

GOD'S OLD AND NEW COVENANTS
Hebrews 12:18-29; Revelation 19:11–22:5

Memory Verse: *Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe* (Heb. 12:28 ESV).

Background Helps:

Our final lesson in “God’s Covenant Story”! How fitting that we conclude our study in the final book of the Bible and with the final story of the Bible, Revelation 19:11–22:5. But first we will consider Hebrews 12:18-29 where the writer once again contrasts the old covenant given to Moses at Sinai (12:18-21) with the new covenant given through Jesus Christ (12:22-24). Addressing these Jewish Christians, the writer indicates that “you have come [notice the past tense—already this is a reality in a spiritual sense] to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, . . . etc.” (12:22ff.). This new covenant will be consummated in the future when God will “shake” the whole creation one final time and his people will receive an unshakeable kingdom (12:26-28).

In the closing chapters of Revelation, in an extraordinary vision, the apostle John gives us an inspired picture of this unshakeable future kingdom. The readings will take us through a series of impressive scenes:

- The Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 19:11-21)
- The Millennium (20:1-10)
- The Final Judgment (20:11-15)
- The New Heaven and Earth (21:1-8)
- The New Jerusalem (21:9–22:5)

A year ago, in our very first lesson in “God’s Covenant Story,” we considered God’s “covenant” with Adam and the whole human race, a covenant that was broken by Adam’s sin. Several weeks ago, we considered the parallels and contrasts between Adam and Christ as representatives of two “races” of people (Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:20-23). Now we bring “God’s Covenant Story” to a climax as we learn about the restoration of Paradise in the New Jerusalem.

Lesson Helps:

A suggested aim: My students will learn about the final chapter of “God’s Covenant Story,” so that they will look forward to dwelling with God forever in the New Jerusalem as his “sons.”

In your lesson, briefly sketch the final events of history as listed above in the Background Helps. Then focus on Revelation 21:1–22:5, John’s description of the new heaven and earth and the new Jerusalem. Make a list of the parallels you see between the new Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden from Genesis 2–3 (e.g., “the tree of life”)—Paradise restored!


Notice particularly Revelation 21:3 and 7: “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*. . . The one who conquers will have this heritage, *and I will be his God and he will be my*

son.” These verses repeat the main covenant promise we have seen throughout our yearlong study: see, for example, Genesis 17:7; Leviticus 26:12; 1 Chronicles 17:13; Jeremiah 30:22; 31:33b; 2 Corinthians 6:18. Now in the book of Revelation, God once again promises to be our God and to own us as his people—only this time, he promises to dwell among us (Rev. 21:3) and to claim each one of us personally as his “son” (21:7)!

Ask your students, “Are you one of God’s sons [which includes the daughters!]? Are you looking forward to the eternal future he is preparing for us?”

Home Assignment:

 Read John 1:19–2:22; Mark 1:14-20; Luke 5:1-11.

 Memorize Mark 1:17.