



LESSON 43

God creates a new heaven and new earth

REVELATION 21:1-22:21



Heaven is a perfect home for perfect people with their perfect God.



“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘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’” (Rev 21:3).

Supporting Truths

1. Heaven is a real world.
2. Heaven has nothing sinful in it.
3. Heaven is where God lives with His people.
4. Heaven is where redeemed people will live the way God created them to live.
5. Heaven encourages us to live godly lives now.

Objectives

1. State that heaven is the New Heaven and New Earth.
2. List the kinds of evil and kinds of people who will not be in heaven.
3. Recite Revelation 21:3.
4. Compare Eden (Gen 1:26–2:15) to the New Eden.
5. Decide the proper response to the promise of heaven.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON



God creates a new heaven and new earth • Revelation 21:1–22:21

Lesson Summary

The last part of John's vision shows us heaven—not the spiritual place where departed believers are with God now, but the eternal place where resurrected believers will live with God forever. This place is a New Creation, a real world like our own but much better. It is a New Jerusalem, the shining capital city where God lives with His perfect people in glory. And it is the New Eden, a lush place full of life where redeemed people will serve in God's presence forever.

Spotlight on the Gospel

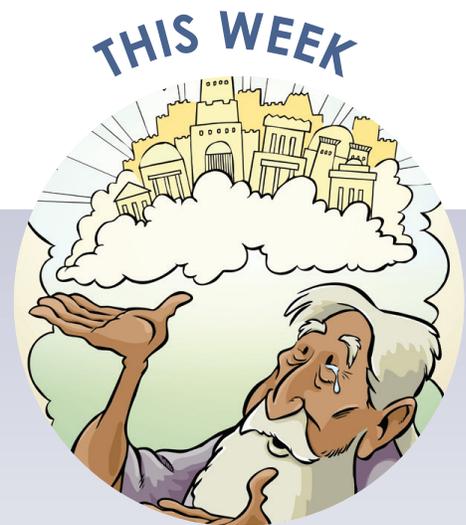
The gospel is the good news of God's plan for mankind—and even for all creation. It began in Genesis, when God made man in His image for His glory. God put man in a wonderful creation, but man sinned, and everything since then is the story of God restoring His original purpose—and making it even better. So Revelation ends where everything began: with mankind restored to God's image, living with God in a perfect creation.



**John sees the worthy
Lamb**
Revelation 5:1–14



**God will judge the
world**
Revelation 19:16–20:15



**God creates a new
heaven and new earth**
Revelation 21:1–22:21

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Lesson Commentary

Heaven is a perfect home for perfect people with their perfect God.

Jesus never said that life as a Christian would be easy. In fact, it is very hard. If you are a Christian, expect to be tested, tempted, and persecuted as Jesus was (John 15:20). But if it's so hard, why stay true to Christ? We saw last week that one reason is godly fear: persevere through trouble now in order to escape the lake of fire. Now this week, we see an even greater reason: hope. When the Christian life is hard, fix your hope on heaven, where you will live forever as a perfect person in a perfect home with the perfect God.

Heaven is the New Creation (21:1–8)

The Bible uses the word “*heaven*” to describe four ideas: 1) the sky (Gen 1:20), 2) outer space (1:14), 3) the place where God and the souls of dead believers are now (2 Cor 12:2; Phil 1:23; Rev 6:9–11), and 4) the *eternal home of believers after they receive resurrected bodies* (Rev 21:1–22:5). The first two are physical, the third is spiritual, and the fourth—the one we are talking about now—is both physical and spiritual. It is “*a new heaven and a new earth*”

(Rev 21:1). Since it is called “heaven” and “earth,” it will be something like God’s original creation (Gen 1:1). But since it is “new,” it will be drastically superior (20:11; 2 Pet 3:10).

But the new world we will one day live in is only the setting for the main thing—God’s own presence (Rev 21:3). God’s purpose from the very beginning was for mankind to live in a close relationship with Him. In God’s presence, and in His presence alone, you find life, peace, security, and joy (Ps 27:4; 73:25–28). Only in His presence will all your crying and pain go away forever—He will personally dry your tears (Rev 21:4). You can get a taste of His presence now (2 Cor 6:16; Gal 2:20), but you will only fully live in God’s presence in the New Creation.

It sounds so good, but it seems so far away that we have doubts. That’s why God says, “Write this down”—this is certain (Rev 21:5).

God is faithful and true (Num 23:19). When He promises heaven, it’s a done deal (Rev 21:6a). He will make it happen because He is *the beginning and the end, the sovereign one in control of all history*. Let His power and faithfulness drive your doubt away.

But who is heaven for? It is for the one who thirsts for salvation (21:6b). It is not for those who thirst for sin (21:8; Jer 2:13). It is for the one who *overcomes*, who *trusts Jesus to the very end* (Rev 21:7; 1 John 5:5). That’s hard, very hard. But it is worth it, because if you overcome by faith, God will look at you and say, “I am your God, and you are my very own child” (Rev 21:7).

Heaven is New Jerusalem (21:9–27)

New Jerusalem is the capital city of the New Creation. This city shows us that the people who live there are perfect. First, they are loved, because New Jerusalem is the wife of the Lamb (Rev 21:9; Isa 62:5). Second, they are redeemed, because they belong to the Lamb who died to set them free (1 Pet 1:18–19). Third, they are glorious, living in a city that sparkles with the radiance of God (Rev 21:10–11). Fourth, they are complete. All the redeemed of Israel (21:12) and the church (21:14) are united there in perfect harmony.

The city itself is perfectly designed for its people (21:15–17). First, it is a real city with real, human dimensions. Second, it is huge: large enough to cover most of the United States and five times taller than our current atmosphere! Third, it is totally secure. Its walls remind us that those who live there are free from all danger forever. Fourth, it is beautiful (21:18–21). God’s glory shines through its translucent gold walls. Its gates are giant pearls, costly and pure (1 Pet 3:18). Even its foundations sparkle in hues of red, green, blue, yellow, orange, brown, purple, and white.

THINK ABOUT IT

Try teaching just one of the three parts of this lesson. Try describing all of it in your own words, then go back to focus on one or two truths.



THINK ABOUT IT

Heaven will be like our world, but with everything good improved and with nothing bad at all.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON



God creates a new heaven and new earth • Revelation 21:1–22:21

Perfect neighbors in a perfect city—but it gets even better! God's perfect presence is the best part (Rev 21:22–27). God and the Lamb will personally live in New Jerusalem with His people. There will be no temple building, for God's presence will fill it completely. Since God is perfectly present there, the whole city will shine brilliantly with His glory. His shining glory will be so great that no one will seek their own glory—even kings and nations will lay their glory at His feet. Also, because heaven is the place of God's glory, it is a perfectly pure place. Nothing detestable or wicked will be there (21:27). No evil will spoil the glory of heaven.

Heaven is the New Eden (22:1–5)

Inside New Jerusalem John saw the new Garden of Eden. God originally created mankind to live in Eden, but Adam failed to keep and guard it as God commanded him (Gen 2:15). Although the first Eden was lost, the prophets looked forward to a time when Eden would be restored (Isa 51:3; Ezek 36:35). In all, there are nine ways the first Eden is made new and better in heaven.

The first three ways show that New Eden is a land of full and unending life (Rev 22:1–3a). First, there is a river that gives life, just like the river in Eden (Gen 2:10). This river shows that eternal life is something like a pure, never-ending river that sparkles with the glory of God (John 4:14; Isa 12:3; Rev 21:6). Second, there is a tree of life, as there was in Eden (Gen 2:9). Third, there is no curse, just as there was no curse in Eden before Adam's sin.

The next three ways show God Himself lives in heaven. First, He is King there (Rev 22:3b). Second, He shows His face there (Rev 22:4a), as He did with Adam and Eve before they sinned and hid in shame (Gen 3:8). For now, no man can see His face and live (Exod 33:20), but in heaven, we will see Him face to face! Third, God gives light there (Rev 22:5a), just as He created light to shine in the first Eden (Gen 1:3).

The final three ways Eden is restored show that believers will perfectly live the lives God designed them to live. First, they will serve as slaves of God (Rev 22:3c). God created Adam to serve and guard the garden (Gen 2:15), but Adam failed. In New Eden, humans will finally do the job they were made to do. Second, they will have God's name on their foreheads (Rev 22:4b). That means they will be perfectly in His image, displaying and representing God just as they were originally created to do (Gen 1:26). Third, they will reign forever (Rev 22:5b). Mankind failed to rule over all creation as God intended (Gen 1:26; Ps 8), but one day, if you humble yourself before Him, you will inherit the earth to reign forever with Jesus (Matt 5:5; Rev 3:21).

John recorded his vision of heaven to give us hope. Life is hard, but if we have hope, we can persevere (Rom 8:24). Like an athlete persevering through the pain, set your eyes on the prize and do not give up. Let go of this world and live for your real home. Let go of your own glory and set your sights on God's glory. Let go of how others think of you or treat you, and look forward to living with redeemed humans made perfect forever. Above all, live for God now. Heaven is about Him, you were made to live for Him, and only by staying true to Him to the very end can you enter your true home. You are blessed if you keep His word, because He is coming (Rev 22:7).

Lesson Outline

Heaven is a perfect home for perfect people with their perfect God.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



Heaven will be . . .

1. A New Earth, like our earth but without any sin or sinful people (21:1–8).
2. A New City, with strong walls and sparkling jewels (21:9–21).
3. A New Garden, with water and trees that give life (22:1–3a).
4. A New Home, where God’s people will live with Him forever (21:3, 7–8, 22–27; 22:3b–5).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **Heaven is the New Creation (21:1–8).**
 - The New Creation is a New Heaven and Earth (21:1–2).
 - The New Creation is where God lives with His people (21:3–4).
 - The New Creation is the new life God promised (21:5–6a).
 - The New Creation is for those who thirst and overcome (21:6b–8).
2. **Heaven is New Jerusalem (21:9–27).**
 - New Jerusalem is the home of perfect people (21:9–14).
 - New Jerusalem is a city with perfect proportions (21:15–21).
 - New Jerusalem is the place of God’s perfect presence (21:22–27).
3. **Heaven is the New Eden (22:1–5).**
 - The New Eden is a land of life without limit (22:1–3a).
 - The New Eden is the realm of the God of glory (22:3b, 4a, 5a).
 - The New Eden is home to people with a purpose (22:3c, 4b, 5b).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God creates a new heaven and new earth • Revelation 21:1–22:21



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. After God ends this world, what will He do?**
He will create a new heaven and earth.
- 2. What city will come down from heaven?**
The New Jerusalem.
- 3. What will be in the New Jerusalem to make it like a beautiful garden?**
The river of life and the tree of life.
- 4. What is the most special thing about heaven?**
God will live there with His people.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Is heaven just an imaginary or spiritual place?**
No. It will be a real world, a world like this one but made perfect.
- 2. Why is God's presence the best thing about heaven?**
We were created to be with Him. We will never feel right until we are with Him. When we are with Him, He will wipe away our tears and end all pain.
- 3. Who is heaven for? Who is it not for?**
It is for people who thirst for God, who overcome by trusting Jesus without giving up. It is not for people who live for their own pleasures.
- 4. What is the New Jerusalem called?**
The Bride and the wife of the Lamb. This shows that the people who live there are loved and made perfect by Jesus.
- 5. What is the city like? What is it made of? How is it designed?**
It is real, huge, secure, well-designed for God's people, and gloriously beautiful (see commentary for more detail).
- 6. Is there a temple building in the New Jerusalem?**
No. God and the Lamb are the temple, because He is fully present in the whole city.
- 7. How does Revelation end like Genesis began?**
It ends with a New Eden, where perfect people will glorify, enjoy, serve, and reign with God forever.
- 8. What difference does heaven make in the way you live today?**
It shows us that following Jesus is worth it, even though it is very hard. It gives us hope. It encourages us to stop living for the things of this world.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

Before today's class, deliberately make the room look different than usual. This can be done by putting up decorations or moving the furniture around. Explain that the New heaven and Earth will be like our current earth but also different. But it will not just be different—it will be much, much better! We'll find out how in today's lesson.

FAVORITE PERSON

Do the children have a favorite person they like to spend time with? Maybe a parent, or a sibling, or friend? Is it hard when they have to say goodbye to this person? Well, in the New Heaven and Earth, God will live with His people, and they will never have to say goodbye to Him (Rev 21:3)! Imagine that: spending all day every day with your favorite person!



ILLUSTRATE

NO MORE...

For today's lesson, bring in visuals to illustrate that there will no longer be sin in the New Heaven and Earth. Show objects or pictures of the following: tombstone, sun/moon, temple, Band-Aid, medicine, Kleenex, prison. Ask the children what these objects are and what they are used for. Explain that in the New Heaven and Earth God will be present with His people and there will no longer be any sin. Since there will no longer be sin there will no longer be the effects of sin such as crying, dying, prison, etc.

GOD'S PERSONAL POSSESSION

Do any of the children have a pet dog? Does their dog have a collar with tags to show that it belongs to them and is loved by them? God shows His ownership and love for all those in heaven by writing His name on their foreheads (Rev 22:4). Use a washable marker and mirror to write "Jesus" on your forehead.



APPLY

THE NEW JERUSALEM

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheet, crayons, yarn, tape, scissor.

Directions: Color the city and cut it. Color the background images. Cut the two dotted lines. Make a hole where indicated. Pass the yarn through the holes. Tape the city to the yarn so that it goes up and down.

The New Jerusalem
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God creates a new heaven and new earth • Revelation 21:1–22:21



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

WHAT IS HEAVEN LIKE?

What do you think of when you think of heaven? As children answer, listen for misconceptions to correct later (people with robes, wings, harps, and halos floating around on clouds doing nothing). We're going to learn the truth about what heaven will be like in today's lesson. Alternatively, read the description of "new Narnia" in the last few pages of C.S. Lewis' book *The Last Battle*. Will heaven be like that—a real place like earth but much better?

STREETS OF GOLD

Bring some jewelry to class: gold, diamonds, pearls, etc. Show these to the children and talk about how valuable they are. We normally only see these items in small quantities. But imagine living in a city with walls, and gates, and foundations made out of them! That's what heaven will be like!



ILLUSTRATE

THIRSTY FOR GOD

Give the children a salty snack but no drink. After some time, ask the children if they are thirsty. Pour a large class of cool water in front of them, but don't offer any of them a drink. Finally, pull out enough cups for each child and offer them a drink. Explain that the Bible uses the idea of "thirst" to describe someone who knows they have a need (sin) that only God can meet. God is the only One who can quench our spiritual thirst (Ps 42:1–2; Isa 55:1–2; John 7:37–38).

HOLY TO THE LORD

Use Exodus 28:36–38 as an illustration of having God's name on your forehead (Rev 22:4). Describe (and show pictures) how the priest had a gold plate fastened to his forehead. Engraved on it were the words "Holy to the LORD."



APPLY

HEAVEN

See *Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2*.

Materials: Craft sheets, cardstock, yarn, tape.

Directions: Color the images and cut them. Tape the gate to the city. Hole punch where indicated. Pass the yarn through the holes, so to close the gate and connect the ticket to the gate.

Heaven
See *Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2*



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

A WORLD WITHOUT SIN

Our present earth is imperfect, tainted with sin. To illustrate this point, collect several newspaper stories throughout the week that display the effect of sin (reports of starvation, crime, injustice, etc.). Read these with the class, discussing the damaging effect of sin on this present earth.

Take a moment to describe how, when Christ returns, the world will be made completely perfect. We will never read stories like these in heaven.

FINALLY HOME

Christians are called “strangers,” and “exiles,” and “pilgrims,” and “sojourners,” and “aliens” on earth (1 Pet 2:11; Heb 11:13). Why is this? Is it because Christians don’t own permanent homes? Today’s lesson will reveal the answer: a Christian’s true home is with God in heaven.



ILLUSTRATE

NEW JERUSALEM

Bring a globe to class. Construct a cube out of cardstock large enough to cover most of the United States on the globe. This will help the children have an idea of the size of New Jerusalem.

NO MORE GOODBYES

As we get older, we are forced to say more and more goodbyes. Have you ever had to say goodbye to a friend that moved away? Have you ever been separated from family members because of divorce or parents having to move the family for a job? What about death? Have you ever lost someone you loved? In heaven there will be no more goodbyes because there will be no more death (Rev 21:4).



APPLY

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

C.S. Lewis wrote, “In the truest sense, Christian pilgrims have the best of both worlds. We have joy whenever this world reminds us of the next, and we take solace whenever it does not.” What does he mean? According to Revelation, is Lewis right? What difference does this make in your life? Discuss with the children how even our current broken world brings us joy because it is a picture of our real home. Is there anything that the children enjoy about this world? The next world will be better! But then discuss how, when we suffer the effects of the curse, we can find comfort in looking forward to a curse-free home. Is there anything that the children don’t enjoy about this world? There will be nothing harmful, or sad, or discouraging in the next.