

Rev 25-10-29a

Greetings, it is Wednesday night here at Grace & Truth Bible Church. It's the 29th of October, 2025. We are working in the book of Revelation, looking at the seven churches.

We are at the center of the chiasm. Very fascinating. This is rich and deep, as you would expect.

We are endeavoring to, one of the buzzwords of this day we live in is unpack. We are unpacking a very rich and meaningful section of the word of God. These red letter words from the Lord Jesus to us as represented by these seven churches.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship this evening and we'll get started. Father, it is such a privilege to recognize that we are strangers and pilgrims on this earth and in this land and in this culture and civilization. We sojourn in a territory that is full of blessing and opportunity for us as well as challenge and testing.

Yet we know that it is all in preparation for our future and final home in your presence with the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that as we study this portion of the word together, the revelation that you gave to your son, the Lord Jesus, our savior, that it will be meaningful, that the Holy Spirit will find us willing and able to partake of this wonderful truth in a way that will strengthen us by the renewing of our minds, will transform us and enable us to understand your good and acceptable and perfect will both now and in the ages to come. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

We have seen Ephesus, we have seen Smyrna, we have seen Pergamos, the first three churches, all of whom have their overcomer promise following the exhortation to listen to what the Spirit has to say to the churches. Beginning at the fourth church, much like the fourth oracle of Balaam, there is a change. And this one to Pergamos is concluded and the one to Thyatira begins.

And when Jesus speaks to Thyatira, he says in verse 18 of chapter two, these things says the son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and his feet like fine brass. This is the Lord Jesus in deity mode. He is the son of God here, not the son of man.

He is equipped with eyes that flame like fire and feet like burnished brass. This is symbolic of judgment. Fire represents judgment, both Old Testament and new, whether it is the fire that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah, the fire at the judgment seat of Christ that will burn up the wood, hay and stubble.

Throughout scripture, even in the Levitical system, the implements that managed the fire on the altar were made of brass. So the only place in the book of Revelation where Jesus is specifically named and he names himself the son of God, it is powerful, it is pertinent, it is at the center of this chiasm. This is the longest letter.

And we have been looking at the totality of the positive promises made by God. If you add in

the negative ones, I will come to you quickly and move your lampstand out of its place and so on. You can add a few more, but we choose to accentuate the positive.

We can't eliminate the negative, but we can certainly decide that we wanna be on the positive side of these promises. And we concluded by looking at the hidden manna and we saw how this is a reflection of those who recognize the grace of God and appreciate the gift of God. It may not always be as flavorful as the leeks and garlicks of Egypt, but it is God's provision and God's sustenance.

I personally think that those who came to it with an attitude of thanksgiving and reverence for God found it a lot more tasty than those who simply gathered it because there was nothing else. And they spent their time saying, if only wouldn't some fried onions go great with this. So we see that the hidden manna is only going to be appreciated by those who love manna.

And Jesus pictures himself as the bread of life. Many of these overcomer promises reflect either directly or indirectly the person of the Lord Jesus. He bore our sins in his body on the tree of death, but those in Ephesus who overcome have the right to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the garden of God.

And just a side note on that tree of life, we went to Revelation 22 to see this tree. You look at the river of life beginning at the start of the chapter there. John has showed a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal proceeding from the throne of God and of the lamb in the middle of its street.

And on either side of the river is the tree of life, which bore 12 fruits, each tree yielding its fruit. What is the promise to Ephesus? I will grant to eat of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. This is an allusion, I think, to the new Jerusalem, to what will be fulsomely detailed here in this final chapter of the book.

And what you find is that there is the opportunity for those who come to the kingdom of the father to partake of the river of life, partake of the river of life. And this is offered freely. You can drink freely.

Look at the 14th verse. Blessed are those who do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates of the city. Access to the tree of life is conditioned on obedience, faithfulness.

This is well past the great white throne judgment and so on. We are now in the kingdom of the father and within the capital city. Blessed are those who do his commandments.

And we'll deal with this textual issue here where some texts read, wash their robes. We'll deal with it when we get there. Outside are dogs, sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, whoever loves and practices a lie.

We have seen over and over again in recent sessions, have we not, that the doctrine of the

Nicolaitans, the doctrine of Balaam, the teaching of Jezebel is all about idolatry and sexual immorality. And those who are seduced by these and overcome by them, instead of being overcomers will be outside. They do not have the right to the tree of life, which tells us that the tree of life is not a synonym for eternal life.

This is a privilege. It is a gift. It is a grant from the Lord Jesus to those who are faithful, to those who overcome.

Look at verse 17, the spirit and the bride say, come, let him who hears say, come, and let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely. Now we know from Ezekiel chapter 47 and Revelation 22 here, that the river of life originates at the throne of God.

You go to Ezekiel 47, you can turn there, or I can just read it to you. The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple. I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east.

The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. He then brought me out through the north gate, led me around outside to the outer gate facing east. The water was trickling from the south side.

He measured it. He goes a thousand cubits. It's deeper, it's knee deep, it's waist deep.

It's a river that Ezekiel cannot cross. And he says, son of man, do you see this? And this is emblematic of this river of life. Of course, Ezekiel is talking about the millennial temple, but in the kingdom of the father, there is no temple because the father and the son and those who are faithful are united in worship in the new Jerusalem.

And there is no more curse. They will see his face. His name will be on their foreheads.

I'm reading from verse three and four of Revelation 22. There's no night there. They need no lamp, no light of the sun.

The Lord God gives them light. They will reign forever and ever. But the point I'm emphasizing here is access to and partaking of the tree of life in the paradise in the new Jerusalem is a grant.

It is a gift and a blessing for those who qualify by obedience. And yet the water of life in verse 17 whoever desires it, let him take the water of life freely. Jesus stood up on the last day, great day of the feast and said, oh, he who is thirsty, let him come to the waters and drink and out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

And this represents eternal life, life that's not only eternal in its duration, but eternal in its quality. And there is wonderful blessing in the kingdom of the son and the kingdom of the father that follows afterward. But access to the river of life is free.

Anyone who wants to can go and drink. Access to the tree of life is restricted. And that's why we have it not only here in verse 14 of chapter 22, but we saw it in Revelation chapter two as an

overcomer promise to Ephesus in verse seven.

Each of these partakes of an aspect of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of the water of life. Those who are thirsty and come and drink out of them will flow rivers of living water, water of life.

So it is a metaphorical representation of fellowship and association with and reflection of the Lord Jesus. The second overcomer promise we saw to Smyrna, not being hurt by the second death. This is introduced by the Lord Jesus who was dead and has come to life.

And we are partaking of life in the Lord Jesus rather than death or the second death. We participate not just in being raised from the dead and existing again and existing forever, but this is resurrection to a life of fullness and opportunity. When you come to this third church in Pergamos, the hidden manna, Jesus is the bread of life.

You remember John chapter seven, eat my flesh and drink my blood and so on. I am the bread of life that comes from heaven, comes from the father. Also the white stone and on the stone, a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives it.

And this is a fascinating promise because you have the Lord Jesus granting this. I will give it to him. And I looked this up because I had heard that it might just be sort of a old wives' tale or something that was made up from whole cloth.

But there really was a pass in the ancient Roman world that would be given, that would allow you access into the games or into places where banquets were being served and food was made available. And this white stone, it was also sometimes used as a sign of acquittal. If someone was gonna hold a criminal charge against you, you could flash the white stone and say, sorry, I've been to court and I've been acquitted.

I am innocent as far as the law is concerned. And this white stone would signify that. And this is a real thing.

It's quoted by several ancient authorities. But what is unique here and is not given in the ancient Roman records is the name that is written on it. And this reminds me of guarantees.

There are some things you can buy or services you can purchase. And if you get gutters, if you get the leaf guard gutter system or whatever, they say this is a lifetime warranty and it stays with the house. If you sell your house, this warranty is transferable to the next owner.

There are certain things that the guarantee follows the item. Others are non-transferable. It is only for you.

This white stone has a name that only you and the Lord Jesus know. This is better than 256-bit encryption in terms of security. This is better than SSL, Secure Socket Layer Transport in the world of connectivity and the internet.

This is better than RFID or a barcode or anything else you could name. This is better than the mark of the beast that will be upcoming because the Lord Jesus gives this stone and it is imprinted with a name that only you and I know. I wish if more of us were computer people, I would go into the exchange factors for security that go on in the computer world where there are tokens that are passed and you establish a secure connection because there is something unique on one end that only matches something unique on the other end.

That's what this is. It is the highest, this is divine security. It's the highest security you can imagine.

This is a non-transferable privilege. And this is access, I think, to the New Jerusalem. This is access to where the manna, the hidden manna is stored.

And I think these may be anything from advanced Bible classes and sitting in on what might otherwise be secure and classified briefings for what God is going to be doing in the future and participation of those who are qualified and faithful and who know how to keep their own counsel and not talk out of school and talk out of turn. But this speaks of tremendous privilege. How real is it to us to want to qualify for these to the extent that we want to be in that chosen few? Wouldn't you love to be Peter, James, and John going in where the other disciples are not allowed to come and observe? Transfiguration, resurrection, and so on.

That's what this speaks of. This is a pass into restricted access and special areas. And we would want that because we love the manna.

We love to understand more about God and his character. So then you come to Thyatira where we're currently concentrated, the son of God, his eyes are flames of fire, his feet are burnished brass from head to toe. He is a reflection of purity, righteousness, and justice.

So we've already examined Jezebel and once again, whether you're looking at the Nicolaitans, whether you're looking at Balaam, those are closely identified. Much as we will see Abaddon and Apollyon when we get to chapter nine of Revelation, this is an Old Testament and a New Testament term for the same idea. Balaam and Nicolaitan are Old Testament and New Testament terms for the same idea.

And the doctrine of Jezebel tells us not that the doctrine has changed, but the source, the way it is implemented. Balaam via Balak was an external pressure that seduced the men of Israel and caused them to sin, the Moabite women and the Midianite good-looking gals and so on. It was seduction that was engineered from the outside, designed to undercut and disqualify Israel from the inevitable blessings that were pronounced by Balaam in his seven-fold oracle.

The first four in particular are blessings on Israel. The latter three are more consequences for Israel's enemies. Here, Jezebel is sourcing a similar set of doctrines sexual immorality and idolatry.

You rely on something, you look to something else for wisdom, you prioritize something, that's

what idolatry is and eating that sacrifice to idols, eating means fellowship, eating from the tree of life implies fellowship in the closest possible terms with the Father and the Lord Jesus and those who are in the New Jerusalem. Here, eating things, sacrifice to idols, this isn't what Paul talks about in Corinthians with reference to what you can buy in the marketplace that was formerly at the temple. Paul says, it's fine if you wanna buy that food, it doesn't associate you with the banquet and with idolaters.

The emphasis in both Pergamos and Thyatira is tolerating those who embrace these things and allow them to speak and allow them to seduce others. And this is why you have, he who has the sharp sword in verse 12 in Pergamos, this sharp sword is of course the word of God, but what does it do? How does Jesus employ this edge? It is separation, it is cleaving, it is dividing asunder something. The word of God divides asunder, separates one thing from another, the soul from the spirit, the joints from the marrow, the thoughts and intents of the heart are divided.

But here specifically, there needs to be separation. And Jesus says, you have those who hold the doctrine of Balaam in verse 14, those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans in verse 15, you have those there and they shouldn't be there. You need to cleave that relationship and separate them out, purge them out.

You remember Jesus talked about, he didn't come to bring peace but a sword and what does that sword do? It divides households because it is so essential. You cannot be a faithful disciple, you cannot be obedient to the words of the Lord Jesus, you cannot be faithful and an overcomer without cleaving apart. You think of the plucking out of the eye and the cutting off of the hand, this can be painful.

It can tempt us to be sorrowful, but what do we love more? This thing that is detrimental, this thing that is proscribed, that is condemned, that is a defiling and corrupting influence or do we love the Lord Jesus? That's the sword, he who has the two edged sword. We need to be associated with the Lord Jesus and he will cleave out just as he sends the angels to pluck out of his kingdom all things that offend. We need to pluck out of our own personal kingdom, those things which offend and separate from them.

This is very emphatic. Nicolaitans, Balaam, Jezebel, toleration, Ephesus does a good job, they have sent these people away. You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, I hate them too.

And you have identified false prophets and you have purged them out, you've done well. You have issues in a different area. It's you've done good in getting rid of the bad but you're not doing enough to cultivate love for God and for one another, your first, your foremost love.

And this is the difference between having your doctrine straight and having your practical application in full force. There is a life of understanding and of knowing what is right and wrong. And then there is our devotional life, our appreciation life, our genuine gratitude and desire to be in the presence of God himself.

So that's the problem in Ephesus, way worse than that by the time you get to Pergamos. So if you value the things of God, you're gonna be given the white stone with your special name on it that you and you alone can use for inner access, hidden manna, going to privileged places to see privileged things. And why are they privileges? Not because they do something beneficial for us, it's because we gain additional access and insight into the Lord we love and into the father we worship and into his future plans and purposes.

He's not idle, it isn't gonna be a freeze and a painting of the peaceable kingdom in the ages to come. God is gonna be just as active in the future as he has been up to this point. And that's a lot of activity.

So we want to be a part of that. And we want to have a pass that is a security badge and the red light on the door turns green and the security guard opens it and in we go. And it is a place of privilege and opportunity and appreciation and we'll be so thankful for it.

In Thyatira, it's a picture of judgment when the Lord Jesus introduces himself. So Jezebel is gonna be cast, it says in verse 22, into a sick bed. This is just the word kline, K-L-I-N-E.

This is where we get the word recline. I was climbed once, I'm going to recline. I'm going to, it's just the word for bed.

When you go back and Jesus is talking two will be sleeping in a bed. One is taken and the other left. When he says, when you light a lamp, you don't put it under a bushel or under a bed, but you set it on a lampstand.

Both in Mark and Luke, when Jesus says that, it says not under a bushel or under a bed, which is an interesting idea. I don't think I'd be inclined if I had a straw mattress, I wouldn't be putting a lit lamp under my bed. I'm liable to give away too much light.

But this is just, it says sick bed. You can scratch out the word sick because it's not a sick bed, unless there was something in context like we're bringing this paralyzed man on a bed. But those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, it is as though this bed of seduction and fornication and adultery, she is going to be thrown into it, Bala, by the Lord Jesus.

It's going to be a trap from which she cannot escape. She's thrown into that bed and those who commit adultery with her, it's like this bed full of people. You remember Phinehas? We talked about that javelin that he's cast through Cosby and the other guy in the days of judgment, Cosby the Midianite woman and the other guy's name slips in my mind.

But they're going to be cast into this bed of adultery and it is going to be a source of trouble. I'm not saying that STDs are a judgment, although I wouldn't put it past the Lord to have some ingenuity in that regard. But that's not what this is primarily talking about.

These choices are going to result in a destination from which there is no return. She likes to lay in the bed and seduce others. And this is doctrinal seduction.

This is teaching through claiming to be a prophetess. And if you want some hair-raising, startling information, you can look at some of these ladies who have big TV ministries and preach the prosperity gospel. And it could be a sort of reflection of this idea.

But this was a specific woman in Thyatira and she is called Jezebel. She is comparable. There's a lot of talk right now about comparing people to the Nazis or comparing our president to Hitler or whatever.

And people disclaiming and saying that that's really wrong to use an ad hominem of that nature and sort of go nuclear with your personal criticism and say somebody is another fascist dictator responsible for the death of millions. This is a different thing. This is the Lord Jesus speaking and calling this feminine presence, this womanly so-called prophetess, Jezebel.

And Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal who was a priest of Baal. She's a big Baal worshiper. She's committed, she's invested, and she brings this idolatrous blasphemous practice to the very throne room of Israel.

Now you think about those who are now trying to bring things like socialism into the very houses of our government. And you look at who is doing it and who is applauding it and promoting it. And at the risk of not sounding like I'm particularly accepting of diversity, a lot of these folks are coming from other religious backgrounds, other religious traditions, both ethnically and family-wise, and have not ever embraced Judeo-Christian values.

And I am not saying that we should have racist overtones or assumptions. What I am saying is I'm not a racist, I'm a valuiist. I think we should either approve or disapprove based on someone's set of values.

Where do their values come from? And many times these are going to be sourced in ethnicity or family or country of origin or one's ancestry, where values are different because religious beliefs are different. And because someone is from a different ethnicity or a different race, that doesn't automatically make them a bad person. But if they bring to and through their origins bad values, and this can be just as true of Europeans who are of white ethnicities or light-colored extractions or whatever, you could be from Europe somewhere where they've got bad values.

And if you come over to this country and try to import communist values or socialist values or other viewpoints, you are Jezebel. So what is the difference in these earlier letters and Thyatira? Balaam is something of an insider. He is actually a prophet of God, although he is not of Israel.

He seems to be an offshoot maybe back in the days of Laban and the origins of Abraham when he gets up out of Ur. He dwells up by the river. This is the place that Abraham left.

And Balaam is from that neck of the woods, but he believes in God. He speaks to God. He knows God.

He listens to God. And he's a genuine prophet, but he's not from Israel. But he brings the values of Mesopotamia with him, not the values of the mount where the 10 commandments were delivered and the law of Moses.

And because of that, he feels free to counsel Balak to introduce that which will disqualify Israel. But that's sort of a semi-inside job. This is someone who can speak for God, but can also speak for bad values.

Here, Jezebel, she's bad out of the box. She's bad from the word go. And I want to make a comparison here before we go to the break, that whether you're looking at the Nicolaitans, Balaam or Jezebel, there is a distortion and perversion and redefinition of what is righteous, what is good, what is okay to embrace and to do.

So you have an internal source of drawing away and seducing. In every case, it involves a change in moral suasion, they call it. Your understanding of what is moral.

So just as an example, what's happening in the modern day when you look at progressive Christianity, there is internal compromise and tolerance of complete mutilation of the scriptures, where they argue for flexibility in your sexual ethics and an embrace and acceptance of LGBTQ plus identities. They redefine sin so that sin is not sin anymore. And this is doctrinal compromise and it's from inside.

You also have the embrace of that which comes from the outside, which is secular humanism, materialism, scientificism or scientism. And so a scientific worldview, multicultural values, social justice, which social justice is not taught in scripture. I'm sorry, but it's not.

Social justice is not in scripture. Personal love in very defined spheres with very specific means and ways of expression is scriptural. It is individual, it is not corporate.

Do you notice that when God set up a society and a government, there was nothing structural in the government of Israel with the elders and the priests and later in the monarchy, there was no system of social justice or welfare. There's criminal justice, but there is no handouts. Individuals are counseled if they own a field to leave the corners unclean and so on.

We've covered this many times, but progressive Christianity and much of other denominational Christianity today has embraced society's notions of righteousness, which aren't in the Bible. And people are shocked to discover that, but they're not. So one progressive writer said, we look at scripture more like fossils.

It's a record of what happened in the past and how they lived in the past, but we don't live by that now. That's prehistoric life, if you will. So we'll see more of this as we move forward and get into Sardis and especially Laodicea.

But there is attack from outside, which was successfully resisted, but from earliest times, there's been attack from the inside. The Catholic church has defined itself as the true church

and the vicar of Christ and speaking for God with equal authority with scripture and so on. And that was an enormous internal attack and problem.

But even in our circles today, we have to be so careful to not be seduced into accepting things the way Jezebel succeeded in doing, the way the doctrine of Balaam succeeded in doing. And you look at the destruction. Jesus is going to cast them into a bed and force them to live with the consequences.

Kill her children with death. Remember, she's gonna be in the bed with these others who commit adultery with her. She's going to get pregnant and have children.

That's one of the consequences. They wish that wouldn't happen, but there's going to be fruit. There will be consequences and that will result in death.

And there is going to be great tribulation in verse 22. We're gonna see tribulation mentioned three times. We'll pick up this idea when we come back from the break, but we have to curate.

It is so important to watch and pray, to look closely at what we allow, at what we accept, at what we tolerate. These are the judgments of Jesus Christ. And to tolerate these is to be condemned.

Even if you don't agree and even if you don't practice it, if you have there those who hold these and you do not use the sharp sword to cut those ties, we fall under condemnation. It's just the word of God. Pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're gonna resume. We're gonna move on to Sardis, come Hades or high water.