



Christ's Return

Small Group Work Sheet
November 14, 2010

Part 1 - Ice Breaker

- What false view of the afterlife have you seen the most of? Which one do most people believe?
 - Universalism
 - Annihilationism
 - Reincarnation
 - Purgatory
 - Soul Sleep
 - Cartoon Death



Part 2 - Review the sermon

- Discuss what will happen after you die. Access either the *One Minute After You Die* sermon from the www.christ2Rculture.com web site and/or use your sermon notes. What was new to you? What did you find most comforting? What did you find most challenging and why? Did you know that *everybody* gets a resurrected indestructible body?
- What is the kingdom of God? What is Jesus' role in it?
- What does Revelation 4:10-11 teach us about the role of a spiritual leader? What is a particularly lethal danger a spiritual leader can fall to?
- Revelation 5:11-14 talks about myriads of angels and created creatures worshipping Jesus verbally. Is that a new thought for you? How does that change your view of creation?
- What does Amen mean? BONUS: What does Hallelujah mean? (answer on the last page)
- Gleaning from the book of Revelation, describe what you think the throne room of heaven looks like and sounds like. How could we change their architecture, color and worship to provide a better taste of heaven?
- What does it mean to say the Bible is a beginning, middle, beginning book? What is different between the first and second beginning?

- Why do you think Jesus begins everything with a meal and a party called, *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb*? Luke 14:12-24 and Matthew 22:1-14 also talk about this feast. What additional insights do they give us about it? Luke 22:14-23 (especially 22:16) talks about the last time Jesus ate this meal. What does this tell us about the meal featured in Revelation 19?
- Do you think Zephaniah 3:16-17 and Jesus singing over us will be fulfilled at *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb*?

Part 3 - Digg deeper ...*get the rest of the story.*

The kingdom of God - already but not yet

The kingdom is both a journey and a destination, both a rescue operation in this broken world and a perfect outcome in the new earth to come. It is already started but not finished. This is important to understand.

When the *already-ness* of the kingdom is overly stressed, the result is an over-realized eschatology. The presence and power of sin are not fully accounted for and there is the naive belief we should always have health and wealth. Jesus should always make life better, get us out of debt and provide the American dream. It results in a “Come to Christ and your problems will be solved” presentation of Jesus. This is the approach of Joel Olstein and many other televangelists. It draws a crowd, and like every good lie, has an element of truth to it. It is just over extended beyond what we can expect in this life.

Conversely, when the *not-yet-ness* of the kingdom is overly stressed, the result is an under realized eschatology that results in a strictly cerebral faith which doesn’t intersect with real life. Rather than expecting God to interact personally in our lives and providing for us either providentially or supernaturally, we put God in our little Sunday box and live life just like our neighbors, not expecting God to show up in miraculous ways. Sin appears to be just as powerful as Christ and we have little hope for overcoming sinful patterns of behavior. Evangelism is without enthusiasm because we don’t anticipate God working supernaturally in a heart to bring spiritual understanding. A feeling of helpless fatalism sets in. The Bible is seen as a nice collection of miraculous stories but there is no expectation for God to work in our lives today.

Which of these two extremes do you find yourself leaning towards? The kingdom is *already-here* or the kingdom is *not-yet-here*? What does a healthy view look like?

Jesus’ kingdom is not a new teaching but just a continuation of the themes of the Old Testament.

- Jesus’s message is not that he was a good man to follow. His ethics and life are something we can not imitate apart from the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit living within us.
- Jesus’ message is much more than how to go to heaven when we die.
- Jesus’s kingdom message is much more than how we can have a personal relationship with God.

The rule of Jesus' kingdom is much more than just in our hearts. It is intended to be over *all* creation. Jesus' kingdom will extend over every physical and spiritual aspect of creation. Jesus will rule, even in Hell, where Satan will be tormented by Him.

The real enemy Jesus conquered was not political, or physical but Satan and the spiritual forces of darkness behind all evil and destruction in the world. Jesus' mission is to create a new redeemed people which he did it by purchasing them with His blood.

When Will Jesus Return

"But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. Mark 13:32–33 (ESV)

Nobody knows the day or the hour of Christ's return. As a result, we must live expectantly and ready for Christ to return at any moment. Many people wait till later in life to deal with spiritual issues. They want to have fun while they are young. The Bible warns about the danger of putting off spiritual issues or issues of repentance.

Hallelujah - It is the translation of two Hebrew words that together mean "Praise the Lord." "Hallelujah" does not appear anywhere in the NT except in Revelation 19:1–6. There it is a chant of the saints in heaven. It was taken over into the liturgy and hymnody of the church at an early date. It became the characteristic expression of joy and was therefore sung especially at Easter, as is witnessed by Augustine.