

LEAD SHEET

REVELATION - WK 10 NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH DECEMBER 4, 2016

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL:

PERSONALIZE SCRIPTURE

If you want to know God better, memorize and apply His Word!

GETTING STARTED

General Discussion:

- What is the newest item you have received? (*Allow students to share.*)
- What was so great about it? (*It was new, different, shiny, exciting.*)
- How long does the newness last? (*Usually not long.*)

We love to get new things, right? We love getting a new video game, a new outfit, new shoes. The list could go on! The bad part about this “new” stuff is that it easily becomes like everything else we have, it becomes old and we don’t think about it as much.

When we think about what we believe in, often times our faith fades with time or with the seasons of life. It is new and exciting for a while, but it fades until the next youth event, retreat, conference, summer camp, and then we get “on fire” for God again.

General Discussion:

- What ideas come to mind when you think of a New Heaven and a New Earth? (*Gold, fire, pearly gates, etc.*)

- How does talking about this feel? What images do you think of when talking about this idea? (*Hopeful, peaceful, beauty, worship, etc.*)

There are different theories on what Revelation means when it talks about there being a New Heaven and a New Earth. For some, it may be a scary idea to discuss. However, it's not something to fear as Christ followers, it can actually be exciting!

We are going to look deeper into Revelation 21 and the idea of the New Heaven/New Earth and the coming of a New Jerusalem; the new that never loses its "newness!"

DIGGING IN

Read Revelation 21:1-4

Discussion Questions:

1. Not only was there a new Heaven and a new Earth, but what was coming down out of Heaven?
(*A new Jerusalem.*)
2. What does Jerusalem represent to the people?
(*A center of worship and religious life.*)
3. New Jerusalem is described as what?
(*A bride adorned for her husband.*)
4. Who is the husband? (*God.*)
5. What is the one thing that stands out about this newness and God's relationship with us?
(*God will be with His people.*)

Many of us remember the passage from Genesis when Adam and Eve ate the fruit and then hid from God. Their sin is what kept them from being with God, but when that which doesn't lose its newness comes, God can be with His people and can live among them permanently. No longer will sin and death live in the world and cause a barrier between us and God. As we read on, we find more about what this will look like.

Read Revelation 21:5-8

Discussion Questions:

1. How does God refer to the words He is about to speak? (*Trustworthy and true.*)
2. God explains that He is, "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," but before this what does He say? (*He says, "It is done!"*)
3. What is special about the water that the thirsty will receive? (*The water is said to have come from the water of life, without payment.*)

Following God's explanation about who He is and that "it is done" we see an explanation of the water that will be given to those who are thirsty. A similar reference to this water is found in John 4:14, "but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." To get this water means eternal life, which is finally achieved when death, sin, etc. , no longer separate God from His people.

John then records what will happen to those who practice immoral actions. We see that these people not only fail to receive the water of life, but "will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." We just heard about the new heaven and new earth, and the joy that will come afterwards because God said, "It is done." However, only those who are recorded in the Book of Life can experience this joy. As we read on, we see more about what the New Jerusalem will look like.

Read Revelation 21:9-27

Discussion Questions:

1. Why was there no need for a temple in the New Jerusalem? (*It's temple was the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.*)
2. What else will be absent in the New Jerusalem? (*There will be no night.*)

3. Who is allowed into the New Jerusalem and who is not? *(Only those who are written in the Book of Life are allowed, those who are unclean or who do what is detestable and false are not allowed to enter.)*

The first part of this passage talks about the structure of New Jerusalem, and we see that it is far bigger than we can comprehend. From the significance of the foundation, gates, the pearl accents, this city is described as being magnificent. Nevertheless, to many during this time, it would be difficult to understand why there was no temple. There is no need for a temple because God is the temple. This means there was no more sacrifices, and we get to be in the temple at all times! God's presence is real, not represented by a physical structure.

Read Revelation 22:1-5

Discussion Questions:

1. From where does the river of the water of life flow? *(It flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb.)*

2. What is found on either side of the river? *(The Tree of Life.)*

3. What does the Tree of Life provide? *(Twelve kinds of fruit for each month, leaves for healing the nations.)*

Not only do we see this picture of the city, but this tree surrounded by the flowing river, each of which are provisions from God. The tree provides twelve different kinds of fruit for each month and the leaves help to heal the nations. This tree is meant to provide for the people of God in this New Jerusalem.

When we think of a tree, we remember that trees need water. Specifically thinking about this tree, we see that it is placed by the river that flows with the water of life. If we recall, we discussed that the water flowed from the throne of God and of the Lamb. This water then aids the Tree of Life. The example of a tree and a fruit is not something uncommon in scripture, John 15:5 states, "I am the vine;

you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." Since we have remained in Him, we not only receive the water of life, but get to experience this fruit that comes from the vine. Do you see the images John paints for us? This Tree of Life in New Jerusalem is God's provision for His people because they have remained in Him!

MAKING IT REAL

There is a lot to absorb about the idea of a new Heaven and a new earth and what they would look like respectively. John paints a picture of the New of the New Jerusalem for us in Revelation 21 and 22. However, this New Jerusalem doesn't just serve as a memory trigger for the people then, but represents the Church as a whole in this newness.

This passage is more than just a reference to Christ's return—it is something that we can live now!

General Discussion:

- What are some of the things from this passage that sound really good to you?
(No more worldly traps, stresses, obstacles.)
- What things did John describe that you didn't like?
(Allow students to share.)

The great thing about this is that the good parts, the rewards for those who get to receive the water from the spring of life, is available to you! While we are awaiting Christ's return, we get to experience Him now if we remain in Him.

Read John 15:5

Discussion Questions:

1. Who is the vine? *(Jesus.)*
2. What are we? *(The branches.)*
3. Is there anything stopping us from abiding in Christ now? *(No.)*

We don't have to wait for the new Heaven and new earth to be attached to Christ and bear fruit for Him. We can do this now!

Think about your life. Think about the idea that we started our lesson with—that we like new things. While it is easy to get excited about the idea of a new Heaven and a new earth, the reality is that an eternity with Christ starts now. There is nothing stopping Jesus from being the center of our lives except for our decision not to let Him.

Instead of waiting until we get to Heaven, let's get busy living for Christ now by letting Him reign in our lives.

General Discussion:

- What can you do today to live attached to God and bear fruit in His name? (*Draw close to God, don't let anything take you away from Him, decide to follow Him, etc.*)
- What are some ways you can help bring God's love to those on Earth? (*Preach the Gospel, do justice, love your enemy, forgive those who harm you, etc.*)

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray for your students to help actively bring God's Love to those around them.