

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- You can watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.

Welcome: *Icebreaker – What is your favorite symbol or decoration that is used during Christmas?*

Study Tip: At the center of this week's message is the presence of a *mysterious scroll* that is in the right hand of the Lord while He sits on His throne. At face value, a scroll is nothing more than a strip of leather or papyrus on which many of the authors penned their words of the Bible (Ex. 17:14). However, a deeper dive into the importance of scrolls in the scriptures reveals some unique insights into the scroll found in Revelation. To start, many kings of Israel were instructed to hold onto a particular scroll – a copy of the Law – so that God's word would remain close to them (Deut. 17:8). Additionally, it was rather unique to have a scroll filled with words to the point where writing had to be delegated to both sides (Ez. 2:9-10). Overall, there are two other supernatural scrolls that stand out. First, a heavenly hand gives Ezekiel a scroll to eat that tasted as sweet as honey (Ezk. 3:1-3). Second, Zechariah describes a vision of a scroll that flies in the air (Zech 5:1-3). *Both supernatural scrolls possessed words of judgment.* Could this Revelation scroll contain the same? There is much debate over what is actually in the scroll and whether Revelation is a book explaining its contents, but it doesn't change the fact that it was sealed to be protected for the proper time and the proper person like many other scrolls (Is. 29:11; Dan. 12:4) As you navigate this study guide, remember that Christmas is a season to celebrate the arrival of Jesus and the beginning of God's great rescue plan for the world unfolded in the scroll!

What's Going on This Week

This week, Pastor Danny Strange introduce us to our new Advent series titled *Encountering God*. This week, Danny brought our attention to *Revelation 5:1-14* to talk about John's encounter with the risen and victorious Jesus to remind us that this Christmas holiday represents the beginning of God's rescue plan. As you engage with this study guide, challenge yourself to see Jesus as the "*reason for the season*" as the Lion who is worthy to carry out God's plan for human history and as the Lamb who was slain to save us. prepare for an encounter with Jesus and become a vehicle for the good news of the gospel this Christmas season.

"If you need something for the Christmas tree to represent, let it represent the tree of Life in the Eternal City of God. Tell your kids that someday, because of Jesus, we will live forever. That the lights represent the fact that night will be over. That the ornaments represent the fruit of the tree from which men and women from every tongue tribe and nation will eat. That the meals we share represent the wedding supper of the lamb, when we will eat and drink with Him in a renewed kingdom forever." – Pastor Danny Strange

GROUP MEETING (60 – 90 minutes)**Worship** (10 – 15 minutes)

Take time with your group and prepare your hearts as you enter into the presence of God for this meeting.

Option 1: Christmas Music Have someone share their favorite CHRISTMAS song. Find it online, play it, and sing along! Have them explain why the lyrics have impacted them!	Option 2: Prayer of Imagination Spend some time reflecting on the Jesus as the Lion and the Lamb. Then, begin echoing the prayers of worship that are being sung by those surrounding him in heaven!	Option 3: <u>Advent Book</u> This year's advent booklet walks through the Bible's description of various encounters with the Lord. Challenge your group to follow along and openly discuss the readings!
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Word #1: Jesus as the One who can “Open the Scroll” (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Revelation 5:1-5 – In John's revelation, we discover that God has a plan for all of creation. He has written this plan on a scroll, He has sealed the scroll, and He is longing to unveil His plans. John, however, begins to weep because he looks around heaven and earth and finds that no one is worthy to open this scroll of God to break its seals to carry out the plan of God until he sees Jesus. **When you look at your life or the world around you, are there any situations in which you feel like you are “weeping” or losing hope? How might Jesus' ability to “open the scroll” in this passage challenge your view of your current situation?**

Prayer Tip: Pray for a renewed sense of hope considering that Jesus contains all human history in his hands!

Word #2: Jesus as the “Lamb who was slain” (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Revelation 5:6-14 – This specific segment of John's vision concludes with a scene of Jesus appearing as the lamb who had been slain. He is being worshipped by everyone around him for being the one who is worthy to open the scroll. **Which portion of this vision of worship stands out to you the most and why? What can you and your group do during this Christmas season to remind each other to humbly, worshipfully, and reverentially deepen your relationship with Jesus?**

Prayer Tip: Pay attention to the distractions that are taking us away from remembering the awe and majesty of what it means that Jesus came to earth.

Witness (20 – 25 minutes)

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would give us insight into God's mysterious will to give us hope!
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would deepen our understanding of who Jesus is!
- Pray for any individual prayer request that comes up in your group.
- **Pray for the entire group and how they may be able to participate in future group meetings.**
- **Pray for an interaction with someone who you can invite into your next group meeting!**
- **Pray for God's hand in the multiplication and revival of your group!**

We invite you to participate in our churchwide [PrayFast](#) (Tuesday 12/14 from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM)

Throughout the Week

-Christmas With 3Crosses: We would love to share with your group some AMAZING volunteer opportunities coming this Christmas. Find out more at [Christmaswith3crosses.com](https://christmaswith3crosses.com)

-Stay up to date with Ministry Opportunities: If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

-Join relief efforts locally and around the world: Looking to contribute to what is going on both locally and around the world? Visit our website and join one of the [relief efforts](#) being made available through our church partners or sponsor an [indigenous missionary](#)!

-Life Groups 2022: For more information about joining a group, hosting a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org