

A Tour of Your Future Home

Revelation 22:1-5

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St. Paul's Lutheran, North Freedom

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. (Rev. 22:1-5, NIV)

Dear fellow believers in the triune God:

Let's say you're looking to buy a new home or rent an apartment. The realtor shows you the house and takes you around the neighborhood. You check the faucets and ask how pure the water is, if you might need a filter. You find out how far it is to get groceries. You see if it's furnished, check the appliances and electrical hook-ups, ask about how secure and safe the building is. And of course, you ask about the price and what's all included.

In Revelation 21 and 22, the last two chapters of the Bible, an angel gave John a tour of "the Holy City, the New Jerusalem," as John called it in 21:2. It's the new home of the Holy Christian Church when Jesus comes and brings in a new heaven and new earth. With John, let's take **A Tour of Your Future Home**.

"What's the water supply like in this future home?" you ask as future tenant. The angel shows you "the river of the water of life." It flows from "the throne of God and of the Lamb," Jesus. (More about that throne later.) It's God's own Word, and it will supply us with life that will endure forever! And the water is "as clear as crystal," 100% pure, no impurities whatsoever. Those who drink of it, those who wash in it, will find that it makes us whole and absolutely clean, forgiven of all our sins.

"And the food supply?" you ask. Alongside this river stands the tree of life. That was one of the two trees in the middle of our first parents' home, the Garden of Eden or "paradise." Those who eat of the tree of life will live forever. So our future home will be like our first home. This tree is on "each side of the river," a little hard for us to picture, but described in a way that no matter where you are in your future home, you will have access to the tree of life. The angel also shows you how this tree bears twelve crops of fruit, for each month of the year. "Twelve" is a symbolic number in Revelation; it represents the whole Church. Every believer, every one who has their faith in Jesus as Savior, will get to live forever.

Notice also on this tree are leaves "for the healing of the nations." The tree has medicinal purposes as well. Think of the nations in the world, people hurting from malnutrition, famine and disease, strife and warfare. In your future home, there will be no more of that, just perfect healing. "No longer will there be any curse." Instead, there will be blessing upon blessing.

The angel next shows you who's in charge of your new home, the New Jerusalem. There is "the throne of God and of the Lamb." God the Father, of course, is the one who reigns. Sharing that same throne is the Lamb, whom you recognize is God's Son, Jesus Christ. Many years before, the Baptist pointed out Jesus to John and his friends, saying, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" The Lamb had accomplished his mission of taking away sin by his sacrificial death on the cross; he rose on high, ascended and now is seated at the throne. The Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit, is in the midst of his people, reigning in truth, grace and love.

"What about my neighbors in the city?" The angel describes the inhabitants in this way: "They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads." All your neighbors, and you yourself, will wear the name of the Lamb, Christ. In other words, you belong to him. God is saying of you, "You are mine, because you were purchased with the blood of the Lamb.

We with our neighbors will do two things. "His servants will serve him." That's natural. Because the Lord Jesus purchased us with his blood, because we belong to him, we will naturally serve the one who rules heaven and earth. We will find it a joy to do his bidding, obey what he asks us to do, and show our love to him. But the second thing we'll do is more surprising: "They will reign for ever and ever." We who belong to Jesus will get to rule with him! For when we get to heaven, we will be glorified with him, and we will rule.

"What about electrical hook-ups? How much sunlight does this city get?" No need to ask, the angel informs you. For "there will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light." In the previous chapter John observed, "the glory of God gives its light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light" (Rev. 21:23b,24a). Of course, Jesus is the Light of the World. He's our spiritual light now in this dark world of sin. But when we reach heaven, there won't be any "prince of darkness," that is, Satan, or any nightfall of sin that takes us away from the Light, Jesus. We will live in total daylight, with Jesus, the Light of the world.

Because of that, there will be perfect security in this world. "Nothing impure will ever enter it," John observed in the verse before our text (Rev. 21:27a). Satan won't be sneaking in a dark corner to tempt us away; no enemies of Christ will try to lure us to the dark. We will be eternally safe from sin, from Satan, and all enemies.

"OK," you say after this grand tour, "what's the price?" There's going to be sticker shock, right? God demands holiness, and that's too steep for us sinners to pay. But thank God, the Lamb himself paid the price. The Lamb shed his lifeblood, died, and rose from the dead. Earlier in Revelation John saw the Lamb "looking as if he had been slain," taking the throne (Rev. 5:6). Because he paid the price, the Lord God himself, the owner of your future home, says, "To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life" (Rev. 21:6). What a relief that is! Jesus supplies the holiness we need, and we receive heaven free of charge, by grace!

Oh, what peace is ours after taking this tour of our future home, knowing what it will be like, and knowing it's been paid for. Let's remember that we are truly citizens of heaven, so let's now live as ones who belong to God while we live in this world! Amen.