

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Let's turn our bible to Revelation 22

The last chapter in the scriptures.

We finish our study through the book of Revelation tonight.

We got a glimpse last week on what eternity is going to be like – living in the presence of God in the New Jerusalem.

Here in the last chapter – we are going to continue to find new things about what life in the New Jerusalem will be like –

And also, we will see a warning directed to all of us regarding the imminent return of Jesus Christ as well as the authenticity of this book.

**Let's pray...**

**[Rev 22:1-21 NKJV] 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.**

We saw in our study last week that in the New Jerusalem (heaven) there is going to be no seas – some of us might have been a little disappointed by the news. However, there will be a river that runs through the city.

Not just any river – but a pure river – no pollution, no contaminants.

The word that is used here in the Greek for “clear” means that the river is going to be so pure – it is going to be transparent.

Like a real clean window.

And the reason that it is pure is because of the origin of the river

The origin is not a mountaintop packed with snow – the way Mt Hermon supplied the Jordan River - but God’s throne room.

And because God is holy and there is no defilement in Him – therefore, every provision that He provides for us is therefore holy.

Turn with me to the book of Ezekiel 47 –

Here in Ezekiel’s vision, he sees a river also.

**[Eze 47:1-2 NKJV] 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.**

Even though these rivers appear to be very similar – they are not the same one.

In Ezekiel's vision – he sees the river here on earth.

When Jesus Christ returns and sets up His kingdom on earth and rules for a thousand years, there will be a river similar to the one in the New Jerusalem but it will be flowing from the temple – which itself is a picture of God's throne room.

However, in our study last week, we clearly read that there was going to be no temple in the New Jerusalem because God's presence is going to be everywhere.

So the river that Ezekiel saw was the one from the Millennium –

That river will last for 1000 years because God destroys the earth after the 1000 years.

This river will run for eternity.

**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. The leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations.**

So this river that John sees –

It flows down the center of the main avenue of the New Jerusalem.

And on either side of its banks we find the tree of life.

Not just one tree of life – but many of the tree of life as they line the river on either side.

**Where do we find in scripture a reference to the tree of life?**

## In the Garden of Eden –

**[Gen 2:8-9 NKJV] 8 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 the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life [was] also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

Now, God told Adam that he was not allowed to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen 2:17)

God never told Adam that he was not allowed to eat from the tree of life.

So we know that when Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – God drove man out of the Garden of Eden and He placed a Cherubim with a flaming sword to guard the tree of life.

Why did God put the Cherubim there?

To punish us? NO!

Because He loves us.

It was God's original plan that man live forever, but not in the state of sin & separation from God.

God wanted man to have access to the Tree of Life; but only under the right conditions; ; when sin had been done away with and the curse was lifted thru the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

So God transplants the Tree of life and places it in the New Jerusalem where we will be able to partake of its fruit forever and ever.

You might be asking, “Won’t we get tired of eating the fruit?”

No, because it will produce a new fruit every month.

It will have 12 flavors.

So, if you don’t like the fruit this month – wait for the next month.

And we also see that even the leaves of the tree will be consumed. Unfortunately, John does not provide for us details regarding this healing of 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.**

In the Garden of Eden, God and man walked together –

When man fell and was banished from the Garden of Eden – the regular face to face time with God came to an end.

In the New Jerusalem, there is no more curse – fellowship between God and man is restored – and is fully realized in a state of continual communion.

And here we see what we will be doing in heaven – we will serve Him.

Just like in the Garden of Eden.

When God created Adam – he gave him a job to do.

Tend and keep the garden.

It wasn't back breaking work – remember, weeds, thorns and decay didn't appear until after the fall.

Adam was pruning trees and directing the growth of trees and vines.

God has prepared for us tasks to do in heaven.

**4 They shall see His face, and His name [shall be] on their foreheads.**

In the book of Exodus, Moses heard God's voice.

He saw manifestations of God's presence; the burning bush, the pillar of cloud, the pillar of fire, the fire and lightening on Mt Sinai.

And when God asked Moses what he wanted –

What did Moses say?

Show me Your glory, let me see Your face.

What did God say?

But God said, "You can't see it. You will surely die.

It's too much for your mortal frailty.

No one can survive beholding my unmasked glory."

So God stuck him in a cleft in the rock and put his hand over it so Moses couldn't see, then when He passed by, removed His hand and Moses saw just the afterglow; like the light of the sun after it's dipped below the horizon.

That's all Moses could endure!

With our glorified bodies, we will see His face – we will be able to endure the glory of God.

His names shall be on their foreheads simply means that we will be identified with God.

**[1Jo 3:2 NKJV] 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**

**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. 6 Then he said to me, "These words [are] faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must **shortly take place.****

This is the same angel that we saw last week –

And he's telling John that what's about to happen is going happen shortly.

Some people might say, well it's been 2000 years since John wrote this, why hasn't it happened?

Because the shortly that is used here doesn't mean soon – it means rapidly and it is a reference to the return of Jesus Christ.

We see the same word used at the beginning of the book of Revelation.

Rev 1:1 - 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,

**7 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed [is] he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." 8 Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 Then he said to me, "See [that you do] not [do that]. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."**

This is the second time that John falls on his face to worship an angel.

He did it earlier in chapter 19 right before Jesus' triumphant second coming.

And once again, the angel reminds him that only God is to be worshipped.

Now, before we start to get on John's case about how could he do that – twice

We must remember that as he is receiving this revelation, this vision – he still has the same flawed body that you and I do.

So he is in awe of what he sees –

And his natural response to what he sees is to simply fall on his knees and begins to worship and the angel corrects him in telling him that only God should be worshipped.

That is why in the gospels Jesus allowed the leper, even his disciples and a blind man to worship Him – because He is God.

And even in the book of Hebrews we find that angels worshipped Him. (1:6)

**10 And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.**

John isn't supposed to hide anything in this book.

The book of Revelation is intended to be read and understood from the time of the early church until the time before His second coming.

It is not a book of riddles – if one spends time studying it, it is not that difficult.

**11 "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." 12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward [is] with Me, to give to every one according to his work.**

Verse 11 is sometimes taken out of context by people.

Taken out of context – it appears that it says that bad people will be bad people, good people will be good people, and that people just don't change.

Which is the exact opposite message of the gospel.

What the angel is telling John is that Jesus Christ' return is going to be so sudden – that it will be too late to try to make any changes.

There'll be no time for last second repentance once He comes.

When the trumpet blows & the Church rockets to heaven, it takes place in the twinkling of an eye.

No one will be able to mumble a quick prayer & catch the last plane out!

So the time to repent is NOW!!!

And for the believer, the reward is going to be based on what we have done for God by faith.

**13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, [the] Beginning and [the] End, the First and the Last."**

Alpha & Omega are the first & last letters of the Greek Alphabet.

Jesus is saying He's the inception and the culmination.

In 1:8 & 21:6 this is attributed directly to God Himself.

Here it's Jesus.

The conclusion is obvious: Jesus is God.

If we truly understand verse 13 –

If we believe it with all of our hearts –

Then we will have no problem being ready for Jesus' return.

**14 Blessed [are] those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.**

Works don't earn us eternal life, but obedience is evidence we have eternal life.

Jesus spoke earlier of rewards for the faithful.

Here He blesses those who obey God.

They'll enjoy the bounty of heaven.

The rest are locked out; eternally.

Look at the list of the excluded in v15

**15 But outside [are] dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.**

By “outside” don’t get the idea outside the walls of the New Jerusalem that there are going to be people trying to get in.

This simply means these people won’t be in Heaven.

We’ve already seen where these individuals will be; the lake of fire = Hell.

Also, by “dogs” this doesn’t mean Secundus or Lassie.

This means people driven by their mere animal urges, people who morally live their lives like animals.

Proverbs 26:11

Solomon writes

**[Pro 26:11 NKJV] 11 As a dog returns to his own vomit, [So] a fool repeats his folly.**

**16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."**

Here in verse 16 –

Jesus puts His stamp of approval on the entire book of Revelation.

And notice who it was intended for – the churches.

The Book of Revelation is written to the churches.

This book is not a private affair, knowable only by an elite – it is for all believers.

Think of all the churches that tell their followers not to read the Book of Revelation.

That is who this book is intended for – so we can be ready.

BTW - This is the first time the church has been mentioned since Rev 3.

Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star are both Old Testament titles reserved for the Coming Messiah (Isaiah 11 and Numbers 24)

**17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!"  
And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life  
freely.**

The invitation to come is given to a world that is lost and dying, doomed and damned.

It is the Spirit Holy Spirit who brings people to Jesus Christ; but we, as the bride, have the privilege of issuing the invitation to the world.

**18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and [from] the things which are written in this book.**

As Jesus has stamped it with an official seal of inspiration & authority in v16, John now adds the remark that to add to or subtract from these words is to incur judgment.

The Bible contains clear truth about who God is, who we are, and how we are to relate to God.

It's really important that we don't "mislabel" or distort the truth.

Those religious institutions that question the deity of Jesus Christ (take away)– this is a warning to them.

Those religious institutions that say – we know what the bible says, but we got something better (adding) this is a warning to them,

And one day, unless they repent, they will be accountable for how many people they steered in the wrong direction.

**20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen.**

**Even so, come, Lord Jesus! 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all. Amen.**

Jesus is the one that is telling the readers that these things are true.

And He is coming quickly.

And John's response is – Maranatha!!!

He wanted Jesus to return for the church back then.

The word Maranatha is not a Greek word – it is an Aramaic word for Come, Lord Jesus.

Even though John and much of the world spoke Greek – the word Maranatha was a common phrase in the early church.

The reason -

It's the gospel in one word.

He comes –

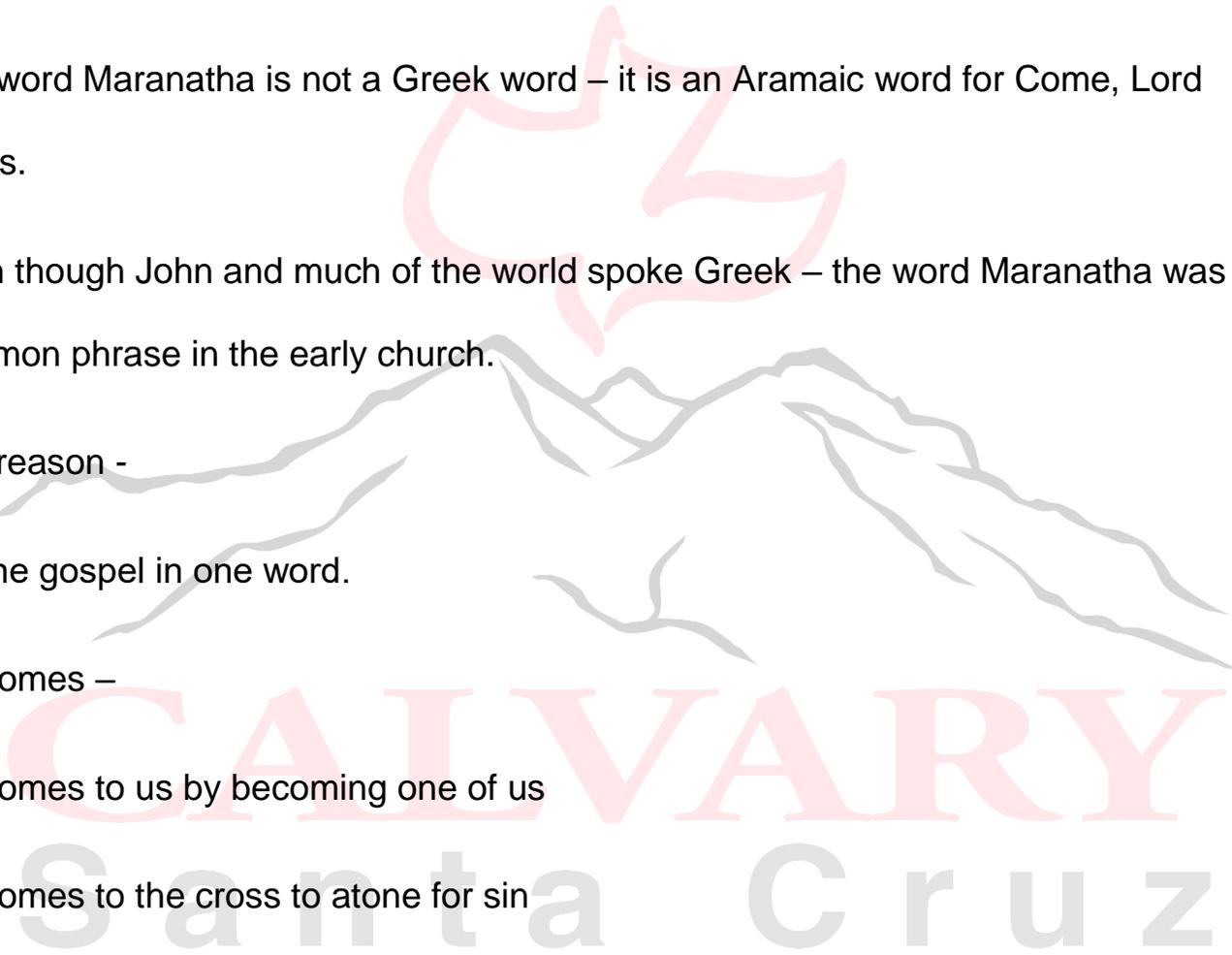
He comes to us by becoming one of us

He comes to the cross to atone for sin

He comes from the tomb, victorious over death

He comes in the Holy Spirit to indwell believers

He comes again as king of kings and Lord of Lords



Because our God is a Lord who comes to & for His own, we can say with all confidence, “Maranatha = Come Lord!”

And then I had you make a note of the last verse in the bible –

Don't miss this: The Bible ends with GRACE.

The last verse & words of the OT are Malachi 4:6

Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

The OT ends with a curse, but New Testament ends with grace.

Why?

Because grace describes God's dealing with man on the basis of the New Covenant.

Grace is possible because Jesus bore the curse on the Cross.

The stroke of God fell on Jesus; & now the floodgates of grace stand ready to be turned loose on those who come in simple faith to Him.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 'May the LORD bless you and protect you. 25 May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. 26 May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'