

# Ministry of Grace

## Revelation Chapter 22

<sup>1</sup>Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup>through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup>No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

<sup>6</sup>And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." <sup>7</sup>"And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

<sup>8</sup>I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me,

<sup>9</sup>but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." <sup>10</sup>And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. <sup>11</sup>Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."

<sup>12</sup>"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. <sup>13</sup>I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

<sup>14</sup>Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. <sup>15</sup>Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

<sup>16</sup>"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." <sup>17</sup>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 desires take the water of life without price. <sup>18</sup>I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, <sup>19</sup>and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

<sup>20</sup>He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

<sup>21</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. [ESV]

## Notes

### Revelation 22:1

**<sup>1</sup>Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb**

“**bright**” – *lampros*, from *lampō*, meaning “to shine.” In verse 16, referring to Christ as the bright and morning star, it is translated as “bright.” In reference to the seven angels in **Revelation 17:16** having clothing clean and bright, it is translated as “bright.”

Inside the city, flowing out of God’s throne is the river of the water of life. In the previous chapter, in verse 7, we saw the reference to those who thirst being given to drink from the water of life. Now we see that water whose source is God Himself! This river is as pure and clean as God, and it is as bright as crystal. Like other aspects of the city (walls of jewel studded diamond and the city of transparent gold) the river of life reflects Gods glory like a sparkling, shimmering crystal.

### Revelation 22: 2

**<sup>2</sup>through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.**

“**street**” – from the Greek word *plateias*, meaning “a wide plat or place.” It is a reference to a wide open, flat plain, more like a large, open square than to a street. This is the same word used in the previous chapter, verse 21 where it was also translated as “street.”

“**on either side**” – Literally this is “here and there.”

“**through the middle ... also on either side of the river**” – One possible way to envision this is to see the river having two forks with a wide expanse between. On the banks of both forks of the river are trees referred to as “the tree of life” as was in the midst of the Garden of Eden. Compare this to “the river” in the Garden of Eden which became four rivers:

A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. (**Genesis 2:10-14**) [ESV]

“**the tree of life**” – Not only was this tree in the Garden of Eden (from which Adam and Eve were denied access after the fall), but this tree is today in Paradise (**Revelation 2:7**), and will exist in abundance in the New Jerusalem.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. (**Revelation 2:7**) [ESV]

“**each month**” – This has caused many expositors to pause. Some say that this is a description of the millennial city since there is no time measurement in the eternal state.

Others claim that this is an anthropomorphism implying “continually” rather than a specific reference to a measure of time (month). Still others say that even in the eternal state there will be measurement of time passage but that it will be without end.

“**healing**” – This is another word which has caused discussion. Since there is no more curse, hence no more sickness or death, why do the people need healing? Again, this is used by some to prove that this is a reference to the millennial Jerusalem. The word “healing,” however, is taken from the Greek word *therapeian*, which in its root meaning signifies “to wait upon, minister to, or render voluntary service to.” Hence, this word properly means that the leaves of the tree of life are for the service of the people. Apparently, these leaves will be desirable to eat just as the fruit is and will be available for all to partake of.

### **Revelation 22:3**

**<sup>3</sup>No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.**

Literally, “And every curse will not be any longer ...” The curse that God placed on the earth, on the serpent, on Eve, and on Adam will no longer be in effect in the eternal state.

“**the throne of God**” – God’s full essence will exist on His throne. Currently, this is true of God’s throne room in heaven (see chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation), but it will exist in the New Jerusalem.

### **Revelation 22:4**

**<sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.**

“**They shall see His face**” – All residents of the New Jerusalem will have full access to the presence of God without fear of condemnation or death. We will be able to behold Him in all his glory.

“**His name will be on their foreheads**” – We will be eternally identified as God’s possession, unlike those who are eternally in the lake of fire.

### **Revelation 22:5**

**<sup>5</sup>And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.**

“**Night**” – Night is the time period when there is little or no light. This situation will never exist in the New Jerusalem because God’s glory will be there and it will shine throughout the entire city. Therefore, there will be no need for a lamp or the light of the sun.

“**And will shall reign**” – The fact that God’s servants will reign with Him implies that there will be subjects to reign over but we are never told who these are.

## Revelation 22: 6

**<sup>6</sup>And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."**

“Then he said to me” – This is still the angel talking to John (see **Revelation 21:9** for a description of this angel).

“These words are trustworthy and true.” – Trustworthy is from *pistos*, which means “worthy of belief” or “trustworthy.” This expression is the same as what was spoken by God Himself in the previous chapter:

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

**(Revelation 21:5)** [ESV]

“spirits of the prophets” – Some manuscripts have “holy prophets” which appears to be an inferior reading.

“And the Lord ... sent His angel ...” – This is reminiscent of the opening words of this book:

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,

**(Revelation 1:1)** [ESV]

## Revelation 22:7

**<sup>7</sup>"And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."**

“soon” – From *tachu*, which means “quickly, speedily, soon, or suddenly.” It is the base of our word tachometer, which is a device which measures speed of an engine.

## Revelation 22:8, 9

**<sup>8</sup>I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, <sup>9</sup>but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."**

Once again, John appears to be so overwhelmed that he is driven to his knees in worship and reverence. And, once again, the angel forbids John to worship him, identifying himself as a fellow servant and commanding him to worship God. This is similar to John’s experience after the judgment of Babylon:

And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. **(Revelation 19:9, 10)** [ESV]

## Revelation 22: 10

<sup>10</sup>And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

“Do not seal ...” – John was told in **Revelation 1:19** to write. He is now told not to seal up these things. A scroll that is sealed cannot be read until the seal is broken and the scroll unrolled. John’s writing is to be open to all. He is to proclaim this message to all who will hear.

“near” – This is from the Greek word *engus*, which means “near or close at hand.” It is been a reality for the church since the first century that the coming of our Lord can be at any moment. That does not make it less likely for Him to come at any time now in the twenty-first century; it makes it even more likely.

## Revelation 22:11

<sup>11</sup>Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."

“still” – From the Greek word *eti*, which could be translated as “still” but it could also mean “yet more.”

On first appearance this verse seems out of place. However, if you look at it in context of what John was just told, not to seal up the words, we can understand. The effect of hearing the truth of God’s word is two-fold. On those who reject His word there is a continuation (perhaps an intensification) of their sinful ways, and on those who receive the word and believe it, there is a continuance (perhaps a growth) of righteousness and holiness. The other sense in which this verse can be taken is that in the eternal state he who rejected the truth will be eternally unrighteous and filthy, whereas he who accepts God’s word will be eternally righteous and holy.

This is clearly contrasting those who reject the message with those who receive the message for “unjust” is the opposite of “righteous” and “filthy” is the opposite of “holy.”

## Revelation 22:12, 13

<sup>12</sup>"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. <sup>13</sup>I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

“soon” – From *tachu*, the same word as used in verse seven, meaning “quickly, speedily, soon, or suddenly.”

“recompense” – This is from the Greek word *misthos*, which refers to that which has been earned. Hence it applies to those who reject God’s message and will, therefore, be judged according to their unrighteousness and will be paid by being cast into the lake of fire. It also applies to those who believe, accepting Christ’s payment for their sins, and will be paid in the form of crowns for the things that have been done for God.

In light of the fact that John is to proclaim the message contained in this book, and the finalizing of unrighteousness through unbelief, as well as the finalizing of righteousness

through faith, God now gives the final warning. Christ will return soon to remove the righteous ones in the church at the rapture, and He will return soon to judge the wicked ones at His second coming.

“**beginning**” – This is from the Greek word *archē*, which denotes “an originating act or cause.” It could be translated here as “source.”

“**end**” – This is from *telos*, from the verb *tello* meaning “to set out for a definite point or goal.” Hence *telos* refers to “the end point.” Hence, Christ is saying that He is the source from which all things originate and the target, or endpoint of all life.

### **Revelation 22:14, 15**

**<sup>14</sup>Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. <sup>15</sup>Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.**

The blessedness of the faithful will be the right to enter into the gates of the eternal city and partake of the tree of life. The unbelieving will be outside, in the lake of fire. Not only will we enjoy the fellowship of God in all His glory and holiness, but we will experience the total absence of anyone who practices wickedness, sinfulness, and deceit. No more will we lament that the wicked prosper. No more will we suffer from the actions of those who reject God. Not only will the curse be gone, those who are unrighteous will be gone as well. We will be enveloped in holiness.

### **Revelation 22:16**

**<sup>16</sup>“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”**

This same angel, before whom John has mistakenly fallen to worship on several occasions, is the messenger who God sent specifically to John to deliver this message so that John can deliver it to the churches. The following are other possible references to John’s guided tour of heaven.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, (**Revelation 1:1**) [ESV]

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” (**Revelation 5:2**) [ESV]

Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, (**Revelation 11:1**) [ESV]

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, (**Revelation 17:1**) [ESV]

But the angel said to me, "Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. (**Revelation 17:7**) [ESV]

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." (**Revelation 21:9**) [ESV]

“**root**” – From the Greek word *hridza* (from which we get the botanical term rhizome), which refers to the root of a plant.

“**descendant**” – Is the Greek word *genos*, from the verb *ginomai*, meaning “to become.” Hence, *genos* refers to “a descendent.”

“**bright morning star**” – Literally this reads, “the Star, the Bright and Morning one.” There are other references to this Star:

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth. (**Numbers 24:17**) [ESV]

because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high (**Luke 1:78** spoken by Zacharias, the father of John the baptizer) [ESV]

And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, (**2Peter 1:19**) [ESV]

And I will give him the morning star. (**Revelation 2:28** spoken by Christ to the church at Thyatira) [ESV]

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. (**John 1:9**) [ESV]

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (**John 8:12**) [ESV]

As we know, the darkest part of the night is just before the dawn. At certain times of the year the planet Venus appears as the brightest star in the sky just before the rising of the sun. It is a harbinger of the coming brightness of the sun and full illumination of the daytime.

## **Revelation 22:17**

**<sup>17</sup>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 desires take the water of life without price.**

“**Come**” – From the Greek *erchomai* which means “to come.” This word is in the imperative mood, implying a command, and it is expressed as a second-person singular verb. Hence it means “You (singular) come!” This is more than just an invitation as it has a sense of urgency. Now that the message has been declared; now that the judgments have been revealed; now that the true glory of our God and His eternal reward for all who would come have been revealed, the message delivered clearly to each and every individual is, “Come now before it is too late!”

There are some scholars who believe that the first “Come!” is addressed toward Christ, seeking to have Him come back soon, whereas the second “Come!” is from Christ inviting sinners to come to the water of life. However, it is more likely that this is a picture of the Holy Spirit and the church encouraging people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior.

“**the bride**” – The church is the Bride of Christ. It is our responsibility to deliver the message of the Spirit of God to the entire world.

“**the one who hears**” – Whoever hears and receives the gospel message of salvation from the judgment of God Almighty should immediately be filled with the desire to share the wonderful news of freedom and glory with others.

“**one who who thirsts ... the one who desires**” – This is a reference to the one who desires the water of life. That is, the one who wants the truth, and welcomes the One who is Truth. This is an open invitation to all who will accept salvation.

“**water of life**” – For more information on the water of life refer to this author’s notes on **Revelation 21:7**.

## **Revelation 22:18, 19**

**<sup>18</sup>I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, <sup>19</sup>and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.**

Clearly the warnings given here apply to the book of Revelation specifically, but they may also be interpreted to apply to the entirety of Holy Scripture, particularly when combined with other passages:

You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. (**Deuteronomy 4:2**) [ESV]

Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it. (**Deuteronomy 12:32**) [ESV]

Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar. (**Proverbs 30:5, 6**) [ESV]

“**if**” – This is translated from the Greek word *ean* which is one of two words translated “if.” The other is *ei*. Here’s what *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* says about these words:

*ei* expresses a condition which is merely hypothetical and separate from all experience in indicating a mere subjective possibility and differing from *éán*, which implies a condition which experience must determine, i.e., an objective possibility referring always to something future.

The use of *ean* and the verb in the subjunctive mood (as in this verse) identifies the structure of a third class conditional clause in Greek. It is a condition that can possible happen and is left up to time to determine. This could be translated as, “If anyone should add to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book”

Notice the play on words in these verses; “If anyone should add ... God will add...” and “if anyone should take away ... God will take away ...”

“**share**” – This is the Greek word *meros* which refers to “an allotment, a portion, or a share.” Some would say that this implies that someone can lose their salvation if they intentionally tamper with God’s Word. I do not believe, however, that a true believer would ever intentionally tamper with God’s Word.

### **Revelation 22:20**

**<sup>20</sup>He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!**

The book of Revelation, and the Bible as a whole, closes with a promise and an affirmation. Christ promises that He is coming quickly. This is the word *tachu* again, meaning “quickly, speedily, with haste.” It does not mean “soon” although that is how this verse is sometimes interpreted. Christ is promising us that when He comes things will occur quickly; “**in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.**” (**I Corinthians 15:52**)

John’s response to Christ’s proclamation, as is that of every true believer, is a petition of affirmation. We should all have our gaze cast heavenward looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ!

### **Revelation 22:21**

**<sup>21</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.**

John’s final parting comment is that God’s grace will be showered upon all readers of this book. May we all read ... understand ... believe ... and testify!

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