

02-09-08b Revelation

We are going to resume our studies now at Revelation chapter 2, beginning with the letter to Thyatira in verse 18, Revelation 2, 18. We've read the content of this letter, we might just quickly breeze through it again. To the angel of the church in Thyatira write.

The angel of course is the singular representative of the church. We see this as the pastor or the teaching elder, whatever terminology you want to use. It's not an otherworldly angel, it's not part of the heavenly creation that preceded man.

This is a human individual who is there and is able to deliver this message to the congregation. He is the messenger, he is the one who delivers the message. Who is it that delivers the message in the church? It's usually the pastor, that's who this is.

These things say the Son of God. Just as a trivia note here, of course I have a game called Bible Trivia and on the box it says the game where trivia is not trivial. And while this is a piece of statistical trivia, it is not trivial.

This is the only place in the book of Revelation where the phrase Son of God occurs. It's right here. These things says the Son of God.

Who has eyes like a flame of fire and his feet like fine brass. It is a commonplace of biblical interpretation that fire represents judgment. That's why you have the lake of fire as the ultimate and final judgment on Satan, on the beast and the false prophet, on all those who refuse to accept the work of Jesus Christ on their behalf.

He has eyes like a flame of fire. So without a great strain to our imagination, we can see that this is the evaluation function of the Lord Jesus Christ. His essence is identical to that of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

If you review your sort of classic list of attributes of God, many of us learned this long ago, ten functional attributes of God, sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, eternal life, immutability, well, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, immutability and veracity. Those ten sort of summarize the functional attributes of God. He has many other attributes.

I've often thought that that list is incomplete. I think compassion, sense of humor, creativity. There's a lot of things you could add to that list in terms of describing and fleshing out the picture of God that we find in the Bible.

But these are functional attributes and what we're looking at for the moment is the justice of God. God has a righteous standard and it is a standard that all creatures must contend with. God does not reserve a corner of the universe and say, well, you creatures who don't want to face my standard, just go over here in this quarantine area and do whatever you want.

All of God's creation is responsible to the justice of God. It is a judgment function. It's like living under the laws of the land, under the laws of the United States.

There are certain things that apply no matter where you are, whether you are caught or not. You are either a law-abiding citizen or you are a lawbreaker and a criminal. God's laws are universal.

They are all-embracing, all-encompassing and there is no one who is not subject. There is no creature that is not subject to the justice of God. Well, the eyes, like a flame of fire, indicate the perception, the knowledge, the evaluating function.

And this is specifically attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Does God the Father not judge? Of course He does. He judged Israel in the Old Testament.

But the judging function of the Lord Jesus Christ, we know this from other passages. We have what is called the Bema or the judgment seat of Christ. And that is specifically for the church.

Christ will judge His own. We have been given in this dispensation all who come to faith have been presented as a gift from God the Father to God the Son. God reserves to Himself the believers who belong to the nation of Israel.

They are His chosen people, His peculiar people, His peculiar possession. All of those phrases are used in the Old Testament. But, beginning at the Feast of Pentecost, all those who express faith and who receive the unique promise package and blessing package that belongs to the dispensation of the church belong to Jesus Christ.

And He evaluates us. So the eyes, like a flame of fire, indicate that the Lord Jesus Christ personally evaluates you and me and all believers in this age. It also says His feet are like fine brass.

This is a hapax legomena. Hapax means once or once only. Legomena is word.

[illegible]

Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc. Tin, although it was somewhat scarce in the ancient world, was a known element, a known metal, and was widely used.

You had a lot of things made of bronze. You have an entire age back during the time of Israel called the Bronze Age. You have early bronze, middle bronze, late bronze age.

That's when bronze was really the metal of choice for weapons, for spear points, for all kinds of metal work. And it would appear from what remains in the archaeological record that bronze was known and used widely before iron came into provenance and use. And archaeologists have miscalculated when iron, you know, they talk about the Iron Age as being subsequent to the days of Israel when, in fact, iron was well known.

That's why the Philistines seized the monopoly on it in the days of Saul. And there were only two iron swords in all of Israel, and those were Saul's and Jonathan's. Everyone else was having to use bronze, which of course was inferior.

At any rate, you have bronze and you have brass. Well, brass was a harder thing to produce because zinc was, they didn't know much about zinc. And the early forms of brass that you find used in the ancient world were created using copper and some compound that contained zinc, like zinc oxide or something that was in an ore or in the earth that was rich in zinc.

And when they heated everything up and did the best they could with their processes, zinc would leach out and meld with the copper. But there's wide variation in the zinc content of early brass because they didn't really know what they were doing. It was sort of an alchemy process.

They didn't really know what they were doing, but they would take certain kinds of earth and they would get this brass. But bronze was really more common because tin was easily obtainable. Well, along about the time of Christ and shortly thereafter, there came to the knowledge of some metal workers, they sort of stumbled by accident on how to distill zinc out of its source materials, out of its ore or its oxides or whatever.

And you had to heat it to a very high heat inside a closed container and zinc would vaporize and then would distill in droplets. And they didn't know what to call it and so it was called pseudo-argarose. Pseudo-argarose.

Pseudo means fake and argarose is the word for silver. So it was fake silver. It was a white metal.

It looked like silver but it was not. And this was sort of a trade secret. This was something they stumbled on by accident.

Sort of like vulcanizing rubber. You remember the story of Goodyear and how he accidentally overheated the stuff and vulcanized the rubber and had that lock on the technology for a long time. Well, the same thing happened.

And Thyatira, not a lot is known about Thyatira. This is the longest and most complex of the letters to the seven churches and yet we know the least about the city. It was not a prominent city.

It wasn't a well-known city. It didn't figure in the historical records of the Greek historians much. We have some coins and a few scattered references.

But one thing we do know about Thyatira is it was a, we know two things. One, there was a heavy military presence there. The Roman army had a huge garrison there.

And secondly, it was a trade town. It was a manufacturing center. And it was well-known for all of its trade guilds, its trade unions.

And there was lots of manufacturing. It was kind of an industrial town. And they did a lot of metalworking in Thyatira.

And it is in Thyatira that the metalworkers figured out how to make this zinc, how to distill this zinc and get a hold of it and have it as a pure metal. So, when they went to playing with this and figuring out what they could do and they mixed it with copper, they got a very high quality brass, a very bright brass. And if you look at brass, you've seen different brass things.

Even today, you've got antique brass and it has varying degrees of orangeness. Some brass is very pale and it's also very hard. Other brass is much more yellow and it's very soft.

I spent a lot of time with Brasso on my belt buckle when I was a midshipman. And that's a relatively soft brass. It scratches easily and that's because it has a high copper content and very low zinc content.

The more zinc you put in, the harder and brighter the metal is. It's very useful for certain purposes, but of course it's more expensive because zinc is not the easiest thing in the world to come by, in the ancient world. So, when it says that this is the Son of God speaking who has eyes like a flame of fire and his feet are like fine brass, this word Kalko Libanoi, Libanoi has the idea of white or very bright and shining.

And Kalko is the portion that talks about brass. And this is a white brass. It's a very high quality, very rare brass.

And it can only be manufactured by these men in the guild who had the secret knowledge of how to distill zinc. Everybody else had to use the polluted zinc. And a lot of times the ore would have a lot of iron in it and you had to get the iron out of it or you'd get a very inferior quality of brass.

So, the quality of this brass is it's very hard, it's very durable, and it is very, very shiny. And if you have a bright light source, which in the image here in the picture are the eyes like a flame of fire, they're going to reflect off of those feet. And so from head to toe you have the Lord Jesus Christ with the flaming fire of judgment.

And even if you go, you know how people fall at the feet of someone for mercy? Guess what happens when you fall at the feet of this Jesus? You're going to see the bright, hard, reflective

surface flashing forth the glory and the fire that comes from his eyes. This is the Christ of judgment. This is the Christ of evaluation.

This is the Christ who burns away the wood, the hay, and the stubble. And in this mode there is grace before judgment. There is mercy.

There is the opportunity to have a change of mind. But there is a point at which the door of the ark closes. There is a point at which the opportunity to repent and have a change of mind ends.

Well, where do you go for mercy? You fall at someone's feet. If someone has got the hard, shiny, brass feet reflecting the fire of the eyes, what does that mean? If you're going there for mercy, it's too late. There is judgment down there just like there is up above.

You're going to see the perfect reflection even at the feet. And it is a reminder of the fact that seek him while he may yet be found. Have a change of mind before he comes suddenly.

Have a change of mind before the hammer of judgment falls. That's the idea here in the brass feet. And not just any brass, not the imperfect, not the yellow brass, not something that is going to dull and dim the reflection.

This is the brightest, hardest reflective surface you can imagine. And it's unique because in Thyatira people would know. They would say, oh yes, he's got the secret of manufacture of this chalcolibanoi.

He is initiated into the mysteries that we thought only our guild masters knew. And it is another reflection of the knowledge. Christ's judgment is based on total knowledge.

His eyes pierce to the very heart of things. So this rare brass also speaks of the fact that there is no secret that is unknown to the Lord Jesus. There is no place you can flee from his presence.

There is no place where your sins will not be found out, where your actions cannot be evaluated and weighed in the balance. He says, I know your works. This is a place where we don't have the textual problem on ergo like we have had in a couple of the previous letters.

Ergo is well attested here. Oida, the Greek verb for no that is used in all of these, is an intimate knowledge. If you go to Kenneth Wiest's word studies in the Greek New Testament or his expanded translation, whenever he hits the word oida he does kind of like an amplified Bible translation.

He says, I know intimately. I have intimate knowledge of. Oida means you know something thoroughly.

He says, I know your works. I know your agape. I know your piston, your faith quotient.

And I know your diakonion, your service, your ministry. He says, I know your hupomone, your

endurance. He says, I know that your works, your last works are greater than the first.

And once again we have that word combination esketos and protos. Your esketos works are even greater than your protos works. Now this is a very great commendation.

They have faith. They have love. They have service.

They have endurance. All of the things that qualify one for reward. And they are growing.

They are doing better now than they did at the first. Unlike Ephesus who did well at the first and has tapered off and lost their first love, this group has gone forward. And when I say group, once again we have the singular of you here.

And it is speaking to individuals in the church. It is speaking to the pastor. It is speaking to each individual believer.

It is in the singular. So you would think, well, he will just slip right into the reward mode here. He will say, because you are an overcomer, so I am going to give you X, Y, and Z. But nevertheless, verse 20, I have a few things against you because you allow that woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess to teach and to seduce my servants to commit Pornusai and to eat things offered to idols.

Now we just had this same combination of things being taught in Pergamos. But if you look closely, you will see that the order is reversed. In Pergamos it was eating things sacrificed to idols and Pornusai.

Generally, you can assume that the thing mentioned first is the greater problem. So in Pergamos, the greater problem was the permissiveness, the laxity, the compromise, the syncretism and combining of and tolerating of and allowing unwholesome, unhealthy, godless things into the church. Here, it is the Pornusai that is mentioned first, which has the idea of disloyalty, of disaffection.

There are disaffected people. He says, look, I know that many of you are excelling in all of these things. Your last works are greater than the first.

You have love, you have faith, you have service, you have endurance and you are on a great path here. But, he doesn't say you engage in Pornusai. He doesn't say you eat things offered to idols.

He says you tolerate those who do. And you allow this woman, Jezebel, who is otherwise unknown. We don't know her real name.

Obviously, her name was not actually Jezebel. It was like somebody standing up and saying, Hi there, my name is Judas. Or, Hello there, my name is Herod.

People don't name people after bad examples in the scripture, typically. But, that woman Jezebel, she is Jezebel. Why is Jezebel mentioned in this context? Well, it is not hard to document.

If you go back to 1 Kings chapter 16 and verse 31, it came about as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that he married Jezebel, talking about Ahab, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, and went to serve Baal and worshiped him. Ahab married Jezebel and fell right into her cult worship of Baal. And he came back and erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria.

Ahab also made the Asherah. Thus, Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him. And that is saying a lot, because he had some pretty notorious predecessors on the throne.

But, nobody provoked the anger of the Lord like Ahab. And what was his primary sin? He led Israel into idolatry. He went outside Israel, married outside of Israel, and brought it all in and set it up right in the heart of the land.

You find similarly in 1 Kings 21, verses 25 and 26, another notation of this failure. Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife incited him. He acted very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Lord cast out before the sons of Israel.

God purged the land with the battles that David fought. The Amorites are the previous inheritance, like the Canaanites. They were purged out of the land.

Ahab went out and brought them all back in. But what is the picture in our day? When we come to faith in Jesus Christ and we are freed from the power of sin, that sounds great in academic terms or theological terms, but what is the power of sin? What is it in practical terms that we get freed from? When we are unsaved, we can do nothing but either live to please ourselves or live to please other people, or a combination of the two. There isn't anybody else to please.

You might have a few Wicca people who say they want to please Satan. But generally speaking, we either live a self-centered life or we live a people-centered life where we do nothing but try to gain the approval of people, to please people, to get their imprimatur of, we want their white stone, we want their new name. We are freed from that and we are enabled, we are set loose in a place where we can live an objective life instead of a subjective life.

We don't have to have our eyes on circumstances. We don't have to have our eyes on people and we don't have to have our eyes on ourselves. What a horrible thing to be set free and to have those sources of bondage and sources of temptation and pressure and distraction and disruption and then to voluntarily go and recruit them and bring them right back in.

That is what the modern church has done. You look at denominational Christianity today and it is

designed for subjectivity. It is designed to make people concentrate on themselves and their problems.

It is designed to make people dependent on the approval of the group and on the acceptance of the group and come back to our church because we love you and we accept you and we stand up and shake hands with you and we ask you how you are and we call on you and we fawn over you and we cater to your whims and we come and sit and hold your hand. Which is a perversion of the genuine love and genuine concern and genuine fellowship that can be had in Christ. None of those things are intrinsically evil.

They become evil when they are a substitute for Holy Spirit inspired godly fellowship and they are offered as a substitute. You may not be interested in God but be interested in us. We may not be interested in you on your own but we are interested in you because you are another warm body that we can count and claim as our own and we don't want to lose you.

We don't want to lose you to another church. We don't want you to go away and reduce our numbers and that sort of thing. People make their numbers a criteria of success and impact on people a criteria of success.

Tony Robbins has had a bigger impact on people than most churches but I have no idea because there is no spiritual dynamic in Tony Robbins or the power of positive thinking or Dale Carnegie how to win friends and influence people. Lots of people have an impact. Impact is not a measure of God's approval.

The church has been sucked into the idea that if we can show how people's lives have changed, people's circumstances have changed, that this in and of itself is a measure of success. It is not. It is a perversion and we have gone outside the land and we have brought in the idols of the Amorites into the church and made them our own.

We fall down and worship at the feet of that form of success. My particular denominational background in the Baptist church, it would be hard to find a Baptist church that doesn't count its baptisms and doesn't count the number of people who come down the aisle and use that as a measure of success. How many new members did we get? How many transferred their letter? How many came by statement of faith? How many did we baptize? How many walked the aisle last Sunday? If a pastor gives an appeal at the end and there is not a very big response, he is disappointed.

He goes and has a powwow and says, what can we do? We are not having an impact. We have brought in the idols of the Amorites and we can do this individually. Remember, this is a singular you.

You have tolerated in your circle, in your presence, in your fellowship, people who use these false standards. People who fall down and worship at these false idols. And what does it do? You

tolerate people who instigate this.

The Christian church today falls under this condemnation because we have people whose books go on the Christian book racks, whose videos go on Christian television, whose ministries are touted and cited and put on radio and put in the media and who are quoted and invited to speak in individual churches. Not only do we not identify their error, but we praise and laud and honor them and their message. In fact, let me just read you something.

Not to pick on any one group, but I don't think anybody knows about the Center for Biblical Counseling in Forest, Virginia. But I got this in the mail. It was sent to Sam Hall Grace and Truth Bible Church.

And it's got a list of people here. There are eight people pictured on the front of it. And it's called, Caring for People God's Way.

It is a seminar. It's a certificate program in biblical counseling. Nearly 40,000 individuals and churches enrolled.

\$300 limited scholarship enclosed. Had to send it in by July, so it's already come and gone. Solid training.

A greater understanding of issues facing men and women. Imagine the confidence, encouragement and hope that will be gained through a better knowledge of the issues men and women struggle with in today's complex world. And as you read through this, how many pages does this have? This is like a 20 page little catalog here.

We are so encouraged by the great response to Caring for People God's Way. It is touching, impacting and making a difference in the lives of hurting people in a hurting world. With nearly 40,000 students enrolled, this program is helping to educate and equip a community of helpers to offer careful biblical encouragement, direction, hope and personal growth.

Now how can it be wrong if it is offering biblical encouragement? But as you read through this and look at the curriculum, it talks about helping others to find significance in life. Helping others to find significance in life. What does that mean? Are we going to have a bible class? Or are we going to talk about, well what is your particular area of enthusiasm? Bringing people into God's presence.

I hate to shock you, but you are already in God's presence. You don't have to be brought into God's presence. You just saw Christ with the eyes like a flame of fire.

Where did you go that you are not in the presence of God? But this is the worship experience, the emotional high, bringing people to a real happy place. How to help people change. Do you need my help to change? Do I need your help to change? The answer to that question is no.

What does the bible say transforms and renews the mind? It is not fellowship. Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is, because then they don't change. It is encouragement, the love and good works that comes from fellowship.

But you do not change in the presence of people. You change in the fiery furnace of God's testing and God's strengthening through the word. Heart matters, repentance and godly sorrow.

This is going back and digging up your old sins and feeling sorry enough for them that you have a catharsis. Forgiveness, letting go of the past and of pain. Freedom in Christ, life in Abba's arms.

That is kind of a strange thing to mix because Abba is the father and Christ is the son. Marriage, keeping the love alive. Guilt, love's unseen enemy.

Great sex, a biblical perspective. Hope focused marriage counseling. Divorce recovery, starting over again.

Caught in the middle, children and divorce. What would Jesus think and do? Understanding the way of Christ. Ethical and legal issues, etc.

etc. etc. There are page after page after page of these things.

We believe that they have a statement of doctrinal faith here. The human nature derives from two historical persons, male and female, created in God's image, etc. You just would have to read this to believe it.

It sounds great. It talks about God all the way through. It has a nice doctrinal statement, but it is anthropocentric.

We can improve if we study our problems more thoroughly. Let's get in and shovel through the garbage in the city dump and that will help us live a better life in our home. We sent the garbage out because it is trash.

We put the trash in the container. The city comes and picks it up and takes it to the dump and it goes away. You find the trash, you put it in the trash can and you let the city haul it away.

You don't say, you know, I can learn more about myself by going down to the dump and picking through my trash. But that is what a lot of counseling does. If we analyze your trash, we can help you do a better job of throwing it away.

You don't need that, but it is a compromise with the world because it brings in the power of the world. Oh, understanding, scientific knowledge of how the mind works and how relationships work, that is the answer. The owner's manual for the human soul is right here in front of us right now.

It seems to me that for 6,000 years, believers have learned and grown and come to the place of approval in God's plan. They didn't have a psychologist and they didn't have an early morning breakfast meeting for accountability. They had God's word and God's spirit and that is all it required.

To say that we are somehow tested in a new and unique way beyond what we are able to bear unless we get a bunch of psychology is to bring the idol in from the Amorites and set it up and say, well, if we just pay attention to this and think about this, this will help us. We can add this to our understanding of the Bible. What great insight! I will quote a scripture here about godly marriages and then I am going to go into marriage counseling based on a bunch of human, secular psychology.

It is very unpopular and politically incorrect to point out what a travesty this is, but that is what it is. To teach and seduce my servants to commit disloyalty. Because if you start putting your faith in what Dr. Phil says or you start putting your faith in what some Christian psychologist says, what Minner says or what Meier says or what any of these others say and what they tell you and the insights they give you, oh well you had problems with your parents when you were young and that is your whole problem.

That is not the problem. You cannot blame any other person for mental attitude sins. It is a matter of faith.

Faith purges. It is like David did not have to catalog what kind of enemy he was fighting. All he had to do was pick up the rock and put it in the sling and Goliath fell.

He did not have to know Goliath's family history. He did not have to go back and study how did the genes come across on the ark. All he had to do was take one of the five smooth stones, put it in the sling and let fly.

He was a man of faith and God slaughtered his enemies. You do not have to understand your enemy to kill him. You do not have to empathize and send money to his widow and do a bunch of other strange things to purge your guilt.

Just kill him. Slay the enemy. But we do not like to hear about the gentle Jesus slaying things.

Look at verse 23. Jezebel had offspring with her illicit behavior. This is in the world of ideas.

This has spawned things. You have the Jabez thing and it has spawned its own little offspring. You have the Experiencing God thing and now there are sequels and subsequent programs.

Mr. Blackaby has a whole fresh thing sweeping through the nation now. Well, this is Experiencing God 2, the sequel. It spawns offspring because people buy the first one and they go back for seconds.

What does Jesus say? I will kill her children with death. I will kill her children with death. This is when people buy into this and take those ideas and run with them and create their own little offshoots.

Jesus says, it is going to be destroyed. It is going to be killed with death. You just cannot get much more explicit than that.

All of the churches shall know that I am he who searches the minds and the hearts. You can wrap it in holy language. You can quote scripture right and left.

But if you are using human energy and human standards and human ideas and thinking that you are going to gild the lily and you are going to improve the Christian faith with your scientific insights and your wonderful additions and accretions, why don't you just go to Bethlehem and build a great big gothic over gilded church on top of the site of the nativity. Why don't you go to Jerusalem and every spot where Jesus ever did anything, build a big gaudy ugly church on top of it? Because that is what man does. That is our nature.

We think, we can improve on this. Why go look at the birthplace of Jesus and just appreciate the spot? Let's add to it. We can make this better.

We can gild it and put in an altar and marble and paintings and sculptures and it is gaudy and overblown and it looks like some of the sets on TVN. That is because that is what we do. We cannot leave anything alone.

We cannot leave it in the simplicity of God. We have to put our efforts into it and I promise you that there is going to be so hot a heat coming from the wood hay and stubble fire that we are all going to have to take a few steps back and pray God that it is not our lives that go up in that smoke. What does he say here? Jezebel, you tolerate her presence.

You don't say who she is. You don't identify her. You don't call her for what she is doing.

You don't do the politically incorrect thing and say, you know what? What you are teaching is wrong. That is evil. You are promoting Satan inspired ideas.

You are pulling in the idols of the Amorites just like the original Jezebel. It is not an easy thing to stand up and say. People resist it.

They don't like it. They don't want to hear criticism. None of us likes hearing criticism or none of us likes being told what we are doing is wrong.

Especially if we have wrapped ourselves in the Christian flag and we have said, oh, but I have verses for this. We study the Bible. We pray.

We lay holy hands on one another. Error is not going to have a great big blinking neon sign in red

letters saying, error, error, I am wrong, I am wrong. Everyone is going to think an error is right.

It takes discernment and it takes application of the word of God. But we have to do that because if we sit calmly by and we don't participate, we just say, well, let's live and let live. Can't we all be brothers and let's have the ecumenical spirit? The judgment of God is coming to Thyatira because you allow that woman Jezebel who calls herself a teacher and promulgator of truth.

Prophets said things and taught things that were not a part of the written record. Valid prophets gave fresh truth from God that wasn't yet reduced to writing. We have all of God's truth reduced to writing and that is why the prophetic gift has gone away.

But prophecy was forth telling of things that were not yet in the canon of scripture. She calls herself a prophetess. Well, what is she doing? She is putting something out as truth that is not true and saying it is from God.

That is what people do today. How many times have you heard people say, I had a word from God. God laid this on my heart.

God spoke to me. God said this and God said that. I cannot tell you the crawly feeling I get on the back of my neck when I hear someone say, God told me.

God said. That is calling yourself a prophet. You are saying you have got fresh revelation from God that you didn't get out of your Bible and that you are so special that God speaks to you so that you can communicate new truth to the church.

All I can say is I want to be well away on the day of judgment. I will be paying for my own things but I am not going to be anywhere near that. You tolerate, you allow that woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess to teach and seduce my servants.

How do you let someone be taught and be lured away? You don't call a spade a spade. You don't point out from the word of God where the error is. It is not a popular thing to do and you take heat for it but you have to point out in the Christian church where error is.

If you just say, maybe you will grow out of that or I will pray for you and you don't help people who are weaker in the faith or younger in the faith to see the error of popular alternatives to the word of God, you bear guilt. That is the problem in this church. It isn't that they participate but they have failed to call out Jezebel for the false liar that she is.

And notice, she herself is a believer. I gave her time to repent to perform metanoeo of her disloyalty. She owes loyalty to God because she is a believer but she has strayed.

She gets a high out of being the big center of attention. You see some women teachers on Christian television today and they have a very obvious joy in strutting back and forth on the stage and making pronouncements and listening to people laugh at their jokes and idolize them

and put them on a high pedestal and it is just Jezebel all over again. I am sorry but that is what it is.

I gave her time to change her mind about her disloyalty and she did not change her mind. There is grace before judgment and there is a point at which that grace ends and the door of opportunity closes and when you try to fall at the feet of Jesus all you are going to see is that shiny brass reflection of the eyes of fire. They are going to be looking at you from down there at the place of mercy just like they look at you from up high.

Indeed I will cast her into a sick bed. I have news for you here. You can cross out the word sick because that is an interpretive translation.

This is the word kline. It is where we get the word incline or recline. To incline or recline means to lay down.

This is the same kind of bed. It is often used for the people who were laid on pallets or who were carried to Jesus on a pallet or let down through the roof and that sort of thing. It is also the word that is used when he says two will be grinding in the field, one shall be taken in the other.

Two shall be lying in bed, kline, one shall be taken in bed. It is any kind of bed. Look at the context.

What is the context here? The sexual immorality metaphor for disloyalty. So what kind of a bed do you think this is? God says, look, I will cast her into a bed and those who commit adultery with her, you don't go to a hospital and make out with somebody in a hospital bed. It has happened, but typically this is the, Jesus says, I am going to put her in a bed, I am going to make the opportunity available and I am going to see who fornicates with her.

It is a test. I am going to let her endure, I am going to let her go on. I have often wondered, why doesn't God just strike people dead when they start speaking perverse things and blaspheme and lead people astray.

Why doesn't God just, oh, sorry to read that somebody had a terrible car accident on the way out of the stadium and they are no more. God leaves them there. Why? For the very same reason that he is going to loose Satan at the end of the millennial kingdom.

If you are of a mind to be seduced and be carried away because your faith is weak and your interest in the things of God is apathetic and indifferent, then this is going to out you. God will leave someone there. Why didn't God slay the Moabites? He is slaying the armies of Israel overnight.

Remember when they went out the next morning and 186,000 were dead outside. The lepers went out looking for food and found that the whole army had vanished and here were all their tents abandoned. God could have gotten rid of the Moabites in Balaam's day.

God could have gotten rid of the Midianites, but he didn't. He let them come in with their seductive ploys and those 24,000 were purged out of the nation of Israel as a result. Jesus says, I am going to cast her into a bed.

She is not just going to stand up and teach seductive things. I am going to throw her in her bed and we will see who fornicates with her. Those who do are going into great philipsis unless they change their mind about what they are doing.

Sometimes people who are teetering on the brink have to go into error to be confronted and to realize what a bad thing it is. You can be going along and not really see consequences and not really see results. So God says, I will let you go down this road.

I will give you over. Remember Romans chapter 1? When they knew him as God they did not glorify him, they were not thankful and he gave them over to the things that they desired. Once you get into that and you experience the misery and the emptiness and the fruitlessness of it, you have a choice.

You can change your mind and reverse course and never go down that road again or you can continue and go out on the sin of death. So he says, I will let you fill up the cup of your iniquities here and see if you ever come to a point of changing your mind or not. These people that are in the area.

I will kill her children with death and all the churches shall know that I am he who searches the minds and hearts. Those flame of fire eyes are looking at you and they are looking at me. Why do we do what we do? Are we committing idolatry? Are we coveting the things that the world has to offer? Are we getting occupied with prosperity? Are we getting occupied with opportunities and ambitions that are part of this life and not of the next? I will give each one of you according to your works.

Each one of you is going to be individually evaluated, not on the basis of the group you belong to, not the family you came from. What are you doing with what you have been given? Now to you I say and we are not going to be able to finish the rest of this letter so I will stop at this point. But there is a lot of great content yet to go in this letter to Thyatira.

But we need to stop and think. Have we set up idols? Have we brought the Amorite idols right back in after God went to so much trouble to purge them out? Have we compromised? Have we allowed in some area of our life the standards of the world and the power of the world and the thinking of the world to distract us and deflect us and take away our confidence in what God has provided and what God has said in His Word? There are a dozen different ways that we can do this without even thinking, without even realizing. And unless we stop and examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith, we can be tolerating the presence.

We can be unconsciously absorbing the content of this nefarious, compromising teaching that comes from the source of believers. This is not Tony Robbins. This is not L. Ron Hubbard and Dianetics.

This is inside the church. And if we tolerate it, if we don't identify it and purge it, we are going to suffer along with those who promulgate it. It is a powerful warning.

It is set at the very center of these letters because it is one of the most important things. This is one of the strongest commendations that any church receives of the seven. But what is their Achilles heel? It is the teaching of Balaam.

It is the stumbling block. You can be seduced away by appeal to the things that fulfill desires in the heart. The appealing things, the things that make sense, the things that make us feel good, seduces us away from the pure milk of the Word and those foundational things that we know from the teaching of the Holy Spirit in our souls.

We are going to pause at this point and we will pick up in verse 24 next time. Father, we thank you for the privilege of studying your Word. We thank you for your perfect provision for all of our needs.

We thank you for the unlimited power that is available to us through your Word and through your Spirit. We pray that we will learn and grow in our ability to avail ourselves of that grace and of that power so that we can live our lives heartily as unto you, not unto men, and that we will be in all things well-pleasing in your sight. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.