

Insight Sheet

Good To Go

Theme Introduction to end time study with a goal of becoming future-facing people.

Introduction We begin this study with humility because many things about the End Times and the return of Jesus are not clear to us. In fact, Jesus told us, "About that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matthew 24:36 NIV) We look to the Bible as God's roadmap to the afterlife. Jesus explained to his disciple Thomas, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6 NIV) Our prayer is that this study guide will help all of us to see and treasure Jesus more earnestly now, as we prepare for what's next.

Terms

- **Eternity:** Term used to describe reality outside of time and the present created order.
- **Eschatology:** The theological study of the "last things" that focus on God's complete work of creation and redemption. Typically, things such as the judgment of God, the second coming of Christ, and eternal consequences are included within these studies.¹
- **Parousia:** Transliteration of the Greek word, The Parousia is in reference to the second coming of Jesus when history is mastered by God's eternal rule. It is the tension between the already and not yet, hope and possession, concealment and manifestation, faith and sight but has already been made known through the teachings of Jesus.²
- **Advent:** Translated as "coming," term used in reference for the first incarnation of Jesus and used for his future or second return.³
- **The Book of Revelation:** Translated from "the Apocalypse," meaning to reveal or unveil. Revelation is a book attributed to Johannine literature that outlines End Time revelation through a series of visions that John received by the guiding of the Holy Spirit on the island of Patmos.

Watch To prepare for this study and gain an overview of the book, consider watching these videos from the BibleProject.

- [Book of Revelation Summary: A Complete Animated Overview \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Book of Revelation Summary: A Complete Animated Overview \(Part 2\)](#)
- Find links to all additional resources at ohcnw.com/WhatsNext

Pray Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you and your group through this study of the End Times. Ask him to provide insights and preserve unity within your group.

¹ Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI: 2004), pg. 409.

² Friedrich, Gerhard and Gerhard Kittel, Ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids: MI, 1967), pg. 870.

³ McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (John Knox Press, London: 1996), pg. 4.

Study Sheet

Good to Go

Consider At some point, we will all reach our final destination. We will either face it through death or through the return of Jesus. Studying biblical prophecies about the End Times helps us prepare for what comes next. Following Jesus' discourse on the End Times in Matthew 25, he gives his disciples a parable to help them know how to wait for him after he leaves. There is great symbolism within this parable that can guide us throughout our study as we allow it to shape within us a correct posture of waiting for the return of Jesus.

Read [Matthew 25:1-13](#)

- Discuss**
- Why would Jesus use a parable to prepare us for his return?
 - Who is represented in this parable?
 - What were the foolish actions of those who were not ready for the return of Jesus?
 - What were the prudent actions of those who were prepared for the return of Jesus?
 - How can we be prepared and actively keep watch for the return of Jesus?

Consider When John scribes these multiple visions known as the Book of Revelation, he has been exiled on the island of Patmos. Patmos is a small island off the coast of ancient Ephesus in modern day Turkey. John first intends for this revelation to be shared with the seven churches of Asia minor (Revelation 2-3). The first three chapters focus on an introduction and cautionary exhortation to these churches. It is important to remember that there was an ancient audience that first heard this visionary epic from John.

Read [Revelation 1:1-8](#)

- Discuss**
- Who is John speaking about and who is John speaking too? What is the blessing of this prophecy?
 - Why is Jesus considered to be the "firstborn from the dead" (v. 5, NIV) and what does this mean?
 - Why would we become a kingdom of priests? What is the significance of that designation?
 - Where else in Scripture can you find the words of Jesus in verse 8?
 - What are your current thoughts about the return of Jesus?
 - What teachings about the return of Jesus have influenced you?

Practice Begin writing your story. Ask God to help you develop a heart of testimony. Start compiling all the times in your life where you have seen God's saving work present in your story. End Time studies center on the urgency of testifying about the saving grace of Jesus. John reminds us, "They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death." (Revelation 12:11 ESV)

Pray We have a relational God who dwells with his people. Connect your prayer time with biblical community. Pray and share prayer requests and praise reports with each other.

Engage Begin our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 1: Revelation 1 -3



Reading Plan

Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Use your Bible and the Reading Plan to further your personal study throughout the week.

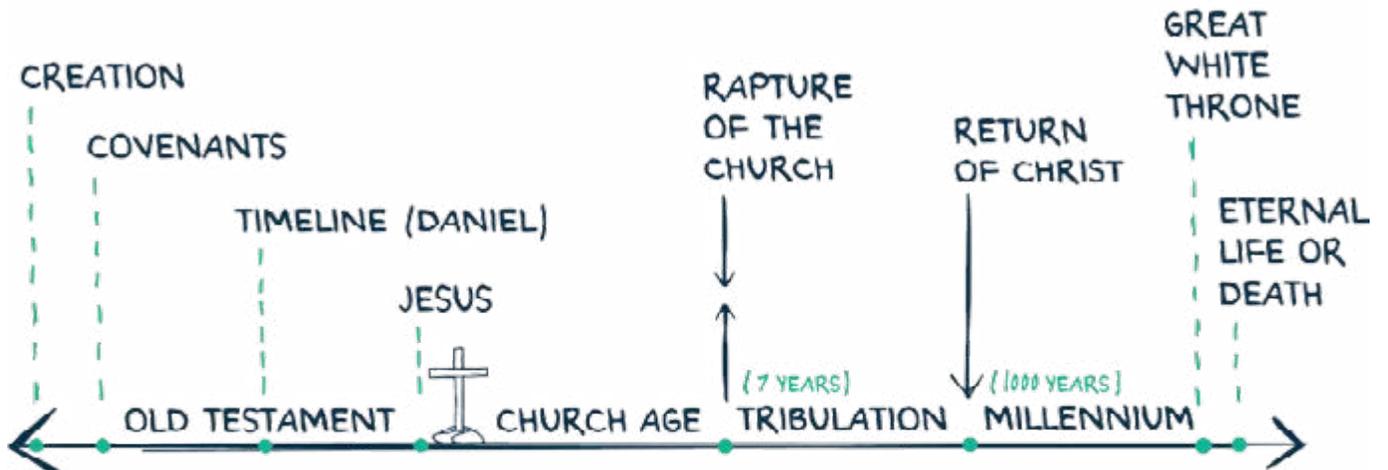
Weekly Reading Plan | The Book of Revelation

- Week 1: Revelation 1-3
- Week 2: Revelation 4-5
- Week 3: Revelation 6-7
- Week 4: Revelation 8-9
- Week 5: Revelation 10
- Week 6: Revelation 11
- Week 7: Revelation 12
- Week 8: Revelation 13
- Week 9: Revelation 14
- Week 10: Revelation 15
- Week 11: Revelation 16
- Week 12: Revelation 17
- Week 13: Revelation 18
- Week 14: Revelation 19-20
- Week 15: Revelation 21-22

Find links to all additional resources at ohcnw.com/WhatsNext



Heaven's Timeline



NOT TO SCALE

Insight Sheet

It Looks Like Reign

- Theme** God reveals his eternal plan for humanity at the conception of creation. God created humanity to reign alongside him over all creation.
- Introduction** God lays out his eternal plan at the creation of the Garden. God's desire is to live with his children. In the Genesis story, God creates humanity to reign with him over the rest of creation. However, after the temptation and fall, the dominion that humanity has over creation is stained with self-destructive, self-glorifying sin. One result of sin entering God's creation is death. God sets a timetable on the reign of sin and death. God has an eternal plan, Jesus. God incarnate will reign over all creation together with humanity. God will have his Garden and we will be co-heirs with him.
- Terms**
- **The Garden:** Term describing God's good creation described in Genesis 1-2.
 - **Incarnation Theology:** The study of God's desire to physically dwell with his creation.
 - **Dominion:** To rule, govern, or steward a set area or people.
 - **Rebellion:** In the context of Genesis, it is original sin which brought forth the curse of death.
 - **Original Sin:** An orthodox view that humanity shares in the sinful condition from Adam and Eve's original disobedience causing a distortion of the image of God.⁴
- Pray** Spend time in prayer mediating on what a Garden scene with God would be like. As you connect with Jesus in prayer, imagine you are walking and talking with him in the Garden.

⁴McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. (John Knox Press, London: 1996), pg. 197.

Study Sheet

It Looks Like Reign

Consider In Genesis 2, the writer reiterates God's action in creation. It gives us an account of God's intention for humanity in the Garden to have dominion over the created things. God shares his image with humanity so that humanity can reign over all created things. How does it feel to know that God has invited us to be co-heirs of creation and has planned for us to reign with him over that creation forever?

Read [Genesis 2:15-25](#)

- Discuss**
- How do these verses describe what it means to reign with God?
 - How does the woman help Adam reign over creation?
 - What reasons might God have for commanding Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of knowledge?
 - What is the significance of Adam naming the beasts of creation?
 - Why would the author share that Adam and Eve were "naked and they felt no shame?"

Consider In the Book of Romans, Paul spends 7 chapters laying out a theological understanding of the atoning work of Jesus. In chapter 8, Paul starts to shift toward a practical understanding of this theology. It centers on the Spirit empowered follower of Jesus, whose hope is in the already-not-yet work of God's redemptive plan. Because of the indwelling of the Spirit, we are restored as co-heirs, sharing dominion over creation with Jesus.

Read [Romans 8:18-27](#)

- Discuss**
- How should our future hope impact the way we experience our present suffering?
 - In what ways does creation reveal that it has been subjected to the fall?
 - Why would we, along with creation, be groaning about our present circumstances?
 - What is the hope we have? How does our hope help us overcome our situations?
 - How does the Holy Spirit help us?
 - How have you personally experienced the Holy Spirit's help to overcome difficult circumstances.

Study Sheet Continued

It Looks Like Reign

Consider Paul's letter to the church at Colossae was meant to be shared among a few other churches within the same region. As such, Paul desires to help the followers of Jesus, living in a temporary pagan world, understand that Jesus reigns eternally supreme. We join with him in this reign.

Read [Colossians 1:15-23](#)

- Discuss**
- What do we learn about Jesus from this passage?
 - What does it mean that Jesus is the “firstborn over all creation”?
 - If he has made all things over all creation, what does this tell us about Jesus?
 - What response does this description of Jesus generate in your heart?
 - What is the partnership we have with God now?
 - If Jesus reigns supreme over all creation, and we are co-heirs with him, then how will we partner with him in his reign?

Practice Spend this week developing your story. As co-heirs with Jesus, we all have a story to tell. Think about your B.C. story - who you were Before Christ. Now, think about the moment that led you to follow Jesus - your transformation moment. Compile your A.D. story – who you are now, After Death to self. Knowing our story helps us understand how to reign with Christ and invite others to do so.

Pray Spend time in prayer meditating on areas of your life that need to yield to God's dominion. Take time in prayer to consider both needs and praises from the week.

- Engage**
- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 2: Revelation 4-5.
 - For more on the fall read Genesis 3.
 - For more on what it means to be a co-heir with Christ read Romans 8:1-17.

Insight Sheet

Compelling Covenants

Theme God's covenants found within the Old Testament help us to understand God's redemptive plan from the beginning of creation all the way to the return of Jesus.

Introduction Christianity makes a radical claim about our God. Instead of expecting humanity to take care of his needs or demonstrate their devotion to him through sacrifices, our God desires a relationship with his creation. He even goes a step further when he sends his Son as the once and for all sacrifice. No other religion provides a god who sacrifices themselves for their followers. He turns the concept of religion upside down by offering himself as a sacrifice for our mistakes.

The best way to describe this relationship is through covenantal language. God has made a series of covenants with his people. Each of these covenants provide a picture of the depth of love that God has for his creation. Each of these covenants relate to original recipients as well as those who have followed. They weave the promises of God together from then, to now, and even into the future to come. As we study the covenants of the Old Testament, they will help us to be prepared to understand the advents of Jesus. While our sermon series will cover four of the major covenants found within the Old Testament, our study sheets will focus on two of the other major covenants in the Old Testament.

Old Testament covenants shared the same qualities of most Ancient Near Eastern covenants. The basic principle was two parties coming together, agreeing upon the terms of a relationship, and then splitting a sacrifice in which the two parties would walk between, sealing the covenant and establishing the responsibility between the two covenant makers. If either party broke the covenant, they would then be held liable for the atonement needed to make the original agreement right. All the Old Testament covenants made between God and humanity were like this except for the Abrahamic Covenant where God becomes solely responsible for the provision of protection and land promised to Abraham's descendants.

- Terms**
- **Covenant Theology:** Theology focused on the ways in which the divine-human relationship has been established by "covenants."⁵
 - **Adamic Covenant** (Covenant of Seed): Covenant with Adam, God empowers humanity with dominion over creation (Genesis 1:26).
 - **Noahic Covenant** (Covenant of Water): Covenant with Noah, God promises to never again flood the earth. In this reset, God renews the blessing of dominion in the Garden and reestablishes humanity as image bearers of God (Genesis 9).
 - **Abrahamic Covenant** (Covenant of Blood): Covenant with Abraham, God gives protection over future generations that will have an inheritance of land. This covenant is sealed through the practice of circumcision (Genesis 12).
 - **Mosaic Covenant** (Covenant of Stone): Covenant with Moses, God provides written instructions to help govern and shape the people of God as they live in the promised land (Exodus 19-24).

⁵McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. (John Knox Press, London, 1996). Pg. 64.

Insight Sheet Continued

Compelling Covenants

Terms

- **Davidic Covenant** (Covenant of Gold): Covenant with David, God promises that a descendant of David will reign on the throne over the people of God forever (2 Samuel 7:8-16).
- **Jeremiah's Covenant** (Covenant of Heart): Covenant of prophecy, this covenant points to the promise of having God's words ingrained on the hearts of his followers no longer needing ritual or sacrifice to fulfill humanities end of the covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Pray Meditate on your relationship with God. Prayerfully recall the most important moments you have had with God.

⁴McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. (John Knox Press, London: 1996), pg. 197.

Study Sheet

Compelling Covenants

Consider The second judgment on a fallen creation comes in the form of a flood. Noah demonstrated a faithful response to God's prophetic word, preparing him and his family from the coming judgment of God. Noah's obedience is key to God's provision. God always provides rescue to protect his covenantal people. For Noah and his family, it was the ark. For those who are in Jesus, it is the providential work of the Holy Spirit.

Read [Genesis 9:1-17](#)

Discuss

- How does the Noachic Covenant share similarities with others? What makes this covenant unique?
- Why would this be a covenant of reset? How was God resetting the world?
- What are the promises made by God?
- Who all is involved in this covenant with God?

Consider To fully understand the Mosaic Covenant, one must first start with the first twelve chapters of Exodus. In this story, God's people have been separated from their inheritance. They have been subjected to slavery and live exiled in Egypt. God hears their cries and sets out to rescue them (Exodus 3:7). The pinnacle of this rescue mission hinges on the Passover. For those who have obediently provided the sacrifice required for covenant, God's death angel will pass over. For those who are not in covenant with God, death will come to dwell in their home through the loss of their first born. The sacrifice of the first born will point to the future and final sacrifice of God's only begotten son, Jesus. The Mosaic Covenant, built upon the sacrifice of the first born, will guide the people of God in their relationship with God and God's people.

Read [Exodus 20:1-17](#)

Discuss

- What instructions does God give for this covenant?
- What are the characteristics of the first four instructions?
- What are the characteristics of the last six instructions?
- How do these instructions help us live in a healthy relationship with God?
- How do these instructions help us live in healthy relationships with each other?
- How does this covenant help us better understand the importance of our relationship with God and others?

Practice Take a relationship inventory. Covenant is all about relationship. What relationships in your life, either with God or others, could be healthier? What steps will you take this week to work on these relationships? Share with a prayer partner or small group member how God has challenged you.

Pray We have a relational God who dwells with his people. Connect your prayer time with biblical community. Pray and share prayer requests and praise reports with each other.

Engage

- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 3: Revelation 6-7.
- For more information about the flood leading up to the Noachic Covenant read Genesis 6-9.
- For more information about the exodus from Egypt leading up to the Mosaic Covenant read Exodus 1-15.

Insight Sheet

God's Plan for the Ages

Theme God has given us a prophetic map to guide us through End Time events.

Introduction At some point, we have all faced an ending: the end of a loved one's life, the end of a career, the end of a marriage. The topic of the "end" in general leads many to different emotions. If you knew your career was ending soon, what would you do now? What are you doing now with your kids at home, knowing that they will leave when they grow up? If you knew the date that you would die, how would that change the way you live now?

Most of our endings are surprises, they aren't planned or scripted. However, the Bible has a map for the end. It is shared through many different prophecies and stories throughout the Old and New Testament. These messages about the end are meant to prepare us and encourage us. We need to be ready to stand before a holy God and if we are ready, then we need to share this promise of eternity with others. If you knew Jesus was returning in 3 days, what would you do differently today?

- Terms**
- **Apocalyptic Literature:** Dualistic literature focused on the conflict between God and the devil or good versus evil.⁶
 - **Dispensationalism:** A theological framework used to divide history into multiple ages or "dispensations" where God interacts with his chosen people (Israel and the Church) in different ways.
 - **Messianic Hope:** Old Testament prophecy centered on the restoration of Israel and God's people through a king from the line of David.
 - **The Exile:** The removal of God's chosen people from the land of Israel in response to idolatry that forced the nation to scatter from the Promised Land to many different Ancient Near Eastern countries.
 - **Age of Grace:** Dispensational term used to define the time frame between the two advents of Jesus. Also referred to as the Church Age.

Pray Prayerfully consider the question: If you knew that Jesus was coming back in 3 days, what would you do differently today?

⁶Achtemeier, Paul J., Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishin, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001), pg. 558.

Study Sheet

God's Plan for the Ages

Consider

With a passage titled, “the seventy sevens,” it’s clear from the beginning that we need some good math to interpret Daniel 9:20-27. Lucky for us, many have gone ahead and done the work for us. We learn that Daniel speaks of approximately 483 years from his prophecy until the arrival of the appointed leader (Messiah). That countdown started around the Passover celebrated in the year 444 B.C. Using Sir Robert Anderson’s math, we find ourselves at the Passover of 32 A.D. This would have been the Passover celebrated by Jesus with his disciples before the crucifixion. The last seven years, describing the time of tribulation, occur sometime in the future. More will be taught on this later in the series.

Read

[Daniel 9:20-27](#)

Discuss

- What is the timing of this event and who is present?
- What spiritual disciplines did Daniel practice at the start of this passage?
- What was the purpose of this time frame of years?
- Why is rebuilding Jerusalem important for Daniel’s audience?
- How does this passage point to the first advent of Christ?
- What connections can we draw from this prophecy to prepare us for the return of Jesus?

Consider

As Jesus approaches the end of his earthly ministry, he begins to prepare his disciples for both his resurrection and his return. After a list of woes, he shifts his focus to the End Times. Passages in Matthew 24-26, including the Passover and the betrayal, highlight the return and judgment of Jesus. He bases his return on the vision of Daniel 9. Building upon this, he helps us to discern how to prepare for the End Times.

Read

[Matthew 24:1-15](#)

Discuss

- Who is Jesus speaking with in this passage? Where is this conversation happening?
- What key phrases does Jesus use to help us prepare for his coming?
- What opposition will the church face, then and now, as we await on the return of Jesus?
- How can we prepare ourselves for the return of Jesus?
- How can we prepare for the end while staying in the present?
- How can we share this news with others without coming across as doomsdayers?

Study Sheet Continued

God's Plan for the Ages

Practice

Share your story and your belief. You have been working on compiling the pieces of your testimony over the past few weeks. The power of testimony was important for the early church. They had no written text, all they had was their own oral tradition. For this reason, testimony was central to belief. Take time this week to share your story with someone and testify to your belief in Jesus.

Pray

Prayerfully consider the return of Jesus. Ask God what you can do to prepare for his return and allow time to listen for his reply.

Engage

- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 4: Revelation 8-9.
- Read Mark 13 for a parallel version of Matthew 24.
- For more information about dispensational theology, read these articles:
 - [Dispensational Theology](#)
 - [What is Dispensationalism](#)
- Find links to all additional resources at ohcnow.com/WhatsNext

Insight Sheet

Millenni-what?

Theme Navigate through preconceived notions of the End Times and discern the literal interpretation of the Millennium.

Introduction Christ will reign! We can all agree upon that. Most people, however, are unclear as to when and how that will happen. We live in a time frame that's often described as the "already-not-yet." Jesus has "already" established his forever reign through the incarnation, atonement, and resurrection, but the final restoration of all things has "not yet" happened. There are many different approaches to interpreting the second coming of Jesus. Understanding these approaches will prepare you for your own interpretation of the Millennium.

In our study, we will take the Premillennial approach that was first shared with us by the early church fathers. According to that interpretation, the 1000-year earthly reign of Jesus occurs after the Rapture and Tribulation and before the Final Judgment. As such, the Millennium is a preparatory time that bridges the fallen state of creation with the final new creation of God in the eternal kingdom. Review the terms below and share your view on this topic with a study partner or small group member, acknowledging the possibility of differing perspectives.

- Terms**
- **Millennium:** The view that Jesus will reign for 1000 years on earth.⁷
 - **Amillennialism:** A view of the "End Times" first suggested by Augustine that the "thousand years" of Christ's reign (Revelation 20) should be interpreted symbolically rather than literally.⁸
 - **Premillennialism:** The view that the millennium will start and last 1000 years after the return of Jesus (Revelation 20:1-5).⁹
 - **Postmillennialism:** The view that Jesus' second coming will come at the end of the 1000 years in which Christian influence will be at its highest and evil will diminish until the final judgment.¹⁰

Pray Before you start your study, welcome the Spirit to guide your conversation as you discuss the Millennium. Invite clarity and peace to reign. Dream about what Christ's reign may look like.

⁷This teaching was first introduced by church fathers from the 1st-4th century such as Irenaeus, Eusebius, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Hippolytus, etc. See resource, David W. Bercot, *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*. (Hendrickson Publishing, Peabody, MA. 1998), pgs. 450-452.

⁸McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. (John Knox Press, London, 1996), pg. 9.

⁹Grenz, Stanley J. David Guretzke, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 1999), pg. 94.

¹⁰Grenz, Stanley J. David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling. *Ibid.* pg. 93.

Study Sheet

Millenni-what?

Consider After the Spirit descends on and indwells the believers on the day of Pentecost, the age of the church was initiated. Before focusing on the Millennium, study this passage that characterizes the church age.

Read [Acts 2:42-47](#)

- Discuss**
- How is the identity of the church described? Who are they and what did they do?
 - How is your church or biblical community experience like the one described in Acts 2? How is it different?
 - Are there things from this first church gathering that you can add to your gathering?
 - How does gathering now prepare us for the return of Jesus?
 - How does this inaugural event point to the millennial reign of Jesus?

Consider This section of apocalyptic literature can cause some confusion. This mainly comes from the two divergent views of this text. One view sees this section of Scripture to be interpreted literally. There will be a literal 1000-year reign of Jesus on the earth after the Tribulation. Another view sees this section as an allegory that is lived out within the church now. The church is the dwelling place of the Messiah as he reigns with them now. To translate this text literally would come with the understanding that this has not happened at any point currently within history - meaning that there are still things to come that have not been fulfilled through apocalyptic vision of John. To see this as allegory would place the current church within a tribulation-like moment in history. These events are all currently happening as we await the final judgment. The author also weaves together important themes that can be found throughout Scripture. God speaks to the fact that his people will be known as a kingdom of priest (Exodus 19:6, Isaiah 61:6, 1 Peter 2:5,9, and Revelation 1:6). We see that God tends to work with timetables and seasons throughout Scripture. There was the time of the judges, the time of kings, the time of the Exile, and the time of the church. Peter also speaks to the importance of time when reminding us that a day is like a thousand years and a thousand year could be like a day for the Lord (2 Peter 3:7-9). Peter wrote this to a suffering congregation to remind them to stay confident in their faith when facing trials.

Read [Revelation 20:1-6](#)

- Discuss**
- Where does this text take place?
 - Who are the important characters of this text?
 - What actions occur within this text?
 - How much power does Satan have in the period reference in the text?
 - When John compiled this vision, Christian martyrdom was on the rise. How would this section of the vision encourage the early church? How does it encourage us now?
 - Why would John describe those who will reign with Christ forever as priests?
 - What is the clearest vision of the millennium you have based upon these Scriptures?
 - What is the significance of the 1000-year reign of Jesus?

Study Sheet Continued

Millenni-what?

Practice

Seek to share the Gospel with others. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to someone in your workplace, school, or neighborhood to begin building a relationship where you can share the hope of Jesus. Believe that he has empowered you as he promised in Acts 1:8 NIV, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Pray

Use your prayer time to exalt Jesus as the King of Kings. The one who will establish his kingdom and reign on earth for 1000 years.

Engage

- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 5: Revelation 10.
- For more information about the 4 views on the millennium read this article:
 - [Eschatology: Four Views on the Millennium](#)
- Find links to all additional resources at ohcnw.com/WhatsNext

Insight Sheet

The Rebel and the Rescue

- Theme** God provides protection for those who are in relationship with him before the Tribulation. This protection event is known as the Rapture.
- Introduction** God has demonstrated throughout Scripture his desire to providentially care for those who are in relationship with him. In his care, God's people are spared from God's punishment and wrath. Noah had an ark (Genesis 6-9). Lot was guided by angels (Genesis 14). The Israelites had the ark of the covenant and mana in the desert. And now, we have Jesus. Before God's wrath is fully realized, there is a procession of his grace. As you study the Antichrist and the Rapture this week it is important to bring these connections together. It is clear through the biblical witness that God protects those whom he loves. Often, he is seen as a hedge, a fortress, or a warrior who protects us from our foes and shields us from his wrath. These examples of grace and protection help us understand the importance and purpose of the Rapture – God provides protection for the end time believers.
- Terms**
- **The Rapture:** The event of both dead and living believers being caught up together to meet Jesus in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17, 1 Corinthians 15:52). Originally Harpazo in Greek, meaning the action of taking away, taking something forcefully, or to steal.
 - **Pretribulation:** The view that Jesus will come to gather (rapture) the church prior to a seven-year Great Tribulation that precedes the return of Christ to earth.
 - **The Antichrist:** Mentioned only in 1 John 2:18, 22 and 4:3, as a spirit that denies the deity of Jesus which is often associated with the ruler to come (Daniel 9:26, 11, Revelation 13).
- Pray** Open your prayer time by asking God to give insight and clarity to you as you study passages that could produce confusion or differing perspectives.

Study Sheet

The Rebel and the Rescue

Consider The letter that John writes to the churches in Asia minor acknowledges the rise of early opposition to the deity of Jesus. Most persecution came at the hands of the Jews early in Christian history, then the Romans. Most of the heretical claims about Jesus came out from the church. It is with this backdrop that John compiles these small letters that precede Revelation.

Read [1 John 2:18-19](#), [1 John 4:1-6](#)

- Discuss**
- When will the Antichrist come?
 - What are the attributes of the Antichrist?
 - How are we to prepare and know who the Antichrist is?
 - Where is the Antichrist from?
 - How will the Antichrist be overcome?
 - How does the Antichrist combat those who know God?

Consider Many in the early church believed in the immanent return of Jesus. Paul writes to the church of Thessalonica to help prepare them for this return. Paul bases much of his understanding of the apocalypse on Old Testament prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Daniel.

Read [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)

- Discuss**
- How does Paul describe those who have no hope?
 - What is our belief in? How does that tie into the End Times?
 - What is the order that Paul walks us through regarding the return of Jesus?
 - How can we encourage each other with the return of Jesus? How do we help those who are asleep to have hope?

Consider In a region often stricken by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, and ruled with oppression by Roman conquerors, it's easy to see why the church at Thessalonica eagerly awaited the return of Jesus. Many thought that his return would be immediate. Therefore, when his return seemed delayed, many were tempted to lose hope. Paul urges these believers to be ready, especially when the signs all point to the return of Jesus. It helps us to understand the urgency of being prepared ourselves, as modern readers of the text.

Read [1 Thessalonians 5:1-11](#)

- Discuss**
- How does Paul describe the coming of the day of the Lord? How does this encourage us to be ready before the Tribulation?
 - How does this correlate with the story of Noah (Genesis 6-9)?
 - How do we stay out of the darkness in preparation for his return?
 - What practical things does Paul suggest doing to be ready for the coming of the Lord?
 - How do these passages contribute to our expectation that God will protect his church?

Study Sheet Continued

The Rebel and the Rescue

Practice

Review the core beliefs of the Christian faith. John warns us that the spirit of the Antichrist is already present within the world, and false claims about the deity of Jesus are prevalent. Take time to understand what you believe, and compare biblical truths to what the world believes. Prepare to combat the false claims of the Antichrist. Use the Oak Hills Church belief summary as a starting point for your review: oakhills.church/whoweare.

Pray

Ask God to strengthen your faith in the truth about Jesus and to protect you, and those you love, from the lies of the antichrist.

Engage

- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 6: Revelation 11.
- For more information on the Rapture and the Antichrist, read the following articles:
 - [The Rapture Question](#)
 - [What is the Antichrist](#)
- Find links to all additional resources at ohcnw.com/WhatsNext

Insight Sheet

Crowned by Christ

- Theme** At the Rapture of the church, the full-blown coronation of Jesus will take place to usher in the 1000-year millennial reign of Jesus.
- Introduction** Our imagination can run wild when we ponder what heaven will be like. Are there actually streets of gold? Will we see and know our loved ones? Will we have an occupation? Before we dream heavenward, we must be prepared for the coronation of Jesus. This coronation is the celebration of the righteous reign of the messianic King Jesus.
- We will all stand before Jesus to face judgment. However, as we explore the first judgment, keep in mind that those who have not had a relationship with Jesus will not face this first judgment. It may be helpful to think about this judgment as an invitation list to the greatest wedding event of eternity! As you study the Scriptures, keep the focus of this judgment moment on those who have lived a life in Christ. Our coronation song will be “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55 NIV)
- Terms**
- **Judgment:** Christian judgment proceeds not from selfish revenge seeking motives but through a sacrificial self-giving Savior who evaluates our participation in his selfless love.¹¹
 - **Righteousness:** The term that embraces several dimensions relating to God’s actions in establishing and maintaining right relationships. Ethically it is the state of moral purity or doing that which is right.¹²
 - **Resurrection:** The view that people who were once dead will be raised back to life.¹³
- Pray** Express your longing for Jesus to return through the word of Augustine’s prayer: Everlasting God, in whom we live and move and have our being; you have made us for yourself, so that our hearts are restless until they rest in you (Augustine of Hippo, Algeria/354/430).

¹¹Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids: MI, 2004), pg. 346.

¹²McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (John Knox Publishing, London, 1996), pg. 242.

¹³Vanhooser, Kevin J. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, (Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI: 2005), pg. 676.

Study Sheet

Crowned by Christ

Consider

In the Greco Roman world of the Corinthian church, philosophy often informed the popular views of the afterlife. Popular philosophies of the time viewed matter as being a corruptible thing that added little value to one's eternal state. Yet, Christianity brings forth a radical claim: The complete resurrection of both body and soul. Paul spends time informing and helping the church at Corinth have a better understanding of the Christian view of resurrection.

Read

[1 Corinthians 15:35-54](#)

Discuss

- How does Paul's illustration of sowing seed help us understand the resurrection?
- How are our resurrected bodies described?
- What contrasting words are used to compare the earthly body to the resurrected one?
- What connections does this passage have to other End Time passages we have studied?

Consider

John's letter to the churches in Asia Minor focused on clarifying the deity of Jesus. A heretical sect of Christianity, called the Gnostics, had its beginnings during the time of this letter. They built a theology on Jesus based off popular Greco-Roman philosophies during that time. Specifically, the separation of the body and soul to assure the non-corruption of the soul because of the body. This heretical claim leads to the view that Jesus was only present as a mode of God, not fully God. It is because Jesus was fully God and fully man that we can also become his adopted children, being like him in the resurrection.

Read

[1 John 2:28-3:3](#)

Discuss

- What makes us righteous? How would you define that word?
- How is our relationship to God described?
- How does being a child of God make you feel?
- How will we be like Jesus?
- What is the hope that we have in Jesus?
- How do these passages connect with other End Time passages?
- As children of God, and co-heirs with Jesus, what will our role be in eternity?

Study Sheet Continued

Crowned by Christ

Practice

Read Psalm 139. Take time to notice and appreciate that God made us in his image. Not only are we image bearers, but we are also created with unique abilities and a specific purpose. Non-believers and believers alike bear the image of God. Ask God to help you see others through his eyes. Focus on loving those who are different from you and admiring how God has uniquely and beautifully made us all. Praise God that we are all completely known by God and fearfully and wonderfully made!

Pray

Prayerfully reflect on the coming resurrection. Cast your present cares on Jesus and express your longings for the coming resurrection.

Engage

- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 7: Revelation 12.
- Read over Paul's words to the Corinthian Church in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.
- For more information about the bodily resurrection of believers, read this article:
 - [Don Stewart: What Will the Resurrected Bodies of the Righteous Be Like?](#)
- Find links to all additional resources at ohcnw.com/WhatsNext

Insight Sheet

A Marriage Made in Heaven

- Theme** Jesus is our bridegroom, and he has patiently waited for the day to be united with his bride (the church).
- Introduction** The church is the bride of Christ. Jesus has bled for her, starved for her, and died for her. She is his passion, his love, and his desire. Flesh, sin, and even Hades itself could not separate the bride from her pursuer. This is the picture that Revelation paints for us. This is also the way Jesus himself talked about his relationship with us, the church.
- Take a moment to remember or imagine a wedding. The beauty, joy, and anticipation of the bride and groom on their wedding day is but a foretaste of the day to come for those who love Jesus. Think about all the preparation that goes into a wedding. Then, think about all the preparation that has gone into the future wedding day of Jesus and his bride. The sacrifice, the time spent talking, and anticipation of an unveiled relationship with Jesus.
- Terms**
- **Jewish Wedding Feast:** Ancient Near Eastern weddings were very different than they are now. Contracts were worked out between the two families at betrothal. Both spouses were set apart or sanctified in preparation for the day. The bride never knew the exact time that the bridegroom would come therefore she would always need to be ready. The ceremony was a whole village affair that lasted for days. The marriage event was not considered complete until the bride moved into the home of the groom.¹⁴
- Pray** As you start your prayer time, recall the emotion of a wedding - the joy, the jubilation! Ask God to bring joy and jubilation to your spirit as you spend time talking with him and getting to know him through the study of his Word.

¹⁴Malina, Bruce J. Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*. (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2003), pg. 332.

Study Sheet

A Marriage Made in Heaven

Consider In the Gospel of Matthew, we find a series of parables taught by Jesus before his arrest. In the parable of the wedding banquet, Jesus begins to shift his teaching from a practical theological response to preparation for the final days of this current creation. Building on the example of a traditional Ancient Near East wedding ceremony, Jesus uses this parable as a cautionary tale to help us be prepared for his return.

Read [Matthew 22:1-14](#)

- Discuss**
- Who are the main characters of this parable?
 - How are God the Father, Jesus, and the church represented in this story?
 - What is the correlation between the wedding banquet and the return of Jesus?
 - Why would people not attend the wedding? How is this like people not receiving the Gospel?
 - Why would the king throw out the person not wearing wedding clothes?

Consider Chaos and tribulation are abounding on earth. In the meantime, John's vision takes us back to heaven. Almost psalm like in nature, this section was meant to give the audience a glimpse of the preparations in heaven for the return and reign of Jesus. The wedding feast marks the end of the Tribulation and ushers in the righteous judgment of Jesus. Notice the central theme of worship as you study this passage.

Read [Revelation 19:1-10](#)

- Discuss**
- Where is the vision happening?
 - Who is mentioned in this vision?
 - What are the responses to the declarations being made?
 - How does this mirror a Jewish wedding?
 - What aspects of worship are described in this text?
 - What is the correlation between this passage and Matthew 22:1-14?
 - How can we prepare for the wedding feast to come?
 - What will be the focus of the wedding feast?

Practice Clothe yourself with Christ this week. Read Colossians 3:1-17, and "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." (Colossians 3:2 NIV) As you put on kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, you are preparing now for what is next.

Pray Pray as a bride who is waiting for her bridegroom. Address Jesus as the one who will come for you.

- Engage**
- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 8: Revelation 13.
 - Read John 2:1-11 for other illustrations on the importance of weddings.
 - See Isaiah 11 for the Messianic hope found in Jesus.

Insight Sheet

After the Saints Go Marching In

Theme The Day of the Lord will be marked by horrible tribulation. Those who know Jesus and the coming tribulation should be evangelistically motivated to share the hope of Jesus with anyone who has not yet trusted in him.

Introduction It's hard to imagine the beginning, when the heavens and the earth were created. No one was around when the earth quaked and mountains were formed. No one witnessed the ripping and separation of darkness and light. No one can testify to the wind blowing and howling so hard to spin the earth on its axes to perfection. Life was spared of this violence. This will not be the case when God restores creation to its original design. Life will be present, life that is not raptured away will experience this cleansing experience.

With the church gone, evil will reign, deception will become established truth. Why should we study the Tribulation? If the plan is for us to not be here, then why would this section of Scripture be important for the church to know? Simply put, God does not hide his intentions from us. God wants us to be ready and to look for the signs of this coming tribulation. He doesn't hide us from his wrath, rather for those who are in Christ he protects us from it.

Terms

- **The Tribulation:** Term used in dispensationalism to indicate a seven-year period of suffering prior to the beginning of the millennium (Matthew 24:21-30).¹⁵
- **The Day of the Lord:** Primarily an Old Testament concept focused on the vindication longed for by the oppressed. It is seen as an apocalyptic moment or event that removes those in relationship with God from his vengeance poured out on those who have oppressed his creation (Amos, Joel, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and Malachi).¹⁶

Pray Pray for God to continue to help you see his perfect plan for the rescue of his children and restoration of his beautiful creation.

¹⁵McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. (John Knox Press, London, 1996), pg. 287.

¹⁶Lasor, William, David Hubbard, and Frederic Bush, *Old Testament Survey*. (Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids: MI, 1996), pg. 420.

Study Sheet

After the Saints Go Marching In

Consider The “Day of the Lord” is a constant theme of both salvation and judgment in the Old Testament. Though Joel is a minor prophet, minor is reflected only in the brevity of his writing not in the importance of the content. Joel focuses on the judgment of God throughout his oracle. The writings in Joel match much of the vision of John regarding the Tribulation. However, Joel offers us a revival of hope before the coming of the Lord. It is important to balance this tension of salvation and judgment as did the prophets. The revelation of the judgment of God should also be a gong of evangelistic urgency. We know the signs so we can point to, and guide others to, God’s providential pastureland that hems us from the coming wrath and tribulation.

Read [Joel 2:28-32](#)

- Discuss**
- Who is the great helper of this revival before the Day of the Lord?
 - What is the importance of prophecy for the Day of the Lord?
 - What does it mean to call on the name of the Lord?
 - How do we balance this tension of future hope and judgment?

Consider As a continuation of Jesus’ teaching on the End Times, this section focuses on the impact of the Tribulation. Like Old Testament prophecies, Jesus likens this period to complete destruction.

Read [Matthew 24:15-35](#)

- Discuss**
- What other Old Testament prophecies are referenced in this passage?
 - How does Jesus describe the coming Day of the Lord?
 - What is Jesus’ purpose for sharing this with his disciples?
 - How does this passage prepare us today for what’s next?
 - What connections stand out in these passages regarding the “Day of the Lord” and the “Tribulation?”
 - How is God’s mercy present through the Tribulation?
 - Why does the Tribulation have to take place?

Practice Go out of your way to lend a helping hand to someone where you live, work, learn, or play. Serving others by meeting their physical needs is a great way to get to know someone, and eventually help meet their spiritual needs. Jesus often met the physical needs of others. Read Matthew 14:13-21 and consider how the act of meeting the physical needs of people provided an opportunity for people to be filled spiritually through his teaching.

Pray The Tribulation is a sobering event. Spend time in prayer this week praying for those around who may not have a relationship with Jesus. Pray that God will give you the opportunity to share the Gospel with them so that they may not have to face the Tribulation.

- Engage**
- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 9: Revelation 14.
 - Read over Old Testament prophecy focused on the Day of the Lord found in the following Prophetic books: Joel, Amos 5:18-27, Zephaniah 3, Zechariah 14, and Malachi 4.

Insight Sheet

Bright Lights on Dark Nights

Theme God has always had chosen people during tribulation and trial who remain faithful to him.

Introduction God always has a redemptive plan. That is the story of the 144,000. It stretches back to when God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden. God's redemptive plan was at work when he gave Noah the plans for the ark, when he parted the Red Sea for Moses, and when the prophets prophesied to the exiles that God would leave a remnant. God has preordained for his people to be protected. In this story, those people are specifically the 12 tribes of Jacob. This text can often be hard to study but the main emphasis is that God will protect the tribes of Israel and that he will keep his promises. The story of the 144,000 is really the story of a promise keeping God.

- Terms**
- **The Remnant:** In the context of Israel as a nation, it is the group that remains faithful to God.¹⁷
 - **Covenantal Code:** Laws designed for a society in which agriculture was the major means of earning a living in which one party is dependent upon the other for provisions.¹⁸
 - **Diaspora:** Term used to describe the Israelites displaced from Israel through the Exile.¹⁹

Pray Take time to think about your life and recall all the promises God has kept. Spend time in prayer thanking God for his faithfulness.

¹⁷McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (John Knox Publisher, London: 1996), pg. 236.

¹⁸Tulloch, John H. *The Old Testament Story* (Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ: 2002), pg. 81.

Study Sheet

Bright Lights on Dark Nights

Consider Often referred to as the weeping prophet, Jeremiah comes from a priestly background but amid his ministry receives a prophetic message. The calling to be a prophet was not easy for Jeremiah. It often left him at odds with his family, his people, and even God. His message is one that carries Judah in 70 years of exile. Yet, there is hope of return in this Exile. His message of hope, renewal, and “remnant” will help us prepare our hearts for the return of Jesus. Jeremiah also helps us understand the message of the 144,000 in Revelation. God will always have faithful people from the nation of Israel under his provision, even in the Tribulation.

Read [Jeremiah 23:1-8](#)

- Discuss**
- Who are the main characters of this passage? What seems to be the tension?
 - Why would Jeremiah use shepherding as an analogy? Where is the remnant of the flock?
 - What is the significance of David’s righteous branch?
 - Why would living in their own land be significant?

Consider During the Tribulation we are introduced to the Remnant of Israel. These are Israelites who are still faithful to God and more importantly believe that Jesus is the Messiah and God. Representation from every tribe of Israel is present among the Remnant. John changes Dan into Manasseh to better align with prophetic testimony found in the major and minor prophets. John tells us that the Remnant are marked people, as in a mark of authenticity. The action of sealing during this time was a means of certifying the relationship of two parties. This would become important in the time of the Tribulation and would stand in contrast to the sealing of those who do not have their names written in the Lambs Book of Life.

Read [Revelation 7:1-8](#)

- Discuss**
- Who are the main characters in this passage? What is happening at this event?
 - What words and phrase stand out in this passage?
 - What impact does this story have regarding the End Times?
 - How does this point to the character of God?

Read [Revelation 14:1-5](#)

- Discuss**
- What is happening in this story? What imagery is being used?
 - What are the characteristics of the Remnant?
 - How do these passages about the 144,000 overlap?
 - What significant event and covenant is tied to the Remnant?
 - How does the idea of the Remnant speak to the nature of God?
 - What action does this passage inspire in the reader?

Study Sheet Continued

Bright Lights on Dark Nights

Practice

Invite someone where you live, work, learn or play to join you at an upcoming event at Oak Hills Church. An invitation to a fun event can make the topic of church approachable and create an opportunity to share the hope of Jesus with others.

Pray

Pray for future saints who will be among the Remnant. Remind God of his promises to deliver these people. And ask him to use them as a witness to those living during the Tribulation.

Engage

- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 10: Revelation 15.
- See other passages on the Remnant: Isaiah 11, Isaiah 37, Micah 5:5-15, Micah 7:14-20, Zechariah 8, Romans 11:25-36.
- For more information about the Remnant, read this article:
 - [Remnant of Israel](#)
- Find links to all additional resources at ohcnow.com/WhatsNext

Insight Sheet

Our Coming King

Theme The study of the Return of Jesus to establish his 1000-year reign over initial creation.

Introduction Christ first came in a lowly and humble state. Swaddling clothes, a manger, and humble beginnings marked the incarnation, the first advent. This will not be the case with his second coming. As a conquering king riding into war after years of siege, Christ will return in supremacy. The war will rage on between the Trinity of Evil and the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Yet, when Christ enters the war in preparation for his wedding, the war will quickly end. When Christ appears, the conflict will seem like a twinkling of the eye. In this section we will see the full influence of Jesus Christ as king. As a conquering king, judgment will be a part of his mission. In the first advent he comes to save, in the second advent he will come to judge.

Terms

- **Trinity of Evil:** Term used to describe three evil characters found in the Book of Revelation: The Red Dragon (Revelation 12), The Beast (Revelation 13:1-10), and The False Witness (Revelation 13:11-18).
- **King of Kings:** Term used by kings in the Ancient Near East classifying them as demigods. In the context of the New Testament, used in reference to Jesus as king supreme over all creation (Revelation 19:16).

Pray As you pray, focus on Jesus as King of Kings and Lords of Lords. Offer prayers of thanksgiving and gratitude to honor our king.

Study Sheet

Our Coming King

Consider In early Israelite history the only offices that held any power were prophet, priest, and judge. Moses, through the law, makes provision for the upcoming rule of a king. The standard of this king is high. He will be a person of high character. This is important during this time because typically kings demoralized their subjects by taking from them to support the king's storage house. The Israeli king will give to his people to stabilize their community.

Read [Deuteronomy 17:14-20](#)

- Discuss**
- When will Israel ask for a king? What is the significance of the timing?
 - Who will choose the king? Why is that important?
 - What things will the king not be permitted to do? What things should the king do?
 - How does this passage set up David to be king?

Consider Revelation 19 comes on the scene like something from a Tolkien book. The marriage supper of the Lamb is set. The Trinity of Evil faces judgment in the form of war. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords is about to reign supreme for 1000 years. As you study this passage, pay careful attention to the imagery and words used. Try to pinpoint places in this passage that overlap with other areas of Scripture.

Read [Revelation 19:11-21](#)

- Discuss**
- Who are the key figures in this text? What are their actions?
 - What contrasting images and confrontational themes appear in this passage?
 - What names of Jesus are used in this passage? What is their significance?
 - How does the fight go? Does it seem long or swift? Who is the main aggressor?
 - Why would war break out? Why does this Jesus have to physically battle evil?
 - What are the qualities of Jesus as king?
 - How do they align with the Deuteronomy 17 passage?
 - Why would Jesus need to be king?

Practice Share a meal with someone you don't know well. Sharing a meal with someone new can provide an opportunity for a personal relationship to be built and open the door to conversations about life and faith. Just as Jesus ate and broke bread with those he ministered to, meals provide us with the same opportunity to build friendships and make disciples.

Pray Take time in prayer to consider both your needs and praises from the week. Praise King Jesus for who he is, and what he has accomplished. Submit your needs to Jesus, knowing he fights for you.

- Engage**
- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 11: Revelation 16.
 - For more information on the theme of kingship review the following passages: Judges 21:25, 1 Samuel 8, 2 Samuel 7:13, Isaiah 32:1, John 18:36, 1 Timothy 6:15, Revelation 19:16.

Insight Sheet

God Will Have His Eden

Theme God is a promise making, and promise keeping God. He made a promise with the people of Israel that they would always have an inheritance. This study explores that promise all the way to the end.

Introduction To fulfill the promises God has made with Israel, Jesus must reign over the land promised to the Israelites. In the Old Testament, the Promised Land was a provision for the Jews, it was their inheritance promised by God. In a sense, the Promised Land served as a typological interpretation of God's original plan with the Garden. In the millennium reign of Jesus, this promise will be fully complete. The multitude, the 144,000, and the Lamb of God will now reign over creation. This is not the eternal reign but the reset. The year of Jubilee will be complete, the land will rest, Christ will reign supreme, and original sin will be purified through original grace.

Terms

- **Typology:** The use of Old Testament salvific events to prove New Testament connection or fulfillment.¹⁹
- **Year of Jubilee:** Feast celebrated every 50 years with the purpose of canceling all debts, liberation of slaves, and the return of the land to the original owners (Leviticus 25:8-55, 27:17-24, Numbers 36:4).²⁰
- **Sabbath:** Literally means "to rest," was a concept implemented by God for his people to totally ensure reliance on God. Sabbath was a concept that only free people could practice. As such, God establishes humanity's freedom and his providence through Sabbath.

Pray "Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening, into the house and gate of heaven, to enter that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitations of thy glory an dominion, world without end. Amen."

(John Donne, England/1572-1631).

¹⁹Grenz, Stanley, David Guretzki and Cherith Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, (IVPress, Downers Grove, Ill. 1999), pg. 117.

²⁰Lasor, William, David Hubbard, and Frederic Bush, *The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (William Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids: MI, 1996), pgs. 92-93.

Study Sheet

God Will Have His Eden

Consider Meant to be a year of Sabbath, the Year of Jubilee (or 50th year), was designed to be a reset for the nation of Israel. The festival reminded the Israelites that everything belonged to God. In Jubilee law, everything must go back to the original owner, slaves must be set free, and the land must lie in complete rest. Most scholars argue that the Year of Jubilee has never been practiced by any nation. If practiced, Jubilee would have provided rest for all of God's creation. Therefore, the implications are that although God rested at the beginning of creation, his creation has since then never rested.

Read [Leviticus 25:8-24](#)

- Discuss**
- What are the key characteristics of the Year of Jubilee?
 - What is the benefit of this practice? Why would God encourage this?
 - How could we honor this celebration today?
 - What does the word Sabbath mean to you?

Consider Now with the backdrop of the Rapture and the Tribulation, let's revisit Revelation 20. This millennium section of Scripture must be considered with Old Testament promises concerning the Promise Land. The earthly millennial reign of Jesus takes places to fulfill God's covenants with Adam, Abraham, and Moses. God's people will have a land, they will have a place, and they will have a righteous king. That king is King Jesus. He will fulfill all the promises of earthly peace, all the hopes of a community of priests whose sole focus is to worship the Lamb.

Read [Revelation 20:1-6](#)

- Discuss**
- What will happen with the dragon deceiving the nations?
 - Who are those seated on the thrones?
 - How important was the testimony of those beheaded? How important is our own testimony?
 - How does the concept of Jubilee align with the millennial reign of Jesus?
 - What will happen during the millennial reign?
 - Why will Jesus have a millennial reign on earth?

Practice Practice Sabbath (rest) this week. Pick a day in the week and prepare. The idea is to let everything in your life rest. Therefore, prepare by making all your meals for that day ahead of time. Complete housework and busy work before or after your Sabbath. In return, fill that time on your Sabbath with Scripture reading, prayer, and moments of worship throughout your day. Let your life rest so that God can restore and prepare you for what is next.

Pray Ask God to restore your soul this week. Invite him into your Sabbath and acknowledge the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as you rest with God.

- Engage**
- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 12: Revelation 17.
 - Study God's design for Sabbath by reading the following passages:
 - **Sabbath:** Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11, Exodus 31:12-17, Leviticus 23:3, Deuteronomy 5:12-15.
 - **Sabbatical Year:** Exodus 23:10-11, Leviticus 25:1-7.
 - **Jubilee:** Leviticus 25:8-55, Leviticus 27:17-24, Numbers 36:4.

Insight Sheet

Where the Soul Goes to Die

Theme Jesus will judge all and usher in the eternal dwelling between those who are in Christ and those who are not.

Introduction Before all things can be made new, all things must first face judgment. The finality and eternal quality of the Great White Throne of judgment makes it a sobering affair. For those who have their name written in the Lamb's Book of Life, this will be like the court proceeding of someone being adopted. The judge will grant custody for all eternity to the Heavenly Father. For those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, Jesus will honor their desire for eternal separation. This is a vindicating event for good and evil. Yet, on this side of eternity, it is an event that should motivate us to share the Gospel with as many people as possible. Peter's words are still true, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."
(2 Peter 3:9 NIV)

- Terms**
- **The Book of Life:** Term referencing the book used by Jesus at the final judgment to judge those at the final resurrection, also referenced elsewhere in the New Testament (Revelation 20:12).
 - **Great White Throne:** Term referring to God's final judgment (Revelation 20:11) in which he will judge all humanity based upon a written account of their life.
 - **The Lake of Fire:** The destination of those whose names are not written in the Book of Life (Revelation 20:15).
 - **Annihilationism:** The belief that once one is thrown into the Lake of Fire in the final judgment they will cease to exist.
 - **Eternal Judgment:** The belief that those thrown in the Lake of Fire will face an eternal existence in damnation.

Pray Open your time in prayer by praying this verse, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:9-10 NIV)

Study Sheet

Where the Soul Goes to Die

Consider Classified as a minor prophet, Zechariah serves as prophet to Post-Exilic Judah. Zechariah literally means, “God has remembered.” As such, this prophetic work is messianic to the original authors. After the coming of Jesus, this prophecy became one used to better understand the final days pointing to the “Day of the Lord.” Zechariah’s prophecies are woven within the New Testament. This connectedness helps us bridge Israel’s longing for the Davidic messiah with our longing for his return.

Read [Zechariah 14](#)

Discuss

- What is the significance of “the day?”
- What details in this passage connect with the other Scriptures we have studied?
- How does the Lord’s battle align with the coming of Jesus in Revelation 19?
- How is this vision both destructive and hopeful?

Consider There is tension considering God’s eternal judgment. Tradition views God’s judgment as eternal for both the resurrected into the New Jerusalem and those cast into the Lake of Fire. Newer interpreters have taken an annihilationist approach to this text meaning that those who are cast into the Lake of Fire are cast out of existence. In Revelation 20, Death and Hades have been cast into the fire and the very nature of God leads us to understand his equality seeking nature. This means with Death and Hades being cast into the Lake of Fire, there is no longer any holding place for those who have been eternally damned. God will be just in how he grants eternity. To those who gave their lives to him, he rewards with eternity together with him in the New Jerusalem. To those who spent their lifetime denying God, he will grant eternal separation from his presence.

Read [Revelation 20:7-15](#)

Discuss

- What does the Lake of Fire represent? Who will be cast into the fire first?
- Why would the earth and sky flee from the white throne?
- What will we be judged by? Why is that significant? How do we balance this with God’s grace?
- How should we respond to a passage like this?
- Why should there be a second resurrection?
- What makes Jesus’ judgment righteous?
- How can we prepare today for God’s judgment?

Study Sheet Continued

Where the Soul Goes to Die

Practice

Take time this week to talk with someone older or younger than you about eternity. Eternity is a thought often overlooked in the face of today. However, the Bible often speaks to our eternal destination. Discuss and determine what shared or contrary thoughts you have about our eternal destination.

Pray

Thank God that he is always with you. Thank God for empowering you with his Holy Spirit to walk worthy of the calling in Christ Jesus, who wrote your name in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Engage

- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 13: Revelation 18.
- Read the following passages to maintain a balanced perspective on works and grace: Romans 6:15-23, James 2:14-26.
- For more information on Hell and the Final Judgement, read these articles:
 - [Hell as Endless Punishment](#)
 - [The Final Judgement](#)
- Find links to all additional resources at ohcnw.com/WhatsNext

Insight Sheet

Finally Home

Theme God has promised to make all things new for the future eternal Eden with his creation.

Introduction The greatest promise is fulfilled when God makes all things new. He will have his Eden. He will dwell without barrier with his creation. They will be a priesthood, a family, and people living in complete freedom as God has ordained. Years of mercy and grace will be replaced by an eternity of celebration. As you study through this section, connect all the promises of God. Look back on the Covenants from week 3 and see how this eternal dwelling with God aligns with all his promises. Can you imagine the feeling of talking with God face to face? The radiance of light is completed by his presence. Pain gives way to joy, hurt gives way to jubilation, and frailty is swallowed up by resurrection.

Terms

- **New Jerusalem:** Futuristic term referencing the final state of the church (Revelation 3:12; 21:2).
- **Temple:** Traditional term used as the location for cult worship: in Revelation, temple is reversed to describe the final state of God's creation (creation will be the temple and God will tabernacle with his creation) and his dwelling place for eternity.

Pray "Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen."²¹

²¹www.episcopalchurch.org/lectionary/advent-2b/

Study Sheet

Finally Home

Consider

In Isaiah, we have a priest who becomes a prophet. As a major prophet, his work spans through many different kings in Judah and foreshadows the coming exile. Not only does Isaiah speak to the coming exile in Ancient Judah but he speaks all the way to end. As a messianic polemic, this section of poetry foresees the return of the King to reign over and restore creation to its original intention. It sparks hope of the eternal reign of Christ.

Read

[Isaiah 49:1-18](#)

Discuss

- What similarities do you find between this passage and other passages we have studied (see Revelation 19)?
- How would you describe the character of God from this passage?
- How would you describe the nature of the world?
- What does God desire to accomplish?
- What is the response of those encountering God?
- What is the mission of God?

Consider

After the final resurrection of God's people, heaven and earth share the same encounter. In some degree it is a reverse resurrection. Instead of ascending, the action now turns into descending. God restores the Garden in the form of the New Jerusalem. Notice that God does not annihilate his creation. Rather, he restores it and moves into the neighborhood. Also, in the original language an interesting thing happens in this passage. The author of Johannine literature has always used one word to describe Jesus as the "Son of God" and another word to describe humanity as either children or sons of God. It is only in verse 7 of this passage where the author uses the same word for Jesus and humanity when the author writes, "he will be my son." This statement makes the adoption complete for us as his children. This has always been God's plan. To live with his creation without separation for all eternity.

Read

[Revelation 21:1-14](#)

Discuss

- What images come to mind when you read over this passage?
- What action words are present within these passages? What is their significance?
- How does eternity contrast for those who are with God and those who are not?
- What are the characteristics of God's people?
- How do the passages from Isaiah and Revelation align?
- What is the overarching theme of these passages?
- What picture of heaven do these passages paint?

Study Sheet Continued

Finally Home

Practice

Think of someone you could invite into your life this week. Prayerfully seek out someone where you live, work, learn, or play that would benefit from the love of God displayed through your actions. Be open to sharing life with someone as if they had been adopted into your family. Adoption has a sense of completeness. God laid the plan for us to be adopted unto him, it was a predetermined plan for us to be his children (Ephesians 1:11).

Pray

Think about the day when God will call your name. When God says, “welcome my child, all that I have is yours!” As you meditate on this day, allow your heart to offer God words of gratitude and thanksgiving.

Engage

- Continue our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 14: Revelation 19-20.
- Continue to read about the description of the Temple of God in Revelation 21:15-27 and compare it with the following passages: 1 Kings 6, Ezekiel 40-43, Hebrews 9:1-10:18.

Insight Sheet

Two Minute Warning

Theme God has promised to make all things new for the future eternal Eden with his creation.

Introduction In Acts, Luke reminds us, “Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11 NIV) What followed was a movement that has never stopped. At the heart of Christianity is hope. At the heart of hope is the promise of the return of Jesus. This promise prompted men and women to share about Jesus at the risk of their lives. This promise guided many disciples to carry on this message throughout the ages. This promise inspires us today to share about the Good News of Jesus. We return to a familiar question, if you knew that Jesus would return tomorrow, how would you live today? Hopefully, this study and these messages have made that point clearer than it has ever been before. But what would change if the church really lived like that? How would you change?

Terms

- **Evangelism:** The action of testifying to God’s transformative work in your personal life to share the good news of God’s saving work to another.
- **Epiphany:** From the Greek word meaning “appearance” or “manifestation” it is a season on the Christian calendar referencing the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the world.
- **Magi:** Ancient Near Eastern term referencing “wise men” or “astrologers” who were well-off in society and able to complete in depth studies.

Pray Pray a prayer of celebration! You have made it to the end of this study. Give God thanks and praise for all you learned and experienced through this study.

Study Sheet

Two Minute Warning

Consider Matthew's Gospel is the only Gospel to share the story of the Magi. Matthew intends to help his Jewish audience understand the messianic qualities of Jesus by retelling this story. The Magi are in search of a king, that king is Jesus. Their story serves as a foretelling for how we should be searching and making ourselves ready for the return of Jesus.

Read [Matthew 2:1-12](#)

Discuss

- How does the story of the Magi relate to our study?
- How does the story of the Magi relate to us today?
- What are some practical learnings from this story?
- How can we replicate the posture of the Magi in how we wait and search for the return of Jesus?

Consider Each Gospel ends with some form of commission passage. Matthew has often been highlighted out of the four Gospels, but each end with the expectation of the return of Jesus and our present call to share the Gospel. This section of Revelation shares this similar approach. John's audience has just listened to this vision and now sits waiting on what is to come next. The challenge is to stay on Gospel mission while eyeballing the return of Jesus. We must be ready – waiting and watching. While waiting, we must live in such a way to inspire others to prepare themselves for this divine coming of Jesus.

Read [Revelation 22:7-21](#)

Discuss

- What is John's final response to his vision? How do we replicate this action daily?
- Why would the phrase, "I am coming soon" be repeated in this passage?
- How important are the words of this prophecy?
- How does this passage point to other prophetic passages that we have already studied?

Consider Written during persecution, Peter desires to encourage his audience with the hope of Jesus' return. Most of the early persecution that Christians faced came from the Jews. Roman persecution would come later. In Rome, possibly awaiting his own crucifixion, Peter pens a letter to help the early church remain vigilant and patient with their hope.

Read [2 Peter 3:1-18](#)

Discuss

- What is Peter's purpose in writing his letter?
- What can we expect from the actions of others at the End Times?
- What is our response to the actions of others as we wait for Jesus?
- What can we expect with the coming of the Lord?
- How is God's character revealed in this passage?
- How do Revelation 22 and 2 Peter 3 correlate with each other?
- How can we actively wait for the return of Jesus?

Study Sheet Continued

Two Minute Warning

Practice

Invite someone to attend church with you. Christmas is upon us. This season is filled with joy and hope for families celebrating the first coming of Jesus. For many though, it can also be a time of bitterness and sadness as they struggle with present loss and suffering. During Christmas, many people are looking for hope, and they are open to visiting a church. As you attend church this Christmas season, be aware of others coming through the church doors in search of hope. Seek them out, make them feel welcome, and encourage them with the truth that the same Jesus who ascended over 2000 years ago is the same Jesus on his way to return to us.

Pray

Invite God to keep the flame of evangelism in your heart beyond this sermon series. Allow the Holy Spirit to bring you peace about your destination and instill a hunger inside you to make sure others will hear about the hope they can have in Jesus.

Discuss

- Finish our reading plan through the Book of Revelation - Week 15: Revelation 21-22.
- Be ready for the return of Jesus by studying his first coming in the following passages: Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2, John 1:1-18.