

BIBLE BACKGROUND

JOURNEY 12: THE RETURN OF THE KING

The Lamb's Book of Life

KEY PASSAGE: Revelation 19:7–16; 20:11–15; 21:1–6

KEY WORD: *Party*

KEY VERSE: Philippians 4:6–7

KEY THOUGHT: Celebrate with the King that your name is written in His Book.

THE SEPARATION

Jesus tried to prepare His disciples for His death and Resurrection. He explained to them that He must go away. They were devastated even though He had tried to prepare them for how it would all end. They just didn't get it. There were two reasons He must go away.

1. First, Jesus had to leave so He could prepare a place for His followers. His Father's house had many mansions, He said. These mansions were permanent dwellings, or resting places, where His followers could live with Him forever. He had to get everything ready before He could come back and get them (John 14:1–4).
2. Secondly, if Jesus didn't leave, then the Helper, the Comforter in the form of the Holy Spirit, could not come. The Holy Spirit was needed to convict people of sin, to energize the work of the disciples as they spread the Gospel, and to prepare the world for the coming judgment (John 14:7–11).

Nothing they could say would persuade Jesus to stay. Going was part of the plan for returning. If He didn't leave now, then He could not return in power and glory at the time appointed by His Father.

THE PROMISE OF THE RETURN

Jesus promised He would return. Matthew wrote about it in Chapters 24 and 25. John remembered what Jesus said about having to leave. The apostle Paul received information directly from Jesus about how He would return that is known as the *Rapture* (1 Thessalonians 4:11–17). Jesus was coming back but no one knew exactly when.

The first-century disciples in the midst of persecution longed for Christ to return and deliver them. They even used a special greeting for one another that reflected this hope.

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It was the Aramaic word “*maranatha*,” which can be translated “O, Lord, come!” (1 Corinthians 16:22). Everyone kept waiting in those days after His ascension, but days turned into weeks, weeks into months, months into years and years into centuries. And, still the followers of Christ are waiting. A look at the wedding customs in Bible times provides valuable insight into this waiting period.

THE CHURCH—THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

According to Jewish customs, the parents of a young man and woman arranged the marriage of their children. Having asked for the hand of a young woman, the man would arrange with his future father-in-law an acceptable dowry to pay for his future wife. A formal ceremony was held where the betrothal contract was signed. The bride and groom sealed the agreement by drinking together from a cup of wine. According to Jewish law, their marriage was finalized but it would be a long time before they lived together. Joseph and Mary were at this point in their contractual agreement, when Mary learned she was with child.

The groom would then return to his parents’ house to prepare a home for his new bride. When all was ready, he would come to take her back with him for the marriage celebration. The bride had no idea when the bridegroom would return for her. She had to be prepared because he could come at any time. He would come at night with a procession of family and friends.

When the bride heard the noise of the procession coming toward her home, she rushed to put on her wedding clothes and to gather her family and friends around her. Having realized the groom was at the door, she stepped out into the street as the wedding party cheered. The entire group returned to the house of the groom’s parents for a prolonged period of celebration. The marriage was consummated and the celebration continued for several days.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

In Revelation 19, the apostle John speaks of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. There are striking parallels between the union of Christ and His Church with that of the Jewish bride and groom.

- Jesus came to pay the price required for the dowry of His Bride, the Church. It cost Him everything; but He and His Father agreed that it was worth the price.
- After having sealed the contract with His own blood, Jesus as the bridegroom returned to His Father’s house to prepare a permanent dwelling, or resting place, for His beloved Bride (John 14:1–3).
- The time is coming when He will come like a thief in the night to take His Bride back to His father’s house. No one knows the hour or the day; it could be any day.

The Bride must be ready at all times, clothed in the beauty of her own righteous deeds (Revelation 19:8), as she awaits His return.

- When the trumpet sounds to signal the groom's arrival, the Bride will rise to meet Him in the air and so they will be together forever (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
- Their wedding supper will be prepared as Christ appears on a white horse and binds Satan for a thousand years (Revelation 19:7–9; 20:3).

THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE

The thousand years will pass as Christ dwells in peace with His Bride. Then Jesus will cast Satan into the lake of fire where he will remain for all eternity. Then Christ opens the books to conduct the White Throne Judgment. One book records every person's deeds, thoughts and actions that reveal the sinfulness of every person. Another book, the Lamb's Book of Life, is opened. In it is written the name of every person who has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Those whose names do not appear in this book are cast into the lake of fire along with Satan for all eternity (Revelation 20:11–15).

ALL THINGS MADE NEW

The New Jerusalem will descend from heaven where God forever will dwell with men. All things will be made new.

- God will wipe away every tear.
- There will be no more death.
- Sorrow and weeping will cease.
- There will be no more pain or suffering.
- Old things will pass away.
- Beauty will engulf every aspect of our existence.
- There will be no space-time continuum.
- We will have new bodies like that of Christ.

The Bride will forever live with the *Alpha and Omega*, the *Beginning and the End* of all things (Revelation 21:6) forever and ever and ever.



TEACHING PLAN

JOURNEY 12: THE RETURN OF THE KING

The Lamb's Book of Life

KEY PASSAGE Revelation 19:7–16; 20:11–15; 21:1–6	KEY VERSE Philippians 4:6–7
KEY WORD <i>Party</i>	KEY THOUGHT Celebrate with the King that your name is written in His book.



INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

CONNECT the Big Room experience with the Bible story by asking the students questions about what they saw.

- “Which character wanted to have a party?”
- “Was everyone in agreement about the party?”
- “What kind of party did it turn out to be?”
- “Was everyone pleased with the celebration?”

THE BEST PARTY EVER

[If possible, create a party atmosphere in your room with balloons and streamers that you provide.] **TELL** the students you want to plan a fabulous party with them. **ENCOURAGE** them to dream big as you write their ideas on the board. **SAY:** No matter how big a party we plan, it can never compare to the celebration that Jesus is preparing for us in heaven that we are going to study about today. **READ** 1 Corinthians 2:9—

“... no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.”

ASK the students to turn to the book of Revelation so we can see what will happen. *[You could even bring your own wedding album to illustrate how grand celebrations weddings are. Ask the students to share any experiences they have had with weddings.]*

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[**Younger students** should locate the book of Revelation and listen as you read the Revelation passages or summarize in your own words. The students can complete the Crossroads, the Bible Learning Project, Scripture Memory and Table Talk options C and D.]



EXPLORING THE BIBLE PASSAGE

PROVIDE some of the background information on a Jewish wedding celebration described in the Bible Background section. **POINT OUT** the parallels to the return of Christ.

- **Revelation 19:7–16:** Who is the Bride of Christ? (*the church*) Who makes up the church? (*those who have received Christ*) How is the Bride clothed? (*in white linen, pure and bright*) How is our sin covered over so that we can come into the presence of a holy God? (*We are covered with the purity and holiness of Christ when we receive Him as Savior.*)
- **Revelation 20:12, 15:** What is the name of the book that contains a list of the saved? (*the book of life*) If your name is not found in this book, what will happen to your soul? (*thrown into the lake of fire along with Satan*) If you are not sure your name is written in the book, what can you do about it? (*repent and be saved*)
- **Revelation 21:1–6:** What will heaven be like? (*no tears, no pain, no suffering, no death, no need for sun or moon*) What will make it so wonderful? (*Jesus will be there.*) What is His name? (*Alpha and Omega, King of Kings and Lord of Lords*)

Have you made your reservation? You know you have to RSVP. You can't just show up and expect to be included. **ASK:** What does RSVP mean? Then **QUOTE** Romans 10:9–10.



THE CROSSROADS: *The Lamb's Book of Life*

[If possible, use a blank journal to simulate the Lamb's Book by showing the empty pages ready to be filled with the names of people who ask Jesus to save them.]

EXPLAIN the urgency of the hour because we do not know what day Christ will come back. If He returns and you have not received Him as Savior, your name will not be found in the Lamb's Book. What will you do? The Tribulation will come and the Gospel will be preached but the world will be a very different place filled with war, disease, natural disasters, horrendous evil, etc. Don't put the decision off. Do it now! [Share the plan of salvation and close in prayer.]



BIBLE LEARNING PROJECT:

Glory Trumpets

Supplies: Plastic horns, pony beads in black, red, white, blue, green and yellow, red ribbon 12"

- Provide each student with 1 horn, 1 red ribbon and 1 pony bead in each of the following colors: Black, Red, White, Blue, Green and Yellow.
- Instruct the students to tie one end of the red ribbon to the bottom of the horn.
- Next, thread the beads onto the ribbon in the following order: Black, Red, White, Blue, Green and Yellow.
- Once all beads are threaded, tie the other end of the ribbon to the bottom of the horn.

Remind the students that the trumpet will sound as Christ returns to the earth to take us to heaven to live with Him.

BLOW YOUR TRUMPET AND SOUND THE ALARM!

"JESUS IS COMING; DON'T BE LEFT BEHIND."



TABLE TALK OPTIONS

CHOOSE one of the following activities that are appropriate for the age group you teach. **USE** your table groups as a means to divide the class and give everyone an opportunity to participate.

A. LET'S PARTY!

HAVE the students make pictures to describe heaven and/or the wedding supper of the Lamb using 8 1/2 x 11 paper. **ENCOURAGE** them to use their imagination but to stay true to the descriptions in Revelation. If at all possible, provide something good to eat while they are working. Poster ideas may include:

- The King lives here!
- The House of Alpha and Omega
- Wedding Cake to the Right, Lake of Fire to the Left!
- Pick up your white robes here!
- NO CRYING ALLOWED!
- THE LAMB WINS!
- WEATHER REPORT: Bright and *"SONNY"*

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B. INVITATION PLEASE?

SUPPLY each student with a ½ sheet of white cardstock. **ASK** them to design an invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven. Be sure to give time, date and place. Add R.S.V.P. at the bottom and write out the verses of Romans 10:9–10.

C. A SERIOUS PARTY GAME

PROVIDE a space where each table group can move around. If possible, you may be able to go out into the hallway. **APPOINT** one person to be “It.” **TELL** the students they are only allowed to walk, not run, and they are not to leave the hallway. “It” will try to tag the other students. When another student is tagged, that student must link arms with the “It” person and then move together to catch as many others as they can. Each time a kid is tagged, he/she must link with the others and then keep on *tagging*. **CONTINUE** playing the game until everyone in each table group is linked together. Then **HAVE** the tables groups all link up together. **ONE LARGE GROUP—ONE BODY OF CHRIST!**

SAY: One day we will celebrate with Jesus in heaven. We need to take as many people along with us as we can. That’s why we need to tag everyone we know with the Gospel message.

D. THINGS WE WON’T NEED IN HEAVEN

Supplies: Tissue box, picture of a church building, flashlight, Band-Aid®
HOLD UP each item one by one. **EXPLAIN** why we will not need these things in heaven. The Bible says in heaven there will be no more tears. Our bodies will not be hurt. There will be no more darkness. We will not need churches because God will be right there with us. We can worship Him at His throne. **CLOSE** in prayer by thanking God for His wonderful promise of heaven.



SCRIPTURE MEMORY: *Philippians 4:6–7*

Verse 6

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything
by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving,
let your requests be made known to God.*

Verse 7

*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

For 12 weeks we have studied Philippians 4:6–7. We have memorized these two verses that keep us from being anxious about anything. Now is the time to put these verses together and make sure they are locked in our hearts. **ASK** the students to get in pairs and practice saying these verses from memory. One student can say Verse 6 and the other Verse 7. Then switch verses so the students say the other verse. Be prepared to reward anyone who can say both verses from memory. Tell them that these two verses will comfort them all the days of their lives.



A LOOK AT THE BOOK

SAY: Let's take a look at the Scriptures that tell us something about Jesus returning to get His people. **HAVE** the students locate these Scriptures and read them aloud. **ASK** them to tell you what the passage says about Christ's return.

- John 14:1–3 – A heavenly home
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 – The Rapture
- Acts 1:11 – His sure return
- Matthew 24:44 – Time of arrival unknown
- Revelation 19:11–16 – His glorious appearing
- Matthew 26:28–29 – A new celebration in heaven



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do we know Jesus is coming? (*He said He was.*)
2. When will that take place? (*No one knows.*)
3. What should we be doing in the meantime? (*sharing the Gospel*)
4. Who will attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb? (*all who have placed their faith in Christ*)
5. What will the Bride be wearing? (*white linen, pure and bright*)
6. Who is the Bride of Christ? (*the Church*)
7. Name two things that will *not* be in heaven. (*crying, suffering pain, evil, sun, moon*)
8. What do the letters RSVP stand for? (*respond, if you please*)
9. How does a person respond to Christ's invitation? (*repent and accept Christ's work of salvation*)
10. Is there only one way to heaven? (*yes*)
11. What is it? (*faith in Christ*)
12. How can we keep from being anxious? (*pray about everything and be thankful*)