



**Week Twelve – Revelation 21-22**  
**Community Group Study Guide for the week of May 23, 2021**

**Suggested Reading:** Revelation 21-22 prior to meeting

**Study Revelation 21:1-27, “The New Jerusalem.”** Choose some or all of these questions to answer and discuss:

1. What is one of the happiest or best memories you have?
2. How did the voice from heaven describe the new world to come? ([21:4-5](#))
3. What were some of the more spectacular features of the New Jerusalem that John saw? ([21:10-21](#))
4. In what way will the New Jerusalem reflect God’s glory and holiness? ([21:21-27](#))
5. Why do you think God revealed so many details about the measurements and appearance of the New Jerusalem?
6. How can we prepare ourselves for a place like the New Jerusalem?
7. How can you remind yourself every day this week of God’s promised future for His people?

**Life Application Bible Notes**

[21:1](#) The earth as we know it will not last forever, but after God's great judgment, he will create a new earth (see [Romans 8:18-21](#); [2 Peter 3:7-13](#)). God had also promised Isaiah that he would create a new and eternal earth ([Isaiah 65:17](#); [66:22](#)). The sea is gone as well; in John's time, the sea was viewed as dangerous and changeable. It was also the source of the beast ([13:1](#)). We don't know how the new earth will look or where it will be, but God and his followers—those whose names are written in the Book of Life—will be united to live there forever. Will you be there?

[21:2, 3](#) The new Jerusalem is where God lives among his people. Instead of our going up to meet him, he comes down to be with us, just as God became man in Jesus Christ and lived among us ([John 1:14](#)). Wherever God reigns, there is peace, security, and love.

[21:3, 4](#) Have you ever wondered what eternity will be like? The "holy city, the new Jerusalem" is described as the place where God will remove all sorrows. Forevermore, there will be no death, sorrow, crying, or pain. What a wonderful truth! No matter what you are going through, it's not the last word—God has written the final chapter, and it is about true fulfillment and

eternal joy for those who love him. We do not know as much as we would like, but it is enough to know that eternity with God will be more wonderful than we could ever imagine.

**21:5** God is the Creator. The Bible begins with the majestic story of his creation of the universe, and it concludes with his creation of a new heaven and a new earth. This is a tremendous hope and encouragement for the believer. When we are with God, with our sins forgiven and our future secure, we will be like Christ. We will be made perfect like him.

**21:6** Just as God finished the work of creation ([Genesis 2:1-3](#)) and Jesus finished the work of redemption ([John 19:30](#)), so the Trinity will finish the entire plan of salvation by inviting the redeemed into a new creation.

**21:6** For more about the water of life, see the note on [22:1](#).

**21:7, 8** The "cowards" are the fearful ones who abandon Christ at the threats of the beast. They fear persecution so badly that they choose temporary safety over eternal life. They are put in the same list as the unbelieving, the corrupt, the murderers, the immoral, the idolaters, the liars, and those practicing magic arts.

By contrast, people who are victorious "endure to the end" ([Mark 13:13](#)). They will receive the blessings that God promised: To follow Christ requires boldness and bravery to stand for him when oppression occurs. Pray for courage to do what is right no matter what pressure you face. Those who can endure the testing of evil and remain faithful will be rewarded by God.

**21:8** The lake is explained in the notes on [19:20](#) and [20:14](#). The second death is spiritual death, meaning either eternal torment or destruction. In either case, it is permanent separation from God.

**21:10ff** The rest of the chapter is a stunning description of the new city of God. The vision is symbolic and shows us that our new home with God will defy description. We will not be disappointed by it in any way.

**21:12-14** The new Jerusalem is a picture of God's future home for his people. The 12 tribes of Israel ([21:12](#)) probably represent all the faithful in the Old Testament; the 12 apostles ([21:14](#)) represent the church. Thus, both believing Gentiles and Jews who have been faithful to God will live together in the new earth.

**21:15-17** The city's measurements are symbolic of a place that will hold all God's people. These measurements are all multiples of 12, the number for God's people: There were 12 tribes in Israel, and 12 apostles who started the church. The walls are 144 (12 x 12) cubits (216 feet) thick. There are 12 layers in the walls, and 12 gates in the city; and the length, width, and height are all the same, 12,000 stadia (1,400 miles). The new Jerusalem is a perfect cube, the same shape as the Most Holy Place in the Temple ([1 Kings 6:20](#)). These measurements illustrate that this new home will be perfect for us.

**21:18-21** The picture of walls made of jewels reveals that the new Jerusalem will be a place of purity and durability—it will last forever.

**21:22-24** The Temple, the center of God's presence among his people, was the primary place of worship. No temple is needed in the new city, however, because God's presence will be everywhere. God will be the light in the new Jerusalem. Light represents what is good, pure, true, holy, and reliable. Darkness represents what is sinful and evil. That God's glory illuminates the city means that the city will be enveloped by him, who is perfectly holy and true. Light is also related to truth in that it exposes whatever exists. Just as darkness cannot exist in the presence of light, so sin cannot exist in the presence of a holy God. The city will be completely

without sin and evil. We will be able to worship God throughout the city; nothing will hinder us from being with him.

[21:25-27](#) Not everyone will be allowed into the new Jerusalem, but "only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." (The Book of Life is explained in the notes on [3:5](#) and [20:12-15](#).) Don't think that you will get in because of your background, personality, or good behavior. Eternal life is available to you only because of what Jesus, the Lamb, has done. Trust him today to secure your citizenship in his new creation.

### ***What We Know About Eternity***

<b><i>Description</i></b>	<b><i>Reference</i></b>
A place prepared for us	<a href="#">John 14:2, 3</a>
Unlimited by physical properties ( <a href="#">1 Corinthians 15:35-49</a> )	<a href="#">John 20:19, 26</a>
Like Jesus	<a href="#">1 John 3:2</a>
New bodies	<a href="#">1 Corinthians 15</a>
A wonderful experience	<a href="#">1 Corinthians 2:9</a>
A new environment	<a href="#">Revelation 21:1</a>
A new experience of God's presence ( <a href="#">1 Corinthians 13:12</a> )	<a href="#">Revelation 21:3</a>
New emotions	<a href="#">Revelation 21:4</a>
No more death	<a href="#">Revelation 21:4</a>

The Bible devotes much less space to describing eternity than it does to convincing people that eternal life is available as a free gift from God. Most of the brief descriptions of eternity would be more accurately called hints, since they use terms and ideas from present experience to describe what we cannot fully grasp until we are there ourselves. These references hint at aspects of what our future will be like if we have accepted Christ's gift of eternal life.

**Study Revelation 22:1-6, "The River of Life."** Choose some or all of these questions to answer and discuss:

1. What is your favorite fruit? What do you like about it?
2. What was growing on each side of the river of life? ([22:2](#))
3. When did the tree that John saw in the city bear fruit? ([22:2](#))
4. Of what value are the leaves on the tree of life? ([22:2](#))
5. What does this passage tell us about God?
6. How can we honor God as creator and sustainer of life?
7. How can you honor the life that God created?

## Life Application Bible Notes

**22:1** The water of life is a symbol of eternal life. Jesus used this same image with the Samaritan woman ([John 4:7-14](#)). It pictures the fullness of life with God and the eternal blessings that come when we believe in him and allow him to satisfy our spiritual thirst (see [22:17](#)).

**22:2** This tree of life is like the tree of life in the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 2:9](#)). After Adam and Eve sinned, they were forbidden to eat from the tree of life because they could not have eternal life as long as they were under sin's control. But because of the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus, there will be no evil or sin in this city. We will be able to eat freely from the tree of life when sin's control over us is destroyed and our eternity with God is secure.

**22:2** Why would the nations need to be healed if all evil is gone? John is quoting from [Ezekiel 47:12](#), where water flowing from the Temple produces trees with healing leaves. He is not implying that there will be illness in the new earth; he is emphasizing that the water of life produces health and strength wherever it goes.

**22:3** "No longer will there be a curse upon anything" means that nothing accursed will be in God's presence. This fulfills Zechariah's prophecy (see [Zechariah 14:11](#)).

**Study Revelation 22:7-21, "Jesus Is Coming."** Choose some or all of these questions to answer and discuss:

1. What is one reward you remember getting?
2. Who will be entitled to citizenship in the new Jerusalem? ([22:14](#))
3. What invitation is given by the Spirit and the bride? ([22:17](#))
4. What do we know for sure about Christ's return? ([22:20](#))
5. What do you think is the point of the angel telling everyone to continue doing what they are doing, whether good or bad?
6. What is involved in responding to God's invitation to come to Him?
7. What can you "continue to do right" this week?

## Life Application Bible Notes

**22:8, 9** The first of the Ten Commandments is "You must not have any other god but me" ([Exodus 20:3](#)). Jesus said that the greatest command of Moses' laws was "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind" ([Matthew 22:37](#)). Here, at the end of the Bible, this truth is reiterated. The angel instructs John to worship God, and worship is a major emphasis in Revelation. The first step toward meaningful worship is a desire to know God. If we thirst for him, the Bible promises that he will provide for us and satisfy our needs. Would you like your worship to be completely transformed? Confess any sins that might be hindering your fellowship with God. Then ask God to stir your heart, to instill within you an unquenchable thirst to know him. Meditate upon how God has revealed himself in the Bible, and ask him to reveal himself to you again. When you see God in a new way, worship will be your only fitting response.

**[22:10, 11](#)** The angel tells John what to do after his vision is over. Instead of sealing up what he has written, as Daniel was commanded to do ([Daniel 12:4-12](#)), the book is to be left open so that all can read and understand. Daniel's message was sealed because it was not a message for Daniel's time. But the book of Revelation was a message for John's time, and it is relevant today. As Christ's return gets closer, there is a greater polarization between God's followers and Satan's followers. We must read the book of Revelation, hear its message, and be prepared for Christ's imminent return.

**[22:12-14](#)** Those who wash their robes are those who seek to purify themselves from a sinful way of life. They strive daily to remain faithful and ready for Christ's return.

**[22:14](#)** In Eden, Adam and Eve were barred from any access to the tree of life because of their sin ([Genesis 3:22-24](#)). In the new earth, God's people will eat from the tree of life because their sins have been removed by Christ's death and resurrection. Those who eat the fruit of this tree will live forever. If Jesus has forgiven your sins, you will have the right to eat from this tree. For more on this concept, see the first note on [22:2](#).

**[22:15](#)** Jesus will exclude from the holy city those "who love to live a lie." These are people whose lives have gone so wrong that they resemble Satan, who deceived the whole world ([12:9](#); [13:13-15](#); [16:14](#)). They are hypocrites, trying to live one way while pretending to believe another. They are like the Nicolaitans, mentioned in [2:15](#), who were among the believers but compromised their faith in order to also include worship of the Roman emperor. John records Jesus' statement that Satan is the father of lies ([John 8:44](#)).

Today we see leaders who twist the truth to serve their purposes. Many people have lost the ability to distinguish what's true from what they wish was true. Dishonest people soon begin to believe the lies they construct around themselves. Then they lose the ability to tell the difference between truth and lies. By believing your own lies, you deceive yourself, you alienate yourself from God, and you lose credibility in all your relationships. In the long run, honesty wins out.

**[22:16](#)** Jesus is both David's "source" and "heir." As the Creator of all, Jesus existed long before David. As a human, however, he was one of David's direct descendants (see [Isaiah 11:1-5](#); [Matthew 1:1-17](#)). As the Messiah, he is the "bright morning star," the light of salvation to all.

**[22:17](#)** Both the Holy Spirit and the bride, the church, extend the invitation to all the world to come to Jesus and experience the joys of salvation in Christ.

**[22:17](#)** When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, he told her of the living water that he could supply ([John 4:10-15](#)). This image is used again as Christ invites anyone to come and drink of the water of life. The Good News is unlimited in scope—all people everywhere may come. Salvation cannot be earned, but God gives it freely. We live in a world desperately thirsty for living water, and many are dying of thirst. But it's still not too late. Let us invite everyone to come and drink.

**[22:18, 19](#)** This warning is given to those who might purposefully distort the message in this book. Moses gave a similar warning in [Deuteronomy 4:1-4](#). We, too, must handle the Bible with care and great respect so that we do not distort its message, even unintentionally. We should be quick to put its principles into practice in our life. No human explanation or interpretation of God's Word should be elevated to the same authority as the text itself.

**[22:20](#)** We don't know the day or the hour, but Jesus is coming soon and unexpectedly. This is good news to those who trust him, but a terrible message for those who have rejected him and

stand under judgment. *Soon* means "at any moment," and we must be ready for him, always prepared for his return. Would Jesus' sudden appearance catch you off guard?

**22:21** Revelation closes human history as Genesis opened it—in paradise. But there is one distinct difference in Revelation—evil is gone forever. Genesis describes Adam and Eve walking and talking with God; Revelation describes people worshiping God face to face. Genesis describes a garden with an evil serpent; Revelation describes a perfect city with no evil. The Garden of Eden was destroyed by sin; but paradise is re-created in the new Jerusalem. The book of Revelation ends with an urgent plea: "Come, Lord Jesus!" In a world of problems, persecution, evil, and immorality, Christ calls us to endure in our faith. Our efforts to better our world are important, but their results cannot compare with the transformation that Jesus will bring about when he returns. He alone controls human history, forgives sin, and will recreate the earth and bring lasting peace.

Revelation is, above all, a book of hope. It shows that no matter what happens on earth, God is in control. It promises that evil will not last forever. And it depicts the wonderful reward that is waiting for all those who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

*Revelation Study Guide questions and notes are from*

