

Heaven and the New Creation

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Our hope is sure because Jesus keeps His word: He is preparing a place, He will come again, and God will make all things new.

Bible passage: John 14:1–3 and Revelation 21:1–22:5. Students read John 14:1–3, Revelation 21:1–7 and Revelation 21:22–22:5 out loud themselves.

Memory verse: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." *John 14:2 (KJV)* and "And 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 (KJV)*

You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.

Before class: read John 13:33–14:3 and Revelation 21–22. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: Bible or Not? (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "in the Bible" and the other side "not in the Bible." Read each statement; students walk to the side they think is right. 1) The city has twelve gates of pearl. (*Bible, Revelation 21:21*) 2) People become angels when they die. (*Not in the Bible*) 3) There is no more sea. (*Bible, 21:1*) 4) Everyone sits on clouds playing harps. (*Not in the Bible*) 5) The city doesn't need the sun. (*Bible, 21:23*) 6) A man stands at the gate checking names. (*Not in the Bible*) Ask: *Why do so many ideas about heaven come from pictures and movies instead of the Bible?* Say: "Today we read what God actually said."

2. Bible teaching: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: John 14:1–3. Context: Jesus had just told His disciples, "Whither I go, ye cannot come" (13:33), and told Peter, "thou shalt follow me afterwards" (13:36). Old words:

- **troubled** (14:1): stirred up, worried
- **mansions** (14:2): places to live; **prepare**: get ready
- **receive you unto myself** (14:3): take you to be with Me
- **my Father's house** (14:2): **Father** is a Bible word for God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16): "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Read out loud: Revelation 21:1–7. Old words:

- **passed away** (21:1, 21:4): gone; **adorned** (21:2): dressed beautifully
- **tabernacle** (21:3): dwelling place; God Himself lives with His people
- **athirst** (21:6): thirsty; **freely**: as a free gift; **overcometh** (21:7): wins, stays faithful



Tell the middle part in your own words (Revelation 21:9–21): John was shown the holy Jerusalem, having the glory of God, its light like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (21:10–11). Its wall had twelve gates, three on each side, with twelve angels at the gates and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on them (21:12–13), and twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles (21:14). The city lies foursquare: length, breadth and height equal, twelve thousand furlongs, about 1,500 miles (21:16). The wall was jasper and the city pure gold, like clear glass (21:18). The foundations were garnished with twelve precious stones (21:19–20). Each gate was one pearl, and the street was pure gold, "as it were transparent glass" (21:21).

Read out loud: Revelation 21:22–22:5. Old words:

- **lighten** (21:23): give light to; **the Lamb**: a Bible name for Jesus, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)
- **defileth** (21:27): makes unclean; **abomination**: something God hates; **the Lamb's book of life**: the record of those who belong to Jesus
- **proceeding** (22:1): coming out; **yielded** (22:2): gave; **curse** (22:3): the punishment that came with sin
- **one throne**: "the throne of God and of the Lamb... his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads" (22:3–4). The One on the throne says, "I am Alpha and Omega" (21:5–6), and Jesus says the same: "I am Alpha and Omega... I Jesus" (22:13, 22:16). One God, revealed in Jesus.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Jesus said "Let not your heart be troubled" right after telling His disciples He was leaving (John 13:33; 14:1). What makes His promise a cure for worry?
2. "If it were not so, I would have told you" (14:2). How does knowing Jesus never lies change how much you trust what He says about the future?
3. Revelation 21:4 says God will wipe away all tears. What does that tell you about how God sees our sadness now?
4. Why do you think the Bible tells us the city doesn't need the sun, because "the Lamb is the light thereof" (21:23)?
5. Only those "written in the Lamb's book of life" enter (21:27), and yet "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (22:17). How do those two verses fit together?
6. Jesus said, "Surely I come quickly" (22:20). How would living ready for His coming look in your week?

4. Memory verses (5 minutes)

Old words: **mansions** means places to live; **sorrow** means deep sadness; **the former things are passed away** means the old things of this world are gone.

Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say John 14:2 this week; keep working on Revelation 21:4 next week too.



5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Revelation 21:27 says 'there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth,' but 'they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.' **In no wise** means not at all. The good news is that the Lamb is Jesus, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), and He invites you: 'whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely' (Revelation 22:17). God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."

Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What worries or sad things am I carrying that Jesus spoke to in John 14:1–3 and Revelation 21:4?
2. Which part of what John saw do I most want to understand better, and why?
3. Write a short prayer thanking Jesus for His promise and asking Him to help you live ready for His coming.

If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: each time you feel worried, say John 14:1 to yourself: "Let not your heart be troubled."

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that every word You speak is true. Thank You that Jesus is preparing a place and will come again, and that You will wipe away all tears and make all things new. Help us live ready for that day, and help us invite others to come. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student is grieving someone who died: listen first, and say it is all right to be sad: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Point to what God promises (Revelation 21:4). Don't guess about where any person is now, and don't say people become angels; the Bible doesn't teach that. Let the student's parents and pastor know.

