



Sermon Growth Guide

June 6, 2021

Future Jesus – Jesus Isn’t Finished

Revelation 1:4-8

Key Verse: Revelation 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Big Idea: Knowing that future Jesus is alive and victorious changes how I live today.

Foundations

Are there any sports fans in your Life Group? Pastor Tim invites us to imagine that we’re a famous athlete. If we knew we were going to win, would that knowledge change the way we play the game? You bet! We would have the utmost confidence throughout each circumstance, even if things felt momentarily defeating.

Today is week one of our new series, **Future Jesus**. Tim writes, “We don’t know what the future holds, but we know Jesus is there, and that gives us peace today.” Knowing that future Jesus is alive and victorious changes how we live each and every day.

For five weeks we will look into some of the most cherished images from the book of Revelation. These images offer hope and salvation in the midst of suffering within a shaking world. We see future Jesus, exalted and victorious. We live our each and every today in faithful response to Jesus’ forever reign.

As we enter these five weeks in Revelation, pray for one another. Pray that God will guide and guard you through these passages. Begin your time together in prayer, rejoicing together that Jesus is not just past or present, but also that King Jesus reigns forever in complete sovereignty. Ask God’s Spirit to guide and guard your time together, to grow you even more into the likeness of Christ.

Understanding God’s Word

How is Jesus described in verse five?

What purpose does God have for His people according to verse six?

According to verse seven, who exactly will see Jesus when He returns?

Applying God’s Word

Knowing that future Jesus is alive and victorious changes how I live today. We know who is in charge and who will reign forever and that does not lead to sloth, but to excitement and energy. Paul writes in Philippians 3:13-14, “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

How might your daily actions better reflect your understanding that Jesus is Lord eternal? What things become more important? What things become less important?

Witnessing God’s Word

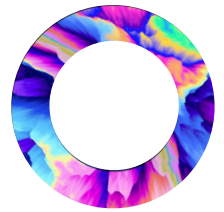
Identify one person you are likely to see this week who does not yet know that future Jesus is Lord of All. Ask God for an open door to connect with this person, that one day soon this person will receive the love of Christ.

Knowing the ending changes the story. If you know how it ends, that changes how you read the book, watch the movie, listen to the story. Doesn't it? If I had known we would be here in June, that would have changed the whole way I played this last year! It's like when you record a game on your DVR, but you accidentally catch the final score before you start watching. Don't you hate that? It changes it all. But we can't always know the future. Have you ever been to a baseball game this afternoon? That doesn't make sense does it? You'd have to know the future to ask that question. Jesus holds time, past, present, future. Only Jesus knows your whole story, beginning to end. Jesus looks at you, He knows your whole story. Jesus looks at your kids, at your spouse, at your parents, and knows their whole story beginning to end. When you follow Jesus, you follow someone who knows the whole story all the way to the end. When you take counsel from Jesus you hear from someone who knows how it ends. So, I ask Jesus, tell me the future. Do you know what Jesus does? He doesn't tell me. But He does say this: "I am not finished. I won't tell you the future, but I'll tell you this, I am there." "And, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Future Jesus. That's what we are talking about. The last book of the Bible is called Revelation. It's a letter written by John, the same John who was Jesus' disciple and beloved friend, the same John Jesus matched up with His mother Mary from the cross saying, "behold your son; John behold your mother," the same John who wrote the Gospel of John and the letters, this John was exiled on

the Greek isle Patmos when the Holy Spirit rushed over him and he had an intense spiritual vision of the end times. He wrote it all down in a letter we call Revelation. In that revelation, we get pictures of Jesus, Future Jesus. When you go through a year like we've just been through, you can feel a little disoriented and confused. But in all the dizziness and fog of a post-pandemic moment, we can see the future Jesus out in front of us. We don't know what the future holds, but we know Jesus is there, and that gives us peace today. God's future breaks into our present when we see and know the Future Jesus. That's what we are going to do.

How do you know Jesus? If you do know Jesus, you know Jesus from the Gospels. At some point, you read Matthew, Mark, Luke or John and you got to see who Jesus is. That's Past Jesus. You can see all these events recorded that Jesus did while He was here on earth in the flesh in the past. But as you read those accounts, something strange happens. When you read the biography of any other figure in history, you feel a certain closeness to them, you start to understand them or even relate to them, but with Jesus it is more than that. It starts to feel like Jesus is speaking to you right now. Today. That's because He is. Jesus isn't finished. Jesus isn't just a figure in past history. Jesus died, yes, but then Jesus rose from the dead and the ministry continued. Now this same Jesus, through His Holy Spirit, is present to each and every one of us speaking with us personally, intimately, in our hearts, in our minds, in our spirits. This isn't a figment of your imagination. A relationship with Jesus is possible. That's Today Jesus.



What about Future Jesus? Can you know Future Jesus?

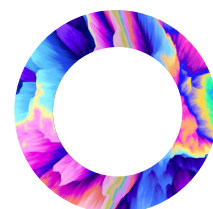
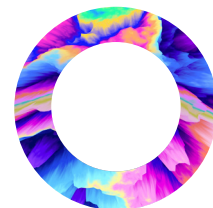
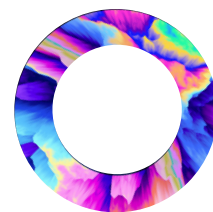
“John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen” (Revelation 1:4-6). Never preach on Revelation, they say. Just don’t do it. It’s too confusing and your people will walk away with nothing out of it! Pastor Michael was talking to one of our Adult Christian Ed teachers who said, “Michael, after this year I will have taught every book of the New Testament verse by verse with my class, except Revelation.” “Oh, well you know what you’re doing next year then!” He looked at him and said, “No. I’m not doing that.” It is challenging. But let’s unpack what we can.

John had this spiritual epiphany, and he was told to write it down and send it to a system of churches in Asia Minor (now Turkey). These are real churches, real places, real people who got this letter and read it, and received it—a message from the Lord. “Grace and Peace to you.” That’s the Christian epistolary greeting. It matches all Paul’s letters. Only this greeting is coming from God. The next few lines are trinitarian. The message is coming from God, one God, the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So first, God the Father,

“from him who is, and who was, and who is to come.” That phrase “him who is” is the exact Greek phrase for the Hebrew “I AM” we talked about last week. That’s the Father.

Next is the Holy Spirit, “and from the seven spirits before his throne.” Let me explain. The one Spirit, the Holy Spirit, is prepared to be present to the seven churches personally. In a minute you will get a quote from Zechariah. So this prophet is in mind here, and Zechariah had a picture of a lampstand with seven ports, seven wicks, seven places where the oil flows and gets lit and makes light. “He asked me, ‘What do you see?’ I answered, ‘I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps’” (Zechariah 4:2). Seven lights, one lamp. That’s what Zechariah saw, and the Lord asked him, “Do you understand what you see?” Get it? No, said Zechariah. So God clarified, “‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty” (Zechariah 4:6). It’s a picture of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is able to be present, fully present in full power, to each of the seven churches and still be the one Holy Spirit. That’s true for you and me too.

Okay, finally, “and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen” (Revelation 1:5-6). And from Jesus Christ. No decoder ring needed there. Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus?



The faithful witness; so faithful He bore witness to the truth even when it killed Him. So faithful to put God's plan of salvation on display, to bring about salvation, He was faithful to it all the way to the cross. But He didn't stay dead, because Jesus is "the firstborn from the dead." He's the first to rise from the dead, and all who believe in Him follow in His path. So, let's glorify Him! To Him be glory and power for ever and ever! He is now, Future Jesus.

And He is coming back. As our Apostles' Creed says, "and he will come to judge the living and the dead." Jesus is coming back. "'Look, he is coming with the clouds,' [Daniel 7:13] and 'every eye will see him, even those who pierced him' [Zechariah 12:10]; and all peoples on earth 'will mourn because of him.' So shall it be! Amen" (Revelation 1:7). Then we get this in verse 8: "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty'" (Revelation 1:8). Who is saying that? Who is speaking now? It's Jesus. Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega. Those are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It's like saying, I am the A to Z, the first and the last. I am the beginning and I am the end. Jesus says this. Look at this picture of Future Jesus we get a few lines later: "I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like

the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: 'Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades'" (Revelation 1:12-18). That's our Future Jesus.

Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega. Jesus is the one who is, who was, who is to come—just like we said about the Father before, now we say it about Jesus. Jesus isn't finished. And when you know the Future Jesus, it helps you know the Present Jesus and the Past Jesus, because it is all the same Jesus. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). We know one another right now only in the present. We only know Present Tim. Some of you know a little Past Tim. But none of us knows Future Tim! Not even me. And I'm Tim! We know one another right now only. Jesus knows you past, Jesus knows you present, Jesus knows you future. He holds your whole life, Alpha and Omega, holds your whole life like handles of a great oven crock. He holds you, beginning to end. He knows you through and through. And God has given us a gift. We can know Jesus. We can see Future Jesus and that changes us today. God's future breaks into our present, and that gives us hope. Unexplainable, irrational, other-worldly hope. Why? Because we already see **Future Jesus** and we know He wins. Knowing the ending changes the whole story.

