



Revelation 21-22 Study Guide

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Rev. 21:1-8 | Exploring the Wonders of the New heaven and New Earth.

There are multiple things that require our careful attention.

1. New heaven & Earth (Rev. 21:1)

When Jesus returns to establish his kingdom and defeat his enemies, this current earth and heavens will "pass away." However, it's crucial to note that this passing doesn't signify a transition to a purely spiritual existence above the clouds. Instead, the "first heaven and the first earth" will give way to a new heaven and a new earth.

The relationship between the old and the new is somewhat ambiguous. Will the new entirely replace the old, or is it a renewal of our current experience? There's continuity between the two, much like the transition from our corruptible bodies to our future, glorified ones (1 Cor. 15). We'll remain the same transformed people in heaven as we are now.

However, the new heaven and earth are described as "new" or *kainos*, denoting a newness of quality rather than time. One key difference is the absence of the "sea" in the new creation. This doesn't mean there won't be bodies of water to enjoy. Rather, the "sea" symbolizes evil, chaos, and anti-kingdom powers. It represents the origin of the Beast, pagan nations opposing God's kingdom, the place of the dead, and idolatrous trade activity. Removing the sea signifies the banishment of evil, corruption, unbelief, and darkness in the new creation.

When Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:35-41), it was a glimpse of heaven—a promise that one day, he will eliminate all opposition, rebellion, and disturbances from both the heavens and the earth.

2. The New Jerusalem (21:2)

The New Jerusalem is an extraordinary city, unlike any other we've experienced. Think of a place devoid of sin, pollution, traffic jams, property taxes, crime, ghettos, smog, or overcrowded streets.

Yet, beyond its physical attributes, the New Jerusalem symbolizes more—it represents us, the people. Just as a bride joins her husband, the descent of the New Jerusalem parallels the unity of the church with Christ. This connection is evident in Revelation 21:9-10, where John witnesses the holy city descending from heaven, identified as the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

So, while we will dwell in the New Jerusalem, we are also the New Jerusalem—a concept reaffirmed in Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16.

3. Eternal Fellowship with God (21:3)

Verse 3 explains the symbolic meaning behind both the city and the marriage metaphor mentioned in verse 2. It highlights the intimate relationship and spiritual unity between God and his people, fulfilling Old Testament prophecies such as Leviticus 26:11-12 and Ezekiel 37:27, as well as echoing the sentiment in 2 Corinthians 6:16.

What truly makes heaven heavenly isn't merely the absence of earthly discomforts, but the presence of God himself! The glory of heaven stems from being in God's presence, where distance and loneliness vanish.

In the new heaven and new earth, there will be forever closeness with God—our constant companion and intimate friend. While we may not always feel God's presence now, we can find solace in the assurance that in eternity, we will be forever united with him!

This doesn't mean we should live without a sense of God's presence now. The Holy Spirit resides in every believer (1 Cor. 6:19-20), and Jesus promised to be with us always (Matthew 28:20; Heb. 13:5; Rom. 8:8-11, etc.). Yet, as Paul acknowledges in 2 Corinthians 5:6, there can be a sense of separation while we are in our earthly bodies. However, in the new heaven and new earth, we will be united with the Lord in every way imaginable—spiritually and physically.

4. See ya, tears (21:4a)

How could we ever experience sorrow, sadness, or anguish when we are in the presence of God and he is with us? While tears of joy, gratitude, and amazement will certainly be present in the new earth, tears caused by grief, pain, and sin will be *forever* gone. The tears we shed now due to persecution and suffering will be absent in the age to come.

In verse 4, notice that it's not us who will wipe away our tears—but *God* himself who will personally do so (Just like he was the one who closed the door to ark in Genesis 7!). Many of us may be shedding tears today, holding back sorrow and suffering. But in the new earth, God will personally wipe away every tear and banish every cause of sorrow from our experience.

One day, God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. Your current sorrow may seem overwhelming, but it won't last forever. God will ensure this by eliminating every source of pain and sorrow.

This fulfillment echoes Isaiah's prophecy (35:10) of the ransomed returning with singing to Zion, where everlasting joy will replace sorrow and sighing.

5. No more death (21:4b)!

There will be no more death—of spouses, relatives, children, siblings, co-workers, grandparents, cousins, or friends. Funeral homes will cease to operate, and cemeteries will be empty, as everyone will be resurrected in glorified bodies free from disease and decay. There will be no more tedious arrangements for caskets, vaults, or limousines, no graveside services, obituaries, or video tributes. No eulogies, flowers, condolence cards, or funeral processions with headlights on. There will be no need for police escorts or headstones, and no awkward moments of uncertainty. Also, as Pastor Nelson notes, no wills, probate court, or estate sales.

6. All things are new (21:5b)!

In the new realm, physical pain will cease as our bodies are glorified to be like Jesus'. Paul spoke of this as "the redemption of our bodies" in Romans 8:23, promising that the Spirit dwelling in us will give life to our mortal bodies (Romans 8:11). In 1 Corinthians 15, he declared that our perishable bodies will be replaced by imperishable, immortal ones, eliminating the victory and sting of death. This transformation is reiterated in Philippians 3:21, assuring that Jesus will change our bodies to be like his glorious body.

In this new reality, ailments like kidney failure, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer will vanish. There will be no more questioning or enduring decay. Those enduring chronic pain or disability are encouraged—pain will be eradicated forever. Emotional, marital, relational, and every other form of pain will also cease.

Those suffering from depression, anxiety, or fear will find ultimate freedom. The joy in this new existence will surpass anything experienced in this life.

As Revelation 21:4 says, the former things, the causes of pain, will pass away, as God makes all things new!

What will God renew? Will "all things" truly encompass everything? Absolutely!

We will undergo a spiritual and moral renewal, where the struggle against sin, temptation, lust, greed, and envy will cease. The frustration of failing to do right and the guilt of past mistakes will vanish, replaced by constant victory over evil thoughts (Rom. 7:4).

Physically, we will be entirely renewed and changed. While there will be enough continuity for recognition between our current and future selves, all defects and disabilities will disappear. Envy of others' appearances or abilities will be a thing of the past. Any dissatisfaction with our bodies now will transform into love and acceptance. Paralysis, blemishes, deafness, blindness, and every deformity will be eradicated.

Let's stay it again: eternity will not consist of being disembodied spirits, like some cheap horror movie. Instead, we will inhabit new, transformed, glorified physical bodies perfectly suited for life in the new heaven and new earth to serve and worship our Lord forever!

Are we sure this will happen?

You might wonder, "How can I trust in all this with such certainty? What if it's just wishful thinking?"

It's a valid concern.

Yet, the answer lies in verse 5: "**Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.**"

But why trust these words? Because they come from the One who is "the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (verse 6). God's reputation is on the line here. He has spoken, and his faithfulness hinges on it. In fact, he speaks of it as if it's already done—literally saying, "It is done" (verse 6), in the perfect tense, indicating it has already happened.

Moreover, the verb is plural, signifying that "everything has happened." This assurance from God himself leaves no doubt that all his promises will undoubtedly come to fruition.

What does Alpha and Omega mean?

When God declares himself as "the Alpha and the Omega," he's not merely referring to letters, but to the essence of existence itself. He is the beginning and the end, the source and the ultimate purpose of all things.

God is the originator of everything, with no cause or explanation preceding him. He simply *IS*—eternally and unchangingly. There was never a time when he did not exist, nor will there ever be. He didn't choose to be; he has always been and always will be. The universe emerged from his command, making him the Alpha.

Yet, he is also the Omega—the ultimate goal and end of all things. Everything finds its significance in how it glorifies and honors him. Even events that seem random or senseless ultimately serve to reveal God's wisdom, justice, power, love, and holiness. In this way, history points to him, fulfilling its purpose in praising and honoring God.

NOTICE THE TWO BLESSINGS...

In verses 6b-7, John unveils both the blessings awaiting in the new heaven and new earth and the prerequisites to receive them.

(1) For those who "thirst," God freely provides from the spring of the water of life (v. 6b).

Why use "thirst" instead of simply "believing"? This imagery is also found in Revelation 22:17, where it speaks of those who "desire" taking the water of life freely. Another example would be the woman at the well in John 4. These terms signify that saving faith isn't merely intellectual agreement but a soul-deep longing for Christ's satisfaction. God offers eternal life and soul-enriching joy to those who earnestly desire him above all else.

Everyone longs for deep-soul satisfaction, but unbelief prefers worldly pleasures over God himself. To the unsaved, God isn't appealing; he's either bland or bitter. They seek happiness in worldly pursuits, oblivious to God's true fulfillment.

Notice the cost: it's "without payment"! You can't purchase God's eternal satisfaction; you only need to thirst for it. Thirst isn't a merit; it's another facet of faith. The water of life is freely given to those who come empty-handed, saying, "God, satisfy me with Your beauty and glory."

But if thirst is a condition, how can it be "without payment"? God's grace evokes this thirst as a condition for receiving his grace.

(2) To those who conquer, God grants the heritage of being his child (v. 7).

Conquering signifies enduring, persevering faith amid persecution. It's victory over Satan's temptations to forsake Christ.

The inheritance for conquerors is the unparalleled joy of being God's child. It means gaining God and all he offers—a lavish feast of every spiritual blessing, akin to the father's embrace of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).

For those on the outside...

Those whose thirst for worldly things surpassed their thirst for God will meet their end in the lake of fire—the second death (v. 8). They were "cowardly," opting for safety in conformity with the world rather than boldly standing by faith in Christ amid persecution. They were "faithless," placing trust not in God or the joy of Christ but in vengeance, sexual immorality, detestable acts, and idolatry.

The list concludes with "all liars," emphasizing not merely falsehood but false professions of faith. This term denotes those who claim to be apostles or God's people but are not truly regenerated/saved – but who withhold the truth for personal gain (bearing false witness).

In the end, every person will face God—the Alpha and Omega. Yet, their encounter will differ greatly. Those who chose worldly pleasures over God's blessings will face him as the punisher in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15 – yikes!). Meanwhile, those who thirsted for God and his forgiveness will meet him as their Father, receiving the water of eternal life and joy freely given.

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21:9-27 – note several things....

1. The Vision (22:9-10)

John's prophetic encounter "in the Spirit" (Rev. 1:10, 4:2, 17:3) echoes Ezekiel's experiences. This connection suggests that John's vision of the New Jerusalem could fulfill Ezekiel's vision of the future temple.

Most significantly, John learns that the holy city—the New Jerusalem—represents the people of God. In Revelation 21:2, he sees the New Jerusalem as a bride adorned for her husband. Now, he's told he'll see "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb," and he beholds the holy city, Jerusalem, descending from God. This city symbolizes the saints, the people of God. We aren't merely residents of the New Jerusalem; we are the New Jerusalem—the church, the Bride of Christ, adorned with grace-given beauty.

This concept might challenge belief, especially considering the flaws and controversies within today's church. Yet, Revelation 21-22 depicts the church in its ultimate beauty as the Bride of the Lamb, adorned with heavenly splendor. It's a reminder that despite our doubts about the church's condition, God has a plan to glorify and redeem his people beyond imagination.

2. The Architecture (22:11-21)

Each element of the city's description is significant, not merely in itself but in constructing a grand vision that stirs our emotions and imagination.

- **The city is described as having "the glory of God" (v. 11).** In the Old Testament, God's glory resided in the physical temple, but in the new creation, his presence dwells among his people. This glory already resides within every believer through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9), now fully expressed in the new earth and the New Jerusalem.
- **The city is adorned with a jasper stone, similar to God's appearance (Rev. 4:3).** Jasper, an opaque quartz mineral, symbolizes various colors and likely signifies the multi-faceted nature of God's glory.

- **A great, high wall surrounds the city, signifying the secure fellowship with God enjoyed by its inhabitants (v. 12).** This wall guarantees eternal protection, ensuring no threat or intrusion can ever breach the safety of God's people.
- **Twelve gates, each guarded by an angel, bear the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (vv. 12-13).** These gates symbolize the inclusivity of God's people, representing both Jewish and Gentile believers.
- **Twelve foundation stones, inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles, signify the unity and continuity of God's covenant people (v. 14).** This integration of the apostles and Israel confirms the timeless nature of the Church, fulfilling Ezekiel's address of the future temple and city. In short, it includes all believers of all time.
- **The city's measurement, described as a cube, suggests its identity as the eternal Holy of Holies where God dwells among his people (v. 16).** Its dimensions, though symbolic, represent the fundamental unity of all believers.
- **The wall's measurement of 144 cubits further emphasizes the unity of God's people, multiplying the twelve tribes by the twelve apostles (v. 17).** This symbolic number underscores the spiritual nature of the city and its inhabitants. As Nelson says, "It is better than the most valuable things on earth."
- **The material of the wall, jasper, and the city itself, pure gold like clear glass, depict the transcendence and holiness of God's character revealed in his people (v. 18).**
- **The foundation stones, reminiscent of those on the high priest's breastplate, signify the spiritual beauty and splendor of God's people (v. 19).** They represent not material wealth but the holiness and glory of God's character reflected in his redeemed.
- **The gates, described as single pearls, symbolize the transformation of former shame into eternal glory for God's people (v. 21).** This imagery contrasts the world's contempt with the eternal honor given upon believers in the New Jerusalem. That is, God's perfect protection (Rom. 8:38-39)!

3. The Temple: the Lord God & the Lamb (21:22)

John's vision reveals that there is no physical temple in the new heavens and new earth. Instead, God and the Lamb themselves are the temple (what the author of Hebrews talks about). This imagery signifies the intimate and direct relationship believers will have with God and Christ in the eternal state.

The absence of a physical temple is significant, especially considering the prominence of the temple in Old Testament prophecy, such as Ezekiel 40-48. John's application of this prophecy to the New Jerusalem underscores the spiritual reality of the new creation, where believers enjoy unmediated access to God's presence.

The identification of the New Jerusalem with the bride of Christ further emphasizes the intimate union between God's people and their divine Bridegroom. In this eternal city, believers will dwell in perfect communion with God and the Lamb, experiencing the fullness of his glory and presence without the need for an earthly temple.

4. The Glory of God (21:23)

The absence of mention of the sun and moon in the new cosmos may imply their literal absence, or it could symbolize the incomparable brilliance of God's glory compared to any earthly source of light. Just as the light of a candle is insignificant in the presence of the blazing sun, so, too, would be the sun and moon in comparison to the radiance of God's glory.

Moreover, the "light" in the New Jerusalem may signify enlightenment, indicating the complete understanding and clarity with which believers will perceive God's truth and glory. In the new earth, there will be no darkness of ignorance or confusion; rather, believers will have full insight and comprehension of God's nature and his redemptive work through Christ.

One might wonder how humans can endure the overwhelming brightness of God's glory without being consumed (Since we just went through an eclipse and all. Unlike Moses, who could not see God's face and live, believers in the new earth will behold God's glory without harm. This is possible because believers will be transformed into the likeness of Jesus in their resurrection bodies, free from sin and corruption (Luke 20:36).

This fulfillment mirrors Isaiah 60:19-20, where the prophet foretells of a time when the Lord himself will be the everlasting light, replacing the need for the sun and moon. In the new earth, God's glory will illuminate every aspect of existence, bringing an end to sorrow and mourning.

5. The Residents (21:24-27)

These verses allude directly to Isaiah 60:1-11, where the nations are depicted as coming to Jerusalem in the latter days, bringing their wealth and resources. John interprets this pilgrimage of the nations as being fulfilled in the New Jerusalem of the eternal state, on the new earth.

The "nations" and "kings of the earth" likely represent redeemed individuals from among the nations who submit to God and join in praise and worship, unified with believers from all ages. This mirrors the promise in Revelation 5:9-10 that Christ has redeemed people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

In Isaiah, the "glory" brought by the nations refers to material wealth, but in Revelation, it symbolizes the praise, worship, and service of the people themselves. This aligns with other passages in Revelation where "glory and honor" refer to the praise of God and the Lamb.

The absence of "night" emphasizes unhindered access to God's presence and the perpetual illumination provided by God himself, as stated in Revelation 22:5.

Sin will find no place in the New Jerusalem. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will enter and dwell there, enjoying eternal fellowship with God.

The crucial question is not whether one's name is written in the Lamb's book of life but whether they thirst for the living water that Jesus Christ provides, whether they desire him above all else, and whether they have placed their hope for eternity in his life, death, and resurrection. Embracing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by faith alone ensures one's place in the Lamb's book of life.

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REV 22:1-5

1. Continuous, unbroken connection to God (Rev. 22:1, 17b)

Remember when God promised in Revelation 21:6 to satisfy the thirst of those who long for him with "the spring of the water of life"? Now, instead of just a spring, we see a river flowing from God the Father and God the Son (the Lamb). Although the Holy Spirit isn't mentioned directly, he's symbolized by this living water, bringing cleansing, refreshment, and empowerment.

This image of a river is similar to Eden's rivers in Genesis 2:10 and Ezekiel's vision in Ezekiel 47, where the water grows deeper, possibly showing God's increasing grace over time. It might also fulfill Psalm 46:4's description of a river bringing joy to God's city.

In John 4, Jesus speaks of "living water" to the Samaritan woman, hinting at the Holy Spirit and the blessings he brings. Later in John's gospel, Jesus connects this water to the Spirit, saying it will flow from believers' hearts. So, in Revelation, the river of water symbolizes the ongoing presence and blessings of the Holy Spirit, ensuring our eternal connection to God's life.

2. Continuous, unbroken access to the tree of life (22:2 – similar to Psalm 1!)

In verse 2, we see that the river of life, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, flows through the city's streets. On each side of this river are trees of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, with new fruit every month. This imagery echoes the Garden of Eden, where the tree of life first appeared.

It's likely that the river and the street are connected, with trees growing between them. The "tree of life" probably refers to many trees lining both sides of the river, similar to Ezekiel 47:12. In this new garden, what was once one tree of life has become many.

Alternatively, the "tree" could symbolize the cross, often referred to as a "tree" in Acts and 1 Peter. Either way, we'll have free and unlimited access to the tree of life and its abundant fruit. This symbolizes the eternal joy and satisfaction awaiting God's people in this perfected Garden of Eden.

3. Continuous well-being and joy (22:2b)

The healing properties of the tree(s) of life extend to all peoples who have believed in the gospel. But this isn't literal healing from physical ailments, as Revelation 21:4 tells us there will be no more death or pain in the eternal state. Instead, John uses imagery familiar to him to describe these eternal realities.

Since the city doesn't need the sun or moon (Revelation 21:23), the monthly fruit-bearing must also be symbolic. The "healing" leaves signify the complete absence of physical and spiritual lack. They represent God's abundant provision and perpetual availability of life, power, and grace to meet every need.

In Genesis 3:24, after Adam and Eve sinned, cherubim were placed to guard the way to the tree of life. But now, nothing stands between us and eternal life in God's loving presence.

4. The removal of the curse forever (22:3a)

This verse signifies the reversal of the Fall. What Adam brought upon humanity through disobedience is now undone by the blessing initiated by Christ's obedience (Rom. 5:12-21).

The mention of "anything accursed" likely refers to the widespread consequences of Adam's disobedience. In the new earth, everything affected by the curse—material creation, humanity, our bodies, relationships—will be completely eradicated.

Richard Phillips notes that out of the 1,189 chapters in the Bible, only four depict life without the curse. The first two chapters of Genesis and the last two of Revelation show life as God originally intended and will ultimately restore it: free from every trace of the curse.

5. Unending joy in worshipping God (22:3b, 8-9)

The fifth blessing ensures endless, unrestricted worship of God in praise and adoration. Verse 3b emphasizes that his servants will worship him.

Skipping to verses 8-9, we see the importance of worshipping only God. The angel warns against worshipping anything else, emphasizing the need to focus solely on God. Whether it's wealth, success, idols, or even ourselves, nothing should take the place of worshipping God.

In the new heaven and earth, worship will be continuously fresh and captivating because God is infinitely fascinating. Think about how vast and rich God is. Each moment, we'll discover new aspects of his grace,

kindness, and love. For instance, Ephesians 2:7 talks about how God will continually reveal his grace throughout eternity, showcasing his immeasurable kindness toward us.

Paul emphasizes that God's grace is not only abundant but also immeasurable and overflowing with kindness. This kindness will be endlessly displayed and experienced, constantly deepening our understanding and love for God.

Our worship in heaven won't grow stale. Instead, it will intensify and expand as we continue to learn more about God's greatness. With each new revelation, our love and joy in him will deepen, leading to an eternity of ever-growing worship and joy.

In summary, worship in heaven will be an eternal journey of discovery and delight, fueling our growth in holiness and conformity to Christ.

6. Unhindered, unparalleled intimacy with God (22:4a)

We've reached the vision of God's face. What does this mean? Literally, it means we'll see Jesus' face. Jesus, as God incarnate, will forever remain human. We'll not only physically see him but also intimately know him, experiencing his love and deepening our connection with him.

Seeing God's face goes beyond physical sight; it's about understanding and experiencing the depth of who he is. In this life, we can't see God fully due to sin's curse, but in the new heaven and earth, we'll perceive him with utmost clarity.

Scripture attests that no one can see God and live due to his glory's overwhelming nature. But in the new earth, this barrier will cease to exist. (Note: Moses, in Exo. 33, saw God's glory. | John 14:8-9—"If you have seen me, you have seen the Father" – Jesus)

What does seeing God's face entail?

- **Utter transparency:** We'll see God clearly without any hindrance.
- **Transcendence:** his glory will surpass anything we've experienced, bringing everlasting joy.
- **Total transformation:** Beholding God will purify our hearts completely.

Just as we're transformed progressively by beholding Christ now, seeing him face to face will result in instant perfection. We'll become like him because we'll see him as he is (1 John 3:2). This vision will either be preceded by holiness or will lead to instant sanctification, depending on differing views.

In essence, seeing God's face will bring about a profound change in us, reflecting his glory and culminating in our likeness to him.

7. The joy of always and forever belonging to God (22:4b)

This promise finds its fulfillment in the new earth. Jesus assured believers that those who conquer will bear the name of God, a truth reiterated when God's people are sealed on their foreheads. This symbolizes belonging: "You are mine, and I will never let you go."

Just as the mark of the beast signifies allegiance to evil (Revelation 13), God's mark signifies his ownership and protection over us. We are his, marked by his name.

8. Christ reigns forever (22:5b)

The exact scope of our reign is unspecified by John. We might speculate that it could involve ruling over holy angels, fallen angels in hell, or perhaps even aspects of the created realm. However, the specifics remain unclear.

Though we may not fully grasp the details, we can trust that God has marvelous plans for us in this regard.

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Rev. 22:6-21

Some observations...

1. The Angel's Assurance (22:6)

The angel's reaffirmation of the trustworthiness and truthfulness of the words revealed to John offers reassurance amidst the bewildering imagery of Revelation. The divine validation emphasizes the reliability of the prophetic message.

2. God's Sovereignty Over Prophets (22:6)

The phrase "the God of the spirits of the prophets" underscores God's sovereignty over prophetic revelation. Prophets serve as conduits for divine revelation, dependent on God's initiative. The reference to "spirits" may encompass both the human spirit of the prophets and the Holy Spirit's influence.

3. Certainty of Events (22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20)

The repeated statement of the nearness and soon occurrence of events in Revelation gets many answers. Some view it as emphasizing the rapidity of fulfillment, while others suggest it denotes certainty. The concept of nearness underscores the readiness required of believers.

4. Blessing for Keeping the Prophecy (22:7)

The blessing pronounced on those who keep the words of the prophecy underscores the practical relevance of Revelation for believers. Obedience to its commands is essential.

5. Open Declaration of Revelation (22:10)

Unlike Daniel's prophecy, which was sealed for a future time, John is instructed to openly declare what has been revealed to him. The fulfillment of prophetic truth is imminent, necessitating its proclamation.

6. Exhortation (22:11)

The seemingly puzzling exhortation in verse 11, urging evildoers to continue in their ways, may serve as a judgment on those who persist in rebellion against God. It highlights human responsibility and the consequences of chosen behavior.

7. Assurance of Judgment (22:12)

Jesus' assurance of coming to repay each person according to their deeds offers comfort to believers and underscores the inevitability of divine judgment for evildoers.

8. Cleansing in Christ's Blood (22:14)

The imagery of washing robes in the blood of Christ symbolizes acknowledgment of sinfulness and reliance on Christ's sacrificial death for cleansing from guilt and sin.

9. Identification of the Unrighteous (22:15)

The description of the unrighteous as dogs and sorcerers underscores their moral depravity and rejection of God's truth. Their behavior contrasts with the righteousness of those who follow Christ.

10. Jesus' Identity (v. 16)

Jesus' self-identification as the root and descendant of David emphasizes his fulfillment of messianic promises and his authority as both Lord and descendant of David.

11. Invitations to Come (22:17)

The triple invitation to come issued by the Spirit, the hearer, and Jesus himself highlights the universal invitation to salvation and the responsibility of people to respond in faith. Come to Jesus, y'all!

12. Warning Against Adding or Taking Away (22:19) The warning against adding to or taking away from the words of Revelation echoes similar admonitions in Deuteronomy and emphasizes the importance of preserving

the integrity of God's revealed truth. Disobedience carries severe consequences, possibly indicating a loss of spiritual life or reward.

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10 Observations about Revelation after a year-long study...

1. Christians may face persecution from a world that doesn't believe in their faith. Suffering doesn't mean God is disappointed but shows alignment with Jesus, which can inspire others. (John 15:18-20; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-14)

2. God controls everything, even the actions of the wicked, though the world may seem chaotic. The book of Revelation emphasizes God's ultimate control. (Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 45:7; Revelation 19:6)

3. Jesus is above all earthly powers. Despite human sin, Jesus reigns over everything, even world leaders and global events. (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22; Colossians 1:16-17)

4. God will achieve his plans through Christ, regardless of circumstances, leading to the fulfillment of his purposes. (Isaiah 46:10-11; Ephesians 1:9-10; Philippians 2:9-11)

5. Despite apparent destruction, the church will endure and lead a revival. (Matthew 16:18; Revelation 2:10; Revelation 7:9-10)

6. Satan opposes God and tries to undermine faith, but believers will ultimately triumph through Jesus. (1 Peter 5:8-9; Revelation 12:11; Romans 16:20)

7. God's wrath won't target Christians; they are secured by the Holy Spirit's seal. (Romans 8:38-39; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:9)

8. The future blessings for believers will outweigh present sufferings. (Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; Revelation 21:4)

9. Judgment will come, bringing justice and vindication. (Romans 2:5-6; Revelation 20:11-15; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7)

10. Christ's imminent return is the hope for believers. (Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 22:20)

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Discussion Questions

- 1. Reflecting on the New heavens and New Earth:** In Revelation 21-22, John describes the vision of the new heavens and new earth. What aspects of this vision resonate with you the most? How does this vision inspire hope and encouragement in your life?
- 2. Comparing Present Sufferings with Future Glory:** Paul writes in Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." How does this verse relate to the descriptions of the new heavens and new earth in Revelation 21-22? How can meditating on the future glory impact our perspective on present trials?
- 3. The Fulfillment of God's Promises:** Revelation 21-22 depicts the fulfillment of many promises made by God throughout Scripture. Reflect on some of these promises and how they find their ultimate fulfillment in the new creation. How does understanding the fulfillment of God's promises deepen your trust in him?
- 4. The Role of the Church in the New Creation:** Revelation portrays the New Jerusalem as a symbol of the redeemed community—the church. How does this imagery emphasize the importance of community and fellowship among believers? In what ways can we strive to embody the characteristics of the New Jerusalem in our Christian communities today?
- 5. Anticipating Christ's Return:** Revelation 22 concludes with the repeated affirmation, "Surely, I am coming soon" (Revelation 22:20). How does this statement impact our daily lives as believers? How can we live in anticipation of Christ's return while faithfully carrying out our responsibilities in the present world?
- 6. The Elimination of Evil and Suffering:** Revelation 21-22 describes the absence of pain, suffering, and evil in the new heavens and new earth. Reflect on the significance of this eradication of evil. How does the promise of a world without suffering shape our understanding of God's character and his ultimate victory over evil?
- 7. Eternal Worship and Communion with God:** Revelation 21-22 depicts a continuous state of worship and communion with God in the new creation. How does this portrayal influence our understanding of worship? How can we cultivate a lifestyle of worship and intimacy with God in our present lives?
- 8. Living as Citizens of the New Jerusalem:** As believers, we are called to live as citizens of the kingdom of God, anticipating the realities of the new heavens and new earth. How does this perspective challenge us to live differently in the world today? What practical steps can we take to align our lives more closely with the values and principles of the eternal kingdom described in Revelation 21-22?