

A graphic featuring a large, gnarled tree trunk in the center, with two glowing circular lights behind it. The word "BOOKENDS" is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the top of the tree. Above "BOOKENDS" is the word "GENESIS" and below it is "REVELATION". The background is a dark, atmospheric scene of a city at night, with lights reflecting on a wet surface.

# BOOKENDS

GENESIS

REVELATION

## THE PROSTITUTE & THE BEAST

*REVELATION 17*

### SYNOPSIS

Babylon is beautiful. Babylon is a lie. In Revelation 17, the Apostle John pulls back the curtain on the world system that has always competed for the hearts of God's people, and he doesn't dress it up. He calls it what it is: a prostitute, passing a golden chalice full of death. She seduces with pleasure. The beast beneath her coerces with fear. Together they form a complete system designed to pull you away from God. But there is a better cup. Christ, the King of Kings, drank the cup of wrath you earned, so you don't have to drink hers.

### SERMON OUTLINE

**Main Idea:** Babylon's offer of a golden chalice that is only full of death.

- a. **Babylon's Chalice (1-6):** In this chapter Babylon is personified as a whore, offering a golden chalice full of death. Here we consider why we are so often tempted by her offer.
- b. **Babylon's Methods (7-14):** The prostitute rides on the beast. This represents two efforts Satan often uses to deceive: seduction and coercion.
- c. **Christ the Chalice Drinker (14-17):** Christ is the conquering lamb who did not just defeat Babylon from a distance, but condescended into humanity and drank the cup in full on our behalf.

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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. Where in your life are you currently holding Babylon's chalice, something that looks golden on the outside but that you know, if you're honest, is empty or destructive on the inside?
3. The sermon described two of Babylon's methods: seduction and coercion. Which one is more effective on you personally right now, the prostitute's whisper that the world can satisfy you, or the beast's threat that standing firm will cost you too much?
4. Judas had been flirting with Babylon long before he ever betrayed Christ. In what small, quiet ways might you be flirting with Babylon while still appearing outwardly faithful?
5. The sermon says that Christ drank the cup of wrath on your behalf (every abomination, every broken cistern, every sip from Babylon's chalice, concentrated into one moment at the cross). How does that change the way you think about resisting temptation is it primarily about willpower, or something else?
6. Revelation 18:4 says "Come out of her, my people." What would it practically look like for you to come out of Babylon's reach? Is there one specific area where you need to put more distance between yourself and Babylon's offer?

### FOR FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

**Question:** If someone handed you a cup that looked amazing on the outside, but you knew it was full of poison on the inside, would you drink it? What are some things the world tries to hand us that look really good, but are actually poison?

**Tip for Parents:** Get down on your kid's level with this one. Help them out. Teach them how to think critically about their experiences in the world, at school. This is a great opportunity to disciple them!