

Life with the End in Sight

A Series in Revelation



1. Nothing can replace Jesus (Rev 2–5)

Introduction

The first snapshots of the book of Revelation can be divided into two sections:

1. **Chapters 2–3**, letters to the seven churches
2. **Chapters 4–5**, a vision of heaven's worship

In both sections, we see the same thing – Jesus is absolutely central. As the one who leads His Church, as the one who heaven adores and as the one who alone can complete God's purposes, Jesus is at the centre.

Part 1, Letters to the Seven Churches

Revelation 2–3

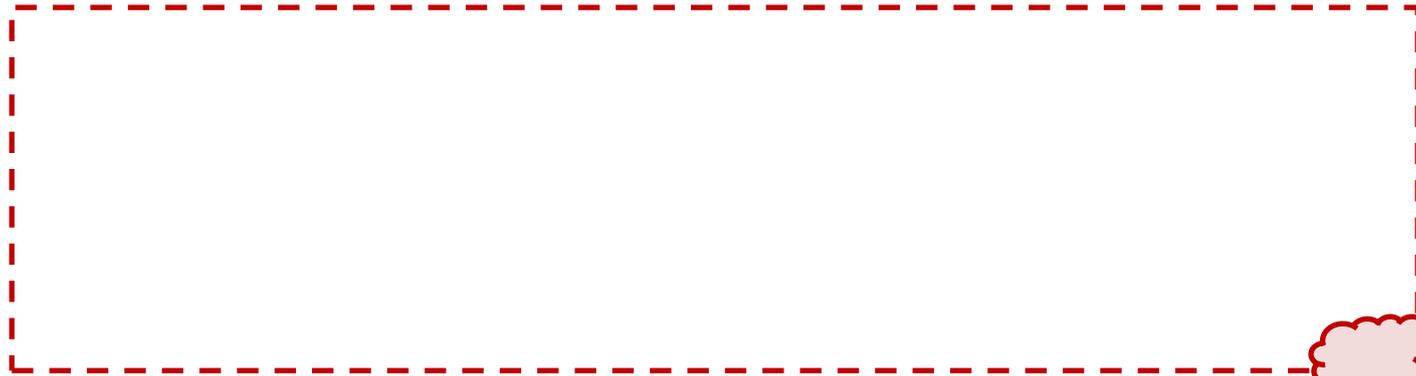
Each of the words to the 7 churches follows the same pattern: (1) a description of Jesus; (2) words about the church; and (3) a promise to ‘those who conquer’.

Use this grid to capture, for each church, all you can under each area.
(If in a group, you might like to divide up and then report back)

Church	Jesus*	What is the church like?	Promise*
Ephesus (2:1-7)			
Smyrna (2:8-11)			
Pergamum (2:12-17)			
Thyatira (2:18-29)			
Sardis (3:1-6)			
Philadelphia (3:7-13)			
Laodicea (3:14-22)			

**There are some weird and wonderful descriptions in all of this! There is lots to explore, and you might want to explore it all further. But there is plenty to be understood without further research so try to stay focussed there.*

Q: In the descriptions of Jesus, what encouragements are there for the 21st Century church in the situations and challenges we face today?



Q. In the descriptions of the churches, which of these messages do you think you need to hear most strongly? Are there any that resonate particularly, either to encourage or challenge? (There might be a temptation to answer this first on behalf of your church! That is good, but make sure you are being attentive to what God might be saying to YOU first and foremost.)



Q. In the promises to 'those who conquer', what encouragement are you going to take and hold onto?



Before moving on, you might like to take some time praying these things over yourself, each other or your church.

Part 2, A Vision of Heaven's Worship

Revelation 4-5

The description of heaven's worship is the first vision in Revelation, and it is packed!

READ 4:1-11, slowly. Try to picture what is described, in your mind's eye or by getting a pencil and giving it a go! Consider what different parts of the description evoke or tell us about God's nature.

The turning point of this passage is a scroll being introduced in 5:1. The scroll is an image of God's planned future for the world unfolding.

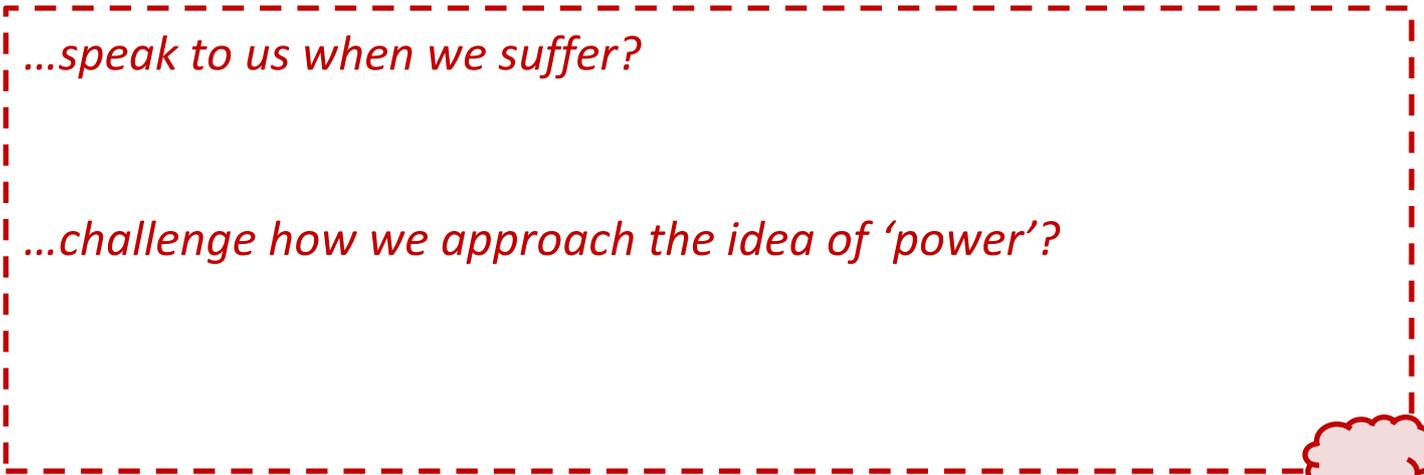
READ 5:1-4. Q. Why is John is so upset no-one can open the scroll?



READ 5:5-14. Q. Why is Jesus described as both a lion and a lamb? Which seems to be most important in heaven's worship, and why?



Q. How might this focus on Jesus as lamb...



...speak to us when we suffer?

...challenge how we approach the idea of 'power'?