

The River of Life (Slide 1)
Revelation 22:1-5

Reading: Ezekiel 47:1-12

Reading summary: Grace and Hope found only in the healing waters that come forth from God. Points to the Grace and Hope found only in the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

The thoughts I want to bring to our attention today are found in the first part of the 22nd Chapter of the Book of **Revelation**.

I think it important to make just some general remarks, yet, limit my commentary of **Revelation**.

I am convinced that the Book does deal with Prophecy and that its symbolic language represents actual historical events. Though many believe the events spoken of in **Revelation** detail the “*End Time*” prophecy or end time expectations, I personally believe that the symbolic language outlines events that have long ago occurred.

Revelation 1:1-2 (Slide 2)

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant

John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

Three particular points must be adhered to when we try and understand **Revelation**: (Slide 3)

1. The message of the **Revelation** was shown to **John** who became a witness to what he would see and hear. He of course would relay the message to those of His day.

I don't believe the Book is steeped in deep mystery. It is evident that it can be understood but because it has garnered much speculation and various interpretations we run the risk of missing its message. **John** and those he witnessed to certainly understood its meaning because he says in:

Revelation 1:3 (Slide 4)

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near. (Similarly, ***time is near***, we will see, relates to point 2).

They could not ***"keep those things"*** unless they understood what those things were.

We are still blessed today even though I am convinced that the events symbolically predicted from Chapter 4 through Chapter 20 have occurred.

The instruction and admonition to the 7 churches and the main message for those in Christ in the last 2 Chapters are a blessing for us today. (Slide 5)

2. **things which must shortly take place**-to me the word ***shortly*** is a term that indicates something that is to happen soon. Some of those events occurred relatively quickly while others occurred several hundred years after the **Revelation**. Comparatively, in either circumstance, this scope of time is very short.
3. ***And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John***-Sometimes the word **signified** is translated as “communicated.” ***Signified in this instance means the message was communicated with signs and symbols.***

Thus it is a Book of Prophecy. That, perhaps, isn't disputed but what is often interpreted as future events and what is considered apocalyptic messaging is disputed.

Nevertheless, I believe there is found in the Book of **Revelation** great comfort for those in Christ.

The Book outlines a time of *catastrophic turmoil*, such things as: (Slide 6)

The Mark of the Beast - **Revelation 13**

The Dragon, The Old Serpent, Satan the Devil bound and held in the *Bottomless Pit* for a *thousand years* only to be released to deceive the Nations for a little while -

Revelation 20

The Battle of Armageddon - an all out conflict between God and the forces of evil - **Revelation 16**

After all these mentally draining, exhaustive and fearsome *signs and symbols* the Book ends with great comfort which is the crux of the message for us today who are in Christ!

Revelation 22:1-5 (Slide 7)

1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each

tree yielding its fruit every month. (Slide 8) 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 They shall see His face, (Slide 9) and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

Picture if you will this river that is being described in Chapter 22:

First of all it is pure. Not many rivers do we see are pure or crystal clear. Some are muddy and mucky. So, at the outset of our understanding we are visualizing something that we typically don't see. This is not an ordinary river.

"The River of the Water of Life" (Slide 10)

How can we relate in our mind's view, what the ***water of life*** represents? ***"Life" spoken of here***, is relatable to what is eternal. We know that because the source of the flowing water in the river is God. He is the source of all life.

It's extraordinary to think that on either side of this great river flowing through the city is sustenance for eternity. A fruit that gives all healing.

"A Child's view of Heaven"

One must consider the inevitable question of those who do not believe in God nor believe in eternity regarding healing. *"I thought there wouldn't be any sickness, pain, sadness, nor death in Heaven?"*

Absolutely Right!! No sorrow, no sickness, no death.....in an instant all these will be wiped away. The same concept is found in:

Revelation 21:3b-4 (Slide 11)

3b "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; (Slide 12) there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

This true peace!! Nevertheless, it only applies to the Bride prepared for Christ, His church!

“And there shall be no more curse” Some commentators believe that **Revelation 22:3** is speaking of the ground that was cursed during the time of Adam because of the abundant supply of fruit from the *“tree of life”* found on either side of the river. *I personally believe that is part of it.*

I am also convinced that the **Revelation** is also talking about the *curse of death*.

This is a place where God and Christ Jesus dwell. Where those of saved creation see His face and have His name written to identify them on their foreheads. Death cannot exist in the presence of eternal life.

What does all this mean to us? It all points to the fact that *“Hope, proof of life, cannot be found in any other source than God. God is our Hope and how we obtain Hope is in the River of Life.”*

I recently saw a Facebook post from the world wide *church of Christ* showing a man and another person who had broken the ice in the bank of a river so that the one could be baptized.

The caption read something like the following: *“Yes, it is that important.”*

I have never personally baptized anyone in a river but have often baptized folks at the lake or more recently in the church baptistry. So often, prior to the baptism as the participants prepare we sing the hymn:

“Shall we gather at the river.” (Slide 13)

*Shall we gather at the river Where bright angel feet Have trod
With its crystal tide forever Flowing by The throne of God (Points to Life as expressed in **Revelation 22**).*

*Yes we'll gather at the river The beautiful, beautiful river
Gather with the saints At the river That flows by The throne of God*

*(Slide 14) Ere we reach the shining river Lay we every burden down
Grace our spirits will deliver And provide a robe and a crown*

*Yes we'll gather at the river The beautiful, beautiful river
Gather with the saints At the river That flows by The throne of God*

The writer of this song, Robert Lowry based the message on the **“River of the Waters of Life”** found in **Revelation 22** where God and His redeemed will be together for eternity.

As he reminisced about the song he spoke of the hope and promise of God in the midst of turmoil and despair.

At the time of his writing there were many songs regarding the “*river of death*” and obviously during these troubling times they offered no hope. He wanted to lift spirits, not drag them further into despair.

Written in 1864 during the American civil war, a typhoid outbreak in New York and upon a sweltering muggy hot day, he pinned the words of Hope only found in God.

Words of which, though not by intention, are sung as one enters the watery grave of baptism and comes forth in the *newness of life*.

1 John 1:5 (Slide 15)

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

Revelation 22:5 (Slide 16)

There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

Light to me is everlasting life, promises made that only God can keep! Only God through His Son can give all of humanity this eternal hope.

Brothers and Sisters: *“Stay in the light!!!”*

Invitation

Have you come into the light through baptism into the death of His Son? If not, don't delay! Do it today!

If you are a child of God but need prayer for any reason, please let us know. We will lift up your petition to Him in prayer.

Please let us know how we can assist you this day.....

Reading

Ezekiel 47:1-12

1 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. 2 He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the

outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side.

3 And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. 4 Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.

7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. 8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. 9 And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10 It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the

same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 12 Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.

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