

SESSION 10 – REVELATION CHAPTER 2 – PART III

¹⁸to the angel of the church in Thyatira write... (Revelation 2:18-28)

I. TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA

- A. Thyatira was a small city of about 25,000 people located 40 miles southeast of Pergamos, notable for its commercial significance and numerous trade guilds. These guilds were essential for business success, but they came with a significant challenge for Christians: members were required to participate in pagan festivals that involved worshiping patron deities, eating food sacrificed to idols, and often engaging in immoral practices.¹ It is this city where the assembly of believers were meeting among a dangerous and deceptive spirit that was at work through a prophetess who was ensnaring believers through sexual immorality and eating food sacrificed to false gods. As a foreshadow to the Great Harlot, we see then a prefiguring of one of the great conflicts between the Church, Jezebel of Thyatira, and the Harlot Babylon.
- B. Jesus introduces Himself saying: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.' The identification of Jesus as *Son of God* is not unique to Jesus, but He is Himself *unique*, thus the definite article *the*, meaning *the only One like Him*.

³⁸son of Enos, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God. (Luke 3:38 NRSVue)

⁶"On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:6-7 LSB)

²that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were good in appearance; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. (Gen. 6:2 LSB)

²²"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says Yahweh, "Israel is My son, My firstborn." (Ex. 4:22 LSB)

¹³"He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴"I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will reprove him with the rod of men and the strikes from the sons of men (2 Sam. 7:13-14 LSB; speaking of the son of David).

⁸When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated humankind, he set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of God⁶³. ⁹For the LORD's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. (Deut. 32:8-9 DSSB)²

¹ Paul D. Weaver, ed., *Surveying Hebrews through Revelation, Surveying the New Testament* (Learn the Word Publishing, 2019).; Joel R. Beeke, *Revelation*, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Jon D. Payne, *The Lectio Continua Expository Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016), 112.

² [163]The note from the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible states: In the famous poem found in Deuteronomy 32, verse 8 tells us that God set the bounds of the peoples according to a certain number. Following the Masoretic Text and the Samaritan Pentateuch, most

The DSSB then points to Deuteronomy 32:43 and gives this translation:

⁴³*Rejoice, O heavens, together with him; and bow down to him all you gods, for he will avenge the blood of his sons, and will render vengeance to his enemies, and will recompense those who hate him, and will atone for the land of his people.” (Deut. 32:48 DSSB)³*

What is the importance of 4QDeuteronomy (Cave 4 Deuteronomy Scroll)? It is the *oldest* text and the *closest to the source*. Much older than the Masoretic Text.

The Septuagint, translating from an *older text* than the MT in the Second or Third Centuries BCE, translates the verses as:

⁸*When the Most High distributed nations as he scattered the descendants of Adam, he set up boundaries for the nations according to the number of the angels of God.^c ⁹And his people Jacob became the portion of the Lord, Israel an allotment of his inheritance. (Deut. 32:8-9 LXX)*

The Lexham English Septuagint provides the following note, which points back to 4QDeut:

Heb. reads “according to the sons of Israel.” LXX reads similarly to 4QDeutJ, which contains the reading “sons of the gods.”⁴

Similarly, Deuteronomy 32:43 is translated (presumably from the same document):

⁴³*Delight, O heavens, with him and worship him, you sons of God. Delight, O nations, with his people and prevail with him, all you angels of God. For he will avenge the blood of his sons, and he will avenge and he will repay the enemies with vengeance, and he will repay those who hate, and the Lord will cleanse out the land of his people.” (Deut. 32:43 LXX)*

Again, the Lexham Septuagint makes note of 4QDeut.:

The clause “and prevail with him all you angels of God” is not contained in Heb. 4QDeutQ reads “and bow down to him all you gods.”⁵

modern Bibles describe this as the number of the “children of Israel.” 4QDeuti, however, specifies it as the number of the **“children of God,”** apparently denoting the divine beings who would serve as protectors for various nations. See also vs. 43. Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English* (New York: HarperOne, 1999), Dt 32:3.

³ Again, the note from the DSSB states, “Deuteronomy 32:43 is an unusual verse in view of its contents. As the list of variant readings shows, 4QDeutq—supported by the Septuagint—differs markedly from the Masoretic Text and the Samaritan Pentateuch. For example, in the Qumran scroll it is “the heavens” which rejoice, not the nations; and God will avenge the blood of “his sons,” not “his servants.” **Moreover, the mention of gods “bowing down to God” and “recompensing those who hate him” is absent from the Masoretic Text and the Samaritan Pentateuch. This verse provides a striking example of the very different readings that sometimes appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls.**” Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English* (New York: HarperOne, 1999), Dt 32:38.

⁴ Rick Brannan et al., eds., *The Lexham English Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012).

⁵ Rick Brannan et al., eds., *The Lexham English Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012).

The writer of Hebrews clears up any confusion about the *particular* Son who is unlike any other son:

¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. (Heb. 1:1-4 NRSVue)

Verse two in the Greek text is not *the Son*, but *a Son*. The writer then distinguishes *this particular* Son as unlike all other sons. He is the One through Whom God the Father has spoken to us. He is the reflection of God's Glory; meaning is the manifest expression of the Glory of God (Gr. *apagasma*). He is the exact imprint (Gr. *character*), meaning a reference to a casting die being the image of the original (think a coin that is pressed with the image of the die); this Son is the Glory of God, and whatever He looks like. And not only what He looks like, but whatever He *is* (Gr. *hypostasis*).

In this passage the focal point is the difference in this Son as *the Son* of God through Whom all things are created and held together. It is an obvious reference to Jesus, the Son of David, the Son of God.

³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. (Luke 1:35 NRSVue)

¹The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Mark 1:1 EOB).

And John gives us the definitive statement, again using *the* definite article:

³¹But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31 NRSVue)

- C. For John to say Jesus is the Son of God in Revelation 2:18 is to point back to his own Gospel and in that points Him to the Messiah, the Son of David. This provides the clarity of the *uniqueness* of *Who Jesus Is*. There is literally *no one* like Him. And it's not because there are no other sons. It's because none of the other sons are the Son, the Creator God ("*through whom He made the worlds*"; "*all things came into being through Him*").
- D. The *Son of God* with *eyes of fire* and *feet like burnished bronze*, both have been discussed previously in terms of His description in chapter one. Here they are highlighted as His rebuke of those in the assembly who have erred in sin and compromise with the prophetess Jezebel, *as well as those who did not follow her*. His eyes and feet then are not only judgment on the ungodly but captivating flame of love and sacred feet that are placed on the footstool of the enemy in an act of placing them in submission and demonstration of the Kingdom of God. (Psalm 110:1-2)

For OT reference to His feet like burnished bronze, see Gen. 3:13; Psalm 110:1-2 and the bruising of the serpent's head making him a footstool for the Messiah's feet.

- E. His fire both judges and purifies and reveals His jealous love for His People. Fire was an emblem (1) **of *Jeh in His glory*** (Dnl 7:9); (2) **in His holiness** (Isa 6:4); (3) **in His jealousy for His sole worship** (Dt 4:24; He 12:29; Ps 79:5; perhaps also Isa 33:14); (4) **of His protection of His people** (2 K 6:17; Zec 2:5); (5) **of His righteous judgment and purification** (Zec 13:9; Mal 3:2, 3; 1 Cor 3:13, 15); (6) **of His wrath against sin and punishment of the wicked** (Dt 9:3; Ps 18:8; 89:46; Isa 5:24; 30:33, “a Topheth is prepared of old”; Mt 3:10–12; 5:22, RV “the hell of fire,” m “Gr, Gehenna of fire”; see Isa 30:33; Jer 7:31; Mt 13:40, 42; 25:41, “eternal fire”; Mk 9:45–49; see Isa 66:24; 2 Thess 1:7; He 10:27; Jude ver 7); (7) **of the word of God in its power** (Jer 5:14; 23:29); (8) **of Divine truth** (Ps 39:3; Jer 20:9; Lk 12:49); (9) **of that which guides men** (Isa 50:10, 11); (10) **of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 2:3); (11) **of the glorified Christ** (Rev 1:14); (12) **of kindness in its melting power** (Rom 12:20); (13) of trial and suffering (Ps 66:12; Isa 43:2; 1 Pet 1:7; 4:12); (14) of evil (Prov 6:27; 16:27; Isa 9:18; 65:5); lust or desire (Hos 7:6; Sir 23:16; 1 Cor 7:9); greed (Prov 30:16); (15) of the tongue in its evil aspects (Jas 3:5, 6); (16) of heaven in its purity and glory (Rev 15:2; see also 21:22, 23).⁶

- F. “I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. (Rev. 2:19 ESV)

Jesus recognizes the good things about the assembly in Thyatira. Their *works, love, faith, and patient endurance* are more than what they were when they started. Similar to the Assembly in Ephesus, they have the outward *works* as a complement to doing good in the community and a product of love and faith. Mounce writes, “The first two identify the motive forces of Christian activity, and the other two, the results that follow. While the love of the Ephesian church had decreased (2:4), the practical expression of love at Thyatira had grown (“you are now doing more than you did at first”). This rather liberal praise is explained by Swete as a preface for the blame that is to follow.”⁷

- G. Behind this commendation of things correct or right (orthodox), His flaming eyes pierce the hearts and reveal the sin of the church: “But I have this against you, that you *tolerate* that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is *teaching* and *seducing* my servant to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.” (Rev. 2:20 ESV)

The word translated *tolerate* is *apheis* from *aphiemi* meaning, “to leave it to someone to do something, with the implication of distancing oneself from the event—‘to let, to allow, to leave it to.’”⁸

Among the uses of this word is that she was not only left alone to teach and prophesy, but in that allowance, is a granting of *freedom*. And the irony is, her freedom led to their bondage.

- H. Who then is this person? “*That woman Jezebel.*” We are instantly transported in our minds to the wicked Queen of Israel, the wife of Ahab, Jezebel who entered into conflict with the prophet Elijah. Ahab’s father, Omri, became King of Israel and was above all other kings wicked before the LORD by building

⁶ W. L. Walker, “Fire,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr et al. (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 1112.

⁷ Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 85–86.

⁸ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 163.

metal idols. He established and founded Samaria, after which Ahab superseded him in wickedness by building an altar to Ba'al, and making an Asherah (1 Kings 16:30-33).

Omri most likely was not an Israelite. This is based on two points: 1. The biblical text does not give Omri any patronymic or tribal affiliation. With the exception of Zimri, this information is given for all the other Israelite kings, suggesting that Omri differed in some way from the other kings of Israel. 2. The civil war described in 1 Kgs 16:21-22 indicates that not everyone accepted Omri's rule. Interestingly, Omri's competitor, Tibni, does have a patronymic (Ginath) associated with his name. Hence, Tibni may have been the preferred king of the Israelite population, whereas Omri may have been the preferred king of a non-Israelite contingent (Kuan, "Was Omri a Phoenician?" 231-233).⁹

The word upon which Omri's name is based (ʿmr) does not occur in biblical Hebrew but does appear in Phoenician and Punic personal names (Benz, Personal Names, 380)... The Omride dynasty is characterized by a close political relationship with Phoenicia, especially in the marriage of Omri's son Ahab to Jezebel, the daughter of a Phoenician king (1 Kgs 16:31)¹⁰

The original Jezebel then became queen through a Phoenician arrangement to marry Omri's son, Ahab. If, Omri was Phoenician, then so was Ahab, and consequently Jezebel. Jezebel most certainly was not an Israelite, and Ahab also was most likely not from Israel. Thus, we have the principalities of Ba'al and Asherah, Phoenician deities, that were given ground in Israel.

- I. The modern *Charismatic* use of the phrase, *Jezebel Spirit*, has come to place either an attribution to the queen's spirit herself, or to another power that promotes her activity. I think we can all agree a *Jezebel Spirit*, is not the spirit of Queen Jezebel herself. She is in Sheol awaiting judgment, not bandying about provoking God's people. John Paul Jackson makes this same definition in his famous work *Unmasking the Jezebel Spirit*,

While the term "Jezebel spirit" is used in some charismatic circles, few people truly understand how this demonic force operates. A Jezebel spirit is a celestial power that has worldwide influence. It is not simply a demon that possesses an individual. It is a demonic power in the heavenly realm that transcends specific geographical boundaries and can affect nations. Whatever region this power enters, it co-joins and collaborates with the ruling principality of that territory. Jezebelic powers operate in conjunction with principalities and powers that torment people (Ephesians 6: 12). These demonic powers include spirits of religion, manipulation, control, lust, perversion, and the occult. These spirits often work in concert with a Jezebel spirit to build strongholds in a person's mind.¹¹

- J. What then is this *celestial power*, this *principality*? To give it the name it deserves is to see it is much more sinister and darker than simply saying, "Jezebel Sprit." While that applies in the defined way above, that or those wicked spirits are Ba'al and Asherah, the power behind the queen herself. To say someone, male

⁹ Benjamin J. Noonan, "Omri, King of Israel," in The Lexham Bible Dictionary, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ John Paul Jackson. *Unmasking the Jezebel Spirit* (Kindle Locations 418-426). Streams Ministries. Kindle Edition.

or female has or is influenced by a *Jezebel Spirit* is to point to the influence of Ba'al and/or Asherah. And from them we see all of the wicked activity that Jezebel herself both participated in and made Israel follow in participation; sexual immorality and worshiping these false gods.

- K. The problem with Ba'al is he was seen as the chief god, the son of El, the most high. He is the rider on the clouds, and referred to as Lord.¹² The figure of Baal which the Bible presents as being worshipped by the Israelites must have resembled the Baal known from Syrian and Phoenician sources, most notably the Ugaritic tablets.¹³ Without chasing the rabbit into this lane of thought, suffice it to say Ba'al was eventually used as the Ba'al Zebul or Baal Zebub, the spirit by whom the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting demons out by; and in this tread on the unpardonable sin, blaspheming the Holy Spirit. This is the great polemic against Ba'al. He is not the son of El, the most high. He is not the cloud rider. That title belongs to Jesus, the Visible-Physical Manifestation of the El Elyon, the Most-High, our God and Father.
- L. Asherah "appears in the following contexts. In the 'Baal cycle' of myths, KTU 1.1–6, she is a great goddess, mother of the minor gods of the pantheon, referred to as 'the seventy sons of Athirat' (šb 'm bn aṯrt, KTU 1.4 vi:46), who intercedes for Baal and Anat before El (KTU 1.4 iv), and who supplies a son to reign following the descent of Baal into the netherworld (KTU 1.6 i:45–55)."¹⁴ She also appears in a number of god-lists, the list K. 3089 indicating that she had a temple in Babylon, and on a number of cylinder-seals and impressions.¹⁵ ... The firmest evidence, i.e. that cited from the Keret story above, and the goddess' role in choosing Athtar as king in the Baal cycle, points to her role in kingship rituals, as 'incarnate' in the chief queen, who in Ugarit appears to have borne the title *rabitu*, 'Great Lady', (GORDON 1988) which is used of Asherah herself as well as of Shapsh, and which would correspond to the office of *gēbîrâ*, also something like 'Great Lady' in Israelite and Judahite royal ideology.¹⁶
- M. To say *Jezebel Spirit* is in fact to point to these powers: Ba'al and Asherah. They are the ancient, cultic forces of darkness at work in *that woman and her husband-king, Ahab*. They are among the deposed 70 sons of God that rebelled after Babel. They are among the sinister plotters of Ephesians 6:12 Paul points to as the fundamental battle ground of wrestling that believers engage in. *Not flesh and blood*, or in other words, the humans themselves are not the enemy. It is the powers influencing and empowering them to perform deeds of wickedness and injustice (see Psalm 82). The *powers* by which the woman Jezebel was operating by in the Church of Thyatira was in fact Ba'al and Asherah.
- N. Jezebel of Thyatira called herself a prophetess and taught "prophetically" or with prophetic power a different Gospel. The purpose of prophecy in the Church is to edify or build up, encourage, and exhort or bring consolation. It is both the ebb and flow of forthtelling (a present encouragement) or in some

¹² W. Herrmann, "Baal," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 133.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 137

¹⁴ N. Wyatt, "Asherah," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 99.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 101

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

instances foretelling (encouragement of the future). This is all in context to the Holy Spirit's work in the Church in believers that began on the Day of Pentecost that launched the *last days* outpouring.

¹⁷*In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. (Acts 2:17 NRSVue)*

⁸*When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for one day. The next day we left and came to Caesarea, and we went into the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the seven¹⁷, and stayed with him. ⁹He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy. (Acts 21:8-9 NRSVue)*

¹*Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts and especially that you may prophesy...³But those who prophesy speak to other people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation...⁵Now I would like all of you to speak in tongues but even more to prophesy. One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up...²²Tongues, then, are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers...²⁴But if all prophecy, an unbeliever or outsider who enters is reprovved by all and called to account by all. ²⁵After the secrets of the unbeliever's heart are disclosed, that person will bow down before God and worship, declaring, "God is really among you." (1 Cor. 14:1-25 NRSVue)*

Jezebel of Thyatira was not this kind of prophetess. The *forthtelling* and possibly *foretelling* did not build up the assembly, rather it countered the Gospel calling the base nature of the unsanctified soul to engage in and with her seduction and to be led into sexual immorality (*porneuo*). This was a wide range of prostitution, fornication, adultery, illicit uncleanness, homosexuality, and anything else that defiled sexually. Of course, this is the calling card of Ba'al and Asherah. Additionally, she brought into her prophecy the act of *eating food sacrificed to idols*; both are direct prohibitions handed down by the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15:19-20. Among the various truths of the defilement of eating food sacrificed to idols and the subsequent sexual immorality, is the twisted, Satanic version of the Communion Table. Eating food sacrificed to idols is equivalented to eating from the Table of Demons in 1 Corinthians 10:14-22. It is a covenant meal and it is what Adam did with the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil when he held communion with the Rebel Cherub/Seraph.

In the Holy of Holies, there was the altar. Altars, if you did not know, were tables. They were sites at which to dine with the gods. They were, moreover, for covenant meals. That will come up again, and it makes the coming transgression far more graphic. When Adam and Eve held a rebellious feast in the Most Holy place, Yahweh did not preside. Another spirit did.¹⁸

¹⁷ From Acts 6:5 one of the first deacons

¹⁸ Eldredge, Blaine. The Paradise King: The Tragic History and Spectacular Future of Everything According to Jesus of Nazareth (p. 51). Kindle Edition.

- O. Among the issues here is the place of idolatry and immorality lodging in the heart before God. Ezekiel 14 describes the defiling of the inward man/temple with idols and this seems to be the proscription given by John for Jezebel and her followers:

¹Then some elders of Israel came to me and sat down before me. ²And the word of Yahweh came to me, saying, ³"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be inquired by them at all? ⁴"Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh, "Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I Yahweh will be brought to give him an answer in light of it, in light of the multitude of his idols, ⁵in order to seize the house of Israel by their heart, those who are estranged from Me through all their idols." ' ⁶"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh, "Turn back and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations. ⁷"For anyone of the house of Israel or of the sojourners who sojourn in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I, Yahweh, will be brought to answer him in My own person. ⁸"I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from among My people. So you will know that I am Yahweh. ⁹"But if the prophet is enticed to speak a word, it is I, Yahweh, who have enticed that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from among My people Israel. ¹⁰"They will bear the punishment of their iniquity; as the iniquity of the inquirer is, so the iniquity of the prophet will be, ¹¹in order that the house of Israel may no longer wander from Me and no longer defile themselves with all their transgressions. Thus they will be My people, and I shall be their God," ' declares Lord Yahweh.'" (Ezek. 14:1-11 LSB)

- P. This is exactly what unfolds for Jezebel of Thyatira and her followers: ²¹I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. ²²Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, ²³and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. (Rev. 2:21-23 ESV)

Jesus' message: *This is not a game. I will not tolerate the idolatry and sexual immorality. Repent!*

Ezekiel 14:6 bears out this message: Turn back and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations.

The Hebrews for *turn* is *shuv* and the root of *t'shuvah*, or repentance. David Stern writes,

The underlying Hebrew concept is expressed in the word "t'shuvah" ("turning, returning"), which in the context of religious behavior means "turning" from one's sins and "returning" to God. Note that there is not only a "from" but a "to," for turning from one's sins is impossible unless at the same time one turns to God—otherwise one only turns from one set of sins to another! The Jewish understanding of

repentance, correct on this point, is that each individual must do it, yet it requires God's grace to be able to do it—"Turn us to you, O Adonai, and we will be turned" (Lamentations 5:21).¹⁹

- Q. Jezebel refused to repent. And in order to call the Assembly of Thyatira back to Himself, Jesus passed judgment on her and her children. They are doomed to sickness, great tribulation, and death. The result? And all the churches will know that I am he who searches the mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. If the heart and mind is filled with idols, then He will stretch out His hand against them and destroy them.

Jesus again confirms His identity of the Second Yahweh figure by equating Himself with the Yahweh of Jeremiah 17:9-10:

⁹"The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can know it? ¹⁰"I, Yahweh, search the heart; I test the inmost being, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his deeds. (Jer. 17:9-10 LSB; see also Jer. 20:12)

^{23b}And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. (Rev. 2:23b ESV)

In Jeremiah it is Yahweh declaring He is the one who searches the hearts innermost being and gives according to their ways and fruit of their deeds (works). Here it is Jesus who searches the hearts and minds and gives according to their works. Same God. Same action. Same result.

- R. *But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come.*

The *rest of you* in this assembly are not in leadership and are clearly aware of what is going on. How do we know? They aren't listed as those who *tolerate* the false prophecy and false teaching, and here they are not holding to this teaching. The Greek *echo* literally means to possess or hold something, as in Jesus *holds (echo) the seven stars in His hand*. You cannot grab something and hold it and not know it or be intentional of the effort to hold it. In this case, these others, *the rest of you*, knew what was being taught (thus, prophecy and teaching), and refused to take it in. There were then three parts to this assembly: a compromised leadership, a deceived and compromised majority of believes, and a remnant by their refusal to bow their knee to Ba'al. Recall the picture in 1 Kings 19:1-18 where Elijah flees Jezebel only to arrive at Mount Horeb/Sinai and learns he isn't the *only one* left, but Yahweh has left 7,000 in Israel who have not bowed to Ba'al, nor have they venerated his image. Paul appeals to this passage in Romans 11 as proof that God has not rejected Israel, but chosen a remnant by grace. This is the apparent background to the Church in Thyatira. Not everyone has bowed to the spirit of Ba'al. It is to these Jesus is speaking.

- S. Not only have they not held to Jezebel of Thyatira's teaching, they have not *learned* the *deep things of Satan*. This is a movement into direct Satanism at work through this false prophetess/teacher. What do other New Testament authors say about false prophets and teachers?

- a. 2 Peter 2:1-4,9-10

¹⁹ David H. Stern, Jewish New Testament Commentary : A Companion Volume to the Jewish New Testament, electronic ed. (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1996), Mt 3:2.

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive opinions. They will even deny the Master who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Even so, many will follow their debaucheries, and because of these teachers the way of truth will be maligned. And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their condemnation, pronounced against them long ago, has not been idle, and their destruction is not asleep. For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned but cast them into hell (tartarosas) and committed them to chains of deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment;... then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial and to keep the unrighteous until the day of judgment, when they will be punished—especially those who indulge their flesh in depraved lust and who despise authority. (2 Pet. 1-4; 9-10; see also 14-22)

b. Jude 1:3-7, 10

Beloved, while eagerly preparing to write to you about the salvation we share, I find it necessary to write and appeal to you to contend for the faith that was once and for all handed on to the saints. For certain intruders have stolen in among you, people who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly, who pervert the grace of our God into debauchery and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed, once and for all, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their own position but deserted their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great day. Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones.

But these people slander whatever they do not understand, and they are destroyed by those things that, like irrational animals, they know by instinct. (Jude 1:3-7, 10)

These two passages have a lot in common, including their source material from 1 Enoch. But the point both of them are making is what is front and center: false prophets and teachers are acting in a way that is consistent with the sin of the Watchers in 1 Enoch. They teach the grace of God in a way that ultimately leads to sexual immorality and fellowship with demons and wicked spirits.

- T. (Rev. 2:24) The *deep things of Satan*²⁰ pertains to something nonphysical perceived to be so remote that it is difficult to assess (*bathys*; BDAG). The motive is the same as the watchers and the *hidden knowledge* is granted at a price. In terms of the Watcher tradition, it was to take wives and bear the Nephilim offspring. In the case of Jezebel of Thyatira, it was to lead into sexual immorality and therefore power over her followers. The end result is the same; the snare was set for them all by Ba'al and Ashera, including Jezebel. And her judgment will be like that of the Watchers.
- U. To the overcomer, Jesus will grant him or her authority over the nations; to rule over them with a rod of iron, and to shatter them to pieces, even as He received authority from His Father. John again continues

²⁰ Contrast with 1 Cor. 2:10 and the deep things of God

to connect the narrative points of the Old Testament to the New and how they unfold into the lives of believers. Here, Jesus is making His promise from Psalm 2, one of the major Messianic, eschatological chapters in all of Scripture.

- V. Psalm 2 opens with a question that strikes at the motive of the wicked rulers of the earth (human and wicked spirits), and Yahweh's solution to their plans. "Why do the nations (*goyim*; Gentile Nations) rage and the peoples (nations) meditate or imagine a vain thing?" It would seem the rage, or restlessness is at the root of their wicked imagination. And this has the echoes of Babel when the world was united in its attempt to re-create Eden (see Gen. 11)
- W. Paul reflects on this truth when addressing the Athenians in Acts 17 and his acknowledgment that the nations are a product of the effects of Babel and God setting their boundaries, along with the assignments of the sons of God to inform them (Deut. 32:8). The same Greek idea is used in Acts 17:26 and Deuteronomy 32:8 (LXX): *horion* (*ore-ee-on*) – noun: boundary, border; *horizo* –(*ore-eez-oh*) v. to divide or separate from.
- X. The kings of the earth take their stand *and the rulers take counsel together*. Notice is the *kings of the earth* and the *rulers* and together *they take counsel*. This is the dark counsel of Satan; the upside-down version of Yahweh's Divine Council. It is the spirit of Antichrist at work. How do we know? Peter applies Psalm 2 to the Crucifixion and death of Jesus in Acts 4:25, 26:

²⁵*it is you who said by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant: 'Why did the gentiles rage and the peoples imagine vain things?'* ²⁶*The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.'* (Acts 4:25-26 NRSVue)

It was the intent of the gentiles, their kings (Herod and Pontius Pilate, and by extension Rome), and the rulers (both the Sanhedrin, and the spiritual rulers of darkness) acting in concert to kill Jesus. One of the clearest reasons is from Psalm 2: They stand against Yahweh and His Anointed, saying, "Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!"

- Y. Their intent is to return to Babel. In order to do so they must tear the fetters and cast away the rope that has them bound. But Yahweh laughs and Adonai mocks them. Thus, He speaks (*d'var*) in His anger. He terrifies or horrifies them in his fury through His declaration. When God *speaks*, it is His Word (*Logos/D'var/Memra*) who speaks.²¹ This is the *same Word who became flesh and tabernacled among us* (*John 1:14*).
- Z. What does He say that horrifies and terrifies them? "I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain." And there they see it. The Mountain of God is not the rebuilt Tower of Babel for the gods to descend to them. It is Eden and the Temple of Yahweh, ruled by His King, He has installed, His Son, King Jesus. And upon installation as King, Yahweh says to His Son, "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance." Again, the kings and rulers all see what the plan is in its finality: He is going

²¹ See Genesis 15:1, et. al.: ...the Word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying...

to inherit them and rule them; and the rebellious He will break them with a rod of iron and shatter them like a potter's vessel. They cannot succeed in their plan to recreate Babel, the perversion of Eden.

- AA. It is here we are brought into Revelation 2:26-27. Jesus, this King that His Father, Yahweh, has been installed on Mount Zion, who will receive the nations and rule and reign with a rod of iron, says to the *overcomer* (in Thyatira, and by implication all believers who overcome), "I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron." This began in Matthew 28:18-20 when Jesus acknowledged His reign of Psalm 2 had already begun²², "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*" Go therefore. (The subject of this sentence is 'you'; as in *you go therefore and make disciples of the nations.*")
- BB. There is then an *already* application of ruling the nations with a rod of iron and shattering them like pottery. This is found in *making disciples* of the nations. The kings and rulers (both natural and spiritual) or this age are terrified by a Church that uses the authority of Jesus in this present-evil age to rescue humans from their domain of darkness (Col. 1:13). The impact is the same as using a rod of iron to effectuate the rule and reign of Messiah. It shatters them like pottery. But that is not the end of the promise. It will unfold into the New Age to Come, in the Millennial Reign. Overcomers will inherit the rule and reign of Messiah from Him to exercise righteous judgment and to shepherd the nations with Him. In effect, the Overcomer will take their place as the newly instituted replacement for the sons of God of Deuteronomy 32:8; replacing the principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and wicked spirits in the heavens.
- CC. "*And I will give him the Morning Star.*" This is a continuation of sharing in the rule and reign with Messiah, *now* and in the *age to come* and points to the transformation of the believer as a New Creation (1 Cor. 5:17). How do we get here? The *morning star* is itself first a reference to the planet Venus given the Ancient Near Eastern view of celestial objects in the night/morning sky (i.e., stars, planets, comets, etc.). Venus is referred to as the daystar, or morning star, and evening star; in reality it's no star at all, but a planet. In the case of the daystar, or morning star, designation,
- The "morning star," "day star," and "evening star" are three modern ways of referring to the planet Venus (known in ancient Babylonia as the star of Ishtar), which appears at dawn before the sun and so was understood in ancient times as the herald of a new day.²³
- The key idea here is that it *appears at dawn before the sun* and is then *the herald of a new day*. And from here Aune connects this reward to the previous one, "The gift of the morning star must refer to the fact that the exalted Christ shares his messianic status with the believer who conquers."²⁴
- DD. The point of the terminology isn't hard to figure out. It has to do with (drum roll, please): brightness. Stars were bright. Brightness is a common description of divine beings throughout the ancient world. They are often described as luminous or fiery (biblical examples include Ezek 1:13; Psa 104:4). Divine

²² An excellent example of the already-and-not-yet.

²³ Dr. David Aune. Revelation 1-5, Volume 52A (Kindle Locations 15569-15571). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

²⁴ Ibid., KL (15577-15578)

beings were therefore associated with, or identified with, objects in the sky — stars or planets. This idea is all over the ancient Near East. In terms of the Old Testament, Job 38:6-7 is the best example (and note that it pluralizes “morning star”):

On what were its [the earth’s] bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Why the plural? Because there were more than one (I know, I’m on a profundity roll now). Why the metaphor? Because it’s the dawn of a new day — the first day, as it were; the day of earth’s creation. Now back to Isaiah 14 ...

While the focus in Isaiah 14 is a human king, the king of Babylon, the description of that king’s arrogance is drawn from a story of a divine being’s rebellion. Like all divine beings, that being was shining / luminous / bright — like the morning star.

To my mind, that’s pretty simple. Now here’s where we need to think a little — with respect to the use of the “morning star” terminology of the New Testament, linked as it is with Jesus. On the surface, it would be easy to just say “well, the resurrected Christ is certainly divine, so the description fits.” (Note: all the morning star occurrences with respect to Jesus are about the risen Christ or his re-appearing). We even get discussion about the manifestation of Jesus’ glory before the resurrection, connected of course with the very presence of God (John 1:14 2:11; Acts 7:55; Titus 2:13). That’s true, but there’s more to it — and it concerns not the shining appearance of the morning star, what it visually looked like to the eye — but what it denoted: the dawn of a new day, the new kingdom come to earth.

Let’s take a look now at how that theme — the coming again of Jesus to earth to consummate the new kingdom of God, the new Eden — is always part of the context of the “morning star” references when used of Jesus.²⁵

There are three morning star references in the New Testament. Heiser provides a good summary of this idea: 2 Peter 1:17-19, Rev 2:26-28, Rev 22:16

He continues,

Let’s start with the last one first. It’s clear that the reference to the morning star has something to do with kingship — why else link it to “I am the root and descendant of David”? (Recall that David was from Bethlehem of Judah). Coming where it does — the unveiling of the new Jerusalem and new Eden — the context couldn’t be clearer. This is why basically all NT scholars since the description here as hearkening back to Num 24:17: “a star shall rise out of Jacob” (“Jacob,” of course is another term used for Israel throughout the Bible, the last portion of which left after the exile and return was Judah). Numbers 24:17 was interpreted messianically in Judaism apart from the New Testament writers (T. Levi 18:3; T. Jud. 24:1;

²⁵ <https://drmsch.com/jesus-morning-star/#fn-2830-1>

1QM 11:6–7; 4QTestim 9–13; CD 7:18–20). In other words, everyone would have known this morning star reference was not about brightness; it was about the dawning of the returned kingdom of God.

That’s also the point of Rev 2:26-28, working backward through our references. But this passage is even cooler. You divine council worldview junkies should like this one. Notice how in this case Jesus isn’t the morning star — he gives the morning star. Look at it again:

26 The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, 27 and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star. 29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Who are the ones that overcome in Revelation? Believers. What do they get? Authority. Over whom? The nations — you know, the nations that are at present under the authority of the corrupted sons of God (Deut 32:8-9, with LXX and DSS; cp. Deut 4:19-20; Psalm 82). That’s right. Believers share in the kingdom (see Daniel 7:27-28, another divine council passage). They will “ruler over angels” (1 Cor 6:3) because they displace them in God’s hierarchy in the last day. Verse 27 has Jesus ruling (“he”) with a rod of iron (Psa 2), but it is Jesus who gives to mere believers — the overcomers — the morning star. What is the morning star? The divine authority to rule in the new kingdom.

The last reference is not difficult to parse in light of all this. Again:

2 Peter 1:17-19

17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts ...

You believers — the ones who need to overcome (and 2 Peter has something to say about persecution and false teachers) — you need to follow the truth, that shines like a lamp in a dark place — until the morning star rises in your hearts. Sound odd? Try this paraphrase: “until the new day dawns in you hearts.” What new day? the one that happens after Jesus returns and you’re all resurrected to rule and reign with him, because you are in him and he is you, and you receive the new body promised through the earnest money of the Spirit (borrowing some Pauline terms there). The “in the hearts” idea is communicating something like “until this hope rises in you” — until you see the blessed hope dawning.²⁶

- EE. The overcomer receives the morning star. The power and authority is not only in the age to come; but is available now, *in part*. Tasting the power of the age to come (Heb. 6:5) means among other things, the

²⁶ Ibid.

exercise of authority over wicked spirits (Deut. 32:8; Matt. 10:1, 7-8; Eph. 6:10-18). We *begin now* to rule and reign. Where the *new creation in Messiah* is in fact the dawning of the new day that has already started in the inner man of the believer; *if*, we overcome. It is contingent/conditional on disagreeing with the enemy, agreeing with Jesus, and entering into the light of the new day. This is the solution to the Church of Thyatira that was infiltrated with false gods and their agenda to destroy the assembly through the false teaching and prophecy of Jezebel. The powers of Ba'al and Asherah came to blind the minds of those in the church. The powers of darkness needed to be supplanted by those who took their place ruling and reigning with Christ, *now*, and in the age to come.

FF. Paul takes aim at the same truth:

⁷Therefore do not be associated with them, ⁸for once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them...¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." (Eph. 5:7-11, 13-14 NRSVue)

And then, the Morning Star, the Dawning of the New Age, will shine on you!