



New Heaven and New Earth

12

Key Theme

- God is faithful to His promises.

Key Passages

- Genesis 1:31; Isaiah 65:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 21:1, 21:3–5, 21:8

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe what God has planned for believers in the new creation.
- Describe what God has planned for unbelievers.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will practice the memory verse by working on the Memory Verse Review Sheet and reciting the verse to a friend.



Activity 1: New Heaven and New Earth Class Notes

Students will fill out New Heaven and New Earth Class Notes as you study the lesson.



Studying God's Word

God has planned what will happen at the end of time. He promised in His Word that believers can look forward to a time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth with no more sin. It will be a place where they will enjoy eternity with the one true and glorious God. But unbelievers will be separated from God and suffer eternal punishment.



Activity 2: Pick a Point Review Game

Divide students into teams. Teams will take turns answering questions. They will earn points for correct answers by picking numbers from the cup.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO



COME ON IN

- ☐ Print the Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.



NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH CLASS NOTES

- ☐ Print one New Heaven and New Earth Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- ☐ Study the Prepare to Share section.
- ☐ Go Before the Throne.



PICK A POINT REVIEW GAME

- ☐ Print and cut apart the Pick a Point Game Point Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM. Put them into a cup, bag, or basket.
- ☐ Print one Pick a Point Questions Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Memory Verse Poster
- ☐ Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student

- ☐ New Heaven and New Earth Class Notes for each student
- ☐ New Heaven and New Earth Class Notes Answer Key
- ☐ Pencils

- ☐ Student Take Home Sheets

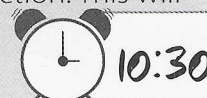
- ☐ Pick a Point Questions Sheet
- ☐ Pick a Point Game Point Cards
- ☐ Cup, bag, or basket to hold the cards



Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above with this background.

The Bible tells us the history of the universe—from the Creation of all things in the book of Genesis to the Consummation when God will end history and fulfill His plan for the universe. The Consummation includes major events that are promised in the Scriptures. One of those events is the promised return of Jesus Christ in glory! The Bible tells us that the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God! The saints of God will meet the Lord in the air and will then be with Him always (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

Another event the Consummation will include is the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. This new creation was written about in the Old Testament in Isaiah 65:17, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.” Peter mentions the new heavens in the New Testament as well. He speaks of God’s promise of the new heaven and new earth in which righteousness will dwell (2 Peter 3:13). And in the book of Revelation, John’s vision included a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away (Revelation 21:1).

What will the new creation be like? Well, there was a time when God’s creation was perfect, and He described it as “very good” (Genesis 1:31). That was the original creation, before sin entered the world, where Adam and Eve were created and lived. But, that very good creation did not last long. Adam and Eve sinned, and their sin brought God’s curse of death, disease, and suffering into the world (Romans 5:12). And we see and live in that cursed world today!

But as discussed above, God has promised a new heaven and a new earth. This new heaven and new earth will be a restoration of ALL things from the wicked, evil, sinful, and dark world we see now to the “very good” state that was the original creation. John got a glimpse of this new creation when he heard a loud voice from heaven proclaiming that the tabernacle of God would be with men. God would dwell with His people. And in so doing, all sorrow, death, crying, and pain would pass away. All things would indeed be made new and good in the presence of God Himself (Revelation 21:3–5). This is a glorious hope—one that can only be imagined—that believers would have the privilege to stand before the throne of God and spend

eternity in a place where there would be no need of sun or moon to shine because the glory of God will be there and the Lamb—Jesus Christ—will be its light (Revelation 21:23)!

But the Consummation will also include a judgment. And all unbelievers—those who never bowed the knee to Jesus Christ, the Savior, those who have never repented and trusted Christ completely for their forgiveness and salvation, will be judged according to their works. And their works are as filthy rags before the holy, Creator God (Isaiah 64:6). Their names will not appear in the Book of Life (Revelation 20:15). These unbelievers will be known as the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars. And God has ordained that they will finally have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone forever and ever (Revelation 21:8).

Jesus Christ came to earth as the perfect sacrifice, the righteous for the unrighteous, that sinners may come into the presence of God through His righteousness. And His Word says that whoever believes in Him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because He has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son (John 3:18).

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND¹

The subject of heaven and what it is like is a very popular one in our culture today. There have been many books written on the topic recently, particularly books by those who supposedly went to heaven and returned to tell us about it. A few of the titles include *Heaven Is for Real*, *90 Minutes in Heaven*, *Proof of Heaven*, *To Heaven and Back*, *The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven*, *Flight to Heaven*, *My Journey to Heaven*, *Waking Up in Heaven*, *My Time in Heaven*, *Heaven Is: A Visit to Heaven*, *Heaven Is So Real*, *A Divine Revelation of Heaven*, *Revealing Heaven: An Eyewitness Account*, *40 Days in Heaven*, *My Trip to Heaven*. Each of these books relates the story of someone who visited heaven—either as a near-death experience, in a divine vision, or who received a personal tour of heaven. Their stories are full of specific details about what heaven is like, who is there, and what is happening in the celestial realm. But when we compare their claims with Scripture, it becomes clear that they are merely

¹ Adapted from John MacArthur, “Are Visits to Heaven for Real?” <https://answersingenesis.org/reviews/books/are-visits-to-heaven-for-real/>

figments of the human imagination, not true visions of heaven as it is described in God's Word.

We live in a self-absorbed culture, and it shows in these accounts of people who claim they've been to heaven. They sound as if they viewed paradise in a mirror, keeping themselves in the foreground. They say comparatively little about God or His glory. But the glory of God is what the Bible says fills, illuminates, and defines heaven. Instead, the authors of these stories seem obsessed with details like how good they felt—how peaceful, how happy, how comforted they were; how they received privileges and accolades; how fun and enlightening their experience was; and how many things they think they now understand perfectly that could never be gleaned from Scripture alone. In short, they glorify self while barely noticing God's glory. They highlight everything but what's truly important about heaven.

There is simply no reason to believe anyone who claims to have gone to heaven and returned. John 3:13 says, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man." And John 1:18 says, "No one has seen God at any time."

Four biblical authors had visions of heaven—not near-death experiences. Isaiah and Ezekiel (Old Testament prophets) and Paul and John (New Testament apostles) all had such visions. Only three of these men later wrote about what they saw—and the details they gave were comparatively sparse (Isaiah 6:1–4; Ezekiel 1, 10; Revelation 4–6). All of them focused properly on God's glory. They also mentioned their own fear and shame in the presence of such glory. They had nothing to say about the mundane features that are so prominent in modern tales about heaven (things like picnics, games, juvenile attractions, familiar faces, odd conversations, and so on). Paul gave no actual description of heaven but simply said what he saw would be unlawful to utter. In short, the biblical descriptions of heaven could hardly be any more different from today's fanciful stories about heaven.

What God has revealed in Scripture is the only legitimate place to get a clear understanding of the heavenly kingdom. God's written Word does in fact give us a remarkably full and clear picture of heaven and the spiritual realm. But the Bible still leaves many questions unanswered.

We need to accept the boundaries that God Himself has put on what He has revealed. It is sheer folly to speculate where Scripture is silent. And it is seriously dangerous to listen to anyone who claims to know

more about God, heaven, angels, or the afterlife than God Himself has revealed to us in Scripture.

It is, however, right and beneficial for Christians to fix their hearts on heaven. Scripture commands us to cultivate that perspective: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1–2). "While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18). "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20).

Such a perspective is the very essence of true faith, according to Hebrews 11. Those with authentic, biblical faith acknowledge that they are strangers and pilgrims on this earth (v. 13). They are seeking a heavenly homeland (v. 14). They "desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them" (v. 16). The "city" that verse refers to is the heavenly Jerusalem, an unimaginable place—the very capital of heaven. It will be the eternal abode of the redeemed. No wonder Christians are intrigued with the subject.

But no matter how much they might obsess over what heaven is like, people who fill their heads with a lot of fantastic or delusional ideas from others' near-death experiences have not truly set their minds on things above. If the inerrant biblical truth God has given us is the only reliable knowledge about heaven we have access to (and it is), then that is what should grip our hearts and minds, not the dreams and speculations of human minds.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Jesus, you are King of kings and Lord of lords. One day in the new heaven and new earth, you will reign. You have made a way through Jesus Christ for sinners to dwell with you for all eternity. Help us to realize that this world and the things of the world are passing away. Help us all to grasp the amazing wonder of this truth. Please move in the hearts of my students to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. May they delight in you and your Word for the rest of their days as they look forward to the new creation you have promised.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, have the students recite the verse together, to each other, or to you.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



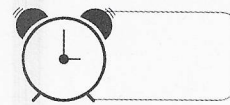
After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



New Heaven and New Earth Class Notes

MATERIALS

- ☐ New Heaven and New Earth Class Notes for each student
- ☐ New Heaven and New Earth Class Notes Answer Key
- ☐ Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study the lesson.

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible passages. Do not work ahead. We will complete them together.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will see what God will create and what He has planned for the end of history.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

- ? Refer to Lesson 11 Lesson Theme Poster. What did we talk about last week? Allow discussion.

God has promised in His Word that one day Jesus will come back in glory! That will be a great day. He will come back in the clouds with the voice of God's archangel and the blast of God's trumpet. This event—that Jesus will return—is part of the seventh C of history.

- ? What does that C stand for? Allow discussion. Consummation.

➤ Write the Seven C's of History on the board as you review them. The list is also on the class notes.

Consummation refers to how God will finally end history as we know it. God has always had a plan from the beginning of all things—the Creation—to the end of all things as we know them—the Consummation.

There are Seven C's that make up all of history. They are listed on the top of your class notes.

Let's go over them. *Creation*. God created the universe at the very beginning! But after God's perfect creation, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sinned. Their sin brought *Corruption* into the world. That corruption of sin and wickedness led to God's punishment—the *Catastrophe* of the worldwide Flood. But in His mercy, God spared Noah and his family. Soon, there were more people, but many were also disobedient to God. They began building a tower at Babel instead of doing what God told them to do. So, God sent *Confusion* into the world. Their languages became different, and the people scattered around the world.

It was clear that man would always sin. And God would always punish sin because He is holy and hates sin. But that wasn't the end of God's plan. He made a way for sinners to be forgiven of their sins.

? Which C talks about God's plan to redeem sinners? Who did God send into the world to save sinners? *Allow discussion. Jesus Christ!*

Yes! The fifth C is *Christ*.

? And what did Christ need to do in order to finish God's plan? It is another C. How did Jesus die? *Allow discussion. On the Cross.*

The sixth C is *Cross*. Jesus died a horrible death on the Cross and then rose from the dead to save sinners. But that wasn't the end of God's plan either! After Jesus rose from the grave, He went up to heaven to be with His Father.

Refer to Lesson 11 Lesson Theme Poster. And God has promised that Jesus will one day return! He will come back in glory on the clouds, with the voice of an archangel, and the sound of God's trumpet!

But this STILL won't be the very end. God has promised even more in His Word. And God is faithful to keep His promises! There are more things that will take place during the consummation. And these are wonderful, exciting promises from God.

In fact, the prophet Isaiah spoke about the promise we are going to talk about today—even before Jesus was born!

Isaiah 65:17

? Turn to Isaiah 65:17 in your Bibles. Will someone read that? *Assign a reader. Isaiah 65:17.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

This is an important part of the Consummation. Let's talk about it.

Observe the Text

- ? What is this verse talking about? What is God going to create? *Allow discussion. A new heaven and a new earth.*

Yes! God made this promise hundreds of years before Jesus was even born! And He said that one day there would be a new heaven and a new earth, and the old heaven and earth would not be remembered!

Revelation 21:1

- ? Turn back in the book of Revelation—the last book in your Bible. In this book, God was showing the Apostle John amazing things that were to come. Will someone read Revelation 21:1? *Choose a student to read the verse.*
- ? Sounds familiar! What did God show John in the vision? *Revelation 21:1. A new heaven and a new earth.*
- ? What had happened to the first heaven and earth? *Revelation 21:1. They had passed away!*

Discover the Truth

God is telling us through the words of the Bible what will happen in the future—this is part of God’s plan to finish history. This is all part of the consummation! And what the Bible says is that there will one day be a new heaven and a new earth! The old heaven and earth—what we know today—will pass away. And God will make everything new!

- ? Let’s go to the class notes. Will someone read #1 for us? How will you answer that? *Assign a reader. Earth. Have students complete #1.*
- ? And what about #2? Will someone read that? *Assign a reader. Old. Have students complete #2.*
- ? And #3? What is the answer? *Assign a reader. New. Have students complete #3.*



READ THE WORD

What do we mean when we say everything will be new? The Bible tells us. And we need to go back to the beginning.

- ? What was the beginning? What is the first C of our Seven C’s? *Creation.*
- ? Yes. Creation! Let’s talk about creation. Turn in your Bibles to Genesis 1:31. This was at the end of the Creation Week. Will someone read that? *Choose a student to read the verse. Genesis 1:31.*

Genesis 1:31

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Who is this verse about? *Genesis 1:31. God.*
- ? It is about God. And what did God see? *Genesis 1:31. Everything that He had made.*

- ? And what did God think of everything that He had made? *Genesis 1:31. It was very good.*

There was a time, long ago, when everything in the creation was very good. God's Word tells us that. That was before sin entered the world and before God put Adam and Eve out of the Garden. This was a "very good" creation. There was no sickness, no hunger, no death, no sorrow, and no suffering. God was there. It was a wonderful place to be.

You might ask what does that have to do with the new heaven and new earth? Let's see, shall we? Let's go back to the end of the Bible. To Revelation 21:3–5. These verses explain what the new heaven and new earth will be like. *Choose students to read the verses. Revelation 21:3–5.*

Revelation 21:3–5

- ? Who will be with the people there? *Revelation 21:3. God Himself will be with them.*
Yes! Can you imagine? In this new creation, God will live with men.
- ? And what will God do for men? Look in Revelation 21:4 for the answer. *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*
- ? And what will be gone forever? *Revelation 21:4. There will be no death, or sorrow, or crying. There will be no more pain!*
- ? And what will God do? What will be new? *Revelation 21:5. He will make all things new.*

Discover the Truth

What a wonderful place this will be! The consummation of history will include Jesus coming back and God making all things new—a new heaven and a new earth. It will be a new creation. And it will be "very good" like the original creation was before sin entered into it.

- ? Let's stop for a minute. Who will read #4 for us? What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Good. Have students complete #4.*
- ? What about #5? Will someone read that? *Assign a reader. God. Have students complete #5.*
- ? And #6? *Assign a reader. Care. Have students complete #6.*
- ? And someone read #7. What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Death. Have students complete #7.*

This wonderful new creation is for all those who have received Jesus Christ and His free gift of forgiveness. It is for all who have turned away from their sins and turned to Jesus! All who have ever trusted in Jesus will be welcomed into this new creation to live forever with God!

God will care for His people. He will wipe away all the tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, or sorrow, or crying, or pain! All of that seems wonderful, doesn't it? But the BEST part is that God will be there—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—He will be there and live with His people!



READ THE WORD

But, sadly, not everyone will be in this new creation because not everyone will believe in Jesus! Turn to Revelation 21:8. Let's read it. *Choose a student to read. Revelation 21:8.*

Revelation 21:8

EXAMINE THE WORD

This verse talks about some of the people who will NOT be in the new creation! These are people who never turned away from their sins. These are people who never believed in Jesus. They are murderers, liars, idolaters. They will not repent of their sins because they do not love or believe in the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Observe the Text

? What will happen to these people? Look at the verse for the answer.
Revelation 21:8. They will go to the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

? What is that talking about? *Allow discussion. Hell.*

Yes. All who turn away from Jesus and refuse to repent and trust Him alone for forgiveness will go to hell for all eternity! The Bible calls it the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. This is a difficult truth—but it is the truth from God's Word!

? Will someone read #8 on your class notes? Based on what we just read, how will you answer that? *Assign a reader. Jesus. Have students complete #8.*

Yes! The Bible tells us that there will be eternal punishment for everyone who does not believe in the name of Jesus Christ.

? Turn now to 2 Thessalonians 1:9. This tells more about what will happen to people who do not believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. Will someone read that? *Choose a student to read the verse. 2 Thessalonians 1:9.*

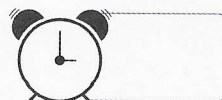
? What will God do to those who turn away from Him and refuse to believe and trust in Jesus Christ? *2 Thessalonians 1:9. They will be punished with everlasting destruction.*

2 Thessalonians 1:9

Discover the Truth

God is just and must judge sin! Sinners who do not believe the gospel of Jesus Christ will be punished in the lake of fire forever! They will be separated from God's presence and the power of His glory forever. The Bible says clearly that whoever does not believe in the name of God's one and only Son will be condemned.

? Let's fill in that last blank now on your class notes. It's #9. What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Condemned. Have students complete #9.*



➤ If time allows, assign students to re-read the points on the class notes as a review and briefly discuss them.



Pick a Point Review Game

MATERIALS

- ☐ Pick a Point Questions Sheet
- ☐ Pick a Point Game Point Cards in cup, bag or basket

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the class into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a number card from the basket. If no one can answer the question, you may want to allow teams to look the answers up in their Bibles. Allow the first team to get the answer to draw a point!

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. The effort to earn points will keep the students tuned into the game. Keep a list of the teams' points to determine the "winner" for the day. If time allows, repeat the questions!

OK. Now you are going to get into teams. We are going to play "Pick a Point." Each team will take turns answering questions

from the lesson. If you get the answer right, you will draw a point card for your team. I'll keep score here on the board.

Get together with your team, and let's get started. *Play the game.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God planned out all of history before He even made the first "very good" creation. So much has happened since the beginning of time! But one thing that hasn't happened yet is the new heaven and new earth that God has promised. Believers can look forward to a time when there will be another "very good" creation with no more sin, and where they will enjoy eternity with the one true, holy, and glorious God. But unbelievers will be separated from God and suffer punishment forever.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Refer to Lesson Theme Poster. God has planned a wonderful new creation for all His children—all those who have repented and believed in Him and received His gift of salvation.

The new creation will be like the original creation—"very good." In the new creation there will be no death and no pain. There will be no sin, no suffering, no sorrow, and no disease at all. God will dwell with His people. Everyone who has received Jesus Christ and His free gift of forgiveness will be welcomed into this new creation for all eternity.

But for unbelievers, God has a different plan. All those who do not believe in Christ are condemned for their sins. They will face eternal punishment separated from God, because they did not believe in Jesus Christ and receive His forgiveness. This is God's Word. This is the consummation—what God has planned for the end of history.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

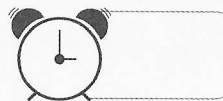
You may be experiencing a mixture of two reactions right now. Of course, it's exciting to think about living in the new creation with the everlasting glorious God someday. For all God's children, there will be God's glorious presence, and love, joy, and beauty forever and ever.

But you might be sad or scared when you think of what God has prepared for sinners who never come to Christ and humbly ask for forgiveness of their sins. Those who do not trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior will face a fate that is more terrible than we can ever imagine! They will suffer punishment for their sin for all eternity. They will have no second chance after they die because they did not accept the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ while they were alive.

Jesus died so that ALL who come to Him can have eternal life. But many reject the salvation that He offers.

The consequences of not loving God, of not believing in Jesus, of not repenting and receiving salvation are real, and they are forever! I hope you'll think hard about what you heard today. Read your Bible. Ask someone if you have questions. Being separated from God for eternity will be more horrible than we can know. But being with God in the new heavens and new earth forever will be more wonderful than we can ever imagine. I hope you choose eternal life!

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God for the promise believers have of eternal life with Him in the new earth.
- Pray that God will open the hearts of those who do not know Him so they will be able to share in the promises God makes to His children.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.