

THE  
BOOK  
OF  
REVELATION

2017 STUDY NOTES

PART 3

## Getting Started

At great cost, God has made the way for us to approach him anytime in Jesus name. As such, in taking advantage of this immense privilege, as a church family we are committed to beginning and ending in prayer.

So, as we come to each of these studies lets remember to begin and end in prayer.

In these chapters we meet two important women: the mysterious Babylon-prostitute and the Bride of the Lamb.

### *Babylon in the Bible*

Way back in Genesis 11, "Babel" is painted as the centre of world opposition to God. It was in Babel that men decided to "build a tower" to storm into heaven, so they could run things for themselves. Much later, it was in Babylon where the people of Israel were exiled after the fall of Jerusalem. Babylon was rich, arrogant... and very, very seductive. But here in Revelation 17 and 18, we meet another Babylon.

Read Revelation 17-18 below.

*One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. 2 With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."*

*3 Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. 5 This title was written on her forehead:*

**MYSTERY  
BABYLON THE GREAT  
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES  
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

*6 I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. 7 Then the*

angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. 8 The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.

9 "This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. 10 They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. 11 The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.

12 "The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. 13 They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. 14 They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."

15 Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. 16 The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17 For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled. 18 The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

18:1 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendour. 2 With a mighty voice he shouted:

*"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!  
She has become a home for demons  
and a haunt for every evil spirit,  
a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird.*

*3 For all the nations have drunk  
the maddening wine of her adulteries.  
The kings of the earth committed adultery with her,  
and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries."*

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven say:

*"Come out of her, my people,  
so that you will not share in her sins,  
so that you will not receive any of her plagues;  
5 for her sins are piled up to heaven,*

and God has remembered her crimes.  
6 Give back to her as she has given;  
pay her back double for what she has done.  
Mix her a double portion from her own cup.  
7 Give her as much torture and grief  
as the glory and luxury she gave herself.  
In her heart she boasts,  
'I sit as queen; I am not a widow,  
and I will never mourn.'  
8 Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her:  
death, mourning and famine.  
She will be consumed by fire,  
for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.

9 "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her  
luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. 10  
Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry:

" 'Woe! Woe, O great city,  
O Babylon, city of power!  
In one hour your doom has come!'

11 "The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys  
their cargoes any more - 12 cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine  
linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every  
kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; 13 cargoes of cinnamon  
and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour  
and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men.

14 "They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and  
splendour have vanished, never to be recovered.' 15 The merchants who sold  
these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her  
torment. They will weep and mourn 16 and cry out:

" 'Woe! Woe, O great city,  
dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet,  
and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls!

17 In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!

"Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their  
living from the sea, will stand far off. 18 When they see the smoke of her burning,  
they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a city like this great city?' 19 They will throw dust  
on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out:

" 'Woe! Woe, O great city,  
where all who had ships on the sea  
became rich through her wealth!  
In one hour she has been brought to ruin!  
20 Rejoice over her, O heaven!

*Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets!  
God has judged her for the way she treated you.”*

21 *Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said:*

*“With such violence  
the great city of Babylon will be thrown down,  
never to be found again.*

22 *The music of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters,  
will never be heard in you again.*

*No workman of any trade  
will ever be found in you again.*

*The sound of a millstone  
will never be heard in you again.*

23 *The light of a lamp  
will never shine in you again.*

*The voice of bridegroom and bride  
will never be heard in you again.*

*Your merchants were the world’s great men.*

*By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.*

24 *In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints,  
and of all who have been killed on the earth.”*

### *Some background*

As a Jew living in the heyday of Rome, we would expect John to draw on both the Old Testament Scriptures and Roman culture and civilisation in the descriptions of the visions God gave him. And the great Babylon-prostitute of these chapters is no exception. As mentioned earlier, the Old Testament has many references to Babylon, and John clearly alludes to these. See the table below for some of those allusions.

<i>Revelation 17:1 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters.”</i>	<i>Jeremiah 51:12-13 The LORD will carry out his purpose, his decree against the people of Babylon. You who live by many waters....</i>
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<p><i>Revelation 17:2-4</i>  <i>With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries. ... The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries.</i></p> <p><i>Revelation 18:3</i>  <i>For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries.</i></p>	<p><i>Jeremiah 51:7</i>  <i>Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD'S hand; she made the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore they have now gone mad.</i></p>
<p><i>Revelation 18:2</i>  <i>"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!"</i></p>	<p><i>Jeremiah 51:8</i>  <i>Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken.</i></p>
<p><i>Revelation 18:2-6</i>  <i>"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! ...</i>  <i>3 For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her,</i>  <i>and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries."</i>  <i>5 ...God has remembered her crimes.</i>  <i>6 Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done.</i>  <i>Mix her a double portion from her own cup."</i></p>	<p><i>Jeremiah 25:12-27</i>  <i>"... I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt," declares the LORD, ... 14 "They themselves will be enslaved by many nations and great kings; I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands." 15 This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. 16 When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad because of the sword I will send among them."</i>  <i>17 So I took the cup from the LORD'S hand and made all the nations to whom he sent me drink it ... 27 "Then tell them, 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Drink, get drunk and vomit, and fall to rise no more because of the sword I will send among you.'</i></p>

**Revelation 17:3-6**

... I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast ... 6 I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.

**Revelation 18:7-8**

In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' 8 Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine.

**Revelation 18:21-23**

... With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. ... 23 ... By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.

**Isaiah 47:1-12**

"Go down, sit in the dust, Virgin Daughter of Babylon ... 5 Sit in silence, go into darkness, Daughter of the Babylonians; no more will you be called queen of kingdoms. ...

7 You said, 'I will continue forever - the eternal queen!' ...

8 "Now then, listen, you wanton creature, lounging in your security and saying to yourself, 'I am, and there is none besides me. I will never be a widow or suffer the loss of children.'

9 Both of these will overtake you in a moment, on a single day: loss of children and widowhood.

They will come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and all your potent spells. ...

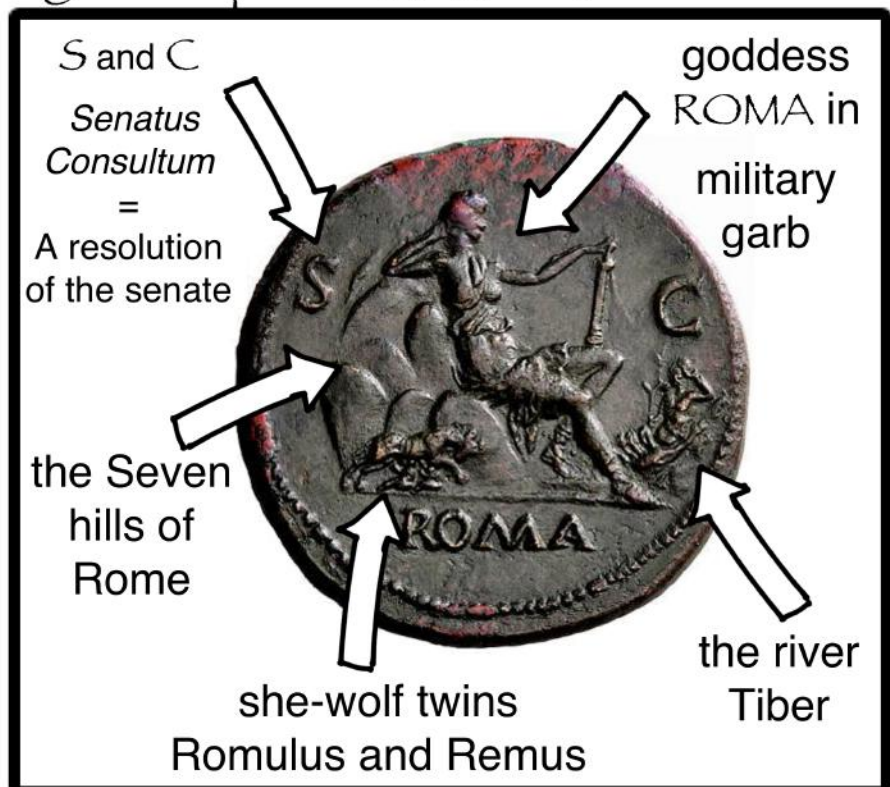
12 "Keep on, then, with your magic spells and with your many sorceries, which you have laboured at since childhood.

In concert with these Old Testament allusions, it is possible that John is alluding to Roman culture at the time. See the fun fact below.

71 AD Roman coin minted in the Roman province of Asia during the reign of Vespasian (69-79 AD)



IMP CAESAR  
VESPASIANVS AVG PM  
TP PP COS III  
=  
Emperor Caesar Vespasian  
Augustus, Pontifex  
Maximus, Tribunica  
Potestas [Tribunal Power],  
Pater Patriae [Father of the  
Fatherland], Consul for the  
third time



The subject of this coin was probably a well known sculpture or frieze and could also be what John had in mind when describing “the great Babylon-prostitute”. First up, its interesting to note the well known Roman legend of the infants Romulus and Remus being nursed by a she-wolf because the Latin term *lupa* means both “female wolf” and “prostitute”. Second, the river Tiber under the goddess Roma is personified and seems to correlate with “the great Babylon-prostitute” who “sits on many waters” (Rev 17:1 and 15). Third, the image of the goddess Roma seated on the seven hills is a striking link to the interpretation of the seven headed beast that “the great Babylon prostitute” sits upon in Rev. 17:9 - “the seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits.”

What is the effect of alluding to these Old Testament and Roman culture references?

What “this-world” reality do you think “the great Babylon-prostitute” is representing?

What is the strategy of this great Babylon-prostitute?

Where does “she” derive her power?

What does the future hold for “her”?

Who does John see as bringing the final undoing of the prostitute? (17:16) What sense can you make of this?



How will the kings of the world react? What will they miss most? (18:10)

What will the merchants say? What will they miss most? (18:16-17)

What will the transport workers union miss most? (18:18-20)

*Think through*

Give some practical examples of what it might look like for God's people today to "come out" (Rev 18:4) of this great Babylon-prostitute?

*Meet the Bride*

We've met the great prostitute, now we meet the great Bride.

Read Revelation 19:1-10 below

*After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:*

*"Hallelujah!*

*Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,  
for true and just are his judgments.*

2

*He has condemned the great prostitute  
who corrupted the earth by her adulteries.*

*He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”*

*3 And again they shouted:*

*“Hallelujah!*

*The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.”*

*4 The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried:*

*“Amen, Hallelujah!”*

*5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying:*

*“Praise our God,  
all you his servants,  
you who fear him,  
both small and great!”*

*6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:*

*“Hallelujah!*

*For our Lord God Almighty reigns.*

*7 Let us rejoice and be glad  
and give him glory!*

*For the wedding of the Lamb has come,  
and his bride has made herself ready.*

*8 Fine linen, bright and clean,  
was given her to wear.”*

*(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)*

*9 Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”*

*10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”*

What points of contrast are there between the woman in verse 2 and the woman in verses 7 and 8?

Who is the bride?

What are the defining characteristics of this bride?

*Meet the Groom*

Read Rev 19:11-21 below.

*I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron sceptre." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:*

*KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

*17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."*

*19 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. 20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. 21 The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.*

Who is the dashing figure on the white horse? (compare verse 11 with 3:14, verse 12 with 1:14, verse 15 with 1:16 and verse 16 with 1:5)

How is he armed?

Compare this with Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12, and Rev 2:12 and 16 below.

*Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*  
Eph. 6:17

*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.* Heb 4:12

*“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:  
These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. Rev 2:12*

*Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them  
with the sword of my mouth. Rev 2:16*

Re-read Revelation 19:21 above.

Penetrating beneath the symbolism, how is Christ going to strike down the nations?

What might this picture of Christ and the inevitable doom of all oppose him inspire believers to do? (see verse 10)

*Think it through*

Where do you find it hard to hold to and/or speak about the testimony of Jesus? Why?

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.

## The end and the new beginning

Revelation 20-22

## Getting Started

Don't forget to begin and end in prayer.

In the previous chapters, we have seen it's all over for the beast and his false-prophet sidekick. Now it's time to deal with Satan himself. Revelation 20:1-6 is a famous passage. Entire Christian denominations have been formed over views of the "millennium" mentioned here. Usually, though, they've lost sight of the symbolism inherent in Revelation.

Read Revelation 20:1-6 below.

*And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.*

*4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*

Retell the events of these six verses. What happens to Satan?

What can "bound" Satan no longer do?

What exactly might Satan be deceiving the nations about?

When and how does the first resurrection occur?

What might the thousand years in verses 2-6 be a reference to?

Bearing in mind that Gog and Magog in the following chapter (verse 8) are nations that the prophet Ezekiel singles out as representative of all the nations of the earth prophesied will gather against God's people for the final war of history (see Ezekiel 38-39, Zechariah 12-14 and Zephaniah 3), read Revelation 20:7-15 below.

*When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. 9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

*11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

How do these verses make you feel?

*To summarise*

Satan, cast down and bound, is unable to deceive the nations. Meanwhile, the Christ-figure gallops around the nations with his powerful Word, liberating people from Satan's bondage by the gospel. He is "robbing Satan's house" (see Mark 3:22-27) by setting free the nations to hear his Word. All of this happens for the period symbolically called "the thousand years" - a perfectly rounded amount of time. It's the time we live in right now! And at the end of the era, there's God's judgement on Satan, on death itself, and on those who prefer Satan's rule to the righteous rule of Christ. People will be judged according to

what they have done - but saved simply by being written in the "Lamb's Book of Life." Responding to the word of Christ in this life is a matter of life and death!

If this is the era we live in, what should we expect the sword of Christ's word to be achieving?

Read Ephesians 6:10-20 below.

*... be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*

What part are you taking in the battle? What are your fears?

Whatever our fears, the promise of keeping up the fight for Jesus in this world is to one day enjoy "the new heavens and the new earth", which chapters 21 and 22 go on to unpack.

Read Revelation 21 below.

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now*

*the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

*5 He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”*

*6 He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”*

*9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. 11 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. 14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

*15 The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. 16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. 17 He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man’s measurement, which the angel was using. 18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. 19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.*

*22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. 25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.*



The "new heavens and the new earth" are like Eden all over again, there's the great river and the tree of life. But now the curse is removed, and God's people live under his perfect rule forever. God's blessing to Abraham is fulfilled as "all the nations" take part in the great heavenly city - God dwells with them in person as he has long promised to do.

What is the significance of the fact that "the first earth had passed away and there was no longer any sea"? Can the present earth be fixed?

*Think about this...*

What future are philosophies and ideologies like Marxism and Humanism - even the ecological movement - looking forward to?

How does this differ from the Christian perspective?

Verse 3 shows the fulfilment of a promise God made long ago. See Genesis 17:7-8 and Leviticus 26:11-12 below.

***"I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."*** Genesis 17:7-8

***"I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. 12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people."*** Leviticus 26:11-12

*Think about it*

God told the Israelites to build a TABERNACLE, or "dwelling place" to symbolise his presence among them. Later, when they served in their promised land, they built the temple to symbolise the same thing. Look at Revelation 21:22. Why is there no temple in the heavenly Jerusalem?

The "bride beautifully dressed for her husband" is also the "new Jerusalem."(v2)

What do these images represent?

Verse 12 and 14 describe the gates and foundation stones of the city. What do the names written on them signify?

In chapter 21 who is invited into the city, and who is excluded.

Read God's promises to Abraham in Genesis 22:17-18 below.

*"I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."* Genesis 22:17-18

How is this fulfilled in Rev 21:24-27?

Read Revelation 22 below.

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.*

*6 The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."*

*7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."*

*8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. 9 But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"*

*10 Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. 11 Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy."*

*12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*

*14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*

*16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."*

*17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

*18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

*20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."  
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

*21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.*

Read the description of Eden in Genesis 2:8-12, and the curse in Genesis 3:22 below.

*Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

*10 A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. 11 The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.)* Genesis 2:8-12

*And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."* Genesis 3:22

What similarities can you see in these to John's description in Revelation 22:1-3?

What themes from our study of Revelation can you see mentioned in the concluding passage of the book (22:7-21)?

Jesus says he will give to everyone according to what they have done (22:12). What's the most important thing for us to do (v14)? What does this mean?

How should we feel about Jesus' promised return?

What should this prompt us to do?

List some ways to encourage doing this more often.

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.