

THE RIVER AND TREE OF LIFE

BIBLE TEXT : Revelation 22:1-21.

LESSON 467 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Revelation 22: 1-21

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.

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.

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:

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

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.

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.

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

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.

9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy

Bible References:

I Internal View of the New Jerusalem

1. The River of Life flows from the Throne, Revelation 22:1;

Genesis 2:10

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

Psalms 46:4

4 *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High.

Ezekiel 47:1.

1 Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house *stood toward* the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south *side* of the altar.

2. The Tree of Life grows on each side of the River, Revelation 22:2

Genesis 2:9

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

Ezekiel 47:12

12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

Revelation 2:7.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

3. There is no curse of sin and no night in that city, Revelation 22:3-5

I Corinthians 15:26

26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

Revelation 21:25.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

II Eternal Verity of the Inspired Word

1. The things shown must shortly be done, Revelation 22:6, 7

Revelation 3:11

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Matthew 24:27, 44.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

2. John mistakenly worships the angel who is one of the prophets, and is told to worship God, Revelation 22:8, 9

Revelation 19:10.

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.

3. This Book is not to be sealed, for the time is at hand,

fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

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

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.

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

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

14 Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

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

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

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:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book

Revelation 22:10, 11

Ecclesiastes 11:3

3 If the clouds be full of rain, they empty *themselves* upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

Daniel 12:4.

4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

4. Jesus again states the nearness of His coming and gives promises of reward for the obedient, Revelation 22:12-16

Matthew 16:27

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Luke 12:37

37 Blessed *are* those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

John 14:2, 3

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

II Timothy 2:12

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*: if we deny *him*, he also will deny us:

I Peter 5:4

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Revelation 1:6

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 21:4.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

III Final Invitation

1. The Spirit and the Bride join in the invitation to the whosoever will, Revelation 22:17

Luke 12:8

8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God

John 4:14

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.

Acts 10:43.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

2. A final warning is given against tampering with the Word, Revelation 22:18, 19

Deuteronomy 4:2

2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:32

32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Matthew 24:35

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

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.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

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

II Timothy 2: 16, 17.

16 But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

3. The final words of Jesus, and the Apostle's response, Revelation 22: 20, 21

Hebrews 9:28.

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Notes:

A Glimpse Within the New Jerusalem

In the study of Revelation 21, we had a brief description of that most glorious city, called the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. This described the city's outside appearance, size, and construction. In our lesson today we get a little glimpse of the inside of this celestial city.

It is indeed difficult for us to form right conceptions of things so much above and beyond all present experiences. When Paul recovered from his visions of Paradise and the third Heaven, he said that it was not permitted of him to tell the transcendent things which he saw and heard. And so, John brought to such a view of the sublime palaces of the saints; he does not tell us all about its eternal economy. But try to imagine such a grand and glorious city as he has described. Try to picture the civic centre, or the very capitol within the capital city. Here at the very focal centre is a Throne occupied by God and the Lamb. No descriptive detail is given of this Throne, but knowing that it is the everlasting Throne from which God the Father and God the Son forever rule and reign among the beloved saints, we must deduct that the beauty of this Throne was beyond description.

The River of Life

This is a Throne from which blessings flow, so John consequently sees a River of Life flowing from it. The soul of the Psalmist must have caught a little glimpse of this blessed time when he wrote:

"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures" (Psalm 36:3).

"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early" (Psalm 46:4, 5).

It is plainly stated in our text that in the new creation there is to be no more sea. Earthly rivers flow into seas or oceans, but here we note another of the many mystical things of this celestial city: we are not told whither the river flows -- but it flows on in its life-giving purity throughout eternity.

The Tree of Life

It appears that this pure and crystal river divided a great street, the dimensions of which are not told. On each side of this river is the marvellous tree that bears twelve manner of fruit and yields this fruit every month, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations.

Perhaps we wonder if glorified saints eat food in this Holy City; and why it is necessary to have a healing for the nations. First, may we say that the Lord Jesus Himself refers several times to eating and drinking in the Kingdom of Glory. Also the Saviour, after His glorious resurrection, did eat. One of the grandest themes of

the future referred to in the Revelation is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The implication is that there will surely be eating in this eternal city. The monthly product of the Tree of Life renders a fruit that we might term "life" fruit, which no doubt is far superior to even the angels' food, of which the Children of Israel ate.

As for the healing benefit of the leaves of this tree, the meaning is not that the nations are full of sickness and ailment, for the last remains of the curse which brought sickness into the world are gone. The meaning rather is that of preservation of health and comfort and not that diseases then exist to be removed.

The Closing Remarks

For the third time in the Book of Revelation, it is repeated that these presentations are "faithful and true" (**Revelation 19:9** 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. **Revelation 21:5** 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. **Revelation 22:6** 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). In the opening of this Book, its purpose is stated: "To shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Revelation 1:1). Here at the conclusion it is repeated that "the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done" (Revelation 22:6). Jesus Himself confirms this in the 16th verse by saying: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." Thus the very highest authority confirms the message given unto the Apostle John. Also at the beginning of this Book of Revelation there is a promise of blessing for him who "readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (Revelation 1:3). And now at the close we hear the voice of the Lord Himself from the Throne in Heaven saying: "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:7). All this is in addition to the seven-times-repeated admonition, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

In the closing of this Book, the summing up of God's Holy Word, come the oft-repeated words of warning: "Behold, I come quickly"; "The time is at hand"; "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Oh, the everlasting love, mercy, and goodness of our Saviour to provide salvation at such infinite cost, to give us a glimpse of the glory that awaits, and then to warn and admonish the whole world to make preparation, for the time is at hand!

So profound were the revelations and so wonderful was the knowledge and understanding of the angel which communicated these things, that John was filled with adoration and twice he fell down before the feet of the angel to worship him. The angel immediately stopped him, stating: "For I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets...worship God" (Revelation 19:10; 22:9). Thus we see that it would be entirely wrong to worship any saint or angel, for only Deity is worthy this honour.

The sayings of this Book were not to be sealed or kept secret, the reason being, "The time is at hand." In other words, all expediency should be used to publish the Gospel, the truths, and the judgments of God that are coming. There is surely a time coming when the seal of permanence is to be set upon the spiritual condition of each one: he who is unjust shall remain unjust forever and he who is righteous shall remain righteous forever. There is

always a twofold effect from the preaching of the divine Word. It is quick and powerful and never leaves men where it finds them. It either makes them better or it makes them worse. If it does not absolve, it the more condemns. If it does not soften to penitence, it hardens to iniquity. If it is not a savour of life unto life, it is a savour of death unto death.

The Final Invitation

Knowing that the time of the end is near at hand and such glorious events await those who prepare, the Bride of Christ joins with the Spirit of God to extend a grand invitation. It has ever been the work of the Holy Spirit to secure a Bride for the Lamb of God, much as it was for the servant of Abraham to secure a bride for Abraham's son, Isaac. Today the Bride of Christ is in her preparation. There will come a time when the "wife hath made herself ready." But now the main interest of the Bride is not only to be ready herself, but to see that others are added to make up the complete Bride of Christ so that that time may come quickly. The Spirit and the Bride are not only longing to see the fulfilment of this time, but they are working jointly in extending the invitation to "whosoever will." To him that is athirst the invitation is, "Come...take the water of life freely." The provision is made for every human soul by which he can be saved; but man is a free moral agent and must exercise his free power of choice and will to come. God has surely done His part. The provision is made. The invitation is given. He that willeth may come and drink of the Water of Life freely.

Final Warning

From this invitation we move solemnly on to the very last words of our Lord and Saviour in His Holy Book. Final words of warning are given against altering the Word and the message that He has sent to man. To mutilate this Holy Word of God, which charts the course to life eternal, is to forfeit salvation and all its eternal benefits.

Once again, and for the last time, comes the message, "Surely I come quickly. Amen." In a spontaneous answer to this statement, the Apostle John sounds forth the cry as from the heart of the Bride, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." All Christendom awaits and longs for the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is no greater promise in all the Word of God than these last words of Jesus to His people. If the whole creation groans and travails together in pain for the manifestation of the sons of God, how much more those sons of God themselves long for that day when they shall come into their inheritance and see their blessed Redeemer face to face.

Can you say you are truly looking for and desiring the glorious return of Jesus Christ? is there a spontaneous answer that rises from the depth of your heart, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"? It is the fervent desire and constant prayer of the Sunday School department, as well as the Apostolic Faith as a body of believers, that you may be among the Bride of Christ to enjoy forever and ever the eternal blessings about which we have been studying.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the internal view of the New Jerusalem as seen by John.
2. In what way is the River of Life different from earthly rivers?
3. What distinguishes the Tree of Life from any earthly tree?
4. What words of warning are repeated several times in this chapter?
5. To whom is the final invitation given? By whom is it given?
6. What warning is made regarding altering God's Word?
7. What is the response from the heart of the Apostle at the final words of Jesus?