

2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

December 12

Pastor Aaron continues his Christmas sermon series “Joyful and Triumphant” as he helps guide us through more of the book of Revelation. This week we focus on the significance of The Scroll and The Seven Seals and we ponder the question “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”

Community Prayer:

Lord Almighty, as we move toward the Christmas celebration, we give you thanks and praise for your gift of Jesus to the world. Even as we see trouble and chaos all around us, we acknowledge that you have a plan and you are in control. We celebrate that because of Jesus, we can experience true hope. In Jesus’ name. Amen

Opening Questions

1. During this past week, what would you say got your attention the most?
2. Have you invited anyone to the Christmas Eve service? If so, who? (Take some time to pray together for all who will come)

The news from this past week was filled with so much that we could be concerned about: the possibility of war, cyber attacks, school shootings, abductions, new Omicron variant... It can be truly overwhelming. But, as followers of Jesus, we can be filled with hope even in the midst of all the chaos that surrounds us. The book of Revelation reminds us that God has already settled the destiny of the world through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus!

3. Was there something in the news this past week that worried you? If so, take a few moments to share and pray about it together.

EXPLORATION

Read the scriptures below. (Have someone read aloud from their bible)

This week we look at the scroll with 7 Seals. The scroll contains the full account of what God has determined will be the destiny of the world. It contains the plans of restoration and bringing God’s original purpose of creation to fulfillment! As each seal is opened, there is a new realization of the brokenness of the world. But even in light of all the darkness, we know that there is also a great light that can only come from our God. It is important to keep in mind that the fact that there is a scroll, shows that there is order behind the chaos. There is a plan and it is held firmly in the hand of God Almighty.

It is also important to note that what we read here is not a chronological explanation of what, how and when things will happen. Last week we saw that John wept and wept when he thought there was nobody worthy to open the scroll. This week we must remember to focus our attention on the “Lamb” who is worthy



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to open the scroll and set things in motion to bring about God's plan. Everything we read here is ultimately about Jesus.

Revelation 6:1-2

Seal 1 - The White Horse - has a bow and a crown, a conqueror bent on conquest. This description is sometimes thought of as an antichrist: the power of evil trying to look like Jesus.

There are a lot of different opinions about the antichrist. Read these verses from 1 John to gain some more insight about this. 1 John 2:18-23.

4. Who are some of the people throughout history that presented themselves as "good", but were actually evil?
5. What are some ways that we might be able to detect when someone is distracting us from the central message of the Gospel?

Revelation 6:3-4

Seal 2 - The Red Horse - takes away peace. This is a reminder that there will be greater unrest ahead.

6. How do you respond to the statement, "Wars, whether between nations or people, always have some kind of spiritual root?"

Revelation 6:5-6

Seal 3 - The Black Horse – Rider carries a pair of scales in his hand. Reminds us that there will be greater and greater injustice and hunger for many while a few live in abundance.

7. There are examples all over the world of extreme poverty and extreme wealth in close proximity. Have you ever seen this firsthand? If so, share with the group about your experience.

Revelation 6:7-8

Seal 4 - The Pale Horse - represents sickness and disease. Reminds us that even with all our medical advances, we are not able to fully relieve physical suffering in the world.

8. Have you ever experienced the limits of the medical field? If you are comfortable, share about that experience with the group.



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“War is social evil, famine is ecological evil, sickness is biological evil. War attacks the goodness of community, famine violates and ravages God’s bounty, sickness destroys and wastes God-given bodies; sins against society, against the land, against the body.” Eugene Petersen

Revelation 6:9-11

With the first four seals we see a description of powerful horses being called out, but now we see a transition to a description of the persecution that the followers of Jesus face.

Seal 5 - The Souls of the Martyrs - each were given a white robe and told that the wait would be a little bit longer.

In the early days of the church, many people were concerned about followers of Jesus who died before the total fulfillment of God’s promises were seen. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 to get a glimpse of how these early brothers and sisters gained a proper perspective.

9. How does this 1 Thessalonians passage encourage you as you continue to study Revelation?

Revelation 6:12-17

Seal 6 - Cosmic Disturbances - A reminder that the earth and all of creation will experience upheaval in these days.

After reading chapter 6 you might think everything is hopeless and that this is a losing scenario...but then chapter 7 opens with an account of the angels standing firm. These are the ones charged with carrying out God’s counsel and his commands throughout the earth. They are not intimidated nor are they running in fear. They stand firm and carry out God’s commands.

Just when it looks like evil is winning, John sees a 144,000 who had the “seal of the living God” and then what is described as a multitude that no one could count from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb worshiping together in a loud voice!

10. How might this description of worship inspire the way you approach worship?

Revelation 8:1-5

Seal 7 - Silence in Heaven and the prayers of the saints - a dramatic pause and then the prayers of all God’s people are offered up to God along with incense.



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This unleashes a display of God's power upon earth. Just like last week, we see that the prayers of all God's people are used as part of the fulfillment of all God's promises for the world.

11. How does knowing that every prayer you pray is included in this epic scene.
 - a. How does it influence the way you approach prayer?

THE TAKEAWAY

- When followers of Christ have been at their best throughout history, they have been the ones standing for Jesus in the midst of an evil world.
- Remember that even though the world is broken, and it is likely to get worse in the days ahead, as faithful followers of Christ, we still have this promise:

"For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 7:17

Parents' Corner

As your kids grow older and start to see the evil and pain that is in the world, they may begin to question if there is a purpose in it all. Some may be tempted to give up their faith, or at least to become cynical about the hope and joy promised in the gospel. As we look at the book of Revelation however, it's clear that God has a plan and purpose through it all.

12. How can we help our kids be honest about the evil in the world, while also pointing them to the hope we have in Christ?

Read Hebrews 6:19-20.

13. Our hope in Christ is an anchor for our souls, and thankfully it's not dependent on current news or circumstances. Brainstorm in your group and find a few practical ways you can help your students be anchored in their faith more than in their temporary circumstances?

In Rev. 7 we see again that heaven is called to worship the Lord. Worship is an important aspect of our lives as followers of Christ, and for our families as well. It includes worship singing, study of scripture, giving, and serving others.

14. How can we make worship a part of normal family life as our kids grow older and prepare to graduate?



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Prayer Requests

