

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

4 Year Olds

Sunday Morning

Study 26

Z is for Zion

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The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the students that God's ultimate plan is to be with His people forever living in the New Zion (Jerusalem).

Key Verses

Revelation 21:1-7—Main Teaching Passage

Psalm 99:2

Revelation 21:8-22:21

Memory Verse - Psalm 97:9 (July Memory Verse)

"For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods."

Hook

Ask the students to describe the best place they have ever been. It could be a vacation spot, somewhere they like to play with their friends, or anywhere else. Ask them why they like this spot so much.

Tell them that in today's lesson, we will be learning about a place even better than the places they just mentioned.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Revelation 21 is the next-to-last chapter of the Bible and begins the final section in God's message to His people. In Revelation 21:1-7, John writes about his vision of the New Jerusalem, the final destination of all believers. He begins by describing the New Heaven and New Earth replacing the old Heaven and Earth, and the New Jerusalem descending from Heaven. This new city is the place where God dwells with His people forever. It is the place where we will spend eternity with our loving Father and our precious Savior. It is a world without sin and all of its devastating effects, without pain, disease, injustice, and death. Anything you can think of that is wrong with this world will be fixed in the New Jerusalem.

Verse 5 says that we can trust that God will do these things, as right now He is making all things new. God promises that if we are able through our faith to overcome this world, with all of its pain and opposition, we can be sure that we will enjoy life together forever with God in the new Jerusalem as His sons and daughters. The rest of these last two chapters (Revelation 21:8-22:21) describe what the city looks like, and what a magnificent city it is! It is this most beautiful city imaginable.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

It is important for this lesson to note that Zion is another word for Jerusalem (mention this earlier in the lesson if you think it would be helpful). In the Old Testament, specifically during and after the reign of King David, Zion was the place where God dwelt in Israel's midst in the temple. God is a personal God, as we saw last week. He does not simply desire to remain distant from His people up in Heaven. He wants to dwell with us. In the Old Testament, the Israelites had to go to the temple to meet with God. However, in the New Zion, God will dwell with His people throughout the city, and we will be able to fellowship with Him like never before.

The New Zion is part of God's plan to set everything right. After sin has been dealt with, Satan has been destroyed, and unbelievers have faced judgment, God will bring believers to the New Zion to be with Him forever. The New Zion will be the most beautiful, peaceful, pleasant, joyful, fantastic place you could think of. It is the place where everything that is wrong with the world will be dealt with and be no more. Ask the students to think of the best possible place they could imagine. What would be there? What would not be there? The New Zion will be even better than the place you just described.

LOOK (Continued)

But the best part is not the things that will be there or the things that won't be there. The best part is *Who* will be there: God. We will be with our loving Father, our mighty Savior, our powerful Holy Spirit. Nothing could be better than that. This is why Jesus died with our sins: so He could live with us in peace and joy forever!

Revelation 21:7 promises the New Zion to the one who overcomes. The New Zion is also the reason *why* we can overcome. When we face pain in this life, we can remember that in the New Zion, there will be no more pain. When we are in a situation where our faith in Jesus is challenged, we can remember that we will be with Jesus forever. Our hope as believers is spending life in the New Zion with God forever, and that hope enables us to endure all things.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the class to describe the New Zion. What will be there? What will not be there? Remind the students to encourage themselves with this truth whenever they face difficulty.

Pray: Thank the Lord for promising to live with us forever. Thank Him for the hope of the New Zion, where there is no crying, pain, or death.

Parent Question: What will the New Zion (Jerusalem) be like?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Revelation 21:1-7 by David Guzik

Revelation 21 - A New Heavens, a New Earth, and a New Jerusalem

A. All things made new.

1. (1) The new heaven and the new earth.

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

a. **Now I saw:** We can say that Revelation chapter 21 begins a new section of the Book of Revelation:

- Jesus, the *Lord of the Churches* (Revelation 1:1 to 3:22)
- Jesus, the *Lion over the nations* (Revelation 4:1 to 20:15)
- Jesus, the *Lamb among believers* (Revelation 21:1 to 22:21)

i. The new perspective of this last section is glorious. "From the smoke and pain and heat it is a relief to pass into the clear, clean atmosphere of the eternal morning where the breath of heaven is sweet and the vast city of God sparkles like a diamond in the radiance of his presence." (Moffatt)

b. **A new heaven and a new earth:** The idea of a new earth, with a new atmosphere and sky is a familiar theme in the Scriptures. Many of the prophets, both Old and New Testaments, spoke of this **new heaven** and **new earth**.

i. *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create a Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy.* (Isaiah 65:17-19)

ii. *Of old, You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes all of them will grow old like a garment, like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.* (Psalm 102:25-27)

iii. *Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat . . . Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.* (2 Peter 3:12-13)

iv. It's worth remembering that the **new heaven** referred to doesn't mean the *heaven* where God is enthroned. The Bible uses the word *heaven* in three senses. The *first heaven* is the earth's atmosphere, the "blue sky." The *second heaven* is outer space, the "night sky." The *third heaven* is the place where God lives in glory. When the Scriptures speak of a **new heaven**, they mean a new "blue sky" and a new "night sky," not a new heaven where God dwells.

c. **New heaven . . . new earth:** The ancient Greek word translated **new** here (*kaine*) means "new in character, 'fresh'." It doesn't mean "recent" or "new in time." This isn't just the *next* heaven and the *next* earth; this is the *better* heaven and *better* earth replacing the old (**the first earth had passed away**).

i. Though some disagree (such as Seiss, who argued passionately that this earth will *never* be destroyed) we should understand that this is truly a **new heaven** and a **new earth**, not merely a "remade" heaven and earth. We know this because Jesus said that heaven and earth *shall* pass away, but His Word would live forever (Luke 21:33). Also, in Isaiah 65:17 God said prophetically that He will create a new heaven and earth, and the ancient Hebrew word for "create" (*bara*) means to "create out of nothing," instead of re-fashioning existing material.

ii. Some take this "newness" as only a spiritual and moral change. But there seems to be a genuine physical transformation in mind: **there was no more sea**.

d. **A new heaven and a new earth:** Is this **new heaven** and **new earth** the Millennial earth shown in Revelation 20, or is it something beyond? It definitely seems to be past the Millennial earth. This is what we think of as "heaven" and "eternity."

i. "In this chapter we see that the history of time is finished; the history of eternity is about to begin." (Barnhouse)

ii. "The eternal state is clearly indicated in the absence of sea, for frequent mention of bodies of water occur in millennial passages (cf. Psalm 72:8; Isaiah 11:9, 11; Ezekiel 47:10, 15, 17, 18, 20; 48:28; Zechariah 9:10; 14:8). The evidence of Revelation 21:1 is so specific that most commentators do not question that the eternal state is in view." (Walvoord)

e. **No more sea:** To the Jewish mind, the sea was a place of separation and evil. Already in the Book of Revelation it is shown to be the source of the Satanic beast (Revelation 13:1) and the place of the dead (Revelation 20:13).

i. In other passages of Scripture, the **sea** is associated with the heathen (Isaiah 57:20) and in a more general sense, with the opponents of the Lord that must be conquered (Psalm 89:9).

2. (2-4) The New Jerusalem descends from heaven.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

a. **The holy city, New Jerusalem:** This is the Jerusalem of hope (Hebrews 12:22), the Jerusalem above (Galatians 4:26), the place of our real citizenship (Philippians 3:20).

i. The terms **holy** and **new** distinguish the city. Because it is **holy** and **new**, it is different from any earthly city. The name **Jerusalem** gives it continuity with earth, especially with the place of our redemption.

ii. It is significant that this glorious dwelling place of God and His people is described as **the holy city**. Cities are places with many people, and people interacting with each other. This isn't isolation, but a perfect *community* of the people of God.

iii. The Christian concept of heaven as a city - a place of life, activity, interest, and people - is very different

from Hindu conception of a blank Nirvana. "The consummation of the Christian hope is supremely social. It is no 'flight of the alone to the Alone' but life in the redeemed community of heaven." (Hunter)

iv. Man has never known a community unmarred by sin. Adam and Eve only knew a limited community, and community in a larger context only came long after the Fall. Here, in the **New Jerusalem**, we have something totally unique: a sinless, pure, community of righteousness, a **holy city**.

v. Problems arise when believers expect this kind of community *now*, or fail to realize that it *only comes down out of heaven*. This city *is not and never can be* the achievement of man, but only a gift from God.

b. **Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband**: John used the most striking, beautiful image he could think of. The most beautiful thing a man will ever see is his bride coming down the aisle, ready to meet him. John said that this is how beautiful the New Jerusalem will be.

c. **The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them**: Moses' tabernacle represented the dwelling place of God on earth. That was past the *representation* of the dwelling place of God; this **tabernacle of God** is the reality of His presence.

i. **He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people**: This succinctly states essence of *God's desire* and *man's purpose*. Simply, God's desire is to live in close fellowship with man, and man's purpose is to be a people unto God.

ii. *This is the greatest glory of heaven, and the ultimate restoration of what was lost in the Fall. "I do not think the glory of Eden lay in its grassy walks, or in the boughs bending with luscious fruit-but its glory lay in this, that the 'Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day.' Here was Adam's highest privilege, that he had companionship with the Most High."* (Spurgeon)

d. **The former things have passed away**: The New Jerusalem is distinguished by what it does *not* have - no tears, no sorrow, no death or pain. Later it will be shown that the New Jerusalem has no temple, no sacrifice, no sun, no moon, no darkness, no sin, and no abomination.

i. "Man comes into the world with a cry; and goes out of it with a groan, and all between is more or less intoned with helpless wailing . . . But the Halleluias of the renewed world will drown out the voice of woe forever." (Seiss)

e. **God will wipe away every tear from their eyes**: " '*Every tear*,' for they be many; - tears of bereaved affection, such as Mary, and Martha, and the widow of Nain wept; - tears of sympathy and mercy, such as Jeremiah and Jesus wept over the sins and the calamities of Jerusalem; - tears of persecuted innocence, tears of contrition and penitence for faults and crimes against the goodness and majesty of heaven; - tears of disappointment and neglect; - tears of yearning for what cannot now be ours; - these, and whatever others ever course the cheeks of mortals, shall then be dried forever." (Seiss)

i. But the idea of tears in heaven should never be used as a tool of guilt-manipulation on this earth. "There is no just ground for imagining from this text that the saints will shed tears in heaven concerning the failures of their former life on earth. The emphasis here is on the comfort of God, not on the remorse of the saints." (Walvoord)

3. (5) All things new.

Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

a. **He who sat on the throne said:** This is an authoritative announcement, coming from the throne of God itself. This is one of the few times in Revelation where we clearly see God speaking directly from His throne.

b. **Behold, I make all things new:** This statement is in the present tense, "*I am making everything new.*" This is the consummation of God's work of renewal and redemption, having *begun* here and now in our present time.

i. Paul saw this transformation at work on *this side* of eternity: *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day . . . Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* (2 Corinthians 4:16, 5:17)

c. **All things new:** This is a brief glance at the thinking behind God's eternal plan - to allow sin and its destruction in order to do a greater work of making **all things new**. At this point in His plan of the ages, the plan is complete. **All things** are **new**.

i. Our instinct is to romantically consider innocence as man's perfect state, and wish Adam would have never done what he did. But we fail to realize that redeemed man is greater than innocent man, that we gain more in Jesus than we ever lost in Adam. God's perfect state is one of redemption, not innocence.

ii. When God finally completes this work of making **all things new**, they will *stay new*. "Presumably this means not only that everything will be made new, but also that everything will stay then new. The entropy law will be 'repealed.' Nothing will wear out or decay, and no one will age or atrophy anymore." (H. Morris)

d. **Write, for these words are true and faithful:** John was probably so astounded by these words that he forgot to **write** - and must be told to do so.

4. (6-7) The invitation

And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

a. **It is done!** God's eternal purpose in Jesus is now accomplished. Ephesians 1:10 has been fulfilled: *that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him.* At this point, all things have been resolved or summed up in Jesus - **it is done!**

b. **I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts:** Drinking and thirst are common pictures of God's supply and man's spiritual need. Drinking is an action, but an action of receiving - like faith, it is *doing* something, but it is not a merit-earning work in itself.

i. "What does a thirsty man do to get rid of his thirst? He drinks. Perhaps there is no better representation of faith in all the Word of God than that. To drink is to receive-to take in the refreshing draught-and that is all. A man's face may be unwashed, but yet he can drink; he may be a very unworthy character, but yet a draught of water will remove his thirst. Drinking is such a remarkably easy thing, it is even more simple than eating." (Spurgeon)

c. **He who overcomes shall inherit all things:** Those who overcome (by faith in Jesus, as in 1 John 5:5) enjoy a special relationship with God (**I will be his God and he shall be My son**).