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1-29-2023

SERIES: 2023 THE YEAR OF OVERCOMING  
PART 4A: COMPROMISE LEADS TO DISLOYALTY

Good Morning CVCHURCH on-site and online. If you're on-site this morning (this afternoon) you can see just how far our renovation has come in only 5 working days! We're very excited about the progress we're making. So far, we have had Small Groups, Bible studies, and EPICC Youth Ministry on our campus as well. We're going full steam ahead!

I want to encourage everyone who is committed to our purpose here at CVCHURCH: **“We exist to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ (Discipleship), by connecting them with Father God (worship), the local church (Fellowship), those we can serve (Ministry) and people who don't yet know Jesus. (Evangelism) to make it a point to come especially during our renovation.** I am aware of some of the annoyances of being here during our work week. Believe me, I hear them too! But, loved ones, we need each other, today, more than ever. So I ask for your patience and prayer with us over the next 4 to 6 months, however long it takes. We all need to be sure to be here each Sunday to worship, and to care for one another. We need to share our faith with those who need to hear about what Jesus has done in your life. We need to continue building relationships with one another as we grow deeper in Jesus, together, in our OVERCOMING SERIES and our study in the book of Revelation.

Today we start our two part teaching on the prophetic word that Jesus gave to John to the church in Thyatira and just how appropriate it is for us today. Revelation 2:18-29 **“WRITE THIS LETTER TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA. THIS IS THE MESSAGE FROM THE SON OF GOD, WHOSE EYES ARE LIKE FLAMES OF FIRE, WHOSE FEET ARE LIKE POLISHED BRONZE: <sup>19</sup>I KNOW ALL THE THINGS YOU DO. I HAVE SEEN YOUR LOVE, YOUR FAITH, YOUR SERVICE, AND YOUR PATIENT ENDURANCE. AND I CAN SEE YOUR CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT IN ALL THESE THINGS. <sup>20</sup>BUT I HAVE THIS COMPLAINT AGAINST YOU. YOU ARE PERMITTING THAT WOMAN-THAT JEZEBEL WHO CALLS HERSELF A PROPHET-TO LEAD MY SERVANTS ASTRAY. SHE TEACHES THEM TO COMMIT SEXUAL SIN AND TO EAT FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS. <sup>21</sup>I GAVE HER TIME TO REPENT, BUT SHE DOES NOT WANT TO TURN AWAY FROM HER IMMORALITY. <sup>22</sup>THEREFORE, I WILL THROW HER ON A BED OF SUFFERING, AND THOSE WHO COMMIT ADULTERY WITH HER WILL SUFFER GREATLY UNLESS THEY REPENT AND TURN AWAY FROM HER EVIL DEEDS. <sup>23</sup>I WILL STRIKE HER CHILDREN DEAD. THEN ALL THE CHURCHES WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE ONE WHO SEARCHES OUT THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTIONS OF EVERY PERSON. AND I WILL GIVE TO EACH OF YOU WHATEVER YOU DESERVE. <sup>24</sup>BUT I ALSO HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THE REST OF YOU IN THYATIRA WHO HAVE NOT FOLLOWED THIS FALSE TEACHING (“DEEPER TRUTHS,” AS THEY CALL THEM-DEPTHS OF SATAN, ACTUALLY). I WILL ASK NOTHING MORE OF YOU <sup>25</sup>EXCEPT THAT YOU HOLD TIGHTLY TO WHAT YOU HAVE UNTIL I COME. <sup>26</sup>TO ALL WHO ARE VICTORIOUS, WHO OBEY ME TO THE VERY END, TO THEM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER ALL THE NATIONS. <sup>27</sup>THEY WILL RULE THE NATIONS WITH AN IRON ROD AND SMASH THEM LIKE CLAY POTS. <sup>28</sup>THEY WILL HAVE THE SAME AUTHORITY I RECEIVED FROM MY FATHER, AND I WILL ALSO GIVE THEM THE MORNING STAR! <sup>29</sup>ANYONE WITH EARS TO**

**HEAR MUST LISTEN TO THE SPIRIT AND UNDERSTAND WHAT HE IS SAYING TO THE CHURCHES.”**

**HOW TO REMAIN LOYAL TO JESUS CHRIST.**

**The WHO:** v. 18b says, **“THIS IS THE MESSAGE FROM THE SON OF GOD, WHOSE EYES ARE LIKE FLAMES OF FIRE, WHOSE FEET ARE LIKE POLISHED**

**BRONZE:”** Jesus gives us six leading characteristics of who He is to that are meant to help us remain loyal to him in a corrupt sexual, immoral and perverted culture.

**1. SON of GOD.**

**Jesus is the perfect revelation of the unseen god.**

See John 3:18 and 5:25 **“<sup>25</sup>AND I ASSURE YOU THAT THE TIME IS COMING, INDEED IT’S HERE NOW, WHEN THE DEAD WILL HEAR MY VOICE—THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD. AND THOSE WHO LISTEN WILL LIVE.”** Church, this is significant because Jesus introduces Himself from the vision John received in Revelation 1:12-20. In v. 13 of chapter 1 John writes, **“AND STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAMPSTANDS (the 7 churches) WAS SOMEONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN.”** This is a direct reference to Daniel 7:13 and 10:5. The term ‘Son of God’ is used only once in all of the book of Revelation. This is done intentionally by Jesus and by John. Son of God stresses the truth that Jesus is of one essence with the Father. John 5:18 says, **“So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill Him. For He not only broke the Sabbath, He called God His father, thereby making Himself equal with God.”** In 1:13 Christ was described as the Son of Man vs. 13. This title emphasizes His humiliation, His sympathetic identification with believers as their merciful High Priest. It offers sympathetic identification with believers as their merciful High Priest. The phrase Son of God does not focus on Jesus humility but On His deity. He doesn’t come as a sympathetic High Priest, but as divine judge.

**2. Jesus has EYES of FIRE.**

This phrase represents that **Jesus has penetrating insight and sees through the seductive sexual arguments of the false prophetess Jezebel.** Jesus describes Himself as having piercing, laser-like vision that sees all; nothing can be disguised, covered, or hidden from Him. In describing Jesus Christ in His second coming glory, Revelation 19:12 says, **“HIS EYES WERE LIKE FLAMES OF FIRE,”** See the similar wording in Daniel 10:6.

**3. Feet of polished BRONZE. This portrays His purity, holiness, and strength.** Jesus will come to trample out impurity of all kind. 4. Vs. 21 I GAVE HER TIME TO REPENT. This person who Jesus identifies as Jezebel he says she describes herself as a prophetess and she leads His servants astray by teaching them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols. Listen to Jesus indictment against this false prophetess in vs. 21.

**4. “I gave her TIME to REPENT, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality.” This demonstrates Jesus’ mercy to the most rebellious.**

**5. Vs. 23. I will give to each of you what you deserve.** Jesus says that I respect your free moral choices. Darrell Johnson writes, **“In other words, “Choose to serve other lords but you will have to live with the consequences.”** How so many so called Christians and not believers respond, this is unjust and unfair. Loved ones this is our spiritual reality. **Jeremiah 17:10 says, “But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve.”** **Matthew 16:27 says, “For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds.**

**THE WHAT:**

**A. Jesus AFFIRMS the good DEEDS in His church. Vs. 19. “I know all the things you do. I have seen your love, your faith, your service, and your patient endurance. And I can see your constant improvement in all these things.”**

**1. Their LOVE.** Jesus affirms their love for God and for each other.

**2. Their FAITH.** Some commentators say that the word for faith “Pistis is better translated “faithfulness” or “fidelity.” In other words, the Christians in Thyatira were dependable, reliable, and consistent as in Vs. 25. Faithfulness and love are frequently linked in the N.T.

**3. Their SERVICE.**

**4. Their patient ENDURANCE.** It is only logical that out of a strong faith and love will come the desire to serve God by meeting others needs and those who are faithful will steadfastly persevere in the faith.

**B. Jesus REBUKES the church for the FALSE witness that is leading His people astray. I have much to say about Jezebel and her ability to Israel into Idolatry that caused them to experience God’s judgment. I want to let the Scripture introduce to her and her diabolical influence on her husband and all of Israel. Because it is most likely in this letter to the church in Thyatira the women’s name is most likely not Jezebel but that is the name Jesus is giving to her because the demonic influence she has introduced into this church. 1 Kings 16:29-33 in the NIV: **“<sup>29</sup>In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. <sup>30</sup>Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. <sup>31</sup>He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. <sup>32</sup>He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. <sup>33</sup>Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to arouse the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than did all the kings of Israel before him.”** 1 Kings 21:25-26 **“<sup>25</sup>(No one else so completely sold himself to what was evil in the Lord’s sight as Ahab did under the influence of his wife Jezebel. <sup>26</sup>His worst outrage was worshiping idols just as the Amorites had done—the people whom the Lord had driven out from the land ahead of the Israelites.)”****

There is much that can be said but as I close this morning (afternoon) I want to give one of the best definitions that I have read to date defining Baal worship, how did it impacted Thyatira, and how it impacts our culture today. The spirit of Jezebel and Baal worship exerts tremendous pressure in our culture today. One of the leading spirits that we need to renounce personally and as a church, is described by Craig Lockwood in his powerful book “FALLING FORWARD: THE PURSUIT OF SEXUAL PURITY: “ ... **is the evil spirits that rule over sexual worship and sexual perversion-Baal and Ashtoreth.”**

#### **APPENDIX D from FALLING FORWARD:**

Baal is the god of sexual idolatry and perversion. Baal was the supreme god worshiped in Canaan and other pagan nations of the Old Testament. He is mentioned over sixty times in the Bible and was the primary reason God did not allow His people to mingle with the pagan cultures. Instead, God commanded that His people were to completely destroy those cultures, leaving none of the spoil intact.

The name Baal means ‘**lord**, possessor.’ There were many Baals, and the form of worship varied from place to place. Because the name Baal connotes husband, God’s people at times called Yahweh, who is the true “Master” and “Husband” to Israel, by the name of Baal. This, of course, led to confusion and overlap in worship practices in the Israelite culture. Baal was the male sun

god, and was worshiped in pagan cultures on the tops of high mountains in order to catch a view of the rising and setting sun.

Ashteroth was Baal's female counterpart. She was the wife of Baal and the "queen of heaven." (Jer. 7:18, 44:17). She embodied the feminine qualities of life, symbolized by the moon. Idols to her were set up in the temples and worshiped through diverse and perverted sexual sacrifices. As we know, there were times when Israel also worshiped Ashteroth through the disobedience of her wayward kings (Judges 2:13, 10:16, etc.). Her priests were eunuchs in woman's clothing, indicating her emasculating power. It is the demonic power behind Ashteroth that causes men to bow to pornography. When men devote themselves to the sensual power of others, they abdicate the good of their true masculinity.

Temple worship of Ashteroth involved women prostitutes given for the use of male worshippers. Worship consisted of lustful orgies carried out in elevated temples and in gardens.

Essentially, the worship of Baal and Ashteroth is what is happening in the worship of the creature over Creator. Worship of created things, such as the sun or moon, has historically ended in the worship of man's procreative faculties — the genitals.

The spirits of Baal and Ashteroth prey on those who hold or act upon the belief that all that is important about man revolves around his genitals. The core of Baal and Ashteroth worship is phallicism — the worship of the male sexual organ. Phallicism exalts the male generative power and is a perverted view of what masculinity is all about. This is why the idols for this religion were totems in the image of the phallus. Ashteroth poles, as well as smaller sexual images that are often unearthed at excavation sites of these ancient civilizations.

We can see how man's or woman's undue emphasis or insecurity about the size and shape of his or her sexual organs is the emotional core of various forms of modern Baal-worship. When sexuality is closely linked to inadequacy, then it may become a form of worship.

As it progresses, the worship of Baal evolves to sexual sacrifice, as Baal begins demanding human lives. This is the other face of Baal worship — child sacrifice to Molech, as is seen in abortion. The two combined are a picture of modern day satanism.

The evil spirits of Baal and Ashteroth dovetail together to empower sexual addiction. As a man begins to buy into the ideals of virility, physical strength, and sexuality as a source for his sexual identity — worshipping himself and the use of his genitals — his thinking is darkened to the truth of what masculinity in Jesus is all about. He is primed to buy into the activity of yielding his faculties again and again to the sensuality involved in the worship of Ashteroth — the worship of a false feminine sensuality. The ideals of Baal give him the illusion of control, while the power of Ashteroth holds him in bondage to images of idealized women.