

SERMON SERIES

DISCUSSION GUIDE

STORY OF FAITH: WEEK 11

Let's review where we've been in the Story of Faith so far. Going back to Genesis, we have the story of God's creation, including the human race, and the entrance of sin into the story. The tragedy of that event ripped Adam and Eve, along with all of their descendants, out of the garden and God's presence and brought death into the world.

But God promised to crush the head of the serpent and redeem His people and His creation from sin's destructive grasp. In His covenants with Abraham, Judah, and David, we see that God was committed to restoring the blessing of His presence among all the peoples of the earth. Although sin and death kept rearing their ugly heads, the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others revealed that God would finally and fully defeat sin and death through a suffering servant who would represent His people. Through the servant and the work of His Spirit, God would establish a new covenant and give lasting life to His people in the new heaven and new earth. Then, and only then, would God renew and restore all of His creation, live among His people forever, and bring lasting joy and peace. (See Revelation 21:1-3)

In the last part of Isaiah, we get a glimpse of what God promised His people once the curse is finally lifted. In Isaiah 65, we see that God's new creation will be a place filled with eternal joy (v. 18), with no weeping or sadness (v. 19), with true and lasting peace (v. 25), and joyful fellowship with God (v. 19). In other words, God's people will finally experience and enjoy the covenant blessing of living with God forever.

Next: As the story continues on, we will look at five key New Testament passages that will help us see how the Old Testament promises were in fact fulfilled through the promised seed, the suffering servant, the resurrected Lord... Jesus Christ.

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ISAIAH 65:17-25 ESV

17 *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.*

18 *But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.*

19 *I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.*

20 *No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.*

21 *They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.*

22 *They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

23 *They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord, and their descendants with them.*

24 *Before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*

25 *The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” says the Lord.*

REVELATION 21:1-3 ESV

1 *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.*

2 *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

3 *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*

DISCUSSION GUIDE QUESTIONS

on your own, with family, or with your small group

Based on Isaiah 65:17-25, answer the following questions:

What did God promise to create? (65:17)

What will happen to the memory of the past? (65:17-18)

When God rejoices over Jerusalem, what will be eliminated from it forever? (65:19)

How will life expectancy and death be redefined when God redeems His people? (65:20)

In contrast to invasion and exile in Isaiah’s time, what security will be enjoyed by the people God blesses? (65:21-23)

When does God promise to hear and answer His people? (65:24)?

When has God provided for you before you even asked?

What will be totally absent from God’s holy mountain? (65:25)

In what ways has God restored you and made you a new creation?