

The End of the Short Story; The Beginning of the Great Story!!!

The New Testament, Week 6

November 17, 2013

DAY 1: The End of the Story

1. We began our 35,000 foot journey over the skies of the entire bible 15 weeks ago. Nine weeks of Old Testament overview; six weeks of New Testament overview. The plane lands this week.

2. God's plan of redemption began in Week 2 and ends in Week 15. Then, the real party begins!!!

Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

3. From Romans 8, answer the following questions:

a. Make a list of what Paul identifies as things that are wrong with the world. (Look for at least five consequences of man's fall).

b. Paul mentions "groaning" twice.

(1) Who is groaning?

(2) Why do you think they (and we) are groaning, inwardly?

c. What can Christians anticipate, with joy? (Look for at least six benefits that are coming!)

Hebrews 9:26 ... But now Christ has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

4. As Christians we are indebted to Christ for taking our sins. When He returns He's taking our selves with Him! Our salvation will be "complete." All groaning will be over!

DAY 2: The Return of the King

1. The book of Revelation is mostly written in apocalyptic language. This is language that communicates through pictures, images, symbols, metaphors, etc. Keep this in mind as you read the following excerpt about the Second Coming.

Revelation 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. ¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great." ¹⁹ Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. ²⁰ But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. ²¹ The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

2. What strikes you about Jesus from this passage?

3. People often complain about there being injustice in the world. According to the bible, no one will "get away" with sin. What pictures of ultimate justice do you see in this passage?

4. Pictures of victory fill this passage! Victory over what? And victory over who?

5. In this world, kings and authorities throw their weight around. What will become of those who throw their weight around immorally?

6. What pictures and words give indication of Jesus as ultimate King?

7. When Jesus returns, God will wrap up human history. How does this passage give you hope?

DAY 3: The New Heavens and New Earth

1. When Jesus comes back a second time, He will wrap up all of human history. This world will go up in flames, and a new heaven and a new earth will appear!

As you read this excerpt, don't look for the details. This is "**big picture**" writing. What you're looking for are splashes of splendor, wonder, victory, beauty, joy, etc. As you read, underline these kinds of images!

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." ⁵ And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. ⁷ All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. ⁸ "But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." ⁹ Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls containing the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come with me! I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ So he took me in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious stone—like jasper as clear as crystal. ¹² The city wall was broad and high, with twelve gates guarded by twelve angels. And the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates. ¹³ There were three gates on each side—east, north, south, and west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

2. What is the point of the passage? What is it that makes all things new? What brings joy to this scene? (21:2-3)

3. What is Jesus making new? (21:5)

4. What does He offer all who are thirsty? (not physical thirst, but a deep human thirst, our longings). (21:6)

5. Does this look at heaven seem "boring?"

6. God's redeeming work of His children will be like the best Christmas anyone ever had!

7. What strikes you most about this coming scene?

DAY 4: A Day of Judgment

1. People complain about not getting justice. "Why did so-and-so get away with *that!*" People like the idea of justice in theory and practice, that is, until the topic becomes them! Then suddenly, "I don't believe in a god of justice."

2. What people don't "believe in" is a justice that is *arbitrary* or *undeserved*. Neither do I. Neither does the bible! However, you can be sure that God's justice at the end of human history will be *perfect justice*.

Revelation 22:12 "Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds."

3. Will judgment be arbitrary?

4. Will judgment be unfair?

5. Will judgment be based "on the curve?" (At least I wasn't an axe murderer!)

Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. ¹² I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

6. According to this passage, on what will God's final judgment be based? (Look for the answer in two places)

Romans 1:20 For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

7. Sometimes people say, "Well, I didn't know any better." Will that excuse hold up on judgment day?

8. Romans 1:20 indicates that *everyone knew better!* The problem was not a "knowledge" problem, but a ***heart*** problem, a *stubborn, proud* problem of the *will*.

9. Do any family members or friends come to mind? Spend a few minutes praying for them.

DAY 5: Living with the End in View

1. The apostle John was living in exile on the island of Patmos when he wrote Revelation. The world looked grim: decadence, lawlessness, and the Emperor of Rome who threw around his weight, taxed the people as he wished and ruled from the top, down.

2. One of the purposes of Revelation is for our encouragement! No matter how defeated or demoralized you may feel, or how dark our time, God is still reigning and will one day have the final word! The point? STAY FAITHFUL !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Peter picks up the same theme...

*2 Peter 3:8 But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. ⁹ The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. ¹¹ Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, **what holy and godly lives you should live,** ¹² looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. ¹³ **But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth** he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness. ¹⁴ And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, **make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.** ¹⁵ And remember, the Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him— ¹⁶ speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction. ¹⁷ I am warning you ahead of time, dear friends. **Be on guard so that you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people and lose your own secure footing.** ¹⁸ Rather, **you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen.*

3. What strikes you most from these verses about:

a. Your personal life?

b. Your ministry to lost friends and family?

c. Being on the eventual winning team?

4. The MULTIPLY series began with the Great Commission: "Go, make disciples of all nations." That's where we end!

5. The sweep of history is God's story: HIStory. You have a significant role to play with the people around you!! Ask God to give you a heart that breaks for your lost friends. Ask Him to use your life with your Christian friends, to spur them on in making disciples, as well.