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**House Church Study Questions**

**Based on the SAC Sermon on June 19, 2022**

**Text: Revelation 13**

**Read: Revelation 13**

**Discussion Questions**

**Icebreaker Question: Everyone wants to have fun in their life. What is an activity that you consider to be fun?**

**Question #1:** “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” It’s likely you have heard this saying before, and it’s relevant to the story of Revelation. The big question of Revelation is this: “Who has supreme power over all things?” God says one thing and Satan says another. When you think about your life with Jesus do you think of ‘power’ or do you mostly think of ‘love’? Does your understanding set you up well for the increasing war that is building in our world described in Revelation?

**Question #2:** In Revelation 13 we see the Dragon, the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth. In Daniel 7 we see four beasts that represent political kingdoms/governments and this helps us to understand the beasts in Revelation 13. The Sea Beast is there to exercise power over political institutions. The Dragon uses this beast to move governments further away from God. Any government that no longer exercises power under God will eventually try to function *as* God.

Additional Question: Normally we tend to align ourselves with a political party. But Revelation 13 begins to ask us what our *ultimate* allegiance is. . .Is it to God or to our Government. It’s not easy to discern this in real life, but talk about what allegiance to God and not to government might look like?

-Do you think this description makes sense?

-Do you see examples of this taking place in governments you are familiar with?

**Question #3:** The Dragon, Sea Beast and Earth Beast are a counterfeit trinity. The Sea Beast is manipulating governmental/political power and the Earth Beast is manipulating the *religious power*. This begins to show us the importance of *worship*. This is a critically important question: “Who will I worship?” “Who will get my attention?”

Additional Question: The war that is going on is for the minds and hearts of the people. The political influences of government influence our minds and the religious influences of religious institutions influence our *hearts*. Read Mark 12:30 and think about how this might put you in opposition to the plans of the Devil.

The Devil has created an environment where it’s ok to have private belief in Jesus but that has no place in the public sphere any longer. Do you think this is by chance or is this evidence that the Dragon and the Beasts are actually accomplishing what Scripture is saying? How is your faith in Jesus expressed. . .is it more of a private thing or a public thing? Why or why not?

**Question #4:** The beast of the earth is described as having ‘two horns like a Lamb’. Jesus is the true witness of God, and this beast has two horns which is a *false witness* that seeks to undermine the two true witnesses found in Revelation 11. The Beast of the Earth is a false prophet, the corrupted religious voice seeking to deceive people.

Additional Question: Read Romans 12:2 and talk about how this applies to our community and what God might want to do among us.

**Key:** False prophets take their cues from the *way things are*, *not from the way things ought to be*. Once the political has set the tone for public life by establishing things that are in opposition to God, then people see that *this is the way it is*. Then the deceived church takes its cues from what is seen around them and proceeds to devise belief systems that arise from what is established around them. Culture is the norm, belief builds off of that.

Think about some of the rhetoric surrounding small community church. Are there voices that try to justify the way church should be, based on a belief of what is perceived as acceptable by a small, rural community? Is this setting belief based on culture or God’s Word? Talk about implications, concerns or changes that you think may be necessary.

**Question #5:** The mark of the Beast is likely not a physical mark on your body. It is more likely a mark on your character, and who you represent. Read Ephesians 1:13 to understand how you are ‘marked’ as a believer. Then read 2 Timothy 3:1-5 to see how people here are also ‘marked’, by the great Deceiver.

Additional Question: The best way to stand against the Devil and his influence through the two Beasts is to keep our accounts short with God. Read 1 John 1:9 and Acts 3:19 and ask yourself: “Is this something that is a priority in my life to actively pursue?” Talk about how this type of living fits with your understanding of daily life.

What kind of thoughts or emotions arise in you when you read these two descriptions?

**Pray for each other**