Table Host Discussion Guide

Week 7: The Beasts and the Mark

This week, Revelation 13 shows us how the defeated dragon wages war against the people of God. The first beast draws directly from Daniel 7, where beasts represent earthly kingdoms, and points John's readers toward the power of the Roman Empire. Yet Revelation pulls back the curtain to reveal the spiritual reality behind what they could see: the dragon gives the beast its authority and uses earthly power to turn worship away from God. The second beast looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon, representing false religion that directs worship toward the beast. For first-century Christians, refusing that worship could bring social, economic, and even physical consequences. The mark of the beast represents this same question of ownership and allegiance, standing in direct contrast to God's seal upon His people. Throughout the chapter, Revelation asks one central question: **Who will you worship?** Earthly kingdoms may appear invincible, but Jesus has already conquered; His kingdom cannot be shaken, and He alone is worthy of our allegiance.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Daniel 7 help us understand the beast from the sea in Revelation 13?

Application: Why is it important to let Scripture interpret Revelation before looking to current events for explanations? How has that approach changed the way you read this book?

2. What does the worship of the beast teach us about allegiance?

Application: What things in our lives or culture can compete with Jesus for our deepest trust, identity, security, or allegiance? How can we be grateful for earthly blessings without allowing them to become objects of ultimate trust?

3. How can Revelation say that the beast “conquers” God's people if Jesus has already won?

Application: How does Revelation's definition of victory differ from the way we normally define success or winning? Where might Jesus be calling you to choose faithfulness even when obedience carries a cost?

4. What does the second beast teach us about deception and false worship?

Application: How can we learn to recognize the difference between the voice of the Lamb and voices that only appear harmless or good? What role does Scripture play in developing that discernment?

5. What do the mark of the beast and the number 666 communicate about ownership and worship?

Application: If belonging to Jesus began to cost you comfort, acceptance, opportunity, or financial security, where would you be most tempted to compromise? What helps you remember that faithfulness to the Lamb is worth the cost?