

Discussion Questions
How to Battle the Beast (Religion and Politics)
Revelation 13:1-14:1

(When you were little what were you most afraid of? What are you most afraid of now? Why?)

- When you have read or heard about the beasts in the book of Revelation what have you typically thought they are?
- What do you think of the idea that the beast from the sea is politics and the beast from the earth is religion?

Scripture seems to reveal that being influenced by the beast and encountering it are inevitable.

- If the beasts are human politics and religion, what sort of relationship do you think followers of Christ should have towards politics and religion?

When people feel threatened by the beast, they naturally want to battle the beast.

- Can you think of something in politics you currently don't like?
How would you typically go about battling it?
How would this world go about battling it?
- Can you think of something in religion that you don't like?
How would you typically go about battling it?
How would this world go about battling it?
- Do you think any or all of those solutions just end up being a new form of the beast battling the old form?

Romans 13:1 Paul wrote, "*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities (exousia). For there is no authority (exousia) except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.*" Paul didn't write, "Obey..." but "*Be subject to*" the authorities. (Remember the word for authorities used here is the same word Paul used in describing what we wrestle against, NOT against flesh and blood but against...authorities (*exousia*).

- Do you think there's a difference between obeying the authorities and being subject to them? (Think about Jesus' life, the life of Paul, and the disciples)
- What might it look like in your life to "be subject" to the authorities.
- How might that be part of battling them? (Can you think of any times when Jesus subjected himself to something? How did that play out?)

God "*instituted the authorities,*" wrote Paul, in Romans.

God "*triumphed over them in Jesus,*" wrote Paul, in Colossians.

And now "*we battle them,*" wrote Paul, in Ephesians.

- How does this affect your view of the beast? Your view of Christ's role and our role (as the Church) regarding the beast.
- Why do you think God instituted the authorities?
- Why did He triumph over them?
- If He triumphed over them, why do you think we still battle them?

In Ephesians 3 we learn that God was revealing a mystery that everyone is a partaker of the promise in Christ Jesus and later we learn that God's plan is that "through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places." Our job is to proclaim that we are truly not divided. But that Christ has made us one Body in Him.

- Write a small list of the areas in your life or situations in which you feel most threatened, unsafe, and tempted toward division—to building walls of "protection" or walling yourself off from relationship.
- Can you identify the fears that are behind your desire to build walls? If so, what are they?
- Is it possible that the walls you have built and your fears are keeping you from proclaiming the Gospel—that we are all one in Him?

"John writes that the beast "*was, is not, and is to come.*" ...In some utterly profound way, the beast has no power now; perhaps it doesn't even exist now. The beast derives its power from fears in your past and your fears for the future . . . it makes you fear death and form strategies to save your own life, so you'd never lose your life. It uses death as a trump card; the resurrection has utterly transformed the meaning of death." —P.H.

- Take some time to reflect on the power of the cross and the victory of Jesus' resurrection. Confess your walls and your fears to God, expose the influence of the beast to the Light and then invite the Light—Jesus—to break down the walls and set you free from your fears.

**These questions were created by Kimberly Weynen*