



ADVENT 2023

# REVEALING JESUS







# FOREWORD

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*'I think I'm quite ready for another adventure!'* So says Bilbo Baggins as he boards the ship at the Grey Havens, on his way to the Undying Lands. Many Christians feel a little nervous about the adventure of reading this book. So here are my suggestions for getting the most out of these studies.

## 1. Be curious

Whenever we open the Bible, we are (in Augustine's words) reading a love letter from home. But this home of ours is another country, so we are also at the same time going on a cross-cultural adventure. The Bible was written in another language by people from another time and place, with different habits, cultures, and expectations from us.

This is especially so with the Book of Revelation, which is 'strange' to us in all sorts of ways. So we need to be curious as we embark on this adventure, ready to learn of its strange ways, and open to hearing what God might say to us on the journey.



## 2. Be careful

When you travel to another country, you need to learn its customs, ways of doing things, and ways of speaking, if you want to avoid misunderstanding or causing offence. There is a widespread vacuum of understanding about some important aspects of this book (such as the way it uses numbers), and vacuums always collect rubbish! We therefore need to exercise a historically disciplined imagination as we read. Many popular interpretations of Revelation are simply not possible, as they could not have been what John intended to communicate to his first audience, and we need to attend to such questions.

## 3. Be confident

And yet, as Rev 1:3 makes clear, we are not on our own as we read. Scripture is not so much a gift to each of us as individuals (though it is that)—it is primarily a gift from God to His people. So we are reading in good company, of those around us, of those who have had time to explore the difficult issues, and those who have gone before us.

Paul tells us that all Scripture is profitable to help us grow in faith—and Revelation is part of those Scriptures! So be assured that God will speak to us through this part of His word to us as we read faithfully—as we set out on this adventure together.

**The Revd Dr Ian Paul, Adjunct Professor of New Testament,  
Fuller Theological Seminary.**



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# The First Sunday of Advent

## Read: Revelation 1

*'Suffering and kingdom and patient endurance'* **Revelation 1:9 (NIV)**

This phrase reminds me of my honeymoon! Gill and I spent the last weekend of our honeymoon in London, and I took her to an Anglican church with a strong reputation for Biblical preaching. The sermon was on Revelation 1 and the preacher spent half an hour explaining that suffering, kingdom and patient endurance were hallmarks of the Christian life. I spent the sermon quietly hoping that my new bride wasn't taking this as a warning of things to come!

John, the author of Revelation, had been exiled to the lonely island of Patmos (v.9) by the Roman authorities because of his testimony to Jesus. When John met the risen Jesus in a vision (v.13) he was given a message that related to events in the first century, *'to show what must soon take place'* (v.1). He was writing to encourage seven local churches to keep the faith in a time of persecution *'for the time is near'* (v.3) and to show patient endurance for the sake of the kingdom of Christ.

The seven churches listed in verse 11 were in a small area of what today would be western Turkey. Interestingly, the order in which the cities are listed is exactly the order that the carrier of the letter would visit them in, following a circular route along the trade routes of the time. So as we embark on reading the book of Revelation let's first try to imagine what this message would have meant to these young churches under threat of persecution.

As we do so let's realise that these words are deeply relevant for today too, for 'suffering, kingdom and patient endurance' have been the lived experience of faithful disciples of Jesus in every generation since the first century. Suffering and persecution are signs of a world that is not yet fully under the rule of Christ. But God's kingdom continues to break into this world, and local churches are called to be signs and agents of God's kingdom in their communities.

**Let us pray:** Lord Jesus, ruler of the kings of the earth, help me to patiently endure whatever suffering may come today as I strive for Your kingdom to come. Amen.

**The Venerable Mark Ireland, Archdeacon of Blackburn.**

## Read: Revelation 2:1-17

*'I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance'* **Revelation 2:2a**

I find reading these words right at the beginning of Advent rather thought provoking. Especially considering how busy the next few weeks will become. To know that God sees my work and my toil, and that He sees my patient endurance, brings me much comfort in the middle of the chaos of this season.

And yet there is also a warning for us, because the passage goes on to say that *'you have abandoned the love you had at first'* (v.4).

How very easy it is for us, not just at this time of year, but throughout our lives, to get so caught up in the 'doing' of being Christian that we forget the God whom we worship. Many are the times when I sit down at the end of the day to read by Bible and pray, only to find myself falling asleep because the day's tasks have left me too tired.

Don't get me wrong, many days are spent doing lots of good works for the Lord, that is one of the privileges of being able to work full-time as a Priest. And yet, all the good works in the world are worth nothing unless I put Jesus at the centre of them. If not careful I can be guilty of doing just that; of focusing so much on the doing that I fail to find time to be with God.

This is a timely reminder to us, right at the beginning of Advent, not to let the business of Christmas divert our attention from the reason behind the celebration. The 25th December will come and go as it does every year, whether I am ready for it or not. But daily focus on Jesus cannot be put off.

As we travel through the book of Revelation let us turn our eyes towards Jesus, place Him first and foremost in our minds, give Him the best part of our days, remind ourselves each and every day of our love for Him, and then open ourselves to receive His love and care for us.

**Let us pray:** Father, may we find your peace in the joy of the upcoming season. In the middle of the excitement, help us to focus on You as we prepare to celebrate the wonder of Your Son coming down to earth to live with us. Amen.

**The Revd Anne Beverley, Vicar of Christ Church, Wesham & Dean of Women's Ministry.**

**Read: Revelation 2:18-3:6***‘Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.’***Revelation 3:6**

Today we are invited to look at the examples of two churches.

Thyatira seems to be doing quite well. They love and have faith, they are patient and enduring, and seem to have improved since their foundation... they have one small problem: ‘Jezebel’ (v.20). Jezebel, the prophetess who is trying to get the faithful to compromise on eating food offered to idols. Thyatira was on a major West/East trade route and had a large number of trade guilds. These guilds would have great meals and celebrations which would involve sacrificing to pagan gods. Our Christians would have found themselves in a difficult position: compromise and sacrifice to the pagan gods and remain in the good graces of the guilds, or hold firm to Almighty God to guide them through the shunning they would face from refusing to sacrifice and eat the food of idols.

Sardis, on the other hand, was apparently nothing to be impressed with. God warns them that though they have received the word of God they have failed to do anything with it...they merely plod along in complacency! They are asleep, and they will be found sleeping when the Lord comes.

Are we, or have we been, asleep in our faith, like Sardis? Have we in the last few months merely ‘plodded’ along in our faith? Have we failed to live out the loving message of life that has been entrusted to us?

Have we been faithful in all things but one, like Thyatira? What issues have we compromised on in our faith when we know it goes against the teaching of Christ, the Scriptures and our inherited faith?

Now is the time to examine our hearts carefully, to turn back to Christ with the love that He has placed in our hearts! Let us turn back to Him and peel away the sleepiness and the compromise that separates us from following Christ who loves us! Let’s go out to proclaim His truth and His love to those around us! Christ is coming, let our hearts be full of joy and love as we return to Him.

**The Revd Matteo Zambon, Assistant Curate, Church of The Ascension, Torrisholme.**

**Read: Revelation 3:7-22***‘Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.’***Revelation 3:22**

I am not ashamed to say that I absolutely love a plan! Furthermore, this is even more joyous when it includes a list. However, I have come to learn that in everyday life things do not always follow the intended plan. Yes, this is frustrating but some might say that it helps to build resilience. Ultimately, we learn that even when things do not go to plan, we should still plough on and never give up.

In today’s passage we read of Christ’s message to the church in Philadelphia and learn they have ‘*kept my word and have not denied my name*’ (v.8). Crucially, they have done these things even though they have ‘*little power*’ (v.8) and regardless of the fact that there are some who spoke against them. In brief, the people of the church in Philadelphia have remained faithful to Christ and their belief in Him regardless of their small numbers or the evil words they hear from others. No matter how challenging this might have been for them, they have not given up on proclaiming Christ as Lord. In turn their faithfulness to Him is rewarded by His promise to keep them from ‘*the hour of trial*’ (v.10) and they are reminded that the door to eternal life will be opened for them. In contrast, the church of Laodicea is ‘*lukewarm*’ (v.16), spoiled by their comfortable existence (v.17) they have called themselves Christians without really living it out. Those receiving this letter think that they have accepted Christ but He is still outside knocking to be allowed into their hearts (v.20).

On our own pilgrim journeys and in the life of our churches, there are times when we may be few in number, deflated by negative comments or exhausted by the toils of daily life. Indeed, we all experience times when things simply do not go to plan. However, we are to be assured always of the promise of Christ and remain faithful to His command. At other times we grow comfortable and forget about our need of Jesus as the Laodiceans did. As we await and prepare for our celebration of the Incarnation, ensure the door of your heart is fully open so that Christ can enter and be your guide and tune your ears to the Spirit. And, then, when things are not going to plan, worry not and be faithful to Christ because you are a part of God’s plan and there is no greater path for us to tread.

**Sam Walmsley, Ordinand.**

**Read: Revelation 4**

*‘The four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, ‘Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.’* **Revelation 4:8**

As we journey towards Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and all that means for the world, it is also a time when we remember the One who sent Him. Revelation 4 reminds us that we should praise God for His wonderful works and the way He sustains everything He made. He is to be praised for the marvellous world He created and for the life He gives us—especially our new life given through faith in Jesus.

This chapter is full of beautiful imagery of powerful acts of glorifying God. Our brother in Christ, John, paints for us a picture of a heavenly act of worship with mystical creatures, images of precious jewels, and a beautiful rainbow that shines like an emerald.

It is all about the authority and worship of our Father God. Worship is such a powerful way to surrender our lives to Father, Son and Holy Spirit; it allows us to glorify and speak Their holy authority over all the earth. So as we approach celebrating that day, the day that changed the whole world forever, let's do so with an expectant sense of reverence and awe.

Re-read Revelation 4:

- Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you as you read and then listen to it.
- Think about how understanding this chapter can help you sing *‘Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come’*, in your heart this Advent.
- Does it leave you with a sense of the Greatness of God, a deeper desire to worship Him, in and through Jesus, in every season?

Finally listen/read the chapter again, see which word or phrase draws your attention, write it down and carry it with you. Maybe write an advent prayer around it.

**The Revd Michelle Delves, Associate Mission Priest, Holy Trinity & St Bartholomew's, Colne.**

**Read: Revelation 5**

*‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!’* **Revelation 5:12**

Have you ever done an escape room? It is only once you crack the puzzles that you discover what is at the end. The sense of euphoria when you get through (and in the time limit) is exciting, especially when you get the photo to prove it!

The opening verses talk of a metaphorical scroll which will reveal God's will and intention. However, it can only be opened after the death of the Lamb (Jesus). He is the only one who can open the scroll and break the seals. He is the only one who is worthy.

Standing in the centre of the throne (v.6), Jesus now comes centre stage, the one to be worshipped. He is worthy to be worshipped, because He has been slain / killed in our place, paid the price for our sins so we can have a relationship with God and through Him will come God's kingdom on earth. That is quite an incredible list of reasons! A bit like an escape room (but so much better!) only once you have encountered God do you experience life in all its fullness and do we realise how amazing it is to worship the creator of the world. In this vision, John sees Jesus standing in the centre of the throne. Does this reflect where Jesus is in your life?

What is even more beautiful is to see how those worshipping Christ grow in number as we journey through this chapter (from living creatures and elders (v.8), to innumerable angels (v.11) to all of creation (v.13)). When we worship God with our whole lives, it shines through who we are and what we do. It points other people to Jesus with the hope that they too will get to know Him and all He has done for us.

This Advent, take some time to think about what is precious to you. What is the most important thing in your life? Is it God our creator and rescuer? If so, does that show through in all that we are and do?

*“And the elders fell down and worshipped”* (v.14). Are we joining in?

**The Revd Jo Smith, Vicar of Euxton Parish.**



**Read: Revelation 6**

*‘they cried out with a loud voice, ‘Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be’* **Revelation 6:10**

Are things getting better or getting worse? I imagine that with climate change in our world, destructive war in Europe, economic and political mess in our country, and ever-increasing persecution of Christians, many are finding quite a lot to feel gloomy about.

This is where the book of Revelation is so helpful. Behind this book stands an agonised question—If God is in control, why are things as bad as they are? When we come to chapter 6 the question takes a slightly different turn—not so much ‘why?’ as ‘how long?’, how long before God does something about it (v.10)? The answers given in chapter 6 are hard and challenging, but hugely helpful too.

First, evil will continue to get worse, so don’t be surprised. That is the message of the first six of the seven seals. We meet the famous four horsemen of the apocalypse, depicting war, persecution, famine and death. Then we meet our brothers and sisters who have been murdered for their faith. Finally, with the sixth seal, we have the final judgement, encompassing every stratum of society from kings to slaves. So while we may (should) be saddened, even appalled by evil, we should not be caught out. God knows. Second, evil is in the hand of God, so be understanding. Notice, first, that the seals are all opened by the Lamb. In other words, it is the crucified, risen, glorified, and reigning Lord Jesus Christ, who brings these things about. Then, notice the repeated word ‘given’. Its rider was ‘given a crown’ (v.2); they were ‘given authority’ (v.8). Given by whom? By God. This is indeed a hard truth. But which do you find the most comforting? That evil happenings are random and meaningless? Or that, time and again, Satan has the upper hand? Or that all things, good and evil, are under the sovereign rule of God? Third, a day of vindication will come, so have hope. The martyrs ask, ‘how long?’ (v.10). They are told to wait a little longer. But then the day of the wrath of the Lamb will come. God will not wait for ever.

And so chapter 6 ends with a new question: On that day, ‘who is able to stand’ (v.17)? Who indeed? And how? The wondrous, glorious, answer comes in chapter 7. Read on!

**Let us pray:** Lord Jesus Christ, when evil increases around us and when our own circumstances seem to threaten us, help us to remain steadfast in faith and in thanksgiving, so that on the day of Your coming we may be found standing and may rejoice to see You face to face. Amen.

**The Revd Philip Venables, Vicar of St John’s Whittle-le-Woods & Clayton Brook Community Church.**

# The Second Sunday of Advent

**Read: Revelation 7**

*‘They cried out in a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!’* **Revelation 7:10**

Cathy and I were watching a TV drama the other day. It involved a depiction of heaven and hell. We were commenting that people find it easier to portray hell, however inaccurate that may be. The idea of fire, eternal torment, shame seems to come relatively easily to us. Heaven is a rather different matter.

In today’s passage we see a depiction of the gathering of the people of God in heaven. It may give us a clue as to why people find it difficult sometimes to see heaven in dramatic form. The truth is that when in eternity the whole people of God are gathered it will be a glorious time and we will experience the full beauty and the benefit of salvation. We often talk about heaven as being a time of worshipping God, day and night for eternity as is stated in this passage. The trouble is that is limited by our own experience of worship here on earth. No doubt, in truth, like me you have seen worship at its most beautiful and uplifting and bluntly, somewhat dreary, so that may not help to have an idea of what worship in heaven is like.

We will always be limited in our understanding of what heaven will be like by our own limited expectation and experience of life on earth. What we really need to know is that heaven is, as the passage says, to be constantly in the presence of God in the fullness of that sense. However much in this life we may experience God as a daily reality we are also hampered by life’s difficult experiences and even the mundane ones. The promise of eternity is of a promise of a people constantly caught up in the reality of all that is good, of all that is beautiful, of all that is uplifting about their experience on earth and so much more. It is in the end the limitation of our own experience and imagination that will make us unsure about the promise of heaven.

Today, let us give thanks for the promise of the great gift of eternity that will surpass any understanding that we currently have. To know the gift of salvation and the hope of life spent in the glorious reality that we see promised in Jesus is as much as we could possibly hope for and desire.

**Let us pray:** Loving God, we thank you for the gift and promise of resurrection and we look forward with confident hope to sharing eternal joy with you. Amen.

**The Venerable David Picken, Archdeacon of Lancaster.**

**Read: Revelation 8:1-9:12**

*‘And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.’ Revelation 8:4*

Why bother praying? If on occasions heaven has seemed silent, maybe this question has crossed our mind? And if true in our setting, how much more for the hard pressed Christians Revelation first spoke to, or persecuted believers today. Does God hear? Does prayer do anything? These verses say yes and yes!

There is silence in heaven (8:1) as Jesus progresses God’s plan. What is heaven holding its breath for? Part of the answer is prayer. Verses 3 and 4 might seem like an ill-timed advert break in a gripping drama. But they are central. They tell us believers’ prayers are heard, rising before God’s throne. Valued. Precious incense is offered with them, a sign they please God. Powerful. Their reaching to heaven is the Lord’s means of bringing His purposes on earth (8:5).

Stern purposes. The first four trumpets signal God’s disciplining judgements in the physical realm. The land, sea, waters and sky face catastrophe. As we look around at once lush forests now arid deserts or flourishing oceans poisoned, we see an echo today. But this is more than simply the outworking of human actions. Shipping and the stars are destroyed or darkened. This is divine action against sin.

In the spiritual realm too. The eagle, a sign of impending danger, signals the first woe (8:13). A humanity which has rejected the life-giver is allowed to feel the consequences, left under the control of the Destroyer (9:11) - Satan and his demonic servants. He promises life in turning from God. But his promises are hollow (9:5-6).

Yet there is mercy. Only a third of creation is destroyed (8:7). The forces of evil cannot kill nor are they eternal (9:5). The trumpets are to warn. God is not yet bringing the end.

I suspect we will be left with ‘what’s and ‘why’s? But let us take one thing away. Why pray? Because those prayers are heard, valued and powerful. Through them the Lord chooses to work out His eternal purposes. Stern purposes at times. But always tempered with mercy. So let us give ourselves afresh to prayer today.

**Let us pray:** *Holy and merciful Father, who hears the prayers of Your people, strengthen us in this confidence that we might be persistent in calling upon You, that Your just and merciful ways might be seen on earth. In the name of the Lamb, our Lord Jesus. Amen.*

**The Revd Paul Bye, Vicar of St Paul’s, Ansdell and Fairhaven.**

**Read: Revelation 9:13-10:11**

*‘So I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.’*

**Revelation 10:10**

Numbers are special in Revelation. The No.49 is my favourite. It corresponds to ‘sweet and sour pork balls’ at my local Chinese takeaway. In our reading today John gets his version of this Chinese delicacy, wrapped up in a scroll.

He’s not the first person to eat this dish, the Prophet Ezekiel also ate sweet and sour scroll. It symbolised God putting His word inside Ezekiel. Ezekiel was given the hard task of taking God’s message of salvation and judgement to a people who didn’t want to hear (Ezekiel 3:1-9).

The same is true here. John is given God’s word to proclaim. There is some hidden information which John is told not to proclaim (10:4). These things are above our pay grade to understand and we do well not to speculate about them. But John is to proclaim the mystery that is revealed on the scroll (10:7). This mystery is the gospel (Romans 16:25-26); Jesus Christ, God the Son made flesh so that He might die our death on the cross and be raised to the right hand of the Father to intercede for us.

It is a sweet message. Because of the cross, we who were God’s enemies can be His friends. We were destined for judgement but now we have the sure hope of heaven. We were alone and lost but now God by His Spirit comes and lives inside us. How wonderful it is to know Jesus! How wonderful it is to tell someone else about Jesus!

However, it is also a bitter message. For those who won’t listen to God it’s a message of judgement. Sadly, people didn’t want to hear Ezekiel and they didn’t want to hear the apostle John, so they exiled him to Patmos (Revelation 1:9). In Revelation 9:20-21 people won’t repent even after seeing the terrible effects of ignoring God. How hard it is to see someone walk away from Jesus.

Will we join Ezekiel and John, receiving and sharing this sweet and sour message? Let’s pause and meditate on the sweetness of the gospel.

Who could we share this sweet message with over Christmas?

I wonder if the man who makes such delicious pork balls has heard the message of Jesus...

**The Revd Dan Freeman, Vicar of St James’, Chorley.**



**Read: Revelation 11**

*‘Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshipped God.’ Revelation 11:16*

Chapter 11 of the Book of Revelation assures those who are going through persecution for their faith that they will continue to remain protected. Jesus at His Second Coming will destroy evil, removing Satan from this world forever. God revealed to John during his exile in Patmos that Jesus is coming back as the king to judge the world and establish a just and righteous kingdom forever.

This revelation came at the time when seven churches in Asia were undergoing severe persecution from Emperor Domitian (A.D. 90-95). This reminds us that Church is built on the foundation of suffering and persecuted Christians.

This book offers comfort to the believers who are persecuted for their faith in different parts of the world today. A Christian from Pakistan had composed a beautiful song in Urdu based on verses 15-19 of chapter 11. He writes, “My home is in heaven - This sinful land and sinful world is not my home.” There is steady growth of Christianity in the countries where Christians are persecuted.

In verse 16, the twenty-four elders represent the twelve tribes of the Old Testament and twelve apostles in the New Testament. In the Birth, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ both Old and New Testaments are summed up. Jesus offers hope to all believers from Jewish and Gentile backgrounds. In God’s family, all are welcomed. Like these 24 elders, every knee shall bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and so we’re reminded this Advent of our call to proclaim God’s saving plan for everyone.

The world will ultimately glorify Jesus (v.13). Advent offers a huge confidence to the Church in our time to believe and serve Jesus. We must robustly engage in preparing our communities to be holy and worthy to receive Jesus when He comes again. We are called to surrender our life in humility to Jesus, the ultimate king. Our Advent Prayer is “Maranatha” - Come, Lord and take charge of this world. Amen.

**The Revd Dr Sarah Siddique Gill, Vicar of United Benefice of St Stephen’s with St. James’, Blackburn.**

**Read: Revelation 12**

*‘they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.’*

**Revelation 12:11**

“We’ve been given our parts in the nativity play! And I’m the lobster!” “The Lobster?” “Yeah!” “In the nativity play?” “Yeah! First Lobster!” “There was more than one lobster present at the birth of Jesus?” “Duh!” We all remember this scene from the 2003 film ‘Love Actually’ – and the later flash of the school nativity play in which, indeed, several crustaceans appear on stage to welcome Mary’s baby. While the film fondly mocks the desperate multiplication of characters in the primary school plays, reality is stranger than fiction. Not a lobster, admittedly, but a great red dragon was indeed present at our Lord’s birth.

A key question we’re faced with in reading this chapter is this: who is the woman, the central character of the stylised story? Is she a symbol of the Church, picking up the imagery of Joseph’s dream and alluding to the twelve apostles? Or is she the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God? To quote an internet meme, ‘Both is good.’ Surveying the Church Fathers, they’re pretty evenly divided on the question – and a few make a case for the woman having double reference to Mother Church and Mother Mary. As Mary brought her Son into the world, the great dragon Satan, operating through Herod, sought to devour Him as soon as He was born; but the Holy Family fled to the wilderness of Egypt. Mary and Jesus thus both re-lived the story of Israel and anticipated the experience of the New Testament Church (cf. v.17): Satan seeks to accuse, destroy, and devour, often through oppressive secular power structures – but God thwarts his diabolical plan, protects and sustains His holy ones, and seals His Son’s comprehensive victory.

We live in-between the Advents of Christ (vv.10-12). The devil has been defeated – thrown down from heaven and awaiting final judgement. The messianic kingdom has dawned: salvation has come, the accuser has been silenced, and the saints have conquered by the blood of the Lamb. And yet the devil’s final doom has not yet come: he has been cast down to the earth and rages around ‘with great wrath’ (v.12) in the short time he has left. It would be easy this Christmastime to ruin a toddlers’ nativity play by seeking to include a bloodthirsty dragon, a massive fight between some angels and demons, and a song about blood and woe in place of ‘Little Donkey’. But while preschoolers needn’t act out this drama, adult Christians should rejoice to have this opportunity to see behind the veil of the historical story we know so well to the spiritual significance of our Lord’s first coming, even as we wait for His second.

**The Revd Dr Tom Woolford, Vicar of All Saints, New Longton.**

**Read: Revelation 13**

*‘and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.’ Revelation 13:8*

We cannot get through life without making choices although sometimes we try to hedge our bets. Usually, even on a sunny day, I take a coat or cardigan with me just in case it gets colder or wetter. However, other situations demand that we choose with no possibility of sitting on the fence. When booking a night away, eventually I have to decide where to stay and confirm the booking.

Today’s passage moves from the picture of the heavenly conflict between God and Satan (the dragon) to the conflict between Satan and humanity in the world. In addition to the dragon, we are first introduced to the beast that comes from the sea with ten horns and seven heads (vv.1-10) who makes war on the saints. The second beast, from the earth, has two horns, exercises all the authority of the first beast, and causes people to worship the first beast (vv.11-15). Although written at a time when the Roman emperor persecuted Christians, it does not take too much imagination to see how various governments and authorities persecute Christians in the same way today. References to the “Mark of the Beast” (vv.16-18) have made their way into films and music even if people may not know where it comes from. Commentaries suggest that 666 may refer to Emperor Nero, who persecuted the early church. His mark was on coins and on legal documents and permeated every area of life and effectively, without having his mark, no one could buy or sell.

However, those who have chosen to follow Christ are already sealed by Him and carry His mark. No one can serve two masters (Luke 16:3). This passage asks us to consider who we follow – do we follow Jesus, or do we let ourselves be deceived by the beast in whatever form that beast appears to us – power, wealth and possessions, popularity? We cannot sit on the fence – we either belong to Christ and are sealed by Him and follow Him or we belong to the world and allow ourselves to be deceived by the world. We must choose.

**Let us pray:** *Father God, I thank You that You have called me to follow You. Help me to choose You and Your ways today and every day. Amen.*

**Stephanie Rankin, Stewardship Resourcing Officer.**

**Read: Revelation 14**

*‘Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus.’ Revelation 14:12*

We live in a world of ‘following,’ where people follow people for various reasons. For instance, millions of people follow famous actors, footballers or other renowned superstars on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or other social media for recreation and leisure. Do you follow any superstars? Today’s reading is also about ‘following’. John shows us a picture of two groups of people who either follow the Lamb or the beast. But this ‘following’ is much more serious than following any superstars of this world. Let us look at these groups.

First, the ‘*followers of the Lamb*’ (vv.1-5). They are the redeemed people from every nation, tribe, and language who accept the eternal gospel of Jesus the Lamb of God (v.4, 7:9, John 1:29). They worship the Creator, not the creature (v.7). They resist conforming to the ways of the beast but follow Jesus everywhere in every corner of life with distinctiveness, living as a sacrifice to God (vv.4-5,12). There is no condemnation for them (Romans 8:1). Eternal life is theirs in Jesus. Are we the followers of the Lamb? If yes, then how are we following Him in our lives? Do we conform to or conquer the ways of the beast? The call is to live a faithful and distinctive life as followers of the Lamb (vv.4-5, 12).

Second, the ‘*followers of the beast*’ (vv.6-20). These people deny the eternal gospel of God and choose to follow and worship the beast, Satan, and receive his mark on them (v.9). They conform to the ways of the beast and reject the Lamb. But mysteriously the Lamb is also the Good Shepherd, the King of Kings. Rejecting the King and the gospel means rejecting the life He offers and evoking His judgement. John warns us of God’s impending judgement of eternal death for those who choose to follow the beast (vv.9-11, 17-20).

We may be following a superstar for recreation and leisure but following the Lamb or the beast is a serious matter. John calls us to follow the Lamb by living as true and distinctive disciples in every aspect of life. May the Holy Spirit help us to endure in keeping God’s commandments and holding fast to the faith in Jesus (v.12) as we wait expectantly for Jesus’ return in power and glory.

**The Revd Munawar Din, Vicar of St Luke’s, Brierfield & St Cuthbert’s, Burnley.**



# The Third Sunday of Advent

## Read: Revelation 15:1-16:7

*'Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty!  
Just and true are your ways, King of the nations!'* **Revelation 15:3a**

I know where I was when I heard that Russia had invaded Ukraine, and the immediate feeling of injustice for all those caught up in another unnecessary war. If I was shouting 'This is not fair' to God, I'm sure the Ukrainians were shouting all the more; perhaps you can relate? God's people have been there, of course, not least during their time in Egypt, and yet God brought them out, and standing on the shores of the Red Sea Moses they sang a hymn of praise. That Red Sea episode seems to be what those in heaven have in mind as they sing their Song in 15:3-4, and when I first read this I wondered why? Since then God's people have grown significantly, of course, and yet still injustice reigns, still those in power oppress those 'below' them, and still many deny the Lord. Like God's people in Egypt many Christians are now crying out, having no one to hear them but God. Will He act again? Our reading today answers emphatically 'yes'.

Uncomfortable as we may find it, for evil to be overcome, for injustice to be made right, for God to be seen for who He truly is, judgement must fall on those who commit evil. Just as plagues fell on the Egyptians in the Exodus story, so we're told God's anger will fall on those who continue to act against His people (16:1). Time and again God has worked in human history to end evil regimes: just think of the empires of fascism, communism, and apartheid of the last century. One day He will do it again, and this time it will be forever. Then God's people, His Church, will once again *'sing the song of Moses'* (15:3a) as heaven finally comes to reign on earth.

In this time of Advent we look forward to celebrating the birth of a baby who marked the beginning of the end for all evil, for this baby was God Himself. In just a few days time we will be singing songs of triumph, to our God, echoing the song of Moses, as we cry out 'Joy to the World'. As we prepare for that joyful celebration, let us be praying for those who are oppressed around the world and for persecuted Christians, certain that He who came before will one day come again to save us once and for all.

**The Revd Michael Print, Vicar of St George's and All Saints', Chorley.**

## Read: Revelation 16:8-21

*'I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake'*  
**Revelation 16:15a**

Let me tell you about a time that Jason, my husband, shouted at Thomas, our six year old. But before you judge his parenting, let me give you some context. Thomas was on a scooter, whizzing down a hill towards a busy road - and it soon became obvious that he wasn't going to stop. Jason's shout alerted a driver which saved Thomas' life. I hate the sound of shouting, but in that moment, asking Jason not to shout would have been like asking Jason not to love Thomas. Because Jason loves his son, he stepped in to avert disaster. God hates sin. God hates the violence, greed, oppression and injustice that flows from our sinful attitudes and actions - and because He's a loving God, He steps in to intervene. He pours out His justice - and it's not pretty.

John interrupts these nightmare scenarios depicting God's judgement, to shout at us from the pages. 'Wake up!' (v.13) Maybe he's afraid that as readers we are finding the bowls of wrath too much to bear so are skipping past the hard stuff to something more up-beat. Or maybe he fears we're not really appreciating the cosmic seriousness of what's going on here. Either way, his intentions are clear; to shock us into action. 'Stop!' He's saying, 'Unless you wake up, you're heading for disaster. You need to get yourself ready for God's judgement.'

How do we wake up and stay alert? By recognising that we fail to live up to the holiness of God and need to be rescued from God's judgement. We're on a scooter whizzing down a hill and need our Father to intervene to avert disaster. The promise in Scripture is that by surrendering our lives to Christ, we are totally covered up by His goodness (Galatians 3:27); instead of being exposed in our sin, we are clothed in Christ's righteousness. But it's not just about us. What about our friends, family, community - do they know Jesus? Do our lives point them to Him? There will come a day when they will need to face Him. Are they ready? In my experience most of us would prefer not to hear this. Just like six year old boys on scooters! But warnings are there for a reason. To change the end of our story. On the cross, the God who declared *'It is finished'* (John 19:30) brings to completion His plan for all humanity. The judgement sounds harsh, but we need to trust our Heavenly Father that although it's inevitable, it's part of the process of bringing us home and making all things new.

**Let us pray:** *God of power and might, remove the things that hinder me from receiving Christ with joy so that I may become one with Him when He comes in glory. Amen*

**Rachel Gardner, Lay-member of St Luke's, Blackburn.**

**Read: Revelation 17**

*‘The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication [...] The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.’ Revelation 17:4,18*

Why do so few people (in the West) follow Jesus? Before reading on think how you would answer. Today we start a new section of Revelation focusing on the symbol of Babylon. We are going to reflect on three things. First, Babylon is alluring. John is shown a vision of a femme fatale, beautifully and opulently dressed. She is an enthralling prostitute who intoxicates kings and nations. Contrast Babylon with the woman we met in chapter 12. She is the symbol of the anti-church, the world in opposition to God. Drawing on the Old Testament, Babylon’s sex appeal is idolatry, i.e. spiritual unfaithfulness to the true and living God. She is so alluring because we are all tempted to idolise good things (money, comfort, pleasure, family, etc) and put them in God’s place. She offers the blessings of God but without Him.

Second, Babylon is oppressive. She rides this seven-headed, ten-horned beast reminiscent of the dragon and the sea beast. The beast is clearly satanic and apes God’s power and authority. She exercises satanic power both in domineering over peoples and nations and in murdering Jesus’ followers. The angel tells us Babylon is the great city of man, like its namesake Babel (Genesis 11). It stands in sharp contrast with the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of God in chapter 21. First-to-fourth century Rome fulfils this picture of Babylon well but does not exhaust it. Babylon, I think, is best seen as a recurring pattern in human affairs of power and authority wielded repressively especially against Jesus’ people. Here our thoughts may rightly spring to persecuted Christians today. Yet we also live in Babylon. In the West, her allure is much more to the fore but the threats against conformity, though milder, are real: mocking, exclusion, silencing, sacking etc.

However, Babylon will not continue forever, because third, Babylon will be judged. The reason John is given this vision is so that, despite the scale of opposition, we see that Jesus wins and therefore so do His faithful people. The Lamb will conquer... and those with Him are called and chosen and faithful (v.17). When Jesus calls us to self-sacrificial love we aren’t missing out. In Jesus are all the blessings of God and their right enjoyment. When we own up to being Christians and take flack for it, it’s a sign we’re on the right side not the wrong one. We are the Church pledged to Christ. The heavenly Jerusalem is our true home. So resist the idolatrous promises of easy pleasure, power, and protection without fear. Jesus wins and so will we.

**The Revd Jonny Lee, Vicar of All Hallows, Bispham.**

**Read: Revelation 18:1-20**

*‘Then I heard another voice from heaven say: “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.” Revelation 18:4*

What are the things that you feel you couldn’t live without? For me it has got to be coffee (I’m a bit of a coffee snob) and, I’m sad to say, my phone! Before you judge me, absolutely I can’t live without my family either, but I’m thinking more ‘things’ than ‘people’!

The world we live in provides more to distract, busy-us-up and absorb our time, focus and energy than at any point in history. I’m not saying that all of this is intentionally bad for us, in fact many things promise to be good for us and are, in the marketer’s eye, something we cannot exist without. Take my phone, for example – in theory it helps me to connect more easily, be more available, be more organised, but at the touch of a button, with the help of Instagram, I can see both how amazing others’ lives are and perhaps how much mine is lacking. That’s before I mention how much time can vanish when I give it my attention!

How does this relate to Revelation 18? Well, we see the fall of Babylon, a picture of the world at its worst; full of evil and people profiting from the excesses that it offers, as well as hear how people will lament it’s fall. Yet in the midst of destruction and chaos, what is revealed is the glorious reality of what Jesus’ death and resurrection means for us, His followers. The writer informs us of a voice that speaks out of heaven that commands God’s people to leave Babylon so that they would neither share in her sins nor destruction.

The fantastic news is that because of the cross and empty tomb we can share in Jesus’ victory over death, sin and evil, walking in a way that doesn’t conform to patterns of this world (Romans 12:2). Do I need to drink less coffee and bin my phone? If they stop me becoming more like Jesus and cause me to fall in love with Babylon then I really need to address their place in my life.

**Let us pray:** Lord Jesus, thank You that we can live in the victory of Your death and resurrection. Help us to identify the things that stop us from living in the fullness of life that knowing You brings, and to leave them behind to walk in Your freedom. Amen.

**Ben Green, Diocesan Youth Adviser.**



**Read: Revelation 18:21-19:16**

*‘And the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’*

*And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’” Revelation 19:9*

The passage today starts with a dramatic image as the angel casts a millstone into the sea as a picture of the destruction of Babylon which echoes Jesus’ words for the consequence of ‘causing children to stumble’ in Mark 9:42. This judgement on Babylon then lists all the things that will cease to be as a result. The things themselves are not the issue, but rather the desire for them at the expense of commitment to God.

On my commute to work, I see all manner of vehicles and am intrigued by the odd supercar that passes me by. Increasingly it seems to me that the more expensive the car the louder the colour. This week I saw a bright orange Aston Martin and I suppose the reference to Babylon is a bit like that. The car itself is not the issue, but the heart that lies behind it. It is a classic status symbol that says, “Look at how well I have done in life to be able to drive this!” The world we live in judges success by wealth or power or both. If you have certain possessions or go on certain holidays you are successful. People dream of the life they could have if only they had a bit more money, a bigger house, a better car etc. And yet, this passage of revelation warns us to reflect on our Babylonian desires and reminds us of the futility of it all.

Babylon represents the human denial of God and movement away from God to serve ourselves. This passage challenges us to rethink. God is our purpose and those who cannot see that will have their lives exposed as folly as they chase the dreams of this world. All the things of the earth will disappear and then what are we left with before God?

In the passage, as all these things are destroyed and Jesus enters the vision in glory and power, we are reminded that for those who turn to Him in humility and repentance there is an invite to the wedding supper of the Lamb, a true measure of success in life. What an honour for us to be able to have a relationship with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, a treasure far beyond any possessions of this world—even an Aston Martin!

**Let us pray:** *Forgive me, Lord, when I am more focussed on the desires and loves of this world rather than desire for You. Create in me a yearning for You so that my heart’s desires may be fully aligned with Yours and my ambition is to see Your kingdom come. Amen.*

**Canon Stephen Whittaker, Diocesan Secretary.**

**Read: Revelation 19:17-20:15**

*‘Also another book was opened, the book of life.’*

**Revelation 20:12**

In these verses, in powerful and detailed imagery, we read of the “final battle”, of the victory of Christ and before that the one thousand year reign of Christ. We hear of the martyrs, those who have been faithful even unto death, who will reign with Christ for those one thousand years, reward and vindication for them. Then, the final battle, where Satan and his forces combine in battle against Christ, seeking to overthrow him, but they are not victorious, Christ is the victor. The powers of darkness are overthrown, judged and condemned to an eternity without God.

What of ‘the thousand years’ (v.7)? Is it a literal time and reign of Christ and His people before the final battle? Or is it more symbolic of the age of the Church, the present age? Is the thousand years an earthly or heavenly reality? There are many views taken on this. Whatever view one takes, surely the main point is that Christ will win the victory, that the powers of darkness, sin and death will be finally vanquished, and that all will face judgement. Those who oppose Christ will face condemnation whilst the faithful will share in the victory.

We must respond to these words by turning again to Christ, repenting of our sins, by renouncing evil and putting our complete confidence in the One in whom we find the promise of life. We are reminded, then, of the promises of Baptism to life in Christ. We must also renew our commitment and our zeal to reach out to others and to encourage one another in our Christian discipleship, confident that those who are faithful will share in His victory.

Finally, we must be reassured. There is so much in the world that speaks of darkness, death and destruction. The powers of evil are all too real, and show themselves in many and varied ways...but they will not have the final word. We mustn’t allow ourselves to become too absorbed by the darkness and too fearful for the future...for we can be confident that the victory belongs to Christ, and that if we are for Christ our names are written in the book of life.

**Let us pray:** *Lord, You call us out of the darkness to live as children of light. Renew our confidence and strengthen our hope in the promise of life that knows no end. Amen.*

**The Revd Damian Porter, Vicar of The Parish of the Ascension, Torrisholme & Westgate.**

**Read: Revelation 21:1-14**

*‘Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.’ Revelation 21:4*

There seems little hope around today, a quick look in the papers or on the TV and all we’re presented with at times is doom and gloom, or so it seems. It would be very easy to allow the present to depress or discourage us, but for the Christian there’s the assurance that the present is not all there is.

The season of Advent is an antidote to the negativity around for it encourages us to look forward with hope and expectancy. But what of this future? Our reading today gives us a glimpse of what the future may look like...

We’re told that it will be a physical reality. People often think that our eternal destiny as Christians is to go to heaven and float around on a cloud for ever, but God’s plans are bigger than that. God’s plan isn’t the destruction of the physical universe we inhabit, but rather the renewal of it. The decay and death of the old will give way—or ‘pass away’—for something new and glorious. We’re not to be a spirit in a non-physical world but a glorified body in a glorified universe.

Today’s passage speaks of ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ (v.1). Mention is made of a ‘holy city...coming down out of heaven from God’ (v.2). This city will be a place where friendships are restored. A place of unity where God will dwell with His people. The new creation beyond is therefore characterised by love and harmony. In short it’s a place of goodness and perfection. ‘Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away’ (v.4). What a future to look forward to! No more physical pain and sorrow, no suffering in the body, no physical decay, no old age, no weakness, no mental or psychological suffering, no disappointment, no sorrow of heart. Every aspect of life will be gloriously renewed. This is a future to look forward to with God who makes all things new.

And how is that possible? Because of Jesus. The one who is Alpha and Omega - the beginning and the end. At His incarnation He lowered himself to the earthly in order to raise us up to the heavenly. We give glory to Him now for the glory He offers us to come.

**Let us pray:** Dear God, thank You that You are the Alpha and Omega and that in You we find strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Amen.

**The Revd David Craven, Priest-in-Charge, St George the Martyr, Preston.**

# The Forth Sunday of Advent

**Read: Revelation 21:15-22:5**

*‘Its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.’ Revelation 21:22*

I don’t really have the attention span for watching television, but for a few minutes recently I became intrigued by a programme called, ‘Dubai: Playground of the Rich.’ It delighted to show the jaw-dropping opulence of that brand new city: its fabulous apartments with their golden lavatory seats, its artificial islands with their luxury homes, its citizens with their seemingly limitless desire to consume. Dubai is an attempt to build an earthly paradise.

And what a sad and miserable place it is compared to John’s breath-taking vision of the New Jerusalem! John draws heavily on the prophecy of Ezekiel 47 to describe a place of dazzling and wondrous light. Its scale is vast, its gates are ever open, its walls are adorned with jewels, its doors are pearls. And this city is not an exclusive playground only for the rich. It is our future. It is the eternal home of all those who trust in Jesus Christ.

But perhaps the most striking part of this description comes in verse 22. There is no need for a temple in this New Jerusalem, because the temple is the Lamb – it’s Jesus himself. The heart of this vision of the future is the proximity of God. This is no distant, aloof God who requires the formality of a cultic setting. In the New Jerusalem God is with us, living amongst us, completely bound up in our lives.

Tonight and tomorrow we will be celebrating Christmas. In utter poverty and stark simplicity our God will come to be with us. In Jesus, God has come to share in our ordinary lives, to live as one of us. And because He has assumed our humanity, we who offer our lives to Him can share in His divinity. Because He has entered into our poverty, we can share in His riches.

Delight this Christmas in the intimacy and the closeness of the God we meet in Jesus. He has come to be with us on earth. So we can be with Him in the perfect splendour of the New Jerusalem.

**The Rt Revd Philip North, Bishop of Blackburn.**





MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER

# Christmas Day

**Read: Revelation 22:6-21**

*‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen.  
Come, Lord Jesus!’ Revelation 22:20*

“Christmas is coming.” The Christmas countdown has been relentlessly ticking away. Longer than this Advent devotional. From the traditional rhyme, “Christmas is coming and the goose is getting fat...” to Coca-Cola’s appropriation of the cheery red Santa: “Holidays are coming”, we are left in no doubt that one day it will be Christmas. 100% guaranteed. And the day is finally here. It’s Christmas Day! Happy Christmas. But this year’s journey through the Book of Revelation as a Diocesan family has opened our eyes to glimpse the heavenly perspective, the bigger story, the real ending. It’s not just that Christmas is coming. Jesus is coming. 100% guaranteed.

I found myself unexpectedly moved this summer when I attended an ordination at St George’s, Chorley. The final hymn was “I cannot tell how he who angels worship”. Usually, I enjoy a great sing with great words, and great tune - O Danny Boy. But this time my heart was profoundly stirred.

*I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,  
when, at his bidding, every storm is stilled,  
or who can say how great the jubilation  
when all our hearts with love for him are filled.  
But this I know, the skies will sound his praises,*





*ten thousand thousand human voices sing,  
and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer:  
'At last the saviour, saviour of the world, is king!'*

I found myself hiding tears, longing with all my heart – Jesus please come soon! The early Christians were certain that Jesus would return in their lifetime. We see Paul writing in 1 Thessalonians to address the disappointment when He didn't (1 Thess. 4.13f). As nearly two thousand years have passed, our hope can become faint.

The book of Revelation has been a heady mix of present and future, earth and heaven, good and evil, joy and pain. But we can be assured that one day God will call time. On evil, pain and death. Anyone who wishes can taste the 'water of life' (v.17). Jesus will return. 100% guaranteed.

I have been asking Jesus to teach me to pray with the faith of Elijah, who saw the heavenly reality and called it into being in the present (1 Kings 17-19). I am praying for giants of faith across Lancashire, who will "stand up and storm the gates of heaven" (to quote 5th century bishop, Augustine of Hippo). I am asking with all my heart for Jesus to come again. Soon. I know He will. 100% guaranteed.

The best Christmas present ever. For the Church, the world, and the universe.

*'Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!'*

**The Rt Revd Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster.**

#### Images

Cover: Unknown Artist, *Christ in Majesty*, 1025–1050. [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu)

Page 2: Duccio di Buoninsegna, *The Nativity with the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel*, 1308-1311. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Page 28-30: Master of Imola, *The Nativity with Six Dominican Monks*, 1265/1274. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

We really hope you've enjoyed walking through Advent with this booklet. If you're wondering how you can continue with this pattern of daily reading there are a whole host of resources available to you. For ease of access, many resources are now available either online or as apps. A few suggestions are:

## Follow the Star

[www.churchofengland.org/faith-calling/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/follow-star-join-song-resources-churches](http://www.churchofengland.org/faith-calling/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/follow-star-join-song-resources-churches)

*Follow the Star: Join the Song* is the Church of England's Christmas campaign. It highlights how singing can help draw us closer to God and each other through the journey from Advent to Epiphany with a range of resources for individuals and groups to use.

## Lectio 365

[www.24-7prayer.com/dailydevotional](http://www.24-7prayer.com/dailydevotional)

Lectio 365 is a devotional resource that helps you pray the Bible every day, and is inspired by Lectio Divina – a method of Bible meditation that's been used by Christians for centuries. Written by leaders from the 24-7 Prayer movement, and produced in partnership with CWR, this resource helps you engage with Scripture to inspire prayer.

## BIOY

[www.bibleinoneyear.org](http://www.bibleinoneyear.org)

With BIOY each day you receive a Psalm or Proverbs reading, a New Testament and an Old Testament reading. It also provides daily audio and written commentary to walk you through each day's reading, to provide fresh understanding of the texts.

## The Vine

The Vine Community is a simple and flexible framework for living out a Christian life; sometimes called a 'rule of life'. This isn't necessarily about doing something 'extra', but about giving yourself the space to be the person God has made, and to grow in your relationship with Him, with an active, practical response to the teachings of Jesus Christ. For more information: [www.blackburn.anglican.org](http://www.blackburn.anglican.org)

## Bible Podlets

[www.bdeducation.org.uk/podcasts/bible-podlets](http://www.bdeducation.org.uk/podcasts/bible-podlets)

Bible Podlets is a Bible study and discussion podcast for primary aged children to do with adults. Each episode has fun games/activities, an engaging Bible reading in the form of a news story, and discussion, with places to pause and talk together about the topic. You can download discussion notes from the resources area of the site.

If you prefer a hard copy resource, Christian bookshops carry a large range of Bible reading material, from daily reading notes to study books on particular themes or books of the Bible.

**In addition to these resources there will be regular Quiet Days and Retreats offered by Whalley Abbey: [www.whalleyabbey.org](http://www.whalleyabbey.org)**



*All texts in this booklet are taken from the  
New Revised Standard Version of the Bible unless otherwise stated*

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