

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

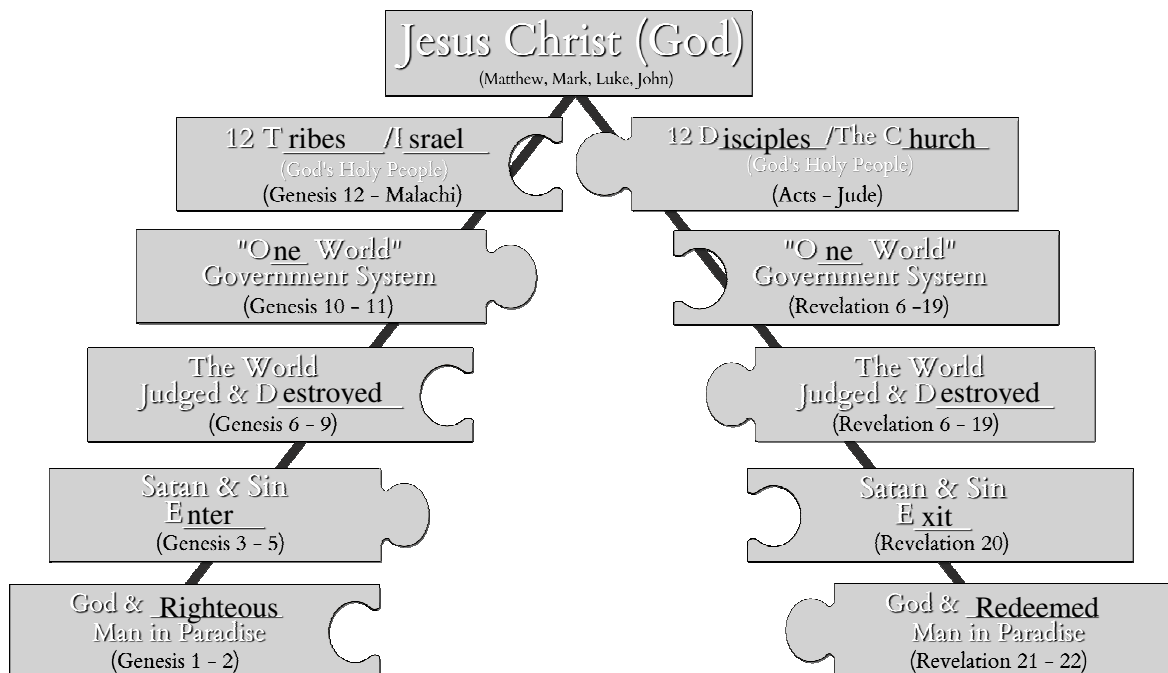
Message Series: Puzzled by the Bible  
 Message Title: "The END"  
 Speaker: Pastor Kevin Myers  
 Date: March 26-27, 2011

### Icebreaker:

Pastor Kevin (PK) is excited about the prospect of having a new, pain-free body in heaven. Based on what we know or believe about heaven, what's one thing you're really looking forward to?

### Message Overview:

The end is here! Well, the end of our seven-week "Puzzled by the Bible" series, anyway. As we reviewed the diagram that gives us an overview of the Bible this week, we saw how the last four major events on the right side of the triangle will play out, matching Old Testament events in reverse descending order. These events will put an end to the lies of Satan, bringing us back to where we started: with God and man – now redeemed through the sacrifice of Jesus – together in Paradise.



As God's story comes to its spectacular close, let's consider three things that will end:

1. **The END of False**

John 8:44 says of Satan, *"When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."* (NIV)

2. **The END of Faith**

Now, we need faith: *"For we live by faith, not by sight."* 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV).  
In the end, we won't need faith: we'll see and know.

3. **The END of Futile**

*"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* Revelation 21:4 (NIV)

**Discussion:**

(Leaders: The questions that follow are designed to stir reflection and discussion on this week's primary Message points. Please read through them prior to your meeting, so you can be prepared to prayerfully pace your group well. And remember, as leader, your goal is to promote increased *biblical* awareness, as well as individual *self* awareness – a combination that with the help of the Holy Spirit, results in revelation and...transformation!)

- PK pointed out that discussions of end times often (and appropriately) carry an ominous, threatening weight. He asked the musicians to "bring the joy" and share a happy song about the Apocalypse. (And they did, gospel quartet-style!) Think about your early memories of hearing about biblical prophecies of Jesus' return, the end of the world and Judgment Day. Was the emphasis on fear or on joy?
- Read Luke 21:8-11. There are many references to signs of the end times in the Old Testament, too. Daniel 12:4 says that at the time of the end, *"Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."* Hosea 4:3 even seems to make reference to mysterious animal deaths: *"Because of this the land dries up, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea are swept away."* Sometimes everything in the news sounds like a sign of the end times! But haven't there always been wars, earthquakes, famines, etc.? How can we know what's a fulfillment of prophecy and what's just – the weather? Or the way things have always been on earth? Does it matter?
- Read Revelation 21:6-8. Do you wish it weren't true that unbelieving people will be consigned to a fiery lake of burning sulfur? What's wrong with basing our beliefs about heaven, hell and judgment on what we wish were true?
- Read Revelation 20:12 and John 3:16-18. If what the Bible says about the coming Judgment is true, why would anyone want to face it without Jesus? How do you think your own actions would stand up against the judgment of a holy God?
- Things will all be much clearer once Satan's out of the picture. John 8:44 says, *"When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."* What are some of Satan's big

lies that are recorded in the Bible? Satan's still talking today. How have Satan's lies tripped you up in your life?

- Here's a lie that's been getting some attention recently: Jesus is definitely coming back on May 21 of this year. But in Matthew 24:36, Jesus says, *"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."* Why do you think some people spend so much time and energy focused on trying to predict exactly when Jesus will return? Considering what the Bible tells us about Jesus' return, what would you say is more important than knowing exactly when it will occur?
- Read Romans 14:10-12. At the Day of Judgment, we won't need faith any more. We'll see God face-to-face, and all will know the truth. Can you imagine? What are some emotions you might feel when you finally see God for yourself?
- Read Revelation 21:1-4. How does this description of the Paradise that is to come change your perspective about the challenges and pain you experience on earth now?

**Wrap-Up/Close:**

Looking back at the past seven weeks, what have you discovered or understood for the first time about God's story? What truths have been renewed in your mind and your spirit? Was there a week that piqued your curiosity to dig into the Bible and learn more about a particular topic?

Continue to pray for those whose names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life over the last few weeks as they made the decision to place their trust in Jesus, accepting God's offer of grace and salvation. Pray that they would continue to pursue God with passion and grow in their faith.

**Throughout the Week: (Optional)**

(Leaders: Share these optional exercises for further study and growth with your group.)

Test yourself! Without looking at any notes, take out a blank piece of paper and see if you can draw the "mirror image" Bible overview triangle, filling in the 11 boxes that identify major events in God's story. Then check your bulletin notes or a study guide to see if you got it right. Look for an opportunity in the coming weeks to share this overview of the Bible with a friend or family member.

To memorize:

*"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* Revelation 21:4 (NIV)

3/27/11 - Week 7

Appendix 1 – Overview of the Book of Revelation

- Revelation is a book about the future and about the present. It offers hope to all believers, especially those who have suffered for their faith, by proclaiming Christ's final victory over evil and the reality of eternal life with Him. It also gives present guidance as it teaches us about Jesus Christ and how we should live for Him now. Through graphic pictures we learn that: 1) Jesus Christ is coming again; 2) evil will be judged; and 3) the dead will be raised to judgment, resulting in eternal life or eternal destruction.
- According to tradition, John, the author, was the only one of Jesus' original twelve disciples who was not killed for the faith. He also wrote the Gospel of John and the letters of 1, 2, and 3 John. When he wrote Revelation, John was in exile on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, sent there by the Romans for his witness about Jesus Christ.
- John wrote Revelation est. A.D. 95, during the reign of the Roman emperor Titus Flavius Domitian. The emperor had demanded that he be worshiped as "Lord and God", and the refusal of the Christians to obey his edict led to severe persecution. Tradition says that it was Domitian who sent John to the Isle of Patmos, a Roman penal colony off the coast of Asia Minor.
- The word translated "revelation" simply means "unveiling" and this verb means "to uncover, to reveal, to make manifest." In this book, the Holy Spirit pulls back the curtain and gives us the privilege of seeing the glorified Christ in heaven and the fulfillment of His sovereign purposes in the world.
- Revelation is an *open* book in which God reveals His plans and purposes to His church. When Daniel finished writing his prophecy, he was instructed to "shut up the words, and seal the book" (Dan.12:4); but John was given opposite instructions: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Rev. 22:10). Why? Since Calvary, the Resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, God has ushered in the "last days" (Heb.1:1-2) and is fulfilling His hidden purposes in this world. "The time is at hand" (Rev.1:3; 22:10).
- This book is the revelation *of, concerning, and from* Jesus Christ. God gave the revelation of His plan to Jesus Christ, who, in turn, revealed it to John. The book of Revelation unveils Christ's full identity and God's plan for the end of the world, and it focuses on Jesus Christ, His second coming, His victory over evil, and the establishment of His Kingdom. As you read and study Revelation, don't focus so much on the timetable of the events or the details of John's imagery that you miss the main message- the infinite love, power, and justice of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The book of Revelation reveals future events, but there is not the gloomy pessimism we might expect. The drama of these unfolding events is spectacular, but there is nothing to fear if you are on the winning side. When you think about the future, walk with confidence because Christ, the victor, walks with you.

3/27/11 - Week 7

Appendix 2: Mirror image of Genesis and Revelation:

<b>Genesis</b>	<b>Revelation</b>
Heavens and earth created, 1:1	New heavens and earth, 21:1
Sun created, 1:16	No need of the sun, 21:23
The night established, 1:5	No night there, 22:5
The seas created, 1:10	No more seas, 21:1
The curse announced, 3:14-17	No more curse, 22:3
Death enters history, 3:19	No more death, 21:4
Man driven from paradise, 3:24	Redeemed man restored to paradise, 22:14
Sorrow and pain begins, 3:17	No more tears or pain, 21:4

Resources:

Life Application Study Bible, NIV; Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. and Zondervan Publishing House

The Bible Exposition Commentary/New Testament, Volume 2; Warren W. Wiersbe; Cook Communications Ministries, Co

The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation by Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Th.M, Ph.D.; Ariel Ministries