



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ASHLAND

This guide is an invitation to follow Jesus with greater purpose and hope. It will help you to explore the scriptures and challenge you to live out your faith. Each week we'd love for you to think about how you relate: **Up** (with God), **In** (with church) and **Out** (with neighbors).



Weekly Questions:

- How is God getting my attention? For help, think about these areas:
- How are you living up with God?
- How are you living in community with other followers of Jesus?
- How are you living out on mission with your neighbors?
- What are you going to do about it?

Revelation: The Fall of Babylon

Revelation 17-20

- **The Seduction of Babylon: The Power of Intoxication.** Revelation 17 introduces us to "Babylon the Great," described as a prostitute dressed in purple and gold, sitting on a scarlet beast. She represents the world's systems of wealth, luxury, and coercive power that "intoxicate" the inhabitants of the earth. This vision reveals how easily we can become "drunk" on the pursuit of status, excessive luxury, and the security offered by earthly empires. In what ways do you feel "intoxicated" by the luxuries or the "way things are" in our culture today? Where do you see the "beast" of coercive power and the "prostitute" of seductive wealth working together in your own life or community?
- **The Call to Exit: "Come Out of Her."** In Revelation 18, an angel announces the total collapse of Babylon's economy and influence. God's people are explicitly told to "Come out of her, my people," so that they do not share in her sins or her eventual ruin. When Babylon falls, the merchants and kings of the earth weep because their source of security and wealth is gone—yet the heavens rejoice. What does it look like to "come out" of an exploitative system while still living in the world? How do you react when your earthly sources of security (finances, reputation, or political standing) feel threatened?
- **The Marriage Supper: Dressing for the New Creation.** Revelation 19 contrasts the ruin of Babylon with the "wedding of the Lamb." The bride (the church) is given "fine linen" to wear, which represents the "righteous acts of God's holy people." Jesus returns not as a victim, but as the Rider on the White Horse called "Faithful and True," who judges with justice and conquers with the "Word of God." Jesus' robe is dipped in his own blood from the cross. How are you currently "making yourself ready" for the wedding feast? Do your daily "righteous acts" and mundane choices reflect the character of the Lamb? How does the image of Jesus as "Faithful and True" provide hope in a world that often feels deceptive?
- **Practice: The Great Exit**

In Revelation, we are invited to stop drinking the "wine" of Babylon and instead prepare for the Feast of the Lamb. This week, practice living as a citizen of the New Creation through these intentional acts:

 - **Audit the Intoxicants:** Identify one area of your life (such as social media, consumerism, or political vitriol) that feels like "Babylon's wine"—something that manufactures anxiety or greed. Take a "fast" from it this week to sober your heart.
 - **Dress for the Wedding:** Intentionally perform one "righteous act" of service, justice, or generosity that reflects the "fine linen" of the Lamb's bride.

- **Choose the Word:** In a moment of conflict or when you feel the urge to use "beastly" power to win, practice using the "sword of the mouth"—speaking truth with the gentle, sacrificial love of Jesus.
- **Will your life demonstrate that you are ready for the feast of the Lamb, or are you still lingering in the ruins of Babylon?**