

240121-1 Re 22,1-5, The River & the Tree of Life of the New Jerusalem– CThurman

Having continued to search the Scriptures since the last time we assembled together I appreciate so much the more the literalness of Revelation ch. 21. And as is my custom let's briefly review the things we've presented in these lessons, beginning at the last part of the 20th chapter.

We must believe the Bible when it says that the LORD shall dissolve this present heaven and earth. (cf. Re.20.11; 2Pe.3.10, 11; He. 1.11) The Lord Jesus said the same during His earthly ministry, that *'Heaven and earth shall pass away* (cf. Mt.24.35; Mk.13.31; Lu.21.33). After this the apostle John saw a new heaven and a new earth. (cf. Re.21.1) The reality of this place is confirmed by the OT prophet Isaiah twice (Is.65.17; 66.22), and also by the apostle Peter (2Pe.3.13), *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

It is interesting that on one hand there is much OT Scripture which deals with the millennium, but few NT texts; and on the other, there are few OT texts which deal with the new heaven and earth, and more NT texts.

After John saw the new heaven and earth, we read that a certain angel took John to a *great and high mountain*. Why? Wasn't it so that he could view the greatness and the glory of the holy city, the New Jerusalem? Remember how it was that Satan took our Lord Jesus to an exceeding high mountain to view all the kingdoms of this world in a moment? (cf. Lk.4.5) So, John was brought to this mountain to view this city. It was at this point, as I began to review the previous lesson, that I noticed the apostle Paul's description of this same place, this same city, and the special people that *live* in anticipation of seeing it, walking into it, and dwelling there for ever and ever. I want you to notice that Revelation 21-22.5 and Hebrews 12.22, 23 are synoptic accounts of this place, this city, and this people. Read now He.12.22, 23.

Heb 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion,
(John was brought to a great and high mountain [Re.21.10] in order to view this spectacular city)

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and unto the city of the living God,
(whose builder and maker is God [He.11.10])

the heavenly Jerusalem,
(which John described as coming *down from God out of heaven*
[Re.21.2])

and to an innumerable company of angels,
(all of these special, ministering spirits also come to this place [cf.
1Ti.5.21])

23 To the general assembly
(πανήγυρις, the entire 'marketplace', the πᾶς ἄγορά, the whole
gathering)

and church
(ἐκκλησία, the 'called out ones')

of the firstborn,
(meaning that these are counted as the crème de la crème of the
believing, the best of the best; this describes these *special servants* of
God and Christ, of whom it is said, *his servants shall serve Him*
[Re.22.3, 4]. Not any of us feels that way do we. We have a strong
sense of unworthiness. But the Bible says that this is who these
people are.)

which are written in heaven ...
(John said of these that their names ... *are written in the Lamb's book
of life* [Re.21.27])

Was Paul writing in figurative terms? If not, then John was not writing in
figurative terms. Aren't they are describing the same things? Isn't there is in the
future, for ALL of the redeemed of Jesus Christ awaiting a new heaven and a new
earth? Is there not before us, in this place, an incomparably beautiful city in
which there will live, not all the children of God, but certain of them? Aren't
these things written to encourage the child of God to faithfulness? Isn't there a
special blessing which the Lord Jesus shall give to the faithful?

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

Of course the flip-side of this is that He shall chastise the unfaithful.

Lu.12.47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not [himself], neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many [stripes].

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few [stripes]. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

The five verse before us today give the final details of the wonders of the New Jerusalem and places emphasis upon the blessed state of those servants of Christ that shall live within its walls.

Chapter 22

1 ¶ And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal,
(the angel) presented (to)(John) stream
(Re.21.9) flood

shewed, ἔδειξέν, 3s. aor. of the verb δείκνυμι, always tss. to shew (31).

river, ποταμῶ, dat. sing. of the noun ποταμός, tss. flood (Re.12.15, 16), river (Re.8.10; 9.14; 16.4, 12; 22.1, 2), stream, waters.

ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου
proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.
from

proceeding, of the verb ἐκπορεύομαι, ἐκ of, from, out of + πορεύομαι to go (Re.19.15), walk, journey; ἐκπορεύομαι, tss. to go out, to proceed out, to come, to depart, went (Wigram, 'coming forth,' Re.1.16), to proceed (Re.4.5; 11.5; 22.1), which proceeded

(Re.19.21), to issue (Re.9.17), which issued (Re.9.18), to go forth (Re.16.14)

Brethren, the phrase, *water of life*, in this text has given me reason to revisit the same phrase given in the text of Re.21.6, and to look at phrases closely related to it, such as *living water* and *living waters*.

First, the phrase *living water* is only found in the NT, in the Gospel of John, and is used symbolically of the Lord Jesus, who is the source of everlasting life. (cf. Jn.4.10, 11; 7.38) I don't know of anyone that would disagree that the phrase is used symbolically.

Second, the phrase *living waters* is only found in the OT. This phrase is used symbolically three times (cf. Song.4.15; Jer.2.13; 7.13) and one time literally. (cf. Zec.14.8, meaning, 'fresh water')

Zec 14:8 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: in summer and in winter shall it be.

And third, like the phrase *living water*, the phrase *water of life* is also only found in the NT, in the Book of Revelation (cf. Re.21.6; 22.1; 22.17). After looking at this, it seems that the phrase, *water of life*, ought to be interpreted literally. This is not to say that these texts could be made to have a spiritual application, BUT the first meaning, the primary sense is literal. Read the text of Re.21.6.

Re 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Or, I will freely give [drink] to the one that is thirsting from fountain of the water of life. Of course, in that day there shall be no more hunger and thirst. (cf. Re.7.16) The idea is that the children of God are presently in a state of thirsting which shall be slaked, quenched when once he reaches that eternal destiny.

The context of Re.21.6 concerns a real city of God, the New Jerusalem, that is on a real and new earth. If we are consistent in the interpretation of these things then we must also agree that the *water of life* is with reference to a real, fresh-water stream that flows out of this city. And from this very stream we shall all drink.

There is a comparison which is to be made between that river which flowed out of the garden of Eden, then parted into four heads and watered all the earth as it was originally configured. (cf. Ge.2.10-13) I think we have to conclude that as the first river of this present earth was literal, so the first river of that future earth is also literal. The point is (and here's a warning,) if we dismiss the literal sense of the *river of the water of life* in Revelation we are very close to dismissing the real account given us in the Book of Genesis. The Book of Revelation is reporting things that are *true* (real) (cf. Re.21.5, ... *these words are true faithful*; Re.22.6, *These sayings are faithful and true...*) That which was closed and sealed in Daniel's day is now opened.

Da 12:9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words [are] closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Is it possible that there really could be such a river that shall proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb? Is it possible that this account is describing something real? Is there something about this text that communicates that it is impossible for this to be interpreted literally? Even David wrote that subsequent to the destruction of this present cosmos there would be a river.

Ps.46.1 ¶ «To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth.» God [is] our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 [Though] the waters thereof roar [and] be troubled, [though] the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 [There is] a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy [place] of the tabernacles of the most High.

5 God [is] in the midst of her (His city); she shall not be moved: God shall help her, [and that] right early. (When? בְּקֶרֶב תִּפְנוֹתַי, lip-nōth bōh-qehr, 'at the turning, appearing of the morning')

6 ¶ The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. (Qal fut. of the verb גִּזַּג, moog, also tss. to dissolve, to consume)

1 Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι καθαρὸν ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον ἔκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁρνίου

2 In the midst of the street of it, and

(Re.11.8; 21.21) (city)

a street is a broad place, and here it proceeds from the throne of God.

Wycliffe (1380), 'in the middle of the street of it (the city), and

midst, of the Greek adj. μέσος, tss. *midst, among, mid-, between, way.*

street, the noun πλατεία, tss. *street*; another noun πλάτος, is tss. *breadth.*

τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν

on either side of the river,

was there the tree of life,

Lit. of the river from here and from there

meaning, on both sides, or, on each side of the river

on either side, ἐντεῦθεν, an adv. tss. hence, from hence; see the same, ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν, at Jn.19.18, 'on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.'

Originally, in the beginning, the LORD planted a garden eastward in Eden. And in the midst of that garden he planted every kind of tree, including the *tree of life.*

First, before considering the *tree of life*, let's consider this garden. The LORD planted a garden. This is the *Garden of God*. (cf. Ez.28.13) In the Septuagint (LXX) the word *garden* is tss. from the Greek, παράδεισος, which transliterated into English would be the word *paradise*.

Ge.2.8 ¶ And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground (of that garden) made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Note: The Hebrew, פֶּרְדֵּיִם, par-dehs', again, transliterated we have the English *paradise*. This is three times in the OT. First, it is tss. with the English *forest* in Neh. 2.8, *the king's forest*. And then *orchard* in Ecc.2.5; Song.4.13, *thy plants are an orchard*.

Adam sinned, was cast out of the garden, and his free access to the benefits in this place and from this *tree of life*.

Ge 3:24 So he (the LORD) drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

The purpose for the cherubs was to preserve or guard the way that the tree of life would be used. The LORD would not allow the tree of life to be used to support man once he has fallen into this sinful, fallen state.

At this point the tree of life is not mentioned again until Re.2.7, but the garden or paradise is next referred to by the Lord Jesus when he was hanging upon the cross. (cf. Lk.23.43) Here he tells the dying thief which has turned in faith to Him, '*Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise*.' Where was Christ coming after He died on the cross? He was coming to the same place where all that had died in faith had come

until now. A place *in the heart of the earth*. (cf. Mt.12.40) And Christ was here until the day of His rising from the dead three days later. Then He took all of those that were with Him *in the heart of the earth* into glory. (Eph.4.8, *When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive ...*) Isn't it interesting that after the next reference to *paradise* is by the apostle Paul. Where is this? It's in glory. Notice this.

*2Co 12:3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)
4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

But glory is not the last time or place that we find *paradise* in the word of God. Turn now to Re.2.7.

Re 2:7 (Written to the church at Ephesus) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

And where is *paradise*? And, what is *paradise*? *Paradise* is on the new earth and it is the very city of God, which is the New Jerusalem. And in this place is the tree of life.

Notice that the *tree of life* is not a single tree, but it is a certain kind of tree of which there are many in this beautiful city. It appears that this tree only grows in the New Jerusalem. I can't prove that these trees are anywhere else than in this city.

Let's turn our attention back to John's description of the river, the street and tree of life.

*Re 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.
2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, [was there] the tree of life ...*

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To me it sounds like the river, with the tree of life on each side runs down the middle of the street of this city.

		καρπούς, pl.	καρπὸν, sing.
which	bare	twelve manner of	fruits, and yielded her fruit
(tree of life)	produced		giving forth

bare, ποιῶν, nom. sing. neut. part. pres. act. of the verb ποιέω, *to do, to make, to appoint*, etc.

fruits, καρπούς, acc. pl. of the noun καρπός, which is always tss. with the English *fruit*.

	εἰς	θεραπείαν
every month: and the leaves of the tree were	for	the healing of the nations.

healing, θεραπείαν, acc. sing. of the noun θεραπεία, four times in the NT and tss. *household, healing*; the verb θεραπεύω, is tss. *healing, cure, worship* (attending to idols [practice of idol worship]),

Notice that the tree of life is a most unusual, productive fruit tree. Rather than bearing a single kind of fruit, it yields twelve kinds of fruit, either all twelve fruits every month or, *if* there are twelve months as there are now, perhaps the tree will yield one of the twelve fruits each month for twelve months.

Then there is mention of the nations. It becomes clear as we read on into the next three verses that the primary subject concerns the servants of God and of the Lamb which reside in the city. (v.3-5) But there are those that live beyond the city. This same people were mentioned in the previous chapter.

Re 21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

Brethren, be careful to stay with what we know. THEY ARE THE SAVED OF ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY. So, there are some that live in the city and those

that live outside of it. As far as I can tell the inhabitants of the city shall eat the fruit of this tree. I can't say any more than that.

Re 2:7 (Written to the church at Ephesus) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Adam in his unfallen state, with Eve, had free access to the tree of life and ate of it. There is no reason to think that they did not eat of the fruit of this tree. The LORD commended to them the fruit of this tree.

Ge 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat ...

Re 22:14 Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life (obviously meaning a right to eat of the fruit of the tree of life), and may enter in through the gates into the city.

But after sin, as we already read, the LORD made it so that Adam, Eve, or anyone else after them could eat of the fruit of this tree. (cf. Ge.3.24) The fruit of this tree evidently supports the physical life of men.

Ge 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life (obviously with reference to the fruit of the tree of life), and eat, and live for ever ...

So the fruit of this tree somehow sustained the physical body so that it should not die, something which the LORD in his mercy prevented man from eating after his fall into sin. But before sin Adam and Eve received necessary support to the physical forms by eating of this fruit.

In that day before us man, being is delivered from sin to the fullest extent and restored to an upright state as Adam was before the fall, except that he

cannot ever again fall into sin. And once again he has access to the tree of life. This much we know, the inhabitants of the city have access to the fruit, and the nations of the saved to the leaves.

‘Even the leaves of the tree are beneficial – they have a medicinal value. Why healing is needed in a perfect universe is a very good question and a difficult problem to solve. Perhaps it is a sort of first-aid kit which demonstrates the old adage, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” I personally believe that the bodies of the earth dwellers in eternity will be different from the bodies of the believers in the church who are to be like Christ (that is, their bodies will be like His). The bodies of the earth dwellers may need renewing from time to time. This may be the reason that they come up to the New Jerusalem – not only to worship, but also to be renewed physically and spiritually. At least the prevention is there.’ *Revelation Volume III*, J. Vernon McGee, p.203, Through the Bible Books

2 ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν
ξύλον ζωῆς ποιοῦν καρποὺς δώδεκα κατὰ μῆνα ἓνα ἕκαστον ἀποδίδου
τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν

καὶ πᾶν κατανάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb

And every curse shall be no more

curse, κατανάθεμα, κατά, after, down, as, according to + ἀνάθεμα, noun, *to be accursed* or verb, ἀναθεματίζω, *to curse, to bind with an oath*; κατανάθεμα, a noun this once in the NT; the verb καταναθεματίζω, is also only once in the NT, tss. *to curse*.

shall be in it;

longer, ἐτι, an adv. tss. *henceforth, yet* (Re.6.11), *further, even, more, thenceforth, more* (Re.3.12; 9.12; 18.21, 22, 23; 20.3; 21.1, 4; 22.3), *any more* (Re.7.16; 12.8; 18.22; 21.4), *moreover, longer* (Re.10.6), *still* (Re.22.11).

The curse was partially lifted during the millennial kingdom, but there is no curse whatsoever here. Think of the permanent state to which the love of Christ for us has brought us. IT ISN'T POSSIBLE THAT THERE SHOULD EVER COME TO THIS PLACE THE SLIGHTEST INKLING OF A CURSE. Sin has been so thoroughly eradicated in us by the death of Christ.

δοῦλοι λατρεύσουσιν
and his servants shall serve him:
 worship

shall serve, λατρεύσουσιν, 3pl. fut. of the verb λατρεύω, tss. *to serve (17)*, *to worship (4)*; the noun, λατρεία, is tss. *service, divine service*.

'In the New Testament, of the worship or service of God in the use of the rites intended for His worship.' Marvin Vincent, 'Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament,' vol.2, p.571, Hendrickson Publishers

Finally, this verse acknowledges the servants of Christ. They live in the city, and they render a divine service to Him. It might be that these servants render a special service in behalf of the nations of the saved as the sons of Levi performed for the nation of Israel. Whatever is involved, we do know that these servants are priests to God.

Re 1:6 And (Jesus Christ) hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Re 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

3 καὶ πᾶν κατανάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι καὶ ὁ θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be ἐπὶ
(the servants) upon
in their foreheads.

foreheads, μετώπων, gen. pl. of the noun μέτωπον, μετά after + ὤψ, Liddell & Scott, 'the eye, the face, the countenance; μέτωπον, is only found in the Book of Revelation. (Re.7.3; 9.4; 13.16; 14.1, 9; 17.5; 20.4; 22.4)

This doesn't say that everyone in all the earth won't see the Lord Jesus, but it affirms that His servants shall see him face to face, and that shall all have His name in their foreheads. Beside the servants having his name I their foreheads, there is that special entourage of 144,000 male, virgin Jews follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

Re 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty [and] four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

4 καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle,
(IN THAT CITY) (the servants)

neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light:
(the servants)

was lightened, ἐφωτίσθη, 3s. aor. pass. of the verb φωτίζω, tss. to give light (Re.22.5), to lighten (Re.18.1; 21.23), to enlighten, to illuminate.

Re.21.23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb [is] the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it (the city): and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

and they shall reign for ever and ever.
(the servants) εἰς unto the ages of the ages

they shall reign, βασιλεύσουσιν, 3pl. fut. of the verb βασιλεύω, to reign, kings (1) (1Ti.6.15, [King of kings [of them that reign]]), and so to have dominion. (cf. Re.5.10; 11.15, 17; 19.6; 20.4, 6; 22.5)

The duration of the reign of the servants of Christ is greater than that time given in Re.20.5. There they shall reign with Christ a thousand years. Here, it's *for ever and ever*. There is a millennial reign and there is a reign that continues for ever and ever. Both accounts are true, accurate, and real. But what is this we've been reading in the text of Re.21.1-22.5 about the new earth, the New Jerusalem, the glorified inhabitants inside the city, and the nations of the saved beyond? It is a brief description of the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isa 9:7 Of the increase of [his] (the Son's) government and peace [there shall be] no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Da 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, [but] it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Lk.1.33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

There is really a millennial kingdom and an everlasting kingdom. The word of God teaches both.

Listen, the doctrine of last things (eschatology) is as important as any other doctrine. We should be concerned about the attitude of some which think that doctrine is optional. But doctrine is one side of watchfulness. The

other side is love for Christ which, if genuine, conforms us to His likeness. Our doctrine and the manner of life tells whether we are watchful. If none of this mattered, it wouldn't be in the Scriptures.

Mt 16:12 Then understood they how that he bade [them] not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Ro 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Eph 4:14 That we [henceforth] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [and] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ...

1Ti 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

I want to encourage you to receive the things revealed in this Book as they are revealed. They are, true and faithful. The things in this book are accurate, real, literal, and shall come to pass just as it is written.

Re.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.

5 καὶ νῦν οὐκ ἔσται ἐκεῖ, καὶ χρεῖαν οὐκ ἔχουσιν λύχνου καὶ φωτὸς ἡλίου ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίζει αὐτούς καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων