

Jesus Makes All Things New

November 15, 2026

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Revelation 21:1-27

Session Outline

1. All Things New (Revelation 21:1-8)
2. The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9-21)
3. No Need for a Temple (Revelation 21:22-27)

Theological Theme

In eternity, God will redeem everything, making all things new.

Call to Action

We are to live today in the promised reality of the new heaven and earth.

Leader Guide

Jesus Makes All Things New

Introduction

Over 20 years ago, the costliest storm on record to ever hit the United States, striking the southeast, was Hurricane Katrina. It caused around \$161 billion in damage. The flooding was catastrophic. Over 1,800 people died. Entire communities were decimated. The destruction was widespread and tragic.

In New Orleans, multiple levees were overwhelmed and ultimately failed, leaving 80% of the city underwater. Mississippi's entire shoreline (which spans 70 miles) was hit by Katrina's three-story-high storm surge, destroying bridges, roads, homes, and businesses. The devastation stretched all the way to Alabama. In Dauphin Island (a small barrier island in Alabama), over 300 homes were destroyed, and in some cases, parts of the island where homes stood were washed away completely. The situation was bleak.

But in the midst of the storm, people stood together. There were many beautiful stories of humanity joining together for the good of the community. People loved their neighbors in significant ways, helping clear debris and pick up the shattered pieces of people's lives. Churches mobilized to participate in the recovery effort, acting as the hands and feet of Jesus.¹

So many areas had to be literally made new. And today, over 20 years later, many impacted communities are thriving. Some may be even stronger than before after living through the pain.

Despite Jesus's victory over sin and death, we still live through devastating storms because we still live in the devastating reality of a fallen world that is marked by sin.

But God has promised His people a new beginning that will surpass the greatest stories told on earth. This is the final word of Revelation. God is going to make all things new. And it is going to be good.

❓ Have you ever had to rebuild after some type of destruction—whether literal or metaphorical?

❓ What happened, and how did God work through that situation?

Session Summary

Today's passage picks up after the final eternal defeat of evil. Jesus wins. Those who don't believe in Jesus will be thrown into the lake of fire, spending an eternity apart from God, but there is eternal beauty in store for all believers.

God will make everything new. He will redeem all of creation. Our world, marked by sin, will get a divine new start, and the results will be wondrous. There will be no more death, grief, or pain. We will be eternally secure and safe. And the real prize of eternity is that we'll be face-to-face with God and His incredible goodness for eternity.

1. All Things New (Revelation 21:1-8)

❓ How is the new creation described in this passage?

❓ What is the relationship between God and humanity in these verses? Why is this significant?

Last week, we talked about Jesus's certain final victory. At this point in Revelation, we pick up after the enemy has been eternally defeated, and now, God is making everything new. He is doing just what He promised through the prophet Isaiah:

*"For I will create new heavens and a new earth;
the past events will not be remembered or come to mind.
Then be glad and rejoice forever
in what I am creating;
for I will create Jerusalem to be a joy
and its people to be a delight."
Isaiah 65:17-18*

In Revelation 21, John saw "a new heaven and a new earth" (v. 1), which we deeply need. Think of all the ways sin has polluted our world. We can and should slow down the decline and fight for what is right, but our power here is limited. God has no such limitations. The broken world that exists now will pass away, and God will redeem it. He will make all things new in the way only He can.

The Bride's Perspective

Chapter 21 is often thought to refer to the period following the thousand-year reign, but it is more probably a retelling of the return of Christ from the viewpoint of the bride.

Think of the most beautiful thing you have ever seen in God's creation. Can you picture it? Now imagine what will be in store for us in the new, redeemed creation. Think how much better that sight will be. It is hard to wrap your head around! The church father Augustine of Hippo said:

"If these are the beauties afforded to sinful men, what does God have in store for those who love him?"²

John mentioned the sea in verse 1. In ancient times, the expanse of the sea was largely unexplored. It was a mysterious and scary thing. In Scripture, the sea often represents chaos and wickedness, so there is a good chance the description of the sea as being "no more" represents wickedness and chaos being no more and is not a literal description (we won't know for sure this side of heaven).³

The New Jerusalem is depicted as "coming down out of heaven" (v. 2), and "God's dwelling is with humanity" (v. 3). In eternity, we get to live with God! This is the prize of heaven. And God "will wipe away every tear" (v. 4). Death will be finished. Grief? Gone. Pain? It will have passed away. The old, broken, sinful order and everything that comes with it will be gone. What a wondrous future waits for us.

It's no wonder the apostle Paul said:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.
—Romans 8:18

As believers, we are spiritually made new (2 Corinthians 5:17), but in the end, God says, "I am making everything new" (Revelation 21:5). The Alpha and Omega will come through on all His promises.⁴ Unbelievers are destined for the second death in the lake of fire (v. 8), but believers are headed for eternal life with God, where living water flows freely (v. 6). This gives us cause for rejoicing and an urgency to share about Jesus.



What is the thing you most long for God to make new in your life or the world?

2. The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9-21)



How did John describe the new Jerusalem?



What might be significant about the materials described and the numbers used in this description?

In this passage, one of the angels who had participated in the bowl judgments carried John in the Spirit to a great mountain from which he could view the wonder of what God was doing.

John described what he saw as shining with God's glory (v. 11), brilliant like precious jewels. There were gates of pearls and streets of gold. Scholars aren't agreed on whether this description is literal or symbolic. Either way, the reality of this city will surpass our greatest imaginations.

The number twelve is repeated several times in this passage. Twelve is a significant number for God's people. God chose a family through which to bless the nations, and from it came the twelve tribes of Israel. Their names were written on the gates in John's vision. Jesus chose twelve disciples. John also saw their names on the foundations of this great city.

Since ancient times, people who fund building projects have often put their names on what has been built. In this heavenly city, God uses the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles to lay the foundation for what He is building.⁵

There are also gates on all sides. People from all directions are welcome here. The gospel is for everyone who receives the gift of salvation offered through Christ.

As the apostle Peter spoke in Acts: "Now I truly understand that God doesn't show favoritism, but in every nation the person who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).



Who is God calling you to share Christ with, that they might gain access to the New Jerusalem?

The city is shaped like a cube, resembling the holy of holies in the temple (1 Kings 6:20). Access to this space was carefully controlled; not just anyone could enter. Only the high priest, once a year, could enter the holy of holies. When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain that separated this space from the rest of the temple was torn in two (Mark 15:38), and now all believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of them. In eternity, God will dwell everywhere with His people, in every space.

3. No Need for a Temple (Revelation 21:22-27)



What was John's point in making clear that there is no longer a need for an earthly temple in this new city?



Consider the description of light in these verses. How have we seen light used by God throughout Scripture, and why is it significant here?

Our passage concludes with a further awesome description of this eternal reality.

There is no physical temple in this city because God will be with us. The whole world will be His dwelling, so there will no longer be a need for an earthly temple. According to the NIV Application Commentary, "Believers will experience God's presence in its full intensity, as never before."⁶

We won't even need the sun or the moon because the light of God's glory will continually shine, and the Lamb will be our lamp (v. 23). In Scripture, darkness is often associated with sin and life apart from God, but in this new reality, there will be no night as we rely exclusively on God's continual light.



Where do you need God's light in your life now? How does the coming hope of God's eternal light encourage you in living today?

In ancient cities, gates provided critical security. The gates would close at night for protection. In the new city of God, evil and sin have been defeated for good. No threat remains to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). No unclean thing will ever enter. There will be nothing "detestable or false" (v. 27). Those written in the Lamb's book of life will be safe and secure with God forever.

Conclusion

We live in a broken world, full of tears, sin, gut-wrenching death, and unimaginable pain (emotional and physical). This is our current reality. Believers have been made new in a spiritual sense, but there will come a day when God will make all things new.

We will dwell with Him, in His new creation, for eternity, and we will live with Him and enjoy His goodness forever. This reality will be free of pain, death, and grief. There will be no more tears, and the "previous things" will pass away. We will rest, reign forever with Him (Revelation 22:5), and enjoy purposeful work.⁷ We don't know exactly what this will look like, but we can be sure it will be good. We can look forward to it with joy and hope in our hearts.

For now, we should be motivated to share the gospel with as many people as possible, so that more will experience this glorious coming reality. As John recorded near the end of this book:

Both the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” Let anyone who hears, say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely. —Revelation 22:17

-  How does this description of our eternal home differ from your past understanding or expectations? Does anything here surprise you?
-  How does this give us hope for the future? How can we encourage one another in this hope?
-  How should what we have learned in Revelation impact how we live our lives today?

Prayer of Response

Thank God for His promise to dwell with us for eternity. Thank Him for His plan that is more beautiful than anything we could ask for or dream up. Pray about the things He wants you to retain from this study of Revelation and for the people He has placed in your life, that you might tell them about Him.

Memory Verse

Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God’s dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. —Revelation 21:3

Additional Resources

- *Be Victorious* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Exalting Jesus in Revelation* by Daniel Akin
- *Revelation for You* by Tim Chester



Historical Context of Revelation

Purpose

Much of the book of Revelation focuses on events at the end of the age (eschatology), more so than any other book in the Bible. But it also focuses on practical choices that believers and unbelievers must make in the course of their lives that have far-reaching consequences at the end.

Author

The traditional view holds that the author of Revelation is the apostle John, who wrote the Fourth Gospel and the three letters of John. Evidences for this view include the following. (1) The writer referred to himself as “John” (1:4, 9; 22:8). (2) He had personal relationships with the seven churches of Asia Minor (1:4, 11; 2–3). (3) His circumstances at the time of writing (1:9) matched those of John the apostle (who was placed in Asia Minor from about AD 70 to 100 by reliable historical sources from the second century AD). (4) The saturation of the book with Old Testament imagery and echoes implies a Jewish writer, like John, operating in overwhelmingly Gentile Asia Minor.

Setting

The initial audience that received the book of Revelation was a group of seven local churches in southwest Asia Minor (1:11; 2–3). Some of these congregations were experiencing persecution (2:9–10, 13), probably under the Roman emperor Domitian (ruled AD 81–96). Others had doctrinal and practical problems (2:6, 13–15, 20–23). Also behind these surface problems was the backdrop of unseen but powerful spiritual warfare (2:10, 14, 24; 3:9).

Special Features

The resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ revealed himself to the apostle John, who had been imprisoned “on the island called Patmos” (1:9). Christ’s twofold purpose was: (1) to “unveil” a spiritual diagnosis for seven of the churches in Asia Minor with which John was familiar (chaps. 2–3), and (2) to reveal to John a series of visions setting forth events and factors related to the end times (chaps. 4–22).

Extended Commentary

Revelation 21

21:1 While like the present creation in some ways, the new heaven and a new earth will be much different. For example, there will be no sea. However, some believe that “sea” is symbolic for the wickedness of the current created order.

21:2 The bride of the Lamb, introduced in 19:7–9, is now pictured as the holy city, the new Jerusalem (see note at vv. 9–11a). The expression coming down out of heaven is used in all three references to the new Jerusalem (see note at 3:12). Prepared ... adorned may mean that the bride will be just as beautiful—and will be for eternity—as she was during the wedding festivities (19:7–8).

21:3–4 God’s presence (dwelling is with humanity) will do away with all death ... grief, crying, and pain.

21:5–8 In the present creation, a Christian is a “new creation” spiritually (2Co 5:17), but in the new heaven and new earth, the Lord will make everything new. The written Word of God is faithful and true (2Tm 3:16), and the living Word of God is also faithful and true (Rv 19:11). On the Alpha and the Omega, see note at 1:8. Living water (22:17) will always be freely available, and this pictures the word of grace, received through saving faith, that offers eternal life even in the present. But those who remain unrepentant in their sin will experience eternal judgment, the second death.

21:9–11a The angel’s offer to show John the bride, the wife of the Lamb, parallels the angel’s offer to show him the judgment of Babylon in 17:1. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, he was taken up on a high mountain and shown the splendor of the world’s kingdoms (Mt 4:8), but it was nothing in comparison to John’s view of the new Jerusalem. On in the Spirit, see note at 1:10. On coming down out of heaven, see note at v. 2.

21:11b–14, 21 On a jasper stone, see note at 4:3–4. The twelve gates (each made of a massive single pearl) in the great wall of the new Jerusalem have written on them the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The twelve foundations of the city wall have the twelve names of the apostles of Christ. This strongly implies that the unified people of God will in some sense maintain the distinct covenant promises to Israel and the church eternally.

21:15–20 The mention of the measuring rod is an allusion to Ezk 40–41 (see note at Rv 11:1–2). For a city to be 1,400 miles square (12,000 stadia) with walls over two hundred feet thick (144 cubits) is mind-boggling, as are the materials of the wall—jasper stone and gold. Human language is stretched to its limits in these descriptions.

21:22–27 No temple is needed in the new Jerusalem. God the Father (the Almighty) and the Lamb (Christ) are its temple. Also, as there was light from the Lord before the creation of the physical light sources of the universe (Gn 1:3, 14–15), there is no need for light (sun or the moon) in the new Jerusalem because the glory of God illuminates it. There apparently will be national distinctions (the nations) and human rulers (the kings of the earth) in the eternal state, but since all who will be there

are included in the Lamb's book of life (excluding the unclean ... detestable ... false; see note at 3:4–5), there is no need for security, and there can be no sin.⁸

References

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