

# The New Creation

Revelation 22



## Revelation 22:1-5 (Renewal of the World)

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.

What does this remind you of? Eden.

Is this literal or symbolic?

The river of life.

The river flowing from the throne and the land goes right through the middle of the street of the city.

Again, not literally a city with one(?) street with a river in the middle of it, along with the tree of life on either side of the river. It doesn't work.

Like the rest of Revelation, it is important that we understand Scripture. John is not painting with brush strokes to see an image, he is using words to convey its message.

And his words are not from the natural world or some sci-fi future. His words, his paint, is the OT Scriptures.

Consider the parallels we've already seen from Revelation to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel's vision starts with a vision into the throne room of God. Same with Revelation 4. In fact, there are overlapping features.

Ezekiel speaks about judgment, horsemen, sealing on the forehead, dividing the city into thirds, the judgment of Jerusalem, the same features we've seen throughout the book of Revelation.

Ezekiel ends also with a vision of restoration, like Revelation. Of a new temple, here a new city that is the temple, a new people of God, restored, remade, and in fellowship with God.

There is hope and life after judgment. That is what Ezekiel speaks about and likewise, Revelation.

## Ezekiel 47:1-2

<sup>1</sup>Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. <sup>2</sup>Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side.

Consider what we've just read about in Revelation 22 and consider Ezekiel 47.

In Revelation 22 we have water flowing from the throne through the city.

In Ezekiel 47 we have water from the temple (the dwelling place of God) leading out into the city.

## Ezekiel 47:3-6

<sup>3</sup>Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. <sup>4</sup>Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. <sup>5</sup>Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. <sup>6</sup>And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?"

Like Revelation, Ezekiel speaks about the measurements of the temple, courtyard, walls, etc.

Here, he measures in 1000 cubit increments and finds that the water is getting deeper and deeper. The water is getting more and more abundant.

The water coming from the temple has become a mighty river!

## Ezekiel 47:7-9

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. <sup>7</sup> As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. <sup>8</sup> And he said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. <sup>9</sup> And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.

Now there are trees on either side of the river. Sound familiar? The grammar of Revelation 22 when it says “the tree of life” doesn’t have the word “the” it could be referring to trees on either side of the river bank as water from the temple gives life to all things.

This fresh water makes the seas fresh.

It gives life. Everything will live where the river goes.

## Ezekiel 47:10-12

<sup>10</sup> Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. <sup>11</sup> But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. <sup>12</sup> And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

Now the river gives life to man through fish.

Notice the trees on both sides of the river. They are for food.

They bear fruit each month because of the water coming from the dwelling place of God.

Their fruit is for food and their leaves for healing. (see Revelation 22:2).

The parallels are undeniable.

So what does it mean?

## Symbols of Revelation 22:1-5

1. Verse 1: The water of life (as mentioned in 21:6) describes the newness of life, abundant life, and eternal life that is ours in God through Jesus Christ (cf. John 7:37-39).
2. Verse 2: The 12 kinds of fruit on the tree of life represent, like water, the wellspring of life and sustenance that are ours in Christ Jesus.
3. Verse 2: The leaves for healing the nations are a reference to the inclusion of the Gentiles (lit. ethne) and how they are included in this holy city/bride.
4. Verse 3: The reversal of the curse is also reminiscent of Genesis 3. Eden restored, sin conquered, through Christ.
5. Verse 4-5: Worship and fellowship (cf. Matt 5:8; sealed Rev 7, 14; Isa 60:19).

#1. The water is sourced in Father and Son and gives life to his people and the entire world.

John 7:37-39, “**37** On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. **38** Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” **39** Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

#2. 12 kinds of fruit (again the number 12 has been representative of the people of God, but here also the 12 months of the year). Food all year around. Like the water, a wellspring of life.  
The fruit of the tree sustains and the leaves heal.

This is like Eden where God has made rivers, planted a garden, and does all to sustain us with all that we need.

#3. The healing of the nations is a reference to the Gentiles and how they are included and part of this holy city, the bride.

#4. Nothing accursed...

A reversal of the curse. This is the kingdom of God. This is owing to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through his salvation and through his judgment, the curse of sin is lifted. Eden restored with God dwelling with man free from sin and death. This is the result of Christ's work in the new covenant. This is a present reality and yet a glorious future to come.

There will be worship.

They will see him for who he is. (the pure in heart shall see God Matt 5:8).

They will be sealed and be his forever (names on the forehead, cf. Rev 7, 14).

Verse 5 is not a physical description of this new universe or earth, but a figure (like Isaiah 60:19) which describes the everlasting bliss and joy in the presence of God. No darkness. No evil. No pain.

Isaiah 60:19, "The sun shall be no more  
your light by day,  
nor for brightness shall the moon  
give you light;  
but the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your God will be your glory."

## Revelation 22:6-10 (The Time Is Near)

<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.

**Starting in verse 6 we have the epilogue to the book of Revelation. We return to the very theme of the opening verses.**

**Revelation 1:1** The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. ... **3** Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Here he says, “what must soon take place” (v. 6) and “I am coming soon” (v. 7; cf. 1:7) and “the time is near” (v. 10). Don’t seal up the words of the prophecy of this book.

Compare to Daniel 12:4, But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. (his prophecies were not a matter of months or years but centuries later).

Like the opening chapter (1:3) which promises a blessing to read this prophecy, here (v. 7) we are promised a blessing if we keep the words of this prophecy.

John again fell down to worship the messenger (v. 8) as he did in 19:10 but was again rebuked. He is either distracted or struck with the glory of this

angel.

## Revelation 22:11-15 (Final Appeal)

<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 each one 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.

Why would verse 11 call the evildoer to still do evil?

Verse 12 is the answer, “Behold, I am coming soon...to judge.”

That is, it is best understood to be that the time is so short, the events so near, the judgment so imminent, that there is no more time to repent before judgment comes. (and so, repent quickly).

Christ is going to bring judgment and repay each one for what he has done. This primarily is a reference to the judgment against the Jews in 70AD but it does repeat an oft-repeated them in the NT (Matt 16:27; 25:31ff; Rom 2:6; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 20:13).

Verse 14 reminds us that those who have faith in Christ enter into the city (the new covenant church) and have access to the tree of life (springs of water)/eternal life (Matt 19:17; 28:20; Luke 6:46; John 8:31; 1 John 2:3-4).

Verse 15 repeats Revelation 21:8 and says the “dogs” are excluded (Paul uses this term to speak of the Judaizers in Phil 3:2). The Jews would use this term to speak of the Gentiles. A real reversal has come. This is repeated elsewhere in (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21). These kinds of people have no place in the church or in the city of God.

## Revelation 22:16-17 (Final Invitation)

<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.

Christ says he is both the “root” and the “descendant” of David. He is both the source and the culmination of the Davidic line. David came from him, and he is his fulfillment.

Bright morning star could be a reference to Venus (which is sometimes visible in the morning and was called the “morning star” by the ancients. Or the sun, the star that heralds the dawn.

Balaam prophesied that a star would arise in Jacob (Num 24:17) which is generally regarded as a prophecy about Christ.

Peter uses this phrase in 2 Peter 1:19, “And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, 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”

Revelation 2:28 says, “And I will give him the morning star.” (to the overcomers of the Thyatiran church).

I take this to be that Christ is the beginning and glory of this new day and transformation. He is the source and also the image into which believers will be conformed.

Who is making the invitation?

The (Holy) Spirit and the church say "Come." They are either asking Jesus to come or are inviting others to come to Jesus.

"The one who hears" refers to those who hear the book of Revelation. They are either inviting Jesus or inviting others to enter the city.

Finally, the one who is thirsty is clearly a reference to those outside of Christ at the present moment. They are being invited, like they were in Revelation 21:6 and John 7:37ff.

Therefore, it seems best to see this as an invitation for others to come to Jesus. The Spirit, Bride, readers of this prophecy, all invite those who thirst to come to Christ.

The time is short, but there is still time.

## Revelation 22:18-19 (Final Warning)

<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.

Those who copy this book have no permission to alter any of its contents, either by addition or subtraction.

This is repeated in Scripture (Deut 4:2; 12:32; Prov 30:6)

Some apply these words to the entire Bible. While the principle is correct, that is likely not what the Spirit intended to communicate through John.

Finally, some appeal to this verse to demonstrate that people can lose their salvation. However, most see this as a warning which the faithful always obey. The warning is still real, it spurs believers on to faithfulness and keeps them from falling.

## Revelation 22:20-21 (Conclusion)

<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.

Again, we are reminded that these events are happening soon. It is a real strain on human language to conclude otherwise, lest words have no meaning.

So John adds his Amen and invites Jesus to come (and judge and reward and bring in his new covenant).

Then John speaks to his readers, and to us. And may we all say, "Amen!"

## Significance of Revelation 22

1. Revelation 21 and 22 describe the new creation as the church in the present era (seated with Christ in the heavenly places, Eph 2:6).
2. These chapters also describe the future glory of the church, described in symbolism of the restoration of Eden, Jerusalem, the temple—the places where God resides.
3. These chapters are a reminder that in judgment, God shows mercy and grace. His judgment clears away sin and death to make fellowship and life possible with his people forever.
4. God wins. History is his story in bringing his people into perfect fellowship with him for his glory and our good.

**Questions?**

