



## Part 13: A Discipleship Manual for Allegiance to the Lamb

Revelation 1:1-8

*Revelation is a discipleship manual for the people of God to stay faithful to King Jesus.*

### THE CRUCIBLE OF FAITH

The Church was on a collision course with the Empire. John and these early disciples were not participating in the political, social, and religious customs of their culture. They were viewed as unpatriotic and atheistic.

### THE POWER OF PROMISING LOVE AND LOYALTY

Rome had a story that demanded allegiance. The followers of Jesus wanted to be good citizens, but they could not swear ultimate allegiance to Rome. Their ultimate allegiance was already promised to Jesus Christ.

The earliest confession known in the early church was “Jesus is Lord” (Romans 10:8-10).

Romans 10:8-10 expresses a principle of reality – of the way things really work – the power of professing and promising love and loyalty. The integrity of our faith in Jesus Christ is demonstrated when the deepest convictions of our heart are in sync with what we profess to others and promise to the Lord.

### THE CALL TO THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

Revelation is about the testing of our faith when cultural powers undermine or oppose it. It is about what the apostle Paul called “the obedience that comes from faith” (Romans 1:5).

*“Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.” Revelation 1:3*

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*“Revelation 1:3 contains the first of the seven benedictions, or blessings, in the book of Revelation. It is pronounced both on the one who reads it aloud (in the assemblies) and on the hearers/keepers of the prophecy. The emphasis on keeping the words of the prophecy reminds us that the book is not primarily a depiction of events to come as a means of satisfying our curiosity but is rather a call to ‘first-commandment faithfulness.’” Michael Gorman, Reading Revelation Responsibly*

The challenge facing these early Christians was that Rome was demanding their ultimate allegiance that could only rightly be given to King Jesus. The Christians were being pressured to surrender and conform to the cultural powers of their day (See Revelation 18:2-5).

*“For no other book of the Bible presents us with the fundamental issue of discipleship, and, therefore, the fundamental issue of life, as sharply. It is the fundamental issue that was facing those who received the document in the first century: Whom will I worship? ... The powers of the present age or Jesus Christ? To whom will we give our ultimate allegiance? In the imagery of the book - to the beast, with the seductive offer of pleasure and wealth, or to the slaughtered Lamb, with his offer of life? Who will we follow as we make our way through this world? By whose value system will we walk? ... What will shape my lifestyle? The kingdom of God in Jesus Christ or humanity in rebellion against God?” Darrel Johnson, Discipleship on the Edge*

### **FOLLOWING THE SLAIN LAMB (REVELATION 5:1-6, 9-10)**

There was a moment in eternity when the Son of God made a promise to God the Father that He would give His life to save simple humanity and restore them back to relationship with the Father. The great Lion of Judah would become the Lamb slain for the sins of the world.

There were many moments in the life of Jesus when He was tempted to deny His true identity and forsake the promise that He made to the Father. There was no greater temptation than in the garden of Gethsemane.

Let us worship King Jesus for His great faithfulness on our behalf. Let us ask King Jesus to fill us with the faith and courage we need to honor our profession and promise of love and loyalty to Him.