

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.

“he” – This appears to be the same angel who was speaking with John in chapter 21, one of the angels that had poured out one of the seven vials (21:9).

It seems that the angel now takes John on a tour inside the city. We are still talking about the New Jerusalem, which is home to the throne of God and of the Lamb—notice one throne for Father and Son. Maybe it is one throne platform with more than one seat. We know that the Son has been seated at the right hand of the Father, and we have seen them interact (e.g., Son taking the 7 sealed scroll from the Father) as separate entities. Suffice it to say that the future will reveal the reality.

The throne is the source of a special river of water—the water of life—and it is clear as crystal (again emphasizing the purity of everything associated with God). There is no longer a concern about those in the new heaven and earth partaking of this source of nourishment, since their eternal condition has already been determined.

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.

Again, there is reference made to “the street” and “the river” in the city. It seems that the tree of life grows along the street and along both sides of the river in the New Jerusalem. Evidently, there is going to continue a marking of the passage of time, since this tree is going to yield fruit “every month.” The wording of this verse is not clear as to whether the tree will yield a different fruit each month or will just produce a new supply of all 12 fruits every month. The Complete Jewish Bible translation states “a different kind every month.” Even the leaves of the tree have a purpose—the healing of the nations.

2322. qerapei÷a therapeia, *ther-ap-i´-ah*; from 2323; attendance (specially, medical, i.e. cure); figuratively and collectively, domestics:—healing, household.

2323. qerapeu/w therapeuo, *ther-ap-yoo´-o*; from the same as 2324; to wait upon menially, i.e. (figuratively) to adore (God), or (specially) to relieve (of disease):—cure, heal, worship.

2324. qera;pwn therapon, *ther-ap´-ohn*; apparently a participle from an otherwise obsolete derivative of the base of 2330; a menial attendant (as if cherishing):—servant.

After looking at these entries for the word “healing,” it makes me think that maybe these leaves will be used in our worship of God. It doesn’t make sense that we would need anything for medicinal purposes. God loves sweet aromas and was very specific on the ingredients for the anointing oil used for the priests (Exodus 30:30-38). Again, the future will reveal the reality.

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:

Emphasis is made of the fact that the “new/fresh” heaven and earth will never again be under a curse. It will forever remain the beautiful, perfect creation that was intended by God for man from the beginning.

The “but” seems to introduce a contrast. I think it is implying that although God fellowshiped with man intimately before the fall, His throne was still in heaven. Again, the reference is to “the” throne of God and of the Lamb. Although referencing both God the Father and God the Son, “His” servants shall serve “Him”—one God.

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

“They,” His servants, all believers, will see (to gaze—i.e., with wide-open eyes, as at something remarkable) His face. There will be total intimacy—Father with children. All His servants have His name imprinted on their foreheads. This reminds me of the 144,000 who were sealed in chapter 7, and that seal turned out to be the Father’s name written in their foreheads (14:1). His seal is permanently and proudly displayed.

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.

Again we are told that there will be no darkness in the New Jerusalem because of the brilliance of the glory of God, which will illumine the whole city. “They,” the servants, will reign forever and ever. It would appear that all believers will have areas of authority regarding the new heavens and earth and responsibilities associated with that authority. You can’t reign unless there are reasons or responsibilities to necessitate that rule.

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.

“These sayings” – I think this is referring to everything that has been shown and told to John during this “revelation.” It is ALL sure and trustworthy; it is not concealing. It is meant to be understood; there is no hidden message. God Almighty, who inspired the holy prophets, sent his angel/messenger to show, to make clear to His servants (all believers from that time forward) the events that would “shortly” come to pass. The Greek for “shortly” implies that events would happen very quickly once they had begun.

I am reminded again of the unchanging character of God. He always prepares His people and tells them what to expect in light of coming judgment.

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

The speaker obviously changes. Who has this revelation been about? Who is the one whose coming we await? The speaker has to be Jesus. When He returns, it will be quickly (shortly, suddenly, without delay).

“Keepeth” – guard, maintain, hold fast, preserve, watch
This message is precious. It is worth preserving and guarding with an attitude of watchfulness as to the return of Jesus, future to the time of its revelation to John. Though the context of this verse is referring specifically to the revelation being given to John, it would also seem to be an appropriate beatitude regarding the whole Word of God. God never changes, nor does His word; His word is truth.

Malachi 3:6 “For I am the LORD, I change not....”

Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

Psalms 119:160 “Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.”

Proverbs 30:5–6 “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”

Deuteronomy 4:1–2 “Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. **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.**”

The declaration of this blessing is a powerful rebuke to those that declare the study of prophecy to be unimportant and a waste of time. Sadly, there are many recognized leaders in the church today who hold that view. Whatever their motive, it is self-serving and/or in disobedience to the will of God for His people.

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.

John testifies again to the fact that all that he has written he saw and heard with his own eyes and ears. Although he has been warned before, John again falls down to worship at the feet of his special angel/messenger.

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.

The angel rebukes John and tells him to worship God. The angel identifies himself as a “fellow servant,” one who serves the same master. He also identifies himself as “of thy brethren.” This indicates a connection from the womb, which I think is saying that he is one of Jewish birth. Not only that, but he is one of the prophets.

This can get really confusing. John has had “angels” and “elders” speak with him during the process of this revelation. I have always considered the angels to be those of the “higher creation” in the heavens that are God’s special ministering servants on behalf of man. Actually, the term is inclusive of any individual doing God’s bidding as requested at any given time. It would seem that there is a likelihood that some of God’s prophets will get to participate in the events about which they prophesied since this angel was originally identified as one that had poured out one of the seven vials of judgment.

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

John is told that this book is not to be sealed or kept secret. The information contained in the prophecy being given in this book is important for the churches to know. Why? Because the time is at hand, near. Here I am looking at these prophecies almost 2000 years after the fact; that doesn’t seem very “near” in our eyes, but in relation to eternity, the passage of time has been minimal. As we listen to God’s message, we need to keep our faith focused on His truth, and not our expectations. What to God is “a very little while” can often seem like forever from the human point of view.

Psalms 37:10 *For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*

Haggai 2:6-7 *For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come:*

Hebrews 10:37 *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

In God’s economy of time, “yet a little while” and the wicked will not be found on earth; that won’t happen until eternity begins. In just “a little while” from the time of Haggai’s prophecy, “the desire of all nations,” which I believe is a reference to Jesus, the Messiah, would come; that would be over 500 years later. “Yet a little while” and Jesus will come again according to the writer of Hebrews; it’s already been 2000 years.

Notice that the directive given here is completely opposite the instruction given to Daniel regarding the words given to him concerning the future. Daniel was told that the words given him were sealed until the time of the end, whereas John is told that the information that had been given to him was important for the churches to know “now,” for the time is at hand.

Daniel 12:9-10 *And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.*

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 verse seems to be emphasizing the fact that at this point in time in the revelation to John a person's eternal destiny has been decided. Though man was given freedom of choice, there comes a point in time when there are no more opportunities for grace and forgiveness. If you have chosen to be unjust (actively do wrong morally, socially, or physically; hurt, injure, be an offender) and/or filthy (associate with dirt and depravity...to become morally dirty), then your eternity will be with those who were likeminded—all who rejected Jesus and the righteousness with which He could cover them to follow Satan in rejection and disobedience. On the other hand, those who chose to accept God's gift of righteousness (innocence, holiness) and holiness (purity, being morally blameless) will continue in that state for eternity in fellowship with the Savior.

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

Behold – be aware, consider, perceive, understand, see

“I come quickly” – This can only be the Messiah talking. This is the one about whom the revelation was given—Jesus Christ. He is coming quickly/suddenly. When He comes, He will reward (pay for service—good or bad) every man (each individual who has ever lived) according to his work/deeds. This sounds at first hearing like salvation by works. I think the following two verses shed the best light regarding Jesus' perspective as He uttered these words to John.

John 6:29 *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the **work** of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

The work of the believer is to believe on Jesus, the Son of God. This will result in eternal fellowship with the Savior.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

The work of the unbeliever is revealed when measured against the law. Our work in the flesh can never measure up and will only bring forth death, separation from God forever.

John 3:18-19 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of*

God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

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

Jesus is still speaking; identifying Himself in the same way that God is identified, as shown in the following verses. The Word of God is clear and consistent in presenting the Father and Son as two yet one.

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Isaiah 44:6 *Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*

Isaiah 48:12 *Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.*

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.

Again, the introductory phrase sounds like we can earn our way into eternal fellowship with the Savior and all its privileges. The book of James was given to help us understand true faith. Our faith is proven by our works. If we say that we have faith, but our actions do not match what our lips say, we are only deceiving ourselves. True faith will produce action--obedience to His word.

James 2:14-17 *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

The Apostle John had also addressed this truth.

1 John 2:3-4 *“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”*

One of the privileges of eternal life with Jesus will be free access to the tree of life and to the heavenly city of Jerusalem. Access to the tree of life was forbidden to Adam and Eve after they chose to disobey and break fellowship with God. At this point in the revelation, full fellowship has been restored, and all believers will be able to enjoy the life sustaining properties of the wonderful fruits that are produced by the tree. Throughout history mankind has not been able to come freely into the visible, actual presence of God; they have always had to depend on a mediator. In Old Testament times the representative was the high priest; in

the New Testament times and since, the representative has been Jesus. In eternity we will have personal access at any time.

I like the expanded Greek by Kenneth Wuest regarding “do his commandments”; he translates it as “wash their robes.”

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

Dogs – This was a term of humiliation and designated one as bad /evil.

2Kings 8:12-13 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

Sorcerer – One who gives spell-giving potions, a poisoner, a magician

Whoremongers – Prostitutes, fornicators

Murderer – One who commits intentional homicide

Idolators – Image worshippers

“whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” – Those who delight in speaking things that are not true and deceive people through falsehood

All those who fall into this category because they chose not to do the work of God, believe on Jesus, will not be allowed anywhere near the abode of God and His children. They will be separated from God forever.

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.

Jesus identifies Himself by name. He tells John that He has sent His angel/messenger to testify (give evidence, bear record, witness) to him (John) all the things that have been revealed to him during the revelation. John, in turn, is to share these things with the churches.

Again, the subject comes up regarding the signifying angel and Jesus and their identities. After reading through this book many times, it is obvious to me that God has used Jesus, real “angels” and redeemed saints to communicate with John throughout the duration of this revelation. It doesn’t really matter that we identify the speaker. The important thing is to understand the message—and in every case we know that this “messenger” is sent/provided by God. Every word is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

I am reminded that this whole book was given as a revelation of Jesus Christ. Jesus is testifying to the truth of John’s record and its application to the churches.

He declares Himself to be the root and offspring of David, a reference to the prophecy of Isaiah.

Isaiah 11:1–5 & 10 “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.... And in that day there shall be **a root of Jesse**, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.”

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 intent of this verse seems to spring from the words of Jesus in verse 12, “behold I come quickly.” Remember, these are the closing remarks in this message from God to the churches.

The Holy Spirit of God that is at work wooing men to the Savior and ministering to the bride, the believers on earth—the church, say, “Come.” They are willing Jesus to return as King of kings and Lords of lords and usher in His kingdom. They are eager in anticipation. Those who hear and understand and respond to this message of salvation will also desire Him to “Come.”

Time is short, but as long as Christ tarries, the one who is thirsty, longing for the truth and recognizes his need for nourishment is invited to come to the Savior. “Whosoever” – This invitation is open to each and every person on planet earth. Jesus’ death on the cross was in payment for All sin—yours and mine.

Hebrews 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

Anyone who desires and responds in faith may take “the water of life” freely. There is no better understanding of this invitation than that which Jesus gave to the Samaritan woman at the well.

John 4:9–14 *Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water....Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 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.*

Jesus is obviously comparing living water to salvation, and He made it even clearer in another teaching.

***John 7:37–39** 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. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

Our spiritual life is directly connected to the presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

***Romans 8:10–11** And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

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.

I take the message of these verses very seriously. Jesus is still speaking (reference verse 20). The truth of His word is precious and important to all of mankind. Warning is given to anyone who might hear the words of this prophecy and then decide to add anything to it—for whatever reason. If anyone has the audacity to think that he can improve on the word of God, he will suffer greatly. The plagues described in this book are certainly not to be desired.

It would seem that this verse is speaking directly regarding the message of the book of Revelation, but I believe it is true of the whole word of God. This conclusion is supported by the following verses:

***Deuteronomy 4:2** 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.*

***Proverbs 30:5-6** Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*

It is just as wrong to take away from His word as it is to add to it. The penalty is severe. Anyone who would add to or take away from God's word is obviously putting himself in the position of God; he is assuming he knows better than God. Obviously, that person is not walking in faith. That person will not have his name in the Book of Life, will not enjoy the pleasures of the New Jerusalem or any of the other blessings revealed to us in this book of prophecy regarding eternity with the Savior.

These verses have always given me great pause when I think about sharing “the truth” of God’s word. I am not a scholar. There are many very learned men who disagree on “the truth” of God’s word. I try to be very careful to let those with whom I share my thoughts regarding the Bible know that I am just telling them “what I understand” any given section to be saying. Although I feel very strongly about many of the “truths” in scripture as I see them, I tremble at the thought of ever leading someone in the wrong direction. I continually ask the Lord to protect me from presenting anything that would be dishonoring to Him. I am trying to follow the instruction given by the Apostle Peter.

1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear....*

It’s always a hard thing to process that we all have the same word from God and the same Holy Spirit to teach us, yet there are so many that disagree regarding its correct interpretation. I truly pray that the Lord will keep my heart and mind sensitive to the leading of the Spirit, and that I will not miss out on understanding the truth He wants to share with me due to not being willing to listen without prejudice to something that may conflict with what I think I already “know.” I believe that is one of the greatest lessons to learn from trying to take each verse of scripture and asking the Spirit to help you understand. It keeps you humble by revealing all that you don’t know and have yet to learn regarding God’s word.

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

Who is the one talking? Jesus. He is the one that has said He is coming quickly (cf verse 12). What does John respond? So be it! Come, Lord Jesus. My sentiments exactly! I am so looking forward to going home and never having to deal with sin again. I often quote His word back to Him when I pray. Some of my favorite verses to use are:

Isaiah 62:6b-7 *...ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*

Psalm 122:6 *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*

Matthew 6:10 *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

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

John closes with a desire for all the churches to experience the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is available to all believers for the taking and sufficient for our every need. The Amen is an exclamation point.

2Corinthians 12:9 *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

Romans 5:17 *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)*

2Corinthians 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*

I want to close with one more quote from Dr. Joseph Seiss: "If I have read into this book (Revelation) anything which He has not put there, or read out of it anything which He has put there, with the profoundest sorrow would I recant....If I err, God forgive me! If I am right, God bless my feeble testimony. In either case, God speed His everlasting truth!"