

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 4: The Gospel At Work

Lesson 52: A Revelation, Part 2



Session Snapshot

Narrative Passage: Revelation 21:1-8

Gospel Focus: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand that in the end, God will ultimately bring about a new order of things, restoring the perfect, personal relationship He had with His people.
- Students will realize that God has always been in the business of renewal, most notably, with the renewal He offers people through faith in Christ.
- Students will consider what it means to embrace the new life in Christ they've been given, rejecting any aspects of their lives that are holdovers from their "old" lives.



Overview

This is the last lesson in your 52-week look at the big-picture story of the Bible. In this lesson, you'll be looking at a second snapshot from John's revelations. In this lesson, you'll be seeing how John describes the new order God will ultimately institute. It's a wonderful ending to the story, as God restores the personal, harmonious relationship He originally instituted in Eden. No longer will we be separated from God. We will be with Him. And He will be with us. It's a great way to end your look at the story of the Bible, and to see the ultimate fruition of the Gospel's work.



Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 52 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 52, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

Revelation

Author: The writer of Revelation identifies himself as John four times. Scholars agree that it is most likely John the Apostle, son of Zebedee, one of Jesus' most beloved disciples.

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Time frame: Revelation was written toward the end of John's life somewhere between 90 and 95 AD.

Purpose: The purpose of Revelation was to reveal the fullness of Christ's identity and to provide hope for suffering Believers at the time who were encountering grave persecution and suffering. Today it provides us hope of what is to come, as well as a stark warning of the battle that rages until Christ returns.

2 Corinthians

Author: The Apostle Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to the Church in Corinth.

Time frame: Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia around 55 or 56 AD, a year or so after writing 1 Corinthians and a year before he wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth.

Purpose: According to the ESV Study Bible, the main theme of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians was "the relationship between suffering and the power of the Spirit in Paul's apostolic life, ministry, and message."



Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

Getting Started

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about this idea of a new creation.
- **Set-Up:** Gather pieces of paper and markers, colored pencils, or any other supplies as needed.

FIRST, remind students this is the last lesson in your yearlong look at the big-picture story of the Bible. Explain that in this last lesson, you'll be looking at what is essentially, the last view God gives us of heaven and what will happen at the end times.

THEN, explain that you want to have students think about the beginning of the story and the end. Distribute paper and markers, etc., and instruct students to draw two drawings:

- **What the beginning of the world looked like, once humans were put on it.**
- **What they think the "end times" will look like.**

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Don't feel like you really have to teach anything at this point. The purpose of this activity is to show all the differing opinions and views of what will happen. Some students will have inaccurate representations, and that's OK. If some students don't draw anything because they don't really know what to draw, that's OK too. The point is to get them thinking about it.

NEXT, as they are wrapping up, hit the high points of the overall narrative of the Bible's story that you have learned this year. Use the following bullet points as a guide:

- **In the beginning, God created the world and it was good.**
- **God created man in His image. Earth is our home and our responsibility.**
- **God was on earth with Adam and Eve, personally engaging with them until they sinned for the first time.**
- **God went out of His way to reach and protect His people. God gave them commandments to protect them. He protected the Israelites from Pharaoh and other dangers. He instructed Solomon to build a temple where God could meet with the high priest. God used prophets to spread His message around.**
- **But humankind still rebelled against God. They could not keep their end of the covenant up.**
- **So, God went out of His way to meet man right where they were. God sent His son Jesus in human form. Jesus showed us how to live and how to die. And Jesus's death on the cross was the final sacrifice that tore the veil, meaning that now we have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.**
- **And so now, we push to follow Jesus's example, to look more like Him every day. And we're fortunate to have the early letters of the church to help us discover not only what a relationship with God looks like, but how to live on this Earth with one another.**

FINALLY, explain to students that you're going to wrap up your time of studying the Thread. If there are no more questions, transition to The Story.

The Story

- **Goal:** To see that God has always been in the business of renewal, most notably, with the renewal He offers people through faith in Christ.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some notes, but it's not essential.

FIRST, remind students that you are going to be looking at Revelation for the second week in a row. Consider asking students what they remember from last week's lesson. If you need help setting the context for the lesson, refer to your Bible Background as a guide.

THEN, instruct students to turn to Revelation 21:1-8. Have a student read the entire passage. Then, jump back in and dig a little deeper through the passage. Start by asking questions similar to the following:

- **First, describe what's happening in the first two verses.**
 - o Help students see that this is John describing something amazing. Something so amazing that the words of a 1st Century guy simply can't do it full justice. We're left wondering exactly what this

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looked like, and exactly what's going on. But there is one important thing to consider.

- **What is the main thing happening here?**

- o Answer: There is a new heaven and a new earth. The old way of doing things will one day go away.

Explain that verses 3-4 are short but amazingly powerful. Explain that they communicate the importance of what's happening. Ask something like:

- **Verse 3 says something pretty profound. What is it?**

- o Answer: God will be with humans. He will literally be with us, in the same place.

- **How is this different than how things are now?**

- o Answer: While we have the Spirit dwelling in us, and we can pray to God, and sense His presence, there is a certain level of disconnect in how we experience God. Being able to physically be with Him in the same location is a game-changer.

- **Think back to your Bible. Where else do you see God dwelling alongside humans in relationship with them?**

- o Answer: In Eden.

- **What happened to the relationship God and humans had in Eden?**

- o Answer: Sin destroyed it. Human's sin caused God to drive them out of the Garden.

- **So, in what ways is the new heaven and new earth restoring God's original intent for His relationship with humankind?**

- o Answer: God will one day restore the nature of His relationship with us. We will no longer be separated. We will be with Him in perfect harmony.

- **What else about these verses remind you of Adam and Eve's existence in Eden?**

- o Answer: There was no suffering in Eden. No hunger. No sadness. The new heaven and earth God will one day institute will be like the Garden in that God will provide for all our needs.

Help students get crystal clear on who the agent of this change is. Verse 5 shows God proclaiming that this change is His work. The renewal of all things is happening at His hand. And it is the culmination of His plan to restore all things to their status before sin corrupted humankind and frustrated creation. This picture, the picture of a new heaven and earth, is what is going to one day happen. It's a done deal. And God is the one who has this planned for us.

NEXT, draw students' attention to verses 5-8. Lead them in a discussion using something similar to the following questions:

- **How does Jesus describe Himself in verse 6? Knowing what you know about the story of the Bible, why is this such a cool statement to make?**

- o Answer: The Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. It's a powerful statement because we know that Jesus was with God in the creation of all things (John 1, Colossians 1). Jesus is the plumb line that runs through the Bible. He is the narrative connection from Genesis to Revelation. And we see it here.

- **What happens in verse 7 and 8? What is Jesus talking about?**

- o Answer: He is comparing the fate of those who have come to a saving faith in Him and those who have denied or rejected Him.

- **How does this make you feel? What emotions or questions does this raise?**

- o Answers will vary.

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Explain to students that anytime we see Jesus talking about judgment, and especially when we see the kind of descriptive language Jesus uses here, we can have mixed emotions. Students especially can feel uncomfortable about the language of judgment and eternal separation from God. Help encourage your students that these feelings should motivate us to want to see others come to a saving faith in Christ so they too may be joined with Him in eternity.

FINALLY, as you begin to transition into the Story, make sure students understand that the heart of this passage is the new order of things that Jesus will one day usher in. Help them see that the damaging effects of sin will be done away with. Harmony between God and humankind will be restored. And it's all because God has the power and the motivation to do so.

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread.

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FIRST, instruct students to turn to 2 Corinthians 5:17 and read it together. Then discuss the difference between the old creation that were our lives before Christ, and the new creation that results from coming to a saving faith in Jesus. Ask:

- **What are some things in nature (animals, plants) that become new creations?**
 - o Answers will vary. Think: butterflies, frogs, etc.
- **How are these things different than what they were before?**
 - o Answers will vary. The goal is to get students thinking about transformation.
- **What kind of new creation is Paul talking about here? Are you literally a different "thing" than you were before?**
 - o Answer: This is a trick question in a way. Some students will say "no." Before you become a Christian, they may say, and after you become a Christian you're essentially still the same person. While this may be true in regards to biology, in regards to spirituality, we're 100% new creations. We have gone from dead in our sins to alive in Christ. We have new identities, new futures, and a new purpose.

NEXT, connect the passage to the passage in Revelation. Say something like:

- **Paul uses "new creation" to describe the new creation of a person when he or she comes to faith in Christ. But this concept connects to the new creation of the Earth that God will create. Name some aspects again of that "new creation" in Revelation that we talked about a few minutes ago.**
- **What are some similarities between an individual's new creation in Christ and the new creation in Revelation?**
 - o Answers will vary. But the point is that all things are completely new. There will be a new system, a new reality, a new order. The old will be gone.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **The coolness of the "new creation" at the end of the world is something that we can't even fully comprehend! That's why so many people focus on it, have crazy theories like "zombie apocalypses," and**

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get so easily confused. But here's the cool thing: The newness that happens inside of you, once you are in Christ, is also something that is incomprehensible. The ways that frogs and butterflies change resemble the way that we change: we become completely different. Everything is made new in Christ. That's sort of the business God is in!

Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** To see what it means to embrace the new life in Christ they've been given, rejecting any aspects of their lives that are holdovers from their "old" lives.
- **Set-Up:** You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some of your students' responses.

FIRST, connect talk about how new creation in an individual is achieved. Focus on how you can only gain this newness through Jesus.

- **How does a person become a new creation?**
 - o Answer: Salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Why is faith in Christ essential for a person to become a new creation?**
 - o Answer: We can't save ourselves from sin on our own. We can't overcome the sin-problem we have. Only Christ can do that.

NEXT, talk about how even though we know we're a new creation, sometimes we hold on to the "old ways." Say something like:

- **When a tadpole becomes a frog, do you think that sometimes they try to still swim like a tadpole? Maybe not. But sometimes Christians, when we become a new creation in Christ, tend to remember what it was like before and hold onto that. Sometimes we are resistant to becoming a new creation. What are some of the ways that we focus on who we were before Christ?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **How can we focus on the newness of life in Christ?**
 - o Answers will vary.

FINALLY talk about the hope of Revelation. Say something like:

- **We have immediate hope once we are in Christ, knowing that he is growing us more and more each and every day. But we also have hope that in the end, everything will be restored. How is Revelation a book of hope?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **Why is it hard to read Revelation that way?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **How can you explain to someone the hope that we have in Christ?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **How can you explain to someone the hope that comes with "new creation?"**
 - o Answers will vary.

If your students don't have any more questions, close the lesson in prayer.

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- If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 52 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.
- Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.