
Scripture Reading Schedule

Week 1: January 8-14 - Witness that Wins the World

Monday	<i>Revelation 1:1-8</i>
Tuesday	<i>Revelation 1:9-18</i>
Wednesday	<i>Revelation 7:1-17</i>
Thursday	<i>Revelation 10</i>
Friday	<i>Revelation 11:1-13</i>
Psalm of the Week	<i>Psalm 72</i>

Week 2: January 15-21 - The Lamb Who Reigns

Monday	<i>Revelation 4</i>
Tuesday	<i>Revelation 5</i>
Wednesday	<i>Revelation 8</i>
Thursday	<i>Revelation 9:1-12</i>
Friday	<i>Revelation 9:13-20</i>
Psalm of the Week	<i>Psalm 29</i>

Week 3: January 22-28 - The War of the Lamb

Monday	<i>Revelation 11:1-14</i>
Tuesday	<i>Revelation 11:15-19</i>
Wednesday	<i>Revelation 12</i>
Thursday	<i>Revelation 13:1-10</i>
Friday	<i>Revelation 13:11-18</i>
Psalm of the Week	<i>Psalm 62</i>

Week 4: January 29-February 4 - Babylon Is Always Falling

Monday	<i>Revelation 17:1-8</i>
Tuesday	<i>Revelation 17:9-18</i>
Wednesday	<i>Revelation 18:1-8</i>
Thursday	<i>Revelation 18:9-20</i>
Friday	<i>Revelation 18:20-19:10</i>
Psalm of the Week	<i>Psalm 111</i>

Scripture Reading Schedule

Week 5: February 5-11 - Wrath, Judgement & The Lamb

Monday	<i>Revelation 6:1-17</i>
Tuesday	<i>Revelation 15</i>
Wednesday	<i>Revelation 16:1-11</i>
Thursday	<i>Revelation 16:12-21</i>
Friday	<i>Revelation 19:11-21</i>
Psalm of the Week	<i>Psalm 86</i>

Week 6: February 12-18 - The City of the Lamb

Monday	<i>Revelation 20</i>
Tuesday	<i>Revelation 21:1-14</i>
Wednesday	<i>Revelation 21:15-27</i>
Thursday	<i>Revelation 22</i>
Friday	<i>Revelation 1:1-8</i>
Psalm of the Week	<i>Psalm 147</i>

Week 7: February 19-26 - Entering the Season of Lent

Monday	<i>Joel 2:1-17</i>
Tuesday	<i>Isaiah 58:1-12</i>
Wednesday	<i>Psalm 51:1-17</i>
Thursday	<i>Matthew 6</i>
Friday	<i>2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10</i>
Psalm of the Week:	<i>Psalm 51</i>

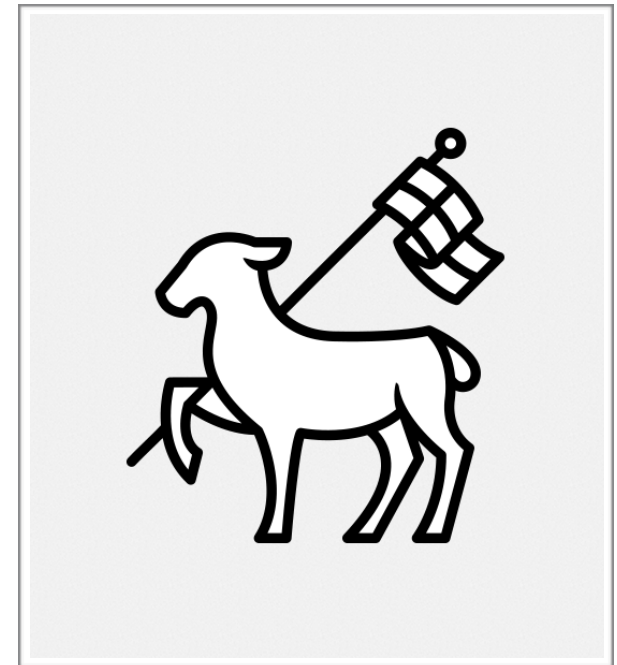
Looking Ahead: Special Guest Speaker

Save the date!

On **Sunday January 21** we will be welcoming Dr. Loren Johns to preach in our Sunday morning service and Adult Education Hour. Dr. Johns is the Professor of New Testament Studies at AMBS.

He will be speaking on how we can understand the book of Revelation as a message to the church today by understanding it's witness to the ongoing work of Jesus.

Triumph of the Lamb: Reading Revelation Responsibly



Winter 2018 Bible Reading Guide

Reading Revelation Responsibly

When I (Pastor Mike) was 11 years old I was given my first Bible: A Gideons King James New Testament; and the first book of the Bible that I ever tried to read was the mysterious book of Revelation.

I was fascinated with its monsters and battles, its angels and demons, and its visions of heaven and hell that leapt out from the pages of the last book of the Bible. Like many others, I assumed I was reading some kind of un-deciphered code about the end times. I thought Revelation was a secret foretelling of the events of the late twentieth century. But I was mistaken. **When it came to understanding the book of Revelation, I was hopelessly lost and confused.**

The book of Revelation is the most misunderstood and abused book of the Bible. But that is unfortunate, because it might just be one of the most needed books for the church today.

The book of Revelation was written around the end of the first century, and is a prophetic critique of the age Christians live in. It's a daring proclamation that Jesus Christ is the world's new ruler.

Revelation is a wild and creative portrayal of the conflict between the beastly empire of the day and the peaceable reign of the Lamb of God. What it foretells is the eventual triumph of the kingdom of Christ. It does this through symbolic images similar to political cartoons — hideous monsters finally conquered by a little Lamb, a slaughtered Lamb who lives again. This is how the author John tells of the triumph of Jesus over all the beastly empires to come.

The challenge lies in understanding these symbols meant to John and his audience.

It is important to keep in mind that most of the monstrous images in Revelation are symbols for cosmic evil working through the empire of John's day - the Roman Empire. But history's pattern is that every human Kingdom becomes idolatrous and must be resisted by God's people. What is important to remember is what Revelation is, and what it isn't.

The book of Revelation is not a coded newspaper foretelling the events of the future.

It is a glorious revelation of the triumph of Jesus Christ. Jesus' lamb-like kingdom brings a saving alternative to the beast-like empires of the world. Revelation doesn't anticipate the end of God's good creation — it anticipates the end of this violent and unjust human age.

John confessed that Jesus is Lord and Caesar is not, which is why he was exiled to the prison island of Patmos. From that deep faith came all kinds of creative images to communicate this good news: **"The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign forever and ever."** (Revelation 11:15)

This is the great message of this book. It is a word of hope to a people who live between the crunch of ages, who face hardship, suffering, injustice and evil. It is a word of promise to people who cry out from the bottom for God to come and set things right, who wait patiently for something better. As John Wesley once said: **"Revelation was not written without tears; neither without tears will it be understood."**

Revelation closes with the image of the heavenly city of the New Jerusalem - a city with gates that are never closed. Entrance to the city is always a possibility. All who repent and turn their backs on the beasts of idolatry and injustice and who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb will be received into the holy city.

In Genesis God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden and blocked their way from returning. But in Revelation God calls to humanity and invites them to enter the city and find forgiveness, healing and new life. The father's house is always open and there are many rooms. The last words of the Bible depict a loving God reaching out to welcome weary sinners home.

The good news is that this New Jerusalem is not only a future hope - but a present, tangible reality. It is found wherever churches follow the way of the Lamb, brining hope, healing and the good news of Christ to their neighbours. With nations raging and warring, with a planet in turmoil, its time to live as citizens of this New Jerusalem now. The way of the beast points to the lake of fire. The way of the Lamb points to New Jerusalem. **Our Lamb has conquered. Let us follow him.**

Imagery & Symbols

Jesus the Slain & Triumphant Lamb

This is the key image of the book. Jesus is depicted as a lamb - not a lion. He does not shed the blood of others - but rather sacrificially gives his own for others; even for his enemies. He conquers through love, mercy and forgiveness. The word is his weapon - not the sword; and justice is achieved through the gospel and God's faithfulness.

The Witnesses

The Church across all the ages of history. The mission of the Church in this age old conflict is to follow the way of the lamb. The Repentance of the world around us comes not through judgement or force but through faithfulness to the Lamb, following his way, and announcing his good news. Witnesses challenge the status quo and point to how things should be and will be.

The Dragon

A symbol of evil. The old enemy from the garden - the serpent. This represents the dark forces at work behind human history inspiring hatred and hostility against God's people. People are not our enemies - rather the forces that hold them captive are.

The Beasts

Symbols of military and economic power that seduce the nations of the world co-opt the faith of the people. The nations of the world become beasts when they exalt their own power and security and demand total allegiance. **The Beasts are opposed by another King named Jesus.**

Plagues & Horsemen

Symbols for human history seen in the news: war, famine, plague, death. The plagues are symbols from the Exodus story of the Old Testament. The people's hearts become hard like Pharaoh's and they refuse to repent. **Force and threat cannot create repentance, only the revealed love of the lamb can.**

Babylon the Fallen & The New Jerusalem

Babylon is never one place, it is the spirit of the age we live in and is experienced globally. It is us, our collective sinfulness and rebellion against God. It is counterfeit and **it is always falling.** The City of God, the New Jerusalem is coming. There is no temple for the Lamb is its temple. **It's gates are always open.**