We want Him as long as He doesn't change what we like. But any person not open to change is NOT open to revival.
Al Whittinghill

REVELATION CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO
Handout #28
Prayer Study #427
First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia USA

Revelation 22
22 *Then he showed me the river whose waters give life, sparkling like crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb*
2 *Through the middle of the broad way of the city; also, on either side of the river was the tree of life with its twelve varieties of fruit, yielding each month its fresh crop; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing and the restoration of the nations.*

Chapter 22 opens with a beautiful description of the New Jerusalem. The first thing we notice is the river of the water of life. Allusions to this river are throughout the Old and New Testament:

a. The river that watered the Garden of Eden and made it fruitful (Genesis 2:8-16).
b. The river in Ezekiel that had its source in the Garden of Eden (Ezekiel 47:1-7).
c. The river whose streams make glad the city of God (Psalm 46:4).
d. Joel's fountain that shall come forth from the house of the Lord (Joel 3:18).
e. Living waters that flow out from Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:8)
f. The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life (Proverbs 10:11).
g. The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life (Proverbs 13:14).
h. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life (Proverbs 14:27).
i. With God, says the psalmist, is the fountain of life (Psalm 36:9)
j. Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water (John 7:38-39).

Knowing that water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit leads us to conclude that this river of life is the Holy Spirit. It comes from the throne because God and the Lamb are the source of eternal life. Remember also that Jesus is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

The second symbol we encounter in this chapter is the Tree of Life. Because there was no punctuation, the first part of verse 2 could go with the last part of verse 2, making the Tree of Life, rather than the River of Life, the broad way or center of the city. The Tree is identified with the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:6), but Ezekiel also gives a picture of trees in Ezekiel 47:12: *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 will be for medicine. The tree gives many and varied fruits. This is symbolic of the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. Praise God, the Tree of life and the leaves of the tree are not just for the Jews, but for the healing of the nations, which includes the Gentiles.

3 *There shall no longer exist there anything that is accursed (detestable, foul, offensive, impure, hateful, or horrible). But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall worship Him [pay divine honors to Him and do Him holy service].*
4 *They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.*
5 *And there shall be no more night; they have no need for lamplight or sunlight, for the Lord God will illuminate them and be their light, and they shall reign [as kings] forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities).*

The curse is gone!!! And the chief activity going on is worship. For the first time God's servants will see His face! We remember the beatitude in Matthew 5:8: ***Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*** When we stop and think about this beatitude especially in reference to Moses who was told by God in Exodus 33:20, "You cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and life," we realize even more that in Christ alone can we really see God. Only by allowing His blood to purify us can we be pure in heart.

In Exodus 33:11, we are told, *"Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face-to-face, just as a man speaks to his friend."* This seems to contradict Exodus 33:20. This is how the *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* explains it: "The Bible draws a clear distinction between gazing on God in His unveiled glory and beholding a representation or reflection of God in a personal interview or encounter with Him. John 1:18 declares: *No man has seen God at any time [that is, his full glory as Creator and Sovereign of all the universe]; the only begotten of God, [that is, Jesus Christ], who is in the bosom of the Father. He has explained Him"* (NASB). The Apostle Paul adds that God the Father '*has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ"* (2nd Corinthians 4:6, NASB). We behold the face of God by faith as we look to Christ, *"He had seen Me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9, NASB). God therefore showed His face and declared His glory through His Son, who was God Incarnate. But back in Old Testament times, God showed His face through an angel (as at the interview with Moses at the burning bush [Exodus 3:2-6], or else through His glory cloud, which led His people through the wilderness after the Exodus. We are therefore to understand that Yahweh met with Moses and talked to him in some glorious representation that fell short of a full unveiling of His face. In that sense He talked with Moses face-to-face - somewhat as a speaker on television speaks face to face with his viewing public."

The sight of God always produces two things: It produces worship, and all life becomes an act of worship to Him. It also produces consecration. The people of God

have the mark of God on their foreheads. This separates them unto Himself, showing that they belong absolutely to Him and only to Him.

John's vision in these verses reminds us that there will be no need for light from a lamp or the sun, for God will be their light, and they will reign submitted to Him forever and ever.

6 *And he [of the seven angels further] said to me, These statements are reliable (worthy of confidence) and genuine (true). And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His messenger (angel) to make known and exhibit to His servants what must soon come to pass.*
7 *And behold, I am coming speedily. Blessed (happy and to be envied) is he who observes and lays to heart and keeps the truths of the prophecy (the predictions, consolations, and warnings) contained in this [little] book.*
8 *And I, John, am he who heard and witnessed these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell prostrate before the feet of the messenger (angel) who showed them to me, to worship him.*
9 *But he said to me, Refrain! [You must not do that!] I am [only] a fellow servant along with yourself and with your brethren the prophets and with those who are mindful of and practice [the truths contained in] the messages of this book. Worship God!*

Many scholars think that these last verses of Revelation are confusing and disjoined, leading some to believe that John was trying to include many of the themes of the previous chapters of the book in these verses. There are three speakers: The angel who stresses the truth of all that John has seen and heard; Jesus Christ Himself who reminds the reader that He is coming again and that those who keep the words of this prophecy will be blessed; and John who again identifies himself as the writer of the book and reminds us once again of the danger of angel-worship, for worship must be given ONLY to God.

10 *And he [further] told me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book and make no secret of them, for the time when things are brought to a crisis and the period of their fulfillment is near.*
11 *He who is unrighteous (unjust, wicked), let him be unrighteous still; and he who is filthy (vile, impure), let him be filthy still; and he who is righteous (just, upright, in right standing with God), let him do right still; and he who is holy, let him be holy still.*

Most likely it is the risen Christ who is speaking here. Jesus did not want this prophecy to be sealed where people could not understand it. In verse 11 He makes a curious statement, which could be His saying that there will come a time when it will be too late for people to change. It could also mean that people can make their own minds up

about which way to live, whether righteously or wickedly. They thus will reap what they sow, sealing their own fates.

12 *Behold, I am coming soon, and I shall bring My wages and rewards with Me, to repay and render to each one just what his own actions and his own work merit.*
13 *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last (the Before all and the End of all).*

Here Jesus tells us that he will render to each person according to his works and that He is eternal. According to Barclay, the Jewish Rabbis said, "Since God was the beginning, He received His power from no one; since He was the middle, He shared His power with no one; since He was the end, He never handed over His power to anyone."

14 *Blessed (happy and to be envied) are those who cleanse their garments, that they may have the authority and right to [approach] the tree of life and to enter through the gates into the city.*
15 *[But] without are the dogs and those who practice sorceries (magic arts) and impurity [the lewd, adulterers] and the murderers and idolaters and everyone who loves and deals in falsehood (untruth, error, deception, cheating).*

Some translations translate "*those who cleanse their garments"* as "*those who do His commandments."* The meaning of either is really the same. You can give someone soap and water, but you cannot make them bathe. One must have accepted the sacrifice of Jesus, which is evidenced by his keeping the commandments of Jesus, thus "*cleansing their garments"* in His blood, to enter into the New Jerusalem.

Dogs to the Jew in the world of that day symbolized unbelievers, non-Jews or Gentiles, and everything that was savage and unclean. There was an additional meaning to the general populace. In ancient temples, there were not only female sacred prostitutes, but there were also male prostitutes. These males were called *dogs.*

16 *I, Jesus, have sent My messenger (angel) to you to witness and to give you assurance of these things for the churches (assemblies). I am the Root (the Source) and the Offspring of David, the radiant and brilliant Morning Star.*

Jesus is validating John's prophecy. As the Root, He was the source of God's plan to redeem mankind; as the Offspring of David, He brought God's plan to fulfillment; and as the Morning Star, He will cause darkness, both literal and spiritual, to flee when He comes.

17 *The [Holy] Spirit and the bride (the Church, the true Christians) say, Come! And let him who is listening say, Come! And let everyone come who is thirsty [who is painfully conscious of his need [of those things by which the soul is refreshed, supported, and strengthened]; and whoever [earnestly] desires to do it, let him come, take, appropriate, and drink the water of Life without cost.*

This is the invitation of the Holy Spirit and the Church for Christ to come and an invitation to sinners to come to Jesus before He returns. Every Christian is to be a missionary and an evangelist, going into all the world and urging people to come to Jesus.

18 *I [Personally solemnly] warn everyone who listens to the statements of the prophecy [the predictions and the consolations and admonitions pertaining to them] in this book: If anyone shall add anything to them, God will add and lay upon him the plagues (the afflictions and the calamities) that are recorded and described in this book.*
19 *And if anyone cancels or takes away from the statements of the book of this prophecy [these] predictions relating to Christ's kingdom and its speedy triumph, together with the consolations and admonitions or warnings pertaining to them], God will cancel and take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the city of holiness (purity and hallowedness), which are described and promised in this book.* Psalm 138:2b says, "*For You have magnified your word above all Your name."*

God in this verse from Psalms and in these verses from Revelation 22 is very serious about His Word. What He is warning of here is distorting the teaching and truth that this book teaches.

20 *He Who gives this warning and affirms and testifies to these things says, Yes (it is true). [Surely] I am coming quickly (swiftly, speedily). Amen (so let it be)! Yes, come, Lord Jesus!*
21 *The grace (blessing and favor) of the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) be with all the saints (God's holy people, those set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively His). Amen (so let it be)!*

Jesus was not saying here that He was coming soon, as much of the early Church wrongly believed. He is saying that, when He does come, it will be quickly and swiftly, like a thief in the night. There will not be time to get right with God. *"Yes, come, Lord Jesus!"* should be the heart cry of every believer.

The Old Testament ends with a curse. The New Testament ends with GRACE. John lived in a time of great persecution of the Christian Church, and He longed for the return of the Lord. I think that we have become so worldly in the Western World. It

seems that much of the American Church no longer wants Him to come, because that would interfere with our ambitions and plans. We are too satisfied and complacent here on earth. This was not the case with the Apostle John. Barclay says, “Come what may, John was sure of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and equally sure that it was sufficient for all things.” How wonderful it is that the ending of the New Covenant is grace!