

A MESSAGE OF HOPE FROM DR. JACK VAN IMPE

Revelation 22: 1 - 10

This closing chapter of the Book of Revelation continues our thrilling "sightseeing tour" of the New Jerusalem, and reaffirms the fact that only those who possess the righteousness of Christ are granted admittance and residence.

Verse 1: *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

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 first two verses of chapter 22 establish the fact that, in our new glorified bodies, we, as inhabitants of the Holy City, will continue to enjoy the habit of eating. Why not? When we see Jesus, *we shall be like him* (1 John 3:2). Since He ate in His glorified body (see Luke 24:43), why wouldn't we? Our text also describes the best drink we will ever enjoy- pure, refreshing water direct from the throne of God. Think of it! Distilled or chemically treated water is no longer necessary, for pollution has become nonexistent!

Not only do we have crystal clear water to drink, but we also enjoy delicious health-producing fruit. In fact, the *tree of life* bears twelve manner of fruits and produces them monthly.

This is interesting.

When Adam and Eve sinned by partaking of the *tree of knowledge of good and evil* (Genesis 2:17), God drove them out of the Garden of Eden. He then stationed an angel before its entrance in order to keep them from eating the fruit of the *tree of life*, lest they eat and live eternally in their sinful state.

Now a new day has arrived. The saints are in the very presence of God, and may eat of *the tree of life* to their heart's content. Undoubtedly this tree plays a part in promoting one's endless existence, for even the leaves contain healing or health for the nations living under, or in the light of, the city. The word *health* is the proper translation, not *healing*. Since there is no sorrow, sickness, or pain, healing is unnecessary because eternal health is for all. In the heavenly city, doctors and nurses are permanently retired. Hallelujah!

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:*

The curse, which originated in the Garden of Eden and was partially removed during the Millennium, is now obliterated forever.

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

Think of it! We will observe the beauty of our Saviour's countenance daily as we live in His presence forever and ever.

When we look at the One who is altogether lovely and He, in turn, looks at us, He will observe His name indelibly inscribed upon our foreheads. This is our seal of eternal ownership! Oh, how wonderful to belong to Jesus!

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.*

Because Christ, in all His glory, illuminates the city and its inhabitants—those who walk in the light of the city—no other type of natural or artificial lighting is required. Even the sun which warmed the former earth for so many centuries is no longer necessary. The warmth of the love of God shines upon His people for the ages of ages in this land of eternal day.

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.*

At this point the angel tells John the reason God has allowed him to experience this vision of the revelation. He says, "The God of the holy prophets who is truth and cannot lie, sent me to tell you that the things you have heard and seen must come to pass speedily."

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

In verse 6, our Lord told John that the things written in this Book of Revelation must shortly be done or "come to pass speedily." Then He adds in verse 7, *Behold, I come quickly* [or speedily]. The term *speedily* is not used in relationship to hours, days, months, or even years. Rather, it speaks of a series of events happening in rapid succession once they begin. In other words, when these things begin to come to pass (see Luke 21:28), the signs and events will fall into place so speedily—one after another—that a state of preparedness should be maintained. Hence, the admonition: *Blessed* [or happy] *is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book*. Such an individual will be ready for the Lord's return.

Verse 8: *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.*

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

Poor mortals never learn! John had already made the mistake of bowing before an angel and being rebuked in chapter 19, verse 10. Now he does it again! Fortunately, we have a God of love. He is willing to forgive the same mistake *seventy times seven* (Matthew 18:22). Only by His grace, love, compassion, and forgiveness are any of us able to continue. Thank you, Lord Jesus!

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

Following God's revelation to Daniel, the prophet was told to *seal the book* [until] *the time of the end* (Daniel 12:4).

John, however, is forbidden to seal the Book of Revelation because *the time is at hand*, or has come. In the Greek, the word *time* is *kairos*, and means "opportune moment" or "correct season." Thus, the angel is saying, "The time for the revealing of prophetic truth has come. People are to be made aware of the future. They must learn the history of the churches and the plan of the ages. Then, as they live in these periods of time, they will understand God's program. They will also realize that, once the events begin, they will speedily come to pass. Knowing this, they will prepare. Therefore, do not seal the prophecy of the sayings of this book."