

## Small group notes

**Welcome:** Read either Psalm 46 or Psalm 23 together. Use this as a way of preparation before looking at Revelation 6 together. Ask individuals to share any concerns they may have from hearing and watching the news, local, national and international. Write them down and use in prayer at the conclusion of the evening.

### **Word - Revelation 6:1-8:1 'Indestructible'**

#### **Despite trials & tribulations the Church is indestructible.**

Revelation chapter 6 can be described as the best overview of world history.

What already has happened has been shown, and what is happening now, and what will happen in the future. It parallels with what Jesus himself told his disciples in Matthew, chapter 24 and Mark chapter 13. The Gospel is preached, and people are saved, the Church grows. Yet at the same time in the midst of it, there are wars, famine, strife, natural disasters, epidemics, persecution and divine judgement.

The interesting thing is this; the Lamb who is worthy, Jesus opens the seals. It is he who releases the four riders to ride out. Verse 1. The positive and the negative aspects of history do not happen apart from God and under his permission. That asks the question why does God allow so much suffering in his world? The issue of suffering is the most frequently raised objection to the Christian faith. We are constantly confronted by suffering in all kinds of forms from a global scale to real personal tragedies. The big argument against God is; if he is so good and loving and Almighty, why does he allow people to suffer?

Christians are not immune to suffering. They face pain of wars, famines, natural disasters and persecution for believing and following Jesus – Verse 9-11.

Why does God allow his people to go through this?

- God uses our situations and suffering to bring us to Christ
- God uses suffering and persecution to mature us – 1 Peter 1:6-7 – John 15:2
- God uses suffering and persecution to bring about his plans and purposes. Romans 8:28

Why doesn't he step in and do something? He has – John 3:16 2 Peter 3:8-9

The day of judgement is coming – Verse 12-17. The Lamb is the Lion, and he has come to Judge. Every single one of us will have to give an account to him who was slain. Judgement is coming.

What can we understand from Revelation chapter 7

- Trials and tribulations will take place and God's people are marked out and placed into his care verse 3
- God's people, His bride, the Church is indestructible. Verse 3-4
- The number of those saved will be large. Verse 9
- It includes every nation, tribe and language. Verse 9
- Jesus is both the Lamb and the Shepherd of the sheep. Verse 12

### **Questions**

- What do the four riders each symbolize – Rev 6:1-9?
- How do you respond to the principle that everything that has happened in history continues to happen at the permission of God?
- Why does God allow suffering in the world today?
- In what ways does God work for good through suffering?
- Who does John see under the altar and what is their cry? – Rev 6:9-11
- The wrath of the Lamb is a striking phrase (Rev 6:16). How can we reconcile the concept of wrath with the love and forgiveness we associate with the Lamb of God?
- How do you imagine the Day of Judgement? What emotions come to mind?
- When and how do you think a Christian is sealed by God? – Rev 7:4
- Chapter seven appears to end with yet another contradiction. How can Jesus be both our Lamb and our Shepherd? In what way is he our Shepherd?
- Why is there silence in heaven when the seventh seal is opened? – Rev 8:1

Prayers: Pray for one another that we may have peace and confidence concerning the future and pray items listed watching the news, local, national and international. Prayer for the persecuted Church around the world. <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/>