

Session 4: Thyatira: Increased Outreach yet Immorality (Rev. 2:18-29)

INTRODUCTION

On Friday nights, we are continuing in our series on the seven churches in the book of Revelation—the seven churches of Asia. We are on the church of Thyatira, the fourth one. What the Lord says to this church in their condition is a paradox to me, because He gives them one of the highest affirmations in the New Testament, that any church could receive from the Lord. Yet He gives them one of the most severe warnings and really stern rebukes. So they get one of the highest marks and one of the most severe rebukes and sternest warnings. It is a bit of a paradox. The other churches are a little bit easier to place. They are bad and they better get with it or they are really good like Smyrna and Philadelphia, hey, I want to be like them. But Thyatira, you are just stuck. You do not know if you want to be like them or if you want to flee from the way they carried themselves.

REVELATION 2:18-29

“To the angel of the church in Thyatira write” (v. 18). To the messenger of the church, I believe it is a messenger. The word “angel” is the word “messenger”. It can be human or angelic. The translators just pick one or the other, but I think it is a human messenger. “These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and He has feet like fine brass or burnished bronze: ‘I know your works, I know your love’—that is the amazing part—“I know your service, I know your faith”” (v. 18-19, paraphrased).

When it says patience, often in the New Testament it is talking about perseverance, specifically under persecution. So He says, “I know that you have a strong ministry, you are increasing in your works, you have love and you are patient, you endure under persecution” (v. 19, paraphrased). You think, “Wow, that is the kind of church I want to be a part of.”

Verse 20 (paraphrased): “Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and you allow her to seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality.” Verse 21: “I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality and she did not repent.” Verse 22 (paraphrased): “I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her, I will cast them into great tribulation unless they repent.” Verse 23: “I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and the hearts. I will give to each one of you according to your works.”

THE PROMISES

Now He gives one of the great promises. It really is a promise of authority and intimacy. That is what He is going to offer to them as the motivation to step out of embracing the spirit of immorality and compromise. He says, “To the one who overcomes and keeps my works until the end.” (v. 26, paraphrased). Now the works in this particular passage is the work of resisting the immorality with which Jezebel was trying to seduce them.

He says, “You have to overcome and keep my works and resist immorality to the end of your life. Not just for a summer, a training program type of thing, or a trip to some nation for an outreach.” He says, “No, you must keep My works to the end of your life. You must hold the line to the end.” (v. 26, paraphrased).

It does not mean we will never fail or stumble, but when we stumble, we get right back into the race that very day and declare war on the thing over which we stumbled. If we do that, we are still walking right with God. We do not make peace with our sin and camp out there for awhile. When we sin, we fall, but we get up, we repent, and we receive the glorious, outrageous mercy of God. We are first class citizens. Within a minute, we are right back in fellowship with God, and we are declaring war on our sin, full blast. That is what He is talking about, “Keeping My works. . .” (v. 26, paraphrased). He is not talking about being blameless, never failing and stumbling. “But the one who will keep My works, who will stay steady in their commitment to My works, I will give him power over the nations” (v. 26, paraphrased).

Then He describes a very interesting detail of our partnership with Jesus in ruling the nations. He talks about disassembling the authority structures in the nations and reassembling them. That is the part He talks about in terms of our partnership with Jesus in ruling the nations. The bringing down and then the reestablishing. That is really what He is pointing to.

He says, “This person or these people who overcome, they will rule. He shall rule them with a rod of iron and they shall be dashed to pieces like a potter’s vessel, like a clay vessel, like a rod of iron breaking a brittle clay pot” (v. 27, paraphrased). So the person who overcomes will rule the nations of the world with Jesus.

SHATTERING THE NATIONS

This verse was originally spoken by king David in Psalm 2:8-9. This is a prophecy that Jesus is quoting. Jesus can take His own prophecy which David gave Him in Psalm 2—that He would dash the nations with a rod of iron—and give it to His own people, if He wants to. When you read it you think, “Well, who has the authority to take one of Jesus’ prophecies and give it to the church?” Jesus could say, “I do because you are going to help Me.”

It is a prophecy about shattering the nations. That is intense, shattering the nations. We know it from Psalm 149, the famous psalm about lifting the high praises of God. With the high praises of God, we shatter the nations. Even in this age, there is a breaking of unrighteousness in the nations through the high praises of God—Psalm 149. Jesus talks about the rod of iron, but the high praises and the rod of iron go hand in hand. That was a sort of parenthetical thought when Jesus said, “You will rule.” (v. 27, paraphrased). He says, “Let Me give you some insight. You are going to rule in an intimate way in the details of breaking down and rebuilding the nations” (v. 26-27, paraphrased).

That is what He told Jeremiah. Jeremiah 1:10 (paraphrased), “You will pluck up, you will tear down, you will destroy, then you will build up again.” That is what the church will actually do

through the process of the tribulation and on into the millennial kingdom. We will be tearing down through the prayer movement. And then we will be building up again.

THE MORNING STAR

Then He goes on in Revelation 2:28: “I will give him the morning star.” Later at the end of the book of Revelation, in chapter 22:16, Jesus says, “I am the Morning Star.” In other words Jesus says, “I will give you the brightness of a continual encounter with My heart. The brightness of My heart will make your heart bright and in that bright exchange, you will rule with Me as a star.” Because stars in the Old Testament also spoke of government and ruling. And we will rule out of the brightness of our nearness to God.

So in this idea of the morning star, Jesus brings together the brightness which happens in our spirit when we encounter the brightness of His Spirit. And then we rule in this age in part, but fully in the age to come out of the overflow of that brightness. That is what He is saying here.

THE PRIMARY MESSAGE

Roman Numeral I: The primary message. Jesus is affirming them for their increased outreach ministries. He says, “The works that you did are even increasing.” (v. 19, paraphrased). He makes that point and then He says, “You even have love.” (v. 19, paraphrased). He never told any of the churches they had love. He never told a church that they had works—ministry—and love. The Ephesians had a lot of works. That was good, it meant service. Service is good, but not if it causes our love to be diminished and waning. Here He says, “You have service and love, and you have perseverance—or endurance—in difficulty.” (v. 19, paraphrased).

My goodness, this was an awesome church, but the thing they lacked was not that the majority of them were involved in immorality, it was that the leadership and the people as well, did not resist it and openly oppose it. They tolerated the presence of immorality and teachers who were promoting it. The Lord says, “I know you love me, but this is not OK with me. Your silence is not OK with me.”

I would go as far as saying that the vast majority of the church in the western world, I would hate to say ninety percent but it is probably true, would be guilty of this lack. The unwillingness to lift their voice against this ever-increasing demonic invasion into the church called immorality. It is coming right into the homes at such a rapid speed through this thing called pornography.

THE SPIRIT OF JEZEBEL

We are going to find out in a few moments that the spirit of Jezebel, the essence of it is the spirit of immorality. A lot of people think about Jezebel and think of a woman with a strong personality. If her leadership is stronger than yours and you are a man, she is a Jezebel. Well, I am getting ahead of myself. The core meaning of a Jezebel spirit is a spirit of seduction.

The people most engaged in the spirit of Jezebel are men. They are the ones who are producing it, they are promoting it, they are partaking of it even more than women are. The most powerful Jezebel institution in the earth is Hollywood, California—the spirit of Jezebel, pumping volumes

of filth into the nations of the earth. There must be a couple of other centers like that. If it is not number one, it is way up there.

So again, when you think Jezebel, do not think of a woman with a strong personality. Maybe she needs a little bit of relationship skills to go with it and she just needs a little help on this and that. I care about that a lot because I have watched over the years, a lot of woman getting written off as a Jezebel spirit because their personality is strong. Again, they just need to get a few rough edges as well as their personality skills refined. A lot of guys have the same problem and nobody says “Jezebel” to them. We are missing the whole thing because this is not the essence of what the spirit of Jezebel even is.

THE CHURCH IN AMERICA

The spirit of Jezebel is alive and well in the church in America. Again, the group that is most responsible for Jezebel is mostly men. Men are the ones that are financing the pornography industry and the whole industry of immorality. It is being financed by men, promoted by men, and is partaken of by men. And women are involved in it as well, obviously.

I want us to get a real grip on what Jesus is saying so that we do not marginalize the weightiness and seriousness of what He is saying to the church. I look at the church in America and I just have one huge statement about it. There is a Jezebel spirit from coast to coast, all through the church. It is a spirit of toleration of immorality.

That is bad, but the warnings that Jesus gives the spirit of Jezebel are really serious. He says to the church that has this spirit on them, which is to me, the vast majority of the body of Christ in the western world, He says, “I will send judgment to you and I will wake you up because I love you that much”.

THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA

Roman numeral II: The church of Thyatira. It was a wealthy city because it had the trade guilds which were like the ancient version of the labor unions, called trade guilds. The people involved in these labor unions were required to attend the feast, which gave thanks to the false god Apollo, for their prosperity. Everybody had to do it. It was social, but there was a lot of pressure. Some of them really believed it mattered. In these idolatrous feasts, there was much immorality and drunkenness.

Many people in the ancient world, in the body of Christ, had a lot of pressure put on them, even by members in the body of Christ, saying, “It is OK to do that. The Lord understands. You have to keep your job. Go there, but do not partake of that spirit.”

That is what Jezebel was teaching them. Not that they could just go to those events, but that they could participate in them because it did not really defile their spirit anyway. They still felt the presence of God. They would say, “I still feel the grace of God, so I engaged in a little drunkenness and immorality. It is not that big of a deal.” Jesus said, “This I have against you: you tolerate that mindset.”

EYES LIKE A FLAME OF FIRE

Roman numeral III. Revelation 2:18: “These things says the Son of Man who has eyes like a flame of fire and His feet like fine brass.”

Paragraph C. The eyes of fire. Fire speaks of love and holiness because love and holiness are identical. We can call it holy love. Every movement in our heart toward holiness is love. Every movement in our heart toward love is holiness. There is no such thing as something that is tender in love, but it is unholy. If it is true love, it is holy, and if it is true holiness, it is love.

Jesus says, “My eyes are a fire” (v. 18, paraphrased). It's as if He says, “I will look upon you, and if you open your heart to Me, I will impart fire to help you resist the fire of immorality. But if you do not receive the fire of My help, I will look with the same eyes, and there will be a fire of judgment to wake you up.” It is a fire of grace that awakens our heart in love, and we go from glory to glory, or it is a fire of judgment. It is not angry judgment. It actually is judgment because God is so committed to His relationship with us. He will not let us go uncontested with that which is destroying our spirit. He is so jealous.

It is obvious when a parent looks at their twelve, thirteen, fourteen year old son or daughter and says with great zeal, “You cannot do that. You do not know but that will really, really hurt you.” The thirteen or fourteen year old says, “I do not get it. It does not seem like it will hurt me, it seems like it would be fun.” The parent says with a tremendous amount of feeling, empathy, and commitment, “No. No. No. You don't understand.”

That is the zeal which the Lord has. Obviously it is much greater and totally pure. He cares. His judgment is because He is so committed to us. It is tender love. It is as if He says, “I cannot let you go that way uncontested. I will put up a road block, you will feel it, and it will hurt. Why wait until I put up a road block? Why not receive the fire of My grace, grow in love, and resist immorality? The fire of My judgment will come because I care so much about you.”

FEET LIKE FINE BRASS

Then He talks about His feet like fine brass or burnished bronze. Brass is a symbol of judgment. Feet are a symbol of triumph. What Jesus is saying is, “If you will submit to Me, I will cause your areas of brokenness to come under My feet. I will walk over them, which means victory all throughout the Old Testament—the enemies are trodden underfoot. But if you do not work with Me, My feet of bronze which I will use to help you get free of this enemy called immorality, My feet of bronze will touch you in a different way.

When He says, “Eyes of fire and feet of bronze,” this is glorious but terrifying. The Lord is making us an offer we truly cannot refuse. He says, “I have eyes of fire, you pick the way you want to encounter Me. I have feet of bronze. I will tread over this area in your life. If you love me, we will get it done with, but let's do it the easy way.”

I KNOW YOUR WORKS

He goes on, verse 19 (paraphrased): “I know your works, you are working hard for Me. That is good. You love Me. That is really good. You are serving the saints. You have a servant spirit, that is really good. You have faith. That is really good. You have endurance in pressure.”

The pressure was in the community. In the community, they had so much pressure to participate in this immorality. When they said no, they actually lost their jobs. The Lord says, “I see it, you have patience—again, you want to put the word endurance—you are not giving up and giving in. You did lose your job.”

Can you imagine working twenty-five years at your job, you get converted, and the thing that was normative, now you cannot do? You actually lost your job because of it. It’s as if the Lord says, “I see it. That is good. I will pay you far better for your obedience than your job can pay you in your disobedience. ‘As for your works, your last are more than the first’” (v. 19). He says, “You are actually growing and increasing in these things” (v. 19, paraphrased). I want to join this church, I really do. They are growing, they are not drawing back. They are increasing in quality and quantity in these five areas. I am in, tell me where to sign the paper.

CORRECTION FOR COMPROMISE

Roman numeral V. Verse 20: “Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols.” Verse 24(paraphrased): “I say to you and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, I will put on you no other burden.”

He goes on and gives a message to them. Paragraph A, verse 20: “A few things I have against you.” It is important to know that Jesus gives one of the strongest affirmations—a five-fold affirmation—to this church, but He still has things that trouble His heart against that church. As long as Jesus is still talking to us, we have a hope and a good future. What I mean by that is that His correction is not rejection. He is talking, He is talking through His Word. That is how it starts. He speaks to our conscience.

It’s as if the Lord says, “Do it my way. Do it my way.”

We say, “OK.” But we do not follow through.

He says, “Do it my way. I tell you, if my Word will discipline your conscience, it is done and it is finished.”

“I am trying to, but I do not want to.”

He says, “OK, I will allow some frustrations to happen to get your attention.”

So the frustrations mount up. Not that all frustrations are in this category. I do not want to join Job's friendship group, his home group, those three guys who thought everything Job did was related to sin—I do not want to be in that home group. They thought everybody's trouble was related to their sin. It is not true at all. There are many troubles that are just the direct attack of the devil. The Lord will allow frustrations to get our attention because of continued compromise.

Then the guy says, "No, I am going to keep going."

The Lord says, "OK, now I am going to really get your attention. I am going to expose you openly."

The thing is building to more than a frustration. They keep going. It's as if the Lord says, "OK, I am going to allow your body to be touched in a way that is really going to get your attention because I do not want to talk to you this way, when we stand face to face in eternity. Then you are really going to be in trouble. I will take you at any level that you will agree. We will end the trouble there."

The force and the weightiness with which Jesus speaks to us, increases in its weightiness, season by season. As long as He is talking to us, we have a hope of a great future. It is when He does not talk anymore, that we are in big trouble. He says, "OK, you know what, you just stay in that affair. You just stay there." One, two, three, four years and you have not felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit. That is really troubling. You are in the final stages of trouble. I really mean that.

You are wrestling, you are sick and in pain, you are getting blocked, and the Lord is allowing circumstances to frustrate you. He is giving you dreams and even touching you in a way that you really feel the weight and the pain of it. He is saying, "I am for you. I am chasing you down. We still have a great plan ahead. You still have a lot of things that you and I can do together. If I quit doing this, you are in big trouble, you are in big trouble."

Sometimes some of the big ministries get exposed and we think, "Oh how tragic." It would be far more tragic if they did not get exposed and the Lord says, "No, go do it. I will leave you alone. I will even let your ministry continue to grow." That is really, really, really bad from the heavenly perspective.

IDOLATRY

He says, "You allow that woman Jezebel to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols" (Rev.2:20). There are two things here. Right now, we are not that focused on the idol thing. The idol thing is going to emerge in the earth. The spirit of Jezebel is the spirit of immorality in the physical realm, and idolatry is to actually interact with demons. It is the quest for the transcendent. We look around in the western world and think, "Idols? How can they bow before that stone and talk to it. That seems so dumb." Well, it was not exactly like that. Demons really appeared and made things happen. They appeared as angels. Spirit beings would appear and power would be released.

There is such a quest for the spirit to be exhilarated with power, that one of the major strongholds worldwide before the Lord returns will be, that the westerners will be buying into idolatry and sorcery. It will look different and be far more sophisticated, but it will be dynamic interaction with the spirit realm. That is what idolatry is. That is what Jezebel was into.

Interaction in the spirit realm out of the will of God, and interaction in the sexual realm out of the will of God. Those were the two things. Interaction in the spirit realm, we can see it mounting, but it is not at the level yet, that it is going to be.

SATAN'S TWO-FOLD STRATEGY

The first line of attack on a global level is to weaken the morals of the planet with immorality. Then the idolatry—the demon encounters—will increase and you can be sure that in the vast majority of these demon encounters, Satan will appear as an angel of light. They will think, “That was awesome, that really worked.” The immorality will set up the situation. The touching of the body in immorality will open the door for people to long for their spirit to be exhilarated in illegal ways. Bringing the two together will bring them into depths of darkness that we cannot fully grasp.

That is the two-fold strategy of Satan: to bring this longing for transcendence and to allow the spirit realm—the realm of demons—to mix with the realm of immorality, through drugs, through mind altering substances, whether it is alcohol or higher level drugs—mind altering substances—so that immorality and sorcery have a far greater convergence together in the human experience. That, in a paragraph, is the spirit of Jezebel. It really is. I see this mounting up fiercely in our nation right now. I mean, the sorcery thing, we see whispers and it is growing. But the immorality, the other thing, is growing so rapidly.

PORNOGRAPHY

The main operation of the spirit of Jezebel in our nation is pornography. Again, the ones who are most responsible are the ones that are producing it and promoting it, yes, and also those who are partaking of it and obviously very seriously involved. When I think of these billionaire guys, whoever they are in the earth, they are going to stand before God one day and give an answer for how they have corrupted an entire generation.

This immorality will open the door straight into the realm of the spirit. When a person's morals are reduced and their conscience is defiled, and their conscience is seared, the door into the spirit realm is far easier to get through. That is the point. That is the great point of the immorality surge from hell. The point is not that the enemy is just trying to get us distracted. He wants our spirits dulled, our consciences seared, so that we easily step over the line. I am saying that multitudes in the church will easily step over the line into the spirit realm, into the dark realm of the spirit. Their spirits will be exhilarated through mind altering substances and they will be so accustomed to and so comfortable with immorality at that time.

There is only one answer. The end-time prayer movement under the leadership of Jesus and the power of God breaking in. The eyes of fire is the other expression of it.

THE WOMAN JEZEBEL

This woman, Jezebel, was an actual lady. She is not just a symbolic figure. Was her name actually Jezebel? I don't know. You cannot know for sure. Can you imagine the bad deal she got, if her mom said, "Isn't she cute, let's name her Jezebel." What? Do not name her Jezebel. What if she was really named that? We do not know for sure. Chances are that she was not named that by her parents. My guess is that she was so brazen with boldness, with unholy boldness, that she looked at Jezebel and said, "That is who I am."

Like some guys change their names to "Elijah" or this, that, or another. My guess is—purely a theory—that it was actually her name. That is what she went by. Maybe her mom and dad named her that at birth. We do not know. Any way it goes, they all knew who she was. And the name she was operating under depicted clearly the spirit in which she was moving. It is a spirit of immorality and it is a spirit of sorcery. I do not want us to lose sight of this and reduce this to a control spirit. Sorcery is far more than that. I am talking about a high level encounter with demon spirits. If it is a control spirit, we reduce it to a person who has a personality that bugs us. Then that is what Jezebel is and we are off the hook.

Beloved, this thing is staring right down at the body of Christ, straight across America. This thing is so huge. We are all being confronted with it. Not just people who are a little pushy in their personalities. This is real and this is big. The Lord is serious about confronting it.

SAVING A NATION

When I hear the voices in America—they do exist by the glory of God, but they almost do not exist. Is anybody crying out against this in the land? Well, you have Lou Engle and you can count on him. There are others. God has His men and women all over America. It is thousands, but we need millions. We don't have millions who are crying out in the body of Christ but thousands are. I don't want to minimize the beauty of that. What I want to do is stir us up.

The sin was that they tolerated her or they allowed her teaching. One translation says tolerated, another says allowed. "You allow her to go uncontested." "Our church is not into that kind of stuff." You cannot be into Jesus and be silent on this subject. I am not talking about an angry spirit, because you have been wounded somewhere. Everybody has been wounded by somebody bringing pain to the life of a family, related to some expression of immorality. It is not enough to just be wounded by somebody near you who engaged in immorality, so you are mad at it and lashing out. That is not going to solve the problem.

We are talking about a tender, clear, bold, anointed voice against this spirit. Because it will save the people, and not just get something off of our chests. It is saving a nation. I look at so many people who are wrecking their lives with immorality. The Lord wants us to feel tenderness towards them, even though they have caused a lot of pain. Not figuring out how we can pound them, but figuring out a way for them to make sense of their life in the grace of God.

Out of that spirit, we have to reach into the bridal paradigm. Looking through the lens of the bride of Christ and talking about a God who desires them. We need to tell them, that they have not gone too far. They do not need to give up and give in. God is waiting right now. All they need to do is agree with Him and they will get a brand new start. Even these top pornography guys.

SALVATION OF THE LOST

In some of our prayer meetings, one of the things we pray for regularly is human trafficking. I have a passion for this. I want to see these evil men, who have these women trapped in cages in basements, these evil men with demons, get so gloriously converted, that they become apostles, who are filled with tears because they love Him. The power of God is on them and they transform a nation. How is that for justice? Well, because God paid the price.

My point is, that when we are reaching for these guys who are steeped in iniquity, they might be the next apostle. That gal might be the next apostle or prophetess, you just don't know who she is.

“Yeah, but she is such a witch.”

“I know, but that it is not bigger than the grace of God. What if she is a great prophetess a moment away? Let's go after her and see what the Lord will give us.”

My point is that we are not writing them off. I am talking about the silence of the church.

On the other hand, what we do not want to do is go in the other direction and say, “We are all going to be vocal”, but we are angry in being vocal. No, it is the cry for the soul of a nation, it is the cry for the soul of an individual, and the church in a generation. That is what we are fighting for and we are doing it as people who have received outrageous forgiveness. We do not forget what the score is in our life which nobody knows. We cannot forget that.

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT JEZEBEL

Well, Jezebel in the Old Testament and Jezebel in the New Testament were two completely different ladies, but they operated in the same spirit. It was immorality and spiritual power, sorcery. Their spirits were exhilarated by power. I am not just talking about having a control spirit, they encountered a transcendent dimension in the demonic realm and they were into it. That is what these Jezebels were about. Here is what the Old Testament Jezebel did: she hated Elijah and wanted to kill the prophets.

The New Testament Jezebel is killing the prophets too, by dulling their spirits through pornography and immorality. She is not killing them with a sword like the Old Testament Jezebel. The New Testament Jezebel is killing them by dulling their spirits and defiling their consciences.

We cannot flow in the way God created us to flow when our spirit is dull. We do not even have an interest in God. When our spirit gets dull, we just want to survive the day. We do not want to gain ground in the spirit, we just want to make it through the way. I tell you, this Jezebel spirit is a demonic spirit. It is more than this lady. It wants to dull our spirits, to kill the prophetic in the house of God.

TIME TO REPENT

If you are involved in any kind of pornography, any kind of immorality, again, I say it with tenderness, the Lord would give you a new beginning right now. You can be a first class citizen, full of His favor, His bright smile over you—the Morning Star exhilarating your spirit with brightness. But if you are involved in that, I assure you, it is shutting your spirit down, even if you are operating on a few cylinders. You are going on autopilot, but there is so much more God has for your spirit.

“I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality and she did not repent”(v.21). This is a verse that would not get Jesus invited to a whole lot of charismatic conferences, unless He changed His theology. He would not mind though. He would just go out to the wilderness, preach, and take His chances.

THE LORD IS AT WAR WITH DARKNESS

Jesus said, verse 22 (paraphrased): “Indeed, I will cast her into a sickbed. I will do it. And those who commit adultery with her, I will cast them into great tribulation.” In this context, it was talking about trouble, not the Great Tribulation at the end of the age. In this context it is talking about great trouble within that generation. So it is not talking about the Great Tribulation in its immediate context, but there is a parallel. The church which is drinking of immorality will be swept into the judgments of the Great Tribulation. They really will be, because the Lord is declaring war against darkness.

If darkness is lodged in our heart, the Lord is at war with it. Satan is the god of darkness, his domain is darkness. Wherever darkness is, he has legal access. If the darkness is in us, we give him legal access to us. The charismatic church does not like this verse, but you just cannot get rid of it. And even if you did get rid of it, there really are ten more verses to back it up. Jesus was really biblical, He was.

“I will cast her into a sickbed, I will do it,” says the Lord (v.21, paraphrased). Jesus will do it. He is talking to Christians in the church of Thyatira. He is not talking to society. That is going to happen in the Great Tribulation. It does happen now too, but that is not what He is talking about here. He is talking specifically to Christians in Thyatira. It’s as if He says, “If I can wake you up on the sickbed of judgment, if I can do that, I will not have to give you judgment at the next level, when I see you face to face. You do not want judgment there.” This is kindness. “Those who commit adultery with her, I will cast into great tribulation, unless they repent. I will kill her children with death—physical death” (Rev 2:21, paraphrased). Her children are her disciples.

FALSE TEACHING ON THE GRACE OF GOD

The Jezebel spirit, again, it is growing so much in America. It is the teaching on the grace of God. It is a perverted teaching on the grace of God. It presents liberty in the grace of God without requiring repentance. That is a false doctrine. That is a heresy, when we offer people forgiveness without repentance, when we offer them grace without repentance. We can offer them forgiveness, with repentance which is weak and filled with immaturity, but there is a longing for God.

The guy blows it and says, “I did it again.”

It’s as if the Lord says, “OK, say it. Declare it to me.”

“I did it again.”

“Declare war on it and we are back walking arm and arm right this moment.”

You do not need to go on a three day, three week probation, a self induced probation period. Within a minute, you can be back arm and arm with the Lord. Still in your weakness. Because, beloved, weak love is not false love. Our love is not false until it is mature. It is true all the way, but we have to declare war on our immorality. We have to. We have to. We cannot make sense of it through the grace of God to where it is okay to continue.

“Well, we are going to get married anyway in a year or two.”

The Lord says, “No, it’s not about that. It is about My heart and your heart.”

“Well, I am not doing anything anyway”.

“I am just looking at your heart.”

It’s as if the Lord says, “Wait. This is about you and Me. This is about your heart and My heart. You are opening doors to demons. I have so much for you. Why are you doing this? You cannot receive from Me in this posture. Stop it. Shut it off so you can receive from Me. I have so much to give you and I have so many plans for you.”

I WILL KILL HER CHILDREN

Verse 23 (paraphrased): “I will kill her children—that means her disciples—with physical death. When the church sees it, they will know that I am the One who searches the mind and the heart. I am the one who knows what the real score is, what is really happening in their hearts.”

The Lord is going to do this. I am sure this happened in Thyatira in the first century and it has happened in history. I believe there is a parallel in the generation when the Lord returns. We are going to see this dynamic of immorality reaching heights never known in history, and it is only beginning to take off. It is exponential in its increase. And sorcery—the realm of darkness in the

spirit—is increasing as well, with drugs and alcohol to back it up, to create a quicker access into the realm of darkness.

It's as if the Lord is looking at the church and saying, "I will kill you with death (v. 23. paraphrased). The reason I will kill you with death is not because I do not love you. It is because I do love you. That is why I will kill you with death. Because once you get on that slippery slope, it is much more difficult to get out if you determine to go in that direction." It is actually a mercy killing if you can imagine such a thing. It is because when you are sovereign, perfect love, and perfect wisdom, you can do it. The Lord takes them home in His mercy. To think that the Lord does not do this is to challenge Jesus with error in His own Bible.

HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE

The charismatic church just absolutely hates this verse. But you know what, we are into Jesus, however He is. We are not going to hide part of Him in the back room when friends come over. We are going for Jesus full blast. I do not mean, we as IHOP-KC. I am talking about a whole multitude in the body of Christ in this hour, way bigger than IHOP-KC. We do not need to tuck Him back in the corner and only put His kind of politically correct face forward. No, the true Jesus is worthy of being presented in all of His zeal and fire.

Let's just do it with tenderness, but let's do it fully, without drawing back. I tell you, Elijah cowered under this spirit. It got him. He drew back. It knocked the wind out of his sail. It was the same thing with John the Baptist, when he confronted the spirit of Jezebel, in the situation with Herod and Herodius, this immoral woman and this immoral man and the daughter. John the Baptist lost his head over it, but gained a great reward. We will really lose out in the arena of men if we take our stand against this, but we will win in the arena of God.

Verse 25: "Hold fast what you have." He is talking about this doctrine, not just a grocery list of twenty-eight things. He is talking specifically about this, "Hold it fast! Hold the line! Do not draw back and do not just do it for a summer or for a year. Do it to the end! Go all the way! Burn the bridges!" (v.25, paraphrased)

I WILL GIVE HER TIME TO REPENT

Paragraph A. I love this, "I gave her time to repent." (v.21). Can you imagine the tenderness of Jesus? He gave Jezebel time to repent. The prayer movement on the earth were saying, "Lord, strike her."

It's as if the Lord says, "No, no, no, not yet, I am going to give her a little more time."

"Lord, break in and strike her with judgment."

"No. I am giving her more time. I like that gal, I really do love her. I am going to give her time. She needs time, she is processing it. She is a confused little girl in a grown up body."

"Lord strike her."

“No. I am going to give her time. I am going to see if she can agree with me. I am going to give her more opportunities. I am going to cause more frustrations and difficulties in her life, so she can have a different look and feel, so to speak—so she can process it from a different angle. Maybe I can get through to her.”

Is that not amazing? He gave Jezebel time. My goodness, that is awesome.

I WILL MAKE HER SICK

Paragraph B. “I will cast her on a sickbed” (v.22). Paul talked about that, 1 Cor. 5:1, “It is reported there is sexual immorality among you. In the name of the Lord Jesus, when you are gathered together, deliver such a one over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that he ends up saved on the final day” (1 Cor. 5:4-5, paraphrased). This is Satan working.

Jesus said, Rev. 2:22 (paraphrased): “I will make her sick.” The Lord can use the devil anytime He wants. The Lord has the power to cast someone on their sickbed without the devil’s help. The Lord can heal and the Lord can afflict. I tell you, He does it. The reason He does it, is because it is His commitment to heal them of the affliction. It is the same logic for which a doctor will look at the patient and say, “I hate to tell you, this will be radical surgery, but we will save your life.”

When the Lord afflicts, it is not because He is not committed to healing, but it is because He is committed to healing. That is why He afflicts. He is the only one with the wisdom to know when and how. I do not even want to go there with God.

I want to say, “I want to do it the other way, move my conscience, I want to respond at that level.”

The Lord says, “This works. We will have a much better time together if you do that.”

“I am in. I am in.” Sanctified selfishness. I want to do this thing the right way. “Lord, I love you, but I do not want to get into a mess either.” It is because we love the Lord, and it is because I do not want to get into a mess.

He has eyes of fire and you cannot manipulate Him. You cannot manipulate Him. I do not want those eyes of fire with judgment waking me up. I want the grace of fire waking me up.

I WILL GIVE YOU POWER OVER THE NATIONS

Roman numeral VII. Two promises. Promise number one, verse 26: “To him I will give power over the nations.” That is clearly in the age to come, though we have a down payment of it right now of course. I do not want to minimize this, but I do not want to focus on it right now, because the promise is huge. It is way beyond anything we will have in this age. It is literally the government of nations on the earth with Him.

This idea of dashing the nations is mentioned in Jeremiah 1, where the prophet plucked them up, tore them down, and then built them up again. We are going to be involved in the intimate details of the intricacies of tearing down and building up entire nations and their infrastructure, with the Lord.

This is a statement of intimacy. When the Lord says, “dash”, He does not dash anything which He does not rebuild. When He says, “I will dash a nation”, the desolation is only for reconstruction. When He says, “The reward is that you will dash it with Me”, it is not so you can have a ball and say, “I’ll tear that city down.” The Lord says, “No, I want you intricately involved in the tearing down and the reconstruction of that which is dear to My heart.” It is a massive promise of intimacy right there. This is promise number one, power over the nations.

I WILL GIVE YOU THE MORNING STAR

Promise number two, verse 28: “I will give him the morning star.” The Lord is the Morning Star. We can touch the Morning Star now in this age. It is the brightness of Jesus making our spirit bright. Not only is He the Morning Star, we—in the grace of God—are stars. It is out of the light of encounter with Him that we become bright. Beloved, that is happening now in this age and it is called nearness to God. And it will happen more in the age to come.

This is a verse we can claim, “Lord, I want you to be to me the bright and Morning Star. Be to me the One who releases the flashes of Your exhilarating brightness which makes my spirit bright. Be to me the Morning Star now and be to me the Morning Star then.” In the age to come, we will know Him in ever increasing ways, but even our nearness to Him in the age to come is related to how we respond to Him now.

RULING YOUR SPIRIT

Ruling the nations in the age to come is related to ruling our spirit in the realm of immorality and sorcery right now. It is a remarkable promise for the people, who can rule their spirit in the realm of immorality and sorcery.

Sorcery is such a gross word. We do not think much about it. It is going to be a real common reality. I am sure they will have some really cool word for it like joyful power or something. But it will be dark demon power. They will name it something to take people off guard. Beloved, Jesus says, “Say no to immorality, adultery, and pornography now! Rule your spirit now! I promise you, I will take that so personally, that you did it for love. You are the kind of person to whom I will give government over nations, because I want somebody to rule nations who values ruling their spirit, because of love. If you do it that way in love now, I know you will rule nations, because of love, in the age to come.”

This is reality: our future in the age to come is literally connected to our responses in this age. A dynamic part of the battle is that we are resisting immorality and sorcery now, in order to have greater realms of partnership with Jesus and His kingdom upon the earth. Amen.



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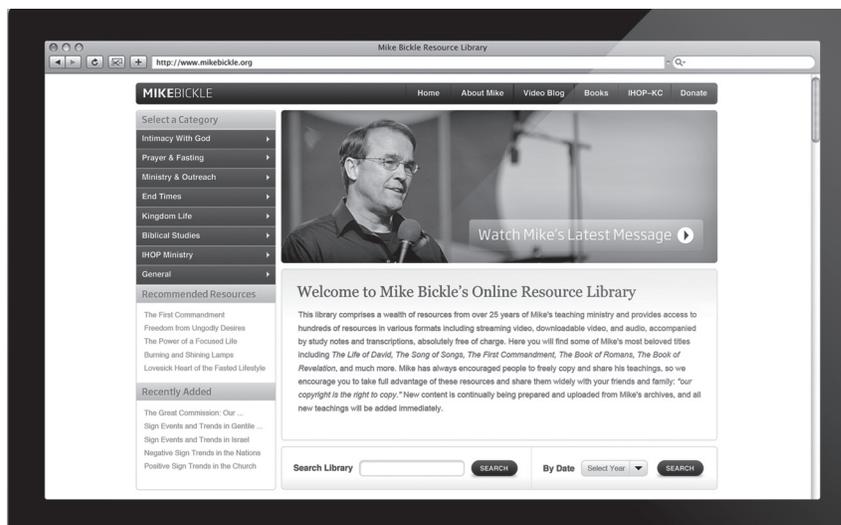
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