

# Chapter 22

## THE RIVER OF LIFE

**Verse 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.**

Out of the throne of God and Christ flows the river of water of life. In Jn 4:10, Jesus tells the woman of Samaria, “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.” Then in verse 14, Jesus explains to her that this “living water” he was offering her would give her everlasting life. Therefore, the “water of life” represents the words of Jesus or the gospel that is available to all people of this world today. Those who believe and obey the gospel will receive everlasting life.

Water is a substance that our bodies must have in order to sustain physical life, and the gospel is the message from God that we must have in order to sustain our spiritual life. This river of water of life flows in the church today. In verse 17, everyone is invited to come into the church and partake of this water of life. It would be impossible to go to heaven to drink this water; therefore, it must be available to mankind today in this present world. It is in the world; it is located in the church. It is our duty as Christians to spread the gospel and make this water of life available to all mankind. As we teach others about Jesus Christ and how to

become members of his church, we are offering people the spiritual water of life. As long as we partake of this water of life, or remain faithful to the Word of God, we have eternal spiritual life. We will never die spiritually.

This river of life is described as being pure and clear as crystal. This refers to the infallibility of the Word. The gospel was given by inspiration and is perfect in every way. It contains no impurities. There is one other possible meaning of the phrase “clear as crystal.” Today, we would use this phrase to indicate that a statement is easily understood. The gospel plan of salvation is easy to understand if man is willing to read and accept it. We have many different interpretations of God’s Word today largely because people refuse to submit to God’s commands. They seek to make God’s Word coincide with their own ideas. The water of life is crystal clear, and we must make every effort to follow it precisely.

A prophecy concerning this water of life was made in Zech. 14:8 which states, “And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea.” This must refer to the salvation that Christ made possible by his death on the cross. We have often heard the statement made that when Christ died his blood flowed in both directions. It saved those who were faithful to him under the Law of Moses or the hinder sea. It also made salvation possible for all those who live in this Christian age or the former sea. These waters of life began flowing out from Jerusalem at Christ’s death and the preaching of the gospel on Pentecost (Acts 2). The gospel is our water of spiritual life, and anyone who partakes of it will be granted an entrance into the spiritual city of God, his church.

**Verse 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.**

The meaning of this tree of life can be derived from the

Old Testament. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had access to a physical tree of life, which would have enabled them to live forever in their physical bodies (Gen. 2:9). Today, we have access to a spiritual tree of life that will enable us to live spiritually forever. When an individual partakes of this spiritual water of life, he enters into God's city where he has constant access to the spiritual tree of life. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn. 14:6). Christ is our spiritual tree of life. The lesson presented here is that if we are faithful to him, we will be able to live spiritually forever.

Jesus became our tree of life by his death on the cross. Act 5:30 says, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." Jesus was crucified on a tree thereby becoming our tree of life. Through his death we have life.

Several symbols are used in Revelation to describe Christ: (1) the Lamb, (2) the Alpha and the Omega, (3) the offspring of David, (4) the morning star, and (5) the tree of life. All of these symbols provide specific information about our Lord. By combining the meaning of these symbols, we can derive a more complete description of him. This same situation exists in these last two chapters of Revelation concerning the church and the gospel. There are several symbols used to describe the church and the gospel. Together they give a complete picture of the spiritual kingdom of God (the church) and the message (the gospel) that enables man to be a part of God's spiritual kingdom.

This tree of life produces twelve manner of fruits and yields fruit every month. The key to understanding this symbolism is understanding that the number "12" is used to represent organized religion. To yield twelve manners of fruit would mean that this tree yields all the spiritual fruit we need to eat in order to be acceptable to God. As people obey the gospel and enter into the spiritual city of God, this tree of life is yielding spiritual fruit. To yield fruit every month shows that this is a continual process. This is once again connected with the meaning of the number "12"

because as we count time, twelve months make up one year, or a complete period of time. Therefore, the basic meaning of this verse is that Christ, who is our spiritual tree of life, is continually yielding spiritual fruit. As long as we eat of the fruit of that tree, we will live spiritually forever. Christians offer this fruit to others by preaching and teaching the gospel today.

The leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations. This is referring to the healing power of the gospel. In Mk. 2:8-11 Jesus says, "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." As one obeys the gospel, he partakes of this tree of life and is healed of his sins. This spiritual healing is taking place today. This once again points to the fact that these last 2 chapters of Revelation give a symbolic picture of the church. Once we reach heaven, the healing of the nations will be completed. Those who have been healed of their sins while on earth will reside in heaven with our Lord forever. There will be no need for healing at that time.

An Old Testament definition of this tree of life can be found in Ezek. 47:12 which states, "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." Notice that this tree puts forth fruit according to months. This verse in Revelation says that it puts forth 12 manner of fruits and they are yielded every month. That would be "according to his months" (Ezek. 47:12).

**Verse 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:**

This verse again points to the difference between the old law and the new. Those who lived under the old Law of Moses were under a curse because the only way they could obtain righteousness in God's sight was to live that law perfectly. Obviously, this was impossible for anyone. Therefore, Christ came to earth; lived the perfect life, and became the perfect sacrifice so we would no longer be under the curse of the old law. Gal. 3:10-11 states, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith." Today, we are no longer under the curse of the old law. We are under a new law – the law of faith. (See Gal. 3:23-26.)

The Throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it. This throne is located in the spiritual city of God, the church. We read in 2Cor. 6:16b, "As God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Christ is presently sitting on his throne as he rules his spiritual kingdom. (See Acts 2:33-36; Eph. 1:20-23.)

As the Lamb sits on his throne, his servants shall serve him. Christians are the servants of Christ today. We are serving him as we do the things that he has commanded. This concept is also present in 7:15 which says "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." (Refer to comments on 7:15.)

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

The most common explanation of the phrase "they shall see his face" is that it is referring to the time of our eternal abode when we will literally see the face of God. However, in keeping with our interpretation of chapters 21 and 22 as being a figurative description of the church on earth today, we believe this is a figurative statement symbolizing the

closeness of the relationship Christians have with our Lord today. For example, 1Cor. 13:12 says, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Verses 8 through 10 of that chapter define that which was known "in part" as the gospel. There were still gifts of tongues, knowledge, prophecies, and etc., but when the full revelation of the gospel came, those things would vanish away. Today, we have the complete record of the gospel (Bible), but it was only partially complete at the time Paul penned those words. With this in mind, it is likely that seeing him "face to face" refers to the ability of the gospel to bring us into a close relationship with God. Obedience to the gospel figuratively brings us face to face with God. We do not "see through a glass, darkly" because we have the full revelation of God.

Another passage which indicates that this phrase "face to face" can be used symbolically is Isa. 59:2 which states, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Sin separates man from God. Because Israel sinned, God "hid his face" from them and would not hear their prayers. Today, when we obey the gospel, our sins are forgiven, and God does not hide his face from us. We see him "face to face," and he hears our prayers.

Having Christ's name in our forehead shows our allegiance to him, or that we belong to him. This same symbolism is used in 14:1 to describe the 144,000 who are the redeemed of the earth. If we are the servants of God today, we are among the 144,000, and his name is in our foreheads. We belong to God, not the devil. (See comments on 14:1.) This also points to the idea that "face to face" is used symbolically in this verse. Those who are the servants of God will "see his face" and "his name shall be in their foreheads." Both phrases refer to the same people at the same time. Christians today symbolically have the Father's name written in our foreheads and we see God "face to face." We can be in a close relationship with God because our sins have been forgiven. He will not turn his face from

us. We see him “face to face.”

**Verse 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.**

The same symbolism is used in this verse as in 21:23. Light is symbolic of the sinless state in which Christians live. Darkness represents sin or the dwelling place of those outside the church. In Jn. 8:12 Jesus says, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” If we are in the church, we are in a sinless state and Jesus is our light. (For more on this, see comments on 21:23.) There is never any spiritual darkness in the church. We have no need of a candle or the sun to give us light. The Lord is the light of the church.

We are also told that we shall reign forever and ever. This must refer to our eternal reign, but we must remember that our reign has already begun. When we overcome this world of sin by becoming Christians, we begin reigning with Christ. This is the description given in 20:4 as it pictures Christians living and reigning with Christ for one thousand years. Rev. 5:10 says that we reign on the earth. As Christians, our reign with Christ has begun, and if we remain faithful, we shall continue to reign with him throughout eternity.

## THE ANGEL CONCLUDES

**Verse 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.**

The angel proclaims that the things which John has seen are faithful and true. They are definitely going to take place. He says they must “shortly be done.” This is similar to 1:1, which states that Jesus is going to show John things that must “shortly come to pass.” This means that the

events recorded in Revelation are soon to begin taking place. It does not mean that they will shortly be finished. It means that they will take place all during the Christian dispensation. (See comments on v. 7 and 1:1.)

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

Some try to determine if Jesus or the angel makes this statement. It really makes no difference because angels are often used as messengers for God. Since Jesus says in verses 12 and 20 that he will “come quickly,” we will interpret this verse as being a statement made by Jesus. This verse helps us to understand how certain phrases and symbols dealing with amounts of time are used in Revelation. Jesus said he would come quickly, yet approximately two thousand years have passed since this statement was made. In terms of man’s understanding of time, two thousand years does not pass “quickly,” but with God this is a short time.

There is a phrase similar to this in 1:1, which many people use as a basis of interpretation for the entire book. Speaking of the things revealed in Revelation, Jesus states that he is going to show his servants things which must “shortly come to pass.” Many people say this means that the events foretold in Revelation will be fulfilled within a few hundred years after its writing. This interpretation uses man’s understanding of time rather than God’s. In verse 6, an angel repeats this phrase by telling John that he had shown him “things which must shortly be done.” In this verse Jesus says, “Behold, I come quickly.” It does not coincide to interpret “shortly” as a few hundred years, but interpret “quickly” as two thousand years or more. They refer to the same identical period of time, the entire gospel age.

A blessing is also pronounced upon those who “keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” If we follow the commandments of God, we will of all men be most blessed.

**Verses 8, 9. 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. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.**

After this great vision was finished, John fell down to worship before the angel. The angel immediately tells him not to do this because he is John's fellow-servant. John is admonished to worship God. Another incident much like this one is recorded in 19:10. The question then arises; Why did John repeat the same mistake? After being admonished in 19:10 not to worship the angel but to worship God, he apparently makes the same mistake again. Coffman gives an excellent explanation of this: "There [19:10], John fell down to worship the angel; here he fell down to 'worship God' in the presence of the angel."<sup>1</sup> Our worship must be presented directly to God. We cannot worship him through another man, image, or even an angel. This is a great lesson for the world today. Everyone is responsible for his or her own acts of worship to God. Certainly, if John was not permitted to bow down before an angel in order to worship God, we must not bow down before other men to worship God.

## **JESUS' FINAL STATEMENTS**

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

Jesus begins speaking in this verse. We know this because of statements made in verses 12-13 and 16. He instructs John not to seal the prophecy of this book, but to leave it open for all to read.

The prophecies in this book deal with our present gospel age or the "last time" (1Jn. 2:16). Therefore, the time of the fulfillment of these prophecies was "at hand." This does not confine the events described in Revelation to a short period of time. Rather, it means that they are to begin

immediately. In fact, the process of fulfillment had already begun because Christ had already established his kingdom, and much of Revelation deals with events that affect the church from its beginning until it is taken to heaven at Christ's second coming. These prophecies were to begin immediately, but they will not be completely fulfilled until Christ returns.

**Verse 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.**

Many ideas have been presented concerning the meaning of verse 4. We will attempt to interpret it according to its context in this chapter. Verse 10 states, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Then verse 11 indicates that there will be no change in the spiritual status of individuals because of these prophecies. Those who are unjust will still be unjust; those who are filthy will continue to be filthy; those who are righteous will remain righteous, and those who are holy will still be holy. The book of Revelation is the final message from God to man, but it revealed nothing that would change the plan of salvation, which God had already given to man. Those who were unjust before this revelation was given to John would still be unjust after it was given. The same would be true for those who were filthy, righteous or holy. This revelation did nothing to change the way one renders obedience to God's will.

This is important from the standpoint that many people, based on their interpretation of the one thousand years of chapter 20, believe that God gave an entirely new method of salvation. God did not set up another dispensation of one thousand years after this present Christian dispensation whereby man might have a second chance at salvation. The book of Revelation in no way changed God's plan of salvation.

**Verse 12. And, behold, I come quickly; and my**

**reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**

When Christ comes again, it will be to reward those who have been faithful to him. There will be no second chance; no period of tribulation for the wicked, and no setting up of an earthly kingdom for a “thousand years.” Everything on this earth will be finished and Judgment will take place. Everyone will be judged according to their works or “the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2Cor. 5:10). (For comments on “Behold, I come quickly,” see v.7.)

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

Christ identifies himself as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending. Interestingly, Christ identified himself in this manner in both the beginning and the ending portions of Revelation. (See 1:8.) Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; therefore, Christ is saying that he is complete in every way. Today we might use a similar expression by saying, “He covers everything from a to z.” (For other comments on this subject, see 1:8.)

**Verse 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.**

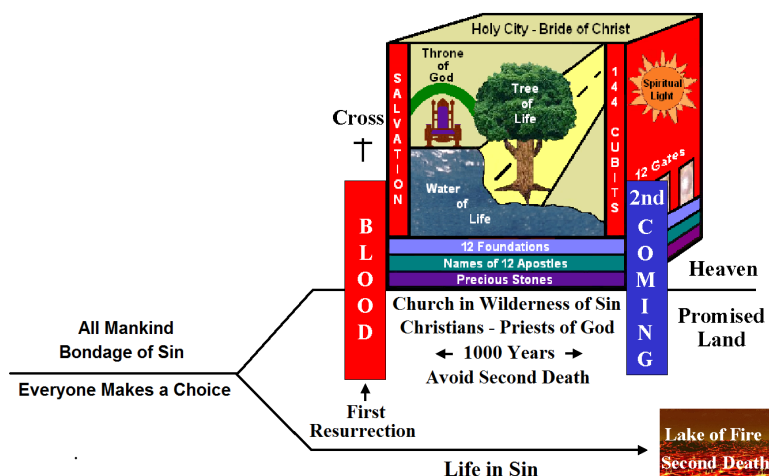
This verse makes it plain how anyone can enter into God’s beautiful city, the church, where the tree of life is located. We enter by rendering obedience to the commandments he has spoken.

Those commandments are given through his written Word, the Bible. Today, when anyone obeys the Law of Christ, he enters into God’s spiritual city, which is the church of our Lord. By becoming members of the Lord’s church, we have a right to eat of the tree of life, which enables us to live spiritually forever. We must always be certain not to make the same mistake as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden. If we sin willfully, the Lord will remove us from his spiritual city, just as he removed Adam

and Eve from the Garden of Eden. (See v. 19.)

**Verse 15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whore-mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.**

All types of sins are located outside the walls of the city, the spiritual kingdom of God. Those who have not obeyed the commandments of God and have not entered into the city are living in a world of sin. The only way to escape a life of sin, which yields sure spiritual death and destruction at Judgment, is to obey the commandments of God and enter into his beautiful city. The amazing thing about this is that the gates to this city are always open, and anyone at



anytime may choose to enter in; however, the majority of people today seem to choose the ways of sin for a season rather than to follow Christ and live forever.

**Verse 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.**

John was instructed to declare the things that he had seen to the churches. In chapters 2 and 3 there were specific messages addressed to each of the seven churches of Asia.

Verse 16 shows that lessons contained in this great book are intended for all congregations of the Lord's church. Just as Revelation was intended for all seven churches of Asia, it is also intended for all churches of all ages. Revelation was written for our study and understanding today as much as it was for Christians of the first century. We must believe the meanings of these visions are the same today as they were when first read. The lessons taught in the Bible do not change with time.

Jesus first identifies himself as the root and offspring of David. To be the offspring of David would mean that Jesus was born (sprang) from the seed of David. A root is the structure that anchors a plant and supplies its nourishment. With this in mind, it is unnatural for us to think of something as being both the root and offspring of anything. But, this is exactly what Christ was. He not only came from the seed of David, he was also the root of David. The Law of Moses was given to the Israelite nation in order to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. Gal. 3:19 states, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." This seed is referring to Christ. Therefore, Christ was the reason the Law of Moses was given to the Jewish nation of which David once reigned as king. So, Christ not only was the offspring of David, he was the root also.

Christ also identifies himself as the bright and morning star. To be identified as a star shows the greatness of an individual. We even use this same type of terminology today to describe people whom we consider to be important or well known. Christ was a bright star – the brightest of all. He gave mankind the most wonderful gift of all. He gave us the opportunity to live forever.

The morning star is one that shines brightly just before the dawn of a new day. A new day represents the coming of a new era, which is better than the previous one. This also describes Jesus perfectly. He came to earth and his glory radiated brightly among men. He brought in a new day or time, the gospel age, in which man could be reconciled to

God by receiving forgiveness of his sins. Jesus is truly our bright and morning star.

**Verse 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.**

Christ is bidding all that will be obedient unto him to “come.” The first part of this verse, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come,” is referring to the Holy Spirit and the church. Through the Word, the Holy Spirit constantly bids all to come. We in the church should constantly bid those who are lost in a world of sin to come in and dwell with us. This is further proof that the beautiful city described in these last two chapters is the church. Rev. 21:9 says that this city is a description of the bride of Christ. In this verse, the bride is bidding all who will to come. The church is not bidding people to come into our final dwelling place of heaven. The church is bidding all who will obey the commands of God to come into it. Those who hear will be able to enter. Rom. 10:17 says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Therefore, anyone who hears the Word of God and obeys its commands may enter into that beautiful city, the church. Rev. 3:20 says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

“Let him that is athirst come” is making reference to the person who desires the truth and seeks to find it. Mt. 5:6 says, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” When one seeks and finds the truth, he may enter into God’s city by obeying that truth. Anyone who is thirsty for righteousness may take of the water of life, which flows out from the Throne of God through his city. (See v. 1-2.) Again, this water of life is referring to the gospel. All who are obedient to it will be added unto God’s kingdom and have the promise of eternal life if they remain faithful (v. 19).

**Verse 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:**

This is a warning against adding to the prophecies that have been presented in this book upon the penalty of receiving the plagues described therein. Verse 18 is used by many to teach against adding to any part of God's Word, not just the prophecies of this particular book. Others question this application. The point is that Revelation deals largely with spiritual matters, and if man tampers with God's method of entrance into his holy city, he is adding to the things written in this book. If any man does this, God will surely add unto him the plagues recorded therein. The plagues must be referring to the series of seven last plagues recorded in chapter 16. As was noted in that chapter, these plagues are directed against non-Christians. If anyone adds anything to God's Word, he is not a Christian because he is attempting to be saved according to his own method. We must follow God's plan in order to be acceptable unto him. God has never allowed man to add to his Word. (See Prov. 30:6.)

**Verse 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.**

This verse explains what will happen to man if he takes away from the things written in this book. We should not make the mistake of believing that different things will happen to man depending on whether he adds to or takes away from God's Word. Having one's name taken out of the book of life and out of the holy city will place him directly in contact with the plagues of this book. Rev. 9:4 and 15:2-4 explain who will not be harmed by the influences of the devil and the plagues. They are those whom God has sealed. They have gotten victory over the beast and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. They are Christians. They have their names written in the book of

life (21:27) and are in the holy city (v. 14). If anyone adds to or takes away from God's Word, his name will be taken out of the book of life and out of the holy city.

This is also an admonition to Christians to live faithful lives. Having our names added to the book of life and entering God's holy city does not give us a license to commit any sinful act we might desire and still expect God to take us home to heaven with him. If we do those things, our names will be stricken from the book of life, and our part will be removed from the holy city. If we expect to reach heaven, we must "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27). We must keep ourselves in God's spiritual, holy city.

It should also be pointed out that this verse proves that one may be a Christian and then do those things that will cause him to be lost. The "holy city" is a symbolic reference to the church, and these two verses specifically says that God will remove anyone from the church who practices things that are added to or taken away from his Word. We must follow the Word of God precisely as he has given it to us.

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

Jesus once again announces that he will come quickly. This is the third time this statement has been repeated in this chapter. (See v. 7, 12.) We should be constantly aware that Jesus could come at any time. We must be watchful and keep ourselves prepared for this great event. This has been a constant admonition throughout the book of Revelation.

John answers, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Christians should look forward to Christ's second coming. One of the main purposes of Revelation is to comfort and assure Christians that their situation will be much better after Christ returns than it is now. Many times Christians also get caught up in the pleasures of this life and forget that our life to come will be much preferred to this one. Let us strive to live our lives so that we might truly be able to say,



“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

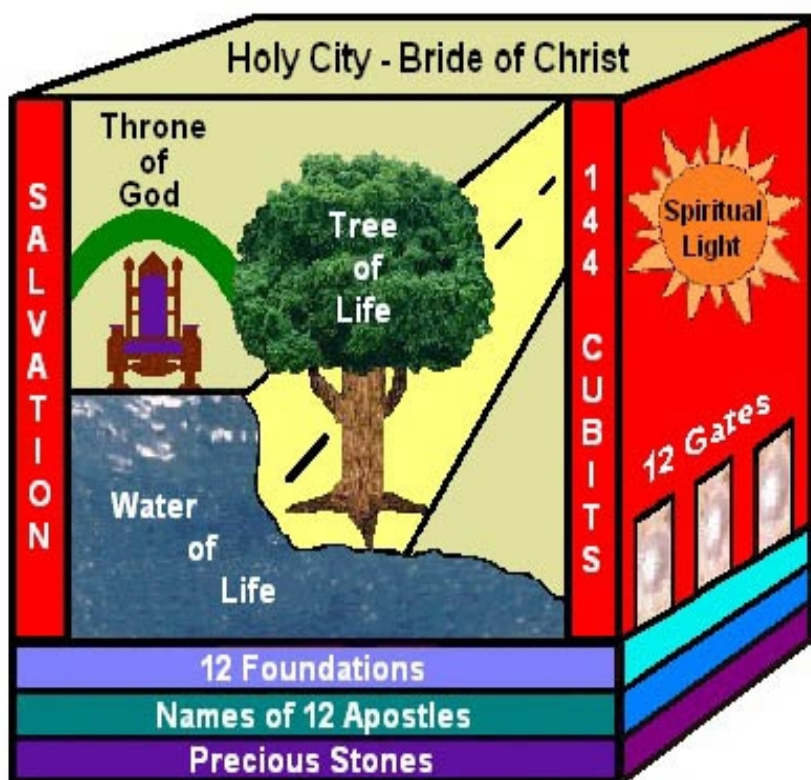
**Verse 21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

John closes Revelation with a personal salutation to all who read this book through the many generations to follow. As was stated in verse 16, Revelation was intended for all who are members of the Lord’s church. It is our firm belief that we may read, study and understand this book just as Christians of the first century did. We also believe that the lessons contained therein are the same for us as for those of the first century. As we close this study, we wish for you many hours of fulfilling and profitable Bible study. We hope this book will aid you in some way as you continue to study this great book of Revelation. Remember, “blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy” (1:3).

<sup>1</sup>James Burton Coffman, *Commentary on Revelation* (Austin, Tex., Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1979), p. 523.

## **CONCLUSION TO CHAPTERS 21 AND 22**

As we conclude this study of Revelation, we would like to once again refer to the following drawing. It contains some of the major symbols used in these last two chapters that describe the beautiful spiritual city of God – the church. Hopefully, this will help us to develop in our minds a better picture of the church that Jesus built for us. This is the place where Christians dwell in a close spiritual relationship with God on this earth today. It is also our desire that we may truly begin to appreciate the fact that this great prophecy of Jesus Christ is a revelation for Christians today.



## THE BRIDE—THE LAMB’S WIFE

In 21:9 an angel tells John that he is going to show him “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” This is definitely a reference to the church. The symbolic language that follows is used to describe a magnificent spiritual kingdom in which Christians dwell today. It is described in physical terms that

we can understand. All of these symbols are taken from the Old Testament prophecies that describe the first coming of Jesus and the establishment of the church. The Old Testament prophecies told the people of Israel what the church would be like when Jesus established it. Revelation shows us that we have the church as it was prophesied.

The church that Jesus built is constructed on the most solid foundation of all – His Word. The gospel is the foundation for all the Christian's worship to God and gives us complete instructions concerning how we should the conduct our physical lives. It is so valuable that it is garnished with all manner of precious stones. The wall of this city represents the Law of Christ that we must obey in order to become obedient to the will of God and obtain salvation from our sins. As described in Isa. 26:1, it is our wall of salvation. It is an indestructible wall of tremendous size that will protect us from the destruction of Satan. He is unable to come into the church and bring us under his control. All he can do is tempt us to come out of the church on our own will. When we obey the gospel through our baptism, we enter this city by passing through the priceless gates of pearl, which represents the value of entering into this beautiful city. Entrance into the church is priceless. We have found the pearl of great price. These gates are never closed because entrance into this city is possible at any place or at any time. Passing through the wall of this great spiritual city by the gates of pearl represents our leaving a world of spiritual darkness and entering into the spiritual light of God's spiritual paradise on earth. The spiritual light of this city is Jesus. A spiritual city needs no physical light such as the sun or moon.

Once we have entered the city, we walk upon the street of gold. According to Isa. 35:8, this is the highway upon which the redeemed walk. It is the "way of holiness." We also have access to the tree of life (Jesus Christ). As long as we remain faithful, we can partake of the tree of life, which will enable us to live spiritually forever.

The great, magnificent Throne of God is located in the spiritual kingdom of God. As Christians, we are gathered

around this great Throne as we serve God day and night, continually, in his temple, which is the church. The spiritual water of life, which nourishes our soul, flows out from this Throne. All we have to do in order to partake of this spiritual water of life is obey the gospel of Christ. This enables us to pass through the gates and enter into this beautiful paradise where our sins are forgiven. The pains and sorrow for sin have been wiped away and we will never die spiritually. We then look forward to God's promise that this spiritual city, the church, will be taken to heaven to dwell with him eternally. As members of the church, we have the spiritual blessings of this life and the promise of eternal life to come.

May God bless you in the study of His Word!