

**The True Story of the Whole World, pp 165 -171**

**“Return of the King”**

**Revelation 21:1-8; 22:1-17**

| Promised Land   | Exile and Return        | Jesus of Nazareth          | The early church      |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Joshua          | Samaria falls           | Birth                      | The Great Commission  |
| Judges          | Judah falls             | The Kingdom of God         | The Holy Spirit       |
| Kings           | Exile in Babylon        | Suffering and crucifixion  | The church together   |
| Saul            | Return to Judah         | Resurrection and ascension | The church scattered  |
| David           | Intertestamental period |                            | Inclusion of Gentiles |
| Solomon         |                         |                            | “Into all the world”  |
| Divided Kingdom |                         |                            |                       |

***In a nutshell...***

*God’s “restoration project” was always intended that what was created good, should be utterly restored. In the last chapters of Revelation we see God’s final purpose unveiled, a vision of a ‘new heaven and a new earth entirely cleansed of sin and evil. God’s kingdom has come and his will is forevermore to be accomplished on earth. Here is the stunning goal and destiny of the biblical story, the true story of the whole world: a renewed creation --- healed, redeemed, and restored.*

*Though this vision of the new creation climaxes the last book of the Bible, most of Revelation is not concerned with the future, but rather gives us a glimpse into God’s purposes throughout history and in our town time. In this final book, the curtains of God’s heavenly throne room have been pulled back and we are allowed to see the spiritual battle that has been shaping our world’s history all along, a battle we could not see from our own earthbound and historically limited point of view.*

(A note from Pastor Schrag)

*A viewpoint of many Christians is that Revelation contains a code language predicting ‘the end of the world’, involving a well-armed Israel and its friends fighting a bloody and cataclysmic “Battle of Armageddon”. This was especially popularized some years ago in the “Left Behind” book series.*

*I respectfully disagree with this interpretation of Revelation, and in particular the way it has promoted fear and has imagined Christians embracing violence.*

*I would willingly engage in dialogue any who wish to visit about this topic. It is not necessary to break fellowship with those whose opinions differ from mine on this topic.*

**Summary points of “Return of the King”**

1. Much of the book of Revelation is commentary on the Roman Empire, the ‘beast’ persecuting the church in John’s time.
2. God’s goal is peace and harmony between the Creator and the creation.
3. The time is coming when God will be as close to us as when Adam and Eve walked the garden.
4. There is a vast spiritual war between Satan and God, and the message to the frightened people of John’s time is that God will triumph.
5. Revelation does not give a picture of people transported out of this world. Instead, John shows the restoration of God’s creation: a new earth.
6. The climax of history occurs when the ‘new Jerusalem’ comes down out of heaven from God.
7. Jesus followers have already begun to enjoy a foretaste of this eternal kingdom.

**To ponder....**

1. How has how we live shaped by our expectation (hope) for the future? Give examples positive, and negative.
2. What appear to be the goals of the great empires of today? Beyond the rhetoric, what is the evidence?
3. To what extent do you see yourself as living in eternity right now? Or is 'eternity' something to be experienced elsewhere and only in a future time?
4. What part of the book of Revelation most affects the way you live your life?
5. What were you taught about 'the second coming' as a child? Has your view of this changed or remained the same? Why?