

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of the new heavens and the new earth. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: New Heavens and New Earth

When Christ returns and the children of God are revealed, the creation itself will be made new. Like the resurrected bodies that Christians will one day receive, the physical world will undergo a similar transformation, so much so that the Scriptures describe it as new heavens and a new earth (2 Pet. 3:13). Scripture describes the new earth as a city (Rev. 21:10-11, 21-26) and as a physical place that will include eating and drinking (Luke 22:18; Rev. 19:9). Best of all, Christ will be all and in all, and we will see Him face to face.

1 The new heavens and earth will be a physical re-creation (Rom. 8:18-22; 2 Pet. 3:5-7, 10-13).

- ▶ How do you imagine eternity? What kind of activities do you think we'll be doing?
- ▶ When we say that with Jesus' return, the world will be destroyed with fire, what do you imagine happening? What will the world look like afterward?

Read 2 Peter 3:5-7.

- ▶ What happened to the earth as a result of the flood (v. 4)? Does Peter mean it was annihilated? What happened to the earth after the flood?

Read 2 Peter 3:10-13.

- ▶ What is the destiny of the present heavens and earth? What will happen to it (v. 12)? How will it be destroyed?
- ▶ What will come of it afterward (v. 13)?
- ▶ How does the destruction of the earth at the flood parallel the destruction of the earth when Jesus returns? Should we expect a physical world after Jesus' return?

Read Romans 8:18-22.

- ▶ According to Paul, the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to what?
- ▶ What is this glory that will be revealed to us, according to (vv. 19-22)? (Hint: note the word "For" at the beginning of verse 19.)
- ▶ What is the creation's current state? To what did Paul compare creation's current pains?
- ▶ What will become of the creation (v. 21)? So will creation be annihilated at Jesus' return?

2 The new heavens and earth will be the culmination of the work of the last Adam (Gen. 1:27-28; 1 Cor. 15:45; Rev. 21:1-2).

Read Genesis 1:27-28.

- ▶ What was Adam's original mandate? Did it happen?
- ▶ What do you think the world would have looked like if Adam had carried it out?

Read Revelation 21:1-2.

- ▶ What has happened to the earth now? Why?
- ▶ How is this passage a fulfillment of the command of Genesis 1:28? Who fulfilled the command that Adam failed?
- ▶ How does it make you feel to know that God didn't forget the command or leave it unfulfilled? How does this realization help you treasure Jesus more?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:45.

- ▶ What might be one reason Paul called Jesus the last Adam?

3 The new heavens and earth will be a setting for Christ-centered cultural experiences (Isa. 25:6-8; 1 Cor. 2:9; Rev. 7:9-10; 22:1-5).

- ▶ What are some of your favorite things from other cultures?

Read Revelation 7:9-10.

- ▶ Do we all have the same culture on the new heavens and the new earth?
- ▶ What kinds of art, experiences, food, architecture, and/or music from other cultures do you look forward to enjoying on the new heavens and new earth?

Read Isaiah 25:6-8.

- ▶ What will we do on God's holy mountain? Why does this activity assume physical creation?
- ▶ How do we know Isaiah was referring to the new heavens and earth?

Read Revelation 22:1-5.

- ▶ Who is the centerpiece of the new creation? What are some of the hopeful things you either see or can infer from these verses?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ How does the sweet promise of the new heavens and earth encourage you to a greater pursuit of Jesus? To greater pursuit of holiness? To greater evangelism for the unbelieving?