

date: **8/20/17**

Bible Passage: Revelation 19:11–21; 21—22
(Promise of Jesus' Return)

God Is the Beginning and the End

REMEMBER VERSE

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

Acts 4:12

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

The fragrant jasmine sent me sweet memories of my wedding day—the moment when my husband and I stood for the first time as man and wife in front of this same jasmine bush. That day had celebrated the beginning of a potentially wonderful life together: all of our shared dreams, all of the newness of establishing a home together, all of the holy expectation that we would carry the joy of that night into a long life together, serving one another.

When I later reflected in the garden, I got a picture of the way God's presence is the same from beginning to end. God was present in my days as a young bride, and He's still present in my days as a mature mother. God was present with my children at their births and in their first days of junior high.

As remarkable as it is for me to imagine that a flower planted for my wedding day could still be blooming, it's even more unfathomable to imagine that the God who created heaven and earth has been with each of us since the beginning of our lives—and will be with us in the end. It's incredible that God Himself, the One who loves us and is present with us in every detail of our lives, is also the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End.

Amy Palmerton
ROCKHARBOR Church

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

When Jesus came to earth, He humbled Himself. He became a servant. He relinquished His glorious state in



heaven and took on human flesh. One of the images that most vividly portrayed Jesus' humility was His choice to enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

In Matthew 21, Jesus sent two disciples to the city of Bethphage on an errand. He told them they would find a donkey and a colt, both of which they were to bring to Jesus. (Matthew is the only gospel that mentions both a donkey and a colt.) To a first-century audience, riding on a donkey represented humility and peace. In contrast, riding on a horse represented status and power. It also represented war. Military leaders, especially those in the Roman army, rode on horseback.

The Israelites longed for a day when their Messiah would appear. But even though prophecy described the Messiah as "lowly and riding on a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9), they yearned for God to send a great king who would destroy their enemies in war. They waited for the Messiah who would ride on horseback.

In Revelation 19, we see a picture of our Savior riding on a white horse. In the Roman world, white symbolized victory. And we read in Revelation that God will ultimately have victory and reign, not only as a military king, but also as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

When this time comes, we will see Jesus in all of His glory. He will be clothed in the majesty that He gave up for our sake. At that time, we'll see Jesus for who He is: the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. And we will know our true identity as children, heirs, and worshippers of the King of Kings.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

The thought of God having a plan throughout history is awe-inspiring. Furthermore, it's moving to know that God has a plan for each of us individually. Take time this week to reflect on God's work in your life. Consider the following questions:

- Where in my life did situations work out unexpectedly? Were there tough situations that were transformed into good? Good situations into tough ones?
- Where have I seen God work in my life?
- How has God changed my life? My heart? My actions?
- Where do I still need God's healing?

After spending some time meditating on these things, take a moment to pray. First, give God praise and glory for the places you see Him working in your life. Thank Him for saving and transforming you. Ask Him to continue His work and healing. Be specific and honest with Him. Next, pray for your future. Ask for His guidance and blessing. Pray you will be faithful to His call and His will. Lastly, pray, the way Jesus taught His disciples, that His kingdom will come.

SMALL GROUP
SECTION

EXPLORE// 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity



about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Beginning or End

Lead children through an EXPLORE in which they play with the idea of beginning and end.

SUPPLIES

- Chairs (2)

PREPARE AHEAD

Place the two chairs about 10 feet apart, facing one another.

RELATE

Today we're going to be learning about how Jesus is the Beginning and the End. Let's take a look at some of the things in our lives that have beginnings and ends.

Designate one chair as "Beginning" and one chair as "End." As you list off things that have beginnings and ends, instruct children to move near the chair they prefer, either standing next to the chair or touching it.

Would you rather be at the beginning or the end of ...

- The school year
- A line
- Summer break
- A sports game/tournament
- A really long day
- A movie
- A shopping trip
- A vacation

Feel free to add your own ideas of beginning and ends. When you're finished, ask children why they chose the answers they did.

LARGE GROUP
SECTION

DISCOVER// 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image (see Resources)
- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure, and celebrate when it's complete.



This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12

Connect

Question

If you could build a city out of anything, what would it be?

The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Revelation 19:11–21; 21—22

Storytelling Technique: Images

God Is the Beginning and the End

SUPPLIES

- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- Images: [Cross](#), [Topaz](#), [Amethyst](#), [Precious Stones](#), [Lightbulb](#), [Fire](#), [Jesus on White Horse](#) (see Resources)
- Bibles

RELATE

Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds. **For a long time we've been traveling through The Big God Story—the story of God's love for us. A story He continues to write today. We're finally at the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, ready to talk about the most exciting news of all time: Jesus is coming back! But first, let's remember just how amazing Jesus is.**

At the beginning of The Big God Story, the first people whom God created disobeyed Him and broke their relationship with Him. But do you think God left people all alone? Invite responses. No! God promised to send a Redeemer who would restore the relationship between God and people.

For thousands of years, God's people waited and waited for the Redeemer. Then, one day, He was born. Who is this Redeemer? Invite responses. That's right—Jesus! Although Jesus is God Himself, born as a human, the Bible says, "He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain" (Isaiah 53:2–3). Can you imagine what it must have been like for Jesus to be born as a human and suffer? But God knew that the only way to restore perfect relationship with Him was for His Son to die for our sins. Tech: Cue Cross image.

Of course, we celebrate the fact that Jesus not only died for our sins but also rose again, defeated death, and went up to heaven! We also know that just because He went to heaven, He didn't leave His people alone. He promised to come back. And He sent the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter and Teacher until He returns. We're living in the time between when Jesus went up to heaven and when He will return. In fact, if you look at the timeline (Tech: Cue Timeline image), you can see all of this blank space between "Paul" and "You and Me." That's the time we live in now—a time when the church is



continuing to grow and more and more people are hearing about Jesus. The Big God Story isn't finished yet because we're still waiting for the wonderful day when our Lord and Savior returns to us as He promised He would.

When Jesus comes back, it will be unbelievably amazing! In Revelation, the last book of the Bible, we see how Jesus will look when He returns to His people. Invite kids to turn to Revelation 19 in their Bibles. What does the word *revelation* mean? Invite responses. A revelation is like a secret that's being told. Revelation 19:11–12 says Jesus will be riding on a white horse with eyes blazing like fire and many crowns on His head. Wow! He'll be dressed in a white robe, and the armies of heaven will be following Him (v. 14). What do you think the armies of heaven might look like? Invite responses. We don't know exactly what it will be like, but we can be sure it will be amazing.

Jesus came to earth as a humble man, but He's also the glorious God of the universe. In this chapter we can read some of Jesus' names: "Faithful and True," "the Word of God," "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS," and "the Beginning and the End" (Revelation 19:11–16; 22:13). Jesus will also have a name "written on him that no one knows but he himself" (Revelation 19:12). He has a name so holy and beautiful that no one will know what it is! Wow! Jesus is truly glorious beyond what we can imagine.

And Jesus is preparing an amazing place for us that reflects His glory. Invite children to turn to Revelation 21. It will be a city with huge walls and streets of pure gold (v. 21). The Bible even lists the precious stones that will decorate the city walls (*cue images of each stone*), such as topaz, amethyst, and more. *Tech: Cue Precious Stones image.* And a crystal-clear river flows from the throne of God that sits in the middle of the city (Revelation 22:1).

The Bible also says, "The city [will] not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light" (Revelation 21:23). What gives us light in our world? Invite responses. Great examples. Lightbulbs and fire are just a couple of the things that give us light. *Tech: Cue Lightbulb and Fire images.* We won't need these in heaven because God's glory will give the city all of the light it could ever need! Optional: Turn off the lights and ask the kids to imagine the room suddenly filling with light without turning on the switch.

Here's the best part: God wants us to live there too! God will live with us, and He "will wipe every tear from [our] eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (Revelation 21:4).

Since the beginning of The Big God Story, God has wanted to live in perfect relationship with His people. And we know God kept His promise to send a Redeemer so we could be in relationship with Him. So, we can know God will keep His promise to return and bring us to live, face-to-face, in heaven with Him. *Tech: Cue Jesus on White Horse image.* We can trust He will have complete victory over sin, pain, sadness, and death when He returns, riding on a white horse as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Beginning and the End (Revelation 22:13).

Jesus says to us, "Yes, I am coming soon" (Revelation 22:20). And we answer, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." We answer this way because when we see Jesus in all of His might and glory, we will see Jesus for who He truly is. And when that day comes, we will see ourselves for who we truly are—children of the King of Kings, the God of everything, the Beginning and the End. Let's all together say, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"



RESPOND// 15 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Reflect: God Is the Beginning and the End

Encourage kids to look up the following verses in their Bibles.

Questions for Younger Kids

- **When will Jesus return?** Revelation 22:12
- **What does the Bible say Jesus will look like when He returns?** Revelation 19:11–12
- **What will He be riding?** Revelation 19:11–12
- **How do you know Jesus will return?** Revelation 22:12, 20
- **How do you know God wants you to live with Him forever?** John 14:3

Questions for Older Kids

- **When will Jesus return?** Matthew 24:36; Revelation 22:12
- **When you think of Jesus, what images come to mind?**
- **What does the Bible say Jesus will look like when He returns?** Revelation 19:11–12
- **How do you know Jesus will return?** Revelation 22:12, 20
- **How do you know God wants you to live with Him forever?** John 14:3, Revelation 21:3
- **How can you become God's child?**

BLESS// 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, palms up. Then open a Bible and read Revelation 21:5–7:

[God] said, “I am making everything new! ... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.”

May you experience joy because of the gift that God has given you—the gift of eternal life with Him.

