

How to Judge a Harlot (Double Vengeance?)

Rev. 18-19:9

#33 in our series “The Gospel According to Jesus: The Revelation”

September 16, 2018

Peter Hiatt

Prayer

Through the power of your Spirit, would you help us see you? Especially those who haven't heard our others messages on The Revelation. I pray that you would help them have faith that it actually does reveal you. Everything is the revelation of you, Lord Jesus. So, Father, I'm asking you to help us preach. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Message

Revelation 17:1-2

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 [harlot, whore] [literally porne] who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality [porneou], and with the wine of whose sexual immorality [porneia] the dwellers on earth have become drunk.”

We read that last week... and then we read the middle of the chapter about the beast... Then we read verse 18 and 18:1-2

And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.” After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!”

Now before we read any further, we probably ought to stop and ask, “**What’s God’s problem with harlots—whores—pornes?**”

Some folks think it’s sexuality, but God’s very first commandment is to have sex: “*Be fruitful and multiply.*”

Porneia is the noun translated “sexual immorality” or “prostitution.” *Porneou* is the verb translated “commit sexual immorality” or “to prostitute.” They all come from the verb *pernemi*, which means to sell, and in particular, sell slaves... that is human souls.ⁱ A human soul is a temple of dust that contains the breath or spirit of God.

We started speaking about this when we preached on the letter to Thyatira at the start of the Revelation.ⁱⁱ We said God’s problem with whoredom must be that it attempts to buy and sell love, which is life, and everything good.

Harlotry is an attempt to pay for the intimate communion called Love or it is an attempt to pay *with* the intimate communion called Love as when a woman sells herself to a man. Either way, it turns Love into a commodity. God is Love.

In Scripture, any sexual intercourse outside the covenant of marriage can be referred to as *porneou*, for you don't have to use money to buy and sell yourself . . . only in marriage is all the sex free. Well anyway, I think that's the big problem that Jesus has with prostitutes, which raises another question: **"Why does Jesus seem to be so attracted to prostitutes, harlots, whores—lose women . . . particularly in the Gospel of John?"**

In John 8, a mob of Pharisees and Bible teachers throw a woman caught in the act of adultery at Jesus' feet. She's stripped of all her dignity, all her pride, all her fig leaves and probably all her clothes. They say, *"The law requires that we take her life."* And Jesus says, *"Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."*

At that, the Pharisees drop their stones...

Over and over, Jesus exposed the pastors as the worst of prostitutes.

Then Jesus says to the woman, *"I don't condemn you, go and sin no more."* (Being God and all, you might wonder why Jesus didn't stop her before she was exposed in such a humiliating way... but He didn't.)

In John 4, Jesus talks to a Samaritan woman at a well and basically exposed her: *"Sweetheart, you're on your sixth man and he's not your husband."* Jesus is the seventh Man. Jesus is her Husband. Perhaps she must feel the pain of sin in order to recognize Grace, who is her husband.

In John 2, Jesus turns six stone jars of water into wine at a wedding feast. He is the Bridegroom and on the Seventh Day, He makes wine and gives it to a Bride.

In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus even appears to host dinner parties for prostitutes, as if they are His Bride. (Luke 15:1-2)

Jesus cast seven demons out of Mary of Magdalene.

Some have suggested that she was the prostitute that washed Jesus' feet with perfume and tears.

Some have also suggested that she was secretly married to Jesus—a harlot who became His bride.

I highly doubt that, and yet, in another way, I believe exactly that! Jesus did marry a harlot and turn her into a Bride.

Well, who is this great harlot in the Revelation?

I suspect that she's one of those "principalities and powers, world rulers of this present darkness" that Paul talks about in his letter to Ephesus.

Recently, Susan and I prayed for an old friend who had been haunted by a vision of a goddess of death. We took authority and asked, *"What right do you have to be here?"* And Susan heard, *"There is something of me in everyone."* Jesus revealed that this was

“The harlot.” And so we prayed confessing anything and everything in each of us that we thought had anything to do with *porneou*. I confessed some stuff about lust, and then I prayed, “*But more than that, Jesus, I think I always have to pay.*”

Once I asked Susan to pray with me, and confessed, my confusion, shame and remorse about watching a particular racy movie. As I prayed, Susan said, “*Peter I hear Jesus... it’s like he’s weeping, He says to you, ‘Peter why do you feel like you always have to pay?’*”

I’m still not sure exactly how Jesus feels about that movie, but the fact that I felt like I had to pay for mercy, seemed to break His heart. And isn’t that the worst type of *porneia*?

Trying to pay for the mercy, grace, and love of God... that is God?

Well, as we prayed for our friend last week, and confessed our *porneia*, Susan saw a beautiful woman hovering over the face of the earth.ⁱⁱⁱ Last time, we noted that if the beast is the antichrist—the imitation Christ, then the harlot is the anti-bride of Christ—the imitation bride and false Eve: she is *not* the mother of the living, but the mother of earth’s abominations—the human ego.

Well, as we confessed our *porneia*, the woman cursed at us, shriveled into a little old woman, and lost her power. The great harlot must be “*a principality and power, a world ruler of this present darkness,*” and yet she derives her power from us.

She’s that, *and* also a city.

A city is an economy, and an economy is a way of relating.

She’s an economy of *porneia* that reminds us of the tower of Babel.^{iv}

She’s Babylon and, as we mentioned last time, she’s clearly Rome.

She’s an evil demonic entity, and yet she’s a city and cities are an economy of people relating to each other—people that God has made.

She’s Babylon, Rome, and Jerusalem. John has already referred to Jerusalem as “*the Great City... where our Lord was crucified.*”

Jerusalem contains the temple and is built on the spot where supposedly God made Adam... but Jerusalem is a harlot. She’s constructed of God’s chosen people, and yet, over and over, the prophets claim that she’s become the greatest of harlots^v and so the entire nation of Israel has become a harlot.

The prophet Hosea is even commanded to marry a harlot, for God claims that He is married to a harlot. Through Hosea God says, “*Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. For the spirit of whoredom is within them*” (Hosea 5:4). And then, in chapter 6, verse. 6, God says, “*I desire hesed—that’s steadfast love, unconditional love,*

covenant love... *but at Adam* (or “like, or as, Adam”) *they transgressed the covenant... and dealt faithlessly with me.*”

God talks as if we’ve all been harlots since Adam.
Or maybe we’ve all become harlots just like Adam.

I’d remind you that Adam means humanity. Every newborn is an Adam and, according to Scripture (Deut. 1:39), none of them have “the knowledge of Good and evil.”

In the beginning, Love, who is God, made Adam.
And then God said, “It’s not good that the Adam is alone.”
And yet, the Adam was in the very presence of Love... who is God.
Adam doesn’t know the Good, who is God, and that it’s evil to be alone.

God shows Adam all the animals, male and female . . . but Adam can’t find his helper.

So God says, “I’ll make a helper—*ayzer*—fit for Adam.”
God divides the Adam in two, making male and female.
But She is just more of He and He is more of She.
Adam means “humanity,” and humanity is not good at being its own helper.
It’s humanity—Adam before he became male and female—that is alone.
Humanity is alone, and that’s not good.

It turns out that male and female is a sacramental representation of God and us.
In fact, in all the rest of the Old Testament that word, *ayzer*, translated “helper,” never refers to a human husband or wife, but only God.

Over and over, David, the man after God’s own heart, refers to the Lord as his “helper.”
Through Hosea (13:9) God says, “*I will destroy you, Oh Israel, for you are against me, against your helper (your ayzer).*”

The female is to be a temple for the male, and the male, a temple for the female. In the same way we are to be a temple for God and God is for us—the New Jerusalem.

In the Gospel of John, at the start, right after Jesus turns water to wine at the wedding banquet, He cleanses the temple in Jerusalem.

We find that the temple is His body, and the temple is us. And do you remember what He cleanses the temple of? Merchants . . . buying and selling the Love that is God. He cleanses this temple of harlotry—but Jerusalem loves her harlotry. And so inspired by the beast from the land, and the beast from the sea, Jerusalem chants, “*crucify, crucify*” and nails her helper to a tree in the middle of a garden, just outside her city walls.

And that was nothing new; it was the revelation of what had been happening since the beginning. As Jesus died he said, “*Father forgive them they know not what they do.*”

In other words, “They don’t know the Good, and they don’t know the evil. They don’t know that I am their helper. I Am salvation. *Yeshua*”

Now pay very close attention:

God made Adam, and Adam couldn’t find his (and her) Helper.
So, God made the Adam, male and female, to teach them about their helper so they would recognize what a helper is, what a helper does, and so, who our Helper is.

And then, God began to fashion the Helper fit for humanity... As the prophets teach, humanity is the Bride of our Lord, who is our Helper... but our Helper wasn’t yet fit for humanity. Our helper is God in flesh—broken body and shed blood.

In the middle of the Garden, God had planted a tree. Genesis 2:7— it’s called the “tree of Life.” In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, “I am the Life.” And so the tree of Life must’ve looked like this:



And in the middle of the Garden, God planted another tree or maybe it was the same tree, for it’s also in the middle of the Garden. Genesis 2:7—it’s called the “tree of the knowledge of Good and evil.”

In Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus says, “*No one is Good, except God alone.*”^{vi}

In John 10, Jesus says, “*I am the good shepherd.*”

Jesus is the Good that is God in flesh...

And so the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil must’ve looked like this:



God said, *“You shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day you eat of it dying you will die.”*

That was the sixth day of creation, for humanity was not yet perfected in the image of God . . . for humanity did not know the Good . . . her helper.

Jesus was crucified on the sixth day of creation, on the sixth day of the week, at the sixth hour of the day. On the sixth day, a snake lied to the woman. In Revelation 12 you’ll remember that the dragon battles the woman, who is us, with a river of lies. Then he calls up the beast to help him lie—the imitation Christ. And riding the beast is the harlot—the imitation Bride.^{vii}

Well anyway, the snake says to the woman, *“Dying you will not die, but you will be like God, knowing Good and evil.”* The woman saw that *“the tree was good for food and a delight to the eyes”* (Gen 3:6). In other words, she saw the Good, but she didn’t know the good. So, she took the Good as if it were food... just as a commodity. She took the Good as if *He* were food; that’s rather beastly!

What if everything Good really is God or laced with God—the Good?

Is your house good? Is your car good? Is your wife good?

Do you own them and so consume them? Do you consume the Good?

Maybe we’ve all been far more beastly than we know...^{viii}

She saw that *“the tree was good for food, a delight to the eyes and to be desired to make one wise”*—that is knowledgeable of Good and evil.

In other words, she took the Good to make her self, Good.
She wanted to make herself Good, in order to make herself like God . . . or even God.
She used the Good for her own ends—to exalt herself.
. . . That's rather whorish.

God kicked them out of the Garden and barred their way to the tree with a flaming sword and two cherubim. He guarded the way so they would not “take also”, or “take again,” (the word can be translated either way)... so they would not take again of the tree of life and live forever; so they could no longer feed on him like beasts and harlots (because that's not good for anyone).

So, what was on the tree?

“The Life.” There's only one Life. “The Life” was on the tree.
Do you have a life? Is it your life? Where did you get that life?
Did you make your life or take your life?

What was on the tree?

“The Good.” Do you own goods? Is that because you paid for those goods?
God alone is good. Did you pay for God? . . . With what? . . . Your life?

What was on the tree? . . . “The Life” and “the Good in flesh,” who is God. God is Love. Love was on the tree. Everybody wants love. When we sell consumer goods we advertise them as love. We all want to make Love... but we can't make love... Love makes us.

What was on the tree? Our Helper.

No wonder humanity fears the Judgment of God; with our every choice we crucify the Good in flesh and take the Life of Love; we crucify our Helper... like the most ravenous beast and depraved of harlots. I know this is hard to hear, but maybe we're already “*dead in our trespasses and sins*” and even our “*righteous deeds are as filthy menstrual rags.*”

Well, in Chapter 18, John witnesses the Judgment of God upon the harlot.

Revelation 18:1-13

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice, [What we now read is written as a song] “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons,

In my experience demons inhabit . . .

That part of a person, that believes they must justify themselves before God,
That part of a person that believes the Mercy of God can be bought, that is . . .

That part or a person that believes we must pay . . . for Love.

She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. For all nations (all people) have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality (porneia), and the kings of the earth have committed immorality (porneou) with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.” Then I heard another voice from heaven saying “Come out of her, my people..

Notice that the voice didn't say “**some** of my people,” just “my people.”

And feel free to picture what the voice is saying....

If you've ever wondered at the passionate fury of your Lord, just look at the picture and listen to the Word of God: “*Come out of her, my people.*”

“...lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues (*pleges*: wounds);

Perhaps these are the wounds that come from the temple in Heaven, which is the Body of Christ... and even the Bride of Christ. It's utterly ironic, but perhaps the wounds of sin, can become the glory of Grace ... as if some harlots can be transformed into the Bride.

*for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.
Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds;*

What a terrifying statement. All throughout the Old Testament, God has stipulated a limit to vengeance: “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” and “no more...” But here the Lord says, “**Repay her . . . double.**” Is that two eyes for one? ...two teeth for one? ...two lives for one? How do you do that? Kill her twice?

*Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds;
mix (prepare) a double portion for her in the cup she mixed (prepared).*

This vengeance comes in a cup.

*As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment
(basinismos).*

In chapter 12 we read that the woman was in torment, *basinizo* to deliver)

... a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow...

She refuses to acknowledge that her Helper is dead. Or, maybe, that she killed Him.

I am no widow and mourning I shall never see.’ For this reason...

(because she glorifies herself and refuses to mourn)

her plagues (pleges, wounds) will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged

*her.” And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality [porneou] and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.^{ix} They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say,
“Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon!
For in a single hour your judgment has come.”
And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore...*

That’s interesting; it appears they still have their cargo... The problem is that they can’t buy or sell “goods” if no one owns any goods. If you call Jesus Lord, you acknowledge that you don’t own anything. You’re a steward of God’s things. God owns everything, and God owns you.

He’s coming like a thief in the night, but He’s not a thief.
Why not? He can’t steal anything, for He already owns everything.

If you’re a Christian you freely confess you don’t own anything.
And if you’re not a Christian, here’s some news: you have stolen everything.
You can’t pay for anything. With what would you pay?
...Your life? You didn’t create your life.
...Could you pay with your works? Well, you made those works with your life.

Everything belongs to God... but check this out: everything these merchants mourn, will be found in the New Jerusalem, and *everyone* will enjoy them . . . But NO ONE will *buy* or *sell* them. You can *only* give or receive them, for everyone shares “*everything in common... with glad and generous hearts...*” Everything is free (Acts 2:44-46).

*“They mourn since no one buys their cargo...” cargo of gold, ...
Streets of gold in New Jerusalem. No one is interested in buying gold in the New Jerusalem.*

...silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves,...

Jesus freely *chose* to be a slave of *all*. When all choose to be slaves, everyone will be truly free.

...horses and chariots, and slaves,—that is, human souls.

A soul is a temple of dust that contains the breath of *Yahweh*, your Helper. Jesus is the “Helper” and His Spirit is the “helper,” and He makes us His home... And so, of course, He said, “*Whatever you do to the least of these my brothers, you do to me.*” He’s in them . . . *and in You.*

You are worth the Life of God—the blood of Jesus, just because you were born because God breathed His breath into you.

I have a friend who was horrifically abused by her father and sold as a harlot. Once in prayer, Jesus appeared to her and to my wife as well... Susan said *“Look, Jesus has something for you...”* And she said, *“It’s just a piece of paper.”* I said, *“Read it.”* And then she audibly gasped in wonder. She said, *“It’s a birth certificate, glowing with light, and there is no date... It’s eternal.”*

In these visions, Jesus used to hold a mirror in front of her face. She’d look in the mirror, and see she wasn’t a harlot; in Jesus’ eyes, the true eyes, she is His Bride.

Revelation 18:14 *“The fruit for which your soul longed...”*

The harlot longed to consume the fruit of the tree.
She knew the Good, the way you know an object, a thing, or a commodity.

The Bride knows the Good, because she’s been known by the Good, and becomes pregnant with the Good, and through torment delivers the fruit of Life—her Bridegroom’s Life, which is also her own Life.

There are two ways of knowing, one results in death, and the other results in babies. When Eve, and that first Adam were kicked out of the garden, they knew the Good in the first way, but they could no longer find it; they had killed it. They can’t find the Good, but the Good will come and find them, and know them in the second way. The Good is their Helper... and *your* Helper.

Revelation 18:14-24

The fruit for which your soul longed, has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!”

No harlotry, ever again!

The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, “Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.” And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, “What city was like the great city?” And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, “Alas, alas, for the

great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste.

“In a single hour she has been laid waste” and “all (the buyers and sellers) on earth mourn...”^x “In a single hour.” What could that refer to?

I went through and counted: at least nine times, in the Gospel of John, Jesus refers to His crucifixion as “his hour,” or “the hour,” nine more times John does the same thing.

All eyes will look on the one whom they have pierced^{xi} and when they see Him as He is, the principality of the harlot will be disarmed, the economy of *porneia* destroyed, and the Bride set free from the prison of her own ego.

“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!” Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, [She must have been teaching people her harlotry.] saying, “So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence,^{xii} [The destruction of Jerusalem was kind of violent; the death of Jesus on the cross was violent] and will be found no more; and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.”

The blood of “*All who have been slain on earth.*” How could that refer to anything other than the blood that is bled, as our Helper is crucified, on the tree in the garden just outside of Old Jerusalem? The Life is in the blood, and He bleeds His river for *all*. Blood that is wine and wine that is blood . . . Understand?

All the blood—all the life in the entire world—is His. Even though we all claim it as our own life, like a blood clot.

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “*Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ² for his judgments are true and just...*”

“True and Just?” And they’re shouting about *salvation* . . . And what we just witnessed was **double vengeance?** **18:6** “*Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds...*”

Taking two eyes for one eye or two teeth for one tooth is strictly forbidden by the law... as unjust... So, what is this justice: this **double vengeance?** “*...Repay her double for*

her deeds; mix (kerannumi: prepare, pour out) a double portion for her in the cup she mixed (prepared)."

Several years ago, I watched a movie that I felt bad about watching, because, at first, it was rather pornographic. But as I watched, it turned into something entirely different. The movie was titled *Original Sin*.

- Antonio Banderas plays a wealthy Cuban plantation owner named Luis who sends away for an American mail order bride named Julia Russell.
- On the passage across the Atlantic, a harlot, in cahoots with a beastly thief, learns of Julia's plans, disposes of Julia, and takes her place.
- The harlot's name is Bonnie Cassel, played by Angelina Jolie.

Well, Luis marries his bride the day she gets off the boat, and he loves her with all his heart. After several months, when her act is about to be exposed by circumstance, Bonnie, posing as Julia, plans to kill Luis and take all of his things.

In the scene, you're about to see, they sit at a table. For her bridegroom, she has prepared a cup of coffee filled with poison. But she has just realized that he now knows, it was all an act and that she plans to take his life with the cup she just prepared. She also realizes that he could kill her.

Clip from *Original Sin*

A cup of coffee is placed on the table. A man and woman sit and converse.]

Luis: *Like a play, all of it, lies, from the moment I met you.*

Bonnie: *Not all of it. No .*

Luis: *Do you laugh at me, the two of you, for how stupid I have been, how blind?*

Bonnie: *No .*

Luis: *Laugh now when I tell you this: I loved you Julia.*

Bonnie: *Julia is not here; Julia is dead.*

Luis: *Laugh...when I tell you I still love you.*

Bonnie: *No, not me. You don't love me.*

Luis: *Oh yes, you, not Julia of Russel. Not Monte Castle.*

You. I love you, as I know you, because I know you . . .

[Bonnie tears up]

As you are good and bad, better, worse. (Laughs) I told you this already.

You didn't believe me. Tonight you will. (Luis pulls out a gun)

To us . . . a short life . . . and exciting life.

Bonnie: *Don't do this.*

Luis: *No other love. To us, no other love but you.*

From first to last, start to finish.

[Bonnie tears up again]

Don't change Julia. Don't ever change.

[Luis quickly sets the gun down and drinks the coffee that was placed in front of him.]

Bonnie: *No, no, no!*

[Luis collapses to the ground and begins to foam at the mouth.]

[The scene switches and Luis is in Bonnie's arms. Shaking and dying.]

Bonnie: *Stay! Stay, stay! [Cries.] I love you.*

Luis: *Say it again,. Say it again.*

Bonnie: *I love you. I love you! I love you!! Don't leave me.*

Luis: *Say it again. Say it again.*

Bonnie: *I love you. I love you! I love you!!*

[Gasps for air.]

Bonnie: *No, no, no!!*

Of course, it's just a silly movie... But, his sacrifice actually does destroy the harlot:

She no longer wants his goods; She sees that he is the Good and wants him.
She sees that although she took his life; He had always given his life.
She begins yelling, *"I love you, I love you, I love you."*
He recovers... and she becomes the bride she is, as they live their lives on the other side of the sea.

I think that's kind of like the double vengeance: *"Vengeance is mine, I will repay,"* says the Lord. "But how does He repay?" Some think the cross means that He won't repay, but He will: *"Vengeance is mine, I will repay,"* says the Lord. "But how does He repay?"

We take His life... and He requires our life. He said, *"The day you eat it of it you will surely die."* People get so offended that God would smite someone, but God smites everyone. We all die... and according to John, we're already dead.

I think that's the first vengeance; God takes our life. Maybe you could call it the ministry of condemnation, the Old Covenant, or the law: *"The soul that sins will surely die."* That's the law. Jesus didn't come to abolish the law but to fulfill the law. In this way we will all gain the knowledge of evil—our sin is evil, and we die.

So what's the double vengeance?

We think we own our life; we think we've created our life; we think we've earned our life, *when in fact* we've stolen God's life and God requires that life... We must surrender the Life so we can watch God *give* the Life, know that we didn't earn the Life, and forever be grateful for the Life. It is the Good.

We must surrender the Life that has already died, so we can receive the Life that is eternal. We must surrender the Life we took so we can know the Life that is given. God is the Good, and His Word is Life. God *gives* His life, *that's* His vengeance—infinite vengeance because He never stops.

He is burning hot, absolute, unstoppable and relentless Love: He is our Helper. And when we see Him in Truth, we'll start screaming, *"I love you, I love you, I love you."*

The 1st vengeance is what we have earned, which is nothing and it reduces us to nothing; it's what humans call justice.

The 2nd vengeance is what God has earned, and that is people in His image... it is righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

In five more verses, we'll read that righteousness is given to the Bride and she puts it on as a garment. It's the New Man. It's Jesus. He is our helper.

The 1st vengeance is the revelation of sin, and the **2nd** is the glory of Grace.

The 1st is the destruction of the old man, and the **2nd** is the Revelation of the New.
The 1st is the death of the beast, and the **2nd** is the glory of God—that is man.
The 1st is the destruction of the harlot, and the **2nd** is the birth of the Bride.
The 1st is the Revelation of I am not, and the **2nd** is who I am.

His vengeance causes us to know the pain of evil . . . and so hate evil. And His vengeance causes us to know the glory of the Good and forever choose the Good in Freedom—choose the Good, who is the Life, who is our Husband. The first and second are not opposite things, but the same thing—the Revelation of one thing: Grace!

The double vengeance is unstoppable Grace, which is God's Judgment, which creates all things and makes us in the image of God—God, who is absolute, unconditional, relentless, and entirely free . . . Love.

I could only find four places in Scripture that prophesy a double vengeance:

Jeremiah 16—God's people will be brought back from Babylon and God says:
"I have repaid a first and a second time."^{xiii}

It's "double destruction." It's the death of death—the second death, which is Life.

Zechariah 9—Zechariah prophesies a king coming to Jerusalem on a donkey and then says, *"Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double"*. (9:12) Then Zechariah prophesies everything we've been reading in the Revelation.

Isaiah 40—*"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, (it has happened) that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins."*

Isaiah 61:1-2—*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God.*

Christ's death and resurrection began the eternal Jubilee—the Sabbath of Sabbaths when all is forgiven and everything is free. And that is God's vengeance on the economy of *pornea*, the whore, the harlot.

Verse 7: *"Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy."*

God's vengeance is Grace, which turns harlots into brides.^{xiv}

We've run out of time, and I had so much more to say, but I'll end with this: In the words of St. Paul, "You have not been given the *ministry of condemnation*, you have been

given the *ministry of reconciliation*—You have been called and chosen to preach the gospel of Grace through Faith.”^{xv}

And what does that look like?

My friend Tony Campolo used to tell a story that is, probably, mostly true. One night he found himself wide awake at 3:30 AM in downtown Honolulu... Not knowing what to do, he stumbled into a dingy little diner. The fat guy behind the counter shoved a doughnut and coffee in his direction.

Just then, eight or nine rather attractive prostitutes walked in. They sat near Tony. Their talk was loud and very crude.

He was just ready to leave when he overheard: *“Tomorrow’s my birthday. I’ll be 39.”*
A second voice said, *“So what? What do you want from me? A birthday cake and a Coke? You want me to sing ‘Happy Birthday?’”*

The first one said, *“Come on, why do you have to be so mean?
I was just telling you, that’s all.
I don’t want anything from you.
I mean, why should you give me a birthday cake? I’ve never had one my whole life.”*

Tony waited until the women left, and he asked the fat guy behind the counter:

“Do they come in every night?”

“Yeah.”

“How about the one right next to me?”

“Yeah, that’s Agnes. Why do you want to know?”

“It’s her birthday tomorrow . . . What do you say we throw a party?”

The fat guy thought a minute, smiled, and said, *“That’s great. I like Agnes.”*

His name was Harry. He said, *“I’ll bring the cake and spread the word.”*

At 2:30 AM the next night, Tony came back with decorations.

He had a big sign that said, *“Happy Birthday, Agnes!”*

At 3:15 it was wall-to-wall hookers, Harry, and Tony.

At 3:30 Agnes arrived. They all shouted, *“Happy Birthday, Agnes!”*

And they sang to Agnes.

When Agnes saw the cake, she broke down weeping.

Harry said, *“Agnes, cut the cake. We want cake!”*

Finally, Agnes composed herself, and said softly, as she looked at the cake,

“Look, Harry, is it okay if I just look at it a little while?”

Harry said, *“Sure. Take it home, if you want.”*

She said, *“Oh, can I?”*

She looked at Tony, *“I live right down the street. I just want to take it home.”*

She picked it up like it was the Holy Grail and walked out.

At that, no one knew quite what to do so they all looked at Tony. Being a pastor, Tony said, "Let's pray." He prayed for Agnes. When he was done, Harry leaned over with a little hostility and said, "*Hey! You never told me you were a preacher! What kind of church do you belong to?*" Tony said, "*A church that throws parties for hookers at 3:30 in the morning.*" Harry said, "*No you don't. There's no church like that.*"

Well, there is a church like that; it's the true Church, not the anti-church, not the imitation church. It's not the great harlot; it's the Bride. It's the New Jerusalem, and she comes to earth on the very spot that the old one was destroyed.

Communion

This is the cake. [Peter points to the communion bread.] Agnes is all around you.

So, the Great Bridegroom took the bread and broke it saying, "This is my body given to you." And He took the cup saying, "This is the covenant..." (Like we talked about earlier in the series, it is a marriage proposal) "This is the covenant in my blood [Lamb's blood], poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you and do it in remembrance of me. And I should warn you: This is the Judgment of God. So, if you take it in an unworthy manner, it can kill you. To take it in an unworthy manner is to think you could somehow . . . pay. You cannot pay for this. This is the infinite vengeance of our God; this is absolute mercy.

[Several worship songs are sung.]

Benediction

If you came to the table this morning you just confirmed the covenant. If you didn't come to this table, you need to know this covenant was made from the foundation of the world. That means you kind of can't ultimately break it. But if you just came to this table and confirmed the covenant, it means that at least with a mustard seed of faith, you believe that God loves you from the foundation of the earth. His Love will never change and so you are free to love Him in freedom.

You're not a harlot; you're the Bride. That's hard for us to believe. It's almost impossible to endure the intimate communion that God has planned for us in these old physical bodies. So, I hope that you just sit in His presence every day. When you do, His glory begins to reveal sin in you. When His glory begins to reveal sin in you, you'll be tempted to start to pay. You'll start to say, "Oh! I'll do this. I'll do that." Just stop. You cannot pay. You can only confess. So, just tell Him, God you know my struggles... you know me. Just confess yourself to Him. Don't run. And then notice He has not run. He has not destroyed you. He does not run away. He is still there, and He's always been there throwing a party for you—just because you were born, just because in the beginning He breathed His breath into the dust and you are worth everything to Him.

When you begin to see that He is always throwing a party for you, you will start to want to throw parties for others. And His will in Heaven becomes His will on earth. We'll talk about that in the next message...

In the name of Jesus, believe the Gospel. Amen.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio or video version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.

ⁱ In the beginning God made Adam by breathing into *adamah*—that is clay. That breath or spirit in the dust is what makes a soul, *nephesh* in Hebrew, *psyche* in Greek.

According to Scripture, there is a sacramental communion which occurs in sexual intercourse which produces one flesh. And that's what constitutes, or consummates, this thing called marriage. When folks sleep around constantly breaking marriages it's referred to as *porneou* in the New Testament... It's consuming Life itself as a commodity.

ⁱⁱ We put this slide on the screen:

ⁱⁱⁱ There was a male figure in a dark robe that held her hand ever so tightly. He owned her and used her. Perhaps it was the dragon; perhaps it was the beast. Perhaps she saw the anti-christ and the anti-bride.

^{iv} She's called Babylon, but Babylon and the tower of babel fell long before the Revelation. What towers are still to fall in Rev. 18?

When the twin towers in the great city of New York fell, because kings of the earth who had been in bed with the economy of our country, which controls the economy of the world, flew planes into the world trade center which fell in one day and one hour, behind a statue of a the pagan goddess *Libertates* who promises a false freedom... I couldn't help but think of the great harlot.

^v Perhaps the most poignant and passionate chapter in all of the Bible is Ezekiel 16. In it the Lord describes how he found Jerusalem as a baby lying forsaken in a field, how she grew and became a beautiful maiden, how he pledged his troth to her, but how she trusted her beauty and became a whore. The chapter ends with His Judgment upon His harlot bride.

^{vi} Literally, "No one is good, except One—God." Everyday a good Jew was to recite that in prayer. "Hear oh Israel the Lord your God is One..."

^{vii} It's fascinating that the harlot is called "the woman," in Rev. 17 and 19, and we are "the woman" in Revelation 12, as well as "the Bride" in Rev. 19. Perhaps the lie of the dragon, which creates the sin of the beast, turns the woman into a whore . . . and the Revelation of Jesus turns the whore into the Bride, and that's what it is to be a man.

^{viii} We've been beastly, but as we saw last time, "The beast is not." For a long time it's fascinated me that the Lord said to Adam, "You shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil." (He didn't say "the tree of life," or "the tree in the middle of the garden.") "You shall not eat." I think this holds true in the Hebrew grammar, but

even in our English translations, it sounds more like a fact than a warning. What God says happens and what He says won't happen, doesn't happen . . . right? Perhaps, we only think we've eaten. Perhaps we only imagine that we're dead. Perhaps sin is really a "nothing." And perhaps, death is ultimately an illusion. Whatever the case, it is the illusion in which we think we live, and from which we must be saved—saved from perceiving ourselves as beasts and whores, when, in fact, we are men and a Bride.

^{ix} They mourn her passing, not because they loved her, but because they used her. They are the ones that desolate her and burn her with fire (17:16).

^x How could this simply refer to the city of Babylon, Rome, or even the physical city of Old Jerusalem? It must refer to the moment eternity touches time, the "end of the ages." We have come to the end of the ages when we come to Christ crucified and risen from the dead.

^{xi} Zech. 12:10, John 19:37, Rev. 1:7

^{xii} The destruction of Jerusalem was violent; the crucifixion was violent.

^{xiii} In 17:18, Jeremiah prophesies a "double destruction." To me, that sounds like the death of death, the second death, which is Life, which is what we'll witness in the next chapter of the Revelation.

^{xiv} In Ezekiel 16 God tells the gut-wrenching story of how He found Jerusalem, loved Jerusalem, pledged His troth to Jerusalem and she turned into a whore. In vv. 35-43, He describes her punishment and His vengeance: He will see her stripped naked and desolated by her "lovers." But then in 53-63, the second portion, the pinnacle of His vengeance: He describes how He will make her watch Him restore Sodom and Samaria in her midst. He will have absolute grace on all and shut the arrogant mouth of His harlot bride, Jerusalem. "...When I atone for you for all that you have done,' declares the Lord God."

As we saw earlier, God's punishment on Israel in the book of Hosea was to take her to the valley of Achor (the valley of trouble), and there He would make Himself a door—Jesus is that door—and she would call Him "my husband." He will betroth her to Him "forever... in mercy". She will "know the Lord" (Hosea 7:14-20).

^{xv} 2nd Corinthians 3:1-5:21, Ephesians 1:11-12, 2:1-10