

APPRECIATING ABUNDANCE Sunday School- May 29, 2011

Unifying Topic: TREE OF LIFE

Lesson Text

I. The Source Of Life (Revelation 22:1-5)

II. Keeping God's Word (Revelation 22:6-9)

The Main Thought: 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. (Revelation 22:2, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Our lives are filled with abundance. What is our attitude toward receiving the bounty provided for us? The Revelation to John made it clear that there is no more appropriate response to what God has done than to worship Him.

Lesson Aim: To teach your students about the abundant blessings God will bestow on us in the new creation, such as the river of life and the Tree of Life.

Life Aim: To teach your students about the ways God sustains us, even after we die.

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

22:2 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.

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:

22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

22:5 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.

22:6 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.

22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

22:8 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:

22:9 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.

HISTORY:

Everything New

Chapter 21:1-8 John first sees all things made new. There is a new heaven and a new earth. Gone the first Heaven, gone the first earth, and gone the sea. The holy city, the New Jerusalem, descended out of heaven from God and with a loud voice from heaven, declares, "*God will dwell with His people and He will be their God and they will be His people.*" God is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. He will wipe away all tears; death, sorrow, crying, and pain will be no more for all things are made new. He will provide freely the fountain of the water of life to them that thirsts. He tells John to write all this down; it is done; each word is dependable and accurate." you can depend on it! Overcomers or conquerors will inherit all this! But for the rest, will inherit the Lake of Fire and brimstone which is called the Second death!"

The City of Light

Chapter 21:9-11 One of the Seven Angels who had carried the bowls filled with the seven final disasters spoke to John, saying, "*Come here. I'll show you the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.*" He took John away in the Spirit to an enormous, high mountain and showed him the Holy Jerusalem descending out of Heaven from God, having the bright glory of God.

Chapter 21:12-14 The city had a great majestic high wall with twelve gates. At each gate stood an Angel, and on the gates were inscribed the names of the Twelve Tribes of the sons of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. The wall was set on twelve foundations, the names of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb inscribed on them.

Chapter 21:15-21 The Angel speaking with John had a gold measuring stick to measure the City, its gates, and

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its wall. The City was laid out in a perfect square. He measured the City with the measuring stick: twelve thousand stadia (*an instrument for measuring distances or heights by means of angles*), its length, width, and height all equal. Using the standard measure, the Angel measured the thickness of its wall: 144 cubits. The wall was jasper, the color of Glory, and the City was pure gold, translucent as glass. The foundations of the City walls were garnished with every precious gem imaginable: the first foundation jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold as translucent glass.

Chapter 21:22-27 But there was no sign of a Temple, for the Lord God Almighty—and the Lamb are the Temple. The City doesn't need sun or moon for light. God's Glory is its light, the Lamb its lamp! The nations will walk in its light and earth's kings bring in their splendor. Its gates will never be shut by day, and there won't be any night. They'll bring the glory and honor of the nations into the City. Nothing dirty or defiled will get into the City, and no one who defiles or deceives. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will get in. (The Message Bible).

LESSON:

Revelation 22:1-5 The Source Of Life

22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: The vision progresses. There are seven provisions of the heavenly Jerusalem.

1. There is a pure river in the city, a river that has the very water of life clear as crystal.

Is there a real river in the heavenly Jerusalem? Certainly, the New Jerusalem being 1500 miles cubic will have the beauty and refreshment of a running river and of many other bodies of water. Well, there were four rivers in the Garden of Eden: Pishon, Gihon, the Tigris, and the Euphrates. We must always remember the teaching of Scripture: God is going to recreate this earth and the heavens of this universe. This is what He explicitly teaches in the Scripture (cp. 2Pt.3:10-12; Rev.21:1; etc.).

A recreated world would certainly have the same features that this world has with one exception: it will be perfected! The heavenly Jerusalem is said to have a pure river flowing through it—the river has the water of life in it. What does this mean? The verse tells us where the source of the river is: It comes from "the throne of God and of the Lamb." The water of life flows from God and Christ. They are the source of all life that lives in the city. Only those who have drunk of the life that God and Christ give will be there. Therefore, the river symbolizes the life that flows out from God and Christ. It will be a constant reminder to us that Jesus Christ is the living water who gives us life...

- who quenches our thirst for life
- who satisfies our thirst for life
- who fulfills our thirst for life
- who completes our thirst for life.

22:2 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 river flows down the middle of the street of the city where the Tree of Life grew on each side of the river bearing its fruit and leaves. Ezekiel 47:12 adds that there are many other trees on this side and that side of the river bank that shall bring forth fruit for meat and its leaves for medicine.

2. There is a tree of life in the city.

Remember "*the tree of life*" was planted in the Garden of Eden (Gen.2:9). It apparently represented the availability of eternal life for Adam and Eve in the garden. As long as they obeyed God, it symbolized the perfect and life-giving environment God had given them. But as soon as they ate of the wrong tree—the tree of good and evil, sin manifested, and there were consequences. John only names and sees the tree of life is in the heavenly Jerusalem. Note two things said about the tree:

1. The Tree of Life bears twelve crops of fruit—The fruit was the nourishment of life. One crop

each month. The tree bears fruit year round symbolizing continuous fruit or continuous life. As far as eating, in the Old Testament, angels ate when Abraham entertained them. Jesus ate after He rose from the dead. We will eat at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. So, I know the fruit will be eaten. Therefore, the person who eats of the tree of life is nourished by its fruit eternally and he lives forever. And the person who eats of the tree of life will bear the fruit of the Spirit eternally.

2. **The leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations.** That is, they provide a perfect life. Ezekiel 47:12 says the leaves are for medicine. Nothing was said about the leaves in Genesis on the Tree of Life, but here in Revelation, they are for the healing of the nations. **What** does that mean? How would the leaves heal the nations and **Why** would the nations need healing? My conclusion is when Israel became divided? The northern 10 families called themselves Israel. The southern families called themselves Judah. And so Israel and Judah came about, and there were other nations that came against them. I don't know if the leaves will be eaten for the healing for the nations or just the presence of the leaves on the tree symbolizes something. Well, I would assume that the leaves would provide that healing that caused that division and will bring a perfect life for all nations including the Gentile nation. There cannot be any divisions. There can only be one whole nation under God symbolizing oneness!

22:3 And there shall be no more curse:

3. **There is no more curse in the city.**

¹ After Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God placed a curse on them and on the earth (Genesis 3:14, 17; Galatians 3:10, 13). The word "*curse*" here is an intensive word. It denotes an accursed thing. God placed a curse on the serpent (Gen. 3:14). And the earth bears the curse (Gen. 3:17). It's cursed to aging, corruption, deterioration, decay, death, suffering, evil, disturbance, division, disasters, and so on. It's cursed because man has chosen to make his own life in this world and to reject God's life. God's life is eternal. Therefore, when man chose to make his own life, he chose to die. Consequently, man brought death and all its evil into the world. But, the heavenly Jerusalem will have no curse. This means that it is free of evil and death. There can be no curse where the throne of God and the Lamb exist. It is perfect and will last eternally.

22:3b ...but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it:

4. **There is the throne of God and of the Lamb in the city.**

That is, the heavenly Jerusalem will be the capital city of the universe, the headquarters of the Lord's government and rule and reign. The throne is now the center of God's presence, replacing the temple. Wonderful impacts will happen in the city.

22:3c and his servants shall serve him:

5. **The Lord's servants will serve God and Christ, in the city.**

The word "serve" is for priestly service. We will have access to the very throne of heaven itself. Our service will never diminish or decline. While service here as we know it, is imperfect; our service there will be pure. We mar our service here with the flesh, with false motives and with pride. We often use service to get ahead or be famous. But our service there will be without fault. This service inspires us to worship God.

22:4a And they shall see his face:

6. **The Lord's servants will see His face.**

We will be able to see His face. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" Matt.5:8. This will be wonderful. As we serve God face to face there will be an intimate relationship throughout all of eternity.

22:4b ...and his name shall be in their foreheads

7. **The Lord's servants will have the name of God written in their foreheads.**

Presently Christians are sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph.4:30). And His seal will be in us until the day we go to be

¹ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/1999/02/14/revelation-223-2/>
<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>

with Him. The seal today is invisible, but the seal in that day will be apparent for all to see because God's name will be upon our foreheads. Of course we were bought with a price and that price was the blood of the Lamb. We shall be wholly His possession and held securely by God throughout eternity.

22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light:

8. The Lord's servants will have the Lord God as their light.

He will be their eternal light in the city. John again repeats that there will be no night in the New Jerusalem. There will be no need for lamps or man-made light, neither the light of the sun. The light of God's presence is all that will be needed (Revelation 21:23, 25).

22:5b ...and they shall reign for ever and ever:

9. The Lord's servants shall reign for ever and ever.

There will be an eternal rule coming from the throne of God and the Lamb being in it. The Millennial reign and eternal reign are united. The first part of 2 Timothy 2:12 in the KJV says "If we suffer"; other versions says "If we endure, we shall also reign with him." And Revelation 2:26 says "And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." Our work and service mean something, and God keeps His Word! We shall reign with God and Christ. None of us can comprehend how wonderful that will be. It will transcend all of our expectations. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

Revelation 22:6-9 Keeping God's Word

There is a better world coming, the most glorious of worlds, a perfect heaven and earth: a world in which there will be no sorrow or tears, suffering or death; a world of righteousness and joy. God wants man to know the message of Revelation. Therefore, as the Lord closes this great book, everything He says has to do with the overall message of Him revealing His Word. The message of Revelation is so important that the Lord takes the time and space to reveal this message of Revelation to John.

22:6a And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true:— All that John had seen was genuine. He had heard the Words of God.

- The message is "*faithful*": it can be trusted, and reliable.
- The message is "*true*": it is not a lie, not false, not a message created by the imagination of men.

²The prophecy began with a glorious worship service in heaven (Rev 4:1; 2-11) as the Lamb prepared to take possession of His inheritance. But at that time, the earth was still filled with evil, and the Lamb faced an intense battle to defeat that evil. Now, 2000 years later, the prophecy draws to a close with the vision of another worship service honoring the Lamb. This time the worship is not just in heaven, but in a new heaven and earth combined. The Lamb's inheritance has been transformed into the paradise He always intended it to be, and with Him in that paradise are His People.

How do we know that the message of Revelation is trustworthy and true? Well, from what the verse continues to say:

22:6b ...and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done:— The message of Revelation is from the same Lord God who inspired the prophets of old. The holy prophets add support to the claims that Scripture can be trusted. God sent His angel to show His bond-servants that what is written was sent directly from Him. The purpose of this verse is to stress the authenticity of this revelation and to encourage anticipation of its fulfillment. God's promises always depend upon His character. He does not give us a specific time as to when these things will happen, only that they "*must shortly be done*." He keeps His Word!

22:7a Behold, I come quickly: — ³ John's vision concludes with verse 6, and then Jesus resumes speaking directly to John, just as He did at first. This verse is best described as a continuation of John's meeting with Jesus that John initially described in Chapter 1:8. This meeting was interrupted with the visions John reported in Chapters 4—22:6. And now Jesus

² <http://bereanbiblestudygroup.com/2011/01/revelation-219-to-2221%e2%80%93living-with-god/>

³ <http://bereanbiblestudygroup.com/2011/01/revelation-219-to-2221%e2%80%93living-with-god/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

returns John's focus to his place there on the island of Patmos (1:9). ⁴"Behold" is a term intended to grab our attention. "Give *thy your undivided attention!*" When Jesus comes, it will be quick (1:7; 22:12, 20). The Greek word "*quickly*" means soon. Jesus will give no warning when He comes. He will come suddenly. It will be unexpected. That is why we need to be alert to His coming. The phrase "*I am coming quickly*" occurs three times in the conclusion to Revelation. Therefore, we must be prepared, and we must quickly witness to a world lost in crime, drugs, suffering, and death. We must study and re-study Revelation. We must prepare ourselves and do what we can to prepare others for the Lord, and the final days of human history. And there are imminent signs of His coming!

22:7b ...blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book:— The Lord's blessings are endless to the person who truly studies His Word. The word "*keeps*" means to guard; protect. It will save your very life. So, pay attention and give heed. We are to guard God's Word by applying it to our lives. ⁵Revelation isn't just a book about things to come; it's a book that encourages us to let our knowledge of the future affect the way we live. Therefore we are blessed by it!

22:8 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:— In other words, John is trying to testify that he had actually witnessed the things he wrote down. The message of Revelation stirs worship. When John heard these things revealed to him and seen with his own eyes, he fell down and worshipped (the angel) who was delivering the message for the Lord. God alone is worthy of our worship and adoration. He alone is above all creation, even the angels.

22:9 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:— John's reaction to worship the angel was prevented. This is not a new problem with John. He's forgotten that he's already done this to the angel back in Chapter 19:10, and was quickly rebuked by the angel. The angel instructs John that he is a fellow servant as his brethren the prophets are, and as well as those that heed the truth stated in the Book. God's first commandment teaches him that he is not to worship any other god. Worship God alone!

SUMMARY:

John's description continues as he sees a pure river, of the Water of Life; so crystal clear, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And in the midst of the street on either side of the river, there is the Tree of Life. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There shall be no more curse, for no curse can be where the throne of God exists. The Lord's servants will serve God and Christ, and we will see His face, and his name shall be in our foreheads in the city. There will be no night in the New Jerusalem. There will be no need for lamps or man-made light, and neither the light of the sun. The light of God's presence is all that will be needed. Our reign with God and Christ will be for ever and ever! **(22:1-5)**.

God's message to John was faithful and true. God sent His angel to show His bond-servants that, what is written was sent directly from Him. These things spoken were to shortly happen. That's why He says "*Behold*", *He will come quickly* without us knowing the time or the day. But, blessed is the one that keep and hold on to the sayings of the prophecy of this Book. John confessed that when he had heard and seen these things, he reacted by worshipping the angel who revealed them to him. And by the integrity of that angel who had been the apostle's interpreter. The angel refused to accept religious worship from John, and reproved him for offering it. People should worship God and not His servants **(22:6-9)**.

APPLICATION:

Don't let your knowledge of future events just be another one of those trivial treasures that you can wow your friends with. It ought to change the way you live. Does your knowledge of future events affect your life and your loved ones?

⁴ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/1999/02/16/revelation-226-7/>

⁵ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/revelation-221/>

<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>