

## Lesson 9 Revelation

---

### I Background Information for Bible Study Leaders

#### A Information for Lessons:

Scripture: Revelation 21-22

Main Focus: Renewal and joy for the universe

Hebrew Scriptures: Isaiah 54; Ezekiel 37:27; Genesis 2:9; Ezekiel 47: 1-12; Isaiah 43:19; Isaiah 65:17

Major images and meaning:

New Jerusalem- a bride of the Lamb (Jesus) – God’s Holy City

Tree of Life – Healing for the nations

River of Life – Renewal for all

Hymns in scripture: Rev. 21: 3-4

### B Main points for Revelation.

#### **Lesson Nine**

#### **Journey Into the New Jerusalem**

Our journey through *Revelation* comes to completion in the vision-tour of the second city, the city of blessing, God’s New Jerusalem. This vision is the very opposite of Armageddon. The New Jerusalem is an earth-centered image of beauty and healing. This vision fulfills the people’s longings for safety and peace with God. It invites us to see ourselves as citizens already of this city, and to live our lives in terms of this vision of hope. This is a vision that transforms the way we live our lives each day. As our journey comes to an end, we come to see our own cities in light of God’s vision of healing (RP 71) (LP 115).

#### **Here Comes the Bride ((RP 72) (LP 116-117)**

In *Revelation 21–22*, we see a vision of the bride, the wife of the Lamb, as a wondrous, radiant city, a place of welcome and renewal for the whole world.

## Lesson 9 Revelation

---

### **Everything Is “New” (RP 72) (LP 117)**

Newness is an image of resurrection and renewal. The Greek word for the “new” earth in *Revelation 21* can mean either “renewed” or “new,” but it does not mean a completely different earth. The earth becomes “new” just as our bodies will be resurrected, though they still are our bodies.

### **Rapture in Reverse: God Dwells With Us on Earth (RP 72–73) (LP 118-119)**

- Unique to *Revelation* is that the heavenly city does not stay up in heaven. It comes down out of heaven to earth, offering a place of welcome and home to all of God’s people. A fundamental example of apocalyptic hope is this message we find at the end of *Revelation*: God is coming to make a home among us. As we come out of empire, God comes to us.
- This vision fulfills the people’s deep longings for a dwelling with God; the promise of God’s dwelling among us recalls God’s “tabernacling” with Israel in the wilderness, following the exodus. There will be no temple in God’s new city, for the presence of God and the Lamb will be the temple or tabernacle.
- It is to the earth that God makes a commitment in *Revelation*. Earth is the location of salvation.

### **The Contrast to Rome (RP 73–74) (LP 119-120)**

- The declarations of “no more” in *Revelation 21:1* and *4* show the ways this mystical city of beauty and love is the opposite of the toxic political economy and ecology of Rome/Babylon that was destroyed in Chapters 17–18. Rome brought famine and violence. New Jerusalem’s tree of life bears fruit each month for people who are hungry.
- Even in the midst of hopeful scenes, the warnings and threats continue. The goal of [such] threats is not to predict who will be saved and who will not. *Revelation* does not predestine anyone for damnation. The goal, rather, is to persuade. John wants to wake us up to be faithful to the vision of God and the Lamb.

### **Touring the City—The Tree of Life and the River of Life (RP 74–75) (LP 120-121)**

- New Jerusalem is a welcoming place; foreigners are invited to enter into the radiant city whose lamp is the Lamb, Jesus.

## Lesson 9 Revelation

---

- The throne of God, which was in heaven in *Revelation 4*, is now located on earth, at the center of the beloved city. The river flows out from the throne of God. The vision of verdant green space and God’s river of life draws on the prophet Ezekiel’s vision of a wondrous, tree-lined river flowing out from the temple (*Ezek. 47:1–12*). Everyone is free to drink from the river. Water flows “as a gift”—that is, without payment or price, even for those who have no money.
- On either side of the river grows the tree of life. This is imagery from the Garden of Eden, now recreated in the center of a thriving urban landscape. The leaves of the tree are medicine. The leaves of the tree bring the healing of the nations.

### **The New Jerusalem Vision and the Healing of Our World (RP 75) (LP 122-123)**

While New Jerusalem is a vision of our life with God after death, it also holds promise and hope for *this* world, for Jerusalem and other war-torn cities. The heart of the message of *Revelation* is not that God plans to destroy our world, but that God’s desire is to heal. *Revelation* calls upon people to live as citizens of God’s New Jerusalem even now, right in the heart of empire. These glimpses of a renewed earth can inspire and motivate us to undertake the exodus journey out of the unsustainable ways of empire, to live as citizens of God’s renewed world.

### **Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End (RP 75–76) (LP 123-125)**

- Listening to *Revelation* being read aloud in the worship service, early Christians traveled with John on a life-changing apocalyptic journey. They traveled up to heaven, to see the throne of God and the Lamb. They witnessed conflict and victory, and they endured. Their journey of worship now comes to a close. As they come back from behind the apocalyptic veil, as they gather around the Eucharistic table, worshipers now see their own cities in a new and deeper way.
- Throughout its twenty-two chapters, *Revelation* invites us to drink deeply from its metaphors of promise and warning, vision and blessing. It is a book not of judgment but of justice, of radical hope for the world’s future. God is with us through every beginning and every ending, our Alpha and Omega. That is the promise of *Revelation*. God’s people gather around the throne of the Lamb, along the river, beneath the healing tree of life, singing “Amen! Come, Lord Jesus

## Lesson 9 Revelation

---

### **C Lesson Summaries**

#### **Lesson Nine: Journey into the New Jerusalem**

Our journey through *Revelation* comes to completion in the vision-tour of the second city, the city of blessing, God's New Jerusalem. John shows us each detail of the new city so we can taste and see and experience the landscape of God's renewed world. This vision is the very opposite of Armageddon. The New Jerusalem is an earth-centered image of beauty and healing. In this lesson, we will come to the awesome recognition that God is coming to us. This vision fulfills the people's longings for safety and peace with God. It invites us to see ourselves as citizens already of this wondrous city, and to live our lives in terms of this powerful vision of hope. This is a vision that transforms the way we live our lives each day. As our journey comes to an end, we now come to see our own cities in light of God's wondrous vision of healing.

### **D Suggested hymn from Workshop for Leaders**

"O Holy City, Seen of John"

This hymn serves as a wonderful summary of this Bible study and as a challenge for our response. Invite participants to sing it or read it in unison, listening for the challenge to act. Then ask, "What will you do now that we have explored *The Revelation to John* (of Patmos)? Can we remain the same?"

### **E Hand-outs for Lesson**

Copy of O Holy City, Seen of John

Handout #1 Seven Beatitudes from Book of Revelation

Handout #2 New Jerusalem- A Realtor's Report and A Doctor's Report.

### **II Additional Information for the Lesson**

The "Tree of Life" symbolizes life and salvation in scripture. It can be found in Genesis 2:9, 3:22, 24 and Revelation 2:7; 22:2, 14. It is also in Proverbs 13:18; 11:30; 13:12; and 15:4. Different versions of the Bible express the phrase in

## Lesson 9 Revelation

---

different words: the tree of life---  
one of the trees gave life  
the tree that gives life  
the tree that lets them live forever  
the life-giving tree

### **III Another suggested Lesson Guide:**

#### **Lesson Outline**

Opening Devotion (RP 77) (LP 126)

Eyewitness News Program 9

Use the Main points to discuss the sections of the lesson.

Close with the last 3 paragraphs (RP 76) (LP 124-125) that begins “ if Revelation is a journey, then this final----“

Handouts

Sing suggested hymn

Closing Prayer (RP 76) (LP 125)

## Lesson 9 Revelation

---

### Lesson Nine Handout One

#### Seven Beatitudes from the Book of

- 1) —Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.
- 2) —Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord.
- 3) —Blessed is the one who stays awake and is clothed, not going about naked and exposed to shame.
- 4) —Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.
- 5) —Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection.
- 6) —Blessed is the one who keep the words of the prophecy of this book.
- 7) —Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.

## Lesson 9 Revelation

---

### Lesson Nine Handout Two

#### **New Jerusalem—A Realtor’s Report**

Your task is to read *Revelation 21:1–22:5* as a realtor would. What you are looking for is a physical description of the New Jerusalem as if it were a piece of real estate that you were planning to put on the market. You do not need to list details such as the names of the jewels on every gate, but try to summarize details.

Write a description of this ideal piece of property in a way that “sells” it to all who have ears to hear.

## Lesson 9 Revelation

---

### **New Jerusalem—A Doctor’s Report on the Spiritual and Physical Condition of the Saints**

Your task is to read *Revelation 21:1–22:5* as a doctor would, except you are physicians of the soul as well as the body. What you are looking for is a description of the physical and spiritual state of those who inhabit the New Jerusalem. It might be helpful for half of your group to scan the passage looking for physical characteristics, while the other half notes spiritual ones. Feel free to summarize material. Write your doctor’s report so that all who have ears to hear will listen.

Spiritual characteristics of inhabitants

Physical characteristics of inhabitants

## Lesson 9 Revelation

---

### O Holy City, Seen of John

1. O holy city, seen of John, where Christ, the Lamb, does reign,  
Within whose four-square walls shall come no night, nor need, nor pain,  
And where the tears are wiped from eyes that shall not weep again!

2. O shame to us who rest content while lust and greed for gain  
In street and shop and tenement wring gold from human pain,  
And bitter lips in blind despair cry, "Christ has died in vain!"

3. Give us, O God, the strength to build the city that has stood  
Too long a dream, whose laws are love, whose ways are servant-hood,  
And where the sun that shines becomes God's grace for human good.

4. Already in the mind of God that city rises fair,  
Lo, how its splendor challenges the souls that greatly dare,  
And bids us seize the whole of life and build its glory there.