

Small Group Leaders Guide:

Daniel 11 & 12:1-4 - Hope for God's People



Warm Up

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together with prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and future plans.

Leader Tip:

- Keep this brief but intentional. Ask specifically for: (1) clarity, not confusion or fear; (2) soft hearts to respond; and (3) unity in the group even if people differ on end-times details.

Ice Breaker

Share one thing you're looking forward to in the future (this week, this year, or beyond). How does thinking about the future make you feel?

Leader Tip:

- Model vulnerability here. Share something real (e.g., excitement, anxiety, uncertainty) so others feel safe to be honest. If someone starts to dominate, gently say, "Let's hear from a few others too."



Know It

Key Scripture Passages

- Daniel 11:36-39
- Daniel 12:1-4
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- 1 Thessalonians 5:6-11
- Romans 12:1-2
- Acts 1:8

Leader Tip:

- Don't feel pressure to read all of these in one sitting. Choose 2–3 to read aloud together and reference the others as needed. Ask different group members to read to increase engagement.

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Sermon Summary

This message explores biblical prophecy about the end times, including the rise of the Antichrist, the tribulation period, Christ's second coming, and the millennial reign. The sermon emphasizes that Christ's return could happen at any moment, and believers must be spiritually prepared through active church involvement, discipleship, and mission.

Leader Tip:

- Ask someone (other than you) to summarize the sermon in 1–2 sentences before you read this. It helps you see what people actually heard and remembered.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

- What was your initial reaction to hearing about the end times prophecy? Were you encouraged, concerned, or curious? Why?

- **Leader Tip:**

- Affirm any honest reaction—even fear or confusion. If fear comes up, keep pointing people back to the hope and comfort highlighted in 1 Thessalonians 4:18.

- Pastor Todd mentioned that the goal isn't just "getting saved and going to heaven." What is the bigger picture according to this sermon? How does this expand your understanding of salvation?

- **Leader Tip:**

- Listen for “kingdom” and “reigning with Christ” language. If needed, restate: salvation is about a whole new creation, new life now, and ruling with Christ—not just escape from hell.

- Discuss the difference between pre-tribulation and post-tribulation rapture views. Which view was presented in the sermon? How does this affect how we should live today?

- **Leader Tip:**

- Keep this gracious. Emphasize that sincere Christians differ here. Steer away from arguments over timelines; bring it back to application: “Regardless of view, how should we live?”

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Going Further

- Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 together. How should the promise of Christ's return change the way we grieve when Christian loved ones pass away?

- **Leader Tip:**

- Be sensitive—this may surface recent losses. Slow down here. Give people space to share, and if tears come, allow silence and support before moving on.

- The sermon warned about "birthing pains" happening now (wars, natural disasters, false prophets). What current events do you see that might align with these warnings?

- **Leader Tip:**

- Avoid turning this into a political debate or conspiracy forum. If it drifts that way, say, "That's interesting—let's bring this back to how Jesus wants us to respond spiritually."

- Why do you think false teachers will be so effective at deceiving people? What makes someone charismatic but wrong? How can we protect ourselves from deception?

- **Leader Tip:**

- Guide answers toward: biblical literacy, being in a healthy local church, submitting to spiritual authority, and testing everything by Scripture (not just emotion).

- Pastor Todd said, "You can be passionate and wrong." Have you ever encountered teaching that seemed compelling but didn't align with Scripture? What happened?

- **Leader Tip:**

- Keep names and ministries out of it. Focus on principles: "What did you learn from that experience?" If it turns gossipy, gently redirect to the lesson, not the person.

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Share It

Personal Application

- On a scale of 1-10, how prepared do you feel for Christ's return? What areas need strengthening in your spiritual life?
 - **Leader Tip:**
 - Invite brief answers around the circle. You can ask, “What’s one number and one sentence on why you picked that number?” This keeps it moving but personal.

The sermon emphasized three key preparations:

- Belong to a church family (not just attend)
- Grow as a disciple (through small groups and teaching)
- Live on mission (sharing the gospel)
 - Which of these three is strongest in your life? Which needs the most work?
 - **Leader Tip:**
 - Affirm whatever is strong, then gently press: “What’s one small step you could take this month in the weaker area?” Capture ideas for the “Practical Applications” section.
- Are you currently a "functional" or "dysfunctional" church member? What would it look like for you to move toward being more functional?
 - **Leader Tip:**
 - Normalize that we’ve all been dysfunctional at times. Keep the tone invitational, not shaming. Help people think concrete: serving, giving, showing up, inviting, encouraging.

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Key Takeaways

- Christ's return is imminent – It could happen at any time, so we must live ready
- The end is actually a new beginning – Heaven and earth will be united under Christ's reign
- Individual Christianity is insufficient – We need the local church body to stay grounded in truth
- False teachers are coming (and here) – They will be charismatic and appeal to emotions rather than biblical truth
- Preparation requires action – Church membership, discipleship, and mission are non-negotiable

- **Leader Tip:**

- After reading these, ask, “Which one of these five hits you the hardest tonight, and why?” Let 2–3 people share.



Live It

Practical Applications

This Week:

- If you're not a church member, sign up for the Membership Matters class or speak with a pastor about joining
- If you're not in a small group, commit to signing up this week
- Identify one person you can invite to church this month (and follow through!)
- Evaluate your church involvement: Are you serving? Are you growing? Are you on mission?

- **Leader Tip:**

- Don't try to have everyone do all four. Ask each person to choose one “This Week” action and say it out loud. This increases follow-through.

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Daily:

- Read one chapter from the Book of Revelation to prepare for the upcoming sermon series
- Pray for discernment to recognize false teaching when you encounter it
- Ask yourself: "If Christ returned today, would I be ready?"

- **Leader Tip:**

- Consider picking one of these as a “group challenge” (e.g., everyone reads Revelation 1–3 this week), then check in next meeting.

Accountability

- Share with the group: What is ONE specific step you will take this week to be more prepared for Christ's return?
- Exchange contact information with at least one group member who can check in with you about your commitment

- **Leader Tip:**

- Pair people up briefly at the end (“accountability buddies”) and have them set a day/time to text or call. Keep it simple: one check-in, one question: “Did you do what you said you’d do?”

Action Challenge

- The "Hacienda Challenge": This week, invite someone to lunch (doesn't have to be Hacienda!) with the specific goal of building relationship and inviting them to church. Report back to the group next week about how it went.

- **Leader Tip:**

- Lower the pressure: the goal is obedience, not results. Even if the person says no, it's a win for faithfulness. Next week, celebrate attempts, not just “success stories.”

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Prayer

Prayer & Closing

Share prayer requests related to:

- Areas where you need to grow spiritually
- People you want to invite to church
- Concerns about the future or end times
- Desire for deeper commitment to Christ

Closing Prayer: Pray for each person's specific commitments and for the church to be prepared as the bride of Christ for His return.

- **Leader Tip:**
 - You can close by asking 2–3 group members to pray short prayers, then you finish. Specifically pray over the one step each person committed to take.

For Next Week

- Come prepared to share: Did you follow through on your commitment this week?
- Bring a friend if possible!

"Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing." - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Leader Tip:

- Text the group midweek with a brief reminder of the reading and their commitments. A simple, "How can I pray for you as you follow through?" goes a long way.