

**The Story Continues – March 2 & 3, 2019**  
**Follow-up Bible Studies**

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**Day One: Matthew 12:1-14**

- Set the scene of this text (1). How did the Pharisees react to the sight (2)? Why do you think this preoccupied them? What stories did Jesus tell in order to justify his disciples' behavior (3-5)?
- What did Jesus claim is in their midst (6)? What, or who, is greater than the Temple? What lack of understanding did Jesus then point out (7)? Who is "Lord of the Sabbath" (8)? How do you think it must've felt for two things of utmost importance – the Temple and the Sabbath – to be seemingly downgraded by Jesus?
- Where did Jesus go next (9)? What opportunity did the Pharisees see in this moment (10)? How did Jesus justify his stance this time (11-12)? How did he act on this conviction (13)? Describe the Pharisees' growing animosity toward Jesus (14).
- The Pharisees made sense of life via the story of religious rules and purity, not unlike today's story of politics. What bigger and better story does Jesus offer? What impact is it making on you?

**Day Two: John 1:1-5**

- In the beginning, who existed (1)? Alongside whom (1-2)? Describe the fullness of his identity (1). Jesus is described in many ways, both within and outside the pages of the Bible; what do you make of this description of him? Note how the language mirrors Genesis 1:1. Why do you think John chose this approach?
- How does John describe Jesus as the origin of all creation (3)? What about his status as the source of all life (4-5)? Both personally and globally, where do you see evidence of Jesus-style life being "the light of all mankind"? In what ways does it shine in darkness? How is it not overcome by darkness?
- John begins his gospel treating the story of Jesus as *the* big story that envelopes all others. Jesus is the hero, the one who will resolve conflict. What is this hero currently up to in your life? What healing and restoration is he bringing to you and through you?

**Day Three: Acts 17:16-34**

- Where was Paul, and what distressed him (16)? In today's world, what distresses you? Hold these concerns – especially their accompanying emotions – close as you engage this text.
- In his distress, what did Paul do (17)? How did the philosophers react to this (18-20)? What was public discourse in Athens like (21)? Where can similar arenas be found today? And what role do you play there? Are you part of God's supporting cast, pointing to the hero and the big story? As you reflect, ask the Lord to speak.
- Summarize the "latest ideas" Paul shared at the gathering (22-31). In what ways is Paul's message like storytelling? How does he affirm the audience and invite them into the story? Which part of this "story" speaks most deeply to your heart? Why?
- Describe the various responses to Paul's message (32-34). When engaging others as Paul did, what do you want to represent about God? How do you want people to respond? Pray it comes to pass.

**Day Four: Revelation 21:1-5**

- Prophesied about in Isaiah, what did John see (1)? What comes to mind when you read that "the first heaven and the first earth had passed away"? Describe the Holy City (2). A

holy city, a bride, a groom: these are interesting ways to picture the ultimate resolution to conflicts long plaguing the world. What is your response to this imagery? Speak to the Lord.

- What did the voice say about God among his people (3-4)? All tears wiped away, no grief or pain – the old order will be no more. What will this mean for you? What tastes do you have of it today? How can you invite others into this “first course” experience?
- What did “he who was seated on the throne” say (5)? Take heart: regardless of anything that’s happened to you or your loved ones, Jesus makes all things new! May abundant grace and faith allow you to embrace your role in this greatest of all stories.

#### **Day Five: Revelation 22:12-17**

- In these final words of the New Testament, what does Jesus say to us (12)? Three times in chapter 22 he says, “I am coming soon.” What does that message mean for you today? What will Jesus give to each person (12)?
- What does Jesus say about himself (13, 16)? In light of who he is, abiding by stories such as hyper-individualism, consumerism, politics, etc. is foolishness. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart about the better story: Jesus’ ever-present, all-knowing, author-and-perfecter nature. How do you want to respond?
- Who is blessed (14)? What are their rights (14)? What will God’s judgment look like (15)? Sit with this – one of many graphic and grim pictures John paints in *Revelation* – for a moment. Then heed the Holy Spirit’s words in verse 17. Come into Jesus’ kingdom, drink the water of life, etc. Pray that by entering into God’s story you’d be forever satisfied.