

LET EARTH
RECEIVE
HER
KING

FINDING
ADVENT HOPE
IN THE
BOOK OF REVELATION



Introduction

Christmas is about Jesus. Every year, we set aside time to remember that God was born as a baby to begin his work to save his people and bring all creation under his reign. The work God began in the manger he is still bringing to completion. That infant now rules as King in the heavens, and he is coming again to make all things new (Revelation 21:5). So it's no surprise that the way the Bible talks about Jesus' birth and his return are a whole lot alike!

For more than a millennium, Christians around the world have set aside a season to remember and proclaim the Advent(s) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The church has leveraged the Christmas season to look back to Jesus' birth and forward to his return. The story of Jesus is way more than just one day can hold. We need a whole season. We need time to let our hearts prepare him room. We need space to retell his story to our friends and family.

We designed this devotional to help our church family remember and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, here in the time between his two arrivals.

This Christmas, we are going to take a journey through the book of Revelation and remember the first advent (or coming) of Jesus, as we also look forward to his second advent. The Apostle John wrote Revelation for the church to find hope and comfort in Christ, and this Christmas, we will find our hope in the one “who is and who was and who is to come” (Revelation 1:8).

We will look back to what was at the birth of Christ and forward to what is to come—when the ministry he began in his mother's womb comes to its completion, where every knee will bow, “in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10–11).

And as disciple-making disciples, we will plant our feet in the present, where God is currently working. Right now, God is bringing all things under the rule of King Jesus as we go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18–20). This Advent season, we are praying for all the earth to receive Jesus as King and for every heart to prepare him room!

The devotional begins on December 1. Each entry takes a few verses from the Summit Bible Reading Plan for the day and provides a Christmas devotion, with an opportunity for you to respond.¹ It should take about 10 minutes each day to do.

Don't forget: Discipleship happens in relationships, and Christmas is a time for our church family to grow together. So invite someone to join you on this Advent journey, and walk together every day on the road to behold Jesus and fan the flame of our hope in his return!

¹ All verses are taken from the ESV (English Standard Version).

Day 1

The God Who Is, Was, and Is to Come

Christy Thornton

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’” - Revelation 1:8

Christmas is about Jesus. Every year, we set aside time to remember that God was born as a baby to begin his work to save his people and bring all creation under his reign.

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God is—unchanging from beginning to end, from age to age. He was—taking on human flesh and entering into our story, born as a baby in Bethlehem, crucified under Pontius Pilate, and raised into new life from the tomb. He is to come—returning to the earth to bring to fulfillment his rule over all things in heaven and on earth.

So this Christmas, we will look back to what was at the birth of Christ and forward to what will soon be—when the ministry he began in Mary’s womb comes to its final realization, where every knee will bow, “in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10–11).

As disciple-making disciples, we will plant our feet in the present, where God is working right now. God is bringing all things under the rule of King Jesus as we preach the good news of his

coming to all nations. This Christmas, we are praying for all the earth to receive Jesus as King and for every heart to prepare him room!

Respond: Who is one person you can pray for and tell about Jesus this Christmas season? Who can you invite to read through and discuss this Advent devotional every day? Listen to “Sovereign Strong” by Summit Worship and praise Jesus as the God who was, and is, and is to come.

Day 2

Let Hope Sustain You in Suffering

Lesley Hildreth

“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.”

- Revelation 2:10–11

The Apostle John tells the church in Smyrna not to be afraid of the coming suffering. The church will suffer from the hand of Satan, but Jesus knows exactly what will happen. Like the church in Smyrna, God’s people in every age experience suffering, but never without his presence and protection.

Believers can find the beauty of suffering through hope in Jesus. We will all be tested. In these seasons, the question is, will you continue to trust that God is good, kind, loving, and wise? Will you still believe that he has your best interests in mind? 1 Peter 1:7 tells us that God’s testing produces faith like gold refined in the fire.

Will your faith withstand the testing? The good news is that when we are faithful, even unto death, Christ promises to raise us from the dead and give us the crown of life. This same promise is also found in James 1:12: “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he

has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.”

We can suffer with hope because Jesus has conquered death, and we get life!

We were dead in our trespasses and sins, but God sent Jesus to die in our place so that we could be reconciled to him and live with him forever. Jesus’ death and resurrection give us life and hope. God’s promise of the crown of life to the church in Smyrna is sufficient encouragement for God’s people as we face difficult times. Jesus promises eternity with him, which should give us hope even in the midst of the great suffering and trials in this life.

Christmas comes every year, whether we are ready or not. You may be in a season of suffering, feeling like there’s not a whole lot to celebrate. Remember that for a believer, this life is as close to hell as you will experience. Persevere. Be faithful to the end. Find your comfort in Christ this Christmas. Trust in Jesus’ power and goodness. Put your hope in the final resurrection.

Respond: Ask yourself: What truly sustains me in seasons of suffering? If your answer isn’t hope in Jesus, take time to repent and ask the Lord to help you live as someone who is born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. Share your response with one other person this week to encourage them to hope in Christ this Christmas.

Day 3

The One Who Clothes Us

Katie Parler

“Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.” - Revelation 3:4–5

In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve try to cover their nakedness and shame with fig leaves after they sin. But God steps in with a better covering. He clothes them with garments of animal skin, foreshadowing the sacrifice of Jesus—the Lamb of God (John 1:29) who covers our nakedness.

We no longer have to piece together our own clothes to cover the shame of our sin. Jesus offered himself to be our covering because God “made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Righteousness isn’t something we stitch together in our own effort. God gives it to us freely through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection!

In Revelation 3, Jesus addresses the church in Sardis—a community that had a reputation for being alive but was spiritually dead. They appeared clean on the outside, but they were dead and dirty on the inside. Still, Jesus commends a few in Sardis who had not “soiled their garments.” To those who conquer by remaining steadfast in Christ, Jesus promises white garments, symbolic of his purity, righteousness, and victory. He says they will walk with him, receive new clothes, and have their names confessed before the Father.

The hope of Advent is that Jesus clothed himself in our humanity, being born as a baby to cover us with his righteousness. Now, he offers us the second birth of new creation and a new identity in him. He takes our sin-stained, homemade rags and replaces them with his glorious robes, flowing with freedom and righteousness—just like the father in Luke 15 who embraced his returning prodigal son and covered him in the best robe, a ring, and shoes.

Today, our Father is ready to clothe you, not in fig leaves of striving, self-righteousness, or shame, but in the garments of grace, holiness, and eternal life. Let’s walk with Jesus and embrace the new garments he so freely gives!

Respond: Take time to P.R.A.Y. through journaling. Grab a pen and paper, set a timer for three minutes, and reflect. Praise God for sending Jesus. Repent of the ways you’ve tried to cover yourself. Ask God to help you walk in the white garments he’s given you. Yield to the opportunities he gives you to share this good news!

Day 4

Our God, Worthy of Worship

Donny Richmond

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.” - Revelation 4:11

Have you ever felt the weight of the busyness that Christmas brings year after year? Between last-minute shopping, office parties, and travel plans, the month of December can fill up before we even realize it. If we're not careful, all that activity can blur our focus, causing us to miss the miracle we're really celebrating.

Christmas is more than shiny presents under a twinkling tree, more than cherished traditions like sipping hot cocoa bobbing with marshmallows as we snicker at Will Ferrell stuffing his face with candy-covered spaghetti.

Christmas is about Jesus—the One who left heaven, was born of a virgin, lived among us, died in our place, rose again, and ascended to reign forever. He came willingly because he loves us! That's the miracle of Christmas.

If we pause and reflect, I think we'd all admit that even when we want to focus on Jesus, the busyness of the season can so easily pull our hearts away from him. Yet, Scripture offers a vision of something better: undistracted and unhurried worship. When we look up to heaven, we remember what it truly means to honor our Savior and find true rest for our souls.

In Revelation 4:11, the Apostle John catches a glimpse of the throne room of God, where every creature is fully focused on giving God the worship he deserves. The elders and living creatures aren't frenzied. They're focused on the One who is worthy. This vision invites us to look up to heaven and inward to our own hearts; if heaven itself worships him with such undivided attention, how might we slow down and intentionally worship him this Christmas?

As we lift our hearts in worship this season, let us remember what's still to come. One day, people from every nation, tribe, and language will bow before Jesus and worship him together (Revelation 7:9–10). Until then, let's not let the noise of the season drown out those neverending hymns of worship. Let's join the everlasting song to the One who is worthy of all our love, all our attention, and all our praise!

Respond: How is God working in you this Advent? Take a few minutes to slow down. Look up—write out a prayer of adoration to the Lord. Look in—consider how you're being distracted from worship, and turn back to him. Look out—tell someone about the glory of God on his throne.

Day 5

The Season of Perpetual Hope

Kristy Wallace

“And one of the elders said to me, ‘Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’”

- Revelation 5:5

“This is Christmas. The season of perpetual hope!” Every year, I get teary-eyed as I watch Kate McCallister shout this line at a frazzled and overworked airline ticket agent in her madcap attempts to get home to her eight-year-old son before Christmas.

While *Home Alone* is yet another (fantastic and hilarious) holiday film that aims at the feeling of Christmas without quite hitting the mark, this line is as true as any movie line ever could be. Christmas is the season of perpetual hope. But it's not the kind of hope that one drags out in a desperate moment, waxing on in a melodramatic speech. The hope of Christmas is what every person on earth has ever sought: “Who is worthy to break the seals on this scroll and open it?”

Or more specifically, Who can show me the meaning of life? Who can tell me my purpose? Who can make the sad things untrue? Like the Apostle John, at some point we all weep bitterly,

thinking no one can answer these questions, no one can fix what's broken around us, no one can offer us true joy.

And yet.

God himself saw fit to live among his people in fully human form. To feel our pain, struggle, and temptation. To die for us. To take on the shame and full consequence of our brokenness. He is worthy. He is the answer to all these questions and more. He is our perpetual hope.

And this season is our time to remember that perpetual hope. To remind the world that God offers this hope to all who will accept it, to all who will believe.

Not belief in some warm, fuzzy possibility of human kindness or universal good, but belief in the “power and wealth and wisdom and might” of “the Lamb who was slain” for our sake. Because the gospel that Jesus was born, died, and rose again includes the fact that he will one day make all things new. He will reign in perfect splendor, fulfilling all hope.

Respond: Consider inviting a friend (or gathering your family) to watch Home Alone (with cheese pizza and ice cream sundaes, of course) and then talk about the difference between Kate's hazy hope and the true hope of Jesus.

Day 6

How Long?

Katelyn Byram

“They cried out with a loud voice, ‘O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.”

- Revelation 6:10–11

When God's people suffer, both in the Bible and today, we cry out, "How long?" If not with our lips, then as the groan of our hearts.

How long until this season passes?

How long until I see a glimmer of hope in this situation?

How long until the healing comes?

How long until you make all things right—forever?

In Revelation 6, John tells us that the martyrs are asking God, "How long until we see justice poured out on your enemies?" They yearn for God's good judgment, and he responds, not with urgency or hurry, but with patience.

God clothes the crying martyrs and says for them to rest until his family is complete (v. 11). In their moment of desperation, he cares for them and also tells them to wait even longer.

Sometimes, against everything we desire, God asks us to rest and to wait even longer too. It can make us wonder, if God is truly just or kind, couldn't he—wouldn't he—make things right as soon as possible? Could he? Yes. Would he? Scripture says not yet, but don't lose hope.

Even in our waiting, God is accomplishing his good purposes. He will act when it's time.

As the Christmas hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" says, a day is coming when we will be unified, free of envy, strife, and quarrels, in a world filled with heaven's peace. And even here, as we wait for Christ's return in a world of "How long?", we rejoice knowing our God keeps his promises. One day, he'll make all things right—hold fast.

Respond: Read Psalm 119:81–88, make a list of your "How long?" questions, and ask God to remember his promises. Listen to "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and receive your comfort from God. Share part or all of your list with a trusted friend who can help you remember the goodness of God.

Day 7

Dear Desire of Every Nation

Jessica Williams

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”

- Revelation 7:9–10

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

You know those songs that have a way of giving you goosebumps every time? This song, a classic Christmas carol from the eighteenth century, is one of those for me. Maybe it’s the swelling strains of the instruments, each note somehow more beautiful than the last ... or maybe it’s that what we see in Revelation 7 is the fulfillment of what hymnwriter Charles Wesley called the “dear desire of every nation.”

When Adam and Eve chose to sin, the harmony they experienced with God in the Garden of Eden was shattered. The consequence was separation from God, truly the most heartbreaking and terrifying result imaginable. But God. In his mercy, at just the right time, he sent his Son, Jesus, to be born “a child and yet a king.” Jesus, who is himself the thread running throughout the whole of redemptive history. His birth made possible the fulfillment of God’s long-ago promise to Abraham: “In your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:18).

We see the culmination of this blessing in the powerful scene of worship recorded in Revelation 7:9–10. A great multitude, so many people that it’s impossible to even count them, gathered around the throne. People from every nation, every language, every socioeconomic background.

We're still waiting for this magnificent vision to be made reality, of course. But we don't just sit idly as we wait. While we wait, we worship and witness. We celebrate the coming of the one true King, born as a baby. We anticipate when he will return in victory, making all things new. And we go into all the world to tell them the King has come and is coming again soon. May all who hear joyfully receive our King.

Respond: Listen to the song "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" (Summit Worship has a great version!) and contemplate the lyrics. How do Jesus' first and second coming bring you "strength and consolation" this Christmas? How does that motivate you to tell others?

Day 8

What Happens to Your Unanswered Prayers?

Chris Pappalardo

"And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel."

- Revelation 8:3–4

You probably have a mental image of what prayer looks like and sounds like—but have you ever wondered what prayer smells like? In the book of Revelation, prayer has a distinct aroma, because prayer appears as incense.

Incense may not be a familiar part of our church services, but it was a key feature in Old Testament worship. God commanded Moses to build an altar of incense in the tabernacle (Exodus 30:1–10), and on the Day of Atonement, the burning cloud of incense acted as a sort of prayer, covering the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:12–13; cf. Psalm 141:2).

And you likely remember its first appearance in the New Testament too. The first people to recognize Jesus as king were a wealthy band of mystics from the east. And what did they bring the newborn king? Gold, myrrh ... and incense (Matthew 2:11). A prayer, not offered upward, but to

a helpless child. But what happens to these offerings? What does God do with that aroma of prayer? What happens to your seemingly unanswered prayers—healing for your sister, justice in your community, victory over sin in your own heart?

John tells us: God collects these prayers, awaiting the day when he will finally pour them out like fragrant incense. As pastor Tyler Staton puts it, “[E]very prayer you’ve ever whispered, from the simplest throwaway request to the most heartfelt cry, God has collected it like a grandmother who scrapbooks a toddler’s finger paints and scribbles ... and he’s still weaving their fulfillment, bending history in the direction of a great yes to you and me.”²

God doesn’t just collect our prayers; he answers our prayers. When he returns, all the wrongs will be made right and all the darkness will be made light. And every now and then, we get glimpses of this final victory. Like Christmas, when we remember how God answered our prayers by entering into our brokenness with us. Every prayer you’ve had—for justice or healing or reconciliation or forgiveness—finds an answer in a cradle in Bethlehem, where our broken earth first received her perfect King.

Respond: What prayers seem unanswered in your life? How might your heart change if you believed that God not only treasured those prayers but answered them through Jesus?

Day 9

Marked by Hope

Toiya Williams

“They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.” - Revelation 9:4

In Revelation 9, John sees the torture and ultimate destruction of those who choose to not be marked by God. They choose to remain marked instead by their wicked works and unrepentance, giving themselves over to idols and rejecting a relationship with God (Revelation

² Tyler Staton, *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*, 177.

9:20). In this vision, God protects those who choose to be marked by him, those who are repentant and are pursuing a relationship with him. But those who choose their own way face a life apart from his divine protection and presence.

The plagues of Revelation 9 echo the Old Testament plagues upon Egypt (Exodus 10:3–15). In that story, Pharaoh, driven by his hardened heart, seeks to keep the Israelites in bondage. Throughout the plagues, God gives Pharaoh a chance to change (Exodus 10:3).

In both Exodus and Revelation, God uses plagues to spur repentance. Locusts (Exodus 10:12; Revelation 9:3), darkness (Exodus 10:21; Revelation 9:2), hail and fire (Exodus 9:24; Revelation 9:17), and more were used to demonstrate both God's power and his desire for reconciliation. Through the final plague in Exodus, God institutes Passover. By marking their doorposts with the blood of the Lamb, God protects his people from death (Exodus 12:13).

At Christmas, we rejoice in the ultimate Lamb born to rule, reign, and atone for us. And we rejoice in God's promises fulfilled, as his plan for reconciliation with us was completed.

Now the church's joy overflows as we sing:

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
(Hark! The Herald Angels Sing)

When you believed in Jesus, you were marked by God (Ephesians 1:13). You are eternally protected from death by the blood of the Lamb. And we live in a world filled with people who refuse God's mark. So we long for a relationship with Jesus—our Savior King—and pray for repentance for all who oppose him.

Respond: How is your life “marked” by God? Draw or list out ways that God is both Savior and Father. Do you know someone experiencing “plagues” to spur repentance? Pray for them to turn to God.

Day 10

Bittersweet News

Janetta Oni

“So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, ‘Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.’ And 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 10:9–10

“Do you want the good news or the bad news first?” We’ve all been asked this at some point and felt the rush of excitement and dread of fear in the same breath. It’s a question that reminds us that joy and sorrow often arrive together. In Revelation 10, John receives a scroll to eat. It’s sweet like honey on his tongue but bitter in his belly. God’s message is both delightful and difficult, full of comfort and challenge.

John isn’t the only one to “eat” God’s Word. Ezekiel tasted a scroll filled with God’s promises and judgments and found it sweet and bitter too (Ezekiel 3:1–3). Even Jesus told us that God’s words were food that nourished him, yet he also drank a cup of God’s wrath on our behalf. God’s Word nourishes us, but it can also unsettle us. It confronts our sin and calls us to repentance.

In the same way, Advent can sometimes bring this same mixture of sweet and bitter. We rejoice because Jesus has already come and was born to bring salvation. That gospel sweetness is a mainstay of all our Christmas celebrations.

Yet, Advent also reminds us that Jesus is coming again to set all things right. He came as a baby to suffer as the Lamb the first time. Next time, he’s coming as a Lion and a Judge. His return will be glorious and his justice terrifying. The coming of our King is wonderful, yet weighty, news. For

many, even the Christmas season itself feels bittersweet because it's filled with memories of joy but also the pain of loss, loneliness, or unmet hopes.

This Christmas, we taste the bitter honey. God's sweet grace announces forgiveness and life through Christ's first coming. His sour judgment exposes the darkness in us and in the world. Like the plea of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," Advent invites us to rejoice in salvation and mourn the world's brokenness as we long for Jesus' return. We embrace the bittersweet as we yearn for the day when God makes all things new, when we will inhabit a world overflowing with sweetness upon sweetness.

Respond: Where do you taste the "sweetness" of Jesus' coming this season? Where does his Word challenge or comfort you in the bittersweet places of life? Invite someone to pray with you through your answers. Ask God to help you welcome both, trusting that his love is at work in it all.

Day 11

A Season of Waiting

Elijah Cody

"Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.'" - Revelation 11:15

During Advent, we wait. We wait, day after day, for Christmas to finally get here, and we literally spend the whole month counting down the days. But we're not just waiting for the happiness of Christmas morning. We're also waiting for the unsurpassable joy when God makes all things new. Revelation 11:15 gives us a glimpse of that future, the day when every broken piece of the world is put back together and renewed under the reign of Jesus.

Jesus was born into the realm of the dead and dying, but with his birth, God declared that he had not forsaken the world he created. Jesus came not only to save but also to redeem all of creation. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul calls him the "firstfruits" of a new creation. Jesus' crucifixion and

resurrection defeated death and decay, and at the same time, restored us to God, ushering in the start of a new life, a new relationship, and a new creation.

C.S. Lewis once said, “If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world.” Advent speaks to the groaning of our hearts. The long wait of Advent helps us recognize that we are made for more, and it helps us look forward to the coming kingdom of God and the abundant life it brings.

So we wait with eager expectation and hope—a hope that realizes these days are short, but eternity is long. A hope that realizes our days may be dark, but Jesus brings a kingdom of light. When he comes back, “the kingdom of the world [will become] the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). His return is certain, and we hope with steadfast confidence in our God.

If we look back to The Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6, Jesus taught us to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). This prayer reminds us that the kingdom of God is already breaking into the world, and as people believe the gospel, God is already making all things new. So as we wait, we pray for God’s kingdom to break into this world as we eagerly expect the coming of “the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.”

Respond: Ask: Where has the kingdom of God not yet come in my life? Think about your family, workplace, hobbies, etc. Pray for God’s kingdom to come in every area of your life and the lives of those you love. Listen to “The Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s Messiah, and praise God that his kingdom has come and is coming.

Day 12

The Cradle That Turned the Cosmic War

Caleb Martin

“And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.”

- Revelation 12:11

A picturesque manger. A still, sleeping baby. The soft glow of candlelight. This is how we typically represent the Nativity scene—like a peaceful, calm, cozy holiday display with the gentle melody of “Silent Night” humming softly in the background.

But Revelation 12 paints a very different picture. This Nativity is not a tranquil retreat; it’s the turning point of a cosmic battle. A battle that has been raging since the dawn of human history.

Satan has always been scheming against God’s rescue plan—from the serpent in Eden, to the empires that crushed Israel, to his temptation of Jesus. The dragon stops at nothing to frustrate God’s purposes. And when Jesus was born, the Enemy was at war.

This was no quiet night. God sent his Son into enemy territory, into a world under the domain of darkness, to turn the tide of history. Through the cradle—and ultimately the cross—God establishes his victory over our ancient foe. Yet even in defeat, the dragon continues to rage against God’s people (Revelation 12:17).

How do we fight a dragon who is already defeated but still dangerous? We overcome him by the blood of the Lamb. We proclaim the gospel to ourselves and to each other, announcing that sin and death have been conquered, and Satan’s power is crushed.

This Christmas, don’t let the season become mere sentimentality. Remember the battle God has already won. Repeat the story over and over. And keep your eyes on the day when the Savior who once slept in a cradle—and suffered on a cross—will return with a crown to defeat the dragon once and for all.

Respond: Who is one person in your life who needs to hear that the dragon has already been defeated? How will you share the good news of Jesus’ victory—through words, a story, or even just reminding them of his love—this Christmas season?

Day 13

He Rules the World with Truth and Grace

Nick Priestley

“Also it [the beast] was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on 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 who was slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.” - Revelation 13:7–10

For all of time, God’s people have been marked by waiting. The Israelites of the Old Testament waited for the Messiah, clinging to the promises of deliverance spoken through the prophets. They waited and they waited. For thousands of years, they waited.

Then, when he finally arrived, he wasn’t quite what they thought they were waiting for. Many in Israel expected the Messiah would rise up to overthrow the kingdoms that oppressed them and restore the nation of Israel. They were looking for a political revolutionary, but what they got was a sacrificial Savior.

The Messiah first came not as a warrior king, but as a baby in a manger. That little child grew up to be the suffering servant and “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Now the people of God are waiting again. We wait for the Messiah to return and take his final victory tour. Just like for our forefathers, trials and tribulations did not vanish at the first advent of Jesus. So we trust his final words before ascending: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18).

Believers of this age wait for the day when Jesus will deliver us from all our pain and suffering and finally defeat Satan forever. We wait for the day that “he will wipe away every tear ... and death shall be no more” (Revelation 21:4).

So this Christmas, as we look back on his first coming and look forward to his second, we worship him who has all authority and power. We worship the God who defeats our greatest enemies—sin, Satan, and death! We worship a God who is with us in our hardship. We worship a God who has written our names in the Lamb's book of life.

Even though we've been waiting for thousands of years, we stand resolute in the certainty of our hope. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Endure. Hold fast. Stand firm. Do not give in to the lies of the Enemy. Jesus rules the world with truth and grace! He has the final word.

Respond: Where in your life do you need to endure or persevere? Where do you need to submit to God's authority? Who in your church family can you invite to pray with you, that you might hope as you both wait?

Day 14

Good News from an Angel: From Luke to Revelation

Taylor Liles

"Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.'"

- Revelation 14:6–7

Read Revelation 14:1–7 and Luke 2:8–20 together and look for similar words and themes.

Not many people realize this, but there are many common themes between these two passages: angels, songs, fear, glory, and worship. The familiar story of shepherds and angels is not in contention with the unfamiliar elements of beasts, angels, and the 144,000—rather, they each present similar truths and call for the same response: Fear God and give him glory. Worship God alone.

In the Christmas story, an angel comes to a group of shepherds to share the good news of a Savior—indeed, good news “of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10). After seeing Jesus, the shepherds leave, glorifying and worshiping God.

In Revelation 14, an angel proclaims the good news of a Savior to the entire world. This gospel message started with a small group of shepherds in Luke but extends into the four corners of the world in Revelation. This scene is a fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) and God’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:2–3).

The invitation given to the shepherds is given to you today: Fear God, give God glory, and worship God. To fear God is to recognize God’s reign and rule over every part of your life. To give God glory is to confess his endless worth. The end result is worship—worship flowing from us and worship flowing from others around us.

Respond:

If you are able, bow down before the Lord.

- Tell God that he is the King over every part of your life: your marriage, your kids, your job, etc.
- Tell God of all the ways that he is worthy.
- Worship God! Whether through song or through prayer, worship God. (Singing the chorus to “O Come, All Ye Faithful” is a good starting place.)

Day 15

Angels We Have Heard on High

David Parisher

“And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, ‘Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.’”

- Revelation 15:3–4

Christmas carols are one of my favorite Christmas traditions. My family, friends, and I would often go to the nursing home with our off-pitch voices, sugar-free candy, and reindeer ears to sing Christmas carols to the residents. It was a time to spread joy to those who could not be at home during the Christmas season and might not see much family.

We see worshipful singing throughout the Bible, like the song of Moses in Exodus 15, the Christmas stories in the Gospels, and the book of Revelation. At Christmas and in Revelation, we see that angels are involved in the singing. In Luke 2:8–14, the angels herald the first coming of the Savior of the world to the shepherds, giving glory to God.

In Revelation 15, we once again see the angels gathering to sing and give glory to God. They are now singing not of Jesus being born, but of his final victory over evil and sin! When we sing worship songs, both at Christmas and throughout the year, we are joining in with the angels, who have praised God throughout the history of the world and will do so at the second coming also.

We also see in this song that “all the nations will come and worship [God], for [his] righteous acts have been revealed.” In the Christmas story, we see a snapshot of this future reality through the visit of the wise men. These Gentile men from a foreign nation traveled to Bethlehem, the city of David, to worship Jesus as king (Matthew 2:1–2). We know that one day, every nation will gather around the throne and worship King Jesus (Revelation 7:9), and so, in the words of the classic Christmas carol, we call to the whole world to “come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing. Come adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King!”

As we celebrate this Christmas, we can rest in the knowledge that the rescue that Jesus began at the first Christmas will be completed. It is a fact that we can rest in and let it guide our hope and joy this Christmas season!

Respond: Sing a Christmas carol today. Sing with family or friends, or maybe with your small group or neighbors. (Bonus: Sing “Angels We Have Heard on High.”) Participate in the worship of the King with the angels today.

Day 16

The King Comes with Truth and Justice

David Talbert

“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!” - Revelation 16:15

In Revelation 16, the angels pour out the bowls of God’s wrath and flood the earth with his justice. This sobering picture of God’s righteous judgment against sin and rebellion cannot be overlooked. The sweetness and joy of the Advent season don’t negate the wickedness of the world. Therefore, when we read Jesus saying, “Behold! I am coming like a thief!” (v. 15), we remember that Christmas not only looks back to the manger in Bethlehem but gives a glimpse forward to the Messiah’s second coming.

Jesus came first to drink the cup of God’s wrath for us. He came not to condemn the world but to save it (John 3:17). So at Christmas, we look to the Lamb lying in the manger, who saved us from our sin.

Christ’s birth signifies that God is not indifferent to the brokenness of the world. Revelation 16 signifies that God is also not indifferent toward sin and disobedience. These verses show us that, though he came first in humility, he is not weak. In his first coming he masked his glory, but in his second he will come again, robed in his full radiance, to judge the living and the dead.

Our future picture of the King on the throne aligns perfectly with the baby in the manger in the city of David. Revelation 16 calls us to “stay awake.” Disciples of Jesus should live expectant, active lives of faith, not drifting into spiritual sleep. The bowls of judgment remind us that sin and evil will not have the final word—the life of faith is not a slow spiral into defeat. Pictures of God’s truth and justice on display spur us on to bear witness to the hope extended to the whole world when God came to dwell among men.

Charles Wesley’s hymn captures this beautiful picture: “Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing.”

Let this Advent season prepare him room in your heart—not only the memory of his first coming, but readiness for his return as well!

Respond: In a few quiet moments, listen to or sing “Joy to the World” and ask God to “prepare him room” in your heart and life. Write down one area of your life where you long for Christ’s justice or peace. Then, share what you wrote with someone you trust.

Day 17

The Victory of the Lamb

Eric Stortz

“These [the ten horns/kings] are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

- Revelation 17:13–14

During Advent we rejoice in the victory of the Lamb. Two thousand years ago, Jesus dealt the decisive blow to sin, Satan, and death via the cross and resurrection. Reading Revelation points us to the final victory, when our ancient enemies will be completely eradicated from existence.

The end times will certainly be a bit scary. The beast will be unleashed to wreak havoc on the world. Powerful leaders will be united (see Genesis 11:1–9) in campaigns of oppression, immorality, and injustice (Revelation 17 and 18). God gave us the book of Revelation to remind us that those systems of oppression will not have the final word.

This passage provides something of a bookend for the Apostle John. In the first chapter of his Gospel, John introduced us to Jesus as “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The “lamb” imagery helps us understand how the gospel is a New Exodus, where our sins are atoned for and our identity is found in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation completes the story by showing us how the Lamb will take his people out of the slavery of evil, injustice, and

immorality in human society. The Lamb is also the King of kings, who will exercise final authority over those oppressive forces.

John gets the title “King of kings and Lord of lords” from Daniel 2. Daniel calls the powerful Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon “king of kings” (Daniel 2:37). After Daniel interprets his dream, King Nebuchadnezzar falls on his face and recognizes that God is “God of gods and Lord of kings” (Daniel 2:47). In Revelation, John employs that title for Jesus.

When Christ comes again, we will see him in the full radiance of his glory. We will experience his ultimate victory. Sin, death, and pain are already defeated in Christ’s first coming; not an ounce of them will be left to harm us when he returns. That is why he is not just a king, but the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Respond: Worship the King of kings. Name one aspect of fallen, broken human society that you can’t wait to be eradicated. Adore him for bringing a different kind of kingdom and savor the vision of a world with no injustice. Tell someone who needs to hear that Jesus offers freedom from oppression and injustice.

Day 18

Christ Our Hope

Katherine Doyle

“Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues.’” - Revelation 18:4

Christmas is all about hope, and Luke 2 overflows with hopeful expectation. There, we read about Joseph and Mary journeying to Bethlehem for the census and Jesus’ unusual birth story, the new parents full of promise for their baby boy. In fact, all of God’s faithful people place their hope in this infant Messiah, including us. We look back on his birth and celebrate, while we look forward with hopeful expectation of his return.

When was the last time you considered hope? We say things like, “I hope I get a new bike for Christmas,” or “I hope the flights are on time,” or “I hope Mom doesn’t burn the dinner.” But have you stopped to inventory in what or whom you have placed your hope? Think about the times you have used the words “I hope ...” What things come to mind?

In contrast to the beginnings of Luke 2, in Revelation 18 we read about endings—the fall of the great city of Babylon. The scene is full of despair, of weeping and mourning. The things in which the people have placed their hope are now destroyed: pleasure, popularity, possessions—now gone. All hope is lost, or so it would seem.

The problem was not that the people lived in the city and enjoyed its bounty. The problem was that they placed their hope in the pleasures, possessions, and popularity of the city. But God calls us to place our hope and find our identity in Jesus, the one who created us, the one who lived and died for us. God offers us a gracious warning in Revelation 18:4: “Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues.’”

How would our lives be different if we did not place all of our trust in our current circumstances, but instead focused on the coming King? What if, during this Advent season, we heeded the warning to come out of the hopelessness of the “great city” in which we live and turn away from its broken promises? Let’s join Mary and Joseph on their journey to Bethlehem, with expectant hope in the new life found in Jesus, the Messiah—who has come and is coming soon!

Respond: Thank God for the promised Messiah who lived and died in your place. Confess where you have misplaced your hope. Ask God to help you “come out of [Babylon], lest you take part in her sins,” and instead place your trust in Jesus, your Messiah and coming King. Listen to “Mary’s Lullaby” by Summit Worship, and let the thought of Mary’s expectation fuel your excitement for Jesus’ return.

Day 19

Hallelujah! For the Lord God Almighty Reigns

Madison Collier

“Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.” - Revelation 19:5

Advent is a season of preparation. We usually prepare our hearts for Christmas with visions of the Nativity scene. We get warm and fuzzy feelings because our God became like us to save us and fulfill his plan of salvation. But the vision of Jesus’ second coming evokes emotions of awe, wonder, and maybe even fear.

Instead of a quaint feeding trough, Revelation 19 depicts a fantastic wedding feast, a grand reception that ushers in the groom who has come to collect his bride. A far cry from the infant in the manger, Jesus arrives on a white horse with eyes like flames of fire and the armies of heaven following him. From birth in a barn to leading angel armies into war—talk about a glow-up of an entrance!

So this Christmas, how do we hold the tension of a humble baby and a powerful ruler? Revelation 19 reminds us of the true nature of Jesus even as we celebrate his first coming. He was fully God and fully man in the manger, as the plan of salvation began to unfold.

He is the Son of David, whose kingdom God promised to establish forever (2 Samuel 7:13). He was and is Lord of all heaven and earth, the ruler coming out of Bethlehem, the city of kings, foretold when Micah wrote, “But you, O Bethlehem ... from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days” (Micah 5:2).

In his return, we see Jesus, the Son of God and Son of David, arrayed in the splendor of his eternal majesty, one whose reign will have no end.

Knowing this, then, should give us a deeper understanding of the Nativity scene and the awe demonstrated by the host of angels that were praising, saying, “Glory to God in the highest” (Luke 2:14). And our response should be the same: worship. We are even given instructions from

the throne to “praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great” (Revelation 19:5). As disciples of Christ, let us answer the call to be worshipers of our God the Almighty, who reigns forever.

Respond: How are you viewing Jesus in this season of Advent? How are you preparing your heart for his return? Who can you help to worship God today? Listen to the song “Revelation 19:1” by Mav City Gospel Choir, and exult him as the almighty ruler who has come and will come again.

Day 20

Hope for the Hopeless

Christopher McClain

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.” - Revelation 20:11–12

The famous poet Emily Dickinson once wrote, “Hope is the thing with feathers/That perches in the soul/And sings the tune without the words/And never stops at all.” That sounds great, but sometimes hope seems unperched in our soul, with no song to sing. This Christmas season may feel like that for you—devoid of loved ones or empty for lack of joy, with no identifiable cause.

At first glance, these verses in Revelation 20 seem devoid of hope. “Every person and everything” feels hopeless. Every person who ever lived—rich or poor, small or great—death claimed them all. Everything they had ever done—not just some things, but every single one—made known. Adam and Eve stitched fig leaves to cover their disobedience, but in the end, no one can hide from God’s judgment. There is no such thing as a “secret sin.” If God reveals everything we’ve done, how can there be hope?

Because of the first advent, we have hope for the second advent. When we trusted in Jesus, he covered us with his blood and wrote our name in his book of life. The Son of God became human for us to “have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

The Christmas season reminds us that hope has come. Hope perches in our soul and sings because “when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4–5).

Jesus came to be our hope.

In the midst of whatever brokenness you are currently facing, you can have hope this Christmas. The reality of this coming day should not push us into the depths of despair but into a deeper sense of gratitude for our blessed Savior. His birth brought hope. His death bought our redemption. His resurrection assures us of our own. “Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight” (“O Little Town of Bethlehem”). Who are you placing your hope in?

Respond: Who in your community needs to hear this good news of Jesus’ birth and return? Spend time praying for an opportunity to share the gospel with them, and when it comes, tell them about Jesus. Listen to “O Little Town of Bethlehem” and place your hope in Jesus.

Day 21

God with Us

Kristy Wallace

“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ... And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.” - Revelation 21:3, 22

Throughout all time, God has been with his people. He has always wanted us near, but our sin separates us from him. We choose our own way instead of his. We choose momentary over eternal. But God is always there, patiently waiting for us to return to the place we were meant to be: in his presence.

Advent may be a time that we're waiting, but God is waiting too.

In Eden, Adam and Eve walked through the garden with God—until they doubted his goodness and chose the fruit of possible greatness over the certainty of divine presence.

In the wilderness, Israel saw the presence of God rise and fall over the tabernacle as a cloud or a fire, leading them and reminding them of his care.

In Jerusalem, God's glory filled the temple.

In Bethlehem, "the Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacled] among us" (John 1:14) in the Son of God: Emmanuel, Jesus.

Today, everyone who believes in and calls on the name of Jesus becomes a temple for the Spirit of God.

In the end, when Christ returns for his bride, when heaven and earth are made new, we will need no temple. We will once again walk with God, and his glory will light our way. We will see him, finally, face-to-face, as we were created to do. We will not need a ritual, a sanctuary, or a priest. We will not see merely a reflection of God and his goodness; we will experience his fullness.

This week, don't choose the artificial light of traditions over the presence of he who created you. Let his glory give light to your Christmas celebration. Dwell in him, revel in his goodness, and praise the One who has always pursued you, waiting for you to pursue him back. Enjoy the gifts, food, and family time, but don't choose them over the presence of the God who is with us.

Respond: In the final countdown to Christmas Day, make space each day this week to be in God's presence—alone and with others. Wake up early, hide in your closet, sit in your car alone, or gather your family around the table. Praise God, who is worthy, and listen for his voice.

Day 22

They Will See His Face

Pritesh Garach

“They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.” - Revelation 22:4–5

At the end of the Bible's narrative, one clear promise gathers all our other hopes into one bright center: We will be with God. John says it with breathtaking simplicity: “They will see his face” (22:4).

Everything in this final vision flows toward that moment. First, John announces the great reversal: “No longer will there be anything accursed” (22:3). The shadow that fell over Eden, the curse on the ground and the sword that barred the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:17, 24), is finally lifted. What was broken at the beginning is made whole at the end.

With the curse gone, God's presence fills everything. His throne is no longer distant, but right in the city's midst. His people will serve him with joyful, unending purpose. This leads to intimacy that was previously unimaginable. Where Moses was once told, “You cannot see my face” (Exodus 33:20), God's redeemed people will enjoy the grace to look upon their Creator. The Lamb will at last bring us home.

This face-to-face intimacy gives us a new identity. John says God's “name will be on their foreheads” (22:4). Throughout Revelation, there is a great contrast between those marked by the world's systems (13:16–17) and those sealed by God (7:3). Here, our allegiance is settled forever. We will bear his name. We will belong to him.

God's presence crowns the vision with light: "Night will be no more ... the Lord God will be their light" (22:5). No more shadows of fear or grief, as God's own glory will illuminate everything. Finally, we are given back our original blessing: "They will reign forever and ever" (22:5). We will share in Christ's wise and holy rule over the new creation.

He who calls himself "the root and the descendant of David" (22:16) was cradled in David's town. The child in a manger at Christmas is the King on the throne. Since he came in humility, we trust he will come in glory and lead us into face-to-face joy.

Respond: Schedule unhurried, phone-free, face-to-face time with someone you love. Ask yourself this question: If this joy is a foretaste, what will seeing his face be like?

Day 23

All Things New

Marsela Marshall

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ ..." - Matthew 1:1

If you were to read this verse in Greek, the language in which Matthew wrote, you would read, "The book of the genesis of Jesus Christ." Was Matthew giving a clue as to his favorite book of the Old Testament, or is something deeper going on here?

The Greek word genesis means "origin," "beginning," or "birth," which makes sense when we're talking about the first book of the Bible, which details the origins of life, the birth of all creation, and the beginning of God's redemptive activity in the world. That book also tells us that the eating of the fruit was a genesis of its own; it was the origin of sin, the birth of every form of suffering, and the beginning of death.

Matthew 1:1 tells us that we should also read this Gospel as a creation story. The birth of Jesus signaled that the new creation had already come, and with it, the origin of a new kind of life without end.

In this book, Jesus forgives sin, heals the suffering, and even defeats Satan and death through his crucifixion and resurrection. He's not just paving the way for a new creation to come. Jesus himself is the genesis—the beginning—of this new creation.

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Even as we await the day of Jesus' second coming where sin, Satan, suffering, and death will be no more, we can be made new today through belief in Jesus.

It's almost Christmas! We're about to celebrate the new creation born in Bethlehem, who is bringing new life to the whole world. Where do you need your own genesis in him? Where do you need freedom from sin? healing from suffering? hope in death? Where do you need the new creation to break into your family and community?

The new creation will be completed when Jesus comes again, but it was inaugurated when he came the first time. Behold, he is making all things new.

Respond: Take some time to journal where you're experiencing the pain of sin, Satan, suffering, and death; tell your sorrows to the Lord. Then, call to mind specific verses where God promises forgiveness, healing, and hope as a way to experience the new creation available now in Christ. Tell someone who loves you about what God is showing you.

Day 24

Heaven Came (and Is Coming) Down

Christy Thornton

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." - Luke 2:11

The heavens roaring with angel songs, sweet incense offered to God, the sojourning faithful emerging from Babylon, believers bowing low before the Lamb in the city of the King. But ... do you know what's wild? Those words describe both the visions of Revelation and the birth of Christ!

In Revelation, John's vision peels back the veil to reveal the glory of the heavenly throne room, undeterred by earth's turbulence. The elders fall down in worship (Revelation 4:10), and at the center of it all, the Lamb of God is reigning on his throne. The angels shout unending praise to God (Revelation 5:11). The saints burn the incense of prayer (Revelation 8:3–4).

On that first Christmas, Matthew and Luke describe a scene strikingly similar to John's vision. The angels sing praise to God, but now they are singing on earth—because God has come down to show his favor to humanity and bring heaven's peace (Luke 2:14).

The shepherds huddle around him and offer their praise (Luke 2:20), much like the elders (shepherds of God's people) fall down before him in the heavens (Revelation 4:10). The wise men come from the east (out of Babylon) carrying frankincense, going straight to the child Jesus, because he is God. And right at the center of every scene: Jesus Christ, the Lord on his manger throne.

These parallels show us that heaven really did come down to earth that first Christmas. That Jesus really is God, who became human to save us through his life, death, and resurrection. When he stepped onto history's stage, he was greeted with extravagant worship.

One day, all of heaven will come down to dwell on earth. The skies will open, and the Lord Jesus will descend, bringing with him all the glory of the heavenly throne room and giving to us the everlasting wonder of life on earth in his presence, free from all sorrow and suffering.

This Christmas, let's offer our extravagant worship to the God of the gospel and proclaim the good news to the whole world that in Christ, heaven has come to earth and one day will be on earth forever and ever, amen.

Respond: Listen to "Everlasting Wonder" by Summit Worship. As you attend Christmas church services, imagine you're entering the heavenly throne room, joining the songs of angels to worship God. Invite a friend to come with you and get a tiny glimpse of heaven on earth.