

Built On a Rock: The Heart of Christianity from Genesis to Revelation
Living the Message 2022-2023
May 2023 Study Guide for Participants and Facilitators

The End of All Things: *Eschatology* with Pastor Ruud [Click here to watch the video.](#)

Opening Prayer: *Dear Lord, help us to be patient and wise as we try to listen for your voice about both the future and the present. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Focus Statement: God promises to bring all things not just to an end, but to a good end, and this promise creates in us the faith to live, work, and love in the present with courage and confidence.

Eschatology Definition: *Theology focused on death, judgment, and the final destination of humanity. Eschaton, from greek eskhatos, means "last" = last day/age, last judgment, defeat of evil, consummation of history.*

Questions

1. What stuck out to you about the definition of "eschatology" Pastor Ruud offered? How does it compare to your previous thoughts on "end of all things"?
2. Pastor Ruud repeated the idea of "prophecy, not prediction" several times as he spoke about many biblical texts, e.g. [Isaiah 10:1-4](#), [Jeremiah 7:5-7](#). What does that phrase mean to you?
3. What is your reaction to the many scriptures Pastor Ruud read regarding what Jesus said about the end times? Were you surprised by what Jesus was saying? How so?
 - a. **Matthew 24:36** *"But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*
 - b. **Matthew 24** ⁴⁴*Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.*
 - c. **Matthew 24** ⁵⁰*the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know.*
 - d. **Matthew 25:13** *Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.*
 - e. **Mark 13:32** *'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.*
 - f. **Luke 21** ⁸*And he said, 'Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, "I am he!" and, "The time is near!" Do not go after them.*
 - g. **Acts 1** ⁶*So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' ⁷He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.*
4. How does confidence that the future is in God's hands create freedom in the present? What can we devote our time to now if we believe God's promise of a good end for us all?
 - a. More specifically: What can you personally do in the here and now? What's on your "Bucket List" of doing God's work today? Some questions to explore this include:
 - i. What would you want to accomplish, and why?
 - ii. Who would you want to thank?
 - iii. Who would you want to tell that you love them?

- iv. Who would you want to help?
 - v. What relationships would you want to restore or mend?
 - vi. How can Mount Olivet help you do those things that matter most to you now?
5. The book of Revelation was addressed to a community being persecuted by the Romans for their faith. With that in mind, read [Revelation 21:1-8](#) and then consider the questions below.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell^{} with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them;^{*} ⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'*

5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.'⁶ Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

- How do you hear the promises God makes in this chapter about a new heaven and a new earth?
- How do you think the original Christians receiving this letter heard them?
- How can this text encourage us in our lives of faith and service today?

Deeper Dive with Pastor Lose

[Mark 13:32-37](#)

³² 'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert;^{} for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'*

- What does the phrase “Keep awake!” from this Mark scripture mean to you?
- How do you stay alert? What are you doing to “stay awake”?
- If Jesus tells this parable to anticipate his impending death on the cross, what does that tell us about “the hour,” and what confidence does that give about the future?

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, Help us to hear your promises about the future in a way that gives us the confidence to hear and follow your voice to love and care for all people in the present. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Next Year:

Thank you for being a part of this Living the Message series! I hope you have found it worthwhile and faith-building. I will send information about next year's series soon. Please join in again and invite a friend to help spread this wonderful Good News!

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