

# Revelation 21:22–22:5

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[ 0 : 00 ] Revelation chapter 21 verses 22 through chapter 22 verse 5. Please stand for the reading of God's Word.

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the lamp is the Lamb.

By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day, and there will be no night there.

They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations, but nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city.

[ 1 : 18 ] Also on either side of the river, the tree of life, with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads, and night will be no more.

They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Good afternoon to you.

What thoughts have run through our hearts and minds as we have sung on this afternoon, and as the scripture that has been read.

[ 2 : 24 ] Won't you pray with me as we take a look into God's word. Father, thank you for your goodness to us, and our eternal destiny calls of the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

Lord, I pray that you would once again open the eyes of our hearts, that we may see, that we may behold wonderful things from your word.

Lord, may we be drawn nearer to you, and may our look into your word this afternoon facilitate that, Lord, in ways, Lord, that perhaps we don't or not done as regularly as they should be.

So we yield ourselves to you for this hour. Bless your name. Amen. Amen. This is the next to the last message in our Revelation series.

We have been in the book, save a holiday breaks, and last summer when we went through the songs of ascents for over a year.

[ 3 : 42 ] But it's been a good journey. And I pray that as we wrap things up over the next two weeks, that there would be some things that would settle in our hearts as far as the implications of the things that we have looked at in this book.

It's been over 20 years now since Shirley and I moved with our family to the Chicagoland area. And I would dare say that over the last three years, I have learned more about Chicago than I have in the previous, you know, 16, 17 years.

In the past week, I've had several occasions to reflect on some very marvelous things about our city.

As we drove up Lakeshore Drive on the way to a pastor's meeting on Monday, I was stricken by the tourists that were there. Lake front to the east, people walking there.

And I thought, well, you know, I need to be a tourist in Chicago. There are a lot of great things in our city that really those of us who are city dwellers don't take enough time to look at.

[ 5 : 04 ] And then Dave and I, as we were walking on Tuesday, we darted in the Chicago Cultural Center with all of its beauty, its intricate stone, and it's been around for years.

Marvelous beauty. Chicago has much to be experienced as a city. But before us today, we have a city that is quite unlike our beloved city.

Yet Chicago and the dwelling that we look at on this afternoon in the text do have something in common.

One thing, at least. When the city of Chicago was incorporated in 1837, a seal was created that included both words and images.

If you haven't seen the Chicago City seal, just let me give you a picture of what is there. There is the American shield with a sheaf of wheat right at the center.

[ 6 : 21 ] American shield, what I mean by that, it depicts the red, white, and blue there in the center. A ship in full sail, in the picture, it's to the right.

And a sleeping infant is at the top. An Indian with a bow and arrow is included on the seal.

The inscription, City of Chicago Incorporated, 4th of April, March 1837, is around the outside of the shield.

But also on that shield, you will find these words in Latin, *urbas in hartol*.

The English translation, city in a garden. City in a garden. And as we move through this text, at the end of the text, you also will see a city in a garden.

[ 7 : 31 ] Paradise. That's one of the depictions of the future home of the redeemed of the ages. Our verses today, brothers and sisters, and I really, really feel a certain amount of not being qualified.

As we look in this particular text, these are glorious things that are before our eyes. And I believe that our groundedness in this world, in a way, keeps us, number one, from beholding, or maybe even desiring to behold, the things that we see in this text as often as we need to.

Perhaps we need some of the things that were pressing in and upon John's readers in the first century that would help to create a greater appreciation and hunger and thirst for the life that is to come.

But if you're a Christian here on this afternoon, and I believe that most of us are, what we see in this text on this afternoon, this will be your eternal home, your eternal dwelling place where indeed cares all pass.

Home at last. Ever to rejoice. I remember the saints of old would say with a degree of regularity, this world is not my home.

[ 9 : 24 ] We're just passing through. Graveyard travelers, if you will. But we didn't come here, brothers and sisters, to stay.

Those who dwell in Christ now will dwell eternally in the dwelling place that we get a picture of, the city, heaven, that we see here.

What are the distinctives of heaven? Some of which we see even here in this particular text.

And I must say at the beginning that what we see here is in no way exhaustive. There's a measure of comprehensiveness to what we see.

But as far as the particulars of our eternal dwelling place. I remember Paul speaking about the ministry of the Spirit.

[ 10 : 32 ] Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has reserved in store for those who love Him. But He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.

While there is more in heaven to what we see here in the picture, certainly there is nothing less than what we behold here.

We must recall that the vision that we see here was originally given to John to his first century readers who were tempted to compromise on several fronts to stand for what they believed meant ostracism and even persecution and death by martyrdom.

But John exhorted them several places in Scripture. chapter 1 he speaks about himself being their partner in the gospel as it were and patient and requiring patient endurance for him.

We see that exhortation in chapters 13 and 14 for the people of God to be patient and enduring while here as they faced in enemy opposition.

[ 11 : 53 ] And though below things here include bitter things the heritage of the people of God includes something that is better better by far.

Paul spoke about it didn't he in Philippians chapter 1. He said he was sort of torn! He said to stay here and to be with the people of God which would be beneficial for him but for them but to depart and to be with Christ which would be better by far far far better.

But in the final chapters of Revelation we get a glimpse of what is in store for those who overcome. Notice the text with me. Cities friends are where people dwell and heaven is depicted as a city. Look at the text verse 22 I saw no temple where in the city for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb and notice verse 23 and the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp the lamp of the city and by its light verse 24 people bring their glory the nations bring their glory into the city this dwelling place life in the city is what is before us in this text and let me give you I want to give you several things that characterize life in heaven in our future dwelling place first of all in verse 22 it's characterized by the presence of God or God's presence

[ 13 : 53 ] God's presence will mean the absence of a temple huh no temple you know a temple was holy space reserved for God's presence in the midst of an unholy world huh that's what temples were for you know in the old testament there was the tabernacle and the temple and there were certain rituals that whereby one could approach God if they would approach God through sacrifice and there there was a special class of people and then there were several classes the Levites and then the priests and then there was the high priest who once a year not without blood he was to go into the holy place of all and offer sacrifice for the sins of the people and of course there were the daily rituals as people approached God God would meet with his people or their representatives but no need for an intermediate place or person here direct access to God it's what's in view what do you have you have a world a universe made holy renovated by means of cleansing and the preparation of a place for the holy people and a and I would add a holy

God that's what's in view in verse 22 because of the presence of God and the lamb there is no need for a specific structure because the whole earth is a holy place God's holy presence and God's holy place among God's holy people the redeemed of the ages what all of that means is that there's no temple no dedicated set aside space is needed there God's presence but look on down as we see God's glory and the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it for notice the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the lamb no other light sources need it there because of the absolute brilliance of God's glory just how glorious will it be we see it earlier in the book turn back over to chapter 4 and we see the glory of God in heaven's throne room we see that in Revelation chapter 4 look at verses 2 and 3

John in the spirit notice what he says at once I was in the spirit and behold a throne and notice the location stood in heaven with one seated on the throne and he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald again God's glory around God's throne in the heavenlies the glory of the throne room was in view here because of the location of the throne of God again it's moving from the heavens to heaven on earth as it were in the last chapters and all the brilliance of heaven then becomes the illumination of the earth notice the descent that we see back to Revelation chapter 21 verses 10 and 11 and he carried me away in the spirit to a great high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem notice coming down what's the source God having the glory of God its radiance like a most rare jewel like a jasper clear as crystal glory of God described in brilliant in terms of brilliant kind of stunning jewels using a kind of language that we understand the brilliance of these things probably doing the best he can with the things that we understand to describe that what the text seems to say is that God's glory is the light and the lamb of God is the light medium the light bulb as it were if you will it's God's glory through his through his son look at the text there for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the lamb no need of other light sources because God himself is present we've seen this before in scripture have we not the writer of the book of hebrews states it this way he speaking of christ is the radiance of the glory of god and the exact imprint of his nature and he upholds all things in the universe by the word of his power and after making purification for sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty!

[ 19 : 26 ] on! ha! ha! ha! the light of the lamb will light up the nations in his vision john saw the fulfillment of passages of scripture like that was read earlier today scripture like isaiah saw in his vision and again john he draws from these prophecies of the prophets like isaiah and ezekiel and zachariah and all of them come to bear on this particular point in redemptive history huh and he sees here listen again the nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising

lift up your eyes all around and see that they will gather together they will come to you your son shall come from far your daughter shall be carried on the hip what a great picture then you shall see and be radiant your heart shall thrill and exult because of the worshipers of the son all previous rebellion has been squelched and all the world will recognize the supremacy of the son and be in total submission to him this is your new home folks just think as we think about the good things of our city one of the exercises that we go through and meet holy trinity is we we stay we stay our vision and we ask those who are attending what would it look like if this vision was fulfilled and they began to say things like you know crime would be less you wouldn't hear a whole lot of sirens you know the homeless would come off the street true but here you have thy kingdom come vision the kingdom of

God has indeed come the reign of God has indeed come the things that will not be there an atmosphere what you're talking about friends is an atmosphere of safety and security and peace that prevail can you use a taste of that here no homeland security no barter guards no national checkpoints there are no enemy and nations to harass no police forces no guards at barbers of walls hey the son is supreme all are in willing and welcome submission to him God supremacy but notice look at verse 27 what characterizes the city God's holiness look at the holiness of God there but nothing unclean will enter it nor anyone who does what is detestable or false but only those who are written in the

Lamb's book of life the threat you know the different homeland security threats you know it's yellow or red or orange the threat of anything listen anything unclean entering the city is absolutely zero heaven will not be the home of anything that's unholy or those who do things that are detestable or abominable both to God not there though though the gates are broad and the borders open the pervasive holiness of God is seeing that nothing unclean enters because all who enter there are holy because their names are written in the Lamb's book of life the life of God is the portion of all who dwell there the names have been recorded in the Lamb's book of life no one will ever ask the question here where is

God perhaps some of John's readers faced the trial and wondered where exactly is God in all of this ever wonder about that in your life situation where is he some of them had suffered persecution and martyrdom temptation to compromise and the like they were threatened by the beastly powers of that day excluded from social and commercial dealings because of their loyalty to Christ but as they see their home in the future the pervasive presence of God nowhere is God questioned one of the things I want you really to look at here is the prominence of the Lamb of God in the picture that we see here notice the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb in verse 22 and notice in verse 23 the lamp is the

Lamb and as you go on down you see the Lamb's book of life again the prominence of the Lamb in this particular picture and then as you go on down look at chapter 22 and verse 1 it speaks of what's flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb and as you continue again look at verse 3 no longer will there be anything accursed but the throne of God and the Lamb will be in it the Lamb and it is because of the Lamb that the redeemed are there that the city is inhabited as we think of the precious Lamb of God throughout redemptive history beginning even in Genesis chapter 2 you remember where when Abraham was sent to the mountain to offer up his son Isaac and he had loaded him down and the question comes to him from his son behold the fire and the wood but where is the

[ 26 : 14 ] Lamb for the offering and Abraham's response of course God will provide for himself the Lamb for a burnt offering in Exodus chapter 12 we see the Passover Lamb there that prefigured Christ in all of his work Isaiah chapter 53 speaks about he will be led as a Lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep done before a shearer's soul he opened not his mouth and then on the threshold as we enter into the New Testament John sees him in John chapter 1 verse 29 and he says behold the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world Peter speaks about the precious blood of Christ as a Lamb without blemish or spot and of course we see him as we enter on the pages of Revelation and chapter 5 verse 6

John says I saw a Lamb standing as though it had been slain seven horns seven eyes and on and on the Lamb in redemptive history prefiguring the work of Christ and he comes as the Lamb of God who was taken it is because of the work of the Lamb that we have access into the city and the Lamb will be celebrated for all eternity the son so I can't help but think of Revelation chapter 12 and verse 11 and they conquered him how through the blood of the Lamb and the word of their

testimony this is a picture of the future existence of God's people and such is the heritage of those all of those through the work of the Lamb it's through his work that they are there it's through his work that their names are written in the Lamb's book of life the scene we see here is possible because God has provided his son as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of mankind but look at God's provision what's in the city God's presence God's glory we get an idea of his supremacy his holiness but look at his provision in chapters 22 verses 1 and 2 it's the sustenance of God water of life from the throne and food from the tree of life that we see look at the verses there then the angel showed me the river of the water of life brightest crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the lamb through the middle of the street of the city also on either side of the river there it is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit yielding its fruit each month the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations the water of life the tree of life central to the city is the water this substance of refreshment from God's throne if the street perhaps had a name it would be a boulevard of life those with access to the city those whose names are in the Lamb's book of Life Have Access to these very life giving waters irrigation source for the tree of life from which comes fruit for the health of the nations isn't it interesting the mention also in this text of the nations look at verse 24 that speaks of nations of people walking in the light of the nations and then the glory and honor of the nations is brought to the city then the healing is for the fruit of the tree of life is for the healing of the nations chapter two and verse two that speaks of the pervasive influence and the extent of the reach of the work of Christ the nations have been given to him for an inheritance we see in revelation chapter five and seven that people from every nation kindred tongue and people are amongst the redeemed water of life tree of life of course there's the connection with the garden reminiscent of the garden of Eden what we see in verses one through three remind us of the faithful scene at the beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapters two and three there God of course had created man and woman and placed them in the garden of Eden where they had access to access to the tree of life but then because of their sin they were cut off from that tree of life after their disobedience they were expelled from the garden with all of its beauty and all of its plenty paradise was lost death entered into the world and here we have a scene because of the work of [ 32 : 01 ] Christ access is restored that which was lost through the first Adam's disobedient has been forever restored through the work of the second Adam the Lord Jesus Christ who fully satisfied God's demands for justice through his saving death but one more thing look with me at verses 3 through 5 not only do we see God's sustenance there but we see the very worship of God no longer would there be anything accursed but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it and his servants will worship him key word his servants we see that at the beginning of the book we see it I mean this is for those who serve worshipfully serve God his servants render this kind of servants to him there will be face to face kind of fellowship their God's servants will worship him revelation of Jesus

Christ which God gave to him chapter one to show to his servants again it's one of those threads that runs through the book this is for his servants when you see this picture we might ask so what great picture it's good that God has those things in store for those who are redeemed so what well if you are in Christ as we look on these things which we don't look on enough it's very convicting to look at this passage for me and it's a reminder that these things are not more of a regular part of my diet but if you are in Christ you rejoice and hopefully or strengthen as you look at these to endure the challenges that we face here because hey there's a new day coming and cares will be passed one of these days we will be home oh

I want to see him to look upon his face there to sing forever of his saving grace cares all past home at last that this is not your home a great home awaits us but seeing this may it serve to propel us to beat wind under our wings as it were to know that even the dwellings that we live in and the city that we dwell in even the country that we dwell in is not final for us we rejoice in the Lord in that such a grand and glorious eternal inheritance has been prepared for us you rejoice in the total sufficiency of God and the Lamb for all time and eternity when we see this perhaps even it has a way of altering your prayers and mine as we'll look on next week and hear the prayers of John even so come Lord Jesus helps us to get a clearer and sharper vision of the eternal but also strengthening us for endurance in the temporal that's what looking at texts like this can do for us and we see that the dwelling of God is with the redeemed of the ages that's what it will be the dwelling of mankind normally it's a city but the dwelling of God is a temple and the dwelling of man

and the dwelling of God in a sense they merge together and God will dwell with his people what we have here is the the riches of Christ which have been fully realized when the kingdom of God has come the rule of God has fully come supremacy and the sufficiency of God God is all you know God will life in heaven be like God's presence means the absence of all that harms us in this life all that pains us all that causes us to mourn we see safety and security in plenty the absence of sin will mean that we flourish and blossom in unimaginable kinds of ways we'll see him and we will be with him the destiny of the redeemed is to dwell with their redeemer that's what this text helps us to see the destiny of those who have been rescued is to dwell with the one who has rescued us the one who has redeemed us and the name of the city

[ 37 : 54 ] Ezekiel wrote from that time shall be the Lord is there we've got us a couple of things to do this afternoon we're going to have communion but before that let me just look at my program here well during that we're going to sing thine the amen and as I have looked over those words what marvelous words that will take us in to this time of communion where we will celebrate the work of the Lamb of God whose body was broken for us in death and whose blood was shed for us in death huh yeah

Jesus our redeemer whom we celebrate let me pray even as our musicians come forward and as we prepare ourselves to come to the Lord's table on this afternoon Lord we do love you we thank you that Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us because of the work of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world our destiny is a marvelous one a glorious one the redeemed will dwell with their redeemer Lord and I pray that as we have come to these last chapter and last verses of revelation I pray that these things will have a way of sticking with us and washing us and cleansing us causing us to be more heavenly minded as we look forward to our future with you home at last blessed be your name amen let me read