

**A JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME**

# **BEHOLD, A WHITE HORSE**



**SHEPHERDCHURCH**

# Lesson 18: Behold, A White Horse

## Welcome

Choose one of the following fun, non-biblical questions to answer:

- **What's a movie or book you rewatch or reread—even though you already know the ending? Why does it still move you?**
- **If you could receive any gift for your birthday/holiday, what would it be and why?**

These questions connect to the book of Revelation because they tap into two big themes at the heart of the book: anticipation and longing. When people rewatch a favorite movie or reread a favorite book even though they know the ending, it mirrors how Revelation gives us confidence and hope because we already know how the story ends. The ending of God's story doesn't get old. Knowing that Christ wins still moves us, strengthens us, and shapes the way we live today.

The question about gifts is tied to Revelation because it highlights the ultimate gifts God promises His people: the return of Jesus, the defeat of evil, resurrection life, and a new creation where everything broken is made whole. Asking about a gift helps people reflect on desire, hope, and what they long for most.

## Worship

**Psalm 96** is a joyful celebration of the Lord's coming reign. As we reflect on Jesus' return in **Revelation 19**, this psalm helps us anchor our hearts in worship. Have one person read Psalm 96 aloud. Then invite three people to each pray the following:

- **Thank God for His greatness and the beauty of creation.**
- **Thank Jesus for being our Savior and victorious King.**
- **Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live with joy & urgency as we await Christ's return.**

Budget around 10 minutes for this portion of the lesson.

You don't have to share the following with your Life Group, but it might help to set the mood and provide clarity. Psalm 96 and Revelation 19 are tied together through their shared celebration of God as King and Judge who reigns over all creation. In Psalm 96, the psalmist calls the whole world to sing to the Lord, proclaim His salvation, and announce that He is coming to judge the earth with righteousness and truth. It's a picture of worship that isn't quiet or local—it's global, joyful, and rooted in the hope that God will one day set everything right. That same theme comes bursting to the surface again at the end of the Bible.

In Revelation 19, John describes heaven erupting in praise because the Lord reigns and His judgments are true and just. The vision of Jesus returning as the righteous Judge and victorious King is essentially the fulfillment of what Psalm 96 anticipated. Where the psalm looks forward to God's coming reign, Revelation 19 shows that reign arriving in full glory. The worship of heaven in Revelation mirrors the call to worship in Psalm 96, showing that what God promised long ago is finally completed in Christ.

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*There are 10 questions/prompts in the WORD section. Your Life Group doesn't have to cover every question below. Life Group Leaders may select the ones that best fit your group. You can also use the remaining questions as personal reflection throughout the week.*

## Word

Watch the video lesson and read as much of [Revelation 16-22](#) as you can before your group meets.

The Book of Revelation is the final book of the Bible and serves as the dramatic conclusion to God's redemptive story. Written by the Apostle John while exiled on the prison island of Patmos, Revelation is a prophetic vision filled with powerful imagery, symbols, and messages from Jesus to His Church. Likely written around 95 A.D. during a time of intense persecution under the Roman Empire, the book was meant to encourage suffering Christians to remain faithful, reminding them that despite present trials, Christ ultimately reigns victorious.

Far from being a random collection of strange visions, Revelation is a carefully structured message about hope, judgment, and renewal. It pulls together themes from the entire Bible—echoing the Garden of Eden, the promises of the prophets, the mission of Jesus, and the final restoration of creation. The heart of Revelation is not fear, but confidence in Jesus as the Lamb who was slain and the King who will return. It calls believers to endure faithfully, live expectantly, and worship wholeheartedly, knowing that the end of the story has already been written: Jesus wins.

**1. In the video lesson, Naomi opens by asking if you've ever watched a movie when you already knew how it would end. How does knowing the end of earth's story ([Revelation 22](#)) impact your perspective during difficult times?**

In the beginning of the video lesson, Naomi makes the point that knowing how the story ends will bring a different kind of peace. There are many different ways that you could explain this question and direct the flow of the discussion, but the following details might help. When you already know the ending of a movie, you watch and experience any tense moments in the movie differently:

- The surprises don't shake you
- The setbacks don't discourage you
- The uncertainty doesn't intimidate you

Revelation 22 gives believers that same kind of confidence. The final chapter in the Bible leaves nothing up in the air. It reveals that God dwells with His people, wipes away every tear, removes death and pain, and brings His story to its perfect completion. During difficult seasons, remembering that the ending has already been written helps shift the tone of life from anxiety to assurance. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by the present moment, we can anchor ourselves in the unshakable future God has promised.



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This perspective also reshapes how challenges are interpreted. Hardship can feel final when we forget where the story is heading, but Revelation shows that suffering is temporary and victory is certain. Jesus returns not to start a new story but to complete the one He already secured at the cross—which means that our current struggles are hardly signs of defeat. Instead, our current struggles are reminders that the world is still waiting for its guaranteed restoration. Knowing the ending empowers us to walk through trouble without losing hope, because the King who rides in triumph in Revelation 19 is the same King who restores all things in Revelation 22.

In everyday life, this should change the way we respond to pain, fear, and uncertainty. Instead of feeling defined by what is happening right now, we can live with confidence that God's Word on life, joy, and restoration is final. The end of the story gives us courage in the middle of the story. And like Naomi said, if Jesus has already won, then His people can face whatever comes with purpose, hope, and unwavering trust that their story is heading toward a promised and perfect ending.

## **2. Revelation 19:11 calls Jesus “Faithful and True.” Why is the title “Faithful and True” especially meaningful in today’s world? What does it mean to trust Jesus’ faithfulness and truthfulness when life feels uncertain?**

In Revelation's broader context, believers were facing pressure, uncertainty, and even persecution from the Roman Empire. Many early Christians lived with fear about the future, yet John saw heaven opened and Jesus revealed as the One who judges with justice and never abandons His people. So, Revelation 19:11 describes Jesus as “Faithful and True.” Together, these words carry deep meaning in a world where promises are often broken, truth feels contested, and people struggle to know who or what can be trusted.

- The word “Faithful” is translated from the Greek word *pistos* (πιστός), which conveys the idea of reliability, dependability, and a character that never changes.
- The word “True” is translated from the Greek word *alēthinos* (ἀληθινός), meaning genuine or authentic, the opposite of anything false or misleading.

The combination of these 2 Greek words gives the sense of someone who is trustworthy, genuine, and 100% reliable. In a world where kings and emperors often exaggerated their power or made promises they couldn't keep (as still happens today), the description of “faithful and true” sets Jesus apart. The title “Faithful and True” assured them that Jesus was not unpredictable or unstable like human rulers. Instead...

- His character is steady
- His words are dependable
- His promises are certain
- His judgments are true

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All of this connects directly to Isaiah 11, where the promised Messiah judges with righteousness and faithfulness. Revelation 19 uses that same Old Testament framework to show that the Messiah now comes to complete the work that Israel's prophets foretold.

Today, trusting Jesus' faithfulness can provide the same comfort. When life feels confusing and/or chaotic, His character remains consistent. He has shown throughout Scripture that His words and promises do never fail. Jesus has proven that His love is not dependent on emotions or circumstances. Why? Because He alone is "Faithful and True." Only His guidance can be 100% trusted, only His commands can be followed with 100% confidence, and only His promises of presence and strength can 100% be relied upon.

### 3. What imagery in *Revelation 19:11-16* stands out to you the most, and why?

There are many images in Revelation 19:11-16 that your Life Group members might connect with. Some images your Life Group members mention might be obvious and others not so obvious. If it's helpful, you can share some of the background and meaning of specific images in Revelation 19:11-16 as detailed below:

- Verse 11: "A white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True"

Throughout the Old Testament and even in the secular ancient world, white horses symbolize victorious royalty or divine triumph (Zechariah 1:8; 6:1-8). More specifically, in the Book of Zechariah, horses are associated with God's patrol and judgment over the earth. Then, as discussed in the previous prompt, the words "Faithful" and "True" echo descriptions of God's character (Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 31:5). Also, God is repeatedly named as THE faithful and true One in verses like Isaiah 65:16.

- Verse 11: "With justice he judges and wages war"

Judging with righteousness and waging just war echo Isaiah's description of the Messianic king: He "will judge with righteousness" (Isaiah 11:3-4). God is the divine warrior who fights justly for His people (Exodus 15:3; Deuteronomy 32:41-43; Psalm 96:13).

- Verse 12: "His eyes are like blazing fire"

God's eyes are described as searching all things in Zechariah 4:10 and 2 Chronicles 16:9. Such passages teach us that God is omnipresent and omniscient (aka, God is everywhere at once and God is all knowing). Then, the "fire imagery" symbolizes God's holy presence. Similar descriptions are used of God in verses like Daniel 10:6 (where His eyes like flaming torches). In more of a general sense, "fire" is consistently a symbol of God's purity, judgment, and omniscience (Exodus 3:2; Deuteronomy 4:24).

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- Verse 12: "On his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself."

The many crowns echo the abundance of authority given to the Messiah who is from the lineage of David (Psalm 2:6-9; Psalm 110). In the Old Testament, crowns frequently symbolize God-given dominion as seen in verses like 1 Chronicles 29:11 and Daniel 7:14. There's more of a description and discussion on crowns in the next prompt. Then, similar to how crowns symbolize God's power and authority, the hidden name reflects the Old Testament theme that God's full essence is beyond human comprehension (Judges 13:17-18; "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding"). God often reveals His name selectively (Exodus 3:13-15; Exodus 34:5-7) and yet retains mystery.

- Verse 13: "He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood"

This description alludes to Isaiah 63:1-3 where God, as the divine warrior, returns with garments stained in the blood of His enemies after treading the winepress of judgment. Many times, in the Old Testament, God is depicted as coming alone to execute judgment and having His robes stained from battle (Isaiah 63:3, "their blood spattered my garments").

- Verse 13: "His name is the Word of God"

God's Word creates and judges (Genesis 1:1-3; Psalm 33:6; Isaiah 55:11). The Old Testament depicts God's Word as active, living, and accomplishing divine purposes, similar to how God's Word is described in Hebrews 4:12. To bear the name "Word of God" is to embody the very self-expression of God, which in the Old Testament belongs only to God.

- Verse 14: "The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean"

Heavenly armies accompany God in judgment and protection (Deuteronomy 33:2; Psalm 68:17; 2 Kings 6:17). The white garments symbolize purity and holiness (Exodus 28 priestly garments; Ecclesiastes 9:8). God commands angelic hosts, often called "Lord of Hosts" (YHWH Sabaoth), which symbolize His authority. The image of divine armies reinforces His authority and purity.

- Verse 15: "A sharp sword coming out of his mouth with which to strike down the nations"

The "sword" is a frequent metaphor for the power of God's Word. We learn in Isaiah 11:4 that "He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth" (see also Isaiah 49:2 and Hosea 6:5). God judges the nations by His spoken Word (Psalm 2; Isaiah 30:33). His Word—His speech has decisive and irresistible power.

- Verse 15: "He will rule them with an iron scepter"

This is a direct quote from Psalm 2:9, where God installs the King Messiah (who is from the line and family of David) and grants him authority to rule and shatter nations. God can do this because He is the ultimate ruler (Psalm 22:28, Daniel 4:34-35), and His appointed King shares in His authority.

- Verse 15: "He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty"

This explicitly echoes Isaiah 63:2-6 (treading the winepress alone), as well as Joel 3:13 ("the winepress is full... the vats overflow; their wickedness is great"). The imagery of treading the winepress belongs uniquely to God as the executor of final judgment.

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- Verse 16: "On his robe and on his thigh, he has this name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords"

Titles of supreme sovereignty occur in Daniel 2:37 ("king of kings" applied to Nebuchadnezzar as God's appointed ruler) and ultimately belong to God alone (Deuteronomy 10:17: "the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords"). In the Old Testament, the highest title of universal rule belongs solely to God. Revelation applies this divine title to the rider, identifying Him with God's own authority.

## **4. Jesus is described as wearing many crowns. What does that reveal about His authority and reign? How is such power different from earthly power?**

Revelation 19 describes Jesus as having "many crowns" on His head, a picture that highlights the fullness and completeness of His authority.

- The Greek word, *diadēma* (διάδημα), is translated as "diadems" or "crowns." This word refers to the royal crowns worn by kings.

In the first century, a king or queen typically wore one crown that marked his or her rule over a particular region. The more crowns or the more valuable the crown, the greater the authority (an example today might be a boxing champion who holds multiple championship titles and belts from multiple boxing organizations.). By describing Jesus with many crowns, John communicates that every kingdom belongs to Him. This echoes Psalm 2, where God installs His King on Zion and gives Him the nations as His inheritance. It also reflects Daniel 7, where the Son of Man is given authority, glory, and sovereign power over all nations and peoples.

Earlier in Revelation, the dragon and the beast wear crowns which represent their temporary and rebellious authority. However, in Revelation 19, Christ wears "many crowns," showing His unmatched and ultimate kingship. Such imagery signals that Jesus is not simply a ruler among other rulers but the One who possesses ultimate kingship. His reign is not limited, divided, or shared. Every realm, nation, and power fall under His sovereign authority (which is why Revelation later refers to Him as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords").

In contrast to Jesus' power, human authority is temporary, fragile, and often marked by pride or corruption. Empires rise and fall, leaders come and go, and even the strongest nations eventually lose influence... and God Himself causes the rise and fall of nations and leaders (Job 12:23; Psalm 75:6-7; Daniel 2:21; Acts 17:26). Earthly rulers are also limited by geography, lifespan, and human weakness. Jesus' reign, however, is rooted in righteousness and justice. His authority flows from the character of God, not from military strength or strategic political maneuvering. He does not rule through fear or manipulation but with perfect wisdom, holiness, and truth.

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## **5. *Revelation 19:13* says that Jesus' robe is dipped in blood. Why is it significant that Jesus returns as both the Lamb who was slain and the King who reigns?**

The image of Christ's robe dipped in blood is another one of Revelation's strong connections to the Old Testament. Isaiah 63 (specifically, verses 1-3) describes the Lord as a victorious King coming from Edom with garments stained red from trampling the nations in judgment. The imagery is graphic, emphasizing God's holiness and justice as He confronts evil. The Book of Revelation (especially chapter 19) picks up that same picture to show that Christ executes judgment with the full authority and righteousness of God.

Some scholars have suggested that the blood could also recall the blood of Jesus' own sacrifice, reminding us that the Judge is also the Redeemer. Both themes are consistent with Revelation's portrayal of Jesus as the Lamb and the Warrior. In any case, the combination of these images shows that His authority to judge and reign is rooted in His willingness to give His life. He conquers not through force but through the victory of the cross, where sin and death were defeated.

The significance of Jesus returning as both Lamb and King highlights a clearer picture of His character. While human rulers often gain authority by taking life, Jesus gains His authority by giving His life. The Lamb who was slain is the same Lord who now comes to establish justice and set things right. Thus, the robe dipped in blood reminds us that redemption and judgment both flow from the same King whose reign is grounded in perfect justice, mercy, and faithfulness. This imagery in Revelation 19 assures believers that the One who judges the world is the same One who bore its sin and suffering.

## **6. In the video lesson, Naomi shared three takeaways: *Stay ready. Let hope lead you. Share the Good News.* In the space below, write down what it might look like to put each into action this week?**

Invite your Life Group members to share their own responses first. If the conversation needs a little help, you can offer one or two examples from the list below, but avoid reading the entire list so the group can draw from their own experiences and perspectives.

- Stay ready
  - Spend a few minutes each morning praying for a heart that stays focused on Jesus rather than distractions.
  - Set aside intentional time this week to read Scripture so your mind stays aligned with God's truth.
  - Choose one habit to remove that consistently pulls your attention away from spiritual growth.
  - Ask God to help you respond with faith instead of frustration in unexpected moments.



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- Let hope lead you
  - When stress hits, pause and remind yourself that Jesus has already secured the final victory.
  - Speak words of encouragement to someone who feels overwhelmed to remind them they are not alone.
  - Replace anxious thoughts with a promise from Revelation 21 or 22 about God's future restoration.
  - Approach challenges this week with confidence instead of fear, trusting that God is still in control.
- Share the Good News
  - Invite someone in your life to attend a church service, check out your Life Group, or go to one of Shepherd's events with you.
  - Look for a natural moment in a conversation to mention how God has given you hope.
  - Serve someone in a simple, practical way that reflects the love of Christ.
  - Pray for one friend or family member by name and ask God for an opportunity to share your faith with them.

## **7. How can we avoid fear when we think about Jesus' return? How does His return inspire us to live with confidence and urgency?**

Similar to the previous prompt, allow your Life Group members to share their own answers. If needed, you can give examples of potential answers from the list below. However, don't share the entire list because you want your Life Group members to come up with their own answers based off their own life experiences.

- How can we avoid fear when we think about Jesus' return?
  - Remember that Jesus' return is a promise of rescue, not a threat.
  - Trust that the One who comes back is the same Savior who loves and protects His people (aka, you).
  - We can rest in the truth that God is fully in control of history & has a plan for its conclusion.
  - Focus on the hope of restoration rather than the uncertainty of the future.
  - Stay rooted in Scripture, which repeatedly calls us to confidence, not fear.
  - Remember that judgment is directed at evil, not at us who belong to Jesus.
  - Keep in mind that Jesus' return fulfills God's promises rather than disrupts His plans.
  - Ask the Holy Spirit for strength and peace in place of anxiety.
  - Stay connected to our Christian friends who remind us of God's faithfulness.
  - Fix your thoughts on Jesus' victory rather than the world's chaos.

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- How does His return inspire us to live with confidence and urgency?
  - Believing that Jesus will return motivates us to live faithfully today.
  - Jesus' promised victory gives us confidence that our obedience is never wasted.
  - The certainty of Jesus' return & reign empowers our boldness in sharing Him with others.
  - His coming kingdom inspires us to invest in building our faith and character.
  - The hope of seeing Him motivates us to persevere through trials.
  - We must live intentionally since our time is limited.
  - Jesus' return sharpens our focus on what truly matters.
  - The promise of reward inspires us to steward our gifts, possessions, and relationships well.
  - Jesus' future judgment motivates us to be compassionate toward others.
  - The hope of eternity anchors us in courage instead of complacency.

## 8. In what ways does **Revelation 19** fulfill the promises of **Genesis 3:15**? How is the cross connected to Jesus' return?

Revelation 19 fulfills God's promise in Genesis 3:15 by portraying the final victory of the Messiah over evil. In Genesis 3:15, God declares that the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent's head while the serpent strikes His heel. This is the first promise of a coming Redeemer who would defeat Satan and reverse the damage caused by sin. Revelation 19 shows the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 reaching its climax as Jesus appears as the victorious King who judges and overthrows every leader and group aligned with evil. The rider on the white horse, called "Faithful and True," represents the fulfillment of God's promise to send One who would triumph over the serpent and restore God's rightful rule.

The imagery in Revelation 19 also connects directly to the cross, where the serpent's strike and the Messiah's victory both took place as Genesis 3:15 describes. On the cross, Jesus experienced the suffering and death symbolized in Genesis 3:15 by the serpent striking the heel, yet His resurrection announced that the decisive blow had been delivered to Satan. This victory explains why Revelation presents Jesus with complete authority, wearing many crowns and bearing names that emphasize His divine identity.

- The Greek word for "victory," *nikaō* (νικάω), appears throughout Revelation to describe the triumph that began at the cross and culminates in Jesus' return.

Thus, the cross not a separate event from His final victory but the foundation that makes His ultimate judgment possible.

Revelation 19 shows that the One who returns in glory is the same Lamb who was slain, demonstrating that His power is rooted in His sacrifice. Because He conquered sin and death through His own blood, He returns with authority to judge the nations and defeat the forces of evil once and for all. Jesus' return is the completion of what began in Genesis and was secured at the cross, bringing the story of redemption (as prophesied in Genesis 3:15) to its fulfillment.

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## 9. What are some different ways that people in your Life Group can encourage one another to stay faithful until the end?

Just like the two previous prompts, let your Life Group members answer in their own words. You may use a couple of suggestions from the list as prompts if needed, but don't walk through the entire list. The goal is for them to reflect on their own lives and come up with their own answers.

- Regularly pray for one another

Knowing that others are praying specifically for their struggles, families, and spiritual growth helps people feel supported and reminded that they're not walking alone.

- Share personal stories of God's faithfulness

Testimonies remind us that God is active, present, and trustworthy. Hearing how God showed up for someone else strengthens everyone's resolve.

- Ask questions for accountability

Questions like "How have you sensed God leading you this week?" or "Where do you feel spiritually vulnerable right now?" can help us stay grounded without feeling judged.

- Be a safe place for others to confess

When people can be honest without fear of shame, they are far more likely to persevere. A grace-filled environment helps them experience God's mercy through others.

- Celebrate spiritual wins together

Whether someone stayed consistent in Bible reading, reconciled with a friend, resisted temptation, or served someone in need – celebrating builds momentum and joy. Also, that which is celebrated is repeated.

- Help each other keep an eternal perspective

Sometimes, we can get overwhelmed by the challenges of life. Encouraging one another to keep eyes on Christ and the bigger story helps us endure.

- Serve one another

Small acts of kindness (meals, childcare, rides, help with projects, etc.) reinforce the gospel and model faithfulness.

- Engage spiritual disciplines together

Reading the Bible, praying, fasting, serving together, and more keeps everyone focused on practices that strengthen endurance.

- Walk with others during suffering

Being fully present with others during grief, crisis, or long-term hardship helps people experience Christlike love, which fuels long-term devotion.

- Remind each other of God's promises

Sometimes people forget what God has said. Speaking promises of God's character, protection, and future hope builds perseverance.

- Keep showing up consistently

Just being present week after week communicates encouragement. Consistency builds trust, depth, and long-term faithfulness.

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**10. Take a few moments to reflect on the past 18 weeks by writing down your answers to the following questions and sharing them with your Life Group:**

- **What story or character from the Bible stood out to you the most, and why?**
- **How has this series helped you understand God's plan for the world—and for your life?**
- **What's one way you've grown in your faith during this "Journey of a Lifetime"?**

This is a subjective prompt and meant to help "put a bow" on the entire experience of our Life Group series, "Journey of a Lifetime." Please do not skip this question.

## Witness

**Revelation 19** is a reminder that the story ends in victory—but not everyone knows that yet. Who in your life still needs to hear the good news? How can you share the story of Jesus' love, victory, and return with urgency and compassion this week? Also, pray about choosing a Christmas service at Shepherd Church to attend and sit together as a Life Group.

Budget about 5-10 minutes for this portion of the lesson