

02-09-18b Revelation

We pick up our study now in Revelation chapter 2 and verse 24. This is the concluding section of the letter to the church at Thyatira. Jesus said that, To the angel of the church, to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine.

And have is the same word that's used for hold. It's echo, to have or to hold. Who do not hold to this doctrine is the idea.

This teaching, we can ask ourselves the question, why doesn't God just, in fact I had somebody ask me this earlier in the week in a completely different context. You have somebody coming in and teaching blatant error. Why doesn't God just strike them down? How can God allow somebody to come in and teach heresy? And you can see them leading people astray.

Why doesn't God put a stop to it? It is because each of us as believers has everything we need to sense the difference between truth and error. We choose to pursue the truth or we choose to accept a substitute. Every believer does so.

I've told you this story before but it's been a little while so I'll tell you again. But when I was in seminary up in Tulsa, at that time we were all young men. There was a young man who was a couple of years ahead of me at Tulsa Seminary.

He graduated. He had come from a particular denomination. And he really had, as they say, they talk about people having a heart for the lost.

Well, he had a heart for the people in his denomination. He had grown up in that church. He loved that church.

He loved the people who were a part of his home church. And so when he graduated, and Tulsa Seminary was the Tulsa Seminary of Biblical Languages, and it was a really conservative, hardcore Bible doctrine, categorical, isagogical, exegetical teaching thing. And so he went through there and had all of the tools to really feed people from the Word of God.

And he said, I'm going to go back to my church and I'm going to pull the curtain aside and show them the wonderful, spectacular truths of God's Word. They're going to love it. And he went back, and he taught, and he explained, and he postulated, and he encouraged, and he exhorted, and he rebuked, and corrected, and instructed.

He just strutted and fretted his hour on the stage, and he came back to the president of Tulsa Seminary in tears. Literally in tears. And he said, I don't understand.

I have presented this. Is there something the matter with me? I've presented these wonderful truths of the Word of God, and I just can't get it across. People just don't catch the fire.

They don't catch the enthusiasm. They don't see what I see. They don't hear what I hear.

They don't love what I love in the Word of God. And it is, in my mind, and in my experience, it's a powerful illustration and reminder of the fact that people end up where they end up by choice. If people were hungry for the truth, they would not long remain in a church where the truth is not taught.

If they were thirsting and seeking as for silver and searching as for hidden treasure, they would not stay in a stagnant, minimum level type of church where they're just not getting fed. If you feel a sense of starvation in your soul, you will not long remain on that starvation diet. You will start moving around.

You will look until you find what you're looking for. There are huge numbers of people who go to churches and who find exactly what they're looking for. They find fellowship.

They find a mystical experience. They find entertainment. They find an activity schedule.

There's something going on down at the church every night of the week. They find something for their kids. They find a lonely hearts club.

They find a singles class for their age group. They find a place where they can assuage their feeling of guiltiness and of unwashedness. They can go down and have kind of a cathartic experience where they feel cleansed and renewed, and then they can go back and do their usual thing during the week.

People look for a lot of different things. These are the teachings of Jezebel to justify in your mind something other than the truth of God, and that's why you go. And we have to get used to the fact that most of us as believers are just like the Israelites generations ago who came out of Egypt.

They recognized God. They accepted His salvation, but they just weren't interested in the divine program, and they dropped in the wilderness all but to. I'll tell you something that's really interesting.

Turn with me back to the book of Exodus. I was thinking about this earlier, and I'm going to have to do a quick search here to tell you the passage I want to go to. But we want to go to the book of Exodus, and maybe you can find it.

You remember the story of Bezalel and Aholiab, the artisans that made many of the things for the tabernacle? It says the Spirit of God came upon them, and they were artificers and workmen. The Holy Spirit came on them, and they did all the beautiful, intricate design work. They wove the cherubim into the curtains, and they made the rings and the golden implements and the brass implements.

I'll let you look up the reference because I'm not finding it. But think about this. The Bible praises these men who were wise in their craft, and the Holy Spirit came and inspired them to create the beauties of the tabernacle.

It just struck me the other day. I was sitting there thinking about these great tabernacle craftsmen who put together the very fabric of the house of God, and none of them went into the land? None of those Holy Spirit-inspired workmen who did that fantastic work, none of them went in and took possession of the land? That really gave me pause for thought. It just sat me down in my chair.

I thought, you know, you can do the work of God. You can have a finished product that is there, that you did by means of the power of the Spirit, and yet not inherit. Something happened to Bezalel and Aholiab and the other tabernacle craftsmen.

I don't think it was that they just got too old and didn't last long enough, because Caleb lasted, Joshua lasted, and they were contemporaries of these men. You can do a lot of good that you can point to and say, there it is. There's the church I built.

There's the monument I left. There's the mission field that I labored in. Here are the fruits of my labors.

And it may be the Holy Spirit's work, and still not qualify for inheritance. It's a very sobering thought. Now to you I say, Revelation 2.24, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not hold this doctrine, this Jezebel doctrine, that is a substitute, that hooks into human desires.

It satisfies. There's a form of satisfaction. People end up where they end up because they're satisfied.

They like what they're getting. They like what they hear. There's a comfort level they reach.

And there are people who don't want to hear too much convicting truth out of the Word of God. There are people who don't want to sit through an expository sermon. There are people who don't want to examine where they stand before God.

They prefer the illusion of spiritual satisfaction. The Pharisees had a good thing going. They had a big community.

They looked at each other and patted each other on the back and said, well, we're not like the blind and the lame and the dumb and the deaf and these beggars in the streets. They stood on the street corners and prayed long prayers to God. They dropped big bags of money into the treasuries.

They canvassed the earth and made proselytes and trained them up in their traditions. They taught the Word of God. They memorized the Word of God.

They quoted the Word of God. They had a self-sustaining, self-admiring community going. And everybody in Israel thought they were holy.

They thought they were holy. They told each other, you're holy. It was a wonderful, comfortable environment.

They dressed in rich robes. They had plenty of sustenance. And where will they be in the resurrection? On the outside, watching the peasants from the north and the east and the south and the west come in and sit down at the table with Abraham and with Isaac and with Jacob.

They will find themselves cast out. Jesus told them to their face and even with that warning, so few of them ever figured it out. There were a few.

Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, there were a few that figured out what was going on, but most of them just could not hear it, could not see it. People end up where they want to be. Do not be discouraged if you speak the truth to someone in love and they don't change.

It's not your inadequacy. It's not your inability to communicate that leaves them where they are. It is their inability to change.

It is their inability to repent. That's why Jesus said, I'm going to leave Jezebel. And I mentioned this before, but it's worth mentioning again.

Why is Satan loosed at the end of the millennium? Why does God keep him in chains? He's already thrown the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire. Why didn't he throw Satan in with him? He reserves Satan. He puts him in the pit for a thousand years.

He puts him in the bottomless pit. He's got an angel with a lock and key. And then at the end of the millennium, what does God do? It's the most astonishing thing I've ever read in the Bible.

God lets Satan out of the bottomless pit. Opens up the door and says, come on out. And when he comes out, what does he find? There is a world full of people as innumerable as the sand of the sea ready to follow him, disgusted with the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ and with those who rule and reign with him, ready for an alternative, looking for something different.

Why? That's what they choose. It's the exercise of free will. We end up right where we want to be.

A lot of times we may not like the results, we may not like the consequences, but we choose what we want. To you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, do not hold this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, and he's sort of mocking them a little bit because they're calling it the deep things of God and they're really the deep things of Satan. I will put on you no other burden, just hold fast what you have until I come.

Hold fast. I could regale you with stories in warfare about units who held the line out of a body of 400 men, only three or four survived, but they hold the line. Hold fast what you have until I come.

Now, verse 26. He who overcomes and keeps my works until the end. This is *nikon* to overcome and *tereo* to keep, to guard.

Tereo means to watch over, to preserve something, to guard it and make sure nothing happens to it. And who guards or keeps my works until the end. To him I will give *exousia* over the nations.

Verse 27. And this is a quote from the Old Testament prophecy in Psalm 2, 8 and 9. Let's take a quick look at Psalm 2. Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh.

The Lord shall hold them in derision. Now, this doesn't mean that God is cruel and is cackling up in heaven about the destruction He's going to wreak, but it is laughable how much disregard people who gain power on earth have for the power of God. And you see this in science.

You see it in other religions. You see it in politics. You see it in the financial world where people who know in their heart that there is a God because God has revealed it through the Holy Spirit and through creation and through what may be seen.

Acts 14 talks about how you can look up in the sky and see the rainfall and see the food that is provided and know that there is a God. You can look up in the heavens. The heavens declare the glory of God.

The firmament shows forth its handiwork and people disregard it and don't care about it. And it is laughable. God holds them in derision and then He will speak to them in His wrath.

He will distress them in His deep displeasure. Yet I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree.

The Lord has said to me, You are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.

This is the inheritance that God has given to the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father has given this gift, this reward of inheritance, to the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, You shall break them with a rod of iron.

Now that is what the Masoretic Text says and your new King James may have a text note there. I'm not sure about the others. But this is one of the cases where the ancient versions like the Septuagint and the Syriac and the Latin Vulgate which have early witnesses to the text have a slightly different Hebrew verb here which is rule.

You will rule them with a rod of iron. You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. Now therefore be wise, O kings, and be instructed, you judges of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Then verse 12 says, Kiss the son lest he be angry and you perish in the way. That is a troubled text and one of these days I'll tell you what that really says.

It does not say kiss the son when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in him. So there is a discriminator, there's a differentiator among the rulers of the earth.

And by extension when you bring this into the realm of application, anyone who has influence, anyone who has authority or power in this life, it could be authority in the home, it could be authority in a business, it could be authority in a church or in a circle of acquaintances or within a family or any area where people hold sway over others. He says you had better acknowledge the hierarchy that God has created. You had better acknowledge the heavenly authority.

Otherwise God is going to hold you in derision. But specifically what we get out of Psalm 2 for our purposes is in verse 8 and 9. Ask of me and I will give the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your possession. You will rule them with a rod of iron.

You will dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. This is the promise of God the Father to God the Son. Well, we know from the New Testament, I don't have the reference for you, but he told the disciples all authority has been given me in heaven and on earth.

This is right before he leaves this world. He sent forth the apostles under that authority and he in turn can delegate that to whom he wills. And the rulership of the nations that has been given to him by the Father is going to be delegated to those whom the Lord Jesus Christ chooses.

And who is that going to be? Well, one category is right here in Revelation chapter 2 with the faithful of Thyatira. And he uses the very same language for these believers that God the Father used with him. He shall rule them with a rod of iron.

They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessel. Now, I mentioned this a little bit in the break, but you'll notice that there is this rod of iron and this dashing in pieces of the nations. If this is the millennial kingdom, and that's a first class condition, if and it's true, then why do we need a rod of iron? If everybody is perfect and it's all perfect environment and we're kind of back to the garden and there's no sin and no crime and all of that, why do you need a rod of iron to rule? Why can't you rule with a gentle shepherd's staff? Or why can't you walk with a garland of flowers in your hair and everyone will just follow? Why is it a rod of iron? The answer is, the iron is necessary and there are those who will have to be crushed.

There are those who will have to be dashed. What happens to a clay pot when you hit it with a rod of iron? It shatters. It is broken.

It is not what it was before you struck it. And this type of destruction, this type of crushing, is going to take place in the millennial kingdom. What does that tell us? There is going to be the presence of sin.

We know that there is going to be death. The Bible says the man who dies at the age of 100 will be considered to have died in his youth. He had much more life left, but he died.

Why did he die? There is going to be capital punishment in the millennium. There is going to be the cracking over the head, the dashing of the potter's vessel with the rod of iron. And as a side note, we have talked about this in the past, any time you find clay and any time you find pottery in the Word of God, it is without exception, as far as I know, it is always in the context of divine discipline.

When you go to Jeremiah and he goes to the potter's field, he goes to the house of the potter and the clay spoils in his hand and he has to make something different. You go to Romans chapter 9, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. Does the potter not have right over the clay? Any time you find potter and clay, it is in a context of discipline and judgment.

It is not happy times when you are talking about crushing the clay and making something else out of it and when you are smashing it. So, what do we know here? Part of the reason there needs to be a governmental structure, what is one of the functions of government? Law enforcement, capital punishment when necessary and that is going to be a feature of millennial government and the rulers that God appoints, that the Lord Jesus delegates authority to in these nations are going to have to know how to adjudicate and how to dispense justice and they cannot be subject to bribe, they cannot be subject to swaying or influence, they cannot be those who give in to self-gratification. Why would someone take a bribe? Because there is something more important to them than their principles.

Why would someone compromise the integrity of their office? Why would someone besmirch their reputation? Why would someone break their vows? Because something lures them, something outlures them and they have a weakness in the area of self-indulgence and that is their Achilles heel, that is what turns them. That is what happened to the angels who fell in Genesis chapter 6 and as I mentioned during the break, in the great chiasm, the great harmony

and symmetry of human history, you have in the pre-flood civilization mortal man being supervised and being judged by an immortal creation, by angelic judges. And when it says the Sons of God saw the daughters of men in Genesis 6, that is what it is talking about. The Sons of God are the Bnei Elohim, they are the angelic overseers who were present on earth in a male human form, just like the companions of God that visited Abraham, just like the same two that went and rescued Lot and his wife, just like the captain of the hosts of the Lord that appeared to Joshua and many other places in the Old Testament where you see the appearance, Gabriel who appeared in the Old Testament, Gabriel who appears in the New Testament to Mary, Michael the archangel. When they appear on the earth, appear in a male human form and these angels were in that form in such detail that they were capable of reproduction and they fell for the beauty of the daughters of men. God told them to come down and supervise and judge, but they were allured, they got into self-indulgence and self-gratification and they tried to wrap it up in morality, they took wives of all whom they chose. They tried to say, we will have a ceremony and make it all legal, but they made a deal with the fathers, they exchanged something, they paid a dowry to the human fathers and this is why mankind is complicit and shares guilt in that angelic failure of Genesis 6 because the men could have said, no, this is not God's plan, this is not God's design, this is unnatural. From the beginning God has said, let each reproduce after its kind, you are of a different kind than us and we don't cross-mix. Remember in the Law of Moses it said you won't mix, men don't wear women's clothes, women don't wear men's clothes, don't cross-breed your animals, don't admix things, and here was an admixture and it was a known principle and men were complicit because they got something desirable from the angels, whether it was technology or some special wisdom or something that the angels had access to, we don't know what it was, but they paid this dowry that the fathers couldn't resist and they gave their daughters in marriage to the angels who couldn't resist their beauty, just like when Eve looked at the tree and she saw that it was beautiful to look upon and good for food, Sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, that they were beautiful and they took, same verb as when Eve took the fruit, they took wives of all whom they chose. So in the same way in the pre-flood civilization you had immortal creation supervising and judging and ruling over mortal creation, we have the same thing in the Millennial kingdom where you have the resurrected saints who are ruling and reigning with Christ and you also have a mortal race of those who are going to have their chance to face the issue of Christ and to make their decision about God and His word and some of them are going to come to faith and others are not and those are going to be the tares that grow up amongst the wheat and that's the sheep and goats judgment that you have at the end of the Millennial kingdom. That's an often misunderstood judgment, but you can tell by the consequences when Jesus separates them at the end He says He will separate out of His kingdom all the things that defile and He's going to set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left.

He already knows who they are and He tells the goats to part into eternal fire. Well, nobody goes into eternal fire except the beast and false prophet until the end of the millennial kingdom. So we know that that judgment is at the end of the millennium and those people are the ones who have manifested their salvation or lack thereof by what they have done in the tribulation period.

There are going to be prisons, there are going to be people who can be visited because you're going to have a mortal component of humanity on the earth in the millennial kingdom and there are going to be those who are immortal, those who are raised, who are going to exercise the same judicial and governmental functions that the angels did in Genesis 6. So in the great

outside most bracket of history what corresponds to the Garden of Eden and the perfection and God walking in the cool of the day and so on. That's the kingdom of the Father. That's where you have God dwelling among men.

That's where you have true perfection. All sin has been eliminated. Everything that defiles has been cleared away.

And in the same way that you had a new heaven and earth in the days of Adam and Eve in the Garden, we're going to have a new heaven and earth in the kingdom of the Father. And it all exactly corresponds and it all centers that chiasm crosses at the cross. That's the great landmark center of human history.

He also says here, he says he shall rule them with a rod of iron. They should be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels as I also have received from my father and I will give him the morning star. Now this is a cryptic reference.

We don't exactly know what the morning star is. This has been called, some people think that this is the order of the morning star. It's like the Legion of Merit or the Navy Cross or some such thing.

That it's the name of a reward. That it's like a ribbon or a medal. What does the Bible say about the morning star? Well, you can go to 2 Peter 1.19. Peter says, we have the prophetic word made more sure to which you do well to pay attention like a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

Well, I'm not sure that was a whole lot of help, but let's stop and think about it. Jesus told his disciples back in John, the one who has my word and keeps it, he is the one who loves me and I and my father will come to him and make our home with him. The indwelling of God the Holy Spirit is automatic and permanent for every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ in this age.

The indwelling of the Lord Jesus Christ, however, is dependent upon learning his word, developing love for him, and manifesting that love by keeping his word. The one who has my word, you've got to have his word, have to have learned it, have to have listened to it, believed it, made it the object of your faith. The one who has, very same word we have here, hold fast what you have, it's echo.

The one who has my word and tereo, who keeps it, who obeys it, who lives by it, he is the one that loves me. That love, how do you manifest love for Christ? Learn his word and live by it, make it the object of faith, let that be your measuring stick, your guide, your criteria. He it is that loves me.

And the one that loves the Lord Jesus and manifests it in that way, he says, I will come and make my home with him. We're going to see in Revelation 3.20 when we get to that last letter, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice, hear my word, open the door, receive that word and live by it, I will come into him.

Indwelling of Jesus Christ. The indwelling of Jesus Christ is something that we can experience and we can enjoy in this life as we develop love and as we exercise faith and obedience. What is Peter talking about here? He says, You better pay attention to the prophetic word.

It's like a lamp shining in a dark place. Thy word, David said, is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. That lamp shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

This is euphemistic, this is illustrative, this is parabolic language Peter is using for church age believers hearing the word, holding the word, living by the word, and the indwelling of Jesus Christ. How do I know that's true? Revelation 22.16 I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David.

I am the bright morning star. Revelation 22.16 I am the bright and morning star. So, he shall rule them with a rod of iron.

They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessel. You are fulfilling Christ's destiny and Christ's role. You are sharing the inheritance of Christ in the millennial kingdom.

The very gift that God the Father gave his own dear son, his dear son, passes on to us. What a privilege, what an honor. Just as I have received from my Father, you are going to receive from me.

And, I will give him the morning star. You know what that is? That is the order of Jesus Christ. It's not just the order of the morning star.

It is, you are so like Christ, I'm going to give you this. You know, the purple heart has a picture of George Washington on it. This is, I can't think of a greater honor than to have the Lord Jesus Christ as your emblem.

That's what's on that ribbon. That's what's on that reward. It's the order of the morning star.

It's the order of Jesus Christ. You are so like him that you reflect him. And he says, I will give you my highest title, the morning star.

In the same way that I, that the Lord Jesus Christ comes into the heart of a believer and illuminates and is a lamp shining in a dark place, you're going to be the lamp to the world. You're going to be the lamp to the nation shining in a dark place. You in the Millennial Kingdom can perform the same function that the Lord Jesus Christ performs for us now.

Reflecting the glory of the Father. Communicating the truth of the Father. Emanating the fullness of deity in bodily form.

That's the privilege that some believers who learn how to be faithful and learn how to hold and keep what Christ has given, that's what we have the opportunity to do in the Millennial Kingdom. It's an amazing thing. Why do you think this reward is at the center, is at the center of the chiasm of these seven churches? This is church number four.

It's right in the middle. It's right at the center. It's the longest and most detailed letter.

Why? Because it stands in the place of the cross in human history. It stands in the place of Christ. And the reward here is the reward of Christ.

It's the reward of the morning star. There is no greater honor that Christ has received than the authority and rulership that God the Father gave Him. And to share that reward with Christ, there is no higher honor in the universe.

No angel is party. No angel is eligible for this reward. No Old Testament saint is eligible for this reward.

But you and I are eligible for this reward. All we have to do is see it. All we have to do is hold fast what we have until He comes.

Be faithful unto death. Hold fast what you have until I come. Well, it's a powerful thought.

It's a powerful reminder. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The ringing bell at the end of each of these letters.

If you have an ear, He doesn't say if you have faith so as to move mountains. He doesn't say if you're an apostle. He doesn't say if you're a martyr that got thrown to the lions in Rome.

To be qualified, to be eligible to pursue this reward, all you have to do is have an ear. If you have an ear and you hear what the Spirit says to the churches, if you recognize the potential, if you recognize the opportunity, it's there. It's available.

And we don't have to go to far-flung mission fields. We don't have to spill our blood. It's in the daily walk of life.

It's such an irony that the greatest rewards and the most profound blessings mind can imagine hinge on how we do the most menial, mundane, ordinary tasks of life. It is so typical of God that He uses the foolish things to confound the wise. He uses the weak things of the world to manifest His strength.

And in our weak ways, in our ordinary days, in our contending with traffic and handling laundry and fixing things that break and working with our children and working with each other and just the normal, everyday commonplaces of our existence is the potential for rewards that angels would give their eye teeth. If angels have eye teeth, they would give them to be in that place. No angel has ever been offered the morning star.

No angel has been offered the rulership of the nations the way we are. And so many of us are just oblivious to what Christ has made us eligible for and what He has brought to us through His faithfulness and His death on the cross. So it's something to meditate on.

It's something to think about. Next time when we meet, we're going to look at the letter that the Lord Jesus Christ sent to the angel of the church in Sardis. We'll see what it means when He mentions the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

That's what we'll pick up next time. Father, we thank You for the privilege of studying Your Word together. We thank You for Your grace.

We are so completely without merit. We are undeserving in every way. We are hopeless and helpless and useless apart from Your grace.

And yet You have raised us up and caused us to stand. You have dressed us in a white robe. You have raised us above the angelic hosts.

You have made us part of the royal family. We are brothers of Christ. We share His sonship.

We share His priesthood. We share His election and His destiny. We have been accorded such a wonderful place in Your plan.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will keep us ever mindful of that opportunity. Which also creates great responsibility on our part to hear and to heed Your Word. To live in its light and to fulfill the calling with which we have been called.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.