lost to "come" and accept Christ as Saviour.
- Tampering with God's word is very dangerous and should never be attempted.
- As time goes on and gets worse we can definitely agree with the Apostle John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus".