

# Life Group/Personal Study

Unleashing Truth in Revelation • Week of August 2

The book of Revelation is both timely and timeless. John's letter was written to instruct seven churches struggling amidst severe persecution in first century Rome. As with many prophecies in Scripture, the Lord's prophets foretell events in the near and distant future. Prophecies are given as warnings in order to help us turn from coming destruction (repent). John's glimpse into heaven drove him to warn the churches to choose courage over compromise. As forces of darkness influence world powers around us, God's Word remains strong. So should the Church.

## Read Revelation 13:1-10

The dragon (Satan) gives 'the beast his own power and throne and great authority' (v2). The whole world marvels at the miracle of a 'fatal wound being healed' and worships the dragon for giving the beast such power (v4). The beast is allowed to speak blasphemies against God (v5), and 'to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them' (v7).

1. Satan imitates God. The apostle Paul says, "even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). If forces of darkness can influence the nations and world powers, how much more can the enemy influence common people? Why is it important to stay grounded in God's Word? How can you improve in this area of your life?

There are times when it looks like the Enemy has the upper hand (the beast is allowed to conquer God's holy people, v7). John writes, "This means that God's holy people must endure persecution patiently and remain faithful" (v10b). How can establishing non-negotiables in our lives ground us for courageous living and patient endurance?

In every generation, Satan has an antichrist in the waiting (see 1 John 2:18). Remember Jesus said: "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows" (Mark 13:32). The Son of God did not allow Himself or His disciples to know dates and times set by heaven (Acts 1:7). If Jesus did not know when He walked this earth, fulfilled redemption, and raised up apostles to lead His church – certainly the devil does not know when the Christ of God will return in final victory.

## Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

2. Notice v4 of this passage:

*"he will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4).*

Emperors often claimed deity (to be god), reminding us of the first sin in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:4-5). Of all things, the Enemy (the devil, dragon, serpent) is after your heart. He is the father of lies and will do whatever he can to deceive you and tempt you to believe that you are 'god' of your life. Even individuals who claim to be 'a Christian' will often believe they are still god and worthy of praise and worship. This is counterfeit (idolatry) and we must repent!

3. In what ways does our culture preach this luring message, to think of ourselves as gods?

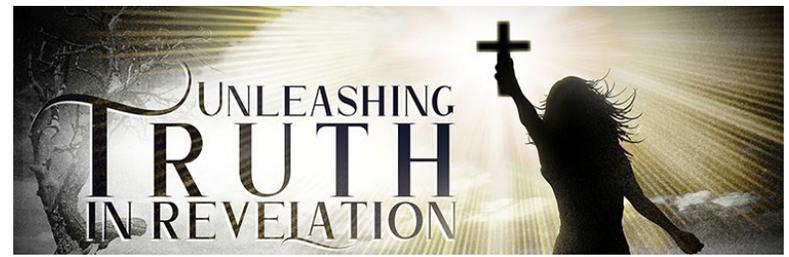
Think of a time pride crept into your heart and caused you to raise yourself to an elevated position. What caused you to identify the pride? How did you lay it down?

A true Christ-follower is someone who asks Jesus into his heart, and fully surrenders his life to the Lordship of Jesus. If you feel that pride is filling your heart instead of God's Holy Spirit, kneel at the nail-pierced feet of Jesus now. There is only one Person worthy of our adoration – that in the Lord Jesus Christ! There is coming a day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).

The apostle Paul says:

*"For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way. Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8).*

4. Like a stress test, coming persecution will reveal what is in your heart. It will be evident for all to see. When all hell breaks loose, will the test reveal that you have compromised with evil or will the test reveal courageous faith in Christ?



There are times compromise is necessary; i.e. in relationships, problem-solving, or working with a difficult individual. But there are other times, when we must be deeply rooted in a steadfast commitment to stand our ground. Close by considering the following non-negotiables. Are you standing strong? In what areas do you need to realign?

- ◇ Being honest in relationships and business dealings
- ◇ Dating (marrying) only a devoted follower of Christ
- ◇ Not fudging on numbers at work or on income taxes
- ◇ Refusing to participate in gossip
- ◇ Regular worship attendance to *give* God praise
- ◇ Tithing 10% into the storehouse of the Lord (the local church)
- ◇ Setting healthy boundaries in your relationships and social media
- ◇ Meeting with God daily in Bible study, prayer, reflection, listening for His direction

**Text: Revelation 13:1-18**  
**Romans 8:31-39**

## Plain Truth:

Pressure will produce \_\_\_\_\_  
or \_\_\_\_\_ faith.

**Courageous Faith is built on these two things found in Christ...**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### One Year Bible Readings

August 2: 2 Chronicles 32:1-33:13, Romans 15:23-16:9, Psalm 25:16-22, Prov. 20:16-18  
August 3: 2 Chronicles 33:14-34:33, Romans 16:10-27, Psalm 26:1-12, Proverbs 20:19  
August 4: 2 Chronicles 35:1-36:23, 1 Corinthians 1:1-17, Psalm 27:1-6, Prov. 20:20-21  
August 5: Ezra 1:1-2:70, 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, Psalm 27:7-14, Proverbs 20:22-23  
August 6: Ezra 3:1-4:23, 1 Corinthians 2:6-3:4, Psalm 28:1-9, Proverbs 20:24-25  
August 7: Ezra 4:24-6:22, 1 Corinthians 3:5-23, Psalm 29:1-11, Proverbs 20:26-27  
August 8: Ezra 7:1-8:20, 1 Corinthians 4:1-21, Psalm 30:1-12, Proverbs 20:28-30

**August 1 & 2, 2020**