

SESSION 6  
Eternal Life



**QUESTION 1:**

*If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?*

## THE POINT

We can live forever in the presence of God.

## THE PASSAGES

Revelation 21:1-8; 22:1-5

## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Location, location, location. Real estate agents often repeat that saying for clients searching for a new home. The Internet is flooded with lists to help us decide ...

- ▶ ... the best places to live.
- ▶ ... the best places to retire.
- ▶ ... the most affordable place to live.
- ▶ ... the best places to live for clean air and water.

People have myriad reasons for choosing where they live. Of course, many people say they don't choose where they live; the place "chooses" them. For example, many live in the places where they do because it enables them to be close to family or near their jobs. Regardless, we all have our ideas of what makes a place ideal. Yet, no matter how idyllic, no place is perfect. Problems still arise. And, of course, sin is ever present.

That will not always be the case, however. God has promised His followers a perfect home with Him that will last for eternity. The apostle John gave us a brief glimpse into the eternal life that awaits those who follow Christ.

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## Revelation 21:1-5

**1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.**

**2 I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.**

**3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God.**

**4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.**

**5 Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new." He also said, "Write, because these words are faithful and true."**

God has promised His children an eternal home that eclipses anything we can imagine. It will be perfect because it is in the presence of God Himself. Revelation 21 paints a beautiful picture of God's perfect home, a place where God Himself will live with us for eternity. The God who spoke the universe into existence has promised to spend eternity with you and me!

Revelation 21 begins with a wonderful picture. The pain and grief we presently experience will no longer be an issue "for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." In their place will be "a new heaven and a new earth." They will not merely be "new" in a chronological, time sense, but in quality as well. The new heaven and earth will be far superior to the earth we know now; they will transcend anything we've ever experienced.

Along with the new heaven and the new earth, John saw "the new Jerusalem" and likened it to a beautiful bride walking down the aisle "for her husband." A bride looks most radiant on her

wedding day, and here is a bride whose radiance will never fade.

John referred to the new Jerusalem as “the holy city.” The place is holy because everyone and everything inside it is holy and righteous. This is the city of God’s redeemed people, and living in a city means we will live *together*—and together we will be in perfect harmony. No longer will we battle the tension between pleasing God or pleasing people because sin and death have been defeated and we will be forever surrounded by God’s holiness. God’s presence demands an essence of awe and wonder, leaving no reason to doubt His power or presence. We will be with God!

When we’re in His presence forever, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more.”

- ▶ **No death.** Our new home in heaven will be a place of total victory. John wrote previously that death would be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). Consequently, “death has been swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:54).
- ▶ **No grief.** No sin, regret, or loss will remain to cause us to grieve or mourn.
- ▶ **No crying.** Crying is an outward expression of grief, and since grief will exist no longer, we will have no more cause for crying or tears.
- ▶ **No pain.** Painful experiences were first mentioned as a consequence of the fall (Gen. 3:16-19); since the sin that led to the fall will have been removed completely, all pain will be gone.

These things will not be in heaven “because the previous things have passed away.” All our old human habits and traits that were part of our fallen, sinful human nature will be gone—for eternity.

#### **QUESTION 2:**

*Which of the things mentioned in verse 4 do you look forward to most?*

Speaking from His throne, Jesus told us why the old things have passed away: “Look, I am making everything new.” Near the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus told His apostles, “I am going away to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2). Now here in Revelation 21, we see Jesus making this promise an eternal reality. Jesus is not merely giving a makeover to what we currently know. In Christ, we become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), and we will dwell eternally with Him in His new creation.

**QUESTION 3:**

*Why is it significant that God will dwell with His people?*

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**Revelation 21:6-8**

**6** Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life.

**7** The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son.

**8** But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

**KEY WORDS:** **Lake that burns with fire and sulfur** (21:8)—This designation for the place of eternal torment occurs only in Revelation, although the idea of punishment by fire is described in other places in the Bible.

**Second death** (21:8)—As death cuts off life, so second death cuts off eternal life for eternal death. As death puts an end to one’s hope, so second death puts an end to one’s hopes forever.

When Jesus hung on the cross, He cried, “It is finished.” (John 19:30). Now He declared to John, “It is done!” On the cross, Jesus completed our redemption, and in Revelation 21, He marks the end of redemptive history. He can do this because He is “the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” Jesus is God; He existed in the very beginning and He will exist to the end. He is the Creator of all things—all things had their beginning in Him, and all things find their goal or end in Him (Col.1:16-17).

All we’ve read so far describes an amazing place. Yet, we have been conditioned to look at amazing offers and ask, “What’s the catch?” I have to be candid with you: there is a catch. The gift of an eternal home is not automatic. Jesus’ offer is open to all, but only those who follow Jesus can enter this new heaven and new earth.

1. **“I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life.”** We must admit we’re thirsty and believe that Jesus is the only one who can quench that thirst.
2. **“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.” (John 7:37).** Water is a symbol of eternal life. When we come to Jesus to receive the water He gives—eternal life—He quenches our thirst.
3. **“The one who conquers will inherit these things.”** We are conquerors when we stand strong and faithful to Christ, and we overcome and are victorious through Him. We cannot overcome in our own power; only when we rely on Jesus.

All this is tied to our relationship with Jesus. When we come to Christ, we are adopted into God’s family (Rom. 8:14-15). We will fully experience all the benefits of that family relationship in our future home. “I will be his God, and he will be my son.”

The Lord made it clear that not everyone will enjoy the benefits of the new heaven and new earth. In verse 8, He listed those guilty of sins that were unforgiven—referring to those who have chosen to remain in their sin rather than choose Christ. Paul outlined a similar list to warn the Corinthian believers (1 Cor. 6:9-10), but added: “And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed,

you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (v. 11).

God is preparing an amazing home where we will live eternally, but it will only be available to those who believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father” and His eternal home without looking to Jesus as the only way (John 14:6). The “fine print” in the deed to your heavenly home is that Jesus is the only way to receive salvation.

**QUESTION 4:**

*How does the promise of eternity impact your life now?*

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**Revelation 22:1-5**

**1** Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb  
**2** down the middle of the city’s main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations,  
**3** and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him.  
**4** They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.  
**5** Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.

**KEY WORDS:** **River of the water of life** (22:1)—John used the metaphor of eternal life, which would have remind his readers of the garden of Eden’s river flowing with living water (Gen. 2:10).  
**Tree of life** (22:2)—In the middle of paradise this tree gives constant and continuous life to all who partake of it.

Some people have an amazing ability to paint a picture so well with words that we can taste it, feel it, and see it. John painted just such a picture with his vision of the new heaven and the new earth. In these verses, we “see” the incredible home promised to every believer. John focused in particular on the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10), and five images stand out in what he saw.

1. **“The river of the water of life.”** A river flowed through the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10); one also flows in our eternal home, but the difference is that this river flows “from the throne of God and of the Lamb.” God is the source of eternal life.
2. **“The tree of life.”** The tree of life was present in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9), but Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit prohibited by God (Gen. 3). Through His death on the cross, Jesus removed the curse, and we can eat from the tree of life. “To the one who conquers, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7).
3. **The tree’s fruit.** The tree of life will bear “twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month.” While it may not be clear to us if the tree bears twelve different fruits each month or a different fruit in each of the twelve months; we can see this as a picture of unending provision and blessing when we live in the presence of God.
4. **The tree’s leaves.** The leaves symbolize the full and healthy lives all peoples will enjoy in God’s presence. Christ has removed the consequences of our sin forever, and sickness and death are banished forever.
5. **“The throne of God.”** John saw the river and the tree which point back to the garden of Eden, but the throne of God and of the Lamb were not in the garden. We’re given a strong reminder that, as idyllic as the garden of Eden was, the new Jerusalem will be far superior. God will rule and reign from His throne in this city.

We’ve been given a great picture of our eternal home, but what will we be doing? Popular culture paints a picture of people



standing around endlessly playing harps, but nowhere does Scripture teach that. Instead, we will do three things:

1. **We will worship God.** We will certainly declare His praises, but worship is far more than the words we sing or speak. We worship through the way we live. In eternity, our worship and service will be perfect because we will be unhindered by sin.
2. **We will serve God.** We are called “his servants,” but our service will not be burdensome. We’re not told what our service will entail.
3. **We will reign with God.** God is the sovereign and supreme Ruler over all creation, yet He will grant us the privilege to reign with Him forever.

God is a bountiful God, and He will not hold back from His children! John’s vision points to the magnificence of eternal life. John wrote that Jesus declared to him, “These words are faithful and true” (Rev. 22:6).

#### QUESTION 5:

*Which of the descriptions of heaven in these verses mean the most to you?*

### ENGAGE

*Consider your honest feelings and fears about death. What scares you most about death? In the space below list some of your fears.*

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Pray over these asking Jesus to remove these fears and provide assurance of the hope you have in Him.

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## LIVE IT OUT

Eternal life with Jesus is forever and ever, so choose to make a difference in the short time you have on earth. How will the promise of an eternal life with Christ affect the way you live this week?

- ▶ **Look to Christ.** If you have not trusted Christ, place your faith in Him. He desires for you to come to Him and live with Him for eternity.
- ▶ **Focus on heaven.** As a follower of Christ, your citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). Don't let the temporary things of life consume you, but "seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on earthly things" (Col. 3:1-2).
- ▶ **Invite others to heaven.** Identify specific people you know who have no hope of eternal life because they have not placed their faith in Christ. Pray and seek opportunities to tell them how they can have an eternal life in heaven with Christ.

