

Rev 25-11-02b

We're ready to pick up this very important look at the words of the Lord Jesus in Revelation chapter 2. We're at the close of the letter to the church at Thyatira. And as with the opening phrases in this book of Revelation, where John is transmitting what the Father gave to the Son. This entire message is what the Father gave to the Son.

Here the promise of power over the nations is given to the overcomer in this particular area of overcoming. There are different kinds of overcoming. This is specifically the pull of the seductive harlot who claims to be authoritative, who claims to speak for God, and in that guise is seducing people into spiritual adultery and into spiritual idolatry.

And switching things out so that there is still worship and there is still attention to things beyond the material, but it is corrupted and perverted. And to overcome, to discern, to discriminate, and to hold fast to the truth that we have. And for that to evidence itself in works, results in the fulfillment of these overcomer promises to essentially rule with Christ.

But specifically, Christ is going to be ruling over many things in the Millennial Kingdom and beyond, but specifically the nations. And if you think about the difference between Balaam and Jezebel as we have seen it in Pergamos and Thyatira, Balaam is from the old country. He's from back in the land of Mesopotamia, the great river.

Balak is a neighbor king in Moab, and Israel is trying to get to the promised land. The attack on Israel through Balaam is when they are on the way. They have not yet arrived, and they're endeavoring to reach the place of promise and blessing and security.

They are on the road to becoming the people of God in the land of promise with a theocracy, with God as their authority. Jezebel is an attack from further away. Her father is the king of Sidon.

He is a priest of Baal. She is importing Baal worship. You remember it is the priests of Baal that are on Mount Carmel with Elijah.

And this is the people of God settled. This is the northern kingdom. They are in the land, and they have a king, Ahab, who is evil.

This is wrought from within. Balaam represented a threat from outside. This has been imported and is now the authority structures of Israel itself are what are being used to bring the people into a place of cursing and judgment through Jezebel and her influence on Ahab.

Now, Jesus pictures her as being the influence on the people in Thyatira. So, to overcome in this area, vis-a-vis overcoming, let's say, in Pergamos, doctrine of Balaam, this is trying to import idolatry and adultery and fornication from the world, from an outside source, and the world arguing that this is okay. Balak, Balaam doesn't teach them to worship idols and fornicate.

Balak does. Balaam gave him the key. Here, this is from within.

This originates inside. Jezebel marries the king for political reasons, and this is politics and government and on the inside, and you get the suggestion that this is more within denominational Christianity. If we apply it in our modern day, rather than science and Darwinism and secular humanism and materialism coming in and seducing us away, Pergamos, here, this is from within and recognizing and listening to false authorities.

She presents herself as a prophetess and so on. Overcoming in this area is to recognize genuine authority, God-granted, God-given, God-inspired, God-ordained, and God-enabled and empowered authority. This is everywhere from the home to the community, to the nation, to the world.

And our appointed authority is primarily in the personal realm, and we are to have authority over our own souls. And as we saw in the first session, to curate, to moderate, to control our thinking by watching what we take in. It's pretty hard to be healthy and strong if you eat junk food and don't exercise, don't apply the good things that you know, exercise in the right way, exercise in the wrong way, you can hurt yourself.

So hold fast what you have till I come. He who overcomes keeps my works until the end. What is the end? This is until I come.

Hold fast what you have until I come. Keep my works until the end. For us, it is the end of this life.

Death or the rapture. Most cases, and has been always the case to this point, it is death. You know my view on this? I would like to say I wouldn't die for it, but based on what I believe about death, I probably would die for it.

That we move immediately to the coming of the Lord Jesus to take us to himself in the air at the point of our physical death. There's no need for intermediate states or hanging in some kind of suspended animation in an unbodied state. There's no need to go up and come down and go back up and come back down.

And so the end and when I come, we look for this right now. We don't have to think, well, I think the rapture might be 100 years away. The rapture is as close as our last heartbeat.

I've said this any number of times, but this is a part of what keeps our thoughts in line. Every day counts. Every hour counts.

Every minute counts. Redeem the time. The days are evil by default.

We have to redeem them the way the Lord Jesus redeemed us out of the world by his own blood. And there is sacrifice involved in redemption. If we're going to redeem the time, that means we need to sacrifice.

You think about your physical life, you go to the doctor and he says, well, you know, this number is high and this number is low and you've got to make some changes. And you cannot be partaking of, say, saturated fats. Well, if you like bacon and you like butter, what do you have to do to stay healthy? Sacrifice.

This is a pleasure. It is a feel good moment to partake of something that is actually harmful. And reflects poor stewardship of whatever physical existence God has granted to us.

And whatever state it's in, it's our job to maintain it. So if something is harmful but pleasurable, what's my choice? Do I go with the pleasure or do I recognize the harm and sacrificially, as a good steward, cut it out? This is just a metaphor for what we should have an even higher responsibility to do spiritually. Something may be stimulating, may be fascinating, may be entertaining, may be pleasurable.

But if it is harmful to holding fast what we have and looking for and hastening the day of the Lord's return, then we got to cut it out. To redeem the time, we have to sacrifice something. Sacrifice what might be, quote, more fun.

But it's bubblegum fun. It has no nutritional value. It's often repetitive and non-nutritive.

Bubblegum for the brain versus whatsoever things. Think on these things. So this is the key.

If you don't remember anything else from the letter to Thyatira, look at this exhortation, this command from the Lord Jesus. Hold fast what you have till I come. For us, that is every remaining day, hour, and minute of our lives.

And keep my works until the end. Hold fast in your mind and what you think, what you say, and what you do. Every day, every moment, every situation, every circumstance, every conversation, every issue, whatever we confront, keep it until the end.

We will be granted by the Lord Jesus power, authority over the nations. And this is wonderful because the nations are a big source of our testing now, whether it is the international news or whether it is the importation of Eastern mysticism and other false notions into our culture and into our philosophy, into our approach to everything from personal life to world politics, ideas imported from the outside, groups, influencers. And to learn to have power over the nations now is to be granted power over the nations in the kingdoms to come.

Remember, there are nations in the kingdom of the Father. The leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of whom? Go look. And this is what I have received from my Father, just like this entire message received from the Father to the Son, given to us through John, this authority over the nations from the Father to the Son to us.

If we qualify, if we are grateful enough to the Lord Jesus for His sacrificial work on our behalf, grateful enough to God the Father for His grace in sending the Lord Jesus to be our Savior, then we will be willing to sacrifice a little bit of momentary satisfaction to enter into these eternal

gifts and eternal functions. And I like that they put it in a separate verse. It's helpful to remember from time to time that there's not a single human author of Scripture recording the inspired words of God that put chapters and verses in their books or their letters.

It flowed seamlessly. And sometimes we almost have to get some white out and erase these divisions. Most of the time, they are suggested from context, and we know that it's time for a fresh chapter, a new paragraph division.

But I like this because this one is important, and I will give him the morning star. What on earth is the morning star? Physically speaking, astronomically speaking, this is a reference to the planet Venus. And if you've looked in the eastern sky at the sunrise, you will often be able to see a super bright entity in the sky in the direction of the dawn, brighter than any star.

It is the morning star. Now, you can immediately say, well, the morning star rises in your hearts. This is at the end of Malachi, the importance of recognizing the Lord Jesus as a bright hope and harbinger of the fulfillment of many wonderful promises from God.

But look at this in its context. We like to think that context is important. So in verses 26 and 27, as we just saw, authority over the nations.

This is an echo of Psalm 2. So keep your finger here and turn back to the Psalms. They used to tell me when I was in Sunday school as a child, all you have to do is divide your Bible right in the middle and you will hit the Psalms. However, if you have an enormous number of helps in the back of your Bible, as my Thompson chain reference does, that doesn't actually work.

Psalm 2. Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? Notice we've just been promised authority over the nations. How does Psalm 2 begin? The nations are raging and plotting vain things. 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.

Does this conceptually connect to Jesus' words at the end of the Thyatira letter? Pretty clearly they do. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall hold them in derision.

Then he shall speak to them in his wrath and distress them in his deep displeasure. I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion. This looks at the existing time of the reign of David and his sons, but it looks forward to David's greater son and ultimately to that throne and kingdom that are of a long lasting nature.

I will declare the decree. The Lord has said, this is the same Lord that is speaking in the revelation in each of these letters. 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, the nations and the of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron.

You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. What I have received from my father, I will pass on to overcomers, Jesus says. The message that Jesus communicates even to these seven churches does not originate with the Lord Jesus.

It originates with the father. The Lord has said to my Lord, sit at my right hand. I will give you power over the nations.

The morning star Venus in the ancient world was also an emblem of sovereignty. So there were Roman generals and even Roman emperors who used the morning star as a symbol of their dynasty and their notion that they were ruling in a divine sense. Julius Caesar used the morning star.

Augustus used the morning star as symbolic of their rule. And as you remember, Augustus is the first to claim to be divine and demand to be worshiped as divine. So receiving the morning star in the ancient Roman world was the equivalent of being included, metaphorically speaking, being included in sovereign divine rule.

If Julius Caesar or Caesar Augustus had conferred on someone a ring or another emblematic symbol that incorporated the morning star, that would be an indication that here is someone who speaks for Caesar himself, who is close at hand and is involved in exercising this regal and in some ways divine rule. So in short, number one, the morning star is a badge of royal office. We are going to see in a very short order, he who has made us kings and priests, he has made us to be kings and priests.

This is an anticipation of that being given the morning star. This is a badge of royal office, royal rule, sharing in the messianic dominion, if you will, but not over Israel. People in Thyatira are largely Gentile.

And so this is not them ruling in Israel. This is ruling over the nations. Secondly, 2 Peter 1.19 can turn forward to the second epistle of Peter, where Peter talks until the morning star arises in your hearts.

I quoted it earlier. It is similar in some ways to the sun rising that's spoken of in Malachi. And with the sunrise that the end of Malachi speaks of, what just precedes the sunrise? The morning star.

So when you get to 2 Peter 1.19, the morning star rising in your hearts, what does this mean? This is the earliest sign that the sun is about to rise. Before there is a glow in the eastern sky, before you begin to see the darkness lifting, this star is visible on the eastern horizon, the planet Venus. So it's an advance sign of glory to come, fullness, brightness to come.

And if you're given the morning star, this would be the advance briefing. You know how a president or a government will decide to do a thing. And it is as with Eisenhower and D-Day, do you tell the press or do you not? Do you share your plan? If you do, it is only with those you can trust not to interfere with the accomplishment of the plan by talking out of turn.

The revelation of the glory of the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration was only given to Peter and James and John, not the other nine disciples at the foot of the mountain dealing coincidentally with a demon-possessed boy, and ineffectively so. Peter, James, and John are on the mountain, and they see an advance, if you will. They see a morning star glory revealed in the Lord Jesus.

And those to whom the morning star is given in symbolic terms will see what is to come in advance of others. If you don't have the morning star, you don't know when the sunrise is coming. Think of Simeon and Anna, who knew that the coming of Messiah was near in hand.

It had been revealed to Simeon that he would not see death before he had witnessed the salvation of Israel. He would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. And that came true.

That's sort of an Old Testament version of the morning star, to be able to anticipate, to be given in advance information about what is going to reveal the fullness of God's glory and the ongoing progress of God's plan. What a privilege to be given the morning star, to be in the classified briefing room when advance notice is given of plans that will soon be implemented. So, enlightenment ahead of the actual dawn, the actual sunrise, a harbinger.

Remember, Venus is reflecting the sun's glory, but it's a mirror. You can't see what's coming around the corner, but if you stick a mirror there and look at the mirror, you can see what's coming. So, Venus is the mirror of what is to come.

So, that's number two. Thirdly, when Paul talks about the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, you look at verses 41 and 42. Don't have time to turn there.

As star differs from star in glory, so shall it be in the resurrection. Well, they didn't differentiate between stars and planets in the ancient world, and Venus was considered a star and the brightest of the stars. So, as star differs from star in glory, so shall it be in the resurrection.

To be given the morning star also suggests being one of those who shines most brightly in the resurrection, most fully equipped to broadcast light to others. The stars were used for navigation in the ancient world as down to the present and to be beacons that provide direction and a sense of place and a sense of direction is a part of being the morning star, of possessing the morning star. So, radiant existence in the resurrection.

That's number three. Number four, these are suggestions. This is what I see connected with the morning star.

Remember the depths of Satan, and I mentioned and emphasized that these depths are characterized by darkness, by the gloom of death, by association with Satan and so on. Satan is the Lucifer, the shining one, but he is a son of darkness. You look at his descriptions through the King of Tyre and so on in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, and we are released from his power and transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of the son of God's love.

And so, this brightness is a relief from darkness. It is set in darkness. It shines in a dark eastern sky before the sun rises.

Don't typically see unless you're a Japanese pilot like Saburo Sakai and you read his book about being a fighter pilot in World War II. He claims that those pilots were trained to see the brightest of the stars in daylight, but for the rest of us, for normal people, you don't see them. Except in darkness, and it is in the darkness that this star shines most brightly, and the privilege of being a light shining in a dark place, of being a light that is put on a lamp stand to be a blessing to others is a part of being given the morning star.

It gives you a sense of direction. That way is east. It is bright in the darkness.

You know that sunrise will soon take place. The dawn is approaching, and it provides hope. We can be beacons of light and of hope to those who are willing to look, who are interested.

Some people aren't. Some love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. So, both vindication and hope.

You're in the dark. You're being attacked. You're being vilified.

You're being ill thought of. You're being snubbed and looked down on and an object of scorn, if not outright persecution, and you end up being the bright morning star. So, that's number four.

Number five. This is a cool one. I love this passage.

We should turn to it. Go back to Job chapter 38. Job chapter 38.

We're going to be looking at verse seven. You back up a little bit. Verse four.

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know. Who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone? When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

The morning stars sang together. And you go back and look in Hebrew. This is not just the stars.

The word bokor is there. Morning stars. The morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy.

Now, with your well-developed eye for detail, we get a lot of practice looking at the scriptures. Look at this verse. What do you see? There are the morning stars and there are the sons of God.

The morning stars are doing one thing and all the sons of God are doing something else. You have all the sons. It doesn't say all the morning stars or all the stars sang together, does it? I

would suggest to you that all of the stars are one thing.

Morning stars are a subset of the sons of God who shine most brightly. Right? Not every star in the heavens is a morning star. You got to be super bright.

You've got to be like Venus. More than one person can get the morning star, right? Individually, Jesus says, if you're an overcomer in this area of Thyatira's challenge, you'll be an overcomer and you'll receive the morning star. Many of the sons of God, evidently, you could speculate, have received a similar honor.

And what are they doing? They are singing together. All the sons of God are shouting for joy. What is the difference in singing and shouting? What's the difference? You can twist and shout, but you're not singing.

What has to be true if you are singing? You know the tune and you know the words, right? We're going to see very shortly, there are going to be some people who are singing a new song. If you're going to sing a song, have you ever gone somewhere and you're expected to sing? You go to somebody's church that you've not been to or they go to a place in the hymnal, you've never heard this song in your life. And everybody rise, it's number 233 in your hymn book.

You turn to it, you've got not the first clue. You don't read music and everybody starts singing. And so, well, do I just stand here quietly? Should I move my lips? Should I Milli Vanilli and lip sync and pretend like I know it? Should I try to sing and make all kinds of mistakes? To sing, especially to sing as an angelic choir, you better know the tune and you better know the words.

The morning stars know the tune and they know the words. What do the rest of the sons of God do? Yeah, they just shout, right? There's a difference. Words mean things.

You can shout for joy like a crowd when your team scores a touchdown, but the morning stars are singing and they are singing together. They're singing the same song, maybe it's harmony parts, but they are like the choirs that celebrated worship in David's day. They've got sheet music.

Or they know it by heart. I suspect they don't need the music, they know it by heart. So what is it to be a morning star? You not only are given advance notice of what God is about to do, but you know things about what God is doing.

God is establishing the foundations of the earth, determining its measurements and stretching the line upon it and fastening its foundations. Laying its cornerstone. The Lord Jesus is the head of the corner.

And in metaphorical and symbolic terms, these morning star angels see the Lord Jesus coming. They see what God has in store by way of redemption at creation. They can already see where creation is going, culminating in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The rest of the sons of God are shouting at the magnificence of God's work. And that's a wonderful thing. But the morning stars know more and appreciate more and sing a song of praise and glory to the God who is doing these things.

That's what it is to have the morning star. I just think it's an amazing thing. In Revelation 22, 16, the Lord Jesus is the bright morning star.

We're not at this point looking ahead 20 chapters, but that's coming. What kind of light do we respond to? Light that turns to darkness or light that continues to shine brighter in God's plan and purpose? In Philippians chapter two, verse 15, this is number seven now. That was number six, number seven.

Believers shine as lights. Phosderes, you can hear the photo in that. Phosderes, Phosderes.

Stare, aster, the S-T-E part of that is star, light star. Phos is like phosphorus. So you have a combination of star light, shine as starlight in the world.

This is the first star to appear. It is the brightest star in the sky, the morning star, and is a herald of the coming day. So we bear witness to the coming glory of God.

We are lamps on a lampstand. Those who will be drawn to the light can come to us. We can speak the truth in love.

The Holy Spirit will bless that witness and God will bring them into the fold. God will reveal himself. You can look at Matthew chapter five, verses 14 through 16, and second Peter 1.9 in connection with this Philippians 2.15. What an opportunity to receive the morning star.

To do so, we need to identify and separate from both the doctrine of Balaam, he who has the sharp sword, you've got to cut that stuff off. The teachings of Jezebel, the false prophetess, don't be lured into that which is bubble gum for the spirit. It may have some sugar, but it is poison for us in the long term.

Identify it, separate from it, don't let it take power over us. Paul says, I can enjoy all things, but I will be mastered by nothing. Nothing is going to start to determine my patterns and the expression of my will.

I will master it. It goes back to what God said to Cain, sin lies crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must master it.

You must overcome it. That's what it is to be an overcomer in Thyatira and to receive power over the nations and to be given the morning star, to possess the morning star, to be a morning star. What an opportunity.

I don't know about you, but I'm excited to understand this is incredible motivation. Take these thoughts captive for Christ. Redeem the time.

Take seriously what it is to be a believer in the short time that remains to us in this life. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the revelation of your truth, these wonderful promises and expressions of grace on your part.

We claim your promise of wisdom when we ask for it. We know that you will give it generously and without reproach. That is our request.

We pray that these truths will flame and live in our soul like a hammer, that it will break the rocks of resistance and pernicious presence of our fallen nature, break them in pieces so that we can overcome in every one of these areas, be useful for service and function now and in the ages to come. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.