

# Eternal Life

## ETERNAL LIFE IN THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

Focal Verses • REVELATION 22:12-21

### Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will: SURVEY the biblical references to the Second Coming of Christ to see the importance of this hoped-for reality; REJOICE that the invitation from Jesus to join the new community continues through the end of all things; and EMBRACE the call to become part of God's kingdom.

### In Focus

Throughout her life, Chanel has struggled in school. She faced developmental issues as a child, and early on, she was diagnosed with a learning disability. Now, however, her moment was finally here. Chanel remembered the day her parents dropped her off on campus. Almost four years had passed, but she vividly remembered how they reaffirmed her intelligence, encouraged her to be fearless in her pursuits, and cautioned her to make wise decisions.

Chanel distinctly remembered how her journey began—the first day of class, what her roommate, Breana, said when they first met, and even her feelings of anxiety. A lot had occurred between then and now. Chanel had faced financial aid issues, the stress of maintaining her sports scholarship while working, and academic struggles.

After her parents, Miriam and Craig, dropped her off at college four years ago, this was the day they had always waited for: Chanel was graduating with honors. In spite of all that Chanel faced as a child, her parents hoped and believed that she would excel. Over the last twenty-two years, sometimes setbacks made this day seem unlikely, but her parent's faith never faltered. They instilled in Chanel the same level of expectation, perseverance, and desire that they had for themselves, and finally, it paid off.

*Walking in faith to inherit eternal life in Christ is much like Chanel's journey to graduating from college. How are you waiting in faith, expectation, perseverance, and desire for Christ's return?*

### Keep in Mind

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last"  
(Revelation 22:13, KJV).



## Focal Verses

**KJV** **Revelation 22:12** And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

**13** I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

**14** Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

**15** For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

**16** I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

**17** And the Spirit and the bride say, Come And let him that heareth say, Come And let him that is athirst come And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

**18** For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

**19** And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

**20** He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

**21** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

## The People, Places, and Times

**Book of Revelation.** John, who lived in a time of Roman persecution, oppression, and idolatry, began by penning his message as “things which must shortly come to pass” (1:1). Whether the text is interpreted as literal events to take place in the future or as allegorical principles of the kingdom of God, it is clear that initially the text was a prophecy (1:3, 22:18) and a letter (1:4) to the seven churches in Asia Minor, the region we know today as Turkey John writes from the island of Patmos, where he said his visions occurred.

**John.** Specifically naming himself as the author of Revelation, John writes with authority to the whole church. From reading these Scriptures, it is apparent the son of Zebedee was a visionary and a prophet. Jesus nicknamed him and his brother James the “Sons of Thunder.” John had a seemingly special relationship with Jesus. In at least three instances, John accompanied Jesus apart from the majority of the twelve disciples (Luke 8:51; Matthew 17:1; Mark 14:33).

## Background

The book of Revelation is considered apocalyptic writing. The term “apocalypse” refers to Jewish and Christian literature that uncovers or unveils future events or unseen realms of heaven and hell; conversationally, the word is applied to religious events surrounding the anticipated destruction of the world. Apocalyptic writing is notorious for mysterious language and imagery that could be perceived and interpreted in many different ways In the Old and New Testaments, there are two full apocalypses (Daniel and Revelation), both of which speak cryptically of corrupt, human political realms in contrast to God’s heavenly and eternal realm.

Eschatology, the study of end times, and more specifically death, judgment, and heaven and hell, has been closely associated with apocalyptic literature. Both Revelation and Daniel (chapter 9) prophesy that the end is on the horizon. Daniel also introduces the Jewish (and then also Christian) concept of being raised from the dead (12:1–2),

and the Book of Life mentioned throughout Revelation is first mentioned in Daniel (12:1).

Another heavily discussed or avoided topic is the second coming of Jesus. This phenomenon has drawn a lot of thoughts that vary widely throughout the faith. In the most literal context, it is the belief that Jesus will literally return to earth and satisfy unfulfilled prophecies.

## At-A-Glance

1. Alpha and Omega (Revelation 22:12–13)
2. City Gates (vv. 14–15)
3. Root and Descendant of David (vv. 16–21)

## In Depth

### 1. Alpha and Omega (Revelation 22:12–13)

The significance of the “I am” statement stems from the book of Exodus (3:13–15), when God instructs Moses to tell the people of Israel that God sent him. Moses asks God for a specific name, and God’s response is, “I AM THAT I AM,” that is, “I am everything and whatever is required at any given moment.” The term is all-encompassing. God further explains that this will be His name forever.

Jesus employs the “I am” statement as an assertion of His divinity and connection to God. He quotes God’s declaration of being the first and the last who is the one true God (Isaiah 44:6, 48:12). Jesus utilizes the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (alpha and omega) to stress the point further. The phrase occurs four times throughout Revelation (1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13).

### 2. City Gates (vv. 14–15)

Revelation was written to churches in large cities. Thus John intentionally describes a particular place that contrasts with the metropolitan life the recipients are used to. Chapter 3 introduces this city of God as the New

Jerusalem (3:12), while chapter 21 provides the description. The dimensions, ethos, foundation, building materials and jewels, walls, and character of its inhabitants are all detailed.

John writes that those who have the right to the Tree of Life will enter the city by the gates; there are twelve of them. Three gates face each compass direction, and there is an angel and inscription of the twelve tribes at all the gates. The people outside the gates are those who are disobedient to God’s commands. They would corrupt the city with their sin.

### 3. Root and Descendant of David (vv. 16–21)

Throughout the messianic prophecies, there is a motif that connects the expectant Savior to the lineage and legacy of King David. The Gospels continue the motif by casting Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecies, and whatever remains void, the New Testament asserts, will be accomplished once Jesus returns. Based on Scripture and because of their plight as a people, the initial followers of Christ longed for a Davidic king who would conquer the enemies of God in the same way that David did.

Even in the apocalyptic text that was canonized last in sequence, Jesus identifies Himself with the legacy and lineage of David. An interpretation of Isaiah 11:1, 10 is that there is still a constant connection between what was and what will come.

## Search the Scriptures

1. What is the severe punishment for anyone who adds or takes away from this book of prophecy (Revelation 22:18–19)?
2. Jesus calls those who follow His commandments blessed (v 14). Write out a mission statement that details how you are going to live a blessed life.

## Discuss the Meaning

1. How relevant is the Second Coming to the way you live your life?

2. What does it mean to you personally that Jesus is the beginning and the end?

## Liberating Lesson

Although Jesus graciously extends the invitation for us to enter the kingdom and offers “waters of life,” we cannot receive these gifts without obligation and investment. Sometimes we can be so preoccupied with the daily routine of life that we have no interest in questions of ultimate significance. These are the things that need to occupy our minds and influence our lives on a daily basis.

## Application for Activation

Verse 15 gives a few examples of actions and character flaws that can separate us from Jesus. Aside from what was mentioned, can you think of anything that may separate you from fully preparing yourself for Christ? The thoughts, words, or actions do not have to be what some consider “sin” in the conventional sense, but rather anything that could prevent you from dwelling in the closest proximity possible to Jesus.

## Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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## Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## Say It Correctly

Plagues. **PLAYGZ**.  
Testifieth. **TES-ti-FEYE-ith**.

## Daily Bible Readings

### DAY 358

2 Peter 1–3  
Ecclesiastes 5

### DAY 359

1 John 1–5  
Ecclesiastes 6

### DAY 360

2 John, 3 John, Jude  
Ecclesiastes 7

### DAY 361

Revelation 1–5  
Ecclesiastes 8

### DAY 362

Revelation 6–8  
Ecclesiastes 9

### DAY 363

Revelation 9–14  
Ecclesiastes 10

### DAY 364

Revelation 15–18  
Ecclesiastes 11

### DAY 365

Revelation 19–22  
Ecclesiastes 12

## Notes

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