

Revelation 22 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

The River and the Tree of Life

22-1 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

In John 4, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman about the living water that will remove all thirst. There are other references to the water of life in the New Testament. John 4:10 *"Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."* John 4:14 says *"but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."* It is the water that gives eternal life. John 7:37-39 says 37 *"Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified."*

The water is clear and is "coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb". As you would expect, God has provided us with pure uncontaminated water.

"Its waters are literal waters, of a nature and quality answering to that of the golden city to which they belong. Man on earth never knew such waters, as men on earth never knew such a city; but the city is a sublime reality." (Seiss)

22-2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

This verse speaks of the tree of life, bearing 12 kinds of fruit. The Bible begins with the Tree of Life and here in the last chapter of the Bible is the Tree of Life again. Genesis 2:9 tells us about the Tree of Life in the garden. The presence of the Tree of Life is one of the similarities between the garden in Genesis and the place that John is describing in Revelation 22.

Below are things that are mentioned in Genesis and then again in the book of Revelation.

	<u>Genesis</u>	<u>Revelation</u>
Death	(2:17) – You will surely die	21:4 – No more death
Sin	(3:6) - she took of its fruit and ate	22:3 – No more curse (sin)
Night	(1:3) the darkness he called Night	22:5 – No more night
Pain	(3:16) - I will surely multiply your pain	21:4 – No more pain
Satan	(3:1) – Satan appears.	20:10 – Satan is thrown in the Lake of Fire
Tree of Life	(2:9) – in the garden	22:2 – In the middle of New Jerusalem

This is how John Walvoord sees it: "The visual picture presented is that the river of life flows down through the middle of the city, and the tree is large enough to span the river, so that the river is in the midst of the street, and the tree is on both sides of the river."

Seeing water (the river) and fruit in heaven makes you think, We will eat and drink in heaven? Luke 24:41-43 and John 21:12-14 tell us that our resurrected Lord ate with His disciples. When the angels visited Abraham in Genesis 18:6-8, they ate with Abraham. We read in Revelation 19:9 of the marriage supper with Christ. It sure sounds as though we will eat and drink in heaven.

It says that the leaves are for "*healing the nations*". "The word for 'healing' is therapeian, from which the English word therapeutic is derived, almost directly transliterated from the Greek. Rather than meaning 'healing,' it should be understood as 'health-giving,' as the word in its root meaning has the idea of serving or ministering." (Walvoord)

22:3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. 5 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, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

If we go back to the original sin or curse, we know that there will be no more sin here. Without sin, the curse of death has been removed also. Paul told us that "*the wages of sin is death*" in Romans 6:23. I am reminded of the praise song, "Soon and Very Soon". The lyrics include seeing God, no more crying and no more dying there. What an amazing place this will be! According to verse 3 of Revelation 22, we will not be celebrating constantly but we will be serving God and Jesus for what they have done for us. Complete God-centered service, no questioning just love-filled service.

In Exodus 33:20-23, Moses is warned against looking at God's face. God told Moses "*You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!*" Here in New Jerusalem, we all shall see God and we are able to look directly into His face. Just as it was in the Beginning, before Satan, before sin entered the world.

"It is the chief blessing of heaven, the cream of heaven, the heaven of heaven, that the saints shall there see Jesus." (Spurgeon)

We shall have "*His name on our foreheads*", there will be no doubt of who we serve. It will be written for all to see. There will be no more night. God will be our source of light. When Moses would leave God's presence he would put on a veil because the "skin of Moses' face was shining". Exodus 34:34-35. Moses' face was reflecting the light from God. We won't need any artificial source of light because we will have the amazing light from God.

22:6 And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. 7 "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

The angel that is showing John around in this vision, reminds John that what he is seeing is “faithful and true”. Even though he can’t believe his eyes, he should believe his eyes. What he is seeing is real and will come true. The angel is reminding John that all of these things were prophecied about and will take place soon. The words like “soon” and “quickly” are relative terms. We have already seen that to God a thousand years is like a day to God.

Prophecy is from God and it is to be tested by whether or not it comes true. If it is truly from God, it will always come true. Verse 7 tells us that if we heed or trust the words of the prophecy of this book, we will be blessed.

*22:8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 But he *said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.”*

Once again John becomes overcome by what he has seen and heard. We know that this is an angel because he tells John to get up because the angel is a fellow servant. The angel tells him to worship God. Throughout the Bible, we can tell whether the angel is truly an angel or Jesus from whether the angel tells the person to get up.

"If it was wrong to worship this glorious heavenly messenger, in and through whom came forth the very voice of Jesus, how can it be right to worship and pray to the Virgin Mary, to whom is assigned no such dignity or office? The impulse and intention may be devout and good, but it is a great mistake." (Seiss)

The Final Message

*22:10 And he *said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”*

In Daniel 8:26, Daniel is told to seal up the prophecy. Since the prophecy in Revelation is relevant for today, this book isn't sealed. Even though we cannot predict the time, it is important for us to know what will happen. It provides us with the understanding that God is in control, that God will punish those that have harmed His people and it gives us encouragement to “fight the good fight.”

12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Since we do not know the time and day, then we are to be prepared for His return. He is coming quickly, it is believed that the word translated as quickly can be interpreted as “suddenly”. We are told by Jesus in the parable of the bridegroom that the bridegroom was a long time coming. The virgins were to keep prepared for his coming. This parable is about Jesus’ return and should urge us to be prepared.

He will be bringing to every man according to what he had done. Even before you get to this point, God has given the non-believer judgment and eternal damnation. For the believer, just being in "Heaven" would be amazing but it says "according to what he had done." James 2:20 says "But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?" You can't work yourself into heaven and the blessings associated with it but you still need to serve God out of love for Him.

Verse 13 gives different attributes or names of the Christ. It shows that He is infinite. He is "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." All ways of says that He is infinite. *John 1:1-2 says "1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning."* Jesus was there in the beginning and He will be here throughout all time. Revelation 22 is the beginning of eternity.

22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

All but the King James version say "Blessed are those who wash their robes," the King James version says "Blessed are those who keep my commandments". This is most likely nothing but a transcription error. In the Greek, HOIPLUNONTESTASSTOLAS means "washed their robes" and HOIPOIOUNTESTASENTOLAS means "do His commandments". A case could be made for either word in this verse. Washed robes could symbolize being unblemished or sinless and doing His commandments would leave you unblemished or sinless.

Inside the gates is good and outside the gates is bad. I struggle with evil at this point in time. How can there be evil outside the Lake of Fire?

"The verse does not intend to teach that in the eternal state all manner of wicked men will be living just outside the heavenly city. It simply describes the future with the imagery of the present." (Mounce)

This verse is about the world today and not some future date. Man is going to end up in the Lake of Fire or in heaven. Your faith today determines where you will spend your eternity.

22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

Jesus sent His angel to testify on His behalf just as a king would send a messenger on his behalf. The messenger would have the same authority as the king. So anything that the angel said was as true as if Jesus himself had said it.

"Christ, as the morning star, heralds the coming day in His role as the One who comes for the church in the rapture." (Walvoord)

22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

This is an open invitation to receive salvation from Jesus. He will not exclude anyone who comes to Him. An invitation is both an opportunity and a responsibility. If we decline an invitation, we have only ourselves to blame. This invitation is always available in our church. Anytime or anywhere, all you have to do is hear the message and have a thirst to know the Christ.

"A similar invitation is extended in Isaiah 55:1. The invitation to come is an urgent command, for the day will arrive when it is too late to come. Now is the day of grace. The hour of judgment is impending." (Walvoord)

22:18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

What John has written in Revelation is difficult to understand. There are warnings about adding to the Book of Revelation, as well as the Bible. When I think about the Book of Mormon, New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (Jehovah Witness) and the additional books in the Catholic Bible, I wonder how their church leaders will be judged.

*22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

As a conclusion, John is not only looking forward to Jesus' second coming, he is praying or asking for it. He was ready for death or Christ's return. He has endured a lot as a result of his relationship with Jesus. John wrote the book of Revelation near the end of his life while still in exile on the Isle of Patmos. He was the only one of the original 12 apostles that died of old age.

This ending is similar to the endings of the letters of Paul. In 1 Timothy 6:21, Paul writes "Grace be with you all."

"Whatever you may miss, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you. In whatsoever points you or any of us may fail, may we never come short of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Spurgeon)