

# The Story 2026

## *The End Times*

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

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Well, we've reached the end of a series that we have been going through now for seven weeks. And I'm kind of sad today is the last day. It's been enjoyable for me to prepare this series as we have been taking you through the story of Scripture. We set out knowing that this was going to be a difficult task to try to summarize Scripture in seven weeks and to give an overview. But we felt it was important for us as a church to be able to help you share the story of Scripture in a unique and a succinct way.

I'm intentionally not going to have a long introduction today because we need to wrap up and I have a lot to finish. And at the end of today's message, I would like to give you a specific example of what it would look like to summarize scripture with somebody in less than five minutes. And I am going to purposefully do this without notes, kind of on the spot, just like a situation that you would find yourself in. Now, obviously, I've spent this last week thinking about it, and you could say to yourself, well, that's not fair pastor. Of course, you've spent time thinking about it.

Well, let me just tell you something. You have time too. You can do the same thing. How would you summarize Scripture in five minutes? Now, let me give you a very, very quick recap, and then we are going to jump into today's topic, which is The Last Days, talking about the end times, all right? The first week, we talked about creation. We were introduced to God, who is the main character in the story. He created everything that you see from nothing. He created you and I to have a relationship with us.

In week two, we talked about the fall. Adam and Eve did not trust God. They eat from the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. They believed the lie of the enemy that God cannot be trusted, and that sin broke our relationship with God. It broke our relationship with others, and it affected all of creation. God decides to choose a people for Himself. He chooses Abraham and Sarah and their descendants, and He is going to reveal Himself to the world through this people group. We know throughout Scripture, as we look through the whole Old Testament, that they failed miserably in being able to do that.

And so God knew that He was going to have to step into creation, into time, as Jesus, the Messiah, die on the cross for our sins, and make a way to God possible again. After Jesus' death and resurrection upon which we place our hope, we entered into the age of the church that we talked about last week, where God would raise us up, and now God is going to choose to reveal Himself to the world through the church. And then, after the age of the church, we get into the last days, and that's what we're going to talk about today.

So that was like a one-minute summary. I'll do a little longer one later. Let's just open in prayer, and then we're going to begin talking about the last days. Heavenly Father, we come before You. We thank You for the story of Your Word so that it allows us to view this world with a biblical perspective, a true perspective. And so, Father, would we allow that to transform us and to change us and to give us proper perspective in how we should live our lives, especially in the last days?

We ask this in Jesus' name, amen. Now, before we even begin, I need to preface the rest of this message with a few things. Every time a pastor talks about the end times, people get excited. Because we all want to know what is going to happen, how is it going to happen, and of course, when is it going to happen? So if you want to sell a lot of books and make a lot of money, just write a book about the last days with confidence.

Make sure that in that book, you include specific dates, specific times, and some very audacious claims, and you will become popular for a little bit, of course, until that time comes and goes, and you're wrong. If you want specifics on the last days, you came to the wrong church this morning. I apologize to tell you that I am not going to give you any specific dates because Scripture is very clear.

Jesus in Matthew chapter 24:36 says, "But about that day or hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, not Joel." Sorry, it doesn't say that. Nor the Son, but only the Father. I don't know the times or dates. Nobody does. Therefore, based on just this one verse, if anyone, anybody, gives you specific dates or times that something is going to happen, run, okay?

If anybody tries to give you specific dates or times, run. Over the years of being a pastor, there have been many well-intended people that have given me books, genuine people, that they want me to read about the topic of prophecy and the last days. I oblige and I will usually read those books. And many of these books that have been given to me have authors who have given exact dates and timelines as to how things are going to happen in the end.

Every single one of those books that I have read with those specific dates and timelines have come and passed, and the author was wrong. I am not going to sugarcoat this morning what I believe our response should be when that happens. From Scripture's perspective, that author who made predictions that proved to be wrong is now a false prophet and shouldn't be trusted going forward. You guys hear what I said, right? Didn't sugarcoat it?

Which means they have lost their voice to speak any truth into my life, meaning which this happens all the time. These authors will write these books about the end times. They give specific dates. It doesn't happen. And wouldn't you know it? They come out with a follow-up book that says why they got it wrong and now why they know it's right. Can I just tell you, I will read the first book. I will not read the second book, all right? There's no point. They already got it wrong. They have lost their voice to speak truth into my life.

So instead of trying to determine the exact timing of Jesus' return, Scripture is very clear that as followers of Jesus, we are to keep watch and be ready. That's the command we are given. From the same chapter, Matthew 24, verses 42 through 44, Jesus says, "Therefore, keep watch because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." But understand this.

If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. With that said, believers will not be completely caught off guard like those that are living in darkness.

The apostle Paul, in writing to the church, believers in Thessalonica, chapter 5 verses 1 through 5 says this, "Now brothers and sisters, writing to the church, about times and dates we do not need to write to you. For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." He's quoting Jesus. While people are saying, "Peace and safety, destruction will come on them suddenly just as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, so that this day should surprise you like a thief just out of nowhere. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness." And again, we are given signs of the end by the apostle Paul as he writes to his young man,

Timothy, 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 1 through 5. He says to us and to Timothy, but mark this. There will be terrible times in the last days.

That's pretty promising, right? Great verse. But it's true. There will be terrible times. Now he's going to describe those for us. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good.

They will be treacherous and rash and conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, and having a form of godliness, but denying its power, have nothing to do with such people. Does that define anybody you know in the world? It defines a lot of people that I know in the world. These signs are already happening. They're already taking place as we see the corruption of the human heart, of the human mind without God. It describes exactly what Paul is saying.

So all of this together means as believers, we should remain ready and prepared for the Lord's return because we will see the signs, but we will never know the exact moment. We follow that? Be ready. Keep watch. That's the command. But we will never know the exact moment. So don't try to figure it out. Don't try to come up with the exact date. One thing is for certain that you and I can know. Jesus is going to return and bring us home.

That's the hope upon which we place our faith. Now let me answer the question publicly. I probably get asked most privately, "Pastor, do you believe we are living in the end times?" Then they go on to say, "What are the signs? How will we know? What is going to happen?" I will just simply answer the question, yes. I believe we are living in the end times, but I usually will follow that up by saying, "I believe the end times started 2,000 years ago when Jesus was born." They go, "Well, that's great. Thanks, Pastor.

That's not really what I meant." Well, that's the answer. Yes, we're living in end times, but it's been going on for 2,000 years. Now, you may be surprised as to where we are going to turn to in Scripture to best answer these questions. When, how, what is it going to look like? If you have your Bibles, I encourage you to open up to Leviticus chapter 23. This is where we're going to look to try to determine some of these signs of what is going to happen. Leviticus chapter 23, I definitely don't have time to go verse by verse in Leviticus 23.

So we're really just going to read one verse that's going to set the stage. But hopefully after today's message, you will be excited enough about what we're talking about that you will go this afternoon and read all of Leviticus 23. That's my desire for you, that you would go and read Leviticus 23. It's not often that I ask you to read Leviticus, okay? But I am asking you. This is what happens in Leviticus 23.

God establishes a calendar, a yearly calendar, for the Jewish people that intentionally places dates in that calendar for the Jewish people to remember and to celebrate God's goodness and His blessings in the past because we all have the fault of easily forgetting what God has done for us. And so God says, I want you to remember, as a people, everything that I have done for you, as well as my continued provision for you.

But these feasts, as we will find out today, don't just determine and remember past events. It also helps us and help the Jews to see future events. Now, as a side note, two things you need to know about the Jewish calendar. The Jews used what was known as a lunar calendar, not a solar calendar. So the months that you will read in Scripture, they do align with our months in some ways, but it's just going to look a little different. Hopefully, from the things I put on the screen, you will see where their months line up with our months.

You can kind of see it here. And the second thing that you need to know that can be a little confusing is for the Jewish people, their day begins at sundown and ends at sundown, not at 12:00 AM. So we go our days by the clock, 12:00 AM. For them, it's sundown. This is very confusing when you go to Israel. I've had the privilege to go twice to Israel now, and they do have the Sabbath still that they remember. And their Sabbath, yes, it is on Saturday, but their Saturday begins at sundown on Friday, okay?

So you will see all the Jewish people running around getting to their homes because they can't be out during the Sabbath. And so from Friday night sundown till Saturday night sundown is their day or their Sabbath. So just remember that when we talk about some of these days that we are going to talk about. One last thing before we jump into Leviticus. I don't often do this, but I do feel like it's important in this specific case. The Hebrew word that is used for festivals in Leviticus 23 is Moed. In plural, it's Moedim.

And yes, this can be interpreted feasts or celebrations, but it also is interpreted in Scripture as seasons, appointed times, or set times. Just remember that as we continue to talk about these feasts or appointed times, all right? We're going to talk about the feasts in the calendar of the Jewish people. There were seven feasts in Leviticus 23 that the people were supposed to remember and celebrate. Four in the spring and three in the fall.

Let's look at Leviticus 23:4. These are the Lord's appointed festivals, Moedim, the sacred assemblies that you are to proclaim at their appointed times. So we're going to work through all seven of these feasts, and I'm going to give them on the screen behind you. It might be a little difficult to track at first, but I promise you it will get very exciting at the end. So here we are. We're going to put them all up here. The Jewish feasts on the calendar. You see that their months are listed first, and then you'll see where our months coincide with their months.

So let's start with the first feast that the Jews were supposed to celebrate as part of their calendar and command that God had given to them. And by the way, Jews still celebrate all of these festivals. The first one is Passover, which we do talk about quite often. You've heard me talk about the Passover Festival. This is actually the first month of Nissan. It's the 14th day. And this feast, many of us do know this, remembers the final plague of Egypt when the angel of death passed over the children of Israel who applied the blood of the lamb to their doorpost.

But every firstborn in the Egyptians home is killed. And so this was a day to remember the Lord passing over their homes and providing them freedom from Egypt. The second feast happens the very next day. So this is something that is easy to miss because we're not looking at a calendar that we have. The very next day begins the second feast in their calendar, and it's known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the reason why it's the very next day, the 15th day of the first month of Nissan, is because this is to remember the haste with which the Israelites had to leave Egypt.

And so this is known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because the Israelites didn't have time to put yeast in their bread. And so they took their unleavened bread. As they were walking out of Egypt, they had to eat unleavened bread. And so during this feast, they are remembering that, that there was no time to add leaven. They remember the hardship that they endured in Egypt and how God freed them from captivity. This feast lasts seven days. So Passovers one day, the very next day, now we're going to begin the seven-day feast, the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

And during that feast, the very next day, the third day, so we have three feasts back to back to back. We now have the Feast of First Fruits. This takes place on the 16th day of that first month, the month of Nissan. And this feast was to celebrate the harvest that God had provided for the people. And so during this day, they would bring in the early crops from their spring planting, and they would thank God for the fertility of the land.

And so this would also be known as the third day celebration following Passover because, of course, it was three days after Passover. Just remember that. Some of you, your minds are clicking now. That's good, okay? So you have Passover, unleavened bread, and then the Feast of First Fruits, all happening consecutively, day after day after day. And then we get to the final feast during the spring. And this is the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Pentecost, called Pentecost because this happens 50 days after the Feast of First Fruits.

And so 50 Penta, that's why it's called the Day of Pentecost. So this would take place on the sixth day of Sivan. This is late May, early June in our calendars. Exactly 50 days after first fruits. And this feast was to celebrate the bringing in of the first harvest of grain, specifically the first harvest of grain. And during this feast, the feast of weeks, unlike any other feast that the Israelites would have, during the celebration, they would bring two loaves before the people.

One loave was unleavened bread without yeast, and one was leavened bread. It's the only feast that the Jews will eat leavened bread at. This is the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Pentecost. They would bring these two loaves because they were bringing in the grain. And so they were celebrating that harvest. Also, during this time, they celebrate the beginning of their nation, Israel, because they believed that it was 50 days after Israel left Egypt that Moses went up on Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments.

And once they received the law, they believed that was the beginning of them as a nation. So think of the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Pentecost as their July 4th for us Americans. Celebrating their birth as a nation, celebrating this grain harvest that they are bringing in and so they can eat this bread that has yeast in it as well. Those are the spring feasts. Now we get to the fall feasts, and there are three. First of the fall feasts is the Feast of Trumpets.

This takes place on the first day of Tishri, which is in September. It is the first fall festival. And they would literally blow trumpets so that the workers in the field that were collecting a harvest could come in from the harvest fields into the temple of God to worship. This was 10 days specifically before the next feast that is going to happen. And you all may be familiar with this one. It is the Day of Atonement, and it's the one that most people still remember its Hebrew name, even if you're not Jewish, and that is Yom Kippur.

Yeah? You guys have heard of Yom Kippur? This is the Day of Atonement, 10 days after the Feast of Trumpets. This was an opportunity to make atonement, to make restitution for wrongs that were committed. This is the one time a year that the high priest could enter into the holy of holies of the temple and offer a sacrifice for the people in order to cover their sins. And so you had the Feast of Trumpets 10 days earlier so that during that 10 days, the Israelites could come in from the fields and they could reminisce and remember and get their minds right for the Day of Atonement.

Specifically, intentionally, come in from the fields. Focus on our God. Spend some time preparing for the Day of Atonement. Make your hearts and minds right. And then we get to the last feast. And now things are going to get exciting after this, okay? This is called the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths. This was the 15th day of Tissue to the 22nd day. This is another seven-day festival, and it was the final festival of the year. This feast celebrated the fact that God provided shelter for the Israelites while they were in the desert for 40 years.

And so during these seven days, even today in Israel, you'll see Jews that will do this. They would create a booth or a shelter out of sticks and natural resources. And during this festival, they actually will live outside in those shelters so that they will remember the shelters that God provided for them when they were in the desert. Also during this feast, feast of booths, feast of shelters, they are celebrating God's presence with them in the wilderness.

They are celebrating the fact that there was a tabernacle and that God dwelt with them during this seven-day feast. Now, I know that some of you have probably already in your head picked up on some very interesting thoughts or ideas, but let me catch everyone else up. These feasts that the Jews were celebrating and remembering events from the past were not just to celebrate what had happened in the past. They also predicted a future fulfillment. This is where things will hopefully get exciting for you guys.

Let me share with you when Jesus came the first time 2,000 years ago, He fulfilled all four of the spring feasts. Let me show you how he fulfilled these. And please know I'm not making this up because we're going to look at some scripture. The Jews did not miss this at all. They picked up on this. Passover, the very first feast.

John the Baptist, when he saw Jesus coming to be baptized, said, "Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Making a very clear reference to that Passover lamb, that just as the blood of the lamb that was put over the doorpost of the house saved the Israelites from death in Egypt. So now the blood of Jesus that is put over our house, our bodies, saves us from sin and death.

Jesus' death, His blood that was shed, allows the judgment we deserve to pass over us so that we can be righteous before God. It is no coincidence that Jesus was killed on Passover. The day before Passover, again, remember the hours, how that works? Killed at that time. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5:7, "For Christ, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed." Very, very clear. That's exactly how they understood Jesus.

He was this sacrificial lamb. He fulfilled that feast that they were remembering. Feast number two, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Leaven in Scripture often is a picture of sin. This idea of yeast is a picture of sin. Why? Because once that yeast is a perfect word picture, once that yeast was incorporated into the bread, it became inseparable. Now, I don't cook bread. I don't cook really anything. But I do know that if you put yeast into bread, you can't just pick it back out.

Once it's woven into the dough, it is going to stay there. And the same is true of our sin and the sin's effect on our life. You can't just pick it out. And so this feast of unleavened bread, Jesus fulfilled this by living a sinless life, unleavened, no sin in his life, making the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus' body was in the grave during the first day of this feast. Remember, Passover? He was killed.

Then during this feast, as he is fulfilling these, he was in the grave during this first day, like a kernel of wheat that was planted and waiting to burst forth as the bread of life. Think about that. Jesus was planted during that feast of unleavened bread, ready to burst forth into life. This bread of life, Jesus said in John chapter 6:35, "I am the Bread of life." And then, so remember, we're following these days.

Passover, day one, day two, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Day three is the Feast of First Fruits. Guess on which day Jesus was resurrected, the day of first fruits. And what did we say that day was called? The third day. Do you remember that? The Third Day Festival. Jesus resurrected on the third day. Paul refers to Jesus as the first fruits of the dead. Jesus represents the first of the great harvest of souls that is going to take place.

Have you ever thought about that before? He fulfilled this prophecy. Yes, there is this first fruits that they would collect as they would harvest their fields. And Jesus was this harvest of the first fruits that were going to be resurrected and live eternally. He was the first of many that were going to be raised back to life. And again, it happened on that day in the Jewish calendars. They could not miss this. And so Paul says, "Jesus is the first fruits of the dead." Now we have the fourth spring feast, the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Pentecost.

Remember, this was an opportunity for Israel to celebrate their day as a nation when God would give them the law. It was 50 days after the day of first fruits. And so we get to the New Testament. The disciples during this feast are in Jerusalem. And while they are hiding in the upper room, they receive the Holy Spirit and they preach the good news of Jesus Christ. And during that day, what did we talk about last week? At the end of Peter's sermon, 3,000 believers gave their life to Christ. And what did I say that began?

The age of the what? The church. Do you find it interesting that they're celebrating their beginning as a nation and on that same day Jesus fulfills by giving them the Holy Spirit that now we have the birth of the church? It's amazing how God fulfilled that on that exact day. And what did I say during that feast? Do you guys remember? They had two loaves and one of them had yeast in it because the church is not just for the

unleavened bread, the Jewish people, but the church is also for us, the Gentiles as well. Isn't this amazing? The symbolism that is there?

Isn't that beautiful? I mean, it's crazy how all of this works itself out. And so the church would be made up of leavened bread, the Gentiles, and the unleavened bread, the Jews, because God is the one who makes us pure. And so if those were the four feasts that have been fulfilled, there's three others that haven't, where does that put us? That puts us right in the middle, doesn't it? We are now living in what would be the summertime, awaiting the fulfillment of the fall feast. Now, let me share with you two observations. I want you to notice this calendar that God has set up, that when events start to take place, they happen quickly.

In the spring feast, you have three following day after day after day. Then there's a 50-day break, and then there's another one. And then we enter this time of summer. There's a break between the two clumped feasts. And right now, we are in that break, the church age, the summer harvest. That's where you and I sit. And then all of these fall feasts are going to take place, and they happen very, very soon, close to each other, which leads me to believe that when Jesus returns, things are going to happen fast.

They happen fast the first time because these feasts were right next to each other. I believe they're going to happen fast again when Jesus returns. I don't know exactly when that's going to start, but I do believe it's going to happen. And so here are the final three feasts that are awaiting their future fulfillment in Jesus. And so many believers, I would say I'm included in that, believe that these three feasts will be fulfilled in Jesus' second coming. So we have the first one, the Feast of Trumpets. Remember, they would blow the trumpets. The people would come in to prepare their hearts.

Many believers see this as the rapture. When Jesus is going to return, the trumpets are going to be called and people are going to come in from the fields to the temple. Many people believe that at this point, the church will be taken out of the world. Those that have professed Jesus as their Savior will be taken out of the world. Now, there's lots of ideas as to how this is going to happen, when it's going to happen, and what it's going to happen. You have pre-millennials, you have mid-millennials, you have post-millennials, you have, you know, pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib. And I always joke with you and say, "I'm a pan millennialist.

I'm a pan trib." And that means I believe it's all going to pan out. I don't have any idea what the timeline is going to look like, but it's all going to happen. We have the Feast of Trumpets. The second feast that's a part of the fall is the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. Many believers see this as Jesus' second coming when He will return to the earth and it will be a day of atonement for the Jewish remnants to repent of their sins and return to Jesus. This actually is very helpful for those that struggle with wanting to know these prophecies about Israel in the Old Testament.

Are they going to be fulfilled in the New Testament by the literal nation of Israel, or are they going to be fulfilled by the church? If you hold to this, you would say it's both and because, yes, the church is going to be called up during that festival of trumpets, but at the Day of Atonement, Jesus' Second Coming, He is going to be here and He is going to provide an opportunity at that time for the Jewish people, truly the nation of Israel, to repent of their sins and put their trust in Jesus. That would be the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies.

And it makes sense logically because if the church is taken away, that means the Spirit is taken away. The earth is going to fall apart. These things would happen quickly. Jesus is going to come back and it's going to be an opportunity for the Jews. Notice I did not tell you that the Jews magically just all make it to heaven. You guys did notice that, right? The Jews' way of salvation is the same way as our way of salvation. It's through the blood of Jesus Christ. There's going to have to be a confession that takes place for those Jewish people. But the church doesn't owe atonement, this Yom Kippur, because the blood of Jesus already has covered us.

The church is not innocent, but it is exonerated. This would give an opportunity for Yom Kippur, for the Israelite, the Jewish people to confess Jesus as Lord and Savior. Then we get to the last feast, the Feast of

Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths. Some translate this as the time when Jesus is going to return and rule during that 1,000-year reign on earth, this millennium that is talked about in Revelation, and that He will tabernacle with us once again. Remember what they were celebrating?

They were remembering the booths that they were living in, and God's presence was there in the tabernacle. So Jesus is going to tabernacle with us again during that millennial reign. There are others that interpret this and see this fulfilled as our eternal heavenly reign with Him as people try to make sense of all of that. So we ask the question, what is going to happen in the last days? Let me just summarize everything I have just said. God is going to win. That's the summary. God is going to win.

Those who have proclaimed Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will be saved. And so the question is, will it play out how everyone thinks? My answer to that is probably not. Probably not. But the conclusion will be the same. I do want you to notice and take note, and I do personally of this, in the New Testament, when Jesus came the first time, who missed him? It was the religious people, wasn't it? They're the ones that missed him because they had in their mind how everything was going to play out, and it didn't play out that way at all because they missed the main message.

So is it possible that those of us that try to read Scripture and try to understand it, we think we have this whole thing laid out? Do we have it 100% correct? Probably not. Probably not. We should be ready. We should keep watch. But the conclusion is going to be the same. God is going to win. But let me just summarize all of this for you. If someone asks you the story of Scripture, you can use this seven-week platform that we have just done. You start by saying week one, creation, God.

He is the main character in the story. He created everything from nothing. He is all-powerful, all-knowing. He created as the crown of his creation was human beings, you and I. Everything else was created for us, for us to enjoy. And why did God create everything, including you and I, so that he could have a relationship with us? That was his desire. That was his goal. And then you get to week two, the fall of man. But even though that was God's desire, Adam and Eve made the decision to disobey God.

They made the decision to believe the lie of the enemy, which is still the lie that many of us believe today that God does not have our best interest in mind and he can't be trusted. For them, that looked like eating from this fruit of a tree that they were told not to eat from. And when they ate from that tree, the consequences were much larger than they ever could have imagined. Not only did it bring personal death into the world, but it corrupted their relationship with a holy and righteous and good God.

It affected their relationship with one another, and it affected all of this perfect creation that God had made so that now we live in a world that is corrupted by sin, and we all experience death. God had a plan from the very beginning. We worked through weeks three and four that God chose Abraham and Sarah, not because they were more righteous or holy than anybody else, but He chose a people through whom He was going to reveal Himself to the world. This people was supposed to be different.

They were supposed to be a people, a nation, a royal priesthood, so that they could be different and point towards a loving God, but they messed up miserably. They could not fulfill what God had asked them to do. But yet in God's grace and His mercy, it is through the lineage of Abraham and Sarah and the Israelite people that God would actually step into creation and become the hero of the story. He would come as a baby with the purpose to be a sacrifice for us, to cover us, to make us clean, to pay for our wrongs, our sin, and to make things right.

And so Jesus came as a baby and He lived a sinless life to be that sacrifice for us to die on the cross. But that wasn't the end of the hero's story because if that were the end, we would have no hope. But instead, as believers in Jesus, we believe that on the third day, He was raised back to life. And that is the hope that we have, that that same power that raised Jesus from the dead can also raise us from the dead. And after Jesus

was resurrected, He promised His believers that He would not leave them nor forsake them, that He would remain close.

And so He sends the Holy Spirit that comes into our lives. And it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that God has established the age of the church. Not perfect. We're still sinful human beings saved by grace. But as a church, we have the responsibility that the Israelites had to point people to a loving God that has made a plan of salvation possible that those who would put their faith in Jesus Christ would not die but have everlasting life.

And so that's the age we live in now awaiting Jesus' second coming when He will come and call us home and all things will come to an end and evil will finally be eradicated. Sin, death, the grave will all be conquered. And those who have put their faith and their hope in Jesus Christ will live eternally with Him where there is no more pain, no more suffering, no more death, no more tears. That is the story of Scripture. Let me pray.

Heavenly Father, may we be able to clearly communicate the hope that we have with a world that desperately needs it. Father, we are certainly living in the end times. And so may we not lose focus as to what you have called us to do, that we would point others towards you, that they would receive the same grace and mercy that we have received, not because we have earned it or deserved it, but it is because of your love.

You still desire to have that relationship with us even after we have messed up. And so, God, we thank You for that. We thank You for Your truth. We thank You for Your Word. May You receive the praise. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.