

A graphic featuring a large, gnarled tree trunk in the center, with two glowing circular openings. The word "GENESIS" is written in small, gold, all-caps letters above the tree, and "REVELATION" is written in the same style below it. The word "BOOKENDS" is written in large, white, serif, all-caps letters across the middle of the tree trunk. The background is a dark, atmospheric scene of a city street at night, with lights reflecting on the ground.

GENESIS BOOKENDS REVELATION

DON'T GIVE AN INCH

REVELATION 13

SYNOPSIS

This sermon on Revelation 13 calls Christians to steadfast endurance in a hostile world. Using John Bunyan's imprisonment as an example of perseverance, it argues that the two beasts symbolize anti-Christian government and false religion throughout history. Believers are warned not to compromise biblical truth, even under pressure, persecution, or cultural opposition. Yet the sermon ultimately turns inward, exposing the "beast within" the sinful human heart that constantly tempts believers to compromise for comfort, approval, and self preservation. The hope of the sermon is not human strength, but Jesus Christ, the true Lion and Lamb, who alone never gave an inch.

SERMON OUTLINE

Main Idea: Don't give an inch.

1. **Don't Give an Inch to the Beast that Rises out of the Sea (1-10):** This beast represents all antichristian governmental powers that have waged war against the Church since the days of John until the final day when Christ returns.
2. **Don't Give an Inch to the Beast that Rises out of the Land:** This beast represents all antichrist religion that attempts to persecute the Church throughout the entire Church Age.
3. **Don't Give an Inch to the Beast that Rises out of our Hears:** The spirit of the first beast that coopts government to serve its own purpose and not God, and the spirit of the second beast that coopts religion to serve its purpose and not God's, actually resides inside of us. Therefore, our hope must be outside of ourselves. In Christ alone!

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Special Leader's Note: Please remember that we are getting into heavily debated passages of scripture. Some will likely disagree with Pastor Raef's choice of interpretation on various symbols in this and coming chapters. That is okay! But be careful to not let the group discussion become a debate on symbol interpretation. Get to the practical heart level discussions around the principles of the text.

GROUP REFLECTION & APPLICATION

1. **Observing the Text:** First, make sure to have your group spend time looking at the text, and observing the text without reflecting on the sermon. You want the group to get familiar with the text, and the words, and the flow of thought. Keep making observations until you feel the group has a solid grasp of the entire text.
2. **“Don't Give an Inch” and Everyday Compromise:** Throughout the sermon, the repeated call was “Don't give an inch.” Yet most compromise does not happen all at once, but slowly through small concessions over time.
 - a. In what areas are Christians today most tempted to “give an inch” in order to avoid conflict, rejection, or discomfort?
 - b. Looking honestly at your own life, where do you feel pressure to soften truth, hide conviction, or remain silent when faithfulness to Christ would be costly?
3. **The Beast Rising Out of the Sea (Governmental Pressure):** The sermon described the first beast as governments and earthly powers that oppose Christ and pressure believers to conform.
 - a. Why do you think political power can so easily become hostile toward true Christianity?
 - b. How can Christians remain courageous and faithful without becoming fearful, angry, or consumed by politics?
4. **The Beast Rising Out of the Land (False Religion):** The second beast appeared lamb-like outwardly, yet spoke with the voice of the dragon. The sermon emphasized that some of the greatest spiritual dangers come through false teaching disguised as truth.
 - a. Why is false teaching that sounds “close to Christianity” often more dangerous than openly pagan unbelief?
 - b. What habits or disciplines help Christians grow in discernment so they can recognize the difference between Christ's voice and the dragon's voice?
5. **The Beast Within:** Near the end of the sermon, the focus shifted from external enemies to the sinful nature within every believer.
 - a. Why is it easier to identify compromise and corruption “out there” than to recognize it in our own hearts?

- b. Can you think of a time when fear, comfort, approval, or self-preservation tempted you to compromise obedience to Christ?

- 6. **Endurance and the Faith of the Saints (Revelation 13:10):** The sermon emphasized that Christian perseverance is not ultimately rooted in personal toughness, but in clinging to Christ.
 - a. What is the difference between self-reliant determination and true Christian endurance?
 - b. When you are spiritually weary, discouraged, or afraid, what helps you practically remember that Christ is your strength and not merely your example?