



# THE STORY *continues...*

*Join us each week as God weaves His Story into the fabric of our daily lives.*

## Chapter 31 The End of Time

### **L**isten to *The Story*

#### *Read **Chapter 31** of The Story*

“Decades after the resurrection, the church is facing intense persecution. The Roman Empire insists that Caesar is a god, and anyone who won’t bow down to him is asking for trouble. John, the last surviving disciple, has a vision direct from heaven. God’s message to persecuted churches is, ‘Hang in there.’ It’s going to be a wild ride, but God will come to the rescue and finish what he started at the beginning of the story ...”

~ Introduction to Chapter 31, *The Teen Edition*

But we have a hard time hanging in there.

“Most of us find it very difficult to want ‘Heaven’ at all—except in so far as ‘Heaven’ means meeting again our friends who have died. One reason for this difficulty is that we have not been trained: our whole education tends to fix our minds on this world. Another reason is that when the real want for Heaven is present in us, we do not recognize it. Most people, if they had really learned to look into their own hearts, would know that they do want, and want acutely, something that cannot be had in this world. There are all sorts of things in this world that offer to give it to you, but they never quite keep their promise [including the church].”

~ CS Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

### **L**earn *The Story*

*Look for ways in which God’s story and your story connect this week.*

*“I can only imagine, what my eyes will see, when Your Face is before me!  
I can only imagine. I can only imagine.*

*Surrounded by Your Glory, what will my heart feel? ...” – Mercy Me*  
Catch glimpses of Eden and Heaven all around you where God is fully present. Journal those glimpses and add to them your longings for the new earth that God has promised to all of His children ... what do you imagine? Commit to bring a little piece of heaven to your world this week.

### **L**ove *The Story*

*Intentionally take a step forward in faith.*

The chapter bearing your name is being written as we speak. Fully embrace God’s Story as yours. He embraces your story as His. We need not wait for Him to return to experience His presence fully in our lives! Alleluia! Praise God! Create a great day with Jesus!

“The One on the Throne will pitch his tent there for them: no more hunger, no more thirst, no more scorching heat. The Lamb on the Throne will shepherd them, will lead them to spring waters of Life. And God will wipe every last tear from their eyes.”~ Revelation 7:16-17

Bring a little of heaven's promise to someone in your world ... personify hope ... donate food, share a meal, share a thirst-quenching beverage, provide shade, hear their sorrows, empathize and bring comfort ... for joy always comes in the morning!

## Luther's Explanation

Many interpreters become very confused about the Book of Revelation because they fail to understand the character of biblical prophecy. They typically read Revelation as depicting a series of end-times events that simply happen one after the other. Such an approach usually generates a long, confusing wall chart and bizarre investigations of current events, searching for things that might connect with the symbols in Revelation. Anyone wishing to understand the complex symbolism and visions of Revelation must first acquire (1) a broad understanding of Old Testament prophecy generally and (2) a specific, clear understanding of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. It's also helpful to understand that Revelation was addressed to seven actual congregations of the time, including the church in Laodicea, a church that had abundance, making it easy for the people there to imagine that they had little need for spiritual things.

In chapter 3 of Revelation, Jesus rebukes the church in Laodicea for growing self-satisfied and indifferent to the faith. Martin Luther often said that becoming complacent and self-satisfied about our Christian walk can be as destructive as outright hostility and persecution.

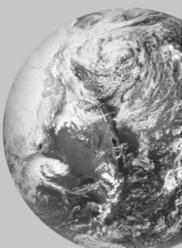
Despite this common mistake, Christ still comes to us in His Word and Sacrament, granting repentance and forgiveness.



## PROMISE

This week, cling to God's promise for you:  
"Wait patiently my children, for I will come."

## The EXTRA Mile



Watch the music video featuring Michael W. Smith and Darlene Zschech titled "The Great Day" (Second Coming) that was inspired by *The Story*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxTI3SrS5mg>