

Rev 25-10-29b

Ready to resume our study here in Revelation, and it is so fascinating to see the beauty with which the Lord Jesus has crafted these messages from introducing himself, using elements of the initial vision, to the implications of the overcomer promises based on identifying, facing, and overcoming the challenges that are given in each of these church judgments, and recognizing that these are different areas within our own life. So it isn't some churches are like Ephesus, some churches are like Sardis. It is at various times and in certain circumstances we can get so busy doing what we know is right and proper, and hating on that which we know is wrong and improper, that we are consumed with the effort and lose sight of God and the Lord Jesus promises, in terms of our devotional life, to take time to reflect and to dwell by the still waters and be thankful for the green pastures and have our soul restored in personal communion with God through Christ in the power of the Spirit and the wonderful manna that is the Word of God, both the Scripture and the Lord Jesus himself.

If we lose sight of the relationship side of our faith and are just absorbed with the information and acting on the information, we fall into the Ephesian trap. To recognize that there will be seasons, often closer to the end of our life, where suffering is in view. Other times, especially in the younger phase of our life, suffering may come from external sources, but Satan is behind it.

It is his goal to get us to deny God. You can see this very clearly in the early chapters of Job, and again at the conclusion, because Job is faithful and does not deny God's name, and he doesn't understand everything that God is doing, but he then functions as a priest for his friends and is restored with double what he lost during the test. And all of us are promised tribulation, testing in this life.

Is it going to be too much for us to bear? If so, it is because we have not availed ourselves of the living water that is freely available to all who thirst. You think back to the two episodes in the wilderness where Moses comes to the rock and at God's behest and by God's grace, he strikes the rock and water flows out for the people. And then the second time, all he needs to do is to speak to the rock, but he gets caught up in his criticism of the people and their faithlessness.

Must we bring water forth for you from this rock? And he smacks it like he did the first time. And he is in the habit of doing what God commands, and he doesn't pay attention that this is a different circumstance and to pay close attention to the details of what God says. We saw this in the story of Balaam.

God told Balaam initially, don't go with these guys from Balak. But then when Balaam comes back and says, oh, please, can't I go? God says, if they come and call for you, you can go. But Balaam doesn't wait for them to come and call him.

He saddles up and goes early in the morning and he got ahead of God. And God will work with

the aftermath and bring both the blessings on Israel that are pronounced. But if Balaam had not gone, guess what would not have happened? The Baal of Peor incident where Israel is caused to stumble and there's a great plague and many of them die.

If Balaam hadn't gone, he wouldn't have told Balak how to put a stumbling block in front of Israel and cause them to sin. So we need to be faithful and obedient so that we can prevent even greater challenges and suffering in our own lives and the lives of others. But we're here looking at the Thyatirans and we've seen what is going to to those that fall in with Jezebel.

And again, I commend to your attention. I am not embracing it. I am not teaching it.

I'm not necessarily approving it. I am making you aware that one way some believers understand these passages and others like them is that the rapture isn't necessarily going to be all inclusive of every believer in Christ that has come to faith in the church age and all of those who are practicing both righteousness and rank disobedience, apathy, indifference and rebellion. When the Lord returns and there is the shout, the voice of the archangel, the trump of God and the dead in Christ rise, we who are alive and remain are caught up together.

This is Paul's general description of what we call the rapture. But you will remember that there are resurrections as in Daniel chapter 12 to righteousness and there is another resurrection to shame and contempt. Some are going to shine like with great brightness in the kingdom of the Father.

Others aren't. And to what extent does this involve not just tribulation? The word is the same, whether it's tribulation, great tribulation or the great tribulation. Sometimes you have the definite article there in a very emphatic way, Hathlipsis Hamegele, the H-O, the T-H-E there.

When you have Hathlipsis Hamegele, the tribulation, the great, you're talking about this 70th week of Daniel. Here in verse 22 we have, I will cast her and those who committed adultery with her into great tribulation. It doesn't have the definite article here.

So is it like unto? Is it as miserable and destructive as what is going to come upon the whole earth? But notice experiencing this great tribulation is conditioned upon repentance. This is not unless they come to believe that I am the Christ, the son of the living God, and that believing they have life through his name. This woman sets herself up as a prophetess.

A prophetess is someone who speaks for God and is bringing divine information. She is speaking in a church. You allow that woman, Jezebel, verse 20, to teach and seduce my servants to commit sexual immorality.

Now my servants are not unbelievers. You can't make that work. My servants are church age believers.

So if they are being taught and seduced by Jezebel and committing adultery with her, they are the people in verse 22 who are cast into the bed with her and into great trouble, great philipsis,

great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds, unless they change their minds. Whether or not they endure great tribulation depends on whether they are unrepentant or repentant of their deeds of what they are doing. I hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans up in Ephesus.

It is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans that you have in Pergamos. And it is this teaching and seduction of an alleged prophetess. They should have known something by the fact that she is a woman teaching and exerting authority over men, which they should have known from Paul, is not correct.

And Paul taught all through this region. Look at the map. I posted a couple of maps of this area.

You can see Colossae nearby. You can see other places that Paul visited throughout Asia Minor here, this region, what is now Turkey. And it is well known what is proper and improper in the churches of God.

And women teaching and exerting authority, and it doesn't necessarily have to be a woman in every case. It is an improper type of assumption of authority and of teaching prerogatives. This could be someone who isn't persuaded that the Bible is inspired and that the scriptures reflect the true word of God and reflect the true Lord Jesus.

And they want to redefine Jesus. And they want to redefine what scripture says. And we're only going to pick out certain portions to rely on.

That is a disqualification for being a teacher. Read 1 Timothy. Read what Paul says about identifying and encouraging faithful teaching of the whole counsel of God, the word of God, which is inspired and profitable.

So she is illicit. She claims to be a prophetess the way those claim to be Jews and are not. They are a synagogue of Satan.

That's in Smyrna. You can't bear those who are evil. You've tested those who say they are apostles and are not up in Ephesus in verse two.

So this is flying a false flag, wearing a false uniform, presenting yourself as something that you're not. We have this in politics now. There are people who say, I'm fighting for the poor and they're not.

There are those who say, I want everybody to enjoy democracy in America and they are socialists and communists. And when they're outed as such, they just say, well, but I'm still a good guy. And they want to disassociate themselves.

It's so strange to me that those who want to associate their political opponents with bad things that happened in the past, y'all are fascists and Nazis and Hitler followers and so on, don't want to associate communists and socialists who are arising in our political landscape with the consequences of those things in the past. It is so blind and it's scary. I'm not so much worried

about those people.

Things are going to unfold as they're going to unfold. I can't influence elections and groups of people who act in certain ways. I can observe and avoid that kind of faulty thinking myself.

It is useful to identify the fallacy, the flaw, the failure, the deception, the blindness that comes from the God of this world. We're going to be looking at that. In fact, this is a good time to look at it.

Turn back to 2 Corinthians 4, 3 and 4. I'd rather look at scripture than our news anyway. Paul says in chapter 4 of 2 Corinthians, we have this ministry. And he's referring to what he has talked about in chapter 3, Christ's epistle, the spirit, not the letter, the glory of the new covenant, unlike Moses.

And when Moses is read, there's a veil over the heart. There are things that the Jews themselves cannot understand. The Lord is the spirit in verse 17 of chapter 3. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

There is liberty. We want to cultivate the presence and power of the spirit. Jesus says, the truth will set you free.

Where the spirit is, there is liberty. The spirit and the word, this frees us from bondage to sin. And it frees us from the blindness and the hardness of our own heart.

We are set free. This is the practical outworking of the positional truth of salvation. Christ pays the penalty.

We are redeemed. Atonement is made. Justice is satisfied.

We are reconciled. We are entered into union with Christ and through him united to the Father and have access to the throne. So many wonderful things.

You have the seven in hymns of Ephesians chapter 1, the wonderful privileges. And the Lord is the spirit. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

The spirit and the word, freedom. We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord. This is upcoming when we get to the morning star.

Beholding the glory of the Lord. Being transformed into the same image from glory of the Lord to glory in us. Reflected glory.

Participatory glory. Becoming a part of and an example of the glory of God. From glory to glory.

It is a transfer. It starts with the glory of God and his glory is infused into us so that we become wonderful examples and reflections of what he can do. Just as by the spirit of the Lord.

How important is the role of the Holy Spirit? Often overlooked in discussions and debates in the

modern day. What is Scripture and what is not? If you've got a question, go to God. The Holy Spirit is given to us to lead us into the truth.

The truth that sets us free. The freedom that is part and parcel of the presence of the spirit. Got a question? Want an answer? James 1. Ask of God.

He grants generously without rebuke. And this is how he does it. It's going to be in the word and it's going to be illuminated by the spirit.

He will shine that word on our path like a light. And we'll hide it in our hearts that we might not sin against God. Chapter four.

Therefore, since we have this ministry, you can't start in the middle of a passage without some context. This is my view. That's why anytime we go to one, I have to back up.

We want to wipe our feet on the mat before we go through the door here. So therefore, since we have this ministry presenting the beauty and the power and the opportunity that comes through God's Holy Spirit specifically as he works in our hearts with the word, we do not lose heart. Look around at the world.

It's easy to get depressed. We can look at circumstances in our own lives and it's easy to get depressed. But we do not lose heart because these are divine, powerful, eternal truths.

This is what we choose to accept as our reality, not what's going on in circumstance. You know, the definition of subjectivity, eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on things, on circumstances. And just like Peter, we will sink into the roiling stormy waters if we don't keep our eyes on Christ.

We do not lose heart. We have renounced the hidden things of shame. Hidden things of shame.

This is going to be referred to in our passage in Revelation as the depths of Satan, the bathos, bathysphere going down to the very bottom of the ocean where there is a lot of pressure and it wants to crush you. The hidden things of shame not walking in craftiness, in areas where everybody is playing a game. Everybody is trying to outmaneuver the other.

This is politics described in the Bible, craftiness. We'll exert leverage. We'll use threat.

We'll hold things in reserve. We will twist the truth. We will do press conferences.

We will distort. We'll impugn motives. We'll reinvent the past.

We will redefine. One of the major sources of propaganda news is changing its name on November the 15th. You can look it up, but they're changing it from the three letters that have been associated with a particular brand for decades.

Ever since I was watching black and white TV as a tiny child, they're divesting themselves of

those three letters and it's going to be something else. Just change the name and it will be different. But they said, we're not changing our approach, our values, our spin, our predilection to filter and try to influence you with propaganda.

We're just changing our name so that you won't associate us with all the heinous things we've done in the progressive Christianity today. Deceitfully handling the word of God, saying, arsenokoites doesn't mean what you think it means when it's talking about homosexual behavior. We'll take each of these passages and we'll tip it and we'll slant it and we'll hide part of it and we'll emphasize another and we'll go to a secular example and we'll define away what is the plain meaning of scripture.

And one way or another, we will get you to accept the teaching of Jezebel who seduces the servants of Christ into her bed, into sexual immorality, not just practicing it, but accepting it or tolerating it or turning a blind eye to it or pretending like it's okay. You look at the number of boyfriend, girlfriend situations where this unmarried couple sees no problem whatsoever with trying out physical relationship because everybody does it and the church doesn't frown on it. There's no preaching against fornication from the pulpit.

There is no frown or looking askance at this from people of faith or my family knows we're doing this and they're fine with it. Doctrine of Jezebel, you have there those who practice these things, who accept these things, who preach and follow these things. You have those there and you better change your mind or you're going to share their judgment.

Handling the Word of God deceitfully here in 2 Corinthians 4.2, we have renounced these things. We're not walking in craftiness. We're not handling the Word of God deceitfully.

We are faithfully examining it and understanding it and interpreting it and applying it. This is what the Word of God says. I don't care how uncomfortable or awkward it is.

I don't care what it costs. Anybody who's going to do something profitable first sits down and counts the cost. We deny ourselves.

We take up our cross. It is a cross of sacrifice. It is a cross of death to things that others refuse to leave.

Manifestation of the truth. We commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Notice by embracing the truth, by living the truth, by applying the truth and representing the truth, we are body of Christ.

He is the way. He is the truth. And our lives should reflect and communicate truth.

Notice what Paul says here. Because we've renounced hidden things of shame, because we don't walk in craftiness, we don't handle the Word of God deceitfully, we don't just sort of quietly tuck away the parts that are uncomfortable for people, but we manifest the truth. We display the truth.

We show it forth. We commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Now people look at us and they've got to make a choice.

Their conscience is either going to accuse or excuse themselves because they have come into contact with God's truth in and through us. If there were no Christians, there'd be no Bible class, there'd be no Bibles, there would be no truth to come in contact with. You know how the world comes in contact with the truth? You, and me, and we, and us.

It is the presence of the body of Christ that commends the truth to every man's conscience. They will either ask us a reason for the hope that is in us, they will either be drawn to the light, or if they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, the sword of the Lord Jesus Christ is going to create a separation. People are not drawn to the light when they prefer darkness and the hidden things of darkness.

And if they choose to move away from us and we do not pursue because we have been told not to, that is one less source of challenge. It can be a source of sorrow and grief if it's within our personal sphere, but it is better than the alternative. I do not want to be thrown into bed with people who follow the practices that Jezebel teaches.

I don't want to share their judgment. I don't want to be drawn away from the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to be a shining light through whom the truth of God and the glory of God can be manifest.

And the specific target of that manifestation is the conscience of others. My conscience has got to be clear. We looked extensively at conscience when we went through Timothy, remember? Well, we are now to be that through which God will challenge the conscience of others.

But even if our gospel is veiled, if despite the fact that we are living with our light on a lampstand, it's not under the bed, and it's not under a bushel, it's on a lampstand, but that gospel can still be hid. It can be veiled, as he said in the last chapter. It is veiled to those who are perishing.

And they're perishing because they do not choose to be saved. They do not choose to be delivered from the fate of perishing. Why? Their minds, the God of this age has blinded.

The God of this world, the God of this age has blinded the minds of those who are faithless, who do not believe, who do not respond. They see the light, they don't want the light, and they are not going to continue to see the light. And the further they move in the direction of darkness, the more the God of this world, this is Satan.

This happens with the synagogue Satan. This happens with the throne of Satan, where Satan dwells. We have all three things mentioned, synagogue of Satan, throne of Satan, and where Satan dwells in our context.

And he is actively engaged in blinding the minds of the faithless. They are not faithless because

they are blinded. They are blind because they do not choose to believe.

It is a consequence. The God of this world blinds the minds of those who do not believe, who have not believed, who refuse to respond. And there is nothing you and I can do about that.

You can't love them out of it. You can't browbeat them out of it. You can't preach them out of it.

You can't send tracts and books to them and persuade them out of it. The most we can do is lift them up in prayer. And the God who has the ability to confront the conscience and the soul can create opportunities where they will either repent and change their mind, or they will confirm and continue their rejection.

You cannot ask God to change someone's heart. He will not do it. It's a fruitless prayer.

You can pray that God will bring them to a point of decision and give them the opportunity to repent and to change their mind. And that opportunity exists. These that have been thrown into the bed with Jezebel can still repent.

They will share her judgment unless they repent. Jesus says there is hope. They can recover from this.

It's not a lost cause until death doth them part from this life. To finish up here in 2 Corinthians 4, the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. Should shine.

They will see it and it's shiny. It is attractive. It draws.

They are drawn to the light. They want deliverance from the darkness. They would love to be transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

Look at verse 5. We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus, the Lord, and ourselves, your bondservants, for Jesus' sake. Verse 6. Pay attention now. This is background for the Morning Star.

It is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That light shines in our hearts and hopefully it shines beyond our hearts to anyone who will be drawn to the light. It's their choice.

It's not too late, even if they begin to suffer the judgments of Jezebel. It says Jezebel was given time to repent and she repented. She refused, but those that she has seduced still have time to repent.

And when you come back to Revelation chapter 2, verse 22, they will go with her into great tribulation unless they repent of their deeds. And repenting of their deeds is an opportunity to repent of their persuasion and what they have been seduced into thinking is okay or good or

right or acceptable. I will kill her children with death in verse 23.

All the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. It's not just the deeds. What is the mind and the heart saying and dictating? I will give each one of you according to your works.

To you, I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, the hidden things of darkness, I will put on you no other burden. Just hold fast to what you have. Don't fall in with those who are being seduced away.

You've got to hold the line. Hold fast till I come. Notice, this is a great thing to pay attention to.

Notice, hold fast what you have till I come. There has been no reference to the coming of Christ in the letter to Ephesus, the letter to Smyrna, or the letter to Pergamos, but beginning here in Thyatira and for the three remaining letters after this, there is a specific reference to the coming of the Lord. Fascinating.

Significant. In the face of certain challenges and certain teachings and the presence of certain individuals, it is the coming of the Lord that is a part of what sustains us and brings us through. He who overcomes power over the nations, rod of iron, dash them in pieces like potter's vessels, as I've received from my father, and I will give him the morning star.

I've run myself out of time tonight for the morning star. This is a beautiful study unto itself. I never understood the morning star a fraction of how I appreciate it now, but I won't keep you on a weak night.

We have enough here to chew on and endeavor to apply in our personal milieu, our circumstance, our relationships, our challenges, our opportunities. Come this Sunday, we will hit the ground running and start without much introduction at the morning star. I will give him the morning star.

What does that mean? It means a lot. We'll see it on Sunday. We'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for this wonderful manna from heaven that nourishes and strengthens our souls in the hands of the Holy Spirit. It liberates us and frees us from the pull of our emotions, the pull of our attractions, the pull of our fallen nature, the pull of the world, the arguments and the persuasions and the seductions of the external forces around us. We pray that as we reflect on these truths, that what has been said to each of these churches by your Son, the Lord Jesus, our Savior, will resonate in our hearts, will strengthen us, will be something the Holy Spirit can use to make us shining examples and worthy members of the body of Christ, fitted for every good work and prepared for everything that you have in the future in the ages to come.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.