



## 9-3-17 Sermon Discussion Guide "Eschatology"



### **Context**

Throughout this summer we are talking about words and ideas that we often hear in church but rarely define. This summer provides a chance to hit "pause" and reflect upon these ideas, their importance, and their impact upon life. This series began by asking the question, "What is theology?" Throughout this summer we've looked at who God is, who we are in relation to God, and how God saves us. After discussing our response to God's faithfulness, we moved into a discussion about the church. We conclude the series by discussing eschatology – what is God's plan for the end of all things?

### **Checking In**

Since the last time your group has met, how have each of you experienced God at work? What have you celebrated? What have you mourned?

### **Introduction**

In this last week of our series, we discuss the end of all things. People have devoted incredible energy to describing what is likely to happen at the end of the world, when Jesus comes again. From time to time you hear from various "experts" who predict when the end of the world will transpire. Why do you think people get so excited or anxious about talking about this? How would your life be different if you knew exactly how many days you had to live?

### **Discussing the Text – Matt. 24:1-14, 36-41, Rom. 8:18-25, 2 Cor. 5:18-22, Rev. 21:1-8**

1. The beginning of the passage in Matthew 24 begins with Jesus telling his disciples that the Jerusalem temple will be destroyed. What do you think he's trying to tell his disciples about buildings and churches when he says this?
2. Do you think this passage is talking about events that happen with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 or about events at the end of the world? Here's a hint: Bible scholars have debated this question for centuries. What difference do you think it makes?
3. Do you think the description of wars and earthquakes is describing the time we live in today? Why?
4. Jesus says in Matthew 24:36 that nobody knows the hour of Christ's second coming. Why do you think people try to predict when it will come if Jesus said it's impossible to know? What do you think Jesus wants to do in order to prepare for it?
5. Romans 8 says that all of creation is awaiting its eventual restoration. Based on this passage, does the end of all time sound positive or negative? Will human history end in tragedy or success?
6. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-22, Paul says that God is reconciling all things toward himself. What do you think this reconciliation looks like?
7. Does Revelation 21:1-8 sound like good news? Based how does this passage help us understand what reconciliation with God and others looks like?

### **So what?**

1. What difference does it make if we know when Jesus will return again? What's the benefit of not know when it will happen?
2. Do you think the general condition of the world is getting better with each passing generation or worse?
3. Do we have to actively participate in order to make Christ's return come sooner or will it happen either way? What's our role in this, if any?
4. The passages in Romans, 2 Corinthians, and Revelation imply that God will on day make all things right. If this is so, what hope does that give us for today, especially when things don't go well for us?
5. In our current political and racial climate, what can Christians offer to the world as a people of hope?
6. How does knowing how the story ends in Revelation 21 impact our actions and outlook today?

### **Prayer**

Share something you for which you are thankful and/or something for which you need support. Have the group pray this week for the victims of Hurricane Harvey. Pray that God would provide restoration in this time of devastation.