

## The New Jerusalem, Part Five: Abundant and Eternal Satisfaction (Revelation 22:1–8)

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### Introduction

John is taken by the Spirit into a high mountain and shown the New Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb (21:9–22:8). The glory of the place is beyond the ability of words in our limited language. (1) 21:1–8—the introduction; (2) 21:9–22:6a—the angel’s tour of the New Jerusalem; (a) vv. 9–14—the general description of the city; (b) vv. 14–21—specific details of the city; (c) vv. 22–27—the glory of the city; (d) 22:1–5—the abundance and eternal satisfaction of the city pictured in the completed work of salvation in Christ.

1. It radiates with a glory of God as reflected in the image of jasper transformed to clear crystal.

Here we see the bride’s transformation from the plainness of moral flesh (pictured by the jasper stone) to that of exceeding glory, the glory of Christ, Himself.

There are two ways that this work is accomplished: first, in this mortal veil, believers are given the privilege of gazing on the transforming glory of the Lamb through the work of the Spirit of God in the Word of God (2 Cor. 3:18).

*“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”*

As we read the Word, we gaze upon His glory in that Word and by gazing we are changed little by little into the image of the One we behold. Do you see now why consistent continual reading of the Word is so vital to your spiritual life?

Second, we wait with eager anticipation for the appearing of Christ who will transform our vile body of flesh to be like His own glorious body (Phil. 3:20, 21). This is sudden, complete, and powerful resurrection transformation.

*“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”*

2. The city/bride is protected by a great wall with twelve gates, twelve foundations, and twelve guardian angels, speaking of the divine government of the Lamb (for 12 is the number of governmental perfection). The city is built on the new covenant of Israel administered by the authority of the apostles.
3. It is a holy city on the true holy mountain where the Lord God and His Lamb reside. They are the Temple of it without a veil, dwelling among His people as their God.

Here the uninterrupted worship of the saints will be possible for they will truly worship in their perfected spirit and in the clarity of unambiguous truth—*“his servants will worship him”* (22:3).

Jesus said to the woman at the well in Sychar of Samaria: *“Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father*

*in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:21–24).*

One thing more: the worshipping saints “*will see his face*” (22:4). No more will this unholy flesh prevent our ability to gaze upon God’s face, as God warned Moses on Mount Sinai, “*You cannot see my face, for man [unholy and unregenerate man] shall not see me and live*” (Ex. 33:20).

4. Completing the vision, a river of life flows from the throne of God, spreading out, deepening, and sustaining a glorious garden with the Tree of Life.

We read in Psalm 46:4, 5: “*There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.*”

We would contrast this to the Jesus’ tale of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. The rich man had abundance of wealth in life, but not Christ. He died and in hell he would give everything for just one drop of water: “*He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame’*” (v. 24).

In the New Jerusalem, we shall have abundant and eternal satisfaction in Christ, by Christ, through Christ, and for Christ. Christ is all!

We should note first that what we view in this passage is the result of the full restoration of all things. However, the vision contains the reference to the Tree of Life having leaves for the healing on the nations. We must not think, nor does the text suggest that the nations need any further healing. As Jesus is the Water of Life, so He is the Tree of life. He has fully healed the nations in their final resurrection to eternal life. The point here is that Jesus has fully accomplished His plan and that every need has been fully met and eternally satisfied.

Note then two things:

## **I. The Source of the River**

1. The significance of the river image is the salvation of God in its full and eternal flow.

Jesus opened the way of salvation in His first coming. “*If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. . . Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life*” (John 4:10, 14).

Again, “*If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’*” Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:37–39).

The Revelation also closes with a repeat of this glorious invitation: “*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 desires take the water of life without price*” (v. 17).

2. The river in Ezekiel’s vision—the *promise* of salvation (Ezekiel 47:1–12)

- a. The picture in Revelation is an expansion of Ezekiel's vision but we also see some differences. In Ezekiel the river flows out from the *altar* in the temple. In other words, what Ezekiel describes is the *promise* of the gospel, with the hope of salvation before the coming of Christ and His death on the cross.
- b. The river, at first, trickles out, increasing in its flow and strength until it becomes a torrent that cannot be crossed. That describes how the gospel progresses in this gospel age.
- c. The river's work—the purifying of the Dead Sea, a symbol of sin and judgment (note that Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt in that region for her disobedience in looking back at Sodom. The healing of the waters produces abundant life. Salvation is life from the dead.

*"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly"* (John 10:10).

- d. The salt marshes in Ezekiel's vision show that the gospel will not save everyone.

### 3. The river in John's vision—the realization of salvation

The image reflects the word of the Lamb from the throne: *"And he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment'"* (21:6).

By way of contrast to the vision of Ezekiel, John's vision in Revelation has the river flowing from the *throne* of God. Jesus' work is finished and He is now ruling. His salvation has gone out into the entire world and saved a multitude from every people, tongue, tribe, and nation (5:9).

The river continues its saving work, but no longer in its gospel stage, bringing people to faith. It now sustains and nourishes all who are living in the glorious city.

## II. The Success of the River

### 1. The renewal of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8–10)

The vision takes us back to Genesis and the original creation:

*"And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden."*

### 2. The restored access to the Tree of Life

When Adam sinned, he was barred from access to the Tree of Life lest he should eat of it and be forever confirmed in his sinful state.

It is interesting to note that in occult false religions a "tree of life" is made a focal point of their doctrine and practice. How God's adversary longs to provide those who are fallen access to this tree in order that, eating from it, they would be forever fixed in their condemnation. At least in this gospel age there is still hope for sinners.

In the restoration, however, the truly saved and glorified saints will be given full access to the tree of life.

## Application

1. In one who is truly born again, there will be a tension between satisfaction and continual thirst.
2. We are now satisfied with Jesus in a way that the world can never satisfy.
3. However, when we look to Jesus and when we savor His goodness and greatness, we can never be fully satisfied. We just crave more of Jesus.

Paul's ministry in the gospel was "*to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, [in order] to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places*" (Eph. 3:8–10).

4. In Glory that craving will be intensified as the sinful tendencies of our hearts, now distracting us from full enjoyment of all that Jesus is, will be taken away forever.

The invitation still stands, however: *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 desires take the water of life without price*" (v. 17).