

Advent



THE VICTORIOUS COMINGS OF CHRIST IN JOHN'S REVELATION

Easter



CHRIST COMMUNITY
CHURCH
Changed Hearts. Changed Lives. Changed Community.

Advent



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Introduction

Christians have historically had a strange relationship with the Revelation of John. Some tend to ignore it all together because of its kaleidoscope of bizarre images and prophetically worded apocalyptic message; others zealously approach it as a specialized puzzle to be figured out based on limited clues from within the book as well as historical events outside of the book. These approaches have led to some outlandish interpretations and uses of Revelation that have not proved helpful to the life of the church. As G.K. Chesterton observes, "...though St. John saw many strange monsters in his vision, he saw no creature so wild as one of his commentators."¹ If we wish to avoid either extreme, then the question becomes: how do we faithfully navigate the complex terrain of God's glorious and terrifying finale to the Redemptive Story without becoming yet another wild commentator of John's extraordinary and wonderful visions? Framed another way, what wise guideposts might we establish to help us make our way through the progressive and variegated telling of the coming of Jesus Christ, the triumphant Lamb and victorious Lion, to consummate the redemption of His people and make all things new? G.B. Caird points out that, "John wrote as a pastor, to give courage and hope to (those) facing imminent persecution, and he wrote as an artist, giving to ancient images new life and meaning combining them in the unity of a great work of art."² Our hope with the Advent Series in **Revelation 1-7** and the Easter Series in **Revelation 19-22** is to establish some guideposts that will allow us all to profit from the teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness to be found in this carefully constructed call to behold what must soon take place.

The first guidepost appears immediately in Revelation in the Prologue in **Revelation 1:1** where John states the purpose of his writing: "*The revelation of Jesus Christ...*" This tells us

¹ G.K. Chesterton from *Orthodoxy* as quoted in Eugene H. Peterson, *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John & the Praying Imagination* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1988), xiii.

² G.B. Caird, *The Revelation of Saint John: Black's New Testament Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1966), 289.

from the start who this book is ultimately about: it's about Jesus! This means that the words of Revelation should help to reveal to us more profoundly and beautifully the person and work of Jesus Christ than what we've previously encountered in Scripture. The key motif further unveiled to this end is that of Christ as the Lion of Judah who is also the slain Lamb who conquers the powers of sin and death and delivers His people to the new Heaven and new Earth. Christ's victory looks nothing like what we expect. Graeme Goldsworthy astutely notes, "It is this relationship of the first and second comings which provides the structure of John's thought in the Book of Revelation. It is the relationship of the suffering Christ to the Christ who is manifested in glory. It is the relationship of the Lamb to the Lion. The Lion is the symbol of the majesty of the glorious messiah-king of Israel who is revealed in the suffering Jesus of Nazareth. John shows us that he who would see the Lion must find him first in the Lamb."³ Our understanding of the paradoxical nature of the Lion of Judah choosing to conquer sin and death as the slain Lamb has significant implications for how we will live out our calling as His servants in a hostile, fallen world.

The second guidepost follows as John writes further in **1:1**, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, *which God gave him...*" This revelation of Jesus Christ comes from God the Father within the context of His unfolding redemptive narrative. Christ isn't writing His own story or going off script for His own purposes.⁴ His person and work remains within the bounds established by the Lord God who declares in **Revelation 1:8** that He is the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. God essentially announces that He is the beginning, the end, and everything in-between of and in history. As Vern S. Poythress writes, "(Revelation's) message can be summarized in one sentence: God rules history and will bring it to its consummation in Christ."⁵ This truth will prove critical as the servants of Christ face a number of troubling times in various locations throughout history.

³ Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Gospel in Revelation* (New South Wales: Paternoster Press, 1984), 28.

⁴ In **Revelation 22:18-19**, John warns us as readers to be careful to stick to what God has written and intended lest we add to or subtract from this prophecy invoking the curses of God, thus, the importance of guideposts to keep us in the banks of the river established by God.

⁵ Vern S. Poythress, *The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2000), 11.

The third guidepost in **1:1** concerns the audience. John writes, “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him *to show his servants...*” This lets us know that the intended audience was, is, and will be those who serve the redemptive cause of Christ in and for the life of the world. The focus isn’t arm-chair theologians who remain quartered safe from the fray by either avoiding the words of this prophecy or twisting them into abstract views that fail to change how we live out our faith in Christ for the life of the world. Jesus further develops the identity of the intended audience in **Revelation 2-3** in His letters to the seven churches (See the **Table of Christ’s Letters to the Seven Churches** on p. 13). Notice how Christ encourages and challenges each of the seven churches to persevere in God’s Word and overcome the various local challenges from within and without. Graeme Goldsworthy’s words grant further insight: “The seven letters to the churches serve to introduce the main themes of Revelation by dealing with them at the outset in the down-to-earth context of the daily life of the local congregations. The drama of redemption is thus shown to have the on-going effects in the world of human existence. **Christians are not onlookers while a cosmic conflict rages in spiritual realms, but rather they are participants.**”⁶ Those who read Revelation must be prepared to live out what they read under a variety of trying and hostile conditions as servants of Jesus Christ, who comes first as the slain Lamb before returning as the victorious Lion to make all things new. We must recognize the greater cost if we don’t. However, His servants do so knowing that He dwells with them in the Holy Spirit until the end of the age. Paul Gardner comfortingly reminds us, “That Christ is with his churches – watching, helping, upholding them in their witness to the world and providing the grace for perseverance – should provide glorious encouragement to his people through the ages.”⁷

The fourth guidepost is in reference to how what we see on the surface and time should be alternately viewed and experienced as John’s visions unfold. John continues in the first sentence of Revelation: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants *the things that must soon take place.*” The things that must soon take place serve to

⁶ Goldsworthy, 85; Bolding and underling are mine.

⁷ Paul Gardner, *Revelation: The Compassion and Protection of Christ* (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2008 Reprint), 31. Christ’s presence is further assured in **Revelation 1** as He walks among the lampstands that represent the churches in heaven.

reveal Christ as the true King, God alone as sovereign, and Christ's servants as more than conquerors eternally redeemed in Him. The various images have been mined from the Old Testament which declared the same things.⁸ As a further part of this revelation, things that oppose God get exposed for the limited and powerless things that they truly are. Dennis E. Johnson helpfully advises us that, "Our starting point should be confidence that God has given this book not to confuse, terrify, or divide his people but to give us light, to reveal to us the invisible forces and the secrets of his invincible plan that make sense of visible events and movements experienced by his church in the world."⁹ Johnson goes on to write, "On the plane of visible history, things are not what they appear, so Revelation's symbols make things appear as they are. It's surprising, paradoxical imagery discloses the true identity of the church, its enemies, and its Champion. Paradox is central to the symbolism. Not only are things not what they appear to be in history, but also typically their true identities as portrayed in the visions are the opposite of their appearance in the world."¹⁰

In addition to the uncovering of what's really going on behind the curtain of history, time itself proves to be not what it seems. We experience time in a linear and tidy fashion so that when we hear "soon" we think relative to how we perceive time according to length. However, as Vern S. Poythress notes, "...neither Old Testament prophecy nor New Testament prophecy is preoccupied with lengths of time as measured by the clock. They focus more on the character of the times."¹¹ "Soon" has more to do with the limitations of suffering and evil in God's grand scheme than with proximity and brevity as we know those terms. We have to remember Peter's declaration in **2 Peter 3:8-9**: "But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

⁸ Dr. J.V. Fesko frequently declared in our Systematic Theology classes at Reformed Theological Seminary in Atlanta that one could not understand the message of Revelation without a robust knowledge of the Old Testament. All of the scholars that I read agree with him. In my own study of Revelation, I have found this to be definitively true.

⁹ Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2001), 6.

¹⁰ Johnson, 9.

¹¹ Poythress, 35.

Moreover, Revelation does not unfold in a linear fashion but through a series of visions that progressively reveal more of the story from different perspectives by sometimes stepping further back or starting further on and going further on. For example, the Bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem descends in **Revelation 19, 21:1-8**, and again in **21:9ff**. Does the Bride/City descend multiple times or is it just one time from multiple perspectives with additional details added based on the perspective to grant a fuller whole? The latter makes the most sense as we move toward final consummation. While this serves as the most disorienting aspect of John's prophecy, the multiple perspectives grant us a foretaste of the multi-faceted joys we will experience in heaven.

The fifth guidepost also appears at the beginning as well as at the end of Revelation serving as a clarifying set of bookends for us as readers. John declares in the Prologue in **1:3**: "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near." In the Epilogue in **22:7**, he concludes, "Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." John, who experienced the mind-bending visions of which he had many questions himself, believed that God's people would be blessed by their reading, hearing, and living out what they read and heard from his prophecy of the fulfillment of history for God's glory. In biblical terms, to be blessed means to experience the presence of God in the assurance of His love and acceptance of us as His children who He has invited to join Him in His redemptive work as ambassadors and priests. This seems paradoxical given the tenor of the times in Revelation and the struggles of the church between the now and the not yet. However, this blessed guidepost proves helpful in that if what we read and seek to live out fails to bless us with God's presence and love, then we need to seek the Spirit's guidance and help with our misunderstanding of God's final words as we read them again. Graeme Goldsworthy humbly discerns that, "John does not urge his fellow Christians to seek a means of escape from this tribulation, for he understood only too well that discipleship means suffering. Rather he urges them to persevere to the end and so to receive the blessings prepared for them."¹² Perseverance in obedience to God's Word and Christ's mission prove the means of experiencing the blessed presence with and fruit of relationship to God. Goldsworthy expounds further on this particular paradox:

¹² Goldsworthy, 32.

“Christian existence is lived out between the two realities of suffering and kingdom. It reflects the suffering of the Lamb and anticipates the consummation of the kingdom through the conquest of the Lion.”¹³ God desires that we His people be blessed by His firm and true Word as we live it out amidst the shifting sands of our various circumstances.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will use our time in Revelation to fashion us further into servants of Christ that persevere in our service as a kingdom of priests for the life of the world and the glory of God in Christ. Pray also that it will reveal the person and work of Christ as the Lion and Lamb in more beautiful ways than previously encountered in Scripture. Pray finally that we would be blessed by the presence, assurance, and invitation of the Lord our God who is the Alpha and the Omega, who was, who is, and who is to come! Eugene H. Peterson’s words prove fitting here: “The intent of Revelation is to put us on our knees before God in worship and to set the salvation-shaping words of God in motion in our lives.”¹⁴ May this be so, oh Lord!

We will continue to seek nourishment from our historic faith and the Old and New Testaments for our weekly devotion and worship. The calls to worship will come from Old Testament passages further revealed in the texts from **Revelation**. We will confess together a confession composed of the key truths from the selected chapters to help keep us focused on the various guideposts. Our assurances of pardon will be declared predominantly from the Advent and Easter stories in Luke and Matthew. Our benedictory blessings each week will come from **Revelation 7:15-17** for Advent and **Revelation 22:6-7** for Easter to remind us of what it means to be blessed. The sum of these elements will hopefully serve to deepen our appreciation for God’s promises kept in Christ’s first coming and look forward with great anticipation to His promised return when all of His promises will be fulfilled.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities each Wednesday to pray for one

¹³ Goldsworth, 33.

¹⁴ Eugene H. Peterson, *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John & the Praying Imagination* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1988), 24.

of the churches in our Presbytery for Advent and for one of missionaries or organizations that we support through Faith Promise for Easter. On Saturday and Sunday, we will prepare for worship in prayer for our church and those who will visit to be blessed by our time in **Revelation**. Our desire is to continue to facilitate and grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer.

May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek to for the Church to grow in the joy of being restored to the presence of God!

Soli Deo Gloria!

Structure of John's Revelation

REVELATION 1:1-8:

Prologue:

The Blessed Will Read, Hear, and Persevere in Christ

REVELATION 1:9-21:

The Presence of the Son of Man

REVELATION 2-3:

The Letters to the Seven Churches

REVELATION 4-5:

The first Heavenly Interlude:

Worthy is the Lion of Judah, the Victorious Lamb

REVELATION 6:

The Opening of the first Six Seals

REVELATION 7:

Second Heavenly Interlude:

The Victorious Church of the Victorious Lamb

REVELATION 8-9:

*The Opening of the Seventh Seal,
the Sounding of the first Six Trumpets*

REVELATION 10-11:14:

The Third Heavenly Interlude:

The Little Scroll and the Measuring Rod

REVELATION 11:15-19:

The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet

REVELATION 12-13:

The Cosmic Combatants Revealed:

The Beast Kingdom, the false Priesthood, and the Commodified Economy

REVELATION 14:

The fourth Heavenly Interlude:

The faithful Army of the Lamb

REVELATION 15-18:

The End of God's Wrath:

The Seven Plagues and the Seven Bowls

REVELATION 19-20:

The Victorious Word of God:

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb and the Death of Death

REVELATION 21-22:5:

The Consummation of Redemptive History:

The New Heaven and the New Earth

REVELATION 22:6-21:

Epilogue:

Blessed are Those Who Keep the Words of The Prophecy of Revelation

Christ's Letters to the Seven Churches

CHURCH	CHRIST'S DESCRIPTION	THE GOOD	THE BAD	THE PROMISE	MODERN EQUIVALENT
<i>Ephesus</i>	Him Who Holds the Seven Stars in His Right Hand, Who Walks Among the Seven Golden Lampstands	Theologically Precise	Unloving	Repent or Have the Lampstand Removed; The Fruit of the Tree of Life for the Conquerors	Theologically Conservative, Lacking in Missional Love
<i>Smyrna</i>	The First and the Last, Who Died and Came to Life	Persecuted and Poor but Persevering	N/A	The Crown of Life for Faithful Perseverance	Small, Faithful Church Struggling to Survive
<i>Pergamum</i>	Him Who Has the Sharp Two-Edged Sword	Holds Generally to the Person of Christ	Failing to Deal with Heretical Teachings	Repent or be at War with God's Word; Admission to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb	Generally Faithful to Christ but Unwilling to Practice Discipline or Confront Heresy
<i>Thyatira</i>	The Son of God Who Has Eyes Like a Flame of Fire, and Whose Feet are Like Burnished Bronze	Strong Missional Presence in the Culture	Accepting the Sexual Ethics of the Culture	Repent or Suffer Great Tribulation and Loss Generationally; Joint Rule with Christ Over the Nations for the Conquerors	Missionally Focused, Theologically Liberal
<i>Sardis</i>	He Who has the Seven Spirits and the Seven Stars	A Small Remnant of Faithful Christians	The External Display of Life Masks the Internal Spiritual Death	Repent or Christ Will Come as a Thief in the Night; A White Robe and Assurance for the Conquerors	An Attractional Church Focused on the External Show But Ignores the Need for Maturity Through Discipleship
<i>Philadelphia</i>	The Holy One, the True One, Who has the Key of David	Faithfully and Patiently Enduring in the Face of Persecution	N/A	Open Door for Mission	
<i>Laodicea</i>	The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of God's Creation	N/A	Nauseatingly lukewarm; Blind to their condition of poverty and need	The presence of Christ when received; Co-reigning with Christ	Large, Affluent Church Concerned Only with Its Continued Existence

Advent Sermon Schedule

DATE	CALL TO WORSHIP	ASSURANCE OF PARDON	BENEDICTION	SACRAMENT
SUNDAY, 11/17: <i>Revelation 1</i>	<i>Isaiah</i> 49:1-13	<i>John</i> 1:1-18	<i>Revelation</i> 7:15-17	<i>Bread and</i> <i>Cup</i>
SUNDAY, 11/24: <i>Revelation 2</i>	<i>Daniel</i> 9:3-19	<i>Luke</i> 1:46-55	<i>Revelation</i> 7:15-17	
SUNDAY, 12/01: <i>Revelation 3</i>	<i>Isaiah</i> 1:9-20	<i>Luke</i> 1:67-79	<i>Revelation</i> 7:15-17	
SUNDAY, 12/08: <i>Revelation 4</i>	<i>Psalms</i> 89:1-18	<i>Luke</i> 1:26-38	<i>Revelation</i> 7:15-17	
SUNDAY, 12/15: <i>Revelation 5</i>	<i>Psalms</i> 89:19-29	<i>Matthew</i> 1:18-25	<i>Revelation</i> 7:15-17	<i>Bread and</i> <i>Cup</i>
SUNDAY, 12/22: <i>Revelation 6</i>	<i>Psalms</i> 89:30-52	<i>Luke</i> 2:8-21	<i>Revelation</i> 7:15-17	<i>Baptism</i>
SUNDAY, 12/29: <i>Revelation 7</i>	<i>Isaiah</i> 54:1-10	<i>Matthew</i> 2:1-12	<i>Revelation</i> 7:15-17	<i>Bread and</i> <i>Cup</i>

Easter Sermon Schedule

DATE	CALL TO WORSHIP	ASSURANCE OF PARDON	BENEDICTION	SACRAMENT
SUNDAY, 3/8: <i>Revelation</i> 19:1-10	<i>Isaiah</i> 59:1-10	<i>Matthew</i> 26:26-29	<i>Revelation</i> 22:6-7	<i>Bread and</i> <i>Cup</i>
SUNDAY, 3/15: <i>Revelation</i> 19:11-21	<i>Ezekiel</i> 39:1-8	<i>Luke</i> 22:39-46	<i>Revelation</i> 22:6-7	
SUNDAY, 3/22: <i>Revelation</i> 20:1-6	<i>Zephaniah</i> 3:14-20	<i>Matthew</i> 26:47-56	<i>Revelation</i> 22:6-7	
SUNDAY, 3/29: <i>Revelation</i> 20:7-15	<i>Isaiah</i> 25	<i>Luke</i> 23:26-49	<i>Revelation</i> 22:6-7	
SUNDAY, 4/5: <i>Revelation</i> 21:1-8	<i>Isaiah</i> 11:1-11	<i>Matthew</i> 27:45-56	<i>Revelation</i> 22:6-7	<i>Bread and</i> <i>Cup</i>
SUNDAY, 4/12: <i>Revelation</i> 21:9-22:5	<i>Isaiah</i> 65:17-25	<i>Luke</i> 24:1-12	<i>Revelation</i> 22:6-7	
SUNDAY, 4/19: <i>Revelation</i> 22:6-21	<i>Isaiah</i> 66:1-2	<i>Matthew</i> 28:16-20	<i>Revelation</i> 22:6-7	<i>Bread and</i> <i>Cup</i>

Weekly Congregational Confession

Heavenly Father, Bless us through the reading, hearing, and living out of the words from Revelation in the power of the Holy Spirit. May we behold anew the Lion of Judah who conquers the evil powers of sin and death as the Lamb who was slain to form us into a kingdom of priests for His service and Your glory. Help us to faithfully persevere in living out the fullness of Your word despite the persecution and temptation from within the church and from without in the world. Stimulate our hope through the visions of this prophecy in the joy and blessings that await us at the return of Christ to make all things new. Amen

The Week of November 17th

REVELATION 1

Monday, 11/11: **ISAIAH 49:1-13:** Meditate on how God has comforted you and had compassion on your affliction through the first coming of Christ. Who could you share this with this week?

Tuesday, 11/12: **JOHN 1:1-18:** Give thanks for God's Word becoming flesh in the person and work of Jesus Christ so that you might receive grace upon grace in God's love.

Wednesday, 11/13: Pray for Hope Presbyterian in Marietta to grow in missional love for their unbelieving neighbors while maintaining theological precision and fidelity to God's Word.

Thursday, 11/14: **REVELATION 1:** Pray that the Holy Spirit would bless you through our time in Revelation giving you the ears to hear and eyes to see Christ as victorious.

Friday, 11/15: **REVELATION 7:15-17:** In what ways does it bless you to know that you have a place secured in Christ before the throne of God?

Saturday, 11/16: Read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Ask the Spirit to grow our church in missional love for our unbelieving neighbors while maintaining theological precision and fidelity to God's Word.

Sunday, 11/17: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH** *with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to help us grow in our understanding of our identity as a kingdom of priests as servants of Christ between the now and the not yet.

The Week of November 24th

REVELATION 2

Monday, 11/18: **DANIEL 9:3-19:** What strikes you most from Daniel's prayer of repentance on behalf of God's people?

Tuesday, 11/19: **LUKE 1:46-55:** Reflect on Mary's Magnificat. What defines the character of those whom the Lord helps and of those whom He judges?

Wednesday, 11/20: Pray for King's Chapel in Carrollton to persevere in their calling to share the Gospel despite outside resistance in their region and be sustained by the Lord's provision both physically and spiritually.

Thursday, 11/21: **REVELATION 2:** Based on the Lord's commendations of the first four churches, for which of these could He commend our church? Based on His warnings, for which of these could He warn our church?

Friday, 11/22: **REVELATION 7:15-17:** How are you preparing for the blessing of perpetual worship before Christ in the intermediate state should you have the opportunity?

Saturday, 11/23: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help our church to persevere in our calling to share the Gospel despite outside resistance in our region and be sustained by the Lord's provision both physically and spiritually.

Sunday, 11/24: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us to be those who conquer by persevering in the Gospel and receive the blessings offered in Christ.

The Week of December 1st

REVELATION 3

Monday, 11/25: **ISAIAH 1:9-20:** How has/is worship at CCC forming you to live out biblical ethics in and for the life of the world?

Tuesday, 11/26: **LUKE 1:67-79:** Reflect on Zechariah's prophecy giving thanks for the promises that the Lord fulfilled in the first coming of Christ.

Wednesday, 11/27: Pray for Midway Presbyterian in Powder Springs to continue to hold fast to faith in Christ while also confronting the theological threats from within.

Thursday, 11/28: **REVELATION 3:** Based on the Lord's commendations of the last three churches, for which of these could He commend our church? Based on His warnings, for which of these could He warn our church?

Friday, 11/29: **REVELATION 7:15-17:** Consider how the presence of the Lord blesses us His people even now. What do you most look forward to about being able to be in His presence without barriers or limits at His final return?

Saturday, 11/30: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help our church continue to hold fast to faith in Christ while also confronting the theological threats from within.

Sunday, 12/1: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us have the ears to hear what the Holy Spirit has to say to us as Christ's church on mission.

The Week of December 8th

REVELATION 4

Monday, 12/12: **PSALM 89:1-18:** Who from a previous generation was faithful to make sure that you heard tell of the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord? How are you participating in this for the coming generations?

Tuesday, 12/13: **LUKE 1:26-38:** Meditate on the statement that “nothing will be impossible with God.” How should this impact how you live out the Christian life?

Wednesday, 12/14: Pray for Smyrna Presbyterian in Smyrna to continue to maintain a missional presence in their region and be careful to cultivate a biblical sexual ethic as part of their witness.

Thursday, 12/15: **REVELATION 4:** What characteristics of God cause the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders to worship Him? How should this affect our worship?

Friday, 12/16: **REVELATION 7:15-17:** Which of your earthly tribulations will you be most thankful to be free from in the heavenly presence of Christ?

Saturday, 12/17: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help our church continue to maintain a missional presence in our region and be careful to cultivate a biblical sexual ethic as part of our witness.

Sunday, 12/18: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us behold and worship the holiness of God who is worthy to receive glory and honor and power for He has created all things by His gracious will.

The Week of December 15th

REVELATION 5

Monday, 12/9: **PSALM 89:19-29:** What of this description of Christ calls you to worship Him?

Tuesday, 12/10: **MATTHEW 1:18-25:** Reflect on the gift of Immanuel, God with us in Christ. What are some ways in which His presence has assured you of who you are in Christ?

Wednesday, 12/11: Pray for Seven Hills in Rome to continue to draw people to hear the Gospel for the first time and to also be careful to cultivate mature disciples.

Thursday, 12/12: **REVELATION 5:** What are the implications of the Lion of Judah presenting as a Lamb slain so as to be worthy to open the seals to the scroll?

Friday, 12/13: **REVELATION 7:15-17:** How have you been blessed by Jesus serving as your shepherd? What are some ways in which He has led and protected you?

Saturday, 12/14: Read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Ask the Spirit to help our church to continue to draw people to hear the Gospel for the first time and to also be careful to cultivate mature disciples.

Sunday, 12/15: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH** *with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to behold Christ as the Lion of Judah who comes as the Lamb slain to ransom us for God from every tribe and language and people and nation to serve as a kingdom of priests.

The Week of December 22nd

REVELATION 6

Monday, 12/16: **PSALM 89:30-52:** What is the cost of rejecting the mercy and grace of God in disobedience?

Tuesday, 12/17: **LUKE 2:8-21:** What did the first coming of Christ declare to the world?

Wednesday, 12/18: Pray for Dave Lindberg and the NJ church plant to be willing to faithfully and patiently endure whatever persecution may come for the opportunity to share God's love in Christ.

Thursday, 12/19: **REVELATION 6:** Who is ultimately in control of the disasters recorded in **Revelation 6**? What purpose do they serve?

Friday, 12/20: **REVELATION 7:15-17:** How have the means of grace blessed you as springs of living water?

Saturday, 12/21: Read the preparatory letter and pray to improve on your baptism. Ask the Spirit to help our church faithfully and patiently endure whatever persecution may come for the opportunity to share God's love in Christ.

Sunday, 12/22: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH with Baptism:** Pray for the means of grace to help us be confident of Christ's saving work in lives to be brought to completion when He returns.

The Week of December 29th

REVELATION 7

Monday, 12/23: **DANIEL 7:9-14:** Imagine what Daniel saw in this vision of the Ancient of Days. What stands out most to you from the vision?

Tuesday, 12/24: **MATTHEW 2:1-12:** Do you take the kingship of Christ as seriously as Herod and the Wise Men did? What impact does His reign have on how you live?

Wednesday, 12/25: Pray for Cherokee Presbyterian in Canton to use all that the Lord provides for the purpose of sharing the Gospel and making disciples.

Thursday, 12/26: **REVELATION 7:** Reflect on the powerful diversity of God's kingdom in Christ. What are the ways in which we are/could be participating in reflecting this glorious picture of the power of the Gospel?

Friday, 12/27: **REVELATION 7:15-17:** What are some ways in which Christ has ministered to you in your sorrow?

Saturday, 12/28: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help our church use all that the Lord provides for the purpose of sharing the Gospel and making disciples.

Sunday, 12/29: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us long for and participate in the forming of the gloriously diverse kingdom of God.

The Week of March 8th

REVELATION 19:1-10

Monday, 3/2: **ISAIAH 54:1-10:** Meditate on God's display of covenant love and faithfulness to His people. What impact does this have on your view of worship as the place where God's people gather together with Him to hear His steadfast love proclaimed yet again?

Tuesday, 3/3: **MATTHEW 26:26-29:** What are the ways in which the regular observance of the Lord's Supper helps to assure you of who and whose you are in Christ?

Wednesday, 3/4: Pray for those who go to the Women's Extension to see eternal fruit born from the meals shared and relationships formed in Christ.

Thursday, 3/5: **REVELATION 19:1-10:** Whose righteousness affects the beauty of the Bride? How does this affect your views of your deeds in this life?

Friday, 3/6: **REVELATION 22:6-7:** Give thanks for the blessing of God's Word from start to finish being trustworthy and true.

Saturday, 3/7: Read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Ask the Spirit to grant us eternal fruit born from the meals we share and relationships that we form in Christ.

Sunday, 3/8: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH** *with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to help us beautify the Bride with how we live between the now and the not yet.

The Week of March 15th

REVELATION 19:11-21

Monday, 3/19: **EZEKIEL 39:1-8:** How does God's just reckoning of evil serve to hallow His name?

Tuesday, 3/20: **LUKE 22:39-46:** Consider the strain that Jesus endured in prayer on our behalf. Give thanks for His willingness to suffer for our restoration to our Abba Father.

Wednesday, 3/21: Pray for the Stocks in SE Asia to persevere in inviting people to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb instead of the Great Judgment Supper of God for the birds.

Thursday, 3/22: **REVELATION 19:11-21:** Compare this vision of Christ with that of **Revelation 1**. How do they differ? How is this scene different from **Revelation 1**?

Friday, 3/23: **REVELATION 22:6-7:** What from Revelation are you most blessed by it being trustworthy and true?

Saturday, 3/24: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help our church persevere in inviting people to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb instead of the Great Judgment Supper of God for the birds.

Sunday, 3/25: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us worship Christ as truly victorious over the principalities and powers of darkness.

The Week of March 22nd

REVELATION 20:1-6

Monday, 3/16: **ZEPHANIAH 3:14-20:** How does God's affection for and promises to the oppressed, lame, and outcast affect your views of and involvement with them?

Tuesday, 3/17: **MATTHEW 26:47-56:** Reflect on Jesus' restraint of His power in Matthew's telling of His betrayal and arrest. What gave Him the confidence to accept what was happening despite its injustices?

Wednesday, 3/18: Pray for Mike Kenamer with MNA Disaster Response to display and declare the power of the resurrection for those in Christ amid the aftermath of natural disaster.

Thursday, 3/19: **REVELATION 20:1-6:** Who is truly blessed in this passage? What did they do to receive the fullness of this blessing?

Friday, 3/20: **REVELATION 22:6-7:** Give thanks for God's revelation of His sovereignty over history for the redemption of His people despite the appearances of various times throughout the unfolding of the story.

Saturday, 3/21: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help our church display and declare the power of the resurrection for those in Christ.

Sunday, 3/22: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us resist the false blessings offered by the various parodies of the things of God so as to receive the true blessing of resurrection in Christ.

The Week of March 29th

REVELATION 20:7-15

Monday, 3/23: **ISAIAH 25:** Meditate on Isaiah's vision of the consummation in this chapter. What all will be included for which we should give thanks?

Tuesday, 3/24: **LUKE 23:26-49:** Reflect on this account of Christ's crucifixion. What aspect grants you the assurance of your pardon in Him?

Wednesday, 3/25: Pray for Dave Lindberg and the NJ church plant to boldly proclaim the death of Death and Hades in the victory of Christ.

Thursday, 3/26: **REVELATION 20:7-15:** How does the eventual final judgment of the powers of evil, Death, and Hades affect how you live now?

Friday, 3/27: **REVELATION 22:6-7:** How has Revelation comforted you with the vision of the victorious Lamb and His beautifully arrayed Bride?

Saturday, 3/28: Read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Ask the Spirit to help our church to boldly proclaim the death of Death and Hades in the victory of Christ.

Sunday, 3/29: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH** *with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to help us live differently as a result of knowing that there will be a reckoning for the powers of evil, Death, and Hades in the victory of Christ.

The Week of April 5th

REVELATION 21:1-8

Monday, 3/30: **ISAIAH 11:1-11:** Give thanks for the promised peace to come at the consummation of history at the return of Christ. Who could you share this with this week?

Tuesday, 3/31: **MATTHEW 27:45-56:** What's the significance of the events that Luke records following the death of Christ? What did they reveal about who He was, is, and will be?

Wednesday, 4/1: Pray for Byron Johnson with Vision 9:38 to continue sending missionaries who will witness to the hope of the return of Christ when He will make all things new and dwell with His people for eternity.

Thursday, 4/2: **REVELATION 21:1-8:** What is the goal of redemptive history? How does worship help us prepare for what is to come at the return of Christ?

Friday, 4/3: **REVELATION 22:6-7:** Meditate on the blessing of God's merciful and gracious limitation of suffering as a historical reality as reflected in Jesus' promise to come soon.

Saturday, 4/4: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us witness to the hope of the return of Christ when He will make all things new and dwell with His people for eternity.

Sunday, 4/5: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us look forward with great expectations of and joyous hope for the return of Christ who will make all things new.

The Week of April 12th

REVELATION 21:9-22:5

Monday, 4/16: **ISAIAH 65:17-25:** What are you most excited to forget eternally in the new heavens and new earth?

Tuesday, 4/17: **LUKE 24:1-12:** What does the resurrection of Christ declare on behalf of His people?

Wednesday, 4/18: Pray for the Robertsons with MTW South America to help plant and support churches who testify to the hope of the New Heavens and New Earth to come at the return of Christ.

Thursday, 4/19: **REVELATION 21:9-22:5:** What all comes full circle and is improved upon in this final vision of the new heavens and new earth?

Friday, 4/20: **REVELATION 22:6-7:** How is one blessed according to this passage?

Saturday, 4/21: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help our church testify to the hope of the New Heavens and New Earth to come at the return of Christ.

Sunday, 4/22: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us long for the glorious coming of the new heavens and new earth at the return of the Lamb.

The Week of April 19th

REVELATION 22:6-21

Monday, 4/13: **ISAIAH 66:1-2:** How are you cultivating humility and contrition in your spirit? Do you tremble at God's Word?

Tuesday, 4/14: **MATTHEW 28:16-20:** What are we to be doing between the now and the not yet? What are the ways in which you are living this out?

Wednesday, 4/15: Pray for the Caltons with RUF at KSU to persevere in sharing the Gospel in the hope of the finished work of Christ and coming consummation of all of God's promises at His return.

Thursday, 4/16: **REVELATION 22:6-21:** Do you ever pray, "Come Lord Jesus"? Why or why not?

Friday, 4/17: **REVELATION 22:6-7:** What words from Revelation are you to keep in order to be blessed?

Saturday, 4/18: Read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Ask the Spirit to help our church to persevere in faithfully sharing the Gospel in the hope of the finished work of Christ and coming consummation of all of God's promises at His return.

Sunday, 4/19: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH** *with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to help us keep the words of the prophecy of Revelation.

Suggested Resources for further Study

You are encouraged to read further on and the rest of Revelation between Advent and Easter. These resources are in alphabetical order under the headings and have a variety of strengths with all being relatively short and comprehensible. Feel free to ask questions, and wrestle with the truths of Revelation during, between, and after both series!

DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARIES:

Let's Study Revelation by Derek Thomas

More Than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation by William Hendriksen

Revelation: A Shorter Commentary by G.K. Beale and David Campbell

Revelation: The Compassion and Protection of Christ by Paul Gardner

The Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation by Dennis E. Johnson

TOPICAL/THEOLOGICAL ISSUES:

Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John & the Praying Imagination by Eugene H. Peterson

The Gospel in Revelation by Graeme Goldsworthy

The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views ed. by Robert G. Clouse

The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation by Vern S. Poythress

The Theology of the Book of Revelation by Richard Bauckham