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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

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**The Harlot and the Beast**

**Revelation 17**

**Prayer:** *Father, I thank you for your grace, I thank you for your goodness, I just thank you for this study that we are in in the book of Revelation. And Lord, we know that there's lots there, there's lots there that is disconcerting and difficult and hard to hear. So I pray this morning again for that extra measure of grace that your Spirit would accompany us, that you'd open eyes and ears and hearts and that you would just enable your word not just to go in but to be of permanent value. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, last week we looked at a series of harvests that are going to be taking place on the earth. And we saw that there's going to be two very different harvests: There's going to be one of wheat and one of grapes. And the wheat's going to be the harvest of the righteous of God's own redeemed; the grapes, that's the harvest of those who've rejected the gospel fully and finally. They are the ones who are harvested in the worst possible way, and we see that harvest unfold by the bowl judgments. And we pointed out they're

similar to the trumpet judgment that we learned about in chapter 8 except they were far more personal and even more intense.

We saw a series of seven bowl judgments poured out on the earth by angels. The first angel poured out his bowl directly onto the earth. This is Revelation 16:2 which we looked at last week, and it was *upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image*. And of course that bowl caused individuals to break out with painful sores and boils.

The next angel poured his bowl out onto the sea which turned into blood; and that was followed by another bowl, this one poured out on rivers and streams and they, too, were turned into blood as the angel said in verse 6: *"For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!"*

The fourth bowl caused the sun to scorch people with fire while the fifth bowl plunged the world into darkness, causing people to gnaw their tongues in anguish over the individual misery caused by the boils and the sores and the corporate misery caused by the contamination of the entire earth.

And what we saw that was amazing is that none of these bowl

judgments caused any of the dwellers of earth to repent. I mean, they just doubled down and cursed God and his judgment. And the sixth angel poured out his bowl and the Euphrates River was dried up in preparation for the great battle that would take place on Armageddon. We saw out of the mouth of dragon appears three frog-like demons that caused all the kings of the earth to gather for this great battle.

And finally -- this is again from last week -- the angel powers out his seventh bowl directly into the air and it's an attack directed at Satan himself. This is what 17 through 21 of chapter 16 says. It says: *The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.*

Now I just want you to picture this because you have to understand

what he's saying here. Islands fleeing away and mountains disappearing, this is clearly an indication of a vast change in geological topography. John MacArthur suggests the text basically asserts this was no normal earthquake, as earthquakes could be considered normal. This was designed in fact to change the whole topography of the earth in the Middle East particularly with regard to Jerusalem.

This is what MacArthur says. He says: "The massive earthquake will split Jerusalem into three parts, beginning a series of geophysical alterations to the city and its surrounding region that will conclude when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. Zechariah 14:4-10 describes these changes in detail. The Mount of Olives will split in two, and a new valley running east and west will be created (Zech. 14:4). A spring of water will flow year-round from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean and Dead Seas (Zech. 14:8), causing the desert to blossom like a rose (cf. Isa. 35:1). Jerusalem will be elevated, and the surrounding region flattened into a plain (Zech. 14:10). Thus, the purpose of the earthquake as it relates to Jerusalem is not to judge the city, but to enhance it."

(MacArthur, John. Revelation 12-22 MacArthur New Testament Commentary (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series Book 33) (p. 152). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.)

Now you also understand this earthquake is accompanied by hailstones as great as a hundred pounds killing all those who escape the quake. And just to put things into perspective, the largest hailstone that's ever been found was a little under two pounds. These are hundred-pound hailstones. The chapter ends by saying the chapter ends by saying that instead of repenting "*people cursed God for the plague of the hail because the plague was so severe.*"

Well that sets the stage for chapter 17 which we're going to be examining this morning which says starting at verse 1: *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk."*

Well like many others, this passage immediately raises three questions: Number one, who is the great prostitute; number two, what does the angel mean by "many waters"; and number three, what is the nature of this sexual immorality that has taken place?

So first, who is this great prostitute? Well, all we have to do is jump ahead to verse 5 and we see she's clearly identified. Verse 5

says: *And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."* So she is Babylon the great. And again you have to understand, Babylon is a reference to the entire system of earth itself that aligns itself against the kingdom of God. It's literally the kingdom of light, life and truth, against the kingdom of darkness, death and lies. The great prostitute is every single system in history that is set out to prove itself superior to God and his kingdom. It represents the enemy's approach to running this world.

Well, the second question, what does the angel mean by -- quote -- *"many waters?"* That, too, is directly answered by God in verse 15. It says: *And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages."* So the prostitute, basically is what it's saying is the prostitute wins the earth's popularity contest hands down, but again that's no surprise, I mean, the kingdom of God is always going to occupy the minority position. I mean, it was Jesus who said: *"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."*

I mean from the Garden of Eden all the way up to today there's been

basically two kingdoms competing for this earth: One has a wide gate, it's got four-lane highways; the other's got a very narrow gate and a lot fewer passengers. One is the kingdom of light and the other is the kingdom of darkness. And ever since the fall, the earth has been locked in this battle between these two kingdoms.

If you remember back the serpent, the devil himself, he was successful in tempting Adam and Eve to fall. And ever since then Satan had his minions doing his work to turn the inhabitants of earth against the kingdom of God. And ever since then we've seen the battle ebb and flow according to the providence of God. And from Cain slaying Abel all the way forward to just before the great flood there was this ongoing battle over who was going to control planet earth.

By the time of the great flood the earth had become so corrupted that the scripture tells us in *Genesis 6:5*: *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* Someone once said that if God looked down at this planet and decided to sweep every last living thing into hell itself, the universe would have shouted, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD God Almighty!" But God in his mercy chose to spare us. And he gave us the rainbow as a sign of that mercy, something that now has been turned into a

symbol the prostitute would be proud of.

After the flood mankind still found itself locked into this war between the kingdoms and no city better represented the antipathy of mankind towards its creator than the city of Babylon. And what's unique about Babylon is that as a city itself, it rebelled against God. After the flood had wiped out all the people on the planet except for eight human beings, humanity eventually bounced back and they attempted to defy God and they did that by building a tower that would reach into the heavens itself, not built with brick and mortar but with brick and bitumen. Bitumen is the stuff that asphalt is made out of. It's highly adhesive but the most important quality it has is it's waterproof. It was used to literally make a waterproof structure that no flood could ever take again so that they could shake their fist in God's face and say, "I dare you to try that once more."

*Genesis 11* describes the circumstance. It says: *Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a*



*name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."*

Well, God had told them to multiply and fill the whole earth, but they were determined to shake their fist at God and say, Nope, will not do. We're going to build a city that defies your command to go forth and populate this earth and we're going to make it so that any flood you send us we will be able to laugh at. That's the spirit of *"Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."*

And what was unique about Babylon is that at that time the entire world was united. Remember, it only had one language at that time. And what united the world was its opposition to God. The spirit of Babylon that God is speaking about is the rebellion first begun by Satan in the garden and then passed on through its minions so that at times the entire world seemed devoted to Babylon.

And this prostitute that we encounter in Revelation 17, she represents the collective desire of fallen mankind to spurn the love of God and instead to go for any other lovers of any type and taste so long as they represent an adulterous rejection of God's love.

And it's not for nothing that this prostitute is given a specific name in verse 5. We pick up at verse 3 of chapter 17. John says: *And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."*

I mean, this is all of earth and its earthly systems arrayed in its finest, they're shooting out the lip, as Psalm 22 says, and they're doing it to God himself. We all know we use the extended finger as an obscene gesture, that's what we do to indicate defiance and scorn; this is the earth itself extending its middle finger directly at God. She's further identified in the very last verse of chapter 17, which says: *"And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth."* So from this very start, outside the gates of the Garden of Eden until today, this great city Babylon has dominated the earth and has dominion over its kings.

This mother of prostitutes, abominations of earth are presented

over and over again in sexual terms, and certainly much of the idol worship that the earthly systems engage in, it has a sexual component. I mean, there was Israel's constant defilement. If you remember when Moses came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments, it was said of the Israelites that in his absence -- quote -- *they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.*

Well, "rose up to play" is a euphemism that describes sexual activity. Just think about this: Moses, he's up on the mountain and he's meeting God himself. God who has set his people apart as the ones to receive this special revelation, he comes down from the mountain and he finds his people sexuality engaged. I mean, it's a pattern that Israel engaged in frequently. The sexual nature of the forms of worship they engaged in when they went after false gods made them adulterers physically, mentally and spiritually.

And God didn't mince words when he described how disgusted he was with his people's conduct. This is what he said in *Hosea 4*. He said: *They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery.* In *Jeremiah 2*, he said: *"For long*

*ago I broke your yoke and burst your bonds; but you said, 'I will not serve.' Yes, on every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down like a whore."*

Over and over again God called out Israel for its unfaithfulness and yet the great crime, the great crime in God's eyes is not necessarily sexual. It was put in sexual terms but God is speaking quite basically in terms of faithfulness versus faithlessness. And the issues that he raises might not have to deal with us sexuality but each one of us has to wrestle with the implications of what he's wrestling with because every single person on earth has a choice. And the choice is will I be faithful to God and his kingdom or will I be faithless? Will I put something ahead of God or will I not, and that's basically the issue. And God has a name for it, I mean, in God's economy it is a great sin and it is the sin of idolatry. In fact it was God's very first commandment.

This is what he said in *Exodus 20:2*: *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me."* Now in 21st century America, we're far too sophisticated to have called-out names for gods but there are clearly gods that we worship just like the Israelites did. I mean in Israel's case it was sex, power and money, they've always been the prime venues for idol worship as

well. And Jesus made that clear when he said in *Matthew 6:24*: "*No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*"

Now, what Jesus is saying, it really defies what most people think, I mean, most people think you can have multiple masters and be neutral about how you treat them. Jesus says that's an impossibility. He says, whatever choice you make will be the one that you devote yourself to; and whether you realize it or not, you're going to despise all the others, and that includes God and his kingdom. You talk about a binary choice. It's God and his kingdom or the earth and a host of all other kinds of kingdoms, period. And for most people the choice is the kingdoms of the earth, and God calls that idolatry.

If you understand that idolatry is at its heart what really guided the great prostitute riding on the beast, you have to understand that Babylon represents a system that's based on idolatry. And you can certainly make the argument that our country and culture leads the pack when it comes to choosing sex, power and money over God.

I mean, I firmly believe that capitalism is the best system on earth. I think it delivers the most good to the most people but I

also believe, as Calvin put it, that human beings are idol factories. We can manufacture idols for almost anything. And the demand of a capitalistic society can easily be turned into covetousness, which according to God is idolatry. Listen to what he said in *Colossians 3:5*. He says: *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.*

We have a demand economy which is it's based on need as its driving force, and the problem is genuine need itself can easily be transformed in producing desire or covetousness which God says is idolatry. It's where advertising goes in order to produce demand which drives our entire economy. I mean, that car, that shirt, that dress, that jewelry, all of those things that advertising shouts will make you into a more desirable person, they can be thought of as inducements to worship, not very different than those that Israel took up while Moses was up on the mountain. God is very clear that desire and demand can easily morph into covetousness, and covetousness in God's eyes is flat-out idolatry. *Ephesians 5:5* says: *For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*

I mean we're looking at the book of Revelation. You got to understand this is a book that speaks through images. And some of them are incredibly bizarre, as this prostitute riding on a beast, but the image is served to encapsulate and display far more than simple words can. And so John is given this vision of the defiance of the world embracing whole-heartedly sexual abomination displayed in the most defiant way that it knows, but then things take an even more ominous turn as John describes it in the next verse. He says this: *And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly.*

Now you have to understand what John is seeing here, I mean, this prostitute riding the beast, it's full of defiant abominations towards God himself but she, too, is an addict. She's drunk with the blood of the saints. She's drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; her bloodlust is for Christians.

Again we've said the earth is engaged in this proxy war between the kingdoms, it's the kingdom of light versus the kingdom of darkness ruled over by the prince of the power of the air. The prince of darkness knows only one true enemy, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ and his followers. It's Christ who came to this planet with one main goal and that was to glorify his Father by ransoming and rescuing his sheep and in the process defeating once and for all

the enemy of our souls. That's why 1 John describes Jesus' role this way. He says: *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*

Jesus perfectly understood the existential nature of the threat that he was to the prince of this world. I mean, he realized that because he was such a threat he would be singled out and hated by the prince and that the enemy would seek by any means necessary to root him out, which of course he tried by first having Herod slay all the male babies. And when that failed he went about the task of engendering pure hatred among all the dwellers of the earth toward this God-man Jesus, and that includes a profound subliminal hatred towards all of his followers. And Jesus made that clear when he said in *John 15*: *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."*

You see, ultimately the devil knows that Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and every other religion in the world, they're not real threats to his kingdom. Christianity alone is the threat. I mean, you have to understand the binary nature of the world that we are in. There's only two choices: It is Christ or it is the enemy, and there's no such thing as neutrality. I mean, I know the vast



majority of your friends and your neighbors and your colleagues, they see themselves as non-participants in this war between the kingdoms. They don't bother God and they sure hope that God doesn't bother them. They have no idea they have already made their choice because you're in one kingdom or you are in the other. And if you're not actively pursuing the kingdom of God, you are by default pursuing the kingdom of the prince of the air.

Jesus said you have to choose one kingdom or the other: God or mammon. And not only do you have to choose but having made that choice you're going to despise all the other choices. James makes the very same point when he tells us in *James 4:4*: *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

Not only does James state unequivocally the binary nature of the choice, but he frames it just like God did with Israel; he frames it in terms of adultery. He says, the more you cozy up to the world, the more God sees you as an adulterer. John looks at the prostitute riding on this beast as the queen of adulterers, and he's so astounded, he marvels.

We pick up at verse 7. It says: *But the angel said to me, "Why do*

*you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come."*

Well we know by now that the woman he's speaking about, she represents Babylon and all the earthly systems that are arrayed in outright rebellion against God, but who is this beast she's riding on? Who's this beast with seven heads and ten horns? Well it's none other than the antichrist. And again, we pick up at verse 7: *But the angel said to me, "Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her."*

Now by now you know there's a lot of different beasts to reckon with in the book of Revelation. Remember that first beast that we encountered, the one that waited for the woman to deliver the child so he could devour it, well that beast represents Satan himself; we've spoken about him often. The beast that we're speaking about here is the one that the prostitute is riding on. That beast is the antichrist. And remember the antichrist, the antichrist is not

some super human creature, he's a human being. He's a human being empowered by Satan in a mockery of the way that Christ is empowered by his Father. And if you recall, the antichrist receives a mortal head wound, something he miraculously recovers from. We looked at this back in chapter 13.

Let me just re-read to you about his head wound. It says: *One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"*

Well, it's that beast who reappears in what we're looking at right now in verse 8. It's what verse 8 is referring to. It says: *The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.*

Well, this is the antichrist. This is the one who at this point is known throughout the entire world. He's the one who received this mortal head wound from which he miraculously recovers. The angel

says he was, then he became is not, that is to say he was apparently killed by this mortal head wound, and then he is about to rise in a miraculous pseudo resurrection.

Not only was the antichrist to rise but it also goes on to say that all the dwellers of the earth -- that's the people in the system of the earth -- will marvel at the beast because it was, then was not and now is once again. Verse 9 goes on to say this: *This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. Piece of cake.*

You have to understand, things get so complicated at this point that God himself in the scripture himself is basically telling us this isn't easy to grapple with; this isn't easy to understand. God says, *"This calls for a mind with wisdom."* And once again, we're met with a myriad of different understandings of just what

the seven mountains and the seven kings and the ten horns are. I mean, lots of folks think that the seven mountains refers to Rome itself because it was founded on seven hills but the scripture itself tells us these mountains, they're not really mountains. It says they're kings. Verse 10: *They are also seven kings.* It goes on to say that *five have fallen, one remains and the other is still to come in the future.*

Now, I've read a good deal about what this is, but I think John MacArthur sums it up best. He says this, he says: "The five Gentile world empires that had fallen by the time of John's vision are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The one that existed at that time was obviously Rome. The other one that has not yet come is Antichrist's final world empire. Furthermore, all six of these were not only legitimate heirs of political Babel but also of religious Babel as well. Babylonia, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome were all strongholds of the world religion of evolutionary pantheism and idolatrous polytheism. Thus, they appropriately are represented as six heads on the great beast that supports the harlot." (MacArthur, John. Revelation 12-22 MacArthur New Testament Commentary (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series Book 33) (pp. 169-170). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.)

So where we are right now, six of these kingdoms have gone before,

he says one is yet to be. Well, that one that is yet to be is the one that we're watching for right now. Verse 10 says: *And when he does come he must remain only a little while.* And again, the antichrist rules for only three and a half years during the tribulation.

So what we have so far is six kings have been described, but there's a description here of a seventh king, and that happens to be the antichrist who's killed and resurrected, making him in fact both the seventh and the eighth king. And verse 11 says: *As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.*

See how simple this is? God's not kidding when he says that this requires a great deal of wisdom, far more than I have. I mean, I had to read this material over and over again just to get a sense of what this might mean, but the next sentence, thankfully, is very clear and very obvious. This is verse 14. It says: *"They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."*

I mentioned before there's very little in Revelation about the battle of Armageddon, but what we can gather from the other

biblical sources is that it's hardly going to be apt to even call it a battle. Basically it's going to be a rout. It says the Lord Jesus is going to make short work of all of the kingdoms that are arrayed for battle; it's not even going to be close. And what follows next is the knives coming out from the world towards the prostitute. Verse 15 says: *And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire."*

We're just assuming the ten horns represent some type of NATO-type alliance and they've all joined forces to promote the prostitute that's been sitting on the beast but now they turn on her. And as much as they encouraged and supported her, now they literally devour her. And however this plays itself out politically, what we are seeing is the elimination of any competition whatsoever by the beast, that is Satan himself. You see, it's his determination to have worship directed at him and him alone.

Again verse 17, it says: *"For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled."*

*And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth."* Again, the woman represents everything that this world stands for. I mean for us, in our culture she's everything that Isaiah was speaking of when he said: *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*

Daniel Atkins sums it up well. This is what he says describing the woman. He says: "The woman is the 'great city,' Babylon in its religious, political, economic, and social significance. It refers to a diabolical worldly system. Babylon cannot be confined to a city in the past or future, such as Rome or Babylon, Washington or London, Moscow or Beijing. It is a trans-historical system of satanic evil, an extension of ancient Babylon, forming an evil world system throughout history and during the tribulation. After the destruction of the woman, all its power will reside in the antichrist, who will manifest all of its satanic evils in its fullness. Evil devours evil because God puts it in their heart. It is inevitable." (Akin, Dr. Daniel L.; Platt, David; Merida, Tony. *Exalting Jesus in Revelation* (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 296). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.)

This woman riding on the beast has ruled this world since the fall in the Garden of Eden and she does it in a very unique way. See,



you have to understand, the battle of the ages, the battle that goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden has never been framed for what it really, really is. The battle has always been between good and evil. But this prostitute, the woman, Babylon, is far too clever to ever let it be framed that way. The battle as we know it today is never between good and evil. It's always between different competing ideas of what is good.

No one ostensibly pursues evil as an end in itself. Instead what they do is they redefine what is palpably evil as good and then they pursue it as a newly defined good. I mean, Hitler never said that he was going to pursue the evil of eliminating a whole race of people; instead, he pursued the genocide of Jews as a newly defined good thing, as a cleansing of the human genome, as a creation of a master race free from the curses of the fall. And today that's the way of reckoning evil, that's -- practically speaking, that's all we know. That's the way it's delivered for us. And that's really what the prostitute riding on the beast stood for. And we can see her handiwork, but we have to look behind the headlines. We have to, by the grace of God, look to see what God is revealing here.

And we battle the prostitute and her redefinition of good when it comes to life itself. You see, she has successfully redefined good as bodily autonomy and the freedom to choose. So now today to be

pro-life is to be regarded as pro-oppression. When it comes to God's order of creation and marriage, the whole idea that God created male and female as two separate parts of an image as a binary thing, it's been redefined as evil, as cis gendered oppression. And once again, we find ourselves labeled as bigoted oppressors for insisting that God's order of creation is not subject to redefinition.

And now what do we find? Now we see the entire world erupting in anti-Semitism redefined as a good thing. I mean, believe me, the prostitute riding on that animal is going to be proud. 1200 innocent men, women and children are raped, pillaged and butchered in Israel and that is now being redefined as good, as a courageous rebellion against the white settler colonialism that marks Israel out as an oppressor and Hamas as a noble resistor. In fact Israel was never white nor was it ever colonial. I mean all of this absolutely defies reason and yet we see it marching forward at breakneck speed.

We just celebrated Thanksgiving. We have much to be thankful for. I mean, not only do we have safety and freedom, at least for now we also have something that's far more important. We know that God himself took on flesh and entered into this world to engage the enemy of our souls, and that he did it in the same way that we do

it, he lived the life just like we lived except he did it perfectly; and then he took that perfect life to the cross and he offered it up as a substitute for my life of sin so that we could stand before God with Christ's righteousness instead of our own and therefore become worthy of heaven itself. And so if you know Jesus as Lord and Savior, you have received the greatest gift that could ever be given. And you and I can't begin to grasp the treasure that God has placed in our hands as a gift.

But we also have the word of God, and the word of God peels back the curtain on the ways of the prostitute riding the beast. See, your friends, your neighbors, your colleagues, they don't have a clue. This Thanksgiving I'm particularly grateful that we have the ability to see beyond the obvious. And in addition to that, we have the wisdom and the power of God himself that's there for us just for the asking because this world is unfolding exactly the way God said it would, and for that, I thank God. And just like Paul said to the Corinthians, *we are not to be outwitted by Satan for we're not ignorant of his designs.* So let's pray.

*Father, I thank you that you have given us the ability to see what this world literally is marveling at, not in a good sense. I sense the panic in people when they see things that are just crazed being put forth as wise and good and full of wisdom. And the world has*

*no idea how -- how to stop this, how this is even happening. We know exactly what's going on, Lord, we know why. I thank you for your book. I know it's not an easy book, I know it's not an easy book to hear, but I continue to thank you for your grace and your wisdom which put it there and I pray for the grace and the wisdom and the understanding to grasp enough of it to give hope to those friends, colleagues and neighbors who still have no clue. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*