

## NMBC Small groups - week beginning 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Revelation 15 16 17 18

### Opening worship/meditation

Read two expressions of God's holiness & perfect justice:

Isaiah's vision of God in his temple: **Isaiah 6:1-7**  
John's vision of God's judgements: **Revelation 15:1-4**

### Starter

Suggest ways in which we can be helped to see and imagine more clearly the wonder of **God's perfect holiness**. Read the end of Charles Wesley's great song ending: "changed from glory into glory, till in Heaven we take our place, till we cast our crowns before you, lost in wonder, love, and praise". Discuss practical ways, in personal prayer or shared worship, of opening ourselves to God so that we are '**lost in wonder, love, and praise**'!

### Read 16:1-16 The seven bowls of God's righteous anger & judgement

- 1 Despite the horror of these symbols of punishment, what did the '**angel in charge**' in **16:4** observe, something echoed by '**the altar**' too in **16:7**?
- 2 As with the reaction to the seven trumpets in **9:20-21**, what sadness is expressed in **16:9 & 11**, at the reaction of the people opposed to God?
- 3 What **warning about the coming of Jesus**, given many times already in the words of Jesus, & in the teaching of Peter & Paul, is repeated here in **16:15**? For Jesus' words: see **Luke 12:33 & 12:39**; for Peter & Paul: see **1 Thessalonians 5:2-4 & 2 Peter 3:10**.  
How would you put this warning into your own words, relevant to our situation?

### Read 17:1-8 The woman on the scarlet beast: the world's agenda, opposed to God

- 4 How does John, to begin with, find the **Woman sitting on the Beast attractive**?
- 5 As John continues to look - & with the angel's help - he sees **other realities**. What are the **characteristics & threats** of the 'woman-beast-Babylon'?  
How do you explain the symbolism of '**prostitution**' **17:1** & '**adultery**' **17:5**?
- 6 **How do these characteristics affect Christians?** Can you identify the same **dynamic** in our world and in our experience of it today? Are there things that appear attractive to us, but which threaten us with **danger**?  
See what **the voice from heaven** says in **18:4**! What does his instruction mean for us?

### Read 18:9-20 Human power, riches, & achievements will disappear... just like that!

- 7 "**Our greatest fear** should not be failure but **succeeding at things that don't really matter.**"  
Suggest cautions we need to take as we work out our faith & discipleship in a prosperous, success-measured, pleasure-seeking, unequal society.

### Prayer

Continue to **worship the Lord our God** for his holiness and his truth.

Pray for **our society**, as biblical guidance on ethics, education, gender, values, sex is being lost.

Pray for those campaigning for these causes, especially Christians standing in **the election**.  
In 18:13 we see the ever-present sinfulness of "human beings sold as slaves". Pray for **Hope for Justice**, and every other project that publicises & prevents human trafficking.

Give some information & pray for **Christians suffering** for their faith & witness across the world.  
Pray for the final weeks of the **Alpha course**, praying for new faith in the Lord.