

POWER HOUR

5/18/2025

Lesson Text:
Revelation 22:1-9

Background Scripture:
Genesis 2:4-3:24

Devotional Reading:
Ezekiel 47:1-12

“THE RIVER OF LIFE”

NLT TRANSLATION

Golden Text: **3** *No longer will there be a curse upon anything. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him.* **Revelation 22:3 NLT**

Time: about A.D. 96

Place: from Patmos

Revelation 22:1-9 NLT

¹Then the angel showed me a river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²It flowed down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations. ³No longer will there be a curse upon anything. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and His servants will worship Him. ⁴And they will see His face, and His name will be written on their foreheads. ⁵And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever. ⁶Then the angel said to me, “Everything you have heard and seen is trustworthy and true. The Lord God, who inspires His prophets, has sent His angel to tell His servants what will happen soon.” ⁷“Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book.” ⁸I, John, am the one who heard and saw all these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. ⁹But he said, “No, don’t worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers the prophets, as well as all who obey what is written in this book. Worship only God!”

INTRODUCTION

Our thinking is framed by our limitations. We have a hard time thinking beyond the limitations within which we live and work. Sometimes the limitations are cultural—language, values, customs, traditions, and routines. Sometimes they are geographical and climatic. These limitations can be overcome to some degree as we travel abroad or expand our education. Our minds learn to think more broadly and grasp greater possibilities.

But some limitations are inherent to humans, and no matter what our culture or location may be, we still have to think as finite earthlings.

These and other limitations make it impossible for us to fully understand God and the cosmic plan He is unfolding. But His Word gives us glimpses into this plan, especially in prophetic Scripture, and we stand astonished and humbled. The final chapter of Revelation gives us one such glimpse into the eternal future and the New Jerusalem. It should lead us to worship God even more humbly than we have before.

Most of us have at some point in our lives experienced the power of being in the presence of God when we worship Him. One does not experience that kind of strong and holy emotion when standing before an inanimate idol. The glory of God fills the place as we truly know the One whom we worship. It is a special feeling. The three disciples felt that way when Jesus was transfigured before them on the mountaintop, and they did not want to leave. The overpowering presence of God was around and in them. Let's explore what we experience when God is the center of our lives. The River of Life flows from Him. He is the source of our strength, and He gives us life itself.

1. The pure river (Rev. 22:1-2). Water in Scripture is frequently used as a picture of life. It is the very source of life and rejuvenation. Here John shows us the river of life, which is as clear as crystal and flows from the throne of God the Father and of the Lamb—Jesus. Point out that everything pure and holy comes from Jesus. He is the source of our river of life. In the New Jerusalem, this river is pictured as coming down the main street in full view of everyone. On either side of the river of life is the tree of life. This tree bears twelve different types of fruit, one different crop every month. The leaves of these trees are used for medicinal purposes for healing the people. Point out to the class that what is pure is also good for healing and life-giving in nature. True life comes to us from Jesus, our source of healing. The river of life and these fruit-bearing trees are pictures of heaven and what it means to be with Jesus, who is pure. When

Jesus rules in the New Jerusalem, everything will be pure and life-giving and whole. Just imagine a life without sickness, pain, sorrow, or suffering. True healing and wholeness come only from Jesus, who gives us new life.

2. No curse (Rev. 22:3-5). The flip side of wholeness is the absence of everything that is evil and corrupt. In the New Jerusalem, where the river of life flows, there is nothing that is evil. The curse is gone. One will remember that when sin came into our world, everything was cursed. The curse of sin is now taken away. John shows us that this is because Jesus is there. The presence of Jesus makes the very important difference in transformation. Where Jesus is, nothing is cursed. It becomes a place of worship. John shows us that the New Jerusalem is the place to behold the face of our Lord Jesus, for He sits on the throne of God the Father and the Lamb. Only Jesus qualifies for this. His servants bow down before Him. The saved will see His face. Remind the students that in the Old Testament we are told the Jews believed that if they saw the face of God, they would not live. In the New Jerusalem we will see the face of God; He is the focus of our worship. John goes on to tell us that in the New Jerusalem, we will not need the light of the sun. Jesus will be there, and He will be our light. Light in the Bible is often symbolic of purity. Bright light is often associated with the presence of God. Jesus will reign from the New Jerusalem. Let's think through what would change if we lived in a visibly manifest kingdom where Jesus was the King and we were His subjects. He promises to be our King and to rule our world. How should the prospect of a future visible kingdom affect the way we live for Jesus now? Encourage the class to think in terms of new life. With Jesus as the center of our lives, we will experience true life, fully realized, in the New Jerusalem.

3. Worship the coming One (Rev. 22:6-9): The call to us is to worship the One who is the source of life. In John's vision, the angel reminds him of the truth of his message. He was sent to disclose to John the facts about the future. The most important message for us is that Jesus is coming soon. We are called to be prepared for that event. We are challenged to live in the light of all the truths that John has opened up for us from his vision of the scroll. When John saw Jesus, he could do nothing but worship Him. He tells us that he actually saw these things in his vision. He was reaffirming for us the truthfulness of what he saw and its implications for us. These things are written down so that we may be prepared for Jesus. When John bowed

down to worship the angel in his vision, the angel told him to worship God alone, for angels and prophets and human beings are all supposed to worship our Lord Jesus and no one else. No one else is worthy to be worshipped. We all must see that Jesus is our supreme Lord. He gives life and deserves our worship. Make sure the class understands the importance of true worship that is focused on our Lord Jesus alone. When we worship Him, we recognize Him as our Lord.

POINTS TO PONDER

When we need refreshment and renewal, only Christ can abundantly satisfy us (Rev. 22:1).

God is the Provider of limitless nourishment and healing in the lives of His people (vs. 2).

The evil and accursed cannot abide in God's presence; so let us always draw close to Him (vs. 3).

Christ has revealed God to us and placed His mark of ownership on our minds and hearts (vss. 4-5).

We assure ourselves of God's blessing by studying and applying His Word, especially as revealed in Revelation (vss. 6-7).

We must always be vigilant that our worship is reserved for God and God alone (vss. 8-9).

CONCLUSION

Ever since Adam sinned, humans have been dealing with the effects of the curse. Apart from notable biblical exceptions, no one has been able to avoid death. We see sin, sorrow, and pain daily. But one day, this will all come to an end; the curse will be over, and all will be made right. We will be restored and experience life as we were designed to in Eden. We will be sinless, living in a sinless paradise. The only reason we can experience life free from the curse is that Jesus has taken the curse for us (Gal. 3:13-14). He took the full wrath of God and the punishment we had earned. Through His death, He paid the penalty for sin. We no longer have to pay that debt, and we will one day be completely free from sin and the curse. Without His atoning work, we would have experienced the curse for eternity. If you are a Christian, take a moment to thank Him for His amazing grace! In contrast to the absent curse, the throne of God and of the Lamb will be present. God Himself will be with us. We will not simply be given a perfect

paradise and left alone. No! Central to our joys will be that we shall see God (Rev. 22:4). Have you ever experienced God's comforting presence? Have you ever had a moment when you were filled with inexpressible joy at God's love? Our experiences of God now are delightful, but we still only see in a mirror dimly; one day we shall clearly see God face to face (I Cor. 13:12.) The Father and Son share a single throne, emphasizing their unity (Rev. 21:22). They share the title of "Alpha and Omega" (Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13). They both receive worship. Jesus is both distinct from the Father and worshipped with Him. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is a Trinity!

Finally, we see that God's servants will serve Him. In today's world this might seem like a negative thing—who wants to be a servant? Most of us usually want to do our own thing and pursue our own goals. We often want to worship and serve ourselves rather than God. However, serving God is a good thing (Ps. 84:10). It is what we were created to do (Col. 1:16). Like an alligator trying to live in a tree or an eagle trying to live in a lake, we will fail miserably if we try to live contrary to how God designed us. If we worship and serve God as we are created to, we will find joy. Think about someone who is deeply self-absorbed and selfish. Are they happy? Although selfish pleasure can distract and please us for a short time, in the end it always leaves us hollow. Far from being a wearisome burden or a damper on the pleasures of heaven, serving God will heighten our joy! It will be our delight to know God and to worship and serve Him as we were created to. If we find true joy as we fulfill the purpose we were created for, why would we want to live any other way now? Let us serve and worship God now, rather than waiting for heaven! God will end the curse of sin. Pain and death will be no more, and we will live in God's presence and serve Him with joy beyond anything we can imagine. Praise God!

QUESTION(S)

1. What is the source of the river in the heavenly city?
2. What does the water of life symbolize?
3. How is the tree of life in the New Jerusalem like the one in the vision of Ezekiel?
4. Who are the "servants" in Revelation 22:3, and why is it an appropriate term for them?
5. How will the saints' future approach to God differ from ours now?
6. What are the connotations of having God's name on one's forehead?
7. What is the source of light in the New Jerusalem?

8. How should we take Christ's words "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. 22:7)?
9. What earlier mistake does John repeat as his visions come to an end?
10. What command does the angel give to John and us?

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is "**Come, Lord Jesus**"

Lesson Text: **Revelation 22:12-21**

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