

Revelation 22:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal (ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον, potamon hydatos zōēs lampron hōs krystallon)—This climactic vision echoes Ezekiel 47:1-12 where water flows from the temple, and Zechariah 14:8 where living waters flow from Jerusalem. The Greek hydatos zōēs (water of life) recalls Jesus's promise to the Samaritan woman: "whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst" (John 4:14). The absolute purity and crystal clarity contrasts with the polluted, death-bringing waters of Babylon (Revelation 17-18).

Proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb—The singular throne (not thrones) affirms Christ's full deity, sharing God's eternal throne. This river doesn't originate from the ground but from God's very throne, signifying that eternal life flows solely from divine grace. Eden's river (Genesis 2:10) divided into four branches spreading outward; here one unified river flows from God to His redeemed humanity—Paradise not merely restored but gloriously consummated. The imagery fulfills Psalm 46:4, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God."

Historical Context

John wrote Revelation circa AD 95 from exile on Patmos during Domitian's persecution. His original audience—seven churches in Asia Minor—faced pressure to participate in emperor worship and pagan rituals. This vision of the New

Jerusalem concludes the entire biblical narrative: from Eden's garden with its river (Genesis 2) to the consummated city-garden with its river of life. First-century believers suffering under Roman oppression would recognize the Ezekiel allusions and find hope that God's dwelling with humanity would be perfectly realized.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the river proceeding from God's throne challenge any notion that eternal life comes from human achievement rather than divine grace?
2. What does the crystal purity of this water reveal about the holiness and perfection of the age to come, and how should that shape your present pursuit of sanctification?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	εἶδειξέν	μοι	καθαρὸν	ποταμὸν	ὕδατος	ζωῆς	λαμπρὸν
And	he shewed	me	a pure	river	of water	of life	clear
G2532	G1166	G3427	G2513	G4215	G5204	G2222	G2986
ώς	κρύσταλλον	έκπορευόμενον	ἐκ	τοῦ	θρόνου	τοῦ	
as	crystal	proceeding	out of	G3588	the throne	G3588	
G5613	G2930	G1607	G1537	G2362			
θεοῦ	καὶ	τοῦ	ἀρνίου				
of God	And	G3588	of the Lamb				
G2316	G2532		G721				

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 7:17 (References God): For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

John 4:14 (Parallel theme): But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Revelation 21:6 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Zechariah 14:8 (Parallel theme): And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

Psalms 46:4 (References God): There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

Revelation 22:17 (Parallel theme): And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Jeremiah 17:13 (Parallel theme): O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.

Jeremiah 2:13 (Parallel theme): For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Isaiah 41:18 (Parallel theme): I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

Revelation 3:21 (Parallel theme): To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

