

# ***FPFWC Christian Development***



## **The Great Hope of the Saints**

August 2022

Summer Quarter

**August 6, 2022**

## **Lesson #1 – A New Home**

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Revelation 21:1-9

### **ICE BREAKER** –

1. *What comes to mind when you hear the words, “a new home”?*
2. *What are some ways to use pain to grow spiritually?*
3. *How can we prepare ourselves for a place like the New Jerusalem?*

**Key Verse – “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”—Revelation 21:4**

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

The book of Revelation (not “Revelations”) is fittingly the last book in the Bible. It is likely the final book that was written, penned by the apostle John near the end of his life. A very early tradition places the writing in about AD 96. That was the final year of Roman Emperor Domitian’s 15-year reign, the year he was assassinated.

John was on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea (Revelation 1:9a). The island was a barren, rocky place of fewer than 14 square miles in area. It is generally believed that John had been exiled there as punishment for conducting forbidden evangelistic work in the city of Ephesus (see 1:9b).

The book of Revelation has three parts. The first chapter relates an appearance of the risen Christ to John on Patmos. Christ told John that he (John) was to receive visions of glorious and mysterious things. John was to write them down for sending to the churches of seven nearby cities (1:11).

The second part of the book consists of personalized messages to those churches (Revelation 2–3). We sometimes refer to these messages as “letters to the seven churches,” but they are more than that. Each serves as an introduction to the book as a whole for the named congregations.

The third part, Revelation 4–22, is John’s record of the series of visions he experienced. These are visions of Heaven and its activities, along with prophetic words delivered to John by angels who served as his guides.

The book of Revelation features a type of literature known as apocalyptic. The root word *apocalypse* does not mean “worldwide catastrophe” (as the word is often used in popular media today), but “uncovering of the hidden” and thus “revelation.” This book reveals the hidden workings and plans of the Lord God Almighty in the midst of the church’s trials and tribulations, to give hope to the persecuted. It has been serving this function for nearly 2, 000 years, showing readers that evil will not

triumph. God has a plan for ending the power of evil emperors and of Satan and his allies.

### **LESSON COMMENTARY**

**21:1–2.** John saw an eternal state in which a beautiful **city** was descending from **heaven** (v. 2). Some interpreters understand it to be suspended above the earth, while others say that its sturdy foundation argues for it being grounded. This is more likely. Each entity is described as **new**. The emphasis is not on time, but on freshness or better quality. This place superseded everything that had ever come before it. The city brings to mind Eden, and is set in contrast to Babylon (17:1–18:24). The absence of a **sea** indicates safety from enemies (12:18; 13:1; 17:2). It will bear the name **Jerusalem** (v. 2). Like the earthly one, it will be loved by God. Unlike its namesake, it will never rebel. It is the place that Jesus has prepared for His followers (Jn 14:2–3).

**21:3–4.** John's tabernacle theme (Jn 1:1, 14) reaches its apex here. God will live in intimate, uninterrupted fellowship with His people, who will be completely free of emotional pain forever. What perspective this must have been for believers in the seven churches who had multiplied sorrows due to persecution. All believers should look forward to relief from various sorrows of life.

**21:5–8. It is done** (v. 6) indicates the end of all things temporal. Everything related to the old heaven and earth had run its course. God would bring about new conditions. **The Alpha and the Omega** again brings to mind the eternity of the Son who gave His life for sinners (1:18; 22:13). The apostle uses the offer of water symbolically as an invitation to salvation (Jn 4:10–14; 7:37–39). God wanted him to communicate this good news to the original audience before it was too late. The one who overcomes, who perseveres in faith, will receive the privileges due beloved sons. By contrast, all unbelievers, typified by the behaviors in v. 8, will be excluded from the new Jerusalem.

**21:9–11.** John was carried to a high mountain rather than the harlot's wilderness (17:1). **Wife of the Lamb** (v. 9) indicates the faithful city, new Jerusalem, in contrast to the harlot (17:3). It reflected the **glory of God** (v. 11). God's glory is intrinsic divine light that emanates from His person. Her **brilliance** (lit., shining star) was like top-grade jasper.

**LESSON NUGGET** – Why did Jesus give John this preview of eternal glory? To encourage His people who go through testing and persecution. “I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:1-6) is the best medicine for a broken heart and the best foundation for wavering feet.

**Sources:** *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, Wiersbe Study Bible and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary*