

All Things New: *The Beast Out of the Sea - Revelation 13:1-10*

1. **“How are we all doing?”** (*High, Low & Buffalo*)

2. **“Can someone read this paragraph out loud?”**

This week will include some discussion of politics. We suggest the following guidelines for keeping conversations full of grace and focused on what really matters:

- i. **Keep the discussion focus on me/us rather than others.** *We must first ask “How am I following Jesus?” before considering “How are **they** following Jesus?”*
- ii. **Keep the discussion centered on Jesus rather than politicians or political parties.** *We should always come back to the political idea that “Jesus is Lord” more than anything else.*
- iii. **Prioritize listening and learning before speaking.** *Do I understand other viewpoints in the group and why people have them? Am I willing to admit where I might be wrong or need to grow? Am I sharing sincerely, or trying to get people to agree with me?*

3. **“Thanks! Let’s keep that in mind. Revelation 13 is a continuation of the vision we heard in Revelation 12. Can someone read Revelation 12:14-17 to remind us of where we left off?”**

4. **“Now let’s read Revelation 13:1-10 and try to imagine what John saw as we listen.”**

5. **“What images stick out to you from this passage? What questions does it bring up?”**

6. **“If you heard the sermon this week, what helped you understand or apply this passage?”**

7. **“Revelation is closely connected to the Old Testament. Can someone read Daniel 7:2-7?”**

“The beasts in Daniel 7 represented blasphemous political empires of its time. What similar features and themes do you notice between the four beasts in Daniel 7 and the sea beast in Revelation 13?”

When have you torn between a personal belief (political or otherwise) and your loyalty to Jesus?”

8. **“A beast emerges from the sea with features combining all four beasts from Daniel 7 into one, thus representing all prideful, blasphemous empires of history. The dragon gives power to the sea beast, representing Satan’s use of powerful empires for evil (verse 2). The beast imitates the slain Lamb (Jesus) with a “fatal wound” that “had been healed” (verse 3). During a symbolic 42 months, representing our current day, the beast has authority for a limited time (verse 5). People give their allegiance and worship to the beast instead of to Jesus (verses 6-10).”**

“What does this passage indicate about God’s perspective of these powerful empires?”

Where do you see the tension between political loyalty and loyalty to Jesus playing out around you?”

9. “Revelation 13 is also closely connected to the rest of Revelation. Can someone read Revelation 5:6-8 and 5:13-14?”

“What similarities and differences do you notice between the Lamb and the beast from the sea? (e.g., their attitudes, allegiances, impact on humans, etc.)

The sea beast is powerful and evil (shown in its blasphemous names, many horns with crowns, and animal features), but it also bears some resemblance to the slain Lamb (shown in its “fatal wound” that had been healed and the universal worship of the beast). When have you encountered something that appeared good, but turned out to be harmful or damaging? (e.g., an approach to life, a business deal, a relationship, etc.)”

Optional: Break into smaller groups for this section

10. “Revelation 13:10b says that prideful political empires call for ‘patient endurance and faithfulness’ in God’s people.”¹

“Take a moment to think about a political belief that you feel strongly about. How has it shaped your view of others? (e.g., has holding this belief ever led you to think less of someone or dismiss a person in need? Has it led to restoration of relationships and loving your neighbour?)

Are you currently compromising your faith in any area of your life due to political pressures or ideals? If so, what would repentance and returning your loyalty to Jesus look like?

Where might Jesus be asking you to simply wait with quiet, patient endurance in the face of opposition rather than taking dramatic action? What would it cost you to endure quietly in this area? (e.g., your reputation, a particular outcome, ideal timing, pain, etc.)

Think of a political leader you disagree with. What would it take for you to genuinely pray for them? What would that prayer sound like? (Consider including this in tonight’s prayer time.)”

11. “Thanks for sharing _____. Can I pray for you?” *Take time to pray for each other.*

12. “Thanks everyone! Same time next week? Who will lead / host / bring snacks?”

¹ Bonus: Read Jesus’s command to “endure patiently” in the letter to the church in Philadelphia (Rev. 3:10-11)!