



# *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

*"The Mark of the Blessed"*

22:1-5

## Introduction

Water! We know the importance of it in the valley. Joseph Seiss writes,

One of the gladdest things on earth is water. There is nothing in all the world so precious to the eye and the imagination of the inhabitant of the dry, burning and thirsty East, as a plentiful supply of bright, pure, and living water.

Many of the worlds great cities are built along rivers:

- Alexandria, Egypt, is along the Nile.
- Paris, France, is along the Seine.
- London, England, is along the Thames.
- Rome, Italy, is along the Tiber.
- Vienna, Austria, is along the Danube.

Most major cities were founded hundreds if not thousands of years ago. In those times major rivers were vital for transport, trade, and

defense. Until the birth of the railway boats were the only way to shift goods economically. As these settlements were the center of commerce they grew and grew and today are our major cities.

Our heavenly home, the New Jerusalem, will feature a great river, but for none of those reasons.

Revelation 22:1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Jesus likened God the Holy Spirit to a river when He said,

John 7:38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

The river of water of life is a physical representation of the life-giving ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus spoke those words about the Holy Spirit at a particular moment. It was the Feast of Tabernacles, also known as Succoth (meaning Booth). The feast commemorated God's miraculous preservation of the nation of Israel during the forty years the people wandered in the wilderness.

God commanded His people to build booths beside their homes during this feast. They would mostly make these booths out of palm thatches and the family would move out of the house and into these booths during the feast.

For the first seven days of the eight-day feast the temple priests in Jerusalem would march in procession down many steps with large water jugs on their shoulders to the pool of Siloam in the Kidron Valley. There they would fill their jugs and make a solemn procession back up the steps and into the temple courtyard where thousands of people would be gathered to worship God. As the priests entered the courtyard the people would break forth in singing the Hallel Psalms - the songs that begin and end with *Hallelujah* ("praise God").

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As the people sang and worshiped God, the priests poured out the water on the pavement. It was a reminder of how God brought water out of the rock when their fathers were dying of thirst in the wilderness. They remembered how Moses took the rod and struck the rock according to the commandment of God, and how life-giving water came gushing out the rock.

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, the priests did not make a procession to the pool of Siloam nor did they pour out water on the pavement.

This was to signify that God had kept His promise to their fathers. He preserved them in the wilderness and brought them into a land flowing with milk and honey - a well-watered land where they no longer needed water to gush miraculously out of rocks.

It was on this day as the people were gathered to worship God that Jesus stood and cried to the thousands of worshipers in the courtyard: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink."

Jesus was talking about the human thirst for God. Deep down in the spirit of every man resides an unquenchable need for God. In the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes we're told that God has put eternity in our hearts. Inside of every one of us we are crying out, yearning for a meaningful relationship with God. We are not complete without Him.

I'm told that the original Greek text here is very dynamic. The word translated *flow* in Greek is actually the word *gush*, while the word translated *rivers* is the Greek term for *torrent*. A better translation would be, "Out of his innermost being there will gush torrents of living water."

Certainly Jesus was talking about the subjective experience of salvation. In another place, using similar language, He told the woman at the well,

John 4:13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,  
John 4:14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

But it's not just to fill us that the Holy Spirit is portrayed as a gushing torrent. It's to serve the Lord. Commenting on this Pastor Chuck Smith writes,

It's glorious that God's Spirit blesses us with joy and beauty and a deep consciousness of God, but the Lord is never satisfied with the subjective work of the Spirit within us. He never intended that the Spirit be kept bottled up within us to bless us. His objective is always that you and I be the instruments through which the Holy Spirit might flow forth to the needy world around us. It is crucial for our service to God that the Spirit be released as a mighty, gushing torrent.

The ultimate work of the Spirit is not merely to transform and change and empower us that we might be blessed. His ultimate work is empowering us to serve, to become effective in bringing Jesus Christ to others. God's Spirit wants to use you and me to bring the love of God to others. He wants His Spirit to flow like a torrent of living water out of our lives and into the lives of those who have yet to quench their thirst at the fountain of God.

When we are in the New Jerusalem, and when we see the river, it will remind us both of our salvation and our service.

Revelation 22:2 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.

In the Garden of Eden there were two trees. There was the Tree of Life and there was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve's test was to not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They failed.

By the way: What kind of tree was it? Genesis doesn't say, and it doesn't ever anywhere in the book mention apples. I read that early Christian scholars often took the forbidden fruit to be an apple possibly because of the pun suggested by the Latin *malum*, which

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means both "apple" and "evil." At least one early Latin translation of the bible uses "apple" instead of "fruit." A contributing factor no doubt was that apples were a lot more popular in Europe than in the Middle East, where it's generally too hot for them to thrive.

Best guess as to what kind of fruit it was is the fig. Immediately after eating it and seeing their nakedness they sewed fig leaves together. Easy to find if you were eating figs!

The Tree of Life flourishes in the New Jerusalem. But is it one tree or several? It seems to be several, a row of Trees of Life on either side of the river. You find something just like this earlier, in Jerusalem on the Millennial earth, when you read in Ezekiel 47:12,

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 for medicine."

Don't confuse Ezekiel's description, though, with John's. Ezekiel writes about earth during the thousand year reign of Jesus. John is describing eternity after the thousand years are up.

Will we eat in heaven. The best answer is that we can eat, but will not have to. In His resurrection body, Jesus enjoyed food (Luke 24:41-43, John 21:12-14). Angels ate with Abraham (Genesis 18:6-8). The great heavenly "reunion" between Jesus and His people is described as a marriage supper (Revelation 19:9).

Why do the "nations" need leaves for "healing?" The word can be translated *health-giving*. The leaves promote the enjoyment of life; they are not for ills and sicknesses. Remember that there will be many inhabitants of the earth in eternity - Old Testament saints, Tribulation martyrs and saints, and Millennial saints. These will enjoy the leaves - sort of like a good cup of tea!

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One thing to note is the mention of “months.” It fascinates me that we will still measure, or at least note, the passing of time. I tend to think of eternity as some kind of endless ‘now’ - as somehow not involved with time. It just shows how limited I am in understanding these things.

Revelation 22:3 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.

From the sin of Adam and Eve until now and up until eternity the universe as we know it is under the “curse.” Sin brought death and the whole earth groans waiting for its redemption.

John was letting us know that all of that is finished, it is done. Both the Father and the Son sit on the throne in the New Jerusalem. We are there as “His servants to serve Him.”

Seems to be a hint of the trinity here, don’t you think? It’s the throne of both the Father and Jesus but we will serve not “them” but “Him.” And don’t forget the river proceeding from the throne as a symbol of God the Holy Spirit.

Does it bother you to be called a “servant” in Heaven? It shouldn’t because the essential nature of God is to serve. Somewhere in time, in eternity past, God the Son volunteered to serve God the Father by willingly coming to the earth to give His life as a ransom for many. In His incarnation as God and man Jesus modeled servanthood.

We’re to serve now and that won’t change in Heaven. Well, it will change in one respect: We will always enjoy it with no bad attitudes about it!

Revelation 22:4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

The fact that “they shall see His face,” the face of God, establishes beyond any doubt that these are glorified saints. How beautiful, how marvelous, how wonderful will be His face!

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What's with the tattoo? "His name shall be on [our] foreheads." Got to take it literally. Today we approximate this with those we love in different ways. We might have rings that match each other. Or some other kind of jewelry where you have half and I have the other half. Some have tattoos, literally, that match or go together.

Whatever form the "mark" takes, it speaks of eternal endearment. Revelation 22:5 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.

Pardon the pun but in the New Jerusalem there will be no "night" life! It's always light.

We don't get that because we need day/night cycles to function. People get weird in places where it's always light or always dark certain times of the year. Sleep deprivation is a serious threat to mental and physical health.

Our glorified bodies will be much different, much improved. We won't need sleep. And, really, who would want to sleep if you could be with Jesus instead?

When you're dating you go without rest and sleep to be with the one you love. In eternity you'll want to enjoy every moment of face time with God.

We've 'seen the light' before, but now it is from inside the New Jerusalem, at its very source.

We will "reign forever and ever." We will reign as servants. We don't normally think of those two words together but we should. As we mentioned earlier, it is the nature of God to serve as He reigns sovereignly over His creation.

As a final meditation I'd suggest this. You can serve and not be a servant but you can't be a servant and not serve.

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Just serving, just doing something, doesn't make you God's servant. There's an attitude behind the activity. It's the mind of Jesus who humbled Himself to serve His Father and us as God in human flesh.

Cultivate servanthood in your heart. Serving will follow and it will flow out of you as torrents of living water.