

Preparation Study
APRIL 29, 2012

MONDAY STUDY

Read Revelation 22:12-14 and answer the following questions:

- *How will Jesus reward each person “according to what he has done?”*
- *How does Jesus refer to Himself in verse 13? What does that mean?*
- *How does the fact that Jesus is the Beginning and the End of all history give us hope today?*
- *What is the blessing promised to “those who wash their robes?” (they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates)*
- *Where else in Scripture is the tree of life mentioned? (It stood in the middle of the Garden of Eden. After the fall of man, God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden. According to Genesis 3:24, God “stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.”)*
- *How does knowing the end of the story help you live correctly today?*
- *What is meant by “washing our robes” in verse 14?*
- *How do you understand the word “blessed” in verse 14?*
- *What is the difference between happiness and blessedness? (Happiness is mostly based on external circumstances. When good things happen, we are happy. Blessedness, on the other hand, is something that is pronounced for believers. We are blessed, whether or not we are in “happy” circumstances, because God has called us blessed.*
- *How is it believers can be blessed even in the midst of persecution and tribulation?*

Summary: The picture Revelation paints is that when Jesus returns, the curse of the Fall will be reversed. In Genesis, humanity was barred from entering the Garden and lost their access to the tree of life. In Revelation, those who have washed their robes can enter the city and have the right to the tree of life. Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega. He was in the beginning with God (John 1:1-2), and will be there at the end of history. So He has the authority to make this promise.

TUESDAY STUDY

Read Matthew 24:39b-44 and answer the following questions:

- *Why wouldn't you need any of these items?*
- *How would your list change if we were talking about moving somewhere permanently versus going somewhere for a week?*

Summary: We prepare very differently for a temporary stay than we do for a permanent stay. Our attitude toward this temporary life and eternity with Christ should not be any different.

- *Do our lifestyles look more similar or different than those who are not preparing for eternity in heaven? Why?*
- *How do we shift our mentality?*

Summary: The Holy Spirit would not have devoted such a large amount of text to the topic of Jesus' return and the need to be ready were it not of utmost important to Christians. This is an aspect of our faith that cannot be ignored in the way we live.

WEDNESDAY STUDY

Read Matthew 24:9-14; and Revelation 7:9; and answer the following questions:

- *What does Jesus assure will happen even within the church, in verse 10? (The implication is that even believers will turn on each other during the time of persecution. You can't be "betrayed" except by someone who has been on your side.)*
- *In light of verses 9-10, what do you imagine might be the message of the false prophets in verse 11? (Possibly that persecution, being hated, and martyrdom couldn't really be part of God's plan for the faithful).*
- *According to verse 12, what will make the "love of many grow cold"? Do you see this happening today?*
- *Are you surprised that after listing all these terrible things that will happen to the faithful, Jesus would call it "This good news" in verse 14? (Allow class members to consider this, but point out that "this good news" refers to verse 13— "the one who endures to the end will be delivered," and not to verses 9-12.*

Summary: It is no secret that living for Jesus is costly and difficult at times, but remaining faithful to Him gives evidence for our faith and ensures the progress of the gospel. This will prove to be our greatest reward in eternity.

THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY STUDY

Read the following articles contained in your study packet:

1. He's Coming Again;
2. Alpha and Omega;
3. John's Use of Alpha & Omega;