

Advent

*And They Will Be My People*

*Revelation 21:1-7*

Sermon

*Hobart, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011*

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**Revelation 21:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

<sup>3</sup> I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.” <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

<sup>5</sup> And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup> And he also said, “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. <sup>7</sup> All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.”<sup>1</sup>

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\* Some manuscripts read *God himself will be with them, their God.*

<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Re 21:1-7). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

## INTRODUCTION:

### I. ADVENT

1. As we discussed a couple of weeks ago, the season of Advent focuses on God's final plan and purpose for us all, and all of creation
2. It is a time in which we focus on the goal and full realization of all that He is working towards
3. As Laurence Stookey writes;

...Advent concerns the future of the Risen One...

"The beginning of the liturgical year takes our thinking to the very end of things. For 'end' means not only the 'end of time,' but the central purpose or goal of creation. We are not aimlessly wandering in the wilderness, even though we may be tempted to think so... History is headed somewhere by direction (though not dictation) from God."<sup>2</sup>

## S.P.S:

### A. TODAY WE ARE GOING TO TAKE A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT TACK

1. Instead of focusing on one core passage, we are going to go quickly survey of several Scriptures we have covered previously, and most recently
2. The idea is to see if we can gather them all up together, and listen for their common chorus, a central and confirming message that they all convey about God's end purpose and plan for us all

<sup>2</sup> Laurence Stookey, Calendar, Christ's Time for the Church. p. 121.

**B. I AM GOING TO READ EACH ONE AND THEN ASK FOR YOUR INPUT ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

1. What do we learn about ourselves, and our world?
2. What do we learn about God?
3. What do we learn about his intent and plan for us all?

**C. SYNTHESIS**

1. At the end, we will talk about the central message we see when we hear them all together
  - a) What they all tell us about God himself, and the overall purpose he has for us and all of his creation
  - b) And the ramifications it all has for our daily lives
2. Then we will take the Lord's Supper

**D. PRAYER**

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**BODY:****Isaiah 35:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> Even the wilderness and desert will be glad in those days.

The wasteland will rejoice and blossom with spring crocuses.

<sup>2</sup> Yes, there will be an abundance of flowers  
and singing and joy!

The deserts will become as green as the mountains of Lebanon,  
as lovely as Mount Carmel or the plain of Sharon.

There the LORD will display his glory,  
the splendor of our God.

<sup>3</sup> With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands,  
and encourage those who have weak knees.

<sup>4</sup> Say to those with fearful hearts,  
“Be strong, and do not fear,  
for your God is coming to destroy your enemies.  
He is coming to save you.”<sup>3</sup>

1. What do we learn about ourselves, and our world?
2. What do we learn about God?
3. What do we learn about his intent and plan for us all?

<sup>3</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Is 35:1-7). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

**Isaiah 61:1-3**

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,  
3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
to bestow on them a crown of beauty  
instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness  
instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise  
instead of a spirit of despair.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
a planting of the LORD  
for the display of his splendor.

1. What do we learn about ourselves, and our world?
  2. What do we learn about God?
  3. What do we learn about his intent and plan for us all?
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**II. HOSEA 11:***The LORD's Love for Israel*

**11** <sup>1</sup>“When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
and I called my son out of Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> But the more I<sup>\*</sup> called to him,  
the farther he moved from me,  
offering sacrifices to the images of Baal  
and burning incense to idols.

<sup>3</sup> I myself taught Israel<sup>\*</sup> how to walk,  
leading him along by the hand.  
But he doesn't know or even care  
that it was I who took care of him.

<sup>4</sup> I led Israel along  
with my ropes of kindness and love.  
I lifted the yoke from his neck,  
and I myself stooped to feed him.

**v8** “Oh, how can I give you up, Israel?

How can I let you go?

How can I destroy you like Admah

or demolish you like Zeboiim?

My heart is torn within me,  
and my compassion overflows.

<sup>9</sup> No, I will not unleash my fierce anger.

I will not completely destroy Israel,  
for I am God and not a mere mortal.

\* As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *they*.

\* Hebrew *Ephraim*, referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; also in 11:8, 9, 12.

I am the Holy One living among you,

and I will not come to destroy.

<sup>10</sup> For someday the people will follow me.

I, the LORD, will roar like a lion.

And when I roar,

my people will return trembling from the west.

<sup>11</sup> Like a flock of birds, they will come from Egypt.

Trembling like doves, they will return from Assyria.

And I will bring them home again," says the LORD.

1. What do we learn about ourselves, and our world?
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**III. EZEKIEL 34:11-16; 20-31**

<sup>11</sup> “For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search and find my sheep.

<sup>12</sup> I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. <sup>13</sup> I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel and by the rivers and in all the places where people live. <sup>14</sup> Yes, I will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There they will lie down in pleasant places and feed in the lush pastures of the hills. <sup>15</sup> I myself will tend my sheep and give them a place to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign LORD. <sup>16</sup> I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bandage the injured and strengthen the weak. But I will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes—feed them justice!

<sup>v 20</sup> “Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will surely judge between the fat sheep and the scrawny sheep. <sup>21</sup> For you fat sheep pushed and butted and crowded my sick and hungry flock until you scattered them to distant lands. <sup>22</sup> So I will rescue my flock, and they will no longer be abused. I will judge between one animal of the flock and another. <sup>23</sup> And I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David. He will feed them and be a shepherd to them. <sup>24</sup> And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David will be a prince among my people. I, the LORD, have spoken!

<sup>25</sup> “I will make a covenant of peace with my people and drive away the dangerous animals from the land. Then they will be able to camp safely in the wildest places and sleep in the woods without fear. <sup>26</sup> I will bless my people and their homes around my holy hill. And in the proper season I will send the showers they need. There will be showers of blessing. <sup>27</sup> The orchards and fields of my people will yield bumper crops, and everyone will live in safety. When I have broken their chains of slavery and rescued them from those who enslaved them, then they will know that I am the LORD. <sup>28</sup> They will no longer be prey for other nations, and wild animals will no longer devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will frighten them.

<sup>29</sup> “And I will make their land famous for its crops, so my people will never again suffer from famines or the insults of foreign nations. <sup>30</sup> In this way, they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them. And they will know that they, the people of Israel, are my people, says the Sovereign LORD. <sup>31</sup> You are my flock, the sheep of my pasture. You are my people, and I am your God. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

1. What do we learn about ourselves, and our world?
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#### IV. JOHN 10:6-16

<sup>6</sup> Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, <sup>7</sup> so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me\* were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved.\* They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. <sup>10</sup> The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

<sup>14</sup> "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, <sup>15</sup> just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

1. What do we learn about ourselves, and our world?
  2. What do we learn about God?
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\* Some manuscripts do not include *before me*.

\* Or *will find safety*.

**V. MARK 5:1-43**

**5** So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes.\* <sup>2</sup>When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil\* spirit came out from a cemetery to meet him. <sup>3</sup>This man lived among the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. <sup>4</sup>Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. <sup>5</sup>Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones. <sup>6</sup>When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him. <sup>7</sup>With a shriek, he screamed, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don’t torture me!” <sup>8</sup>For Jesus had already said to the spirit, “Come out of the man, you evil spirit.” <sup>9</sup>Then Jesus demanded, “What is your name?” And he replied, “My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man.” <sup>10</sup>Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. <sup>11</sup>There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. <sup>12</sup>“Send us into those pigs,” the spirits begged. “Let us enter them.” <sup>13</sup>So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water. <sup>14</sup>The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. <sup>15</sup>A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. <sup>16</sup>Then those who had seen what happened told the others about the demon-possessed man and the pigs. <sup>17</sup>And the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone. <sup>18</sup>As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. <sup>19</sup>But Jesus said, “No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been.” <sup>20</sup>So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.

\* Other manuscripts read *Gadarenes*; still others read *Gergesenes*. See Matt 8:28; Luke 8:26.

\* Greek *unclean*; also in 5:8, 13.

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## VI. EPHESIANS 1:3-14

<sup>3</sup> All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. <sup>4</sup> Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. <sup>5</sup> God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. <sup>6</sup> So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. <sup>7</sup> He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. <sup>8</sup> He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

<sup>9</sup> God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. <sup>10</sup> And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.

<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God,\* for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

<sup>12</sup> God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. <sup>13</sup> And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. <sup>14</sup> The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

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\* Or we have become God's inheritance.

## VII. REVELATION 21:1-7

**21** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

<sup>3</sup> I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them." <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."

<sup>5</sup> And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup> And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. <sup>7</sup> All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

1. What do we learn about ourselves, and our world?
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## CONCLUSION:

### **A. SO WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM ALL OF THIS?**

1. What do we learn about ourselves, and our world?
2. What do we Learn about God?
3. What do we learn about his intent and plan for us all?

### **B. EPHESIANS 4: TELLS US THAT WE HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED THE BLESSINGS OF GOD**

1. The Messiah, Jesus has already come
2. He has done what God has always done

\* Some manuscripts read *God himself will be with them, their God.*

3. He has fulfilled and lived out the promises to Israel
  - a) To pursue and rescue, redeem and return his people to himself
  - b) To be their God, and make them his people
4. He has become the Good Shepherd, the King, the Saviour Israel was promised
5. He has already rescued his people, and as one of us, as God in the flesh, Jesus has brought us out of the realm of death and separation from God, into the life and kingdom of God
6. We are already the new Israel
7. We have already been saved; we have entered into God's life even though we still live in the world of death
8. Jesus' victory over sin, evil, loneliness, pain and injustice that the prophets spoke about, is already ours

**C. SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR OUR LIVES TODAY?**

1. In Christ we are already born again as citizens of the new world, not the world of sin, injustice and death,
  - a) And we are called to live in that new reality and by doing so, display and demonstrate it to the world around us
  - b) bringing glory to God, and hope to the lost
2. Trinitarian theologian Katherine Tanners says;

Eternal life means a community of life with God in Christ, a community of action in which we are taken up into Christ's own action for the world.

As Jesus does the life-giving work of the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit, we, in virtue of our union with Christ, are to do the same.

Eternal life turns attention, then, not just to the benefits we are to receive through Christ—our being healed, purified, elevated by Christ in the power of the Spirit – but to our active participation in Christ's own mission.

In this life, life in God sets a task for us, secondly, as a proper sign or witness to our fellowship with God in Christ" we are to be a holy people and

in that way demonstrate through the character of our deeds what it means to be God's own.<sup>4</sup>

3. We are enabled through the Spirit to actively participate in and be taken up into Christ's action for the world as he comes to people to love and serve them where they are

a) Just as we have seen he does in the Scriptures today

**D. LET'S NOT BE DAUNTED BY THE WORLD, OR HOW WEAK OR SEEMINGLY INEFFECTIVE OUR EFFORTS MAY BE NOW**

1. Let's keep at it;

2. We don't give up on ourselves or on others, because we know that God in Christ never gives up on us or them

3. We don't give up, because we know that though we may lose many battles, in the end in the end Jesus will bring the kingdom in its fullness

a) and death and all that stands against justice, love and peace will be fully and finally defeated

b) The victory that Jesus won on the cross over all that opposes God will be realized in its fullness everywhere, and forever

4. The life of the Father, Son and Spirit will extend outward to include all things

a) The trinitarian life of love, self-less, gracious giving, intimate communication, support and abundant giving and creativity will fill the face of the earth, and all will be well, everywhere, forever

**E. THIS IS WHO OUR GOD IS, THIS IS WHAT HE IS DOING IN HIS SON, RIGHT HERE AND NOW**

1. And each one of us is a part of it!

**F. PRAYER**

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<sup>4</sup> Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity*, Fortress Press, 2001, p.121

## VIII. LORD'S SUPPER:

### II Corinthians 5:14b-6:2

14b Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life.\* <sup>15</sup> He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

<sup>16</sup> So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! <sup>17</sup> This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

#### **A. AS WE TAKE THE BREAD AND THE WINE**

1. We are participating together in the body and blood of Christ
  - a) We are remembering and giving thanks for his coming to be with us
  - b) A coming that has not ended, but that continues on
2. The Bread and Wine symbolize his ongoing presence in our lives right now
  - a) That he has already come for us and brought us into fellowship with the Father through the Spirit
  - b) That as our High Priest, as one of us, in our place, he sits at the right hand of the Father
  - c) Our taking of the Bread and Wine symbolize he is with us, for us, among us, and in us right here and now
3. The Bread symbolizes that we are one body, part of his body
  - a) One with him, and thus one with one another
4. The Wine symbolizes he is our life today, tomorrow and forever
  - a) That he died for us, and we died in him

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\* Greek *Since one died for all, then all died.*



b) That he was risen to new life for us, and that we have risen to new life with him

<sup>18</sup> And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. <sup>19</sup> For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" <sup>21</sup> For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

**6** As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it. <sup>2</sup> For God says,

"At just the right time, I heard you.

On the day of salvation, I helped you."

Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation.

**B. THE BREAD AND WINE REMIND US THAT TODAY IS THE DAY OF OUR SALVATION**

1. That all that has been promised is fulfilled in Jesus Christ
2. That we have already received the promises
3. That we already participate in the new life, as ambassadors of God's kingdom, and messengers of his plan to reconcile all to himself through Jesus body and blood given in love for all mankind.
  - a) And because of that we have the assurance that we are, and will always be his people, no matter what may happen this side of Jesus final return to bring all things under his feet
  - b) And we look forward in hope to the full realization of the new life with God when all things will be reconciled to him

**C. BREAD:**

- 1.

**D. WINE:**