

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Revelation 13

Revelation — Week 18

ICEBREAKER: If you had the opportunity to travel into space, would you go? Why or why not?

OVERVIEW: In Revelation 13 we encounter the unholy trinity — the three great enemies of the early church. They are Satan (the dragon), the Roman empire (the sea beast), and the Jewish religious leaders (the land beast). Together these three persecuted the first-century Christians. But persecution is not ancient history. It is a reality that true Christians in every generation must face. In this discussion we will go deeper with how we can face persecution in a way that honors God.

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. What is religious persecution? What are some ways that persecution can be carried out?
3. Who are the biggest haters of Christianity in America today? In the world?
4. Is religious liberty a good thing or a bad thing for the progress of the faith?

5. Read 1 Peter 4:12-19 and answer the following questions.
 - a. Why shouldn't we be surprised by persecution (see v. 12)?
 - b. Why should we rejoice when we are persecuted (see vs. 13-14)?
 - c. Why does persecution mean we are blessed (see v. 14)?
 - d. What does it mean to not be ashamed but glorify God (see v. 16)?
 - e. How does verse 19 instruct us to respond to persecution?
6. Refer to Sunday's sermon and answer the following questions.
 - a. Who were the early church's three great enemies?
 - b. What evidence is there that the sea beast is the Roman empire in general, and Nero Caesar in particular?
 - c. According to the sermon, what was the mark of the beast?

The Last Word: "Our suffering is proportionate to our dedication to Christ." Kent Hughes