

Revelation Lesson 22

Revelation Chapter 22

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

Website: <http://www.kjvbiblestudies.net>

Email: mail@kjvbiblestudies2.net

Introduction: The final chapter in the Bible gives further descriptions of conditions in the eternal kingdom. It concludes with Jesus Himself promising blessings. He promises to come quickly. Included is a warning against tampering with the Word of God.

I. The River of Life

Rev 22:1 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.

After having described the structure of the New Jerusalem in the previous chapter, John now gives further details regarding its character. John saw “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

Several things are significant about this river.

- (1) First is its purity. The thought literally is that this river of life is sparkling clear. No pollution will exist in that day.
- (2) It flows directly out of the throne of God and the Lamb. This evidently is within the New Jerusalem.
- (3) It is called a river of life. Its precise purpose is not noted.

However, in 21:6, Jesus spoke of giving drink to those who are athirst from the fountain of the water of life. In 22:17, reference is again made to water of life and there it clearly is in a spiritual nature. There are parallels to Ezekiel 47:1-5. However, there the river described is during the Millennium.

Rev 22:2 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.

Rev 22:3 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:

Once again ‘the street’ of New Jerusalem is mentioned. There, In the midst of

the street and on either side of the river, is the tree of life, which bare twelve types of fruits. This tree bares its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. The word translated as midst (mesov mesos) in its simplest meaning is 'middle.' Implied is how the river of life in the New Jerusalem flows down the middle of 'the street.'

The thought may be that the major street of the city has the river of life flowing through the midst and 'the street' is like a boulevard on each side of the river. Mentioned is the tree of life. It is noted as singular, but at the same time as being on each side of the river. This most unusual tree bore twelve different types of fruit. A new crop appeared each month. Of interest is the mention of 'months' in the eternal kingdom. John's description had more to do with how often the tree produced and not the establishment of time in eternity future.

The leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations. The word translated as healing (yerapeiatherapeia) can also have the sense of 'service' or 'benefit.' It seems incongruous that there will be sickness in need of healing in the new heaven and earth. Of further interest is the mention of nations in that day. Implied again is that there will be nations in the eternal kingdom. See notes for 21:24.

It would appear that the fruit of the tree of life along with the river of life are a food and fountain of life for a heavenly race of mankind placed on the new earth in the eternal kingdom. Even the leaves of the trees are for the benefit of the nations. Recall how the tree of life is also mentioned in Genesis 2:9 and 3:22, 24. It may be that the potential for endless life was there yet Adam and Eve never partook thereof. However, that blessed tree will exist in the New Jerusalem.

Come that day, there shall be no more curse it says in verse 3. The curse so mentioned evidently is a reference to the curse sin brought upon the earth at the time of Adam's fall. In the new earth, there will be no curse. See Genesis 3:17.

Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

Gen 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

All of the problems of this earth resort ultimately to the curse brought about by

Adam's sin. It ranges from sickness and death, to thorny weeds, to carnivorous animals. None of that will exist.

The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him. As mentioned in 22:1, the throne of God and of the Lamb are located in the New Jerusalem. It is there and then that His servants will serve Him. His servants certainly will be those who are the saved of the ages, whether of redeemed Israel or the church triumphant in heaven. In that day, we will have the privilege of continuing to serve Him.

Rev 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Rev 22:5 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.

Though sinful man in his sinful flesh cannot see God, a new and different dispensation is herein underway. His servants in that day will have shed their sinful bodies to receive a glorified, holy, and resurrected body. Their sinful nature will be buried along with their old body. In heaven, they will be holy and righteous altogether.

There no doubt that God's people in that day will see Jesus face to face. See I John 3:2.

1Jn 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

The question is whether we will see God Himself. However, that also is implied, not only here but also in Matthew 5:8 and Hebrews 12:14. In that day, "his name shall be in their foreheads." Even as the Servants of Satan during the Tribulation had his mark on their foreheads, in heaven, the servants of God will carry the very name of God on theirs.

Further conditions of that blessed day are described in verse 5. In this present day, the phenomenon of night is the demarcation of each day. In as much as there is no night then, days as we know it will be in another dimension not described. Time as we know it surely will be in another dimension or nonexistent. (Months, however, are mentioned in verse 2 of this chapter.) There is therefore no need of artificial light because there is no night there. Moreover, no need for light of the sun will exist "for the Lord God giveth them light."

Indeed, God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. See also notes on 21:23. Of further significance is the profound statement, and they shall reign for ever

and ever. The they clearly refers to “his servants” in verse 3. These again likely are the redeemed of the ages who with Christ will rule and reign in the eternal kingdom. See also Daniel 7:27, Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 20:4.

Dan 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Also, the parables of our Lord regarding positions of authority in the kingdom (Luke 19:12-26 and Matthew 25:14-28) very well may find their ultimate application here. The greater truth is that those in this life who have faithfully served Jesus Christ will in that day be rewarded with positions of rank and authority in His eternal kingdom. We, in that day, will rule and reign with him. The subjects of such rule evidently will be the Nations consisting of the family of God.

II. Jesus is Coming

Rev 22:6 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.

Rev 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

This section nears its conclusion as John records the message from the angel. At the beginning of the conclusion, the angel authenticates that all which John has been shown and told are “faithful and true.” The following phrase, “and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done,” seems to refer to the entire book of Revelation.

God, in so revealing these things to John, has made known to His servants to this day that which “must shortly come to pass.” Though time has passed from a human perspective, in God’s mind, the things revealed in Revelation are impending. If they were about to come to pass in John’s day, how much more now.

The major prophecy of the book has been concluded. Beginning here in verse 7 to the end of the book are closing comments. Quite apparently, as the angel concluded his remarks to John, our Lord and Savior interjected Himself and said, Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Two major promises are spoken by the Lord. He promises to come quickly. The word so translated (tacu tachu) may refer as much to how He will return as to when. It will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The first phase of His

promised return is at the Rapture and then seven years later He will appear in power and great glory.

The second promise is of blessing for those who keep (obey) the “sayings of the prophecy of this book.” The word translated as sayings (logov logos) is the common term for ‘word.’ In effect, Jesus said, blessings are promised for those who obey the words contained in this book. (Verbal inspiration is once again thence implied in the term ‘sayings’.)

In all likelihood, the promise extends to the entire Bible. Jesus knew this was the final book of the canon. It was the capstone of the Scriptures. He reiterates a promise found throughout the Bible. There is blessing for those who obey God’s Word. This very promise is found at the preface of the book in 1:3.

Rev 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Rev 22:8 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.

Rev 22:9 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.

John manifest his personal witness of all he had heard and seen. He then fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed him these things. He was promptly rebuked by the angel and told to worship God. Here is a matter of interest. John’s guide, particularly since 21:9, has been one of the angels which had the seven vials of the final judgments of the Tribulation.

This angel informs John that he is was not only a fellowservant of God, but also of his brethren the prophets and of them obedient to God’s Word. The question arises: are some of the angels mentioned throughout the book in fact Old Testament prophets used by God in the climatic days of the Tribulation to effect His will?

The word, angel (aggelov angelos), literally means ‘messenger’ or ‘envoy.’ Even as the angels of the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3 clearly are not heavenly beings, but rather the pastors of the seven churches, here the angel in question may also be a heavenly messenger, but not of that race of heavenly beings commonly called ‘angels.’

It seems he is a prophet now in heaven impressed into this service by God. His

injunction to John was simple: “Worship God!” He would not tolerate any worship of himself.

III. John is Commanded to NOT Seal the Prophecy of the Book

Rev 22:10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

Rev 22:11 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 heavenly envoy enjoined John to Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. In contrast to instructions given to Daniel (Daniel 12:4 and 10), John is ordered to not seal the prophecy revealed to him. John is informed that “the time is at hand.” The word translated as hand (egguv eggus) literally means ‘near.’ The thought simply is that the time of all that was prophesied was near at hand. Recall, how a thousand years with the Lord is as one day. The greater truth is how that time must be that much closer today.

The focus of thought here shifts in verse 11 from the prophetic back to the present. Invoked here is a warning for all who will hear. The speaker is Jesus who warns, “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.” The thought literally is, ‘He that is unjust, be further unjust: and he which is filthy, be further filthy, etc.’ To paraphrase, the thought likely is: ‘He that is unjust, then be so. He that is filthy, then be so. He that is righteous, then be so, and he this is holy, then be so.’

As the consummation of this life as well as of the ages is at hand, Jesus warned in whatever state one is to be careful. He would remain therein forever. For those living in sin about to enter eternity, they would continue in their filth forever. For those about to enter eternity as righteous and holy in Christ, they would be so confirmed therein forever.

The time is at hand. Christ is about to return. Therefore, take heed. Once the wheels of eschatology are set in place, it will be difficult to repent. As the end of the age nears its culmination, the spiritual state of mankind will soon be solidified in the condition they enter eternity. For those continuing to live in sin, they will be solidified thereunto in hell. For those holy and just in Christ, they will be confirmed thereunto in heaven for ever.

Rev 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Rev 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Further urgency to turn to Him is set forth by our Lord. “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” The word translated as quickly (tacutachu) has the sense of ‘swiftly’ or ‘speedily.’ It connotes not only the time of His coming (soon) but the manner thereof as well (suddenly). Jesus also makes mention how that His reward is with Him.

The word so translated (misyov misthos) refers to ‘due compensation for services rendered.’ It also is rendered as ‘wages.’ The thought likely is of the various rewards promised for faithful service to Christ in this life. Only what’s done for Christ will last.’ This may be a generic reference to the impending Bema Seat for those in Christ.

In any event, His rewards in that day are promised for every man “according as his work shall be.” We surely are not saved by good works, but there will be rewards for faithful service to Christ someday, based upon the work we have done for Him after salvation. Moreover, it is significant that Jesus mentioned ‘work.’ It is what we have actually done for Christ in the Christian life which will be rewarded in that day.

As Jesus revealed Himself to John at the beginning of the book (1:8, 17), in verse 13 He once again announces, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. (See notes thereto for Revelation 1:8, 17.) His eternity once again hovers in view. He, the eternal One, is about to return as He promised.

Rev 22:14 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.

Rev 22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Our Lord reiterates one of the most basic promises in the Bible, Blessed are they that do his commandments. The doing of God’s commandments does not convey salvation. But upon becoming a child of God through faith in Christ, God promises blessing for obedience. The promise of blessing for obedience extends from one end of the Bible to the other. It is plainly taught in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. It is here again repeated at the conclusion of the Scriptures.

God blesses obedience to His Word. That is an Old Testament as well as New Testament promise. It remains in force to this very hour. Jesus then made more specific application of His promise: that they may have right to the tree of life, and

may enter in through the gates into the city. This may refer to those who in this life have turned to Christ and trusted Him as Savior. It may also conceivably refer to those who are obedient. In any event, in the new heavens and new earth, these will have right to the tree of life and entrance into the New Jerusalem. It would seem that the principle of obedience will find blessing even into the eternal kingdom. Whether in this day or then, God has promised to bless obedience to His Word.

Jesus then ominously noted in verse 15, For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. This very well may refer to those who will spend eternity in hell and the lake of fire. They will be without the scope of the new heavens and new earth (i.e., heaven). In the ancient Middle East, dogs often were semi-wild, scavenging animals which were universally detested. In modern terms, they would be considered like rats in a city.

The term is used as a metaphor to refer to the wicked of the ages summarized as sorcerers, whoremongers, murders, and idolaters. Incumbent therein are sins of the occult, immorality, violence, and of the spirit of idolatry. Come the new heaven and new earth (i.e., heaven), sinners of all sorts will be damned far away in the lake of fire, never to be of influence again. Implicit again is warning to those in sin to repent or else. The time is at hand.

Rev 22:16 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.

Rev 22:17 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.

The angel mentioned may in fact be John. Once again, the word translated as angel (aggelov angelos) literally means 'messenger' or 'envoy.' The recipients of the testimony of the prophecy of the book of Revelation are 'the churches.' These no doubt include the seven churches named early in the book. It also includes Bible-believing churches down through the ages to this day. It is of note that Jesus did not send this final book of the Bible to 'The Church,' but rather to 'the churches.'

A collective 'Universal Church' evangelical or otherwise is unknown in the New Testament. The focus is always upon local churches. They are the focal point of God's work in this age. They, moreover, are not only the recipients of the Scripture, but the guardians thereof as the ground and pillar of the truth. Jesus presents further names and titles of Himself: I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

In Revelation 1:5, Jesus is noted as the “root of David.” He here describes Himself as both the root of David, that is the origin of David, and yet at the same time the offspring of Him. The latter refers to his royal descent of the dynasty of David. His royalty as Messiah is thus set forth. Jesus also refers to Himself as the “bright and morning star.” A reminder of His glory is seen each morning in the morning star above the horizon preceding the rising of the sun. Reference to Christ as a star is found throughout the Scripture, ranging from Numbers 24:17, to II Peter 1:19, to Revelation 2:28.

2Pe 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

2Pe 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

Verse 17 bides all to come. In view of Jesus’ promised return (and the warning found in verses 11 and 15), our Lord now extends a threefold invitation to come to Him. “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.” The Holy Spirit is in this age offering a continual invitation to come to Christ. The bride, the church, likewise extends a continual invitation to come. Moreover, anyone else who has heard the gospel is enjoined to likewise say, come. For those thirsting spiritually, the message is come.

The invitation undoubtedly hearkens back to the beatitudes where Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6). John 7:37 is in view as well, “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” Finally, the invitation ‘to come’ is extended to “whosoever will.” The thought of the latter is ‘whosoever is willing.’ To him, the water of life is freely available.

Salvation in Christ is beautifully portrayed as the water of life. It is free and offered to all who will receive it. Insight into the human side of salvation is thus given. The matter of the will is crucial. It is not until one is willing to turn to Christ and trust Him as Savior that one will receive the water of life. This touches upon the essence of repentance which is part and parcel of saving faith. It begins with a heart willing to turn to God. This then is accompanied by faith in the Savior.

Rev 22:18 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:

Rev 22:19 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 ominous warning regarding tampering with the written Word of God is spoken by our Lord. “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.” To add to the Scripture is a serious offence indeed. Many have done so by giving equal credence to their religious books and the Scripture. Both the Apocrypha and the Book of Mormon come to mind.

The plagues found throughout the Book of Revelation are assigned to those so tampering with the Word of God. Though the immediate context of “this book” no doubt refers only to Revelation, the application to the entire canon of Scripture likewise is in view. In that same vein, Jesus warned, 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 curse for tampering with Scripture is expanded. To excise portions of Scripture (not only from Revelation itself, but the Bible as a whole) has grave consequences.

Those who have clipped out verses or Scripture or portions thereof in the name of textual criticism place themselves on very thin ice. Jesus warned of their part being removed from the book of life and the holy city. If we believe that salvation once accomplished is secure and permanent, the thought here maybe similar in nature to the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost—the unforgivable sin.

To tamper with the Scripture, particularly excising portions thereof, is to place oneself in a position where he cannot be saved. Moreover, all the promised blessings written in Revelation will be excluded from such an one. Grave indeed is the risk one takes in tampering with the Scriptures.

Rev 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Rev 22:21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Our Lord speaks His final recorded comments. “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.” His final witness and last inscripturated promise is, “Surely I come quickly.” For the third time in this final chapter of the Bible, Jesus promised to come quickly. See 22:7 and 12. Again, that promise is as much when He will return as it is how He will return. It is imminent. When He comes in the Rapture, it will be with lightning swiftness. It therefore behooves us to be ready.

The amen likely is John's response as he replies, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. In response to Jesus' promise to come quickly, John could only utter, "Amen, Even so come, Lord Jesus!" That ought to be our continual prayer as well.

This great apocalyptic book ends with John's invocation in verse 21, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." In fashion similar to many of Paul's epistles, John the Apostle invokes the grace of our Lord to his readers and concludes it all with a final amen! So be it!

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Email: mail@kjvbiblestudies2.net

Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.