

Revelation 22:1-21
“In the land of the living”

I. Intro

II. Vs. 1-7 Behold I am coming quickly

III. Vs. 8-21 Worship God

I. Intro

In the 21st chapter John was shown what heaven would be like practically as well as physically. Because heaven is eternal, and we dwell in a temporal place John described heaven from the point of view of what it was not going to be there:

- A place absent of sorrow, pain, and grief.
- A place where no type of sin will ever find a thought to roost in.
- A place where there will never be a separation between what is sacred and that which is secular.
- A place where we will continually dwell in God’s unapproachable light.

In the 22nd chapter John sees that heaven will be a place full of life, instead of a place where dead people go. In Matthew 22:31-32 Jesus handled a question by those who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead by saying, “*But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*” **In heaven we will realize how much everything is more alive and that our earthly experience was very much the place of death.**

II. Vs. 1-7 Behold I am coming quickly

Vs. 1-2 In these first two verses John’s attention is drawn towards two things that depict life:

- A. Vs. 1 “**a pure river of water of life**”: Last week in 21:1 we were told that in the new heaven and earth **there will be no sea** but here we see **that there will be a river**. Jesus said in John 7:38-39 “*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.*” The apostle John commented on the meaning of Jesus’ words, “*But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*” Living

water is tied to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. When we consider this we realize that the Holy Spirit renews us, sets us free, strengthens us, leads us into a holy life and brings forth fruit of a Christ like character. Most of the work of the Holy Spirit will no longer be needed in heaven as we are in our glorified bodies. But if you take a look at all the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and boil it down you will realize that it is His work to continue to make the presence of Jesus more real to us. I believe that in heaven that a drink from the “river of life” will do just that as it will give us more of Him as we will desire to continually drink from the river of life.

Notice that it proceeds from the throne and 100% pure thus we see the Godhead gave to all more of themselves.

- B. Vs. 2 “was the tree of life”: The word for tree here is one often associated with the cross. In fact, five times in the N.T. the word is used this way. **There is an aspect of Jesus character that we can see no other way then from the view of the cross. The truth is the cross is our “tree of life” for without Jesus’ death upon that tree we whom He gave His life for would have no life!** Notice the variety, frequency, and usefulness of this tree of life. There is a never-ending supply of fruit. I think of what Jesus’ work has produced in our lives as the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians five Paul says, “*the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*” ***Perhaps this tree of life will enhance these aspects of the life in the Spirit?*** Even the leaves have a therapeutic aspect, as they are health giving producing further enjoyment among God’s people. In Proverbs 13:12 we are told “*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.*” Our only desire in heaven will be for the Lord and as such we will be constantly fed on the fruit of His presence.

Vs. 3-5 There will be no more curse since the cure was a righteous act of God’s judgment has forever been dealt with. We will enjoy an uninterrupted and unhindered fellowship with God as Adam had prior to the fall. God’s throne will be among us, and God can’t dwell with sin. Furthermore, we are told that “His servants shall serve Him” which is our greatest joy. We were created for worship and service, and we shall finally be doing that which we were designed for. Our eternity will be filled with joy, as we shall be doing that which we have longed to do without any hindrances.

Next we are told that we shall see His face; with all my imagination **I still cannot imagine what beauty my redeemed glorified body eyes will behold.** The psalmist cried

out saying, “Restore us, O God; Cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved!” We shall see His face forever more and even greater than this be identified as His. We have all seen those shirts you get while on vacation, “property of” that is what this reminds me, as *His character will be stamped as our identity.*

Finally, we will be remind of the truth of Jesus being the Light of the world. *Light reveals, gives warmth and provides a sense of security.* There in nothing in us that is hidden so the light will continue to show us more of God’s beauty which will provide us the with the warmth of His love.

Vs. 6-7 *These verses begin the epilogue containing affirmations and assurances.* The *first thing God does is affirm that the words John has just heard and the visions he has written down are trustworthy. There is nothing so certain as the faithfulness of God to keep that which He has promised as He can never be contrary to His own nature and character.*

This is the promise of Jesus for all that watch over their lives in accordance with the truths found in this book. The word “quickly” is a word that we get our word “tachometer” from. A “tachometer” is a device to measure speed in order to determine how quick something is moving. So, Jesus says that when these events begin to take place that things are going to happen very rapidly. These words of Jesus serve as a reminder of two things:

- a. *We who will spend eternity in the presence of the Lord need to live in this life with a light hold upon it.*
- b. *While we are here in this world we are to watch over His word living obediently to it and to Him who entrusted it to us.*

III. Vs. 8-21 Worship God

Vs. 8-9 John is overwhelmed at what he has seen and heard and begins to worship the messenger. This is always a temptation, but **any true messenger of God will deflect any and all glory that comes their way to the only One that is worthy of such praise.** In Matthew 5:16 Jesus said, “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and **glorify your Father in heaven.***” Yet in Hebrews 1:6 we read “*when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."* **Two things equal to the same thing are by nature equal to each other and as such worshipping Jesus is the same as worshipping God.**

Vs. 10-11 In 22:7 there was a blessing for those who keep the sayings of the book of Revelation, so John is told to not seal up the book in order that people would read it and understand it. ***God's desire is to give mankind all the information necessary to make the right decision for eternity.*** How often people turn to funny looking cards, stars with charts, or some charlatan who will take their money to guide their future.

There is an old adage that says, “**Decisions determine character and character determines destiny**”, how true that is based on verse 11. **The truth is if someone hears or reads this book and still won't repent then their problem is not coming from the head but rather the heart.** In Luke 16:31 Jesus was speaking on this issue when he said, “*If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.*”

Vs. 12-15 Revelation opened with the words of 1:7 “**Behold, He is coming**” and it now ends with the fulfillment of this promise “***And behold, I am coming quickly***”.

Furthermore, we are told that He is coming with His reward and this reward is going to

be given to everyone according to his work. The child of God will not be judged according to sin as that has been judged on the cross of Christ, but we will be reward based upon our works empowered by Christ. Paul speaks of this in 1st Cor. 3:11-14 *“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.”*

In chapter 1:8 we saw the same attributes attributed to God the Father and here they are said to be Jesus' nature as well. **Jesus is the source of all things, the goal of all things and the consummation of all things.** A blessing is pronounced upon *“those who do His commandments”* but who are those and how can we know if we are doing His commandments? Well 1st John 3:23-24 tells of two such commandments then this verse before us shows the corresponding blessing:

- a. *“That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ”*: *“That they may have the right to the tree of life,”*
- b. *“And love one another, as He gave us commandment”*: *“And may enter through the gates into the city.”*

Vs. 15 This is the 3rd time the unsaved are mentioned in such terms and here we see that perhaps those who are listed here will have the ability like the rich man to see what they refused for all of eternity.

Vs. 16-17 These words of Jesus are meant for His church and are His titles, it is the first time Jesus has addressed the Church in this book since the 3rd chapter.

1. *“I am the Root and the Offspring of David”*: He is that which was hidden but at the same time is the source (the root), while also coming from David. This is a picture of Jesus' deity as well as His humanity.

2. “*The Bright and Morning Star*”: Jesus is all that is glorious clearly visible proclaiming His majesty. Many folks want a written invitation to become Christians from God well here it is, “**The Holy Spirit as well as Jesus Church say, Come!**” If you thirst for that which can only quench your parched heart, come! But you must desire to come and do so without any strings attached. In Isaiah 55:1-3 God gave a similar invitation saying, “*Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy, and eat. Yes, come; buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you; The sure mercies of David.*”

Vs. 18-21 Finally a warning is issued not to take away from or add to this book or else God will add to the person who does so the curses in this book. This is not the only place in scripture such a warning is issued in fact you can find them in Deut. 4:2, Prov. 30:5-6 and in Gal. 1:8-9.

Finally, we have the testimony of Jesus Himself as to His desire to be with us, so our response could only be that of Johns words here, “**So be it, even so come!**” John closes with the benediction and thus our need for, grace to be upon us as we wait for Him, and grace is only found in Jesus. So, as we wait for Jesus please give us more of Jesus until He comes for us!