

Revelation 22:1 - 21 Pt.1

1 And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; 4 and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever.

6 And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place. 7 "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

8 And I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God."

10 And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 "Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and let the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and let the one who is holy, still keep himself holy." 12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. 13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which 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 tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

We come now to our final chapter of Revelation, and indeed, the final chapter of God's revealed truth to mankind.

The final chapter of the final revelation from God seems a good place to pause and restate some things that we have learned are true about God, and His revelation.

First of all. Nothing about God or indeed about anything beyond our normal fallen 5 senses *including* everything that is called science, can be found out. That means we only know what God has revealed. Indeed, the word of God teaches us many things that are counter to 'science'.

Where there is a seeming disparity between what God's word says and what popular learning says, God's word trumps. Every time.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, and the end thereof is the way of death. Pr. 14:12

And one thing we know about ourselves as God's light illumines our minds is that even in christians, in our fallen state, pride wants to override this Book. We think we're smarter than the Book. We think we should be able to make it work by our logic, rather than God trumping our logic where the Book seems at odds with the world.

If that's the case, we need some rules, don't we. Some groundrules, or the whole thing falls apart. Here's why. If ultimate truth is beyond finding out, it's hidden from men and they can search and never find, but this book we hold is the revealed truth, simple logic will tell you that either every word is from God, and true, or we're lost.

We can't find God out in the first place. So why do different liberal and modern theologians say, "it contains God's word" or certain parts are inspired, and others aren't, or there are errors. Parts of it are inspired but study will show you there are errors, or It's just ordinary words that men wrote that can become the word of God to you.

All those word games, and schemes are illogical because You couldn't find any of it out in the first place. It's hidden from men. All we can know about God is what He chooses to reveal to us. And it's all written in this book.

So if that logic is true, and it is, some other ground rules fall into place.

- Every word of it is true. What we call verbal plenary inspiration of the words themselves.
- It is God breathed. He used human authors and even human personalities to pen His words, but the very words are from the mind of God.
- Scholars have enough ancient manuscripts that even with their very slight differences, none of the known small problems involve any of the first order doctrines that matter to salvation themes. Transmission problems are negligible and few.
- It has authority over men. Men don't judge it, it judges men.
- It is sufficient for life and Godliness.
- Nothing needs to be added or subtracted. It is complete.

In chapter 22 of this book, I'm seeing some indicators that go beyond John's final book, that close out the revelation of God and make it complete. This

isn't just the final chapter of the Revelation to John, it's the final words of The Book, capital letters.

These are the last words of revelation that God will speak and after these, the book is sealed shut. Add nothing. Subtract nothing. This is a magnificent chapter. The majestic end of a majestic book, we call the Bible. God's revelation of Himself to men is complete.

Vss. 1-5 of course are a continuation of the description of the New Jerusalem, and are of course, as impossible for our minds to fathom as the words that preceded them last week.

I want to read through the description, again, and quickly show you what I believe the Spirit has shown me this week.

1 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

We could spend days in here trying to describe physical things in our world that make an image our brains can fit around, but, I think there's something different going on here.

Far better expositors and saints than me have done that, and you can find their words and study to your hearts content, but my approach is going to be a little different.

Yes, this is a physical place, with physical realities. We'll have bodies and senses more real than anything we've experienced so far.

But spiritually and mystically what I see here in these phrases are all of the promises Jesus made as he walked in this fallen world, fulfilled. Let me show you just a few.

I Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

Jesus IS the living water.

This idea of water of life, or living water, is Bible wide.... the woman at the well, Jn. 4:13-15
13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." 15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw."

Isaiah 55:1 *"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.*

Jeremiah 2:13 *"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.*

Mt. 5:6 the beattitudes *Blessed are those who hunger and **thirst** for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

John 7:37,38 *On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."*

These words in Vss 1-5 are somehow mystically to us, because we haven't seen it and can't understand it yet, the great "I Am's" of Jesus. Somehow,

beyond my understanding, I am in Him and He is in me and we *are* this place, and He is it also, and this Crystal City IS Jesus and it is US.

My mind can't understand it, and the safer thing to do is not at this point to try too hard. There just isn't enough here, and the connection with our current minds and intellects is too limited. People spin off into bizarre land.

All I'm saying is Jesus, in many times and places said "I am...." and the end result of those claims is here in the crystal city. I am the water of life. I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the branch. I am the one who heals the nations. I am the one who reverses the curse.

2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Jesus is our food;

Jn:6:26,27;35 26 Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27" Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

Is. 55:2 2" 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 delight yourself in abundance.

Jesus is the branch;

Jer. 23:5 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

Jn. 15:1-5 *1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*

Jesus is the tree on either side of that river and somehow, mystically we are the fruit, and we eat the fruit, and the fruit is a joy and delight to us forever. The metaphors are all mixed up together. It's Him, and it's us, and it's one and the same, and separate.

Don't try to unscrew the inscrutable. We can't understand it; yet. Heb. 11;1,2 *1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval.*

VS. 3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

The great "I Am's" of the book of John that Jesus shouted in the temple before the throngs, and that the Jews recognized were claims to be God Almighty, were the reason the Jews murdered Him.

He claims to be the One who will reverse the curse. He claims to have a Father in heaven. He claims that I and the Father are one. He claims to be able to give us peace and rest that are impossible to achieve in this world.

Mt. 11:28,9 *28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

In the letter to the Hebrews this idea that we aren't any longer part of this world, but we live longing for a better one is stated perfectly in the 'faith' chapter;

Hebr. 11:13-16 13All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

Oh, how much we need to be people whose heads and hearts are no longer part of this world, but transferred into this next one described in Rev. 22. We need to have this attitude of exiles.

If it please God that we should see the beginnings of the trauma's described in this book before Jesus comes, we need to have this attitude in us, or we won't survive.

This mindset I'm describing is rare in the church these days. We aren't seeking a far country, divorced from this current one. We're seeking a life of ease and a retirement account that will outlive us. We're checking the Dow Industrials instead of the Bible. We're building a future for ourselves here!

VS. 3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

Think about **this** Rev. 22 world. The curse is gone. Sin is irradiated. God is on His throne. The Lamb is there, with God and with us. We are His slaves, his servants, and we will worship Him forever. We will see His face! His name will be on MY forehead. Jim is Mine, and I am His. Forever and ever.

It's in these verses. Think about THAT world, not the money you've put into a system fraught with peril that will vanish over night.

VS5 And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Jn. 8:12 12Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

The Glory of God will replace every other kind of light in this place. Nothing else is bright enough against the Glory of God Himself to even register as light. Jesus said, I am that light.

Let me spend just another moment or two, preaching to myself. We're a million miles from this reality. And things can change, over-night. And they will, too, if Christ tarry's.

Let me show you some saints that understood what I'm talking about, and lived it. This was brought home to me again this week, although it's a familiar passage to me. Turn to Hebrews, chapter 10 starting in vs. 32

32But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. 35Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

37FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE,

HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

*38BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH;
AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.*

39But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

I watched a movie recently, and I recommend it highly. It was brilliant. No sex. No cursing. It's called ***The Book Thief***.

And one of the scenes in that movie is the night where the germans smash out the windows of the shops that are owned by jews, and haul the jews off to march down the streets on their way to train cars, cattle cars, where they will be hauled to camps and eventually, after gross starvation, they will be executed.

People, this happened in my mother's life time. And almost in mine!

Are we really so foolish as to think it won't happen again!! Really!

Think about the seizure of property. We live in America, right. And the entire basis of this nation, this freedom, was built around governments not being able to seize the property of it's citizens. That's the foundation of our nation.

I think one of the reasons God has opened the door of opportunity for me to teach is this: Get over your property. Get over your stuff. It isn't yours. It can and will be seized, over-night.

If we don't own something better, in a different world, we're not going to survive that, when it happens.

The church I see in the United States on April 6, 2014 is NOT going to survive beyond the state coming in and taking their stuff. The church I see in

the USA is all about their stuff.

We need to prepare ourselves for THAT day when our windows are bashed in, and we are hauled out into the street while our treasure, our stuff, is confiscated before our eyes.

These's a huge pile of it at my house. Cameras and lenses and antique cars, and lovely antique furnishings. A minor jackpot, at least for Tonopah. God has blessed us. Two people faithfully working together, every day, every day, getting up sober and going to work. Over 45 years, it builds up.

What if I sold all that stuff that will be someone else's over-night, one way or the other, maybe through death, but maybe, and realistically through seizure, and purchased for myself and my wife, treasure in heaven. What if?

*32But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a **great** conflict of sufferings, 33partly by being made **a public spectacle** through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34For you showed sympathy to the prisoners **and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property**, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. 35Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. **36For you have need of endurance**, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised*

If Revelation 22:1-5 are not more real to us than our earthly treasure, our STUFF, we'll not survive the day when the soldiers are walking down the street with their guns and bashing in the windows of the 'known' christians, taking them captive, to a destiny, undefined, and the state owning their stuff.

The Hebrew christians went to see their brothers who were in prison because of their faith in Jesus. And the authorities took note of who these sympathisers were. And they bashed in their windows and took their stuff. And vs. 34 says it clearly, these christians accepted joyfully, JOYFULLY!, the seizure of their property.

And it says the reason they made it through that experience was because of a value transaction. It says they believed there was something far better waiting for them in a different world.

Let me show you an inside picture of the church in America; 2014. We fly overhead for an aerial view. The building is pristine, modern, comfortable and has soft theatre seats that rise up in steep rows so everyone can see the performance.

In the parking lot, you'll be more than hard pressed to find a vehicle that is even dirty, let alone more than 4 years old. Spotless luxury sedans. And of course, the ubiquitous shiny RV's.

The grounds are spotless. Designer areas. Laid out in circular parking lots, with spotless little gardens and some green grass in between the cars, and here and there, small trees that the folks hope will some day be shade for the shiny cars.

There is a coffee bar, and several different seating choices. If it's a fine day, you might want to get your coffee and sit outside, and watch the performance on the giant digital 'screen' while you sip your espresso. There are chairs and shades provided, and even green grass if you're the 'earthy' type.

Or, if you feel like it, go inside and get a seat in the theatre. ON the stage in front there will be very loud rock and roll music that will enter your consciousness. It not only entertains, it takes your mind captive and controls your emotional state.

Then a guy will come out, holding a Bible, probably NIV version, and give a homily based on a verse or two about, what else, YOU. A better you. A thriving YOU. A complete, happy, wellness, YOU. All the songs (you can't hear the words anyways) are about YOU.

But this book is carefully, purposely, never taught. Mega-Church 101.

After church, they all get in their luxury sedans and go have \$40 lunches. The servant class can't go to church because - well - who would make them lunch.

And when the soldiers come to bash in windows, these folks will scatter like roaches that were out and about when a human enters the room. They'll be gone. Unseen. They'll have reason's galore why their stuff isn't the stuff the soldiers are after.

They don't have the book inside them, they don't have the endurance that real christians will need, which comes from this book, and they don't have any sense of any other life or place that is better than this life and place that they would trade their stuff for.

They've never read Revelation 22 vss 1-5. How will they endure in the evil day? Why would they?

*36 For you have **need of endurance**, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.*

How foolish we are if we think this verse is for someone else! We're Americans! We don't need this kind of endurance. It will NEVER be the **will of God**, for me to suffer. To lose my stuff, for Him??! Impossible.

The American church is going to gleefully, do I dare say, gayly, do just what we're doing now until Jesus comes and whisks us out of our luxury sedans into Glory. That's how its' going to work. The tribulation isn't for US. Don't talk crazy.

*37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE,
HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.*

*38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH;
AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.*

See those awful words, those terrible words, *IF HE SHRINKS BACK*.

This is exactly what we talked about 2 Sunday's ago, and what Michael asked about last week that I did a poor job of explaining.

Rev. 21:7 “He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8 “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

These are the cowardly. When the soldiers come, they don't bash in their windows, because they have already shrunk back. They back away from anything that looks 'christian' in the sense that the state cannot endure it.

We've come full circle haven't we. For some reason, although I thought perhaps we would get through the entire chapter and be finished, the Spirit has taken us to Matthew 13.

You say, Matthew 13???! Yep. If you hang around me long enough, you'll know these by heart. I go back to them over and over.

44 “*The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*

45 “*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls,*
46 *and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

Jesus *is* that treasure. If we own Him, and the day comes, the soldiers can beat in our windows and take our stuff and march us off to starvation camps and prisons, and we'll look at the balance scale with Jesus on one side and all our stuff on the other, and say, I'll keep Jesus.

Revelation 22:1-5 is the reward for those who choose Jesus. Believe it!

Vs. 6 *And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place.*

"These words are faithful and true";

A day has come before, and may come again, when you may have to choose between STUFF and your faith, maybe even your very life, and faith. That entire decision has to be based on a value judgement that comes down to - WORDS.

Really?! Lose everything over words??

History is littered with christians who had to do just that. And I may be next. We may be next.

People in Iraq and North Korea are losing their stuff and their very lives over - words. As we speak. Right now!

We are very foolish if we don't at least think about that scenario and hopefully prepare our hearts for that scenario.

Beginning in Vs. 6, we've actually moved beyond the book of Revelation into an epilogue of all of God's revealed truth. 66 books from Genesis to revelation. We're 15 verses away from the final words in that book.

We may have to give up everything in order to keep the treasure, in another place, far far away, described in mere words, in this book.

Why would anybody do that?? Over words?? Goodness.

Here's why; *"These words are faithful and true";*

Maybe we'll be lucky like my mom's uncle Fred. He mowed the lawn one

summer day, came in to cool off, drank a glass of lemonade, and took a nap. He died in his sleep. What a peaceful way to pass.

Maybe we won't be lucky. Maybe the price will be impossibly high. We don't know. We need to be ready, whatever the scenario.

“These words are faithful and true”; Die over them if you have to. Live for them now, whatever the cost.

VS 7 “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

We're probably out of time but I want to look at just one more word in that verse tonight, and maybe, if it pleases the Lord, we'll start with it in our last session.

It says; *Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book*

I just want to consider that one word, **heeds**, and then we'll be done.

It's talking about much more than just paying attention. Happy are you if you pay attention to these words of prophecy. And that's very true, but there's more there.

The word is *tereo*, from the greek root *tereos*, and it means to guard. To hold tightly. To clutch onto with all your might.

It's the same root word as the one in Jude 1:1, also used many times by Peter.

1Jude, a *doulos* (slave) of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are ***the called, beloved*** in God the Father, and ***kept*** for Jesus Christ:

The saints are called. The saints are beloved. And the saints on an equal scale to those two words, are kept.

This is the P in T U L I P if you happen to be a calvinista. Preserved.

Guarded. Kept. This is what God does for His saints, and this is what we are commanded in Revelation 22:7 to do with the Words of the Prophecy of This Book.

We are to live and die over the words of this book! Do not shrink back from that.