

Session 5 Jesus' Message to the Church of Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29)

I. THE PRIMARY MESSAGE: A CHURCH TOLERATING IMMORALITY (REV. 2:18-28)

- A. Jesus commended them for their love and ministry to others while warning them that they must refuse to tolerate immorality and idolatry. This church was affirmed for their patience (perseverance) in their many outreach ministries. However, they lacked zeal for moral purity.

We are looking, Session 5, at Jesus' message to the church of Thyatira in Revelation 2:18-29. Now the primary message and warning to this church was that they were tolerating immorality. However, remarkably, they were very diligent in ministry and very aggressive in their outreach and works of service. So the Lord said, "However, this one thing that I really have against you"—even though He compliments them greatly—"you are not confronting the issue of immorality. You are tolerating it. You are looking the other way and letting it continue in your midst."

¹⁸To the angel of the church in Thyatira write, "These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: ¹⁹I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience...²⁰I have a few things against you, because you allow [tolerate; NAS, ESV] that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. ²¹I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality ...²²I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent...²⁶He who overcomes...I will give power over the nations..." (Rev. 2:18-28)

Let's look at Revelation 2. I have an abbreviated overview of this, and we will be breaking it down more and more, word for word. Verse 18, "To the angel of the church of Thyatira, write, 'These things says the Lord.'" Now He describes Himself in three ways, and the three ways that He describes Himself to this church are specifically about empowering them to overcome immorality and idolatry. In each of the churches that we have gone through each week, He identified two or three facets of His majesty which pertain to the issue they are struggling with in order to help them walk in victory or to persevere and not draw back.

He says, number one, "I am the Son of God." The idea is "I am the only one with the authority to define what love is and what it is not. I am the Son of God."

Now there were many arguments in the culture back then, and even today there is dramatic increase, "What is love? What is not love? Who has the right over whose body?"

He said, "I am God. I have the final word. I am the Creator. I am the very source of love. I define it. I impart it. I am the only One with the authority to remove what hinders love." And so He starts off with this bold, confidence-building but terrifying statement as well, "I am God! There is no argument except for My argument." That is how He starts off. That is a revelation that the Church needs today.

He said, "My eyes are like fire, a fire that imparts love and a fire that destroys that which hinders love, both dimensions. And My feet are like fine brass." Verse 19, He starts off, very positive, "I know your works. I am very aware of your dedication to Me." He is speaking to the church generally. He said "You have love. You have service." This is outreach ministry and all kinds of acts of kindness to people in need. He said, "I see your faith. You stand strong. You believe My word. I see your patience." You can put the word, perseverance, here. Often times when the New Testament says, patience, it means perseverance. "You will not quit. You will not quit with obstacles. You will not quit before persecution." I mean this verse 19 is the kind of church you want to be a part of.

As a matter of fact, this is the only church of the seven that He affirms for love **and** service, because to some of the others, He said, "Well, you serve, but you do not love." Here He says, "You do love. You love people, and you love Me." I mean, what an amazing statement! If we stopped at verse 19, I mean that is the church you want to be a part of!

He said, "But I have a few things against you; not all of you"—He was talking to their leadership team—"You tolerate" or the word that is used most often is "you allow" or "you tolerate the women Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess." In other words, she had a reputation of giving accurate prophecies. Now whether the reputation was exaggerated, or whether it was hype, or whether there was demonic involvement and she was getting information, we do not know. A lot of people have a reputation for accurate prophetic words, but there is a little bit of hamburger helper and hype involved. And so we do not know for sure what she was operating in, but she was known across the city as having a reputable, accurate prophetic ministry. He said, in effect, "But here is the deal: she is garnering this confidence and support from people and endorsement, but she is using it to teach and seduce My servants that it is okay to do acts of immorality."

She said something like, "In the grace of God, the Lord understands. The immorality is not a problem. it is just your body. It is your spirit God cares about, not your body."

He said, as it were, "She is distorting the message of the gospel and the message of grace. And she tells them that it is okay to be involved in the feasts where they worship idols."

Verse 21, this is so remarkable and should give everyone courage and confidence before the Lord, anyone who is stuck in any issue, whether it is immorality or any other issue. Verse 21, "I gave her time to repent." Isn't that remarkable? I mean, He gave Jezebel time to repent. He could have stepped in, right from the beginning, and cut her off, but He said, "No, I care about her, and I am going to give her time to reckon with what she is doing. I am going to let some pressure build up around her, and I am going to give her time to wake up and come to Me in truth. But if she does not repent..." Well, it goes on, and we will see later where He says, "She did not repent so I am going to cast her on a sickbed." Now this is Jesus talking, and it is not very popular in the Charismatic church, but it is still Jesus. And, like I say with a little bit of tongue-in-cheek, but it is real: you cannot bind Jesus with the name of Jesus. He said, in effect, "I will cast her on a sickbed to wake her up because I actually care about her spirit. I care about her destiny and she will not listen to Me. And it is not only that, but for those who commit adultery with her, her disciples, those that she is emboldening with her logic, her teaching and twisting of scripture, I am going to cast them into great tribulation."

Now He is not talking about the great tribulation at the end of the age. Basically He said, "I am going to cause pressure in circumstances with her disciples to get more and more intense, and I am going to remove the options for them to continue in immorality." Beloved, that is severe mercy. It is not fun when the Lord starts, like it says in Hosea 2 with Gomer who was walking in harlotry, God put a hedge around her. It was a hedge of thorns so she could not move in any direction. Here the Lord was saying, "I am going to hedge her disciples in, and I am going to make sin an unattractive option. I am going to remove options from their life, and I am going to steadily increase the pressure." Again, you cannot bind Satan in these situations. The only way out is coming to repentance and agreeing with Jesus' leadership.

Verse 26, how glorious! "To the person that overcomes"—they will experience the grace of God, and of course you cultivate that grace which is available to everybody to rule their own spirit in this issue—"I will give them the ability to rule nations in the age to come." That is, if they cannot rule their spirit in this age, they will not rule cities or nations in the age to come with Him when they have their resurrected body.

- B. Thyatira was about 30 miles inland in Turkey, surrounded by many rivers. The city of Akhisar now exists on the site of Thyatira. It was a wealthy center for trade guilds—"labor unions"—(garments, bronze workings, weavers, leather workers, linen makers, etc.). All employees in the "unions" were required to attend worship feasts for Apollo (the sun-god). These idolatrous feasts included drunkenness and immorality. Refusal to participate would lead to them losing their job.

Thyatira was a wealthy city. It was well-known for its labor unions, and they had many different types of labor unions. The problem was that everyone in the labor unions was required to go to idolatrous feasts to honor the god Apollo, who was one of the patron gods of that area. They had to. If you did not go to the feasts, then you were saying that you were not supporting that trade union, so your job was in jeopardy. However, if you went to the feasts and you partook of the food—the food was sacrificed to demons and these were drunken orgies—your job was secure. They had some twisted way of believing that this was how the gods were pleased and that the land and the economy would become more fertile if the people are engaged in sexual activities. They had all of these kinds of ways in the ancient world of how they were connected. And so before they were believers, they were involved with this, but now they are born again and are going to lose their job if they are not involved in this. But they are going to be in a very difficult place with the Lord if they do not repent of this, so this is a really hard spot here.

- C. The Spirit is preparing the Church to operate in great power. He requires that we live in agreement with His leadership. Idolatry and immorality are the two sins that Jesus spoke against most in Revelation. Idolatry refers to **power** outside God's will; immorality to **pleasures** outside God's will.

The Holy Spirit is preparing the Church to operate in great power. Of course we look to the Book of Revelation, and we look at the seven churches and, though it was very pertinent to the generation that Jesus was speaking to in the first century, it is important in the end times. Jesus identified these seven churches prophetically because they would be the issues that the end-time Church that would experience with the power and the persecution in the Book of Revelation. They would face these very issues on a global level. So these seven churches, though they applied to that day, are prophetic of the opportunities, the challenges, the glory, the revelation of Jesus, the way He is going to move by His Spirit, and the temptations. He was saying, "End-time Church, when the Book of Revelation's storyline unfolds, you will face these challenges and these promises and these opportunities, so know how I am looking at the Church." It is interesting that the two areas of sin most emphasized in the Book of Revelation are idolatry and immorality. There are more, but these are the two main ones: idolatry and immorality.

When you look at the harlot Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18, it is idolatry and immorality again. Idolatry is seeking to have power outside of the will of God, because idolatry, though many people worshipped the idols, was really about gaining economic advantage. Not everyone believed in the demons behind the idols—some did and some did not—but one thing was clear: if you did not participate, you were penalized economically.

And so people would say, "Well, I do not really buy this." Others really did believe in it, and they had "proof" that more would happen for their benefit if they did worship these demons. I mean, they said, "He, we have proof! Look at history. It really matters!" I am sure many people said, "Whatever!" but did it to gain an advantage economically.

The Lord would say, "No, trust Me. Do not trust those rituals, and do not trust the approval you get from the people who believe in those rituals. Trust Me."

Perhaps they said, "Well, we trust You, Lord, but we really need to do that little compromise."

But the Lord would say, "No, that desire to trust in money and compromise, I call that idolatry even if you do not believe in the demons behind the idols." Again, some did, and some did not believe in that.

Today the same thing is going on. It is covetousness, as Paul the apostle talks about, and we will look at the verses in a few minutes. He said that the love of money is in essence what idolatry really is. It is seeking power and security outside of the will of God. Immorality is referenced to pleasure outside of the will of God. And so those are two big themes that test and tempt the human heart at all ages, and they are going to come to a head in the generation the Lord returns. Here it is:

1. **Idolatry** is expressed in covetousness (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5) by pursuing and trusting in money in ways that oppose Jesus' leadership over their life.

⁵Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (Col. 3:5)

Number one, idolatry, Ephesians 5:3 and Colossians 3:5. Paul said that covetousness really is idolatry, as it is really money that they are focused on, and not really the worship of the demon. It is the benefit that they are getting economically, because that is what they are trusting as their source, and not the Lord. And the Lord would say, "I will not have you trust another as your primary source."

2. **Immorality** includes all sexual activity (physical, technological, etc.) outside of the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman.

Number two, immorality. We have to be very clear about it. The Bible is very clear. Immorality is all sexual activity outside of the covenant of the marriage of one man and one woman. We cannot move the boundary lines without harming our spirit and our walk with God. The Lord himself created the ancient boundary lines because the Creator is the only one who understands the design of the human spirit and how love is defined and how love operates and flows. So it is not a matter of which argument is right. It is that the Creator determines it, and no one has the right from the garden of Eden forward to change those boundary lines.

Of course, the argument in the culture is getting more and more intense on this subject. Psalm 2 tells us David prophesied that the day is coming when all of the kings of the earth will be in unity together to drive the influence of the word of God out of the culture. That is happening in an increasing and accelerating way in this hour, but I want to assure you that though the kings of the earth and the merchants of the earth and some of the great power brokers will have a temporary momentum and seem like they have the upper hand, but they will utterly fail, and the Lord will reverse everything. His Word will prove successful and be the only thing true at the end. However, He is going to test the whole human race in every society, every church, every family, every nation whether they will stand for the Word of God or be engulfed in the man-pleasing spirit and arguments of the culture. They are going to be around the money of idolatry and the immorality and arguments of the culture. Of course we have seen in the last five years those arguments are exploding. Beloved, in the next ten and twenty years, these arguments will be at such another level that we have to be rock-solid clear about who it is that we look to for the definition of love and purity, life and truth. And there is only one Man, the Man with eyes of flaming fire who has scars in His hands, who is the only one qualified.

II. JESUS' REVELATION OF HIMSELF (REV. 1:14-15; 2:18)

- A. Jesus highlighted three aspects of His majesty that help to equip His people to overcome immorality and idolatry (covetousness)—that He is the Son of God and has eyes like fire and feet like brass.

¹⁸Says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass... (Rev. 2:18)

Jesus gives three aspects of His majesty that will be very pertinent in resisting immorality and idolatry. Again we don't think of idolatry today. We could say, "I don't know anyone in idolatry," but we know a lot of folks who are in covetousness, and covetousness is idolatry from God's point of view. Again, it is trusting money as our primary source of safety and for our future protection and direction. It is trusting in money, and that is the idolatry dimension of it.

B. **Son of God:** Jesus emphasized His deity and power to equip them to withstand Jezebel.

He says, number one, "I am the Son of God." I already mentioned it, but I love to say it again. He is saying, "I am the only one with the authority to define love. I am the only one with the authority to impart love. I alone can impart love." He is the only one with the wisdom and tenderness to remove what hinders love.

He says here, in effect, "I am the Son of God. I am the Son of man. I am human, but I am divine. All authority is Mine, and I have full understanding of the human make-up. Only I understand the human make-up. I understand the damage that immorality does to the human spirit, and I understand the liberty that the grace of God will bring anyone who will say yes and stay with it with all of their heart. Great liberty and freedom will come to the human spirit." He would say, "I am the Son of God; I understand this."

C. **Who has eyes like a flame of fire:** His eyes speak of His attentiveness to His people and to what they do. Fire symbolizes the impartation of holy love and the release of judgment. He releases either the "fire of grace" or the "fire of judgment," depending on how we respond to Him.

Then He goes on, saying, "I have eyes like a flame of fire." This has many, many meanings. He can see through everything; He not only sees every false argument in the culture, but a lot of those arguments are in the Church. A lot of born-again believers and a lot of people who are not even born again but grew up in the Church and made a profession of faith, for both of those groups the arguments of the culture for many of them are in their mouths, and they are promoting them in the Church. The Lord would say, "I see through everything. I know the arguments. I see through the faulty logic. And not only that, but I see the sincere struggle of people who love Me yet are struggling with this. I see the cry of your heart. I do not just see the false arguments. I see the sincere cry of your spirit. My eyes are like fire. I can see through any wall, any hindrance you put before Me. I see everything."

There is a verse, Proverbs 15:3, that says, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place." He sees everything. It is ridiculous when some folks imagine they can get over here and get behind this situation or that and think, "Aha, I think we are safe," and the Lord says, "No, Proverbs 15:3! My eyes see everything." Again, not just the arguments, not just the secret sins, but even the sincere desire to get free of that sin. He sees that, too, and He honors it.

Another verse, Hebrews 4:13 says of the eyes of the Lord that nothing can be hidden, that everything is laid bare to His eyes—every argument, every sincere desire, all the shame and accusation the enemy piles up on people. He would say, "I see all of it. My word is the only truth that you should base your life on."

His eyes of fire symbolize that He says He will impart holy love, because His eyes of fire illuminate as fire illuminates where there is darkness. I love it in Acts 2:3 where they are in the upper room praying, and the Holy Spirit comes like tongues of fire and rests on them. I mean the fire of God illuminates. It tenderizes. It warms. It softens the cold heart. A hardened heart, a cold heart, is warmed by the fire of the love of God. The fire of God purifies, but the fire of God also destroys what gets in the way. If we hang on to what gets in the way, He still comes after it, and that is called severe mercy. He might say, "I am going to destroy it because I love you. I will not take no for an answer, because I am coming after you." Now, I mean, eventually He will allow a person

to stay in their sin if they want to, but He will put up roadblock after roadblock, and He will increase the pressure. It will get greater and greater because He is trying to wake them up; He wants to purify them.

His eyes of fire destroy, and His eyes of fire terrify as well. It is interesting that in the Book of Revelation here, the "eyes of fire" are described when He is facing Jezebel in her immorality, and the next time "the eyes of fire" are mentioned, the only other time besides Revelation 1 where the eyes are fire are manifested, is at Armageddon when He is destroying the Antichrist armies. He has eyes of fire that terrify and destroy, but what His people see is tender, burning love for His people.

And so those eyes of fire have both sides to it. They are either the fire of grace or the fire of judgment. Each person gets to decide how they experience His eyes of fire, but His eyes will always be the eyes of burning. He is the Man with burning eyes. We get to determine how we experience those eyes. They soften, illuminate, tenderize, and purify. They warm our hearts. The disciples on the road to Emmaus said, "When He spoke, did our hearts not burn when He spoke to us! We were on fire with love and tenderness." Or we can choose, even as believers, to resist His leadership, and those eyes of fire will become more and more intense. Again, it is severe mercy, and it will not be pleasant in the flesh.

- D. **His feet are like fine brass:** Brass is a symbol of judgment against sin. Jesus' feet of bronze speak of His commitment as a mighty warrior to confront and triumph over persistent immorality with judgment. Jesus promises to tread down as His enemy all that is identified with Jezebel.

"His feet are like fine brass." Typically in the Word of God, brass is a symbol of judgment. "Feet" symbolize, all throughout the Old Testament, that when a king or an army or the people of God, wherever their feet would go, it would declare their inheritance and their victory as they marched around. And so wherever their feet would go, it was the place of inheritance and victory. The Lord says, as it were, "My feet—I will either step in to help you or I will step on your circumstances to remove them." And so He says, "My feet are like burnished bronze or fine brass. I will step in to deliver you in victory. I will bring this sin in your life under My feet and under your feet. Or, if you refuse Me, I will step in, not to help, but to step on your circumstances, and I will crush the things you are hanging on to." This is a very strong word, and He means it to be strong.

The Church around the nations in this hour does not have a revelation of the Man with eyes of fire and feet like burnished bronze, but I tell you that His personality never changes. And in the end-time Church, this is going to be the deliverance and the victory and the confidence of God's end-time people. He steps in to alter the circumstances or He steps in to crush the circumstances that are getting in the way of us growing in love. And again, that is severe mercy. He will cut off options for us to sin. He will still let us choose at the end, but He will keep cutting off options. When it is happening, people are like, "Oh Lord, this is so difficult!" but when it finally happens and it is over, then God's people are delivered and are grateful.

III. AFFIRMATION FOR FAITHFULNESS

- A. **I know your works:** This church was affirmed for their works, love, service, faith, and patience. This is the only church commended for both love and service.

He says "I know your works," He continues on talking about their perseverance, their outreach ministries, etc.

¹⁹I know your works, love, service [outreach ministries], faith, and your patience [perseverance]; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. (Rev. 2:19)

- B. **The last are more than the first:** They increased in their work of ministry and service as time went on. Their deeds were greater in number and quality than in their earlier days of ministry.

He says, basically, "Your works of service and your love—you are actually growing! You have more now than some decades ago," maybe four or five decades ago when the church was first planted. He said, "Your ministries have actually increased." That's a "Wow, what a statement!"

IV. CORRECTION FOR COMPROMISE

- A. **I have a few things against you:** Jesus' correction is not rejection. He corrected three churches in the seven letters. Those in Ephesus left their first love (Rev. 2:4). Believers in Pergamos held the doctrine of Balaam (Rev. 2:14), and those in Thyatira allowed Jezebel to teach (Rev. 2:20).

²⁰...I have a few things against you, because you allow [tolerate; NAS, ESV] that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols...²⁴to 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. (Rev. 2:20, 24)

Then He says, "But this I have against you." Verse 20, "A few things I have against you because you allow, you tolerate, Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess." She seemingly had some prophetic credibility, a little bit of credibility, from her ministry. It was not real, but it appeared that way to people.

I have been involved in the prophetic ministry for thirty, forty years, and I have seen a lot of the real, I have seen a lot of the not-real, and a lot of the in-between where some of it was real and some of it was not real. I remember one pastor saying, "Well, it is either all of God or not," and I said, "I wish it was that easy, but it is not." Some really anointed people get carnal and use their gift in a wrong way, but the Lord still uses them some. And there are really false people who say right things, but it is not the Lord. It is the enemy. It takes discernment, and it takes paying attention to the Spirit and judging the fruit of it by the word of God. It is not just crystal clear every time. You have to patiently, carefully, and with discernment, judge the fruit over time by the Word of God. And ask for the Holy Spirit's discernment in it.

- B. **You allow Jezebel to teach and seduce My servants:** They tolerated Jezebel by allowing her to continue instead of rebuking her error and stopping her ministry. She taught "liberty in grace," saying that attending idol feasts involving immorality was acceptable.

*He said, "You allow this woman Jezebel..." They allowed her to continue because she had a reputable ministry in the city, but they needed to pull her aside and rebuke her to correct her errors. Now, you do this in private first. You do not start publicly, but you give her opportunities. Matthew 18 says you do it once, then go with two, and then you get a group, so there is time. He said "I am giving her time to repent, but, elders at Thyatira, **you** need to take a stand, and **you** need to be dealing with this issue. Then you need to stop her ministry and expose the falsehood."*

This is not the falsehood of every ministry in the world, but the ones that were under their leadership. The reason I say that is because some people think that if they see anything wrong, they should get right on the internet and tell everybody what is wrong, so they have kind of set themselves up as the guardians and the discerning gift of the Body of Christ. I remember talking to one guy who had a well-known radio ministry that said how everyone was false. I remember talking with him, and he said, "Well, I have the discernment ministry for the Body of Christ," and I thought, "Oh my goodness! Please do not think of that because whatever

standard you use, it will come back on you." It really will come back on you by men, and it will come back on you by the Lord. Be careful.

And so when you are exposing something, the rule I have used over the years, which I believe is biblical, is that I expose the people under my authority and influence. I do not expose the guy on the other side of the world. That is between God and the authorities over there. Some people think they should get on the internet and say everything that is wrong that they ever find out because after all they are just exposing it, but they do not have any authority over that group of people.

Here He is talking to the elders in Thyatira to expose a distorted ministry under their care and under their authority. She was teaching liberty and grace. I do not think those were the terms she used. Probably she was preaching the word of God, the name of Jesus undoubtedly, but she said, "Hey, you are going to those idol feasts. You know what? That is not a big deal. The grace of God covers it. What you are doing with your body is not what is important because your heart loves Jesus. Your spirit is not affected. Only your body is affected, but so what." That was a very popular and common error in that day, and you still see various expressions of it today.

I remember forty-five years ago, whatever, in 1974-1976. I was in college, and I remember that a bunch of us were going hard after the Lord. Half the believers were in fraternities, and half of the believers would not get into fraternities, and so there was a big debate: "Do you or do you not get into fraternities?" Nobody quite knew for sure as we were all freshman, but then a couple of the guys went into a few fraternities and it was like drunken orgies. And they were saying, "Well, the Lord wants me to win them to the Lord," so that is why they went. I have learned over those forty-five years that [people getting saved] almost never happens in that setting. Most of that is self-deception, and I have learned over the years that you do not want to go in those settings. They say, "Well, Jesus did!" If you have Jesus' track record of purity in the face of temptation, you can go everywhere. Until you get a stronger track record of purity, I would not go into drunken dens of orgies in the name of witnessing. "Well, I just don't feel the liberty to say anything now, but maybe the next time I will." That is typically how that went. I have watched many, many believers in forty years be sucked into that kind of logic, whether it was the drunken orgies at fraternities or going to bars. I don't mean that all fraternities were that way, but the ones I saw, it was rough stuff.

And so different folks would say, "Well, we go to the bars to witness, and, yes, we get a little bit loose, but, hey, we have to relate to them," etc. Now I believe in winning people, and I believe in becoming friends with sinners. I believe in all of that, but a lot of folks are living in deception because they are stepping out beyond their history of maturity in facing those temptations. If you have a history of maturity in overcoming, that is one thing. If you do not, then maybe approach it in a different way. Maybe go serve them. Go clean up their dormitory if you are in college. Do acts of kindness and get their attention that way and maybe approach it differently.

C. Those who participated their idolatrous feasts were worshipping demons (1 Cor. 10:20-21).

They did not understand that when they were participating in idolatrous feasts that they were actually worshipping demons. In 1 Corinthians 10 :20-21, Paul makes it clear and you can read that on your own.

²⁰The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons...and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. (1 Cor. 10:20-21)

- D. Most idolatry was motivated by covetousness (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5). Covetousness is an expression of idolatry because people put their confidence in money instead of the Lord.

⁵***Put to death...fornication, uncleanness...and covetousness, which is idolatry.* (Col. 3:5)**

⁵***No...covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom.* (Eph. 5:5)**

I am showing here where Paul identifies covetousness with idolatry because they are putting their confidence in money. "Well, we love the Lord, but we need that money," and they saw that network as their source of economic security and their independence for the future.

The Lord said, "They are not your source. I am. You do not have to compromise for Me to provide for you."

"Well, Lord, it is..."

Paul says, "That is idolatry at the end of the day. That is what idolatry is mostly about, throughout the ancient years." It is not mostly about totally convinced demon worshippers. Undoubtedly they are in the mix, but I have a feeling that it is not the majority.

- E. Paul required the leaders under him to confront immorality in the church. Immorality is included in almost every list of sins in the NT and is emphasized in Revelation as one of Satan's primary strategies in the end times (Rev. 9:21; 14:8; 17:1-4; 18:2-4, 9-10; 19:2; 21:8).

Paul required the leaders under his leadership to confront immorality. We are looking at this subject of immorality here, and Paul demands the leaders to confront them in Corinth.

¹It is reported that there is sexual immorality among you...⁴In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together...⁵deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord...⁹I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world...since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹Now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral...or a drunkard ...not even to eat with such a person. (1 Cor. 5:1-11)

Look at this: it says, 1 Corinthians 5:1, that Paul said, "It is reported that there is sexual immorality among you," and he talked about this one particular man who was continuing in sin after he had been confronted. Again, it is one thing to stumble and repent, and even stumble again and repent with a genuine sincerity, and there is a fight and disdain of that. I do not want to say, "Well, boys will be boys."

I still take that seriously, but I approach that very differently from the guy who says, "Hey, it is what I do, and the grace of God covers me, and I have a bunch of other Christians who will back me up." And they even have Bible verses or at least they say they do, though I have not actually seen them, but they say they have them. That is a really different thing when someone gets settle in their immorality and they just live it as their lifestyle, and say, "Well, we are going to get married anyway, one of these days."

No man! If you are going to get married, spend those last months in obedience to Jesus' leadership! Do not spend your last months preparing for your marriage living in compromise together! Go the other way! Say, "You know what, we are going to be thirty, forty, fifty years together. Let's live under the glory of God! Let's go into our marriage having known that we have a testimony of obeying Him before then." Beloved, that is precious to the Lord, and it would be precious to any marriage.

Some folks are saying, "Well, we are going to get married so we can do this and that."

No, Jesus' leadership is not on hold because you are going to get married next year. His leadership is good. His leadership is not cruel. It is not to deny us love; it is to prepare us for the fullness of love. That is what His leadership is about. He defines love, He imparts love, and He protects love. He is the only one who fully understands love. And so we look at Him and say, "Your leadership is the right way."

Well, anyway, verse 4, this one guy would not repent. When is the last time you saw this happen? You might say "Well, Mr. Wiseguy, when was the last time you did this?" Okay, so I will just be quiet here.

Verse 4, "In the name of the Lord Jesus, when you gather together, deliver that man"—in front of the Sunday morning congregation—"deliver him over to Satan"—I mean, that is a terrifying thought to do that, to name a guy who will not back off from his immorality and deliver him over to Satan—"And his flesh will be destroyed," which means his body will get sick. Paul says, basically, "The reason I want you to do that is so that the man will repent and his spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord, because if he does not repent, he will not end up saved in the day of the Lord." It is like that kind of changes the whole thing here!

Then he goes on in verse 9, in effect, "I wrote to you"—and you can read this on your own—"how important it is that you hold this line. This is a very, very important reality."

- F. The high priest Eli loved God but tolerated immorality in his sons—Hophni and Phinehas—who were leaders under him. He failed to replace them when they refused to repent. As a result of allowing immorality to continue under his leadership, Eli lost God's blessing (1 Sam 2:12-31).

²²Eli...heard everything his sons did...how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle...²³So he said to them, "Why do you do such things?...²⁵Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the LORD desired to kill them...²⁷Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD...²⁸'Did I not choose him [your forefather Aaron] out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest...?'²⁹Why do you...honor your sons more than Me...?'³⁰Therefore the LORD...says: 'I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the LORD says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.³¹Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off...your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.'"
(1 Sam. 2:22-31)

This is one of the most graphic examples of the top spiritual leader of Israel. His name was Eli. He was the number one spiritual leader of Israel in his generation. He loved God, and he was a godly man in his own lifestyle choices, but he overlooked his sons' sins, and they were not just his sons as they were the number two and three persons in spiritual authority over the nation. So it was not just like Dad was being lenient with his boys. It was a leader who was looking the other way when the top spiritual leadership of the nation were living in immorality, and he would not confront it.

Look at this, verse 22, "And Eli"—again, he is the high priest, and he is the primary priest of the nation—"heard everything that his sons were doing" and his sons were going to inherit his position—"how they laid with the women who came to the door of the tabernacle," which would be the temple in Solomon's day. When the women would come there, his sons would seduce them and do all kinds of things.

Verse 23, and so he said to his sons, "Boys! Why are you doing this? Stop it! It is not just that you are my sons and I care about your lives and families, but you are the spiritual leaders of Israel! You cannot do this!"

"Nevertheless," verse 25, "they would not repent," but Eli would not remove them, and that was the issue.

"Then a man of God," verse 27 "came to Eli." Verse 28, "Thus says the Lord, 'Did I not choose your family line to be My priests?'" and Eli nodded yes. "You know, way back with Moses and Aaron, didn't I choose your great, great grandfathers, your forefathers? That is why you are the High Priest. You are in the family line! Didn't I choose you?" Yes. Verse 29, "Then why are you honoring your sons more than you are honoring Me by allowing them to do this without stopping them and replacing them?" Again, it was a family issue, but it was bigger than that. This is a spiritual principle over the religious authority of the nation. It was both things going on in his house.

Verse 30, God says, as it were, "Eli, I would have honored your offspring forever, and forever they would have been in the family line of the priesthood. All your generations, if you would have obeyed." But look at the end of verse 30, "But thus says the Lord, 'Far be it from Me that I do this for you'"—because of the immorality which he allowed to go unchecked—"for those who honor Me I will honor. Those who despise Me"—Eli, you are despising Me by allowing this to continue in Israel at the top leadership positions—"I will lightly esteem your family." He went on in verse 31 to say, "The days are coming that I will cut off your family." All of his sons were killed. In other words, when He says, "I am going to cut off," it means I am going to kill your sons and you are not going to have offspring because of this immorality.

This is the very same spirit that Jesus is communicating at Thyatira. He says, "I am going to step in to deliver." That is, "I am going to step on to crush those things that you will not get rid of."

G. **Jezebel:** There are two women in the Scripture named Jezebel—one in the OT and one in the NT.

And so, Jezebel. Well, as you probably know, there are two women in the Bible named Jezebel. There is the Old Testament Jezebel, and then here in Thyatira is the New Testament Jezebel. Two different ladies entirely, and they are about nine hundred years apart, so they are not related at all in any family way whatsoever.

1. The OT Jezebel was married to King Ahab (1 Kgs. 16:31). She financially supported 850 false prophets, killed God's true prophets, and sought to kill Elijah (1 Kgs. 18:13, 19; 19:1-2). Her harlotries and occult practices were well known (2 Kgs. 9:22). Her name lived on as a byword for immorality and/or occult activity.

The Old Testament Jezebel is the one we are familiar with. She killed the prophets of God, and she tried to kill Elijah. She was so well known for her harlotries and occult practices that her name lived on as a byword "Jezebel."

2. The NT Jezebel acted like the OT Jezebel and, therefore, may have deliberately taken her name in her brazen boldness to live in sin. She was a recognized leader in the church who claimed to be a prophetess. Thus, she had a reputation for accurate prophetic revelation. Those accepting her teachings prided themselves on their enlightened liberalism in grace.

Nine hundred years later approximately, this other lady is in Thyatira. She is in the church and has a recognized ministry in the church, a teaching ministry, a prophetic ministry. She probably called out words of knowledge. I do not know what she did, but she was well known in the city enough for Jesus to identify her. Her name was Jezebel. My assumption is that her parents did not name her that. Do not name your daughter Jezebel. Maybe your pet rat or something, but don't name even your puppy that; give your puppy grace. My guess is that she deliberately took that name in her brazen boldness to say, "I am not afraid of this! I get what the grace of God is about! The grace of God gives us liberty they did not have in the Old Testament." That is my assumption, something like that.

My assumption is that her people, her disciples, her children—they were not her natural children; they were her disciples—prided themselves in being more liberated and enlightened than the rest of the people at Thyatira. Well, it's the shock of their life when Jesus breaks in and says, "No, they are not enlightened, and they should humble themselves instead of having pride in themselves." There is no testimony of this, but they are moving forward in their deception in the midst of a church that is growing in love and ministry, so you know that there is a collision going on somewhere. However, the elders are not taking it on in a public way. Again, you start in private, and you work your way through the steps; you do not just call a person out in a meeting.

- H. Those described as having the *spirit of Jezebel* are those who promote immorality and/or sorcery. Immorality stimulates one's body outside of God's will. Sorcery stimulates one's spirit outside of God's will. The spirit behind making, selling, or buying pornography or partaking in any expression of immorality is the spirit of Jezebel. As the OT Jezebel killed the prophets physically, so the spirit of Jezebel today kills the prophets spiritually with immorality—it kills the prophetic spirit.

You hear a lot these days, and we have over the years, about someone having the "spirit of Jezebel." What the spirit of Jezebel is, according to Jesus in this passage, is a spirit which promotes immorality—that is what Jezebel is—or promoting sorcery. A lot of folks think that the spirit of Jezebel is control, and I have seen more women who have a leadership gift but are still developing their people skills be called a Jezebel spirit. I say, "Give her a break! She has a leadership gift. That is not what Jezebel is!"

A "Jezebel spirit" is mostly promoted and financed by men. The United States media and Hollywood are shipping out the spirit of Jezebel on a global level, and it is mostly rich men that are financing the spirit of Jezebel. It is not some poor lady in the church who has a strong gift and she does not do it just right so the men gang up on her and call her a controlling spirit of Jezebel and kick her out of the church. I have seen that over and over. Or they penalize her, and they are misappropriating this passage of scripture.

The Jezebel spirit is more embodied in men than it is in women, in my observation. And so the Jezebel spirit is making, selling, buying, and/or participating in immorality or pornography or those kinds of things. My goal is not to pick on men versus women. I like men. I like women. I like humans. The idea is that I do not want this issue perpetrated against women who have a strong leadership gift who are still working out the details on how to communicate it just perfectly. I want to give those ladies grace and see a recovery of people in that kind of situation.

However, as in the days of old the ancient Jezebel with Elijah, back in 900 BC, killed the prophets physically, the spirit of Jezebel, immorality—pornography plus some—is what is killing the prophetic spirit in the Church today. I tell you that you cannot grow in the Spirit and you cannot move and grow in the prophetic Spirit the way God wants and yet be dipping into pornography and a little bit of immorality or a lot of immorality and just hoping that no one will catch you. It is killing the prophetic spirit in the Church, just like Jezebel of old killed the prophetic spirit.

- I. **Depths of Satan:** John referred to Jezebel's doctrine as the deep things of Satan. In other words, her false teaching on grace that promoted immorality and idolatry without concern for Jesus' leadership or His judgments is one expression of the depths of satanic deception.

Jesus said, "This doctrine is part of the depths of Satan," but this doctrine did not seem so bad in that day.

They were saying "No! The grace of God and Jesus, and He repented for us, and He died for us, so we do not have to mess with that. It does not affect our spirit. It only touches our body. Hey, we are good. We do not really believe in the idolatry. You know, we are there and our spirit is free!" That is called the doctrine of the depths

of Satan. You are seeing manifestations of that all over the Body of Christ growing more and more, typically couched under the language of grace, mercy, freedom, liberty, and love, but they are the depths of Satan. They are not the only depths of Satan, but they are part of it; it is one expression of it.

V. JESUS' EXHORTATION TO THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA

- A. Jesus warned the church that He would kill her children—those who followed her teaching—and cast them into tribulation (increased trials) that troubled believers who refused Jezebel's ways.

²¹I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. ²²Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. I will give to each one of you according to your works. ²⁴Now to...as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan... I will put on you no other burden. ²⁵Hold fast what you have till I come. (Rev. 2:21-25)

Jesus said, verse 21, "I gave her time to repent." Again, the issue was not stumbling once, it was not stumbling twice; but it was the refusal to repent when the Lord is confronting.

Again, I am not into the "Hey, hey, just stumble. It is not a big deal." Stumbling is real, but it does not end your story. It does not end your testimony. You can stumble. We just looked at this the other day in Zechariah 3 where Joshua the High Priest stumbled in a major way, and the Lord said, "Satan, I do not receive your accusations. I am going to reinstate him and fill him with the mercy of God, but I am calling him not to go back to those ways anymore." The Lord delights in mercy; we want to present the eyes of fire in mercy and we want to give people the understanding that there is a way out of it and the Lord will give mercy and honor and help but you have to say yes to the Lord and repent of it.

Some folks are like, "If you mess up, you are gone forever. Jesus has eyes of fire!"

Other people say, "Well, you know it is not a big deal. It is all under grace."

Neither one of those postures is right in my opinion. I believe that He is extravagant in His mercy, but He does require repentance, like in Zechariah 3 with Joshua the High Priest. He said, "This man really stumbled badly as the main spiritual leader of the nation of Israel, but he did repent, and I am reinstating him and giving him another fresh season in the grace of God." That is a remarkable reality in the grace of God. And that is the combination of the two, but he had to repent, and that is the issue.

Jesus said this, verse 21, "I gave her time to repent but she did not." There are many believers—I want to say this tenderly and in the fear of God—there are many believers who love Jesus, but they are dabbling with immorality, or they are entrenched in it, and they are on a ticking clock, but they do not know it. The Lord says, "I am giving you time, and I am giving you a little bit more time, but the clock is ticking. There is a day when I am going to take action, and I am going to confront this in circumstances. I said the word to you; you did not listen. I sent a friend to you; you did not listen. I convicted you with a dream at night; you did not listen. And so now I am going to start touching your circumstances, and I am going to hem you in and remove some options. It is called severe mercy. You will not like it. The pressure will get more and more intense. I am after your heart. I am after your heart," is what He is saying.

Verse 22, He said, in effect, "I am going to cast her on a sick bed, and when she gets sick, John, tell her that her only way out is repentance. She cannot bind the devil and get rid of this sickness; I am going to put her on a sickbed myself. And those who are involved in the spirit of adultery with her, they are actually involved in

immorality, though they are in the Church. I am going to cause great tribulation,” which means pressure on their circumstances. Now, not all pressure on your circumstances is this, but He says, “I am going to increase and increase and increase the pressure until they repent. And if they do not repent,” verse 23, “I am going to kill Jezebel’s disciples. The reason I am going to kill them”—we find out in other passages—“is so their spirit is saved in the day of the Lord. That is, “I am going to take them home early before they go too far.”

Now, most Charismatic ministries value Jesus the Healer, Jesus who heals physically, which is one of the great values in the Body of Christ. It is one of our great values, and a lot of folks say, “If Jesus is the Healer, how could Jesus do this?”

And some people have really strong opinions, “He always heals and only heals! He never does anything but heal!” However, we have to get rid of a number of verses to make that real.

Jesus would say, “No, I love and I only love. And if they will not repent, I use sickness sometimes to wake them up so that they will repent, because I only love. That is how I lead My people.”

Again you will not hear this preached very often. I am not trying to act Messianic or like a hero here, but this message is a Book-of-Revelation, end-time message for a generation that is going to be polluted with immorality and pornography. Where pornography, which is all in the Church, is going in the next twenty years, we need a serious wake-up call, because whether we preach it or not Jesus is still going to step in and do it, but people will not have any understanding of what is happening. It will be the devil they are all binding, and Jesus would say, “You cannot bind Me in the name of Jesus! I am after your heart. I am coming after you because I love you.” This has to be clarified. This is not the main message of the end-time Church, but this message is part of the end-time message to the Church and has to be included in there.

He says, verse 24, “As many of you that do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, I will not put any more burden on you. A number of you in Thyatira do not embrace any of this false stuff, and I am not putting anything else on you. You are doing great. You are growing in love. You are growing in ministry.” Verse 25, “Hold fast, stay steady in your obedience to the end.”

- B. Believers are sometimes made sick and even die under God’s judgment on immorality. God’s discipline includes Satan being permitted to make the unrepentant sick (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 11:30-32).

Some believers are made sick, and they even die. I am going to say this really clearly. I want to say it tenderly, but if we do not understand it we are just binding the devil instead of repenting. We have to repent of things! I am all for binding the devil, but you cannot bind the devil when you are under divine discipline, when repentance is what Jesus is requiring. He would say, “I will not do anything but love you, and this is love. I am coming after you. I care about your soul.”

³⁰For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep [died]. ³¹If we...judge ourselves, we would not be judged. ³²But when we are judged, we are chastened [disciplined] by the Lord, that we may not be condemned [go to hell] with the world. (1 Cor. 11:30-32)

Here is what Paul said. “For this reason”—he was talking about the communion table in 1 Corinthians 11—“many of you are weak and sick” because they were taking communion carelessly.

They were living in sin in their private life and going to the communion table, saying, “Oh, I live in covenant with God!” All the people said, “Man, we are a covenant community. Isn’t this great! We rejoice in the mercy of God and the grace of God!” You do that in communion; you rejoice in mercy and grace and healing, but on the basis that we are coming in agreement with His leadership. The communion table is celebrating the

covenant, and the covenant is real, not because we never stumble, but when we stumble we take it seriously and say, "Lord, I am grieved! I am coming under Your leadership. This is not okay!" and we celebrate His mercy. He was saying that a lot of folks in Corinth were taking the communion table lightly and for that reason they were weak, meaning their lives were weakened. There are several ways that they are made weak which I will not go into right now.

He said, "A number of you are sick." Well, he actually said this horrible word in verse 30, "**Many** of you." Like, many, Paul? Come on, how about "a few of you"? He said, "Many of you are weak," emotionally, physically, financially, relationally. I mean, who knows what that means for sure? Different people read different things into that. I am not sure all that is involved. However, he said, in effect, "Many of you are living in compromise. You take the covenant and declare it publicly, and you pat each other on the back, but it is not true. You are not really seeking to live in God's leadership in your private life in that area." He said "Many of you are sick," many! I just don't like that word, "many," but "many are sick among you and many have died!" Paul, take the word, many, out of that please! I have looked at every translation. Is there a translation that does not have the word, "many"? When he said, "many are asleep," he did not mean you took a nap. He meant you died physically, under the discipline of the Lord.

Paul said in verse 31, "If we judge ourselves," which means if we are honest with our own sin—that is what it means to judge ourselves—"Then we will not be judged." This means disciplined by the Lord. To be judged here is when God's judgments are described in the Bible. There are His redemptive disciplines, which are to wake up His people so that they will say yes to love. His redemptive disciplines are to wake us up. Then there are punitive judgments which He does to the Antichrist when He removes him out of the way so he cannot destroy other lives. So whenever the word, "judgment," is used you have to understand: is it a redemptive discipline, which is severe mercy but it is good, or is it a punitive judgment to remove you out of the way so you cannot harm more people because you are already a reprobate and you will never repent? The word, "judgment," is used for both cases, and if you do not know that distinction you can be confused reading this. You say "Wait! I thought we were not judged?"

He says in verse 32, in effect, "What I mean is you are disciplined by the Lord. I do not mean that it is a punitive judgment and you are going to hell. As a matter of fact, the point of this discipline is so you will not go to hell! God causing these people to get sick and die was so they would not be condemned at the end of their life in the trajectory that they were on of greater hardness, greater hardness, and greater hardness to where they would deny the Lord at the end if they stayed on that trajectory. They would be condemned with unbelievers."

¹It is reported that there is sexual immorality among you...⁵deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord... (1 Cor. 5:1-5)

Well, we already looked at 1 Corinthians 5, but I want us to look at it one more time because it is such an unusual verse, but it is very biblical, so it is good for us to get our mind around it. We go back to that guy in 1 Corinthians 5 that we talked about ten minutes ago. Paul said, "Deliver that man over to Satan so his flesh is destroyed"—in other words he gets sick—"that his spirit would be saved in the day of the Lord" because if he stays on that trajectory of increasing hardness he will get less and less likely to be sensitive to the Spirit. He will get harder and harder and harder and harder and more angry against God and His Word. He said, "I have got to break in and stop him before it goes too far."

- C. **Churches shall know:** Jesus wants the Church to know that He is zealous to free His people from immorality. He said they all shall know when He casts unrepentant believers on a sick bed.

- D. **Hold fast what you have till I come:** It takes diligence for a leadership team to hold fast in proclaiming and insisting on purity among those involved in their ministry. It is not automatic.

VI. PROMISE FOR OVERCOMERS: AUTHORITY AND INTIMACY

- A. **He who overcomes:** We must maintain our obedience in this until the end of our life. Augustine said, “Lust yielded to becomes a habit, and a habit not resisted becomes necessity [addiction].”

26“He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations. 27He shall rule them...28and I will give him the morning star.” (Rev. 2:26-28)

Here are the promises “to the person who overcomes,” verse 26 “and keeps My works to the end.” It is not a summer of freedom. He says, as it were, “You really set your heart. You are done with it. It is not like ‘Well, you know, for now.’ No! Settle it. Settle it! You are going to come under My leadership for the rest of your life in that area.”

Again, you might stumble, but you take it very seriously, and you sign back up. Confidence in His mercy is saying, “Lord, this is not what I want. I will go find help. I will take classes! I will get ways of deliverance and freedom. I am going to get free of this! I am pursuing it!”

And the Lord would say, “I will give you time. I am for you. I am your Father.” Then He says, “But if you overcome and keep My word until the end”—you stay with it; it does not mean that you never stumble again, but you are serious about it—“I will give you power over the nations; you will rule nations in the Millennial kingdom.”

It says in Proverbs 16:32, “A man that rules his spirit is more powerful than a man that rules a city.” He puts together ruling our spirit, which means coming under self-control by the grace of God and the Holy Spirit and our interacting with the Word and the Spirit in relationship to the Body of Christ; all are components of bringing our self under self-control in the grace of God. If we rule our spirit in this age, He says, “You will rule with Me over nations in the age to come.” That is a remarkable promise.

Well, there is more than just increased authority in the age to come, and maybe that increased authority has some application in this age as well—I am assuming that it does—but it has its ultimate application in the age to come. There are people who have been confronted with immorality, and they have overcome it, and in the secret place they have said yes to the Lord, and they fought through it. And they don't have a ministry that anybody knows about, but the Lord is going to give them the shock of their life: they are going to have leadership over cities and nations or whatever sphere it is. Because it is not if you are famous in ministry in this age that you are going to have a ministry over nations in the age to come. It is if you rule your spirit in this age in humility and in purity, then you will have part of the government in the age to come. You may never be known by anybody in this age, but you are known by the Lord. And He says “You rule your spirit, you say yes to Me, and you will not be disappointed.”

“Yes, Lord, but I am lonely, and I am hurting, and my body wants this expression. I am aching and I am hurting!”

He would say, “I know, I know. I understand. My body hurt. My body ached. I am a man. I walked through the temptations and the sufferings on the cross. I am with you!” The Lord is not saying that it does not matter. He is saying He sees the anguish that you are involved in and the pain and the loneliness and the ache, but you are saying yes to Him and you are going to find that it is worth it. It is worth it!

All of these lies that are in the culture which are getting into the Church, that are getting believers to let go of Jesus' leadership, people are actually throwing away their long-term destiny in the Lord by these man-pleasing lies which are pleasing to the flesh. We say, "Jesus is good! He knows the struggle. He knows the pain! He knows the loneliness! He knows the tears, and it moves His heart, and He will remember them forever!"

And He says, "I will help you! I will help you in this age, and I will reward you beyond measure in the age to come.

- B. ***Power over the nations:*** One reward for resisting immorality is to reign with Jesus in His *millennial* kingdom (Rev. 2:27; 3:21). Each believer has a different measure of eternal rewards.
- C. ***I will give him the morning star:*** Jesus is the morning star (Rev. 22:16). This promise speaks of increased revelation of Jesus and deeper relationship with Him. The morning star is the brightest star in the sky (planet Venus), seen just before the dawning of a new day.

And He says, "And not only that, I will give him the morning star." That is in this age and the age to come.

¹⁶"I, Jesus...am the bright and morning star." (Rev 22:16)

Jesus goes on in Revelation 22:16 and says "I am the Morning Star!" When He says, "I am going to give you more of Me. If you will say yes to this in this age, you will have an increased capacity to encounter and enjoy Me, and in the age to come, even in the resurrection, you will have an increased capacity in the glory of God because you said yes to Me in this painful, lonely, difficult struggle in your life because you said, 'I am in it for love.'" This is a theatre in which we show Him our love.

VII. SUMMARY

- A. Believers in the Pergamos and Thyatira yielded to idolatry and immorality. Jesus emphasized specific truths to equip His people to overcome immorality. Jesus is the wisest teacher who has perfect understanding of the human heart. These truths are needed in overcoming immorality.
- B. Jesus revealed four things about Himself to the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira and four rewards as part of the solution to the two main temptations they were facing (Rev. 2:12-28).
 - 1. Jesus revealed that He has *a sword* that He would use to fight the saints (Rev. 2:12, 16) and that He was the *Son of God* with *eyes like fire* and *feet like brass* (Rev. 2:18).
 - 2. Jesus promised to reward overcomers with *hidden manna*, *a white stone* with a new name (Rev. 2:17), *power to rule the nations* (Rev. 2:26), and *the morning star* (Rev. 2:28). These are the positive blessings of restraining our flesh because of our love for Jesus.

Amen and amen! Let's stand before the Lord.