The Point
A life in Christ means a life with Christ forever.

The Bible Meets Life
None of us have an idyllic life. We’re pulled down by failures, disappointing relationships, and problems in a world full of sin and insecurity. Thankfully, this world is not all there is. The closing chapters of the Book of Revelation show us that God provides a permanent home where He will dwell with those in His family. It is a home with no health issues, insecurities, or sin. In Christ, we are promised the perfect home with Him.

The Passage
Revelation 21:1-8
The Setting

The Book of Revelation details the consummation of world history, in which God judges all those who reject His offer of salvation and oppose Him. Chapter 21 describes the time immediately after the Great White Throne Judgment—after Satan and all of God’s enemies have been condemned to the lake of fire (see 20:7-15). It details the coming of the new heaven and new earth, which is the time of the fullness of God’s rule and reign.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Revelation 21:1-8

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 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

6 And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”
GET INTO THE STUDY

**ENGAGE:** Begin the session with one or more of the Engage Options on the next page. (This is optional. If you’d rather skip the Engage Options, just begin with the first discussion question.)

**SAY:** None of us have an idyllic life. We’re pulled down by failures, disappointing relationships, and problems in a world full of sin and insecurity. Thankfully, this world is not all there is. The closing chapters of the Book of Revelation show us that God provides a permanent home where He will dwell with those in His family. It is a home with no health issues, insecurities, or sin. In Christ, we are promised the perfect home with Him.

**GUIDE:** Call attention to The Point. Explain that this is the key to keep in mind throughout the session.

**THE POINT.**

*A life in Christ means a life with Christ forever.*

**READ:** Read and summarize *The Bible Meets Life* for your group (*p.56*).

At one time or another, you may have suffered from what doctors call “the distress and functional impairment caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home and attachment objects.” You probably just called it “being homesick.” But have you ever been homesick for some place you’ve never been? Followers of Christ have been adopted into God’s family. We have a citizenship in heaven and a new home awaits us. The Book of Revelation gives us a brief glimpse into what this new home is like and what waits for us when we are in the presence of Christ. As you dive into this study, you might find yourself becoming homesick for your new home!

**DISCUSS:** Ask students the question, “*What’s the most homesick you’ve ever been?*”

**PRAY:** Transition into the session by praying that students would adopt a heavenly mind-set in their daily lives.
Engage Options

► Lead with Action
Lead students to jot down some of their favorite things about their house. Next, guide them to write things they love about their hometowns. Encourage a few students to share some of their thoughts with the group. Say, “There really is no place like home. Still, the deepest parts of our hearts can’t and won’t ever be totally satisfied on this earth. As followers of Christ, heaven is the home we were made for.”

► Lead with Atmosphere
Display the following C.S. Lewis quote in the front of the room: “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.” Lead a brief discussion on the meaning of that quote. Say, “The more pain and hurt we experience in this life, the more we will realize that nothing in this world will ever truly satisfy. We are a people created for a different place and for an eternity in heaven. Only then will our souls be completely satisfied.”

► Lead with Media
Search the Internet for a time-lapse video of a house being constructed. After showing the video, say, “There’s a lot of work that goes into constructing a house, but the construction is only one part of what makes that house a home. For many of us, there is something so sweet and special about our childhood homes. No matter where we go, home will always hold special meaning. But our earthly homes will eventually age, break, and disappoint. Scripture tells us that the home we were meant for is eternity in heaven.”

OPTION: Instead of talking through things that students love about their homes, consider presenting information on traditional houses throughout the world. Say, “Although these houses may look different from those in your neighborhood, one thing remains the same—they are all “home” to someone. There’s something so special about being home, but the deepest parts of our hearts can’t be fully satisfied on this earth. As believers, we were made for an eternal home in heaven with our Father.”

OPTION: Perhaps there is someone who has built a house in your church. Consider bringing that individual in to share the construction process.
STUDY THE BIBLE
The Point: A life in Christ means a life with Christ forever.

REVELATION 21:1-3

DISCUSS: Lead students to answer the following question, “How do movies/TV/music portray heaven?”

DISCUSS: Guide students through a brief discussion on what they personally think heaven will be like. Consider comparing their descriptions to the earlier discussion on culture’s view of heaven. How are the descriptions similar? Different?

SAY: God has promised His children an eternal home that surpasses even the richest neighborhoods in the most exclusive zip codes. God’s home is perfect because it is in the presence of God Himself.

GUIDE: Introduce Revelation 21 and the idea of a new heaven and earth that are far superior to the earth we now know. Inform students that it will be a city of God’s redeemed people and will be free of grief, pain, and sin. And the best part is that God Himself will inhabit this city with His children.

READ: Allow a volunteer to read the following (p.58):

God’s presence in our new home will neither be temporary nor only for a select few. It will be an eternal home in God’s eternal presence. In the rest of Revelation 21–22, John described our new home, but the ultimate joy we will experience in heaven will be because of God Himself (Ps. 73:25).
[Verse 1] The phrase a new heaven and a new earth is found in several Bible passages (see Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13). As might be expected, there are several interpretations of this phrase and no easy answers as to exactly what it means. What we do know, however, is that a great change is coming. In this particular verse, the nature of the new heaven and earth stands in contrast to the first heaven and earth, which will not continue as they are forever. Purity is a characteristic of the new heaven and earth as there will be no sin. The new world will be marked by perfect fellowship of believers with one another and with God, and is the final, perfected state of the universe as prepared by Him. The sea was often a place of chaos and evil in the minds of the Jews. Already in the Book of Revelation, it is shown to be the source of the satanic beast (see Rev. 13:1) and the place of the dead (see 20:13).

[Verse 2] The new Jerusalem is the residence of the redeemed. A new Jerusalem is necessary because the old one was not perfect and was spoiled by the sinfulness of humanity. This city coming down out of heaven from God and being set on the earth may be symbolic of how glorious the dwelling place of the righteous will be—a representation of heaven in the image of a beautiful city, of which Jerusalem is an example. Just as the church is often described as the bride of Christ in the Scriptures, here the Holy City is described as a bride adorned for her husband.

[Verse 3] The loud voice John heard from heaven may have been one of the cherubim (angels) that surround God’s throne, or perhaps the voice of God Himself. The voice pronounced the fulfillment of promises found throughout the Old Testament: God’s dwelling will be with humanity. The meaning here is that God will now dwell with the redeemed, as if in a tabernacle prepared exclusively for His residence among them. This is reminiscent of God’s first dwelling place among His people—the garden of Eden. It’s also a reminder of the tent set up among the Israelites that was moved as directed by Him as they wandered in the desert. However, this home of God will be permanent. It will never move.

The redeemed are referred to here as God’s people. They will be acknowledged as such and God will dwell with them permanently; He will never leave them. Even though we know as believers that the Spirit of God indwells each of us when we come to faith in Christ, God is typically pictured as dwelling in heaven and people as living here on the earth. But in the eternal state, no such distinction exists; God will now dwell with His people as their God in a way never before experienced.

God and His people living together in close fellowship will be possible because the effects of sin in the previous world (“the first earth”) will be removed.
The Point: A life in Christ means a life with Christ forever.

REVELATION 21:4-5

Discuss: Lead students to discuss the following question, “What tough experiences have you had that make you look forward to heaven?”

- Death
- Suffering
- Injustice

Guide: Help students to understand that we can find hope in these moments through the promises of God’s Word. As believers, we are promised eternal life in the presence of God where death and grief will be no more.

Read: Enlist a few volunteers to read the following (p.59):

- No death. Our new home in heaven will be a place of total victory. John wrote previously that death would be thrown in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).
- No grief. No sin, regrets, or loss will remain to cause us to grieve.
- No crying. Crying is an outward expression of our grief, and since those things will exist no longer, we will have no more cause for crying.
- 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.

Say: Jesus spoke from His throne and told us why the old things have passed away (v. 5). At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus had said that He was preparing a place in heaven for us (John 14:2). In Revelation 21 we see Jesus making this promise an eternal reality. The emphasis has been on a new heaven and a new earth; Jesus is not merely giving a makeover to what we currently know. In Christ, we become a new creation, and we will dwell eternally with Him in His new creation.
[Verse 4] Although tears are sometimes the result of joy, they are often symbols and expressions of pain, sorrow, and grief. The fact that God will wipe away every tear from the eyes of the redeemed is one of the realities of the new heaven and earth. The very hands that were nailed to the cross will gently wipe away all the tears of pain we have shed here on the old earth, and there will never be a tear shed on the new heaven and earth. Not only will there be no more tears, there will also be no more death. In our eternal future of glory, no one will ever die. Again, this is in contrast to the present world where death is a common occurrence and a fact of life. It’s mind-boggling to consider that all who put their faith in Christ in this world will live forever—but it’s the truth.

John goes on to write that grief, crying, and pain will also not exist. Grief for any kind of loss we can imagine will be non-existent because there will be no loss. While this old earth has had countless sources of sorrow and grief, it will be abolished forever. While John has already mentioned in this verse that there will be no more tears, here he writes that there will be no more crying. This refers to the type of crying or wailing that might result from pain or suffering. Since the future state will contain none of these things, there will be no crying and no reasons to cry. Likewise, there will never be any more pain, which is mentioned separately from grief and crying. This would be inclusive of any type of physical or mental pain—or any other kind—that might visit us here on the earth.

John closes this verse simply by writing that the previous things have passed away. This will be a new day—the end of the world as we knew it. On that future day, none of these things will matter or be able to affect us anymore. The new world will be perfect and without sin.

[Verse 5] John tells us that God will speak from His throne. His throne is the symbol of stability and His omnipotent power and authority. It represents His divine sovereignty over all creation. Christ has already made many things new. He has given every believer a new birth (see John 3:3-8); made each a new man or woman (see Eph. 4:24) and a new creation (see 2 Cor. 5:17); given each a new heart and a new spirit (see Ezek. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26), a new way of direct access to God (see Heb. 10:19-22), a new commandment of love (see John 13:34; 1 John 2:8), a new name (see Rev. 2:17), and the New Jerusalem (see Rev. 3:12; 21:2-3,10). In eternity, finally, He will give us a new heaven and a new earth.

God then told John to write a record of these things because the words God spoke were true. Since the words of God are founded in truth and are faithful, we can believe them and trust that God will do what He has promised. What He has said is certain to come to pass.
STUDY THE BIBLE

The Point: A life in Christ means a life with Christ forever.

REVELATION 21:6-8

SAY: The gift of an eternal home is not automatic. Jesus’ offer is open to all, but the only ones who can enter this new heaven and new earth are those who follow Jesus.

READ: Guide a few students to read the following points (p.60):

In regards to eternal life there are a couple of things we need to consider:

1. Water is a symbol for eternal life. When we come to Jesus to receive the water He gives—eternal life—He quenches our thirst (Matt. 5:6; John 7:37).

2. We are victorious when we stand strong and faithful to Christ. We cannot overcome in our own power; but only when we rely on Jesus.

GUIDE: Explain to students that the gift of eternal life is only found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When we choose to turn away from our sin and follow God, we are adopted into God’s family and can joyously anticipate an eternity spent with Him.

DISCUSS: Discuss the following question, “How can the truths we read about heaven influence our lives now?”

DO: Direct students to complete the Action Point, “Life Eternal” (p.60).

Life Eternal

Only those who put their trust in God for salvation will dwell with Him in eternity. This fact should ignite a fire in us to share Christ with those who don’t know Him. List a few people you could share the gospel with:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.
Commentary

REVELATION 21:6-8

[Verse 6] God told John, “It is done.” There is much meaning in those few words. God was saying that His work is finished and completed. Jesus spoke similar words while on the cross: “It is finished” (John 19:30). God then said that He was the Alpha and the Omega, and the Beginning and the End. This is the same language He used in Revelation 1:8. The words here verify that God has an unchanging nature. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last. This refers to the sovereignty and eternal nature of God being the Beginning and the End. Thus, He controls everything throughout all generations. The Greek term translated End carries the sense of completion or purpose. So, God is not only the beginning of everything, but also the purpose of all that transpires. God also referenced the grace of Christ, which is a living stream flowing from the throne of God to a lost world. Drinking and thirst are common images of man’s spiritual need and God’s supply (see Ps. 42:1-2; Jer. 2:13). This fountain that flows in abundance allows all people the opportunity to quench their spiritual thirst.

[Verse 7] The victor is the one who remains faithful to God and Christ in the face of the hardships and persecution in the world (see Rev. 2:8-10,26-29). Our inheritance is not only valuable beyond measure, it’s also incorruptible. In this present world we may lose our jobs, our money, our homes, our health, and our loved ones; but in the new world, our inheritance in God is beyond the reach of any loss. Every person who has been redeemed will be an heir of God in all things and Christ will forever be the Lord and Savior of the redeemed.

[Verse 8] In this verse, John mentions a number of groups of sinful people who will spend an eternity in hell. The cowards are not those who are naturally timid, but those who choose their own safety and comfort over Christ. Unbelievers are those who reject the offer of salvation and have no faith in God. He also mentioned those who are detestable to God because of their sins. The murderers are those who have committed homicide, particularly in the persecution of believers. The sexually immoral are those who have polluted their hearts and minds with unnatural lusts. He mentioned individuals who practice magic (or sorcery) through the use of drugs and the casting of spells. Liars are those who speak contrary to what they know to be the truth.

All the different types of people mentioned in this verse—the unsaved—will have a place in hell, God’s final place of punishment. At the end of the period of tribulation, the beast and false prophet will also be thrown alive into this lake, where they will be tormented day and night forever. The second death is a spiritual separation from God that follows physical death.

TIP: Reiterate the main point—A life in Christ means a life with Christ forever.

TIP: Once students have completed the Action Point, Life Eternal, pray with them that they would have the courage to share Christ’s love with those individuals.
**IMPACT**
(10 MINUTES)

**APPLY IT**

**SAY:** How will you let the promise of an eternal home with Christ affect the way you live this week?

**READ:** Guide a volunteer to read aloud a few ways students can take what they learned and Apply It (p.61).

- **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 temporary things consume you, but identify ways to set your mind on Christ (Col. 3:1-2).

- **Invite others to heaven.** Pray and seek opportunities to tell others how they can have an eternal life in heaven with Christ.

**GUIDE:** Lead students to consider which of the three suggested responses to the Bible study most closely applies to them and their current circumstances.

**ASK:** Which of these responses do you personally need to focus on most as you live this session out? Allow time for responses.

**WRAP UP**

**PRAY:** Close in prayer, asking God to help students focus on heaven rather than on the things of this world.

**ASK:** Ask students about last week’s Live It Out options. Discuss any responses and encourage students as they choose to apply the Bible to their lives.

**GUIDE:** Encourage students to complete one or both of the Live It Out activities for the week. Let them know you will discuss them the next time you meet.

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For free online training on how to lead a group visit

MinistryGrid.com/web/BibleStudiesForLife
LEADER LIVE IT OUT

Before the session, challenge yourself to grow with your students through this Live It Out.

Eternity-Focused | Revelation 21:1

Play some worship music, and grab a journal or piece of paper. Open your Bible to Colossians 3:1-2. Begin to pray, asking God to give you focus and to open your heart to what He has to say to you. Read the passage several times. Jot down your first reactions to what the verse is saying. Next, write a prayer of thankfulness to God based on the passage. Read the verse once more. Now, write a prayer asking God to grant you vision that is eternity-focused. Ask Him to reveal how you might do that specifically.

▶ How would your life look different if you were more focused on eternity rather than the here-and-now?

ONE CONVERSATION™

Use these discussion starters to help foster a spiritual conversation with your family.

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THE POINT: A life in Christ means a life with Christ forever.

- What tough experiences have you had that make you look forward to heaven?
- How can the truths we read about heaven influence our lives now?

Discuss the following quote: “My home is in Heaven. I’m just traveling through this world.” —Billy Graham


LIVE IT OUT: Your student has been encouraged to do one or both Live It Out activities in the Personal Study Guide. Here are some suggested ways to help your student:

If he or she plans to complete Eternal Perspective:

- Complete this activity with your student.
- Share your prayer of thankfulness with your student, and discuss your answer to the question provided.

If he or she plans to complete Eternity-Focused:

- Adopt an eternity-focused perspective in your family by serving together.