

2022 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

January 23

Pastor Aaron continues to guide us through the book of Revelation. This week look at the themes found in chapters 13 and 14. Once again we observe the ultimate battle of good vs evil; the battle between God and Satan. In these chapters we are reminded to hold onto our faith no matter how the world around us chooses to live. God is the ultimate victor and our call is to patient endurance and faithfulness to the end.

Community Prayer:

Lord, as we look at these passages, we ask for your help and guidance so that we keep our focus on you. As we face the challenges of daily living, we choose to hold tight to our faith and to place our hope in you. We ask for your wisdom to guide us through our time of study and sharing. In Jesus' name, Amen

Opening Questions:

1. Think back about when you first decided to make Hillside your church home. What was it that drew you to this community?
2. What is one hope or dream you have for Hillside Community Church?
3. What is one thing you could do to help move that dream forward?

Exploration: Read aloud the passages below. (Have someone read aloud from their bible)

In chapter 13 we see the dragon (Satan) working hard to distract and deceive God's people.

Revelation 13:1-2

The Dragon and/or The Beast from the sea can be understood as representing both a kingdom and a person with characteristics of charm, charisma, leadership power and intelligence. The problem is that all those attractive qualities are motivated by wickedness. It looks great to many people, but it is truly evil. At the time this book was written, the people very likely assumed that this was written about the Roman Empire.



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According to theologian, Darrel Johnson, "Governments that step out from under the rule of God do not become divine, they become demonic, and governments that exalt humanity as the measure of all things do not become more humane they become more bestial."

4. How would you describe what it looks like for a government to step out from under the rule of God?

Revelation 13:4-8

With the limited, but real, power that Satan has, he gives it to the beast and apparently it is effective in impressing people. We see here that people actually worship the beast as its power is displayed. Only those whose names have been written in the book of life and who faithfully follow Jesus do not worship the beast.

5. How would you define the word, "worship"?
6. What are some subtle ways that people might "worship" something other than God?

Revelation 13:10c says, "This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints."

7. What might it look like for followers of Jesus today to live with patient endurance?
8. Has there ever been a time when you wanted to fight, but chose to wait and you were glad you did? If so, share about that experience.

Revelation 13:11-15

The Beast from the Earth described here joins both political and religious forces to entice and even force people to worship the beast. This is a manipulation of religious powers.

It's important to remember that a true prophet leads people to worship the living God, but a false prophet leads people to worship political



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powers. It is sad to see that many who were considered “religious” chose to compromise and offer their worship to political systems rather than to God.

9. Can you think of a time when you have seen Christians who are known more for their allegiance to political powers than to God? Share about that.

Revelation 13:16-18

As we see the beast increase in power, all people are forced to receive a mark on their hands or foreheads in order to buy or sell. This calls for wisdom on the part of God’s people. At that time it was very common for letters and numbers to be used as language. The number 666 translates precisely into “Nero” the Roman Emperor of the day.

The dragon, the sea beast and the land beast are a satanic trinity that infiltrates the political world in order to deflect our worship from the God we can’t see to the authorities we can see.

The beast puts a mark on people so that they could be easily identified as those who are his. The significance of a mark on the forehead points to thoughts and ideas being submitted to the Beast and on the hands to the practical outworking of that commitment.

In Revelation 14 we see the rescue of God’s people. While this battle is taking place, the gospel is being declared throughout the whole earth.

Revelation 14:1-3

Here we see that those who have remained faithful to God even in the midst of great tribulation are rescued and are redeemed. The rest of chapter 14 goes on to describe God’s ultimate victory over Satan and all his schemes. Those who faithfully follow the Lamb will join in songs of worship to God who is proven to be all powerful, trustworthy and true to his word.

7. Has there been a time or a season when you have struggled to believe that God is trustworthy? If you are comfortable, share about that experience.



