

Session 11 Overcoming Jezebel: Immorality and Idolatry (Rev. 2)

I. REVIEW: THE CALL TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL OF OUR HEART

- A. Jesus spoke seven messages to the Church in John's generation (Rev. 1-3), knowing that they would also apply to the end-time Church living in context to the unprecedented revival, temptations, pressures, and persecutions described throughout the book of Revelation.
- B. Jesus' declaration in Matthew 22:37-38 is one of the most significant statements in Scripture.
37“**You shall love the Lord...**” *38***This is the first and great commandment.**” (Mt. 22:37-38)
- C. John made a stunning prophetic declaration that the Church will eventually become a prepared Bride (Rev. 19:7). The greatest corporate miracle in history is the transformation of the end-time Church from spiritual compromise into a “*prepared Bride*” walking in the first commandment.
7...**for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.** (Rev. 19:7)
- D. The end-time Church will be established in her spiritual identity as a cherished Bride (Rev. 22:17).
*17***The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!”** (Rev. 22:17)
- E. The biblical storyline includes far more than a great end-time revival. It includes the Father raising up a *prepared Bride for His worthy Son*. If we lose sight of Jesus as a Bridegroom King coming for His Bride, then the book of Revelation may be reduced to end-time events, facts, and charts.
- F. ***The Bridegroom revival:*** Jesus will come to His people as a Bridegroom who wants all of their heart. The end-time “*Bridegroom revival*” will be far more invasive than any revival in history. Jesus will reveal and impart His love in an unprecedented way that will transform the Church.

II. JESUS' MESSAGE TO PERGAMOS AND THYATIRA (REV. 2:12-29)

- A. Jesus encouraged those in Pergamos and Thyatira for persevering in the face of persecution (2:13) and for their diligent ministry (2:18), yet corrected them for not standing against false teachings that tolerated immorality and idolatry related to Jezebel (2:18-29) and Balaam (2:12-17).
12“**To the angel of the church in Pergamos write, ‘...¹³...you hold fast to My name and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr...¹⁴I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before...Israel to [worship] idols and to commit sexual immorality...’**”
*18***To the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘...¹⁹I know...your patience [perseverance]...²⁰I have a few things against you, because you allow [tolerate NAS] that woman Jezebel... to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.’**” (Rev. 2:12-20)

- B. The acceleration of immorality and idolatry in the end times are a significant aspect of the enemy's end-time strategy to attack the Spirit's call for the Bride of Christ to love Jesus with all of her heart.
- C. This message is important today as immorality accelerates in context to internet pornography, etc.
- D. Jesus addressed three groups—believers who held fast to His name, those who embraced the false doctrine of Balaam, and the leaders who refused to correct those who promoted these teachings.

¹²“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, ‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword... ¹⁴“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before...Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality...¹⁶Repent or else I will come you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.”” (Rev. 2:12-16)

- E. Many temples in Asia Minor were dedicated to worshipping the emperor and various Greek gods. Pergamos was the center of emperor worship in Asia. There were many temple prostitutes associated with each temple, promoting immorality in their idolatrous feasts. Thyatira had many “trade unions”—all their employees were required to attend various idolatrous feasts which included drunkenness and immorality. Refusal to participate would lead to losing one's job.

- F. John made references to a sword proceeding from Jesus' mouth (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21). This sword speaks of Jesus “fighting against sin” in two different ways—sin in the Church (2:16) and sin in the nations under the Antichrist (19:15, 21) in persecuting His people (Rev. 19:2).

¹⁶Repent or...I will come...[to] fight against them with the sword of My mouth. (Rev. 2:16)

¹⁵Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike nations... (Rev. 19:15)

- G. Jesus uses the “sword of His Word” in a progressive way against believers who persist in compromise. First, He convicts them of compromise (Jn. 16:8). Next, the Lord often uses the sword of His Word through the lips of others. Then, He uses pressure in circumstances to “wake them up.”

¹²For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit... (Heb. 4:12)

- H. **Pressure:** The Lord raised up a “hedge of thorns” around Gomer or His people in immorality, etc. so that eventually they would say, “It was better for me when I was with the Lord” (Hos. 2:6-7).

⁶“...I will hedge up your way with thorns, and wall her in, so that she [Gomer] cannot find her paths. ⁷She will chase her lovers, but not overtake them; yes, she will...not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will...return to my first husband, for it was better for me than now.’” (Hos. 2:6-7)

- I. **The doctrine of Balaam:** The doctrine of Balaam taught that believers could participate in the “parties” associated with temple feasts and their orgies. The false prophet Balaam was paid by King Balak to curse Israelites, but Balaam was unable to curse Israel. He knew God would judge Israel if they engaged in idolatry and immorality, so Balaam advised Balak to get the Moabite women to seduce the Israelite men to participate in feasts engaged in idolatry and immorality that would lead to God judging Israel (Num. 25)—24,000 Israelites died under God’s judgment.
- J. **Immorality** includes all sexual activity (physical, technological, etc.) outside of the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman.
- K. **Idolatry:** Covetousness is idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5)—Covetousness is an expression of idolatry because people put their confidence in money instead of God and make spiritual compromises for financial gain. Much idolatry in and at the end of the age is economically driven (Rev. 17). Those who participated their idolatrous feasts were worshipping demons (1 Cor. 10:20-21).
- ⁵Therefore put to death...fornication...evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (Col. 3:5)*

III. JESUS CALLED THEM TO REPENT AND WARNED THAT HE WOULD FIGHT THEM

- A. They were to repent of tolerating immorality. This required that they change areas of their speech, actions, and relationships—including some of the ways and places they spent their time and money.
- ¹⁶Repent, or else I will...fight against them with the sword of My mouth. (Rev. 2:16)*
- B. **I will fight against them:** Jesus releases the sword of His mouth against immorality in the church. He fights for us by fighting against those things in our life that are in agreement with darkness. Some of God’s judgments are *redemptive disciplines* to wake people up to receive more grace.
- ¹⁷The time has come for judgment [God’s discipline] to begin at the house of God... (1 Pet. 4:17)*
- C. The Spirit is raising up those with the “spirit of Phinehas,” zealous to stand for Jesus in the midst of accelerating immorality and idolatry across the nations (Rev. 17-18).
- ¹¹“Phinehas...turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel...” (Num. 25:11)*

IV. JESUS’ MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA (REV. 2:18-29)

- A. Jesus affirmed Thyatira for their perseverance in ministering, yet they lacked zeal for moral purity.
- ¹⁸To...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 [perseverance]...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)

- B. ***Son of God***: Jesus is God. Thus He has the authority to define what love is and what it is not. He has the power to equip His people to withstand Jezebel. Jesus as our Creator is the source of love.
- 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.
- 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. Jesus can "step in" to help His people come to victory or He can "step on" circumstances in their lives to wake them up to obey Him (Hos. 2:6-7)— He seeks to remove all that hinders love in His people.

V. CORRECTION FOR COMPROMISE

- A. ***I have a few things against you***: Jesus' correction is not rejection. He corrected three of the seven churches in these 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)

- 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.
 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.
 2. The NT Jezebel acted like the OT Jezebel and may actually 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 who accepted her teachings prided themselves on their enlightened liberalism in grace.
 3. Those described as having the *spirit of Jezebel* are those who promote immorality and/or sorcery. 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.

- C. Jesus warned the church that He would kill her children—those who followed her teaching—or cast into tribulation (increased trials) those who embraced Jezebel's ways.

***22"Indeed 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...26He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations. 27He shall rule them..."* (Rev. 2:22-26)**

- D. Believers sometimes become 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).

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)

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)