

The Book of Revelation, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 15: A New Heaven and a New Earth; the New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:1-22:21

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This final lesson gathers up everything the study has taught and lands it on the Christian's true and final hope. Doctrinally, the stakes could not be higher, because this is precisely where popular end-times teaching goes most badly wrong. Revelation does not end with an earthly thousand-year political kingdom, a rebuilt temple, restored animal sacrifices, or a separate program for national Israel. It ends with a new heaven and a new earth, the eternal dwelling of God with His people, and the New Jerusalem coming down from God. The teacher must be clear and confident that this eternal state, God dwelling with man, every tear wiped away, death no more, Eden restored and surpassed, the redeemed seeing His face and reigning forever, is the believer's hope, against every premillennial and dispensational scheme. The New Jerusalem is the church glorified, the Bride of the Lamb (21:9-10), described in symbols of perfection: a cube of pure gold like the Most Holy Place, twelve gates and twelve foundations for the whole people of God of both covenants, no temple because God and the Lamb are its temple, no sun because the Lamb is its light. Keep the reading symbolic and amillennial throughout.

But this lesson is not only the climax of the study's doctrine; it is the climax of its pastoral aim, and the teacher should feel the difference. Every chapter of comfort and warning has been preparing the suffering, enduring saint for this. Now the curtain is pulled all the way back, and what the faithful see is not a reward they earned but a Person they love: "the dwelling place of God is with man." The teacher's goal is to make the class homesick for heaven, not in a sentimental way but in a way that reorders how they live this week. People who long for the city where nothing unclean enters live differently now. People who know they will see His face pursue holiness now. The lesson should end the way the book ends, with the Spirit and the Bride saying "Come," the free water of life offered to all, the canon closed and sufficient, and the church's deepest prayer on every lip: "Come, Lord Jesus."

Practically, guard two things as you close the study. First, do not let anyone leave still hoping for an earthly millennium; gently but firmly relocate Christian hope where Revelation puts it, in the eternal dwelling of God with His people. Second, do not let the beauty become mere information. The aim of all fifteen lessons has been transformation, members actually becoming more like Christ. So press the capstone hard: send every person out able to name one specific way Christ has formed them through this book, and able to mean, from the heart, the prayer that ends the Bible.

Question 1

Student Question:

John sees “a new heaven and a new earth” and a loud voice declares, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them... and God himself will be with them” (21:1–3). Trace how this theme of God dwelling with His people runs from Eden through the tabernacle and temple to its consummation here, and explain why this, the very presence of God, is the true center of the Christian’s hope.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This opening question puts the central truth of the whole passage on the table: the climax of redemption is not a place, a reward, or a kingdom in the abstract, but the presence of God Himself with His people. “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God” (21:3). The Greek word behind “dwelling place” is the word for tabernacle; God will tabernacle with His people forever. This is the same word John used in his Gospel: “the Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us” (John 1:14). The whole Bible has been moving toward this sentence.

Help the class trace the line. In Eden, God walked with man in the garden (Genesis 3:8). After the fall, that intimacy was broken, but God did not abandon the purpose. He gave the tabernacle, “let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst” (Exodus 25:8), where His glory came down but stayed behind a veil. Then the temple, where the glory filled the house but the Most Holy Place remained shut to all but one man one day a year. Then, gloriously, the incarnation, God with us in flesh. Then Pentecost, God dwelling in His people by the Spirit, the church as His temple (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:21–22). And now the consummation: the veil gone forever, the dwelling complete, no barrier left at all.

This is why the very presence of God is the true center of Christian hope, not gold streets, not reunion with loved ones (real as that is), not even the absence of pain considered by itself. Heaven is heaven because God is there. The teacher should press this gently against the way many people imagine the afterlife as an upgraded version of earthly comforts. The deepest promise of the new creation is not better scenery but unveiled fellowship with God: “they will be his people, and God himself will be with them.”

Keep the amillennial frame. This is the goal of all history, the eternal state, not a temporary earthly kingdom that precedes something better. There is no further stage after this. The new heaven and new earth is the final, eternal home of the redeemed. The teacher should let the weight of that settle: everything the study has covered, every battle and beast and bowl, was leading the people of God home to live with God forever.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- The climax of redemption is God dwelling with His people; His presence is the true center of Christian hope (Revelation 21:3; Psalm 73:25).

- “Dwelling place” is the tabernacle word; the theme runs Eden, tabernacle, temple, incarnation, the church, consummation (Exodus 25:8; John 1:14).
- The new heaven and new earth is the final eternal state, not a temporary earthly kingdom before something else.
- Heaven is heaven because God is there, not because of upgraded earthly comforts (Psalm 16:11).
- The church is even now the temple where God dwells by the Spirit, a present down payment of the final dwelling (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:21–22).

Discussion Prompts

- Have the class trace God dwelling with man across the Bible: Eden, tabernacle, temple, Jesus, the church, the new creation.
- Discuss: if heaven were full of every comfort but God were absent, would it be heaven? Why does that question expose what we really hope for?
- Ask: how does knowing the goal of all history is God’s presence with us reframe the sufferings of this life?

Question 2

Student Question:

God promises, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore” (21:4). Where in your life right now are the tears, the mourning, the pain, and what difference does it make to carry that grief while knowing the hand of God Himself will one day wipe it away?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (21:4). This question takes the most tender promise in Scripture and presses it into the student’s actual grief. Notice the intimacy of the image: God Himself stooping to wipe each tear, the gesture of a parent over a hurting child. He does not send an angel to do it. He does it Himself.

Help the class feel the comprehensiveness of the promise. Every tear. Not most. Not the dignified ones. Every tear, including the ones we are ashamed of, the ones no one knew about. And the causes of tears are named and abolished one by one: death, mourning, crying, pain. These are “the former things,” and they pass away. This is drawn straight from Isaiah 25:8, “he will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces.” The teacher should let students name their real griefs, the empty chair, the diagnosis, the broken relationship, the long disappointment, and hold them up against this promise.

The pastoral point is not that grief is unspiritual now. Jesus wept at a grave (John 11:35); we “grieve, but not as others do who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). The promise does not forbid present tears; it sets a limit on them. There is a last day for crying. The teacher should help students carry their grief differently because they know its expiration date and they know

Who holds the handkerchief. This is not denial of pain but hope strong enough to hold pain without being crushed by it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- God Himself, not a proxy, will wipe away every tear; the promise is intimate and complete (Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 25:8).
- Death, mourning, crying, and pain are “former things” with an appointed end, not the final word.
- Christians grieve, but not as those without hope; hope sets a limit on sorrow (1 Thessalonians 4:13).
- Present tears are not unspiritual; Jesus Himself wept (John 11:35).
- Hope strong enough to hold grief without despair is the fruit of the resurrection promise (1 Corinthians 15:54–57).

Discussion Prompts

- Invite the class to name, as they are willing, one specific grief they are carrying right now.
- Discuss the difference between grieving without hope and grieving with hope; what does the second actually look like day to day?
- Ask: how does the image of God personally wiping your tears change how you pray about your pain?

Question 3

Student Question:

An angel says, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb,” and then shows John the holy city, the New Jerusalem (21:9–10). Explain why the New Jerusalem is best understood not as a literal real-estate city but as the church glorified, the redeemed people of God perfected and presented to Christ as His Bride.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the lesson’s first crucial interpretive question, and getting it right keeps the whole passage amillennial. The angel says, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb” (21:9), and then shows John “the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God” (21:10). The grammar is decisive: the angel promises to show the Bride and shows a city. The city is the Bride. The New Jerusalem is not a literal metropolis that the church will inhabit; it is the church herself, the whole redeemed people of God, glorified, perfected, and presented to Christ as His Bride.

This identification is consistent across the New Testament. The church is the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25–32; 2 Corinthians 11:2), and “Jerusalem above... is our mother” (Galatians 4:26), and believers “have come to... the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Hebrews 12:22). Revelation already prepared us for this when “the marriage of the Lamb has

come, and his Bride has made herself ready” (19:7). The city coming down adorned “as a bride adorned for her husband” (21:2) is the same Bride.

Teaching this guards against two errors. First, against a wooden literalism that measures the city for real estate and misses that it is people, a community in perfect fellowship with God and one another. Second, and more importantly for Church-of-Christ boundaries, against the dispensational notion that the New Jerusalem is a literal future city for ethnic Israel separate from the church. There is one people of God, one Bride, drawn from every nation, both old-covenant saints (the twelve tribes on the gates) and new-covenant saints (the twelve apostles on the foundations), built together into one city.

Let the beauty land. The teacher should help students hear the wonder that they, the church, the often-stumbling, persecuted, ordinary people of God, are the radiant Bride being prepared for the Lamb. What is unimpressive and hunted now will be revealed then as a city of glory, the dwelling of God. That is who you are becoming.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- The angel promises the Bride and shows a city; the New Jerusalem is the church glorified, not a literal real-estate city (Revelation 21:9–10).
- The church is consistently the Bride of Christ across the New Testament (Ephesians 5:25–32; 2 Corinthians 11:2).
- Believers already “have come to” the heavenly Jerusalem; it is our mother-city (Hebrews 12:22; Galatians 4:26).
- One people of God, both covenants together, against any separate future city for national Israel.
- The often-humble, persecuted church is the radiant Bride being prepared for the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

Discussion Prompts

- Walk the class through 21:9–10 and ask: what did the angel promise to show, and what did he actually show? What does that prove?
- Compare with Ephesians 5:25–32 and Galatians 4:26; how do they confirm the city is the church?
- Discuss: how does knowing you are part of the Bride being prepared change how you view the church’s present weakness?

Question 4

Student Question:

The city has gates that are never shut and into it “nothing unclean will ever enter... but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (21:25–27). Holding both truths together, the open welcome and the closed door to uncleanness, what does this say about how you must live now if you mean to dwell in that city then?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Two truths sit side by side and must be held together. On one hand, the gates of the city are “never... shut by day, and there will be no night there” (21:25), a picture of perfect, permanent welcome and security. On the other hand, “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” (21:27). Open gates, yet a closed door to all uncleanness. The city is utterly safe precisely because nothing that defiles can get in.

This question presses the present-tense implication. If the city excludes all uncleanness, then those who would dwell there must be a people being cleansed now. The teacher should connect this to the consistent New Testament call to holiness: “strive for... the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14); “as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” (1 Peter 1:15–16). The hope of the holy city is meant to produce holy lives.

Guard the Church-of-Christ boundary against once-saved-always-saved presumption while also guarding against works-righteousness. Entrance is for “those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life,” not for those who earned a perfect record, the city’s purity is the Lamb’s gift, washed in His blood (7:14; 22:14). Yet that grace does not leave us in our uncleanness; it cleanses and calls us to walk in the light (1 John 1:7). The same book that says “take the water of life without price” (22:17) also warns that the unclean do not enter. Free grace and real holiness are not enemies.

Practically, the teacher should ask students to name what “unclean” things they are tolerating now, the secret sin, the cherished bitterness, the dishonesty, the impurity, and to see that the hope of the city is itself a summons to repentance and cleansing. We do not clean ourselves up to earn entrance; we let the One who is preparing the Bride make her ready, beginning today.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- The gates are never shut (perfect welcome), yet nothing unclean enters (perfect purity); both truths stand together (Revelation 21:25–27).
- The hope of the holy city summons believers to holiness now: without it no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15–16).
- Entrance is by being written in the Lamb’s book of life, washed in His blood, not by earning a perfect record (Revelation 7:14; 22:14).
- Against once-saved-always-saved presumption, we must walk in the light and remain faithful (1 John 1:7; Revelation 3:5).
- Free grace and real holiness are not enemies; grace cleanses and calls us to purity.

Discussion Prompts

- Discuss how the city can be both perfectly open (gates never shut) and perfectly closed (nothing unclean enters).

- Ask: what does “strive for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” require of us this week?
- Invite honest reflection: what “unclean” thing am I tolerating that the hope of this city calls me to surrender?

Question 5

Student Question:

The New Jerusalem is a perfect cube of pure gold (21:16–18), the exact shape of the Most Holy Place; it has twelve gates for the twelve tribes and twelve foundations for the twelve apostles (21:12–14). Working from the book’s symbolic numbering, explain what these details teach about who dwells in the city and what kind of dwelling it is.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The architecture of the city is a sermon in symbols, and the teacher should read it that way rather than as a builder’s blueprint. The city is measured as a perfect cube: “its length and width and height are equal,” 12,000 stadia each way (21:16), and it is “pure gold, like clear glass” (21:18). There is only one other cube in the Bible: the Most Holy Place, the inner sanctuary of the temple, which was also a perfect cube of pure gold (1 Kings 6:20), the place where God’s presence dwelt. The message is unmistakable. The whole city is now the Most Holy Place. The entire dwelling of God’s people is the inner sanctuary. Everyone lives in the immediate presence of God.

The numbers are symbolic, not arithmetic, exactly as throughout the book. Twelve is the number of the people of God, and it saturates the city: twelve gates with twelve angels bearing the names of “the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel” (21:12), twelve foundations bearing “the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (21:14). The measurement 12,000 stadia is 12 x 1,000, completeness multiplied by fullness; the wall of 144 cubits is 12 x 12. This is the language the study has used all along: twelve and its multiples signify the whole people of God.

Two things follow about who dwells there. First, the city holds the complete people of God of both covenants, the twelve tribes on the gates (the old-covenant faithful) and the twelve apostles on the foundations (the new-covenant church built on the apostolic foundation, Ephesians 2:20). There are not two peoples of God but one, fitted together into a single city. The teacher should use this to close the door, one last time, on any dispensational two-peoples scheme. Second, the cube of gold tells what kind of dwelling it is: a sanctuary. To live in this city is to live where the high priest once stepped trembling one day a year, now home for all the redeemed, all the time.

Let the class feel the contrast with the old temple. There, access to God’s presence was restricted, veiled, dangerous, available to one man one day a year. Here, the whole people lives inside the Most Holy Place forever. That is the trajectory of the gospel: from the veil to the open sanctuary, from the few to the many, from a day a year to forever.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- The city is a perfect cube of pure gold, the shape of the Most Holy Place; the whole city is now God's sanctuary (Revelation 21:16–18; 1 Kings 6:20).
- The numbers are symbolic: twelve and its multiples (12,000, 144) signify the whole, complete people of God.
- Twelve tribes on the gates and twelve apostles on the foundations means one people of God of both covenants, not two (Ephesians 2:20).
- The city's design closes the door on any dispensational two-peoples-of-God scheme.
- The gospel's trajectory is from the veiled sanctuary for one priest to the open sanctuary for all the redeemed forever (Hebrews 10:19–22).

Discussion Prompts

- Ask: what is the only other cube in the Bible, and what does it mean that the whole city shares its shape?
- Have the class list the twelves in the chapter and explain what "twelve" signifies throughout Revelation.
- Discuss how the gates (tribes) and foundations (apostles) together teach one people of God, not two.

Question 6

Student Question:

John says of the city, "I saw no temple in it, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb," and "the city has no need of sun or moon... for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb" (21:22–23). When God Himself is the temple and the Lamb is the light, what does that promise about the kind of nearness to God you were made for, and where are you settling for less?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

"And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" (21:22). In the old creation, the temple was the place you went to be near God, a building that localized His presence because direct, unmediated nearness was not yet possible. In the new creation there is no temple building, because the localizing is over. God and the Lamb are the temple. You do not go somewhere to meet God; you live in Him. The whole point of every temple has been fulfilled and then transcended.

The same logic governs the light: "the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb" (21:23). The created lights that have governed every day of human history are not needed, not because they are bad, but because the uncreated Light has come in full. "Night will be no more" (22:5). This recalls Isaiah 60:19, "the sun shall be no more your light by day... but the Lord will be your everlasting light." The Lamb who was the light of the world (John 8:12) is now the light of the new world directly.

This question presses what kind of nearness to God the believer was made for. We were made not for religion at a distance but for unmediated communion, to dwell in the presence, to live in the Light. The teacher should help students see that this is the satisfaction every restless human longing has really been after. Augustine's old line fits: our hearts are restless until they rest in God. The temple-less, sun-less city is the picture of a humanity finally at home in God Himself.

Then turn it pastorally: where are we settling for less? We were made to dwell in God, yet we often content ourselves with substitutes, achievement, entertainment, even religious activity that keeps God at arm's length. The promise of a city where God is the temple and the Lamb is the light should expose our cheaper satisfactions and stir a deeper hunger. The teacher should invite students to name one place they are settling for a flicker when they were made for the Light.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- No temple building, because God and the Lamb are the temple; the era of localized, mediated presence is over (Revelation 21:22).
- No sun or moon needed, because the glory of God and the Lamb are the everlasting light (Revelation 21:23; Isaiah 60:19).
- Believers were made for unmediated communion with God, not religion at a distance (John 8:12; 17:24).
- Every lesser satisfaction is a flicker compared to the Light we were made for (Psalm 16:11).
- The restless human heart finds its rest only in dwelling with God Himself.

Discussion Prompts

- Discuss: why is there no temple and no sun in the city, and what does each absence teach?
- Ask: what does it mean that we were made for unmediated nearness to God, not religion at a distance?
- Invite each person to name one "flicker" they settle for when they were made for the Light.

Question 7

Student Question:

John sees "the river of the water of life" flowing from the throne and "the tree of life" with leaves "for the healing of the nations," and declares "no longer will there be anything accursed" (22:1-3). How is this scene deliberately Eden restored and surpassed, and what does it teach about God's purpose for all of human history?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The vision now circles all the way back to the beginning of the Bible and surpasses it. "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; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life... and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there

be anything accursed" (22:1-3). Every reader who knows Genesis recognizes the scenery: a river and the tree of life (Genesis 2:9-10), the very things humanity lost. Revelation deliberately ends the Bible where it began, in a garden, but now a garden-city.

But this is Eden restored and surpassed, not merely repeated. In Genesis, after the fall, the way to the tree of life was barred by cherubim and a flaming sword (Genesis 3:24); here the tree stands open, freely accessible, its leaves for healing. In Genesis there was a curse; here "no longer will there be anything accursed," the curse fully and finally reversed by the Lamb who "became a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). What was lost is not merely recovered but exceeded: not a garden with one couple, but a city full of the redeemed of every nation; not innocence that could fall, but glory that cannot.

This teaches God's purpose for all of human history. The whole sweep of the Bible is one story with a unified design: creation, fall, redemption, new creation. God was never improvising or merely reacting to the fall. From the beginning He purposed to dwell with a people in a place of life, and not even human sin could defeat that purpose. The teacher should help the class see the Bible as one book with one Author and one goal, the same God who planted Eden brings the redeemed home to the tree of life at last.

There is deep comfort here for weary saints. History is not a meaningless cycle and not a slow descent into ruin. It is a story going somewhere, toward the river, the tree, the healing of the nations, the end of the curse. The faithful are not clinging to a sinking ship; they are being carried home to the garden-city. The teacher should let that reframe how students read both world history and their own.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- The river and the tree of life return the Bible to Eden; the story ends where it began, now a garden-city (Genesis 2:9-10; Revelation 22:1-2).
- Eden is surpassed, not merely repeated: the barred tree is now open, the curse fully reversed (Genesis 3:24; Revelation 22:3).
- The curse is removed because the Lamb became a curse for us (Galatians 3:13).
- The Bible is one unified story under one Author: creation, fall, redemption, new creation.
- History is purposeful and headed home, not a meaningless cycle or a slow ruin (Romans 8:20-21).

Discussion Prompts

- Have the class identify every echo of Genesis in 22:1-5 and ask how each one is surpassed.
- Discuss: what does it mean that the Bible ends where it began, but better?
- Ask: how does seeing history as a story headed for the garden-city change how you read the news and your own life?

Question 8

Student Question:

“They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads... and they will reign forever and ever” (22:4–5). To see God’s face is the deepest longing the human heart can hold. What in your daily life is being shaped, or ought to be shaped, by the hope that you will one day actually see Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

“They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more... and they will reign forever and ever” (22:4–5). Of all the promises in the new creation, this one is the summit: “they will see his face.” Under the old covenant, this was the one thing denied even to Moses: “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live” (Exodus 33:20). What was impossible then is the everyday reality of the redeemed forever. The beatific vision, seeing God face to face, is the deepest longing the human heart can hold, the thing every lesser beauty has only hinted at.

Notice what is bundled with it. His name on their foreheads marks them as wholly His, the true mark answering all the study’s talk of marks; the beast branded his own, but the Lamb writes His name on the faces of those who are His forever. And “they will reign forever and ever,” the redeemed sharing in Christ’s everlasting reign, the fulfillment of the promise to the one who conquers (3:21). This is the Christian’s destiny: to see God, to belong wholly to Him, and to reign with Him without end.

Keep the amillennial frame sharp here, because “they will reign” is exactly where premillennial readers want to insert an earthly thousand-year kingdom. But this reign is in the eternal state, forever and ever, in the new heaven and new earth, not a temporary earthly political regime. The saints’ reign is the everlasting one, the same reign 1 Corinthians 15 and Revelation 20 point to, consummated here. There is no earthly millennium left to hope for; this eternal reign is the hope.

This question turns the summit promise into present formation. If you will one day see His face, that hope is meant to shape your face now: to purify you (“everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself,” 1 John 3:2–3), to fix your gaze, to loosen your grip on lesser sights. The teacher should ask students what in their daily life is, or ought to be, shaped by the hope of seeing God: how they handle temptation (would I want to be doing this when I see His face?), how they handle suffering (this light momentary affliction is preparing an eternal weight of glory, 2 Corinthians 4:17–18), how they set their affections. The hope of seeing His face is not passive; it sanctifies.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- Seeing God’s face, denied even to Moses, is the summit of the believer’s hope (Revelation 22:4; Exodus 33:20; 1 Corinthians 13:12).
- His name on their foreheads is the true mark of belonging wholly to the Lamb, answering the beast’s mark.

- The redeemed reign forever and ever in the eternal state, not in a temporary earthly millennium (Revelation 22:5; 3:21).
- The hope of seeing Him purifies us now: everyone who has this hope purifies himself (1 John 3:2–3).
- Eternal hope shapes present holiness, endurance, and affection (2 Corinthians 4:17–18).

Discussion Prompts

- Discuss what it means that the one thing denied to Moses, seeing God's face, is the everyday reality of the redeemed.
- Ask: how would the question “would I want to be doing this when I see His face?” change a specific area of your week?
- Consider how the hope of reigning with Christ forever steadies us in present weakness and suffering.

Question 9

Student Question:

The book closes with “Behold, I am coming soon,” the Spirit and the Bride crying “Come,” the free invitation to “take the water of life without price” (22:17), and a solemn warning against adding to or taking from “the words of the prophecy of this book” (22:18–19). Drawing these together, explain why the eternal state described here, and NOT any future earthly thousand-year reign, is the Christian’s true and final hope; why the closing invitation shows the gospel call is genuinely free and open to all who will come; and why the closing warning teaches that this completed Word, the closed canon, is our settled and sufficient authority.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal question of the lesson and the capstone doctrinal question of the entire study, and the teacher should give it room. Three threads from the book’s closing must be drawn together clearly: that the eternal state is the Christian’s true hope, that the gospel call is genuinely free, and that the completed Word is our settled authority. Each thread guards a vital truth.

First, the eternal state is the hope, not an earthly millennium. The teacher must be plain here, because this is where popular end-times teaching most distorts the Bible. Revelation does not climax in a thousand-year earthly political kingdom ruled from a literal rebuilt Jerusalem with restored temple sacrifices and a separate program for ethnic Israel. It climaxes in the new heaven and new earth, the eternal dwelling of God with His people. The “thousand years” of chapter 20 was symbolic of Christ’s present reign through this age; the actual, final, eternal hope of the Christian is everything described in 21:1 through 22:5, God with us, every tear wiped away, death abolished, Eden restored, His face seen, His reign shared forever. When “Behold, I am coming soon” (22:7, 12) is fulfilled, what follows is not an earthly interim kingdom but the eternal state. The teacher should send the class out hoping for the right thing: not a future

earthly utopia, but the everlasting presence of God. Premillennial and dispensational schemes do not just misread a chapter; they aim Christian hope at the wrong target.

Second, the closing invitation shows the gospel call is genuinely free and open to all. “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price” (22:17). This is one of the clearest universal gospel invitations in the Bible, and it stands against Calvinistic limited atonement and irresistible grace. The call goes to anyone who is thirsty; the water is “without price,” free grace, but it must be taken, “let the one who desires take.” The Church-of-Christ reading holds both: salvation is the free gift of God, not earned, and yet genuinely offered to all and genuinely received by those who respond, who hear the gospel, believe, repent, confess, and are baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3–4), then remain faithful. The invitation is free, real, and open, never the irresistible call of an unconditional election to a fixed few.

Third, the closing warning teaches that the completed Word is our settled and sufficient authority. “If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life” (22:18–19). Most immediately this warns against tampering with the prophecy of Revelation itself. But it fittingly seals the whole canon, for Revelation is the last book given. The teacher should use this to affirm the Church-of-Christ conviction that the complete New Testament is our authority and that we expect no new revelation, no continuing apostleship, no further inspired additions, and no modern prophets to update or correct the Word (2 Timothy 3:16–17; Jude 3, “the faith once for all delivered to the saints”). The Word is finished, sufficient, and not to be added to or subtracted from, whether by the cults that add scriptures or by the skeptics who delete what they dislike.

Hold all three together as the book intends. The same closing verses give us the certain hope (the eternal state), the free invitation (come and drink), and the sufficient Word (do not add or take away). The teacher should let the class feel how fitting it is that the Bible ends this way: with a promise to long for, an invitation to accept, and a Word to keep. And then with the final prayer, “Come, Lord Jesus” (22:20), which is where the next question, and the whole study, must land.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- The Christian’s true and final hope is the eternal state (Revelation 21:1–22:5), NOT a future earthly thousand-year reign, rebuilt temple, or separate program for national Israel.
- The symbolic thousand years of chapter 20 was Christ’s present reign through this age; the eternal new creation is the actual hope, against all premillennialism and dispensationalism.
- The closing invitation is a free, universal gospel call: whoever is thirsty may come and take the water of life without price (Revelation 22:17), against Calvinistic limited atonement and irresistible grace.

- Free grace is genuinely received through obedient faith: hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, being baptized into Christ, then remaining faithful (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3–4).
- The closing warning seals the completed Word; we add nothing and take away nothing (Revelation 22:18–19; Jude 3).
- Revelation closes the canon; we expect no new revelation, continuing apostleship, or modern prophets (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Discussion Prompts

- Ask the class to state, in one sentence each, the Christian’s true hope and why it is not an earthly millennium.
- Discuss how “let the one who desires take the water of life without price” affirms both free grace and a real human response, against irresistible grace.
- Consider how the warning against adding or taking away applies both to those who add new scriptures and to those who delete what they dislike.

Question 10

Student Question:

This is the end of the book and the end of our study. From the seven churches to the throne, from the Lamb and the dragon to Babylon’s fall, from the great white throne to the New Jerusalem, name one specific way Christ has been forming you through Revelation, and let your answer become the book’s own final prayer: “Come, Lord Jesus.” What does it look like for you to live this week as someone who truly means those three words?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the final question of the final lesson, and its job is to land the whole study in the heart and send the class out changed. The aim of all fifteen lessons has never been to make people experts on Revelation; it has been transformation, members actually becoming more like Christ (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). So the teacher should resist any temptation to end with a tidy doctrinal summary and instead press each student to name one specific way Christ has been forming them across this book, and then to mean, from the heart, its final prayer.

Help the class look back across the whole journey. From the glorified Christ among the lampstands, to the letters to the seven churches, to the throne and the slain Lamb, to the seals, trumpets, and bowls, to the dragon and the two beasts, to the fall of Babylon, to the great white throne, to the New Jerusalem, one Christ has been on every page, the crucified, risen, reigning Lamb who is Lord of history and the church’s true hope. Ask: which scene gripped you? Where did the Lord meet you? What endurance, holiness, courage, hope, or worship has He been working in you? Push past generalities to one named, specific thing.

Then turn to the book’s own ending, and make it personal. “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (22:20). The whole study should end exactly where the book ends, on that prayer. The Spirit and the Bride have said “Come” (22:17); now the Bride answers the Bridegroom’s promise with her deepest longing. The teacher’s

closing task is to ask each student whether they can pray those three words and mean them, “Come, Lord Jesus”, and then to ask what it looks like to live this week as someone who truly does.

Make clear that meaning “Come, Lord Jesus” is not escapism; it is the most transforming prayer a Christian can pray. People who long for Christ’s coming hold this world loosely, pursue holiness eagerly, forgive freely, serve faithfully, and witness boldly, because they are living for the day they will see His face. End the study by sending each person out with one specific way they will live differently, and with the prayer of the Bride on their lips: Come, Lord Jesus. “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen” (22:21).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- The goal of the entire study is transformation into Christ’s likeness, not information (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18).
- One Christ, the crucified, risen, reigning Lamb, has been on every page of Revelation as the church’s hope.
- The study fittingly ends where the book ends, with the Bride’s prayer, “Come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).
- Longing for Christ’s return is not escapism but the most transforming hope a believer can hold (Titus 2:11–13).
- Those who truly pray “Come, Lord Jesus” hold the world loosely, pursue holiness, and witness boldly (1 John 3:2–3).

Discussion Prompts

- Have each person name one specific way Christ has formed them through this study of Revelation.
- Ask: can you pray “Come, Lord Jesus” and mean it? What in your heart competes with that longing?
- Close the study by having each student say one way they will live differently this week as someone who prays, “Come, Lord Jesus.”