

Revelation 13 – Discernment

Discussion Questions *for families and small groups*

1. What previously held conceptions of the beast did you bring with you to this sermon? Do you still hold them? How were they challenged or reinforced?
2. One of the key ideas of Pastor Bill's sermon was that the beast is a moving target. There is not *one* beast. Satan will use whatever he can get his hands on to distract humankind from worshipping the one true God. Why is that an important insight?
3. How was Rome both a blessing and a curse for the early Christians? How is the modern world a blessing and curse for Christians today? Do you think the human race would be better off if the Enlightenment had never occurred? Spend some time thinking and talking about that.
4. Pastor Bill argued that mass media and the world of advertising is a propaganda machine for the global consumer culture. Do you agree? Why or why not?
5. Flip through a magazine or watch a series of TV commercials. What products are being sold? What else are the marketers selling? For example: are the *really* selling an identity? Security? Belonging? Intimacy? What false redemption stories do you notice in the advertising you encounter? How can you strengthen your defenses against these SimGospels?
6. What are the core values of the global consumer culture? How do they compare with the values of the Kingdom of God (perhaps as described in Matthew 4:12-5:12)? What worldly values have been carted into your own heart by the Trojan Horse of culture? And to what extent? When do you feel the dissonance between these values and Jesus' values the most and the least?
7. What would it look like for you to "come out from" the beast and take your stand with Christ?
8. What else from the sermon challenged you or made you think? What unanswered questions remain, and what are you still confused about?

For further reading

- *From the Bible:* Amos, Exodus 20, Matthew 4:12-5:12
- Counterfeit Gods (Tim Keller)
- On Earth as it is in Advertising (Sam Van Eman)
- Screwtape Letters (C. S. Lewis)
- Where Your Treasure Is (Eugene Peterson)
- Above All Earthly Powers (David Wells)