

## **9 – The Beast (Revelation 13:1-18)**

In *Brave New World* Aldous Huxley described a future too close for comfort: "As political and economic freedom diminishes, sexual freedom tends compensatingly to increase. And the dictator will do well to encourage that freedom." Faithful Christianity inevitably involves conflict, tension and suffering for followers of Jesus. We cannot be fully at home in our own culture. Even where we do not face open hostility, we are pressured—indeed seduced—by a seemingly friendly society. Rev. 13 demonstrates that the church must always deal with radical evil. In these visions John unmasks the powers of darkness at work in everyday life and at the end of history.

- 1.** Why do you think it is so difficult for believers to make substantial changes in society? (For example, in the areas of justice, protection of the unborn or making peace.)
- 2.** *The Beast Out of the Sea:* Read Rev. 13:1-10. In what ways is the beast a satanic imitation of Christ?
- 3.** What is the mission of the beast?
- 4.** What effect will the beast have "on the saints"?
- 5.** Why do you think John tells us about this formidable enemy of the soul?

**6.** How does Satan today offer false alternatives to the true benefits Christ provides?

**7.** *The Beast Out of the Earth:* Read Rev. 13:11-18. What new powers are given to this second beast?

**8.** How does this beast ensure that people worship the first beast?

**9.** Why do you think these two beasts will have such influence over the people living in the world?

**10.** John seems to be describing a conflict with Satan and his puppets that is going on now but will one day be fully realized (see 1 John 2:18). How might we expect to see this satanic influence at work today?

**11.** How can we prepare ourselves to face this conflict?