

- 6 *Revelation 12*
We read of spiritual battles going on in the heavenly realms (vv.7-9). Does this suggest that ‘spiritual warfare’ may be a significant, if invisible, reality of our lives today too? What difference does this make to us?
- 7 *Revelation 14*
The repetition of the 144,000 (v.1) representing the faithful, first encountered in 7:4 shows that despite such a frightening series of events not one person has been lost. Does this offer you some comfort regarding God’s care for you in any difficulties you may currently be experiencing?
- 8 *Revelation 19*
Jesus is depicted as a mighty rider on a white horse (v.11). How do you respond to this picture of Jesus which is at odds with how we typically see him portrayed in the gospels?
- 9 *Revelation 21-22*
What aspects of the vision of the holy city presented in these chapters particularly inspires you? Does it help you to imagine what heaven will be like?
- 10 *Psalm 112*
In reflecting on your own personal response to all that God is and all that he has done, how do you gauge the strengths of your ‘upward’, your ‘inward’ and your ‘outward’ spiritual outlooks and actions?

Closing Prayer

Light a candle, silently watch the flame flicker, reflect on your discussion, and pray for the wisdom and discernment to apply what you’ve learned in your spiritual life.

After a few minutes, close by saying together the Grace.

SACRED

Group Resources

Month 31

Opening Prayer

Holy God,
you have shown me light and life.
You are stronger than any natural power.
Accept the words of my heart that struggle to reach you.
Accept the silent thoughts and feelings that are offered to you.
Clear my mind of the clutter of useless facts.
Bend down to me, and lift me up in your arms.
Make me holy as you are holy.
Give me a voice to sing of your love to others.
Amen.

(From a papyrus, probably 2nd to 4th century)

General Questions

- 1 Central to the ethos of SACRED is that a regular rhythm of reading the Word of God will lead you to know God better (see notes on *Psalm 111*). Is this what *you* have found?
- 2 The diverse images of strange monsters and widespread destruction so prevalent in *Revelation* do not make for comfortable reading. They are not meant to. How does it all make you feel about your faith? Does it lead you to take judgment more seriously?

Activity

Try to obtain a print or image of the 1850s Holman Hunt painting *The Light of the World*, based on *Revelation 3:20*. The original is on display in the chapel at Keble College Oxford, while a larger copy is in St. Paul's Cathedral, and a third, smaller version is in Manchester City Art Gallery.

Allow the group some time to look at the image. What do you see? What does the painting say about (a) Jesus, and (b) yourself?

Further Ideas

As usual, read through these discussion ideas first and then choose just some of them to explore as the group sees fit.

- 1 *Psalm 109*
What do you make of this psalm?
C.S. Lewis observes how we need to forgive our brother or sister seventy times seven times for a single offence, let alone for 490 offences. Do you agree?
- 2 *Revelation 2-3*
So what would the letter to *your* church look like? For what would the church be commended, for what would it be rebuked, and what compromising aspects of its context might be highlighted?
- 3 *Revelation 5*
We read about “the golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints” (v.8; see also 8:3-4). What do we learn from this about our own prayers? Does it give you an incentive to persevere in prayer?
- 4 *Revelation 9*
In the face of disaster, death and destruction, the people still refuse to change their ways (vv.20-21; see also 16:11). Why do you think this is?
- 5 *Revelation 10*
The scroll that the angel gives to John to eat tastes sweet in the mouth but sour in the stomach (v.10). Why is this?

In what way have you found your Christian journey to be both sweet and sour; that is, to be characterised both by blessing and by suffering?