

# THE END OF THE WORLD OR HEAVEN ON EARTH? CURRICULUM GUIDE

## Why Use the Curriculum

The Book of Revelation is not often studied by mainline church congregations, the Episcopal Church included. We hope this five-part video-based curriculum on Revelation will start to change that, to open up new ways of engaging with the scriptural text, and to provide greater confidence in discussing apocalyptic writing with people from the wider Christian family.

To that end, Trinity Church Wall Street is delighted to offer churches and faith-based communities an important new study on the Book of Revelation. Led by the Very Rev. Michael Battle, PhD, professor at General Theological Seminary, and based on his book *Heaven on Earth: God's Call to Community in the Book of Revelation*, this curriculum explores the final book of the Bible and its relevance to our world today.

## How to Use the Curriculum

The five-part video series is perfect for Advent, when the Lectionary focuses on apocalyptic passages from the Bible. It can be used for a weekly class, beginning with Christ the King Sunday. Although it works well in Advent, the content is suitable for any season of the church year. Each video installment includes two sections, and we also offer a short glossary of terms used in Professor Battle's presentation.

Section 1: A presentation of approximately 35 minutes by Professor Battle delving into the text and the images of the Book of Revelation and offering alternate interpretations.

Section 2: A group made up of clergy, seminarians, and laity wrestling with a guided question posed by Professor Battle.

In your individual study groups, you have the option of using both sections of each lesson, which will fit into the time generally allotted for Sunday Adult Education or weekday Bible study. As an alternative, you might choose to watch only Section 1 and then open a discussion of the guided question with those present at your class.



## Readings

1. **Christ the King Sunday:**
  - a. Read Revelation chapter 22 first, then chapters 1–11 (emphasizing how the Lamb of God is the beginning and end, and the upside-down nature of a Christ the King as a lamb with power, and the stream of conscious methodology of the Book of Revelation)
  - b. From *Heaven on Earth* read: Introduction
2. **Advent 1:**
  - a. Read Revelation chapters 12–18 (emphasizing John’s nightmares)
  - b. From *Heaven on Earth* read: Part One: Revelation’s Nightmares
3. **Advent 2:**
  - a. Read Revelation chapter 21 (emphasizing keeping your eyes on the prize and a happy ending)
  - b. From *Heaven on Earth* read: Part Two: Staying Awake
4. **Advent 3:**
  - a. Read Revelation chapters 19–20 (emphasizing the complexity of apocalyptic discourse and how we use it in self-serving ways)
  - b. From *Heaven on Earth* read: Part Three: Good Dreams
5. **Advent 4:**
  - a. Read Genesis 11:1–9 (emphasizing again the beginning and end, and the troubling narrative of God dividing the unity, which seems akin more to a mob or a group united by a common enemy)
  - b. From *Heaven on Earth* read: The Afterword: The Healing of the Nations