



LORD,  
TEACH  
US TO  
PRAY

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*Sermons and Studies*  
*April-August 2017*

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Name:

St **MATTHEW**<sup>s</sup>  
Anglican  
Church



# Welcome

If this is your first time we're really glad you're here. We are an Evangelical Anglican Church which means that we shape everything around the good news of Jesus Christ – in our church services and all our other activities.

We want to help you get to know us better. If you fill out your details in the accompanying 'details sheet' (and mark the 'I'm new here' box), we'll send you an email or give you a phone call during the week (whichever you'd prefer) – letting you know a little more about some of the things we're doing right here in Wanniasa, and why we all call this church our home. We want to give you the opportunity to get to know our staff a little better, and help connect you with other people in St Matt's.

You can put the 'details sheet' in the white bucket at the Connect Desk, or give it to one of our greeters on your way out.

If you can, please stick around afterwards for tea, coffee and a bite to eat.

## Church services

God's plan for the church is enormous. Ephesians 3:10 tells us that the church is God's display case of His manifold wisdom. In the church, we see people of different ages and stages, experiences and backgrounds, united in their love for Jesus and for each other. Church often has a bad reputation these days – often for good reason. Christians have messed up the church. But church can and should be the most glorious place on earth. That's why we take church seriously.

All of our services are Bible-centred and designed to help us engage God and learn how to serve Him in the world.

- Sunday at 8am: Relaxed, traditional style
- Sunday at 10am: Contemporary family style with kids program
- Sunday at 6pm: Contemporary style followed by supper
- Tuesday at 11:30am: fortnightly followed by lunch
- Tuesday at 10am: Goodwin Village (Ralph Cartwright Centre)
- Thursday at 10am: Goodwin Village (David Harper House)

Events and activities take place regularly throughout the year, such as men's and women's breakfasts, as well as congregation-specific social events, teaching and training days, outreach events, camps and conferences.

## Life Groups

We recognize the importance of small groups for nurturing newcomers, new Christians and regular church members. Our Life Groups are a great way to get to know and support each other, while strengthening our relationships with God. They allow us to learn more about Jesus, what it means to be a Christian, and how to reach out to people who don't yet know Him.

## Simply Christianity

We run a 5-week course for those who are curious about Christianity, and want to take an adult look at the life and message of Jesus. This course is held at the home of our Rector – all questions are welcome. These are held several times a year on different nights to accommodate all diaries.

## Kids at St Matt's

*Proverbs 22:6 says - Train children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not turn from it. What a blessing it is to invest in children! The 10am Church service is a great place to bring kids of all ages!*

- **K@Ch (Kids at Church):** helping children follow Jesus, for life! After a Kids Spot in Church, all the children from Preschool to Year 6 have their own time of fun & value where the Bible is taught age appropriately. In 2017, we have begun exploring the Bible book of Genesis.
- **Year 7&8's:** During the Adult Bible Talk, these older children meet together to relate with each other and with God in his Word the Bible. They often also drink hot chocolate together! This term the 7&8's have been learning about their identity from the Bible book of 1 Peter.
- **Creche:** The younger children around the 2-4 age range enjoy a creche play, sing, and read in the red building outside. This also happens after the Kids Spot. There is also a "cuddle room" for parents with babies 0-1 inside the church building.

**More?** There are a number of other children's activities available on Friday nights and mid-week after school.

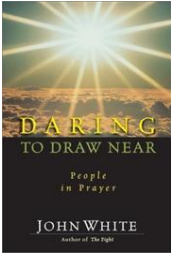
**Youth:** our Youth programs offer opportunities for young people in Years 7-12 to learn about Jesus with their peers in a casual environment that encourages friendship, frank discussions and fun.

- Youth Group runs on Friday nights from 7-9pm during school term.
- LIFE Groups run on Sundays (during the 10am morning service for younger youth, 4-6pm for older youth)
- We also run an annual 5-day youth camp in the September holidays

# WHAT'S COMING UP?

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## #1 ABRAHAM:

### THE DAY GOD GREW LARGER

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**Q.** “The quality of a conversation may well be determined by the person who initiates it” (p.13). Is this your experience?

*Read Genesis 18:9-33*

**Q.** Scan your eyes over the passage we just read. Along with p.14 of the book, how did Abraham hear from God? How do we hear from God?

Read the paragraph on p.16 beginning with “The God who in the same instant upholds galaxies... **Q.** How does God’s communication skills affect our praying to Him? Think practically.

**Q.** What does John White say about our identity as Christians at the end of p.16 and into p.17? Why is this relevant to prayer?

**Q.** Is praying “if it be thy will” a cop-out? (p.19)

**Q.** What did you make of the “God, How Could You Be Like That?” section? (pp.19-21). What does John White say is true prayer? And how do we become people who pray truly?

**Q.** On what issues do you need to meet God with? Which passages of Scripture do you need to “wrestle with God” over? How will you do this?

➔ Read at home before next week: Chapter 2, Jacob: A Crippling in the Chasm





## #2 JACOB: A CRIPPLING IN THE CHASM

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Q. What is the biggest challenge you've ever faced?

*Read Genesis 32:22-32*

Q. What words or phrases stood out in the above Bible reading? Why?

"If God is almighty and man feeble, why is Jacob not immediately overwhelmed? Does God need to cripple Jacob?" (p.25) Q. How do you answer this question?

Q. Scan pp.26-27. In what ways was Jacob's life a struggle?

Q. Read the paragraph on p27 that begins with: "In these ways he struggled half his life to gain for himself the things God had planned to give him anyway..." How might we do the same, this side of Christ?

Scan p.30. Q. "How is one to act in the face of God's promises?" What are your thoughts? How does your life reflect your answer? If it doesn't, how might it?

Q. What is the difference between God honouring prayers and God-dishonouring prayers on p.33?

Q. What does John White say is the purpose of Jacob's wrestling on pp.34-35? Are there areas that God might be wrestling you on? What might He want to change in you to make you more like Jesus? How might He be doing this, and how should you respond?

➔ Read at home before next week: Chapter 3 – Moses: Shining Faces



### #3 MOSES: SHINING FACES

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**Q.** How was church on the weekend? What did you learn?

*Read Exodus 32:9-14, 31-32; 33:12-23.* **Q.** What words or phrases stood out in the Bible reading? Why?

**Q.** Have you ever been hurt by God's people to an extent that you cheered when they were put in their place? Be honest - without giving harmful details. Why?

**Q.** According to John White, what were the two things that dominated Moses' prayer (see the bottom of page 40)?

- 1.
- 2.

**Q.** Have you ever prayed like this? Why? Why not?

**Q.** "Golgotha only makes sense in the light of Sinai. You can never experience the urgency of intercession until you see sin from God's perspective" (p.43). Really? Why?

**Q.** When you see the sin of people in the church, what stance do you take towards them? "Is the church 'they' or is it 'we'? Do you love 'them' in spite of what you see? Are they still God's people and ours?" (p.45)

Read page 48 together. **Q.** Is this you? Do you want it to be? How might it be?

➔ Read at home before next week: Chapter 4: David – Fellowship Restored

## #4 DAVID: FELLOWSHIP RESTORED

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**Q.** When was the last time you confessed your sin to God? Without naming the sin (unless you feel safe to do so), were you caught by surprise in this sin you committed, or was it part of an ongoing 'habit'?

*Read Psalm 51.* **Q.** What words or phrases stood out in Psalm 51? Why?

"If we are doing *what* we should be doing *when* we should be, we shall be less exposed to temptation. Obedience to God carries protection with it" (p.52). Discuss.

**Q.** In Psalm 51, how did David deal with his sin? How might this be a model for us?

White says "we need a model, for questions bewilder us. Am I truly repentant? Will God hear me? Is the gravity of my sin such that it calls for special treatment? Why did I have to do it in the first place?" (p.53). **Q.** Which of these questions might you need to hear God answer from Psalm 51? Why?

Read the paragraph on p.54 that begins "If some people knew what you have done..." **Q.** Have you experienced these feelings? What makes us put walls around our feelings of guilt and shame?

**Q.** What excuses did David make for his sin? What excuses do we make? Why? (see pages 58-59)

**Q.** How does Jesus provide the answer that David was looking for? See pages 63-64. How might these truths shape our daily existence? Think practically.

➔ Read at home before next week: Chapter 5: Daniel – The man who was greatly beloved

## #5 DANIEL: THE MAN WHO WAS GREATLY BELOVED

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**Q.** Do you ever get the urge to pray? When and why?

*Read Daniel 9:1-19.* **Q.** What words or phrases stood out in the Bible reading? Why?

**Q.** Why does White say that the written Word (the Bible) is more beneficial to us than dreams, visions, spoken words etc? (see pages 67-68)

**Q.** In Daniel 9, Daniel was wrestling with God's promises and the reality of what he was experiencing. When the Scriptures and your experience clashes, which holds sway in your heart and mind? How?

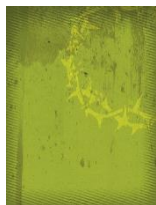
**Q.** Why might White say that tension in life can be good and healthy? (pages 69-70)

Read the paragraph on p.72 that begins "Does God's character grip you?" **Q.** What are your answers to these questions? How could you answer that question?

Read the section "Crippling Fears" on pages 74-76. **Q.** Do you have eyes to see?

Read the section entitled Beyond Self. **Q.** How can we pray like Daniel? How might the truths found in Hebrews 4:14-16 be of help? Be practical.

➔ Read at home before next week: Revelation 1



# Introducing Revelation

## Author and Date<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Christ is the divine author of this “revelation” (1:1). He describes coming events to his servant John. John, son of Zebedee, was the “beloved disciple” who also wrote the Fourth Gospel and 1, 2 and 3 John. Most scholars believe John recorded these visions while imprisoned on the island of Patmos in the mid-90s A.D.

## Audience

The book of Revelation is addressed to the seven churches named in 1:11, and John presents the risen Christ addressing each church in Revelation 2–3. Each letter to a particular church, however, ends with the words “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22), so with the number seven meaning ‘completion’ and with each letter calling all the churches to hear, in addressing seven churches John writes representatively to all churches. In their culture, the churches seem to be small, insignificant, and struggling against mounting persecution from the Roman Empire. John shows them the world as it really is.

## The Gospel in Revelation

John has built the unique application of the gospel he provides in Revelation into the very structure of the book.

Gospel faith makes people right with God and produces gospel faithfulness, which reaps gospel reward. The book of Revelation is a triumphant vision of God’s final victory over all the forces of evil in the world. This final victory is secured because of the blood of the Lamb that purifies God’s people for his ultimate reign. Revelation is filled with the gracious purposes of God, to strengthen his people.

## Us and Revelation

There are two basic responses to the book of Revelation: people either avoid it, or they focus on it so much it ceases to have any of the meaning it had in the first place. This arises because of the unique literary genre in which the book is written – apocalyptic.

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<sup>1</sup> This Introducing Revelation section is taken from The Gospel Transformation Bible, ESV, Book Introductions

## Literary Style

There are at least four recognised literary styles in Revelation: letters, prophetic oracles, hymns of praise, and apocalyptic visions. There has been a tendency to split off the letters to the churches, because they are more accessible, and leave the rest of the book alone. This is foolhardy, as the letters are an integral part of the message of Revelation as a whole. Of the four literary styles mentioned, apocalyptic is clearly dominant. As a genre is found in the OT, particularly in the visions of Daniel and Zechariah. It is in them we can find clues as to how to interpret the visions presented here. The very fact that they are visions tells us that they are different to other forms of communication. John sees these things and records them for us - they are highly graphic and very descriptive. Questions arise on how to interpret imagery and language such as the sea beast, the mark of the beast, the 144 000 and the 1000-year reign of Christ. Should we take these literally, or symbolically? God willing, as we journey through Revelation, we'll come to appreciate the rich imagery, imagine it (that's why the imagery is there), and see what each section meant then and now. It will be quite a ride!

## Structure

The important thing to note is that Revelation is not chronological; it is cyclical and revolves around the number 7. This indicates that it is the same or a similar story being retold over and over again – quite a simple method of teaching called repetition. The same story, the gospel story, is retold from many different perspectives, looking at it from the viewpoint of the church, the world, the principalities and powers, the end times, but throughout it is the same story.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Note: these studies were originally written by Chris Guppy for the Evangelical Students (AFES) group at the University of Queensland. With permission, they have been revised and expanded by Steve Nation for church use.



# STUDY #1: THE GLORIOUS UNVEILING (REV. 1:1-20)

**What is the most bizarre dream you've ever had?**

FYI: The reason Revelation is called Revelation, is because of the very first words in the letter: "the revelation from Jesus Christ (1:1). In the original Greek language of the New Testament, the word "revelation" is "apocalypse". For this reason, sometimes the Letter of Revelation is called the Apocalypse. Apocalypse and Revelation mean disclosure, unveiling, or revelation.

**Read verses 1-3. Q.1 What essentially is Revelation about according to these few verses? Who is the ultimate source of this message? What is the motivation for heeding the words written in Revelation?**

- A Revelation which John was shown
- Revelation is about Jesus Christ – all about Him, and the things that must soon take place
- Ultimate author = God – He made it known through His message to John!
- Motivation for reading Revelation = to be blessed – it's for us, His 'servants' – we are blessed if we read it aloud, hear it, and obey it - because the time (of His Second Coming) is near!

**Read verses 4-8. Q.2 Is there anything significant about the greeting that the John brings (vv.4-5a)?** Note: the number seven is used for completeness. Seven churches represent all churches, seven spirits = perfect spirit

- It's very Trinitarian: From the Father, the Spirit and Jesus Christ
- It's eternal – just as its source

**Q.3 Who is John talking about in vv.5b-8, and what is he telling us about Him?**

- Jesus – Revelation is all about Jesus and His gospel
- Jesus loves us, freed us from our sins by His blood, made us a kingdom, priests to God the Father, He deserves and will receive eternal glory and dominion, He is coming again, everyone will see His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, this 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming will be difficult for many.

**Read verses 9-20. Q.4 Who is John, where is He and why is He there (see also verse 2)?**

- V2, 9 – a witness to the Word of God and to Jesus

- He was a brother and partner to the churches who were struggling under immense trial (the tribulation).
- He was on the island of Patmos – John was exiled (held prisoner) for preaching the gospel.
- He was given a vision which he was to write down for the seven churches.

**Read verses 12-16. Q.5 How is the speaker described? Who do you think it is speaking to John? Why?**

- One like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and a golden sash around his chest...
- It is Jesus – His favourite name for Himself was the Son of Man, and He exudes the characteristics of vv.12-16 → kingship, power, holiness, purity – transfiguration scene; perfect or “7”

Note: See verse 20 for the interpretation of the seven golden lampstands and the seven stars. To understand where this imagery of Jesus comes from, *read Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 and 10:4-6*. This is a description of Jesus pre-incarnation. When the veil of the incarnation is pulled back, the image we are given of Jesus is pretty awesome!

**Q.7 How do you understand verse 19? Have a good think about it as it determines what follows**

- “Have seen” – the glorious unveiling (vision) of Jesus in vv.12-16
- “Are” the present condition of the church
- “What will take place” – the visions beginning in chapter 4 and continuing to the end of Revelation.

**Q.8 If you were asked to tell someone three facts about Jesus, what would you say from Rev 1? Why are these important – to you, to others?**



## #2: WHAT JESUS THINKS OF HIS CHURCH (REV. 2 AND 3)

*Read Revelation 2 and 3 - Pray that you would have "ears to hear"*

The aim of this study is for you to gain an overview of the two chapters and see how things hang together.

**Q.1 Do you think the letters were meant only for the specific churches addressed? Justify your answer (take note of the final "command" - 3:20)**

**Q.2 Complete the table...**

Church	Strength	Weakness	Summary
Ephesus	Working tirelessly in. Maintaining the truth – bastions of it	Lacking in love – for God (for Christ was their first love) and each other	Orthodoxy without love – church will fall apart, love is the mark of the Christian – remember salvation
Smyrna	Enduring under suffering – spiritually rich	none	
Pergamum	Holding fast under pressure	Evil practices – false teaching , i.e. idolatry, immorality (Num 22- 23) patterns of sin and judg.	
Thyatira	Good works and fruit	Tolerating evil – Jezebel – she's inside the church	
Sardis	Some unspoiled and worthy	Weakening to death – all it has is a reputation – worthless at that, incomplete works	Death diagnosed – depressing, but there is hope of conquering
Philadelphia	Faithful to the Word	none	Weak, faithful, wanting to belong, they have His power
Laodicea		Lukewarm and unworthy – proud – makes Jesus want to vomit	Complacent, avoidant, self-sufficient, Jesus is like an ornament

**Q.3 What are the titles Jesus gives Himself in each message How is each title appropriate? Do the same with the promises to overcomers. How do these titles and promises help you grasp the central message to each church?**

**Ephesus:** Jesus: Him who holds the 7 stars – who walks among the 7 lampstands. Warning: Jesus holds the lampstands and He will take it away. Promise: They are given permission to eat from the tree of life in paradise. Central message – return to first love

**Smyrna:** Jesus – the first and the last, was dead and came to life, Jesus knows and is in control; Promise – crown of life, unharmed by the second death; Central message – Be faithful

**Pergamum:** Jesus – has the sharp double-edged sword; Promise – given hidden manna, white, bread of heaven – Christ Himself; Central message – repent and hold firm

**Thyatira:** Jesus – Son of God, eyes like the flame of fire, feet like burnished bronze; Promise – given authority over the nations – sharing in Christ’s rule, right now! The Morning Star – Ps 2; Central Message – Repent

**Sardis:** Jesus - Him who has the 7 spirits of God and the 7 stars; Promise – Walk with Christ – clothed in white, name not blotted out, confessed before the Father; Central Message – remember, obey, repent

**Philadelphia:** Jesus - The Holy One, the true One who has the keys of David, authority; Promise – made a pillar in God’s temple, never to leave, names written on... means belonging – the mark of ownership, sharing in the kingdom – the keys of power; Central Message – encouragement

**Laodicea:** Jesus – The Amen, the faithful and true witness, origin of God’s creation; Promise: a place in Christ, on His throne, loved by Jesus; Central Message – be zealous, hot!

**Q.5 What is Jesus teaching His people (then and now) about patient endurance? (see 2:2-3, 7, 10-11, 13, 17, 19, 25-26, 3:4-5, 8-12, 21)**

- 2:7 – reward awaits
- 2:10-11 – need to be feared, not to be fearful
- 2:19 – works built on faith, pleasing to God
- 3:4-5 – worthy to walk with Christ
- 3:8-12 – authority over oppressors, will be preserved
- 3:20-21 – a place on His throne awaits – just as Christ endured

**Q.6 Which of the churches is our church most like in our Strengths**

## Weaknesses

Q.7 What is Jesus' message for you today then?



## STUDY 3: ENTER THE THRONE ROOM (REV. 4 AND 5)

**Q. What first comes to your mind when you think about heaven – what sort of place it is, what happens there, what will it be like etc?**

John speaks in picture symbols – don't read literally, the message behind the symbols is what's important. John is invited to the throne room of God. What he sees and describes gives us the necessary perspective to deal with the breaking of the seals that follows.

*Read Revelation 4 and 5*

**Q. What do you learn about God in Rev 4? For what attributes is He considered praiseworthy?**

- Vv3-4 – indescribable, beyond words, yet there are chosen words which are significant
- “Rainbow” – grace – re-establishing order after reversing it (creation to un-creation to re-creation (the Flood))
- Jasper and carnelian – precious
- V5 – magnificent
- V8 – perfect holiness
- V11 – He is the Creator King over everything – by His will life exists, worshipped forever

**Q. The Old Testament gives important background to many, if not most, of the imagery seen by John in Revelation. How do the following passages help you to understand:**

**Thunder and lightening (Exodus 19:16-19; Job 37:1-15; Psalm 18:7-19)?**

- Exodus - heralding God's presence
- Job – “thunder” – the sound of His voice – His lightning
- Psalm – accompanying the presence of God
- God is the central figure of these three passages

**The living creatures (Ezekiel 1; Isaiah 6)?**

- Ezekiel 1:5 – in terms of what Ezekiel saw!
- Ezekiel – similar description and wheels beside
- Ezek 1:13 – like burning coal and fire / torches
- Isaiah – seraphs, bearers of coal, calling “holy, holy, holy”

- Revelation – saying “holy” forever, giving glory, honour and thanks
- These represent creation – God’s world is all its facets – 4 faces. The Jewish interpretation is wisdom, strength, speed and power
- It is yet again symbolic – don’t worry about the inconsistency between Ezekiel and Isaiah!

**The Lion (Genesis 49:9; Isa 11:1) – see Rev 5:5**

- Genesis – Judah = a lion
- Isaiah – ancestor of Jesus
- God’s church and God’s world join together in worship of Him.

**Q. The scroll in Rev 5 seems to be a rather important piece of papyrus. What is it that qualifies the Lamb to open it? Does this help you understand what it might contain?**

- Rev 5:1-5 – John hears of a victorious Lion, with whom Israel identifies
- Rev 5:6 – John turns around and sees a slain Lamb – 7 horns, 7 eyes – omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (all places)
- The scroll – God’s plan for creation, unfulfilled without the death of Jesus (see Col 1:25-29)
- Rev 5:9 – He was slain, His blood was shed to purchase men for God – redeemed – “certificate of redemption” – it is desperately helpless without it opened. Once it is opened, God’s kingdom is revealed with Christ at the heart of His kingdom – Christ the mystery of God revealed!

**Q. Note down everything you learn about Jesus in Revelation 5 (particularly how He overcame, why He overcame, and His status now – v.6)**

- V6 – slain, in the centre of the throne - encircled
- V7 – to take the scroll
- V8 – worshipped by the elders and living creatures
- V9 – worthy by death to purchase men from every people group
- V10 – He made people to be a kingdom and priests who serve God and to reign
- V13 – worthy of eternal praise and glory, honour and power

**Q. The progression and contents of the songs in these two chapters is quite astounding. Picture the scene – the increasing numbers of participants, the crescendo and conclusion. What insights does this give you into the true nature of worship?**

- In one voice; resounding; unceasing, focussed, we are at the centre of God's purpose, a crescendo of voices, a chorus of praise to the Creator, Redeemer, the Lamb who was slain

**Q. Is this your hope and passion?**

**Q. How does this perspective of heaven help the readers who are facing persecution and tribulation today? Q.9 How does this perspective of heaven help you?**



## STUDY 4: GROUNDHOG DAY (REV. 6:1 – 11:19)

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The scene is set; God is well and truly in control and the Lamb opens the seals... *Read Revelation 6:1-17, and 8:1*

### 1. First to Fourth Seal (6:1-8)

- White horse – bow, crown, conqueror = kings of the earth??
- Red horse – power to take peace, invoke war – a large sword = causes strife
- Black horse – scales = famine, economic hardship
- Pale horse – death and Hades = power over ¼ of the earth to kill and destroy

### 2. Fifth Seal (6:9-11)

- The white robes of the martyrs who are told to wait some more = calling for God to be true to Himself – this is our prayer

### 3. Sixth Seal (6:12-17)

- Those who are damned will be judged; praying that God would be true in judging = earthquake, black sun, red moon, falling stars, receding sky, islands and mountains removed – all people hid from God's wrath; yet God's people are sealed (before the tribulation??) – they are a multitude in worship to God

### 4. Seventh Seal (8:1-5)

- Silence in heaven

**Q. What do you think the horsemen represent, both individually and corporately?**

- Persecution, Satan, his army
- But not total annihilation, only partial

The next thing John sees is angels with Trumpets. *Read Revelation 8:6 – 9:21*

**Q. Trumpets can indicate a day of remembrance (Lev 23:24); a coronation (1 Kings 1:34); triumph (Joshua 6:4) or warning (Jer 4:5ff; Ezek 33:1-6; Joel 2:1). Which is most likely here?**

Warning – the judgements aren't final. Their purpose is to lead people to repentance.

**Q. What seems to be the purpose of these Trumpet visions (9:20-21)?**

- Warning – allowing for repentance for those who are spared.
- The point is the *who* and not the *how* (not about natural disasters, disease etc)
- What is our response? These things are methods of grace – God is merciful, destroying His creation for the sake of man's lives.

**Q. Think about what it means to you that the locusts are freed with God's permission (9:1), that God chooses what they can and can't do (9:3-5), and that death is unleashed upon mankind in response to a voice from the altar (the saints? 9:13-15). Is God cruel? Why or why not?**

- He is still behaving within His character – He is being merciful!
- And Christian's are secure – the warning isn't for us so far as we are already under grace. He acts for His own glory; He is just, to His own glory (Rom 9).

What does Revelation 6-11 tell us about:

The present and future state of Christians?

The present and future state of non-Christians?

How should this lead us to pray for the world around us?



## STUDY 5: THE GLORIOUS GATHERING (REV. 7:1-17)<sup>3</sup>

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*Read Revelation 7:1-17*

**Q.1 What assurance is given in vv.1-8 concerning God's watchful care over His people?**

Nothing is to be touched (land, sea - anything) until all of God's people (the full number of believers alive when these events take place) are sealed (and thus protected) from the coming judgements.

Before looking at Rev 7:9-17, *read the following:*

- *Genesis 12:1-3*
- *Isaiah 49:5-6*
- *Luke 24:46-47*
- *Acts 1:8*

**Q.3 What do the above passages tell us about God's vision for the nations?**

- Genesis 12 – to bless them through the line of Abraham (Israel)
- Isaiah 49 - To bring salvation to the ends of the earth
- Luke 24 – for the Christ to suffer and rise from the dead and repentance and forgiveness of sins proclaimed to all people
- Acts 1 – The disciples are to be Jesus' witnesses locally and globally – to the very ends of the earth

**Q.4 Describe the crowd that John sees, and what is its importance (7:9)?**

A multitude no-one could count – like the sands on the seashore (Genesis 15:5)

From every nation, tribe, people and language – a thorough way to say there is no favourites, no racism, parochialism – people from everywhere are in glory! God's plans from Genesis 12 have been fulfilled!

**Q.5 What are the worshippers wearing, and what do you think this attire symbolises (7:9)?**

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<sup>3</sup> This study on Revelation 7 borrows from Paul Borthwick, *Missions: God's heart for the world*, pp.37-40

White stood for victory – these are the ‘victorious ones’, victorious through the work of Jesus. White also stood for purity – sin and guilt and shame is gone, now spotless – washed in the blood of the Lamb (v.14), perfect, clothed in the splendid righteousness of Christ!

**Q.6 The servants are sealed and numbered, and before God’s throne (7:15). How did they come to be there (7:10-15)?**

- The same answer as above – but wanting to stress this – there is no other way we can be holy and pure, to approach God and be in heaven, than through Jesus’ work on the cross.
- By washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb
- The cross – we were saved and sealed at the cross.

**Q.7 Make a list of the blessings that they enjoy (7:15-17). What do these blessings mean for us?**

Before the throne of God and serving Him day and night

God’s tent (or love and protection) spread over them

No more hunger

No more thirst

No more damage from the elements

The Good Shepherd – in person

Living water – refreshed

No more tears!

**Q.8 How does the Revelation 7 ‘worship’ compare with what we do at our church?**

Q.9 What does this passage say to the church of Jesus Christ today in light of facts like 1) there are over a billion people who have never heard of Jesus, 2) there are still several thousand languages with no written translation of the Bible, and 3) whole ethnic groups (what John calls peoples or tribes) still have no witnessing church?



## STUDY 6: BEWARE OF IMITATIONS (REV 12:1 – 13:18)

*Read Revelation 12:1-6.* Q.1 **Describe what we learn about the three characters in 12:1-6 (remember, this is symbolic language)**

- **The woman** – either Mary, the mother of Jesus; or Israel, the descendants of Jesus and the ancestors of the church. The woman fled from the attack on her and her Son. Though this is a battle in heaven, the earthly battle could have been when Joseph and Mary's escaped to Egypt to flee from the genocide ordered by Herod (see Matthew 2:16 and following). It could also be the time that the church fled from the persecution soon after the death of Christ. Whatever the exact picture, the woman (God's people) is taken care of and protected from the dragon.
- **The dragon** – Satan (v.9). Hates the child, wants to cut its life short by devouring it. The dragon is unsuccessful in stopping the child, so turns its attention on the woman (God's people) who need to flee (v.6)
- **The child** – Jesus, who will rule the nations with an iron sceptre (see Psalm 2:7-9); escapes from the devouring work of the dragon (Jesus' temptation?), snatched away (Christ's ascension?)

*Read Revelation 12:7-16*

**Q.2 The great battle is heating up. What details does 12:7-16 give us of the characters, activities and destinies of those involved?**

- **God** – has an army of angels fighting his battle and they win; the salvation and power and the kingdom belong to God. Jesus has all authority (v.10)
- **Satan** – the dragon, the devil, lost the battle, hurled down (vv.9-10); the ancient serpent who led Adam and Eve astray in the Garden (Genesis 3) and brought the curse on the earth; leads the whole world astray (away from God). No contest against God, so takes his frustration out on people (v.9). Accuses Christians of our sins (v.10). Has been overcome by Christians who reject his accusations and trust in Jesus (v.10-11). His time is short (v.12)
- **God's people** – overcome Satan's accusations by trusting in Jesus' sacrifice for our sins and testifying of Jesus' victory (v.11); willing to die for their faith (v.11)

**When did Satan fall – be hurled? See Luke 11:18**

Read Revelation 13:1-10. Q:3 As Christ is God's representative, so the beast from the sea is the Dragon's (Satan's) representative. **Detail on the table below how the beast mimics and parodies Christ:**

Christ	The Sea Beast
'On His head are many crowns' (19:12)	13:1, 10 horns – strength / 7 heads - authority
'He has a name written on Him' (19:12, 16)	13:1 blasphemous names
'He shares the power and Kingdom of God (12:10)	13:2 the power and throne and authority of Satan
He died and came to life again (2:8); He had been slain but stands (5:6)	13:3, 14 healed death wound
He made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve His God and Father 1:6)	13:4 worshipped, followed by the 'whole earth,' magnified

#### Q.4 What do you think the sea beast represents?

- This kingdom parodies God's kingdom – earthly kingdoms and governments always demanding full allegiance – not just Rome but all governments apart from God's since
- But, the government is in God's hands

Read Revelation 13:11-18

#### Q.5 How does the second beast parody Christ and His Spirit?

Christ and the Spirit	The Earth Beast
"A Lamb" with "seven horns and seven eyes" (5:6)	2 horns <i>like a lamb</i> , spoke like a dragon (13:11)
An angel with God's seal; marking the servants of God (7:2-3)	Causes 'all' to be marked, by the mark of the beast (13:16-17)
God's people protected by fire; having	Performs great signs – including hire

<b>authority and signs (11:5-6)</b>	from heaven (13:13)
<b>The Spirit, glorifying Christ, declaring what is Christ's (John 16:14)</b>	Exalting the sea beast; idolising it, causing people to worship it, killing those who don't (13:12, 14-15)

**Q.6 What do you think the earth beast represents (cf. 19:20)?**

- The false prophet – miracles deceiving even the elect; looking like Christianity; described here in apocalyptic language – it is the same false prophet that all of Scripture warns against
- The first beast has no power without the second (e.g. institutionalised church, giving life to the powers that be... leading to nominal Christianity etc)
- As a side issue – the number 666 (in v.18) is the number of man (i.e. in terms that we can understand). It doesn't represent anything more than what is being described. It represents being short of 'God's mark' – being 7. Be diligent, don't be led astray!!

**Q.7 For us in Canberra, how might the government or false teaching affect the way we live as Christians (think from the subtle to the obvious effects)?**

The secular movement has done a great job in silencing Christians – and making issues of faith a no-go zone in conversations. This is seen in chaplaincy in schools, keeping 'religion' out of politics.

False teaching – teaching that focuses on everything but Jesus (this could be focussing on things like wealth, security, health, self-help, social justice, spirituality etc

**Q.8. It has been noted that where persecution of Christians is the dominant expression in a country (e.g. China, Africa, South America), revival happens. Why isn't there blatant oppression against Christians in Australia? Is this a good or bad thing? Is there anything we need to change?**

I'm thinking here about Christians looking the same as everyone else – the way we dress, the way we speak, how we spend our money, what we vote for (generally a healthy economy over issues of social justice). If we aren't a threat to anyone, if we look and act the same, there's nothing to fight against.

**How can we Christians share in God's victory over Satan and his cohorts?**

## REVELATION 14:1-16:21 SERMON NOTES

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## STUDY 7: RELEASING THE WRATH (REV 14:1 – 16:21)

Share a situation, either from recent news or from your own life, where justice was not done.

*Read Revelation 14:1-20.* **Q.** From the picture of war in Revelation 12-13, the scene in heaven changes in 14:1-5. **How has it changed?**

A gathering of people who have experienced the saving power of the gospel, now surrounding God throne in praise. The people in 14:1-5 were not perfect, but lived holy lives - speaking the truth and worshipping Jesus

**Q. All of a sudden, six angels are sent out. Summarise the actions of the angels**

- Angel # 1 (vv.6-7)
- Angel #2 (v.8)
- Angel #3 (vv.9-10)
- Angel #4 (vv.15-16)
- Angel #5 (v.17)
- Angel #6 (vv.18-20)

*Read Revelation 15.* **Q. A part of the celebratory song of Moses (Exodus 15:1-8) is sung in 15:3-4. From what you see in the rest of Revelation 15: who are singing and why are they singing?**

- **Who:** not just one nation (as in Exodus 15) but all nations will come to worship the creating and redeeming God
- **Why:** because God alone is holy – for His righteous acts have been revealed. The song is now called the song of the Lamb, because Jesus died as the Passover Lamb in the new exodus (releasing us from slavery to sin, death and hell).

*Read Revelation 16:1-11. Q. On the table below, compare and contrast the first five Trumpets with the first five bowls*

Trumpet	Bowl
#1 - 8:7 Plague on the earth	#1 - 16:2 - sores
#2 - 8:8-9 Plague on the sea	#2 - 16:3 – seas / blood
#3 - 8:10-11 Plague on the rivers	#3 - 16:4-6 - rivers/springs - blood
#4 - 8:12 Plague on the sky	#4 - 16:8-9 - sun scorches the earth
#5 - 9:1-12 Locusts torment	#5 - 16:10-11 - darkness

Q. How are the Bowls similar to / different from the Trumpets?

- Trumpets = ½ destruction
- Bowls – complete destruction
- The difference is because of who they were directed to

*Read Revelation 16:12-16. Q. Verse 15 is quite forcefully inserted into the story here, interrupting the flow. Considering the context of the 6<sup>th</sup> Bowl, why is it there?*

- To be ready and alert for Christ's return
- We shouldn't be surprised, but anticipating Christ

*Read Revelation 16:17-21. Q. What is mankind's response to the wrath of God through all of this? (16:9, 11, 21)*

- Cursed God, the name of God
- Did not repent or give Him glory

**Q. What should be ours?**

**14:7** – Fear God and give Him glory and to worship God based on the certainty that He will establish justice in His creation

**16:15 (see also Matthew 24:42)** – stay awake and stay clothed

Q. How can we practically do this?



## STUDY 8: THE CITY OF MAN IS GONE! (REV 17:1–19:10)

How much truth do you think there is in the saying “your character is formed by the company you keep”?

*Read Rev 17:1-6. Q. Compare and contrast the women of Revelation 12 and 17*

	Chapter 2	Chapter 17
<b>Location</b>	<b>The heavens, flying to the wilderness (12:1, 14)</b>	the wilderness – a safe vantage point, where God protects (17:3)
<b>Clothing</b>	<b>The sun, moon and stars (12:1)</b>	regal, appealing, deceit (17:4)
<b>Offspring</b>	<b>The male child – Jesus – a ruler (12:5, 17)</b>	whores and earths abominations (17:5)
<b>Who loves them</b>	<b>God (12:6)</b>	kings of the earth - fornicators (17:2-3)
<b>Sustenance</b>	<b>By God, provided for, reassured by (12:6, 14-16)</b>	drunk with the blood of the saints, witnesses of Jesus (17:3, 6)

**Q.** In verse 5, the woman is called ‘Babylon the Great. The Mother of Prostitutes and of the vile things of the earth’. A Biblical Theology of Babylon: have a quick look at the following passages. **What do they tell you about the great city, Babylon:**

- **Genesis 11:2 and 9** (Shinar is renamed Babel which is short for Babylon)
- **Daniel 1:2** (Israel is exiled and dragged off to Shinar)
- **Zechariah 5:5-11** (Babylon or Shinar is the place where sin is taken to dwell)

**FYI:** From Revelation 17-19, ‘the great city Babylon’ is simply the human race organised in defiance of God.

*Read Revelation 17:7-18. A ‘mystery’ in the Bible is not something to be solved; it is not a puzzle. A mystery is something that was once unknown, but has now been*

made known. The best approach to this passage is not to 'solve it', and identify kings and hills, etc, but to look at the symbols and realities that underlie them.

**Q. Babylon, the woman, rides a beast (v.7). Who or what is the beast? What does the beast do?**

- The beast is explained in verses 10-11. He is a king (or ruler) of the earth who is awaiting destruction.
- He mimics Christ (was, is not, is to come) to remind us of Jesus who was and is and is to come). The only difference is, this beast (earthly ruler) is not eternal. He will come to an end.

**Q. Why do you think the beast and the ten kings join forces against the harlot?**  
(read Mark 3:23-26)

- Because Satan's Kingdom is divided – they are power hungry and devious, proud and self-seeking. And verse 17 – God uses their nature to destroy themselves (and carry out God's plan of reversing the curse from this world and destroying evil)

*Read Revelation 18:1-3.* **Q. The cry of Revelation 14:8 is made again – summarise the intent of the angels proclamation.**

*Read Revelation 18:4-20.* **Q. Why do you think:**

- The kings of the earth mourn (vv.9-10)?
- The Merchants mourn (vv.11-17a)?
- The people who live by the sea mourn (vv.17b-19)?
- The saints and apostles rejoice (v.20)?

*Read Revelation 19:1-10.* **Q. What is the emphasis of the praise of heaven at the fall of Babylon?**

- Fallen is Babylon
- God exercises His authority – Babylon's judgement is complete

**Q. The Bride replaces the harlot at the end of history and rejoices greatly before He who sits on the throne. How should we respond to God's justice and vindication of His people (vv.6-10)?**

- We should rejoice too

- V.9 is our great hope – or it should be
- Worship God
- V.10 “testimony about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” means that speaking of Jesus must be the major part of prophecy (declaring God’s Word to people) – so speak of Jesus!



## STUDY 9: REVELATION 19:11 – 21:8

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A lot of themes introduced in Revelation are starting to come together as we approach the end. In this scene we have 7 (!) visions of the drama behind history, of judgement...

*Read Revelation 19:11-16. Q. Who do you think the rider on the white horse is? Why? How is He described?*

- Jesus – rider of a white horse; faithful and true; judges – makes war in righteousness; fire, crown and unknown name; robe in blood; the word of God – sword in mouth; followed by Christians; ruler of the nations; King of Kings, Lord of Lords...

*Read Revelation 19:17-18. Q. What does the angels' cry tell you about the impending fate of those who dwell on the earth?*

- Doom – the great supper of God which is contrasted with the marriage feast of the Lamb – everyone is invited – either as main course or as guests (brutal - yes, but true)

*Read Revelation 19:19-21. Q. What is your impression of this battle? Is it much of a contest? Why?*

- It's not a contest at all;
- It is the consummation of a defeat that has already occurred (at the cross – see Col 2:15)

We now come to one of the most difficult parts of this book. There have been endless disputes over this passage, some of them very bitter. There are disputes over how to interpret the numbers (1000 years), when these things will happen, or have they already happened. Faithful Christians have agreed to disagree, and it is our responsibility (as always) to humbly see what the text has to say, and be gracious in our discussions. *Read Revelation 20:1-6. Q. An angel appears in verse 1, but is not described in any way in verses 1-3. The focus is on what he does. What does he do (vv.1-3)? What are the results of the angels work?*

- A key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand
- Seizes the great dragon (Satan) and binds him for 1000 years
- Matthew 12:29 and Colossians 2:15 might help bring understanding of the chaining of the dragon
- The dragon thrown into the abyss, closed it and sealed it for 1000 years

- Releases him for a short time

**Q. Verses 4-7 speak of those who have been killed for the faith (martyrs). What do we learn about the present and future realities for the martyrs?**

- They came to life and reigned with the Messiah for 1000 years (the time when Satan was bound)
- The rest of the dead (those not with the Messiah – non-Christians??) did not come to life (this might mean that non-Christians aren't conscious between their death and Judgement Day??)
- The martyrs are blessed and holy – sharing in the first resurrection
- The second death of being thrown into the lake of fire (seen in 20:14) doesn't touch them.
- They are priests of God and the Messiah – serving God for 1000 years.
- What all this means is that those who have died before Jesus comes back again are not forgotten by God, but have a very special place, in conscious joy with Him.

*Read Revelation 20:11-15.* **Q. Here we find ourselves on the final Judgement Day. On what basis are the dead judged?**

- V.12 – their works
- Their names are not written in the Book of Life

*Read revelation 21:1-8.* **Q.7 List all you can see of the descriptions given for the new heaven and the new earth. How does it compare with Babylon (look back at Rev 17-18 for more details)**

- This cursed earth has passed away
- No sea – sea in Hebrew culture signified chaos. Therefore, there's no chaos in heaven.
- The Holy City, New Jerusalem comes down from heaven to earth – that means that instead of us going to heaven, heaven comes to us → God coming to earth to make His home with His people in a new and re-created physical world.
- The New Jerusalem is God's people – like a Bride, beautiful and prepared for joyous relationship with God (metaphorically her husband).
- Unlike Babylon, which is a godless place, the New Jerusalem is a God-filled place (verse 3).

- Unlike Babylon, it's not a place of pain and destruction – it's a place of peace, healing, life, joy, newness, refreshment...
- Everything is new
- Living water – life, and life in abundance – with God at the centre of life and consciousness!
- No sin is allowed in heaven – never again! Sin and sinners have been judged in one of two ways:
  1. for Christians, Jesus has taken the penalty and punishment for our sin on the cross, and made us new creations (2 Cor 5:17) ready for the new creation; or
  2. people choose to take the penalty and punishment for their own sins – which means the lake of fire.

There are aspects of Revelation 19-21 which are hard to understand. There is no doubt about that. But the big picture is clear. There are only two ways to live in this world (with God or against Him), and only two destinations for all people. **Q.8 How should this change our approach to life?**

- Live as new creations in Christ preparing for the new creation
- Living in light of the coming judgement – prayerful proclamation of the gospel
- Don't fear persecution – God looks after His own
- Prepare for Satan's death those – he can't kill us, but can take away our joy, and hamper our faith by distraction or persecution. But being God's people is worth it – so don't live the wasted life, living for a world that will not last...



## STUDY 10: GLORY! (REVELATION 21:9 – 22:21)

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What are you most looking forward to in heaven?

*Read Revelation 21:9-22:21. Q. How is heaven described in 21:9-27? What might this tell us about heaven?*

- V.10 – Jerusalem – the holy city, perfect, beautiful, glorious...
- V.11 – having the glory of God – it's sheer beauty, resplendence – it is the radiance of a rare jewel (cf. 4:3 – God Himself radiating from within)
- V.12 – fortified
- V.19-20 – the stones from Exodus – the garment of the High Priest – the church is God's servant – His priests
- V.21 – the walls are transparent
- Exodus 48 – it's name – "The Lord is there!"
- God's glory goes everywhere – His presence in the church – the place is perfect, indescribably glorious!

**Q. What is significant about the absence of the temple? (21:22)**

- A temple is not necessary because God dwells with/in the presence of His people and vica versa
- God is the temple!

*Re-read Revelation 22:1-5. Q. From the outside the people of God are described as a city; from the inside, a garden (read Genesis 2:8-14 and Hebrews 11:18-24 for some background info). Why do you think this is the case?*

- City's represent large groups of people.
- Eden: the garden where we would be God's servants in the place of God's choosing (God's people, in God's place under God's rule)
- Creation is renewed, restored, healed, sustained

**Q.4 According to 22:6-10, how seriously should we take the message of Revelation? Why?**

- Very seriously!
- It is teaching us about God's revelation – it's trustworthy and true; the same Revelation through the ages, the same Christ (v.6)
- V's 6-7 – these are Jesus' words, delivered through His messenger! See Revelation 1 – the source of Revelation is Jesus Himself

**Q.5 What does 22:11-21 have to say about Jesus and the gospel message?**

- V.11 – people who don't trust in Jesus are confirmed in their evil state, their filthy life – a statement of fact, of judgement about them.
- The gospel message is true and has consequences (v.12)
- Jesus is coming quickly in judgement – it is imperative that we wash our robes! (v.14)
- Don't change the message – it is a fixed, once for all time message of grace and truth (vv.18-19)

**Q.6 What does the last two verses of the Bible say, and why are they suitable end to the Scriptures?**

- Jesus is coming soon. The end of this world is coming. Live now in light of the great change that Jesus brings.
- While we live in the here and now, what we most need is the grace (undeserved favour) of the Lord Jesus to be with us all.

**Q.7 How many times is God or Jesus referred to in these two chapters? What names are given for them? What does this tell us about heaven?**

I counted 36 times. The names are:

- The Lamb
- The Spirit
- God
- The Lord God the Almighty
- The Lord God
- The Lord
- The God of the spirits of the prophets

- The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End
- Jesus
- The Root and Offspring of David
- The Bright Morning Star
- Lord Jesus

The following question is from John Piper's book, *God is the Gospel* (p.15): "The critical question for our generation – and for every generation – is this: if you could have heaven, with no sickness, and with all the friends you ever had on earth, and all the food you ever liked, and all the leisure activities you ever enjoyed, and all the natural beauties you ever saw, all the physical pleasures you ever tasted, and no human conflict or any natural disasters, could you be satisfied with heaven, if Christ were not there?" **Q.8 Give your answer**

Q.9 What impact does this teaching on the new heaven and new earth have on these aspects of your Christian life?

Evangelism

Holiness of life

Contentment

Assurance

Attitude to other believers

*Revelation summarised: the King has conquered, will conquer and is coming again so hold on and trust in Him*

**A Month-Long Journey with Jesus:** here are 31 readings (one for each day of the month) listed in the order of their appearance in the New Testament<sup>4</sup>

Day 1. **Matt. 1:18–2:23.** Jesus is born, then becomes a refugee as an evil king seeks to destroy Him. Finally His family returns home.

Day 2. **Matt. 4:1–11.** Jesus confronts very real temptations.

Day 3. **Matt. 13:54–58.** Jesus faces rejection based on His family, their work, and the small size of His hometown.

Day 4. **Matt. 23:1–39.** Jesus speaks out against deceit, pride, and hypocrisy.

Day 5. **Matt. 25:31–46.** Jesus judges according to mercy and compassion rather than outward displays of spirituality.

Day 6. **Mark 4:1–41.** Jesus begins to explain the kingdom of God, using stories and images from the workplace.

Day 7. **Luke 2:1–52.** Luke describes events connected with Jesus' birth—and tells of an incident during a boyhood trip to Jerusalem.

Day 8. **Luke 4:14–37.** Jesus goes public with His purpose and immediately encounters opposition.

Day 9. **Luke 6:17–49.** Jesus teaches basic truths about attitudes, true charity, evaluating others, and making wise choices.

Day 10. **Luke 9:18–36.** Jesus talks with His followers about who He is.

Day 11. **Luke 22:1–24:53.** Jesus is betrayed, judged, executed, buried, resurrected, and reconnected with His followers.

Day 12. **John 1:1–18.** John, one of Jesus' followers, describes how God became a man through Christ—full of grace and truth.

Day 13. **John 5:19–47.** Jesus explains His relationship with His Father and the implications for us.

Day 14. **John 6:35–51.** Jesus teaches that He is the bread of life, and tells how people can find Him.

Day 15. **John 8:12–30.** Jesus announces that He is the light of the world.

Day 16. **John 10:1–18.** Jesus says that He is the good shepherd who seeks His Father's lost sheep.

Day 17. **John 11:1–12:8.** Jesus describes Jesus' relationship with some of his friends, and their profound love and care for each other.

Day 18. **John 14:1–15:8.** Jesus explains that He is our source of spiritual life and productivity—the way to God.

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<sup>4</sup> Edited from Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts (Thomas Nelson Publishers 1996)

Day 19. **John 21:15–25.** Jesus loved even the man who had denied Him and was jealous of another disciple.

Day 20. **Acts 2:22–42.** Peter explains Christ to a massive crowd in Jerusalem, and welcomes 3,000 people into the faith.

Day 21. **Rom. 5:1–21.** Paul explains how Christ sets people free from sin and makes them acceptable to God.

Day 22. **1 Cor. 15:1–28.** Paul teaches about Christ's resurrection and the destruction of our enemy, death.

Day 23. **Eph. 1:3–14.** Paul describes Christ's work for us from three vantage points: before creation, in the present, and in eternity.

Day 24. **Phil. 2:5–16.** Paul explains the choices Christ made in order to become a man, as well as the choices we should make in following Him.

Day 25. **Col. 1:15–22.** Paul states that Christ is Lord of all—yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Day 26. **1 Thess. 4:13–5:11.** Paul explains that Jesus will return and bring history to its culmination.

Day 27. **Heb. 1:1–2:18.** The author of Hebrews describes Christ's complete and wonderful work on our behalf.

Day 28. **Heb. 4:14–5:10.** Christ has experienced every kind of test or trial we will ever face.

Day 29. **Heb. 9:23–10:18.** Jesus takes away sin, once and for all. Forgiveness is ours in Him.

Day 30. **1 Pet. 1:1–12.** Peter tells us that our salvation in Christ is a reality that even the angels and Old Testament prophets did not understand.

Day 31. **Rev. 5:1–14; 22:1–21.** Christ will rule heaven and earth and will welcome believers to an eternity with Him.

## 32-DAY REVELATION BIBLE READING PLAN

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1. **Introducing Revelation**, promise of blessing, meet the King (1:1–8)

### **The Body of the Letter (1:9–22:5)**

2. The Son of Man among his churches (1:9–20)
3. Christ's message to Ephesus (2:1–7)
4. Christ's message to Smyrna (2:8–11)
5. Christ's message to Pergamum (2:12–17)
6. Christ's message to Thyatira (2:18–29)
7. Christ's message to Sardis (3:1–6)
8. Christ's message to Philadelphia (3:7–13)
9. Christ's message to Laodicea (3:14–22)
10. Heaven opened: the Lamb receives the scroll (4:1–5:14)
11. The Lamb opens the scroll's seven seals (6:1–8:1)
12. Interlude: the sealing of God's international people (7:1–17)
13. Heaven's incense altar: the saints' prayers, and fire flung to earth (8:2–5)
14. Angels sound seven trumpets (8:6–11:19)
15. The woman's son defeats the dragon (12:1–6)
16. Michael and heaven's armies defeat the dragon (12:7–17)
17. The beast from the sea (13:1–10)
18. The false prophet from the land (13:11–18)
19. The Lamb and his sealed victors (14:1–5)
20. Angelic announcements of judgment (14:6–20)
21. Heaven's sanctuary filled with glory (15:1–8)
22. Angels pour out seven bowls (16:1–21)
23. Babylon's power and luxury (17:1–15)
24. Babylon's fall lamented and celebrated (17:16–19:10)
25. Christ defeats and destroys the beast, the false prophet, and their gathered armies (19:11–21)
26. (Interlude: the thousand years of the dragon's binding and the martyrs' reign, 20:1–6)
27. God defeats and destroys the dragon and its gathered armies (20:7–10)
28. The last judgment and the destruction of death, the last enemy (20:11–15)
29. The new heaven and earth, home of the Lamb's bride (21:1–8)
30. The new Jerusalem, the Lamb's pure bride (21:9–22:5)

### **Epilogue (22:6–21)**

31. Transmission and trustworthiness of the Revelation, promise that Jesus is coming soon, promise of blessing (22:6–9, 16–17)
32. Prohibition of sealing the book, promise that Jesus is coming soon, promise of blessing (22:10–21)

This outline of Revelation is an edited version found in the ESV Study Bible

# Monday: Thanksgiving

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*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

**That we can know God:** who is our Maker, Sustainer, Provider, Redeemer and Protector. He is bigger and better than anyone or anything else in this universe – and we are His children, whom He loves.

**For Jesus and the gospel of His grace:** 1) the cross, where Jesus took our sin, shame, guilt, condemnation; 2) His resurrection, where Jesus defeated death, secured our future hope, and ushers in the new creation (of which we are a part of)

**For Jesus being our Good Shepherd:** who in His earthly life experienced every emotion / struggle we have or will ever face: rejection, injustice, abuse, physical agony, humiliation and more; who brings us to God the Father, so we can pray with confidence – knowing that God hears, acts and provides.

**For the Bible:** which is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey; the very Word of God, everything we need to know Jesus, grow like Him, and live well in His world.

**For the church:** that we are God’s children, reconciled through Jesus, to love and serve each other with grace, experience God’s grace together, and display God’s manifold wisdom to the world.

My personal thanksgiving list

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## Tuesday: Confession

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*If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9)*

Among other things, we confess the following:

Our selfishness and self-centredness, worldliness and greed, inconsistency and lack of stability, coldness of heart - our lack of love in general, and in specific - our lack of concern of those dying without Christ, our tolerance of sin on our life, our disobedience to God's revealed Word - especially when we knew we were sinning, our failure to make best use of our time, our need of serious prayer time and more time spent alone with God, our over familiarity with the gospel and the love of God

The sins I need to confess, give to God, seek His strength to change from:

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Ask for forgiveness - as individuals and as a church, trusting that the blood of Jesus cleanses all our sin; and entrusting ourselves to God's Holy Spirit, who guides us into newness of life and obedience.

(source: Enrich Your Prayer Life, B. Price)

## Wednesday: for our church family

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For all members of St Matt's to have relational closeness with Jesus, hearing His voice in His Word, and delighting in prayerful communion with our Maker and Redeemer, resulting in our faith affecting our lives more deeply, that our faith and love for Jesus will be more dominant in every aspect of our lives, when we meet together and throughout the week.

Pray in particular for our church services:

- Sunday at 8am
- Sunday at 10am
- Sunday at 6pm
- Tuesday at 11:30am
- Tuesday at 10am: Goodwin Village (Ralph Cartwright Centre)
- Thursday at 10am: Goodwin Village (David Harper House)

Ask God to remind us of the privilege and purpose He's given us as His children, reconciled through Jesus, to love and serve each other with grace, experience God's grace together, and display God's manifold wisdom to the world.

Ask God to grow our **Life Groups** (including Friends of Jesus & Christianity Explored) as gatherings that nurture newcomers, new Christians and regular church members; to get to know and support each other, while learning more about Jesus, what it means to be a Christian, and how to reach out to people who don't yet know Him.

Pray for the **kids and youth ministries** at St Matt's – that our children and youth will follow Jesus for life! Ask God to give the ministry leaders strength, wisdom and His abiding love as they serve our kids. Pray for more children from the area to meet Jesus for the first time, and know the safety, security and hope that He alone brings.

Pray for our **church training activities** – that we will all understand how the body works at St Matt's and where each ministry and role fits into the bigger picture; that our motivation to serve will be love for God and love for His church; never to earn anything from God or others, but serving freely out of the identity that Jesus has already won for us. And that we will all seek to grow to fulfill our particular ministry role.

## Thursday: our local community

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Ask God's blessings upon the churches of our area: to bring many people into His family.

Pray that many in Wanniassa and wider Canberra will realise their need of Jesus and will turn to Him in true repentance and faith. Pray that many will find Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, and that great numbers will be born again, into God's kingdom.

For workmates, uni- mates, family, friends, neighbours, strangers...

- For our lives to show forth the love and grace and truth of the gospel of Jesus
- For opportunities to share the gospel with them
- For clarity in speaking the gospel
- For God to have mercy on them, and for us to have the privilege to be involved in their new life in Christ

Below is a table to help guide your prayers. In the table, write down the name of three people you know who do not know Jesus in a personal way – and therefore facing judgment. For the next few months, concentrate praying for these three people whom you can attempt to help along to the next stage of the evangelism process (e.g. bring them to church). It is best to focus on three people who seem to be potentially receptive and with whom you have some common interests.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Friday: the world

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Pray that the Lord Jesus may be lifted up in every culture, among every people, so that people everywhere may hear of what He has done and place their trust in Him. Ask that they will look to Him in faith and worship, and be released from sin's deadly hold as they come into His new birth to eternal life.

In particular, pray for our St Matthew's supported missionaries

- University Christian Groups at CU and ANU (AFES)
- Nungalinga College in the Northern Territory,
- Bush Church Aid
- George Whitfield College in South Africa
- The Church Missionary Society
- Logos Hope and Operation Mobilisation
- Logosdor...

And all other Christians we partner with. Pray for those who have gone out in their fellowship to preach, to teach and to heal. Pray for God to guard, guide and use them; to raise up more people in His worldwide church to pray and to work, to care and to understand, to give to Him and to go for Him, that His church may grow, His will be done, His kingdom come, and His glory be revealed.

Pray for countries where persecution is an everyday experience for Christians: North Korea, China, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Egypt, and many other countries. Pray for God's sustaining grace to be upon His children – bringing respite, healing, hope and justice. Pray also for the persecutors – to be confronted by the risen Jesus and brought to repentance, faith and justice. And pray that the growth of God's kingdom in countries of persecution would continue to increase in depth and width.

Pray for countries that are experiencing disaster such as famine, war and upheaval.

For more information, check out our regularly updated website

**stmattswanniassa.org.au**

St Matthew's Anglican Church  
Cnr Laurens St & McBryde Crescent  
Wanniassa, ACT 2903

02 6231 7347

02 6231 7500

office@stmattswanniassa.org.au

We'd love to harness the creativity of those in St Matt's! We are hoping that each future edition of this booklet will feature a design from somebody within St Matt's.



If you would like to contribute an original artwork or design, please send it through to Jane our ministry co-ordinator (office@stmattswanniassa.org.au or 0401 732 389).