

All Things New - The Big Guide

Revelation 17 – 22 (June 28 – August 30)

How to Use This Guide

1. There is one set of questions that can be used for each week.
2. We've included additional information for each passage to help with the discussion.
3. It is helpful to listen to a sermon before your discussion! You can also look at *Discipleship on the Edge* by Darrell Johnson. If you still feel stuck, feel free to reach out to Jon, Meredith, or Tim!¹
4. Remember to enjoy the summer! Maybe meet outside, or have ice cream, or chat at the beach. Lean into the summer as you dive into the last part of Revelation!

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All Things New – Weekly Guide

1. How are we all doing? (*High, Low & Buffalo*)

- i. High – What was a high point in your week? What was good or went well?
- ii. Low – What was a low point in your week? What was a challenge, disappointment, or struggle?
- iii. Buffalo – What was something interesting, random, or different that happened this week?

2. Can someone read the passage for this week? Try to read a little *slower* than usual. For the rest of us, try to imagine what John saw as we listen. Can we “see” what we hear?

Date	Passage
28-Jun-26	Revelation 17 - Babylon
05-Jul-26	Revelation 21:22-25 – Jesus is the Light (Move Camp)
12-Jul-26	Revelation 18-19:10 - Fallen Babylon
19-Jul-26	Revelation 19:11-21 - King of Kings
26-Jul-26	Revelation 20:1-10 - The Thousand Years
02-Aug-26	Revelation 20:11-15 - The Great White Throne
09-Aug-26	Revelation 21:1-8 - A New Heaven and New Earth
16-Aug-26	Revelation 21:9-27 - A New Jerusalem
23-Aug-26	Revelation 22:1-5 - The River of Life & the Tree of Life
30-Aug-26	Revelation 22:6-21 - Jesus is Coming Soon

3. What images stuck out to you from what you heard? What questions does it bring up?

4. If you heard the sermon this week, what helped you understand or apply this passage?

5. Can someone read the summary of this week’s passage?

Find the summary for this passage and read it out loud.

6. If there is a key Old Testament connection this week, can someone read that?

The Old Testament connection (if there is one) is at the end of the summary.

7. Choose a couple of questions to discuss:

- a) What does this passage show us about God?*
- b) What does this passage show us about the church or the world?*
- c) What does this passage show us about my life, or the people in my life?*
- d) What are you encouraged to keep doing, saying, or believing?*
- e) What are you challenged to change what you are doing, saying, or believing?*
- f) What is one big idea for you to hang on to this week?*
- g) Where does this passage feel particularly relevant to your life right now?*
- h) Where does this passage **not** feel relevant to your life?*
- i) What gives you hope, joy, or strength as you look to this coming week?*
- j) Where do you feel discouraged or weary as you look to this coming week?*

8. Thanks for sharing, everyone! Let's take some time to pray for each other.

9. Thanks everyone! Our next meeting is _____. Who would like to lead, bring snack, send a reminder, etc.?

Revelation 17

Summary

The Great Prostitute is another name used for Babylon. Throughout Revelation, the 'Prostitute' is contrasted to the 'Bride of Christ.' Their difference is faithfulness: the Bride is faithful to Jesus, while the Prostitute pursues significance and intimacy elsewhere. As the 'Mother of Prostitutes,' she represents the systems, people, and governments that opposed God and the coming of His Kingdom, as well as everything that *will* oppose God and His Kingdom. Her opposition is not just ideas but persecuting Jesus' followers until she is 'drunk with the blood of God's holy people' (v. 6).

The Prostitute 'sitting on the waters' (v. 15) shows how Babylon's influences nations, cultures, and people around the globe. The beast represents the political and spiritual powers that uphold the cultural corruption of Babylon. By 'supporting' her, they enable her to work against all that God wants to do. The 'seven hills' (v. 9) might reference the seven hills on which Rome was built, but Rome was certainly not the last Babylon!

The horns represent actual kings (v. 12). While they could refer to specific nations or specific Roman rulers, we want to avoid speculation as to who they are! Instead, we can understand them as political leaders who support Babylon and oppose the Lamb. They are in charge for 'one hour' (just a short moment) but are defeated. The defeat does not come through combat, violence, or an election, but simply because the Lamb is "Lord of Lords and King of Kings" (v. 14). Evil's ultimate defeat happens simply because the Lamb is the Lamb!

The angel then tells John that the beast and horns will turn on the prostitute and devour her. While God's Kingdom will last forever, evil will eventually 'implode' as it devours itself.

OT Connection

Genesis 11:1-9. "Babylon" comes from the word "Babel," and symbolizes humanity's efforts to 'make a name for themselves.' In other words, a group of people who work hard to earn significance, power, and accomplishment independent of God.

How does Babel help us better understand Babylon? Where do you find yourself tempted to accomplish things for yourself rather than depending on God?

MOVE Camp Sunday – Jesus is the Light! (Revelation 21:22-25)

1. Isaiah 9:2 promises that those living in ‘deep darkness’ would see a ‘great light.’ This light is Jesus! If we’ve lived in the light for a while, we can forget how dark the darkness was.

Take a moment to reflect on your life before Jesus, or what life is like for you when you don't rely on Jesus. What does 'deep darkness' look like for you?

2. Our theme verse for Move Camp this year was John 8:12. *Can someone read this verse?*

When have you encountered Jesus most clearly?

3. Over time we can forget what God has done for us. We feel like we’ve always been in the light! *Can someone read Deuteronomy 6:10-12?*

Do you ever find yourself forgetting what Jesus has done for you?

How do you remind yourself to live a life of gratefulness?

4. Jesus doesn't just shine a light into the darkness, but He invites us into the Kingdom of Light! *Can someone read Revelation 21:22-25?*

5. Revelation 21 talks about how people will encounter God as a person and not in a building, that the nations will live according to the way of Jesus, that there will be safety and security ('no gate will be shut'), that there will be no crime, brokenness, or deceit.

How have you seen or experienced an 'appetizer' of these things?

Which of these things are you most eager to fully experience?

Revelation 18 – 19:10

Summary

Chapter 18 describes the fall of Babylon, which will happen in just ‘one hour,’ or very quickly. From a historical perspective, this could describe the fall of Rome. As a nation, Rome ruled much of the world for centuries but fell in only a week. Rome is an example of the influence of Babylon, but it was not the only Babylon. Chapter 17 reminded us that Babylon ‘sits on the waters’ and influences people around the world. Revelation 18 doesn’t just talk about the fall of Rome but about the final downfall of all systems, powers, and governments that oppose God and the coming of His kingdom

In Revelation 6:9-11, those who had been killed because of their faithfulness to Jesus cry out, “How long, O Lord, until you judge the earth and avenge our blood?” Here we see the answer: the ‘great multitude’ in Heaven (Revelation 19:1) is the gathered, redeemed people of God who praise God for ‘avenging the blood of His servants.’ Chapters 7 – 18 were full of difficult images and we don’t understand everything that we read. However, it was a long journey of justice that started with the prayers of God’s people and now it is complete. We might not understand how it happened, or why it happened this way, but we can see that justice has been served and it is time for the wedding, so we say ‘Hallelujah!’²

The wedding of the Lamb (v. 7) symbolizes the loving unity between God and His people. Throughout the Bible God’s relationship with His people is compared to the love between a husband and wife, and here we see it come into being! The ‘fine linen’ (v. 8) is the righteous acts of God’s holy people, which it was also ‘given,’ symbolizing how our righteousness is not simply our good works but God’s gift to us.

In Revelation 16:9 & 11, people experience the plagues and yet ‘do not repent.’ In Revelation 18:4, God’s people are commanded to come out of Babylon so that you will not share in her sins [and] so that you will not receive any of her plagues’ (v. 4). In *Discipleship on the Edge*, Darrell Johnson gives seven marks of Babylon (p. 321):

1. Living without God in the equation – Who or what do we trust to make everything OK in our lives?
2. Sensuality (Rev. 17:2, 4) – Do we spend our lives in the pursuit of pleasure?
3. Injustice (e.g. the selling of slaves, Rev. 18:13) – Do we care about how our goods and services are produced or provided?
4. The Worship of Products (e.g. Rev. 18:16) – How often do we “need” the next new thing?
5. Violence (e.g. Rev. 18:24) – Do we use violence as a tool to get what we want?
6. Deception and Counterfeit (e.g. the parody of Jesus’ resurrection in Rev. 17:8) – Can we discern between what is truly of Jesus and what is not?
7. Idolatry (e.g. Babylon glorifying herself in Rev. 18:7) – Am I the most important person in my life?

Choose a couple of these characteristics of Babylon.

Which do you feel you encounter most often?

Which is most tempting for you?

Where might you need to ‘come out’ of Babylon?

² It is interesting that Revelation 19 is the only place that ‘Hallelujah’ appears in the New Testament. What a moment!

Revelation 19:11-21

Summary

In verse 11, Heaven is 'standing open' and we see Jesus described as a rider on a white horse who rules the nations with an iron scepter. He judges and wages war *with justice*, which is different from the rider on the white horse in Revelation 6:2 who was simply 'bent on conquest.' Jesus has a name written on Him that nobody knows and His robes are drenched in blood, but the army riding with Him is wearing white. These remind us of the letters to the churches where those who are victorious will rule the nations with Jesus (2:26-29), will have a new name that nobody knows (2:17, 3:12), and are dressed in white (3:5, 3:18). In other words, we see a picture of the victorious church riding with Jesus!

Though we're not 100% sure, verses 17-21 seem to be a picture of the nations (symbolizing everyone opposed to God and His Kingdom) gathered at Armageddon for the battle first mentioned in Revelation 16:14 & 16. However, both the beast and the false prophet are captured and thrown into the lake of sulphur, which is the place of final defeat and destruction of evil. The rest of the army is killed 'with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse' (v. 21). This might mean that they're literally slain, or that the spoken 'Word of God' (v. 13) is enough for victory. In any case, the battle never seems to happen – Jesus is victorious simply because He is Jesus. As followers of Jesus, we can place our trust for justice in Jesus, knowing He will make all things new.

Old Testament Connections

Isaiah 63:1-6 describes God's judgment of the nations like someone stepping on grapes in a winepress, and Ezekiel 43:1-7 describes a similar picture to Revelation 19 – the loving union of God with His people.

Can someone read each of those passages? What similarities or differences help us understand Rev. 19?

Revelation 20:1-10

Summary

We don't know a lot about the Abyss, but it seems to be an evil place full of evil things. Locusts came from it (Revelation 9:1-3), a group of demons didn't want to go to it (Luke 8:31), and here we see the devil thrown into it 'for a thousand years' (v. 3), where he cannot deceive the nations for that time.

There is a lot of debate around the thousand years, often called 'The Millenium.' Is it literally one thousand years that have a start and end time? Is it a season of political prosperity and peace? Does it simply represent 10x10x10, meaning 'a long time?' Is it a figurative description of a spiritual reality? Who will be raised to life, and what will it look like when they reign?

We're not really sure, and don't want to get lost in speculation. Whatever else it may be, the Millenium reminds us that the devil's authority is subject to God, the best is yet to come, followers of Jesus will experience everything good that Jesus has for us, and that the future is not in our hands but is firmly in Jesus' control. We might not agree on what will happen or when it will take place, but we can be confident that the faithful followers of Jesus will not miss out on anything Jesus has in store for us.

At the end of the thousand years (whenever those may be), the devil is released for a time and gathers the nations for another battle. Gog and Magog are references to Ezekiel 38 and 39 and are used as symbols of those who oppose God and His Kingdom. This may or may not be the same battle mentioned in chapter 19, but the result is the same: the nations are defeated and the devil is thrown in the lake of burning sulphur. This defeat doesn't happen through military strength, policy change, or an election, but 'fire from Heaven' (v. 9) devours them.

Revelation 20:11-15

Summary

After the battle and the thousand years is the time of judgment in front of the Great White Throne. Every person who has ever lived will stand and give an account of their lives. As 2 Cor. 5:10 says, “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” This should not cause fear. When we look back through Revelation at the descriptions of the throne (chapters 4, 7, 8, 11, 16, 19), we always *hear* of God’s redemption, and we *see* the redeemed people of God. God has redeemed His people!

One set of books has a record of everything everyone has ever done (Rev. 20:12). Based on this book alone, no one would be saved! However, there is another book. The Lamb’s book of life is a list of everyone who followed the Lamb (v. 15; Rev. 13:8), and Jesus references this book in Luke 10:20. Our salvation is not earned with good works, but through what Jesus has done.

Whether the lake in v. 14 is a literal lake or a picture of final destruction, the end result is the same – Death and Hades are fully and finally defeated. (‘Hades’ is not the Greek god Hades but refers to the grave.) Those whose names are not written in the book of life are thrown into the fire.

This is one of the most emotionally challenging images in Revelation. God is the just judge of the earth who will deal with everything that causes brokenness (15:3, 16:7, 19:2), and also the redeemer of people from ‘every tribe and language and people and nation’ (5:9). In other words, God is both the one who judges sin and also provides the way to escape judgment. Revelation 20 is a powerful picture of both the justice and mercy of God.

Revelation 21:1-8

Summary

Revelation 21 describes the end (and beginning) of all things. The last chapters of Revelation finish in the same way that Genesis began – with creation! The new heaven and new earth represent all things being made new. The lack of sea is not about geography but about God’s rule and reign. In the Bible, people often saw the sea as the place where chaos and evil powers reigned. The lack of a sea is a picture of how God conquered evil and brought order into chaos. It shows that things as they should be.

Revelation was written to people who lived in cities, and verse 2 gives a picture of a new city – the new Jerusalem. Revelation was likely written in 96 AD and Jerusalem was destroyed in 70AD, so the arrival of a new Jerusalem would have been very significant. This new city is a picture of God restoring what was lost and establishing His Kingdom. However, this new city isn’t some paradise built by people; it is coming down from heaven. We don’t build the city, we receive it, just as we are received into it.

The city is described as a bride, unlike the city of Babylon, which is described as a prostitute. The new Jerusalem is marked by her faithfulness to Jesus, just like “those who are victorious” (v. 7) are known by their faithfulness.³ The words written here are ‘trustworthy and true’ (v. 5), which means that they need to shape our lives. What we do, say, and believe need to be founded on these words and impacted by this truth.

Verses 3-5 are among the most beautiful of all the Bible and are often read at funerals or celebrations of life. They remind us that the life we are living now is not the life we will experience for eternity.

Verse 8 echoes the challenging image of 20:15 – those who are ‘consigned to the fiery lake.’ These are not people who had a bad day or have a checkered past. It’s not those who are imperfect or make mistakes. Rather, this verse talks about those whose lives are characterized by sin, selfishness, and brokenness. Paul describes these things as ‘acts of the flesh’ and warns the Galatian church that, “those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:21).

Old Testament Connections

Isaiah 65:17-25 describes a vision of when God would restore all things. Read it through and compare it to Revelation 21. What sticks out to you in this description?

³ In Revelation, those who are ‘victorious’ or ‘overcome’ usually means ‘those who are faithful.’

Revelation 21:9-27

Summary

This is one of those parts of the Bible where we can might be tempted to skim and move on. There's a lot of measurements, gates, tribes, and precious stones. However, this isn't a throwaway moment – it's a picture of the new Jerusalem (v. 10), also described as 'the bride, the wife of the Lamb' (v. 9)! We might not understand every detail, but the extravagance is undeniable: a 2,200km cube city made of pure gold and precious jewels, which was about the same size. (For comparison, this is about the combined size of BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut).

John doesn't use kilometers to measure the city, but *stadia*, and he describes it as 12,000 stadia. Like the rest of Revelation, numbers have meaning: '12' symbolizes complete (12 tribes & 12 apostles) and '1,000' is a symbol for 'a lot.' In other words, the city is 'a lot of completeness.' The walls are 144 cubits thick, or 12x12, meaning 'fully complete.'

John points out that that there is no temple (v. 22) in the city, which would have been jaw-dropping for a Jewish audience. Strangely enough, the fact that the city is described as a cube (v. 16) brings some clarity. In 1 Kings 6:20, Solomon builds the Temple and one part of the Temple is described as a cube: the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies was where God's presence was. Only the High Priest could enter, and he could only do so once a year.

In the new Jerusalem, also described as a cube, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb *are* the Temple. In other words, God's presence is not limited to one part of one building for one person one day a year, but it fills the city! Everyone in the city lives within the presence of God, and the nations are welcome to join (v. 26), though only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 22:1-5

Summary

There are two accounts of creation given in Genesis 1 and 2, after which humanity was empowered to 'rule the earth' (Genesis 1:28). However, in Genesis 3 we see the fall of mankind: Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, bringing sin, death, and the curse into the world. God removes Adam & Eve from Eden so that they cannot 'take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever' (Genesis 3:22). This is the world in which we live now, full of brokenness, sin, death, and the curse.

Revelation 22 calls back the image of Eden, but a new Eden, an Eden that has been fully restored. The tree of life is no longer out of reach. There is no curse. There is healing for the nations. People live in the presence of God, and the people of God are invited once again to rule 'forever and ever' (v. 5).

OT Connection

The image of the river and the tree both appear in Ezekiel 47:1-12. This is another description of God's restoration of all things and the way of life that springs up as a result.

Can someone read this passage?

How do the similarities and differences help us understand Revelation?

Revelation 22:6-21

Summary

Revelation 22:6 reminds us that all these words we have read are ‘trustworthy & true.’ Jesus says that the ‘one who keeps the words’ is blessed. ‘Keeps the words’ means to change how we live based on what we have heard. In other words, they are worth building our lives on. They aren’t just good to hear and helpful to understand, but they require a response in what we do, say, and believe. As we come to the end of Revelation, have we been shaped by what we have heard? Do we continue to be shaped?

The time for our response is limited! In Revelation 1:3 and 22:10, we are told that ‘the time is near.’ Twice in this passage (v. 7, 20), Jesus says He is “coming soon.” However, hasn’t it been almost 2,000 years? How can that be ‘soon?’

Darrell Johnson explains that it is *always* ‘soon.’⁴ Jesus knew there would be a period of time between His life on earth and His return. He talked about nations and kingdoms rising, of wars and false messiahs and earthquakes and persecution (e.g. Matthew 24:1-35). He also talked about the importance of being faithful, even when you don’t know how long you need to be faithful for (e.g. Matthew 24:36-51). The time is always near, and we are called to continue to be faithful.

Faithfulness is our response to Jesus, which is represented by the washing of robes. In response, Jesus is bringing His reward with Him and will ‘give to each person according to what they have done’ (v. 12).

The warning not to add or remove words could be as simple as not adding to the scroll that John wrote as the letter was passed from church to church, or a broader warning not to add or remove to the words of Jesus as a whole. In either case, we want to hold to these words as ‘trustworthy and true.’

The last title Jesus gives Himself is ‘the bright Morning Star.’ This star appears around 2 or 3 in the morning, in the darkest point of the night, and it signals the beginning of the night’s end. The morning has not yet come, but it is on the way.

We join with the people of God who have prayed for generations: ‘Come Lord Jesus!’

⁴ This is not a completely bizarre idea! Recent discoveries in relativity and quantum mathematics are changing our understanding of time. We might one day understand the math behind what Jesus meant!