

LESSON 2: LOCKED ON A COLLISION COURSE

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have been involved in our lives and our world from the beginning. Guide us as we consider what life was like for those suffering under Roman persecution. Reassure us that You will continue to be with us no matter what we experience and will make everything work together for our salvation. We pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Revelation Is God's Message to His Suffering People

- Where have you seen people suffer for their Christian faith?
- How have you suffered for your faith?

Watch the Video: Lesson 2

In the video we saw what life was like for those Christians to whom Revelation was written.

- What are some similarities *and* differences between our world and the world in which they lived?

Christians on a Collision Course

At the beginning, Christianity was tolerated within the Roman Empire and the apostles were free to share their faith from place to place. To be sure, persecution flared up in spots, but generally there was peace. But over the years the Roman emperors came to see Christian values and beliefs as a threat to their goals and purposes. Read what Revelation has to say about the Roman Empire's efforts to stamp out Christianity.

Notice the bold parts of this passage show it is speaking about the Roman Empire:

- **Babylon** - the name of this capital of the mighty Babylonian Empire, which fell to the Persian Empire, was frequently substituted for Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire. This was a reminder that Rome would fall just as surely as Babylon had.
- **Drunk with the blood of the saints** - Several Roman emperors held great public spectacles in which they shed the blood of a great number of Christians.
- **Seven mountains on which the woman is seated** - the city of Rome was spread over seven hills.
- **The great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth** - throughout the writing of the New Testament, Rome ruled the numerous kingdoms it had conquered around the Mediterranean Sea.

Pastor Klaus demonstrated that Rome and Christianity were headed on a collision course.

- How are *we* on a collision course in this country?
- How far should we go to avoid the collision or soften the blow?
- In what ways do you think we have yielded to our society too much already?
- How can we reach out to those who embrace the ungodly values of our society and yet remain true to our faith?

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, it is not easy to face persecution and suffering for our faith. Remind us of the price our Savior Jesus Christ willingly paid to save us from our sins and Your wrath. Empower us by Your Holy Spirit to boldly confess our faith in words and actions that those caught in error might learn the truth. We ask these things in Jesus' Name. Amen.

History of Revelation

The most likely date for the writing of Revelation is the last years of the first Christian century. The setting is Asia Minor (Western Turkey).

We have a good idea of the situation.

- Jews and pagans thought Jesus' followers who were living a Christian life were saying, "We're better than you are!"
- The emperor of Rome was trying to enforce the worship of the emperor, something Jesus' saints could not participate in.
- Both of these issues led to God's people being killed, exiled, and robbed
- The persecution fell on Asia Minor because Christianity was strongest there.
- With nasty stuff happening, believers began to ask, "Has God lost His power?"
- Revelation is God unveiling His answer to this question. Read Revelation 1:1, 4, 9 and 22:8.
- John was a Jewish Christian who had lived in Galilee.
- It was the unanimous opinion of the early church the author was John, the apostle.

- explaining all the scary stuff in revelation -