



Groups

Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

NEW this year: These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE
for the Sermon given on June 18, 2023
by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson
HOPE FOR THE WORLD - Revelation 20-21



Question: Will it be worth it, in the end, to be faithful to Jesus and our mission?

Bottom Line: YES! Our hope for the world is that evil will be no more, good will be even more, and God will be with us like never before, forevermore.

We have made it to our final message in the Revelation sermon series. Thank you for sticking with us through this challenging concluding book of the Bible. So far, we've learned that The Revelation:

- Is from God
- Was inspired by The Spirit
- Is about Jesus
- Is to every church in every time and place
- Is for the world

It's a wake-up call to every church in every time and place – a call to faith and mission in the face of great evil and hardship. Contrary to popular perception, Revelation is good news for a world that often seems to be headed toward destruction. And that good news is what we are going to focus on today, as we come to the final chapters and discover Hope for the world.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Readings:

Revelation 20:1-2;4

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. ² He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years....⁴ I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They^[a] had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 19:7-9

⁷ When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. ⁹ They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Revelation 21:1-2,5

21 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth,"^[a] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.... ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Group Discussion Questions:

1. At the beginning of the sermon, Pastor Bryan discussed how the first century Christ followers were feeling outnumbered, afraid, and discouraged from Roman rule and increasing persecution. Most of the eyewitnesses to Jesus had passed away, some were executed for their faith.

- During the Revelation sermon series, what have you observed about the early church? Was there anything that strike you in particular? What about their example inspires you with your personal faith?
- In what ways can you resonate with the first century Christ followers? What do you/we do to keep believing in a better future for our church and for the world?

Leaders - Make space for people to acknowledge potential struggles. There may be people struggling to hold fast unto hope or are not sure what to do to keep believing in a better future. Let this be a time to share encouragement and/or personal stories of what you do to hold fast unto hope.

2. Read Revelation 20:1-10. Pastor Bryan mentioned that chapter 20 is described as one of the most debated chapters in the Bible. John's vision asserts there will be a day where a great confrontation will occur between the forces of evil and the power of God. At the end of the age, judgment means that every evil thing, power, inclination will be finally and forever eradicated.

- To illustrate the judgment scene, Pastor Bryan referred to a scene from Lord of the Rings. Are there other illustrations or references that have helped you visualize the final battle of good and evil? Of God triumphing over Satan?
- What are the cries of justice/lament in your heart? Take a moment to collectively share these topics. Don't rush this sacred moment. Lift these cries before the Lord together with the eager anticipation that one day **"evil will be no more."**

3. Read Revelation 21:1-5; 22:1-4.

In Revelation 21:5 says, "I am making everything new!" Pastor Bryan points out that "new" in Greek is *Kainos*, which means "new in quality; superior, better." He describes this as an extreme makeover of planet earth, not a tear down. The new creation will be superior, better, more beautiful.

- God is making everything new! Good will be even more. How is God inviting you to be part of his mission in making all things new? What are the places, opportunities you are already involved in where you can love like Jesus and point people to Jesus? What are new possibilities God is inviting you to?

4. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, there is nothing better than sensing His Presence. It happens sometimes in a worship service when you find yourself overcome with gratitude and praise. It happens sometimes when you are reading Scripture and sense Him speaking into your life. It can happen when you are watching a sunset, or holding a child in your arms, or finding satisfaction in a job well done, or showing kindness to another human being.

- When was the last time you sensed His Presence? Where were you? What were you doing? How did you feel?

In the words of one commentator, Dean Flemming, “As God’s image bearers, we are called to extend God’s presence throughout the earth by our faithful witness, anticipating the day when the whole world shimmers with His glory. Our task involves leading fellow human beings from every tribe and culture into fellowship with God, so that they, too, might be overwhelmed by His presence.”

- How can you extend God’s presence by your witness? Who is God putting in your heart today?
- How can your small group extend God’s presence? Explore opportunities you can do as a small group to be a witness to the church and to the world.

Take Home Message:

The church is meant to offer the world a foretaste of the future; to be a place of beauty and harmony and activity and vitality. So, we join God in making all things new by loving Jesus, loving like Jesus, and pointing to Jesus by the way we live.

Homework Until Next Time:

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

We’re all on a journey; where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it’s not just good for us, it’s good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn’t come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Let's Pray

Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).

Teaching Points:

- Revelation 20:1-2,4 says that Satan will be bound for one-thousand years and that Christ will reign for one-thousand years. This is the only place the term *millennium* is used in the Bible.
- 3 views of the Millennium (End Times):
 - *Premillennialism*: Christ will return before that time to inaugurate those 1000 years of shalom
 - *Postmillennialism*: the church will usher in the age of shalom and Christ will return at the end of those 1000 years
 - *Amillennialism*: the one-thousand years are to be understood symbolically, to represent the age in which we are now living; an age that was inaugurated at Christ's resurrection, in which Christ is ruling from his exalted place at the right hand of the Father, through His people, the church
- 3 Hopes for the world:
 - Evil will be no more
 - Good will be even more: more beauty, harmony, activity, vitality,
 - God will be with us like never before, forevermore
- In this new world God will be fully present all the time with all of His people
- What do we do with this hope?
 - Take hold of it and make it our own
 - We share it with the world (we point to Jesus by the way we live)

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.