

Community Group Curriculum

for the week of June 9, 2013

"The End of Time"

BIG PICTURE

Our last chapter in *The Story* (chapter 31) is the book of Revelation, which gives us insight to how God's story ends and how eternity begins. We see wonderful portrayals of Jesus, clear teaching for the church and pictures of the end of time (as John wrote down what he saw and heard in a great vision). We see that God wins! We are inspired to stand strong until all of this becomes a reality... and we know it will.

John's vision does more than simply show us the future. It shows us the center. It shows us that at the heart of everything, God reigns. It shows us that the God who reigns on a throne is also the Lord who sent his only Son to die on a cross and rescue sinners. The Lamb who was slain is now alive forevermore. For all eternity we will see and celebrate the goodness and glory of the God who saves.

LET'S DIG IN!

1. Read Revelation 1. John paints an amazing picture of Jesus in this passage. According to this portrait, who is Jesus and what has He done?
2. Read Revelation 2:1-7. The book of Revelation includes short letters written to seven real churches in the ancient world. What did Jesus' letter to the church of Ephesus say regarding:
 - What they were doing well
 - Where they needed to grow or change
 - What action they should take
 - What are specific ways we can make sure that Jesus remains the first love of our life and in the life of the local church?
3. Read Revelation 3:14-21. In the letter to the church in Laodicia, Jesus told the people He did not want them to be "lukewarm." What does it look like when the church becomes lukewarm? How can we make sure our church remains "hot" for God?
4. Read Revelation 21. An angel takes John to see the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the Holy City (New Jerusalem).

- What did it shine with (21:11)?
- Describe what the city looked like (21:11-21).
- Why was there no temple in the city (21:22)?
- Will the gates ever be shut (21:25)? Why?
- The image of the bride in Revelation 21 speaks of true intimacy and purity. The shining city speaks of community, of many people living together in peace and abundance and love. Who is permitted to enter this city (21:27)?

5. Read Revelation 22.

- What was flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb (22:1)?
- What will be gone (22:2)? Read Genesis 3:16-19 and describe the curse.
- What blessings are listed for the servant of God (22:3-5)? In 22:6 how does the angel encourage us to believe?
- What was John's response to what he saw (22:8)? What does the Lord tell us in Matthew 4:10 and Matthew 22:37?
- Finally, what invitation is made in Revelation 22:17, and who is giving the invitation?

PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE STORY

Think back over your journey through *The Story* and reflect on all you have learned. Thank God, over and over again, for His loving persistence with us human beings!

AND NOW FOR SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

God came down in the beginning because He wanted to do life with us. He returned again in the form of a baby, according to His Father's plan, to once and for all make a way for anyone to live forever with Him. He is coming again to establish a new community for all of us who have received His forgiveness. And in response, we echo the words with which John ends the Bible – the words that continue *The Story*:

"Come, Lord Jesus!"