

The Jewish Final Solution to the World's Problem - Revelation, Part 7-Letters to the Seven Churches, Part 3

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Date: 06 November 2016

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[0 : 00] Please turn to the book of Revelation, chapter 2, and we'll be taking a look at the latter half of the chapter, starting with verse 18 through verse 29.

And to the angel of the church in Lyatira write, The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like burnished bronze, says this, I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads my bondservants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.

And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am he who searches the minds and hearts, and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

[1 : 58] But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them, I place no other burden on you.

Nevertheless, what you have, hold fast until I come. He who overcomes, and he who keeps my deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from my Father, and I will give him the morning star.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. By way of remembrance, let me say that the Revelation, the last book in the Bible that we have recently commenced, is perhaps the most controversial book in all of the Bible when it comes to its meaning and interpretations.

There are some who insist that it is simply impossible to understand because of all of the symbolism that is found and the inability to determine what those symbols indicate, that it just makes it impossible to get a handle on it.

So the best that they can suggest is that it is simply an overall consideration of the battle ongoing between good and evil.

[3 : 55] And as you turn to the last chapter of the book, you will discover that good has won out over evil. Therefore, that's the essence and the totality of the message of Revelation.

And if you're looking for any more details than that, they are simply not to be found. We cannot accept that idea at all because we are committed to the idea that the totality of the Word of God, including the Revelation, is intelligible.

That means it is capable of being understood, that it is intended to be understood. The Bible is a book of revelation, not a book of concealment.

God has no interest in puzzling us or confusing us. He has given us this information so that we can understand it, and in understanding it, be responsible and responsive to it, because you cannot respond to what you do not understand.

Not only that, but this last book of the Bible, the Revelation, is the only book in the Bible that says it is accompanied with a special blessing for those who read it.

[5 : 17] Now, I do not think that the meaning or intent is, there is a special blessing for those who read it, never mind the fact that you won't be able to understand it at all.

Just read it, because there is some kind of magical osmosis that will slip from the pages into you, and you will somehow be blessed, even though you don't have a clue about what it's saying.

That's nonsense. The blessing comes from understanding, and we are committed to the idea that it was given to be understood.

We are also committed to the idea that the Bible is not only its best interpreter, it is its only safe interpreter. We are going to see how this plays out time and time again as we consider the various symbols that are found here in this book.

All of these symbols mean something. Each symbol doesn't mean a half dozen different things. The Bible will tell us the meaning of that symbol, so we will be able to connect the dots.

[6 : 25] One other thing that I want to advise you about before we look at this church at Thyatira is we are committed to the idea that the entirety of the Revelation, beginning with chapter 1, all the way through the end of the book, is all future.

Most who are of a pre-tribulation and a pre-millennial position, such as we are, take the position that the first three chapters are in connection with the church, and that these churches actually had historical existence at the time John wrote.

He wrote somewhere in the area of 90 to 95 A.D., which would be about 30 or 35 years after the ascension of Jesus Christ.

And most scholars are of the opinion that the church to which John is writing, or the seven churches, were seven actual geographical historical churches that existed in Asia Minor, which is modern-day Turkey, and that John wrote these letters to those seven churches.

And chapter 4 involves that which is future, and the first three chapters involves that which is history.

[8 : 01] So the position of the majority is the first three chapters have already happened. They were back in John's day when he wrote this. So, with that history behind, beginning with chapter 4 of Revelation, everything is future.

From chapter 4 on is all future. First three chapters, they're history. I am convinced that is not a tenable position at all, and I think it will become apparent as to why we believe that as we move on through the book.

We take the position, and I think it's the only consistent position to take, that the entirety of the book is future. All of it's future. All 22 chapters.

None of it has transpired yet. At all. Then, the question automatically arises, well, what is it about these seven churches? Weren't there geographical places in Asia Minor with these names, Smyrna and Ephesus?

Yes, there were. In fact, we were privileged to visit one of them, the ancient site in the ruins of Ephesus, which was just absolutely stunning. So, some feel that all of these letters to the seven churches were all history.

[9 : 29] But I am more and more convinced that they are all future. The entirety of the book of the Revelation is future. And I think we will be able to establish that case as we move on through.

So, what that would do, for one thing, is it would lend consistency to the whole book. I find it very unseemly, very difficult to suggest that, well, the first three chapters are history, but chapter four on is prophecy.

Seems to me to be much more consistent and much more logical, which I think will be buttressed with other ideas and with other answers, that the whole thing is future. The entirety of it.

And, of course, there are some who take the position, and these are called preterists, preterists. They believe that the whole thing is history.

That everything that is recorded in Revelation already happened. But, of course, you have to do some pretty fancy reading between the lines to be able to work in certain great events of history.

[10 : 37] Nonetheless, they search the Revelation and they find World War I and World War II and some find Napoleon and Hitler and so on. So, these things to them are already history.

They've already been fulfilled. And that we just cannot entertain for a moment. It is just too obviously futuristic. And I think as we continue on through the book, the case will build and establish itself that it is obviously to the future.

So, what I am saying is these seven churches, churches, as they are described here, never have existed.

But they will. When will they? They will exist following the rapture of the church. Church is gone.

Ah, yes, but these are churches here. And how can we have churches, seven of them, if the church is already supposed to have been raptured? What are they doing here? And that's the dilemma that some hold that position that I mentioned earlier.

[11 : 46] But I am persuaded, and again, I think we'll be able to establish the case, these churches are not at all what you and I would call New Testament churches, such as Grace Bible Church is today.

These are Jewish, and they are Jewish assemblies. The word that is rendered, church, in the English, ecclesia, is the very same word that is rendered church.

It also means assembly, it means congregation, it means gathering, it means a group called out for a certain thing. So, it does not have to comport with what we know and understand as a church at all.

Now, just let me give you a brief introduction to this that I think, as I mentioned, as time goes on, we'll be able to build on and establish in a stronger way, that what is going to happen in connection with the rapture or the translation, the catching away of the church to be with the Lord when He comes in the air.

1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15. sometime after that, sometime after that, there is going to be an enormous revival of spirituality among the Jewish people worldwide, particularly as they are in the Middle East.

[13 : 21] I think it is very, very significant that more and more Jews across the world are making Aliyah, Aliyah. And Aliyah means the return. And they are going to their homeland, even though many of them have never been there before.

They're going there from all over the world. And as I mentioned before, there are more Jews living in Israel today than there are in the rest of the world combined.

This is the first time this has ever happened in our lifetime, for sure. Well, for hundreds, even for thousands of years, the Jewish nation as a nation, as a national entity, was simply destroyed, albeit not finally, but destroyed for a period of almost 2,000 years before it was reborn in 1947, which is just a miracle in and of itself.

And the time is coming when the Jewish people are going to undergo an enormous spiritual transformation. It is that of which Zechariah was speaking when he says, they shall look upon me whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son.

And Israel is going to come full circle. They are going to embrace Yeshua HaMashiach as their Savior, and they are going to begin establishing synagogues.

[14 : 48] The text here calls them churches. And by the way, I have insisted from the outset, and will continue to do so, that the whole book of the Revelation is intensely Jewish.

Very Jewish. In fact, we'll even see that in the session this morning. How that Jewish terminology keeps surfacing. And Gentiles have no point of reference to these terms.

But Jews do. Very much so. And I am suggesting that when these events transpire, these letters to seven churches or seven Jewish assemblies will be exactly as they are given in the text here, and these congregations will be suffering from the same spiritual maladies that are described here, and some will have the same spiritual positive qualities that are required here.

All of this is put in the tribulation period, and that too will be described by what is going to occur in these bodies of these assemblies.

They are going to be living, surviving, struggling in the tribulation period, and in that period of time that will precede the tribulation. Now we've got some difficulty in establishing the exact timetable because there are just too many unknowns, and we're not interested in setting any dates or making any prophecies, but we'll let the text speak for itself.

[16 : 20] So let's get now, if we may, to the message of Thyatira, and the address is to the angel, and may I remind you again, we are going to see repeated angelic involvement, repeated expressions of the supernatural in the revelation that are not found in any other book of the Bible.

Our Lord performed certain miracles during his earthly tenure on earth, but they were minor compared to what is going to be happening in the revelation. These are going to be events that are cataclysmic.

They are going to involve angels repeatedly, both fallen and unfallen angels. There is going to be enormous demonic activity that is going to plague the earth and will be part of the divine punishment.

So let us get into the text, if we may. To the angel of the church. All of these are addressed to the angel. Each church has its own angel, and the angel is a messenger.

I do not understand the connection that the angel has to that individual church. I don't understand what that connection is, other than the fact that this angel is charged with the responsibility of the message to the church.

[17 : 46] To the church. And how they are involved beyond that, I do not know. But it is interesting that the message is given to the angel.

I know most translate that, angelos, as the pastor. messenger. And there is no question but what the pastor of the church is a messenger.

But I am looking for consistency here, and I think the Bible labors to maintain it. And we have got the appearance of an angelic being in the very first chapter, in the very first verse of the revelation.

And one of the rules of hermeneutics is called the law of first mention. And that simply means that you go to where the Bible mentions a particular word the first time, and see if that does not become the ordinary usage of that word thereafter.

Now it is true that you take the whole Bible into consideration when you do that. And I am just taking apart. But if you just go back to Revelation chapter 1, in verse 1, we have got an angel involved here.

[19 : 01] And I do not know why God is going through angels. I do not know why he does not just do this directly. But we do know there is precedent for it. Because when God gave Israel the law, he gave it to them through the instrumentality of angels.

So it went from God to angels to Moses. to Israel. Why angels are included, I do not know. I can just give you a wise man guess. And that's all it is.

It's just a guess. And that is that the information that is involved is going to be filtered through every available entity. It is going to be a prize of God because it's coming from God.

It is going to be a prize by angels as a created entity. And it is going to be a prize by humans, the others. And those cover the waterfront. There are no others besides those.

There is deity, angelic, and human. As far as we know, that's it. And all three come into play. All three are involved in this message that is to be delivered.

[20 : 14] And it is as if God is saying, I'm not leaving out anybody who is involved in creation. So all are in on this. To the angel of the church of Thyatira write, The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and his feet are like burnished bronze, says this.

May I remind you, all of the letters begin the same way unto the angel of. And then, immediately following, there is always some characteristic given of the Christ who is sending the message.

All seven letters are like that. Each one begins with a particular aspect that identifies the sender in some of his qualities. And in this case, it is the one who has eyes like a flame of fire and his feet are like burnished bronze, says this.

I know. And that's another thing all seven letters have in common. They all begin with the Lord acknowledging that he has full knowledge of the situation he is addressing.

Nothing escapes him. I know. Your deeds and your love and faith and service and perseverance and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

[21 : 40] This is all commendatory. He is commending them for this. And that's one thing that we may really love about our Savior is that he will give a commendation everywhere he can.

He is not one to withhold credit or praise or acknowledgement or his gratitude on the behavior regarding the behavior of his saints. He recognizes it and he appreciates it.

And he says here he knows it. He's not underestimating it. He's not taking it for granted. He's giving them credit where credit is due. But it isn't all positive.

There's something negative to be said. I have this against you. That you tolerate the woman Jezebel. Jezebel.

Who calls herself a prophetess. Now where in the world does she come from? Jezebel is an Old Testament character.

[22 : 43] And she was a piece of work. Jezebel of the Bible was one of the most evil, conniving, corrupt, lewd, lascivious, debauched, depraved individuals who ever lived.

And she spread it around. Her demeanor was infectious. And a lot of people were taken in by her. She called herself a prophetess.

Now where is she when John is writing this? Well she's dead and gone a long time ago. I mean we're talking about seven to eight hundred years before Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem was the time in which Jezebel flourished and the prophet Elijah that did combat with her if you will.

So she is well off the scene. But we can only concur that there was some female in this congregation at Thyatira who was a carbon copy of Jezebel.

She had all of those characteristics so much so that she was labeled a Jezebel. And this is what Christ calls her. And it's going to be necessary for us to go back to 1 Kings chapter 16.

[24 : 19] 1 Kings chapter 16. See something about this because we need to get the historical perspective before we can appreciate what the Lord is saying to the church at Thyatira.

1 Kings 16 and let's just jump in for time's sake if we may with verse 29. Now Ahab, the son of Omri, became king over Israel in the 38th year of Asa, king of Judah.

Let me just insert something here and stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. We've got Israel and Judah here. This is talking about a time period when Israel is divided.

The kingdom is split between north and south. Northern ten tribes called Israel. Southern two tribes are called Judah. One of them is Judah. The other is Benjamin.

Tiny tribe. Other ten tribes are up north. Each had their own kings. And each had their own prophets. And each had their own priesthood.

[25 : 32] Each had their own worship. But the only legitimate one is that one that remained in Judah where the temple was and the priesthood that God established after the order of Aaron.

And all of the priests and all of the kings up north were all man-made. God had nothing to do with them. He didn't appoint any of them kings, priests, or anything. They were illegitimate. And the only legitimate one was in the south.

So he is simply telling us that Ahab, the son of Omri, became king over Israel. That's the northern ten tribes. In the 38th year of Asa, who was king of Judah.

That is, Asa had been king of Judah for 38 years when Ahab came to the throne in the north. And Ahab, the son of Omri, reigned over Israel in Samaria 22 years.

And Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him. And by the way, that would be doing some.

[26 : 34] Because all who were before him were pretty evil characters. You know, out of all of the kings in the southern ten tribes, all of whom were in the line of David, descendants, direct descendants of David the king.

There were only two or three of them that were worth anything. Even though they were in the royal bloodline. But in the number of kings that ruled in the north, one after another, some for a mere matter of months and some for several years, every single one of them was an evil individual.

And they all made Israel to sin after the manner of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that made Israel to sin. It's a phrase you find over and over again.

Every king that came to the throne in the northern ten tribes was an apostate, an idolater. It came about, verse 31, though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sons of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.

That he married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, and went to serve Baal and worshipped him.

[27 : 55] The name Baal is even found in the name of the king, in the same verse, this Ethbaal. Baal was a false god, a false idol, that led the children of Israel into idolatry.

He was a god of fertility. And in connection with the god of fertility, were sexual practices. This god and attendant goddesses and women and male prostitutes who frequented the Baal temples were given to every kind of orgiastic activity, sadism, bestiality, everything you can think of.

Too horrible to describe to go into any detail here in the public. But suffice it to say, these were the same kind of people that archaeologists uncovered their historic spots back in the 1930s and 1940s and hired local people there to do the grunt work, the pick and shovel work and the excavating and digging out and carrying away all the dirt.

And they got down to some of the places and the levels where these people had lived centuries before. And they found such tawdry and lewd and lascivious and shameful pictures and descriptions on the walls that these people had left behind from hundreds of years earlier.

They got to the place where they couldn't even hire locals to work there without covering up the pictures with sheets so they didn't have to look at them.

[29 : 42] This was the beginning of pornography. And it was rank. I mean, it was patently disgusting stuff to look at.

And I'm not real sure about the connection between sexual lewdness and fornication and everything that goes with it with idolatry.

But let me tell you, there is no separating them. They are bound together like a hand in a glove. Sexual promiscuity of every imaginable type accompanied idolatry and the worship that all of these people were engaged in.

And this is the kind of thing that God warned his people against. And yet they fell into it time and time again. Just like men today with pornography.

It is epidemic. It is available at your fingertips. The only really startling thing about it is the number of women who are also involved in it.

[30 : 59] And it is everywhere. It just inundates our culture. And you think it's bad here? And it is! I am told it's even worse in Europe. And it is characteristic of this day.

And it's going to be characteristic of the day in which these churches are going to exist. And the church at Thyatira is going to be dealing with it.

Big time. Not that the others won't. But this is going to be epidemic where the church at Thyatira is. Now, while we're still here in Kings, let's go to 1 Kings 21.

Just over a few pages. I want to give you a little bit of a picture of this woman so you'll understand why our Lord was so upset with those at Thyatira. Let's look at verse 21.

Well, let's just start with chapter 1. Okay. It came about after these things that Naboth, the Jezreelite, had a vineyard which was in Jezreel beside the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria.

[32 : 04] So we're up north, all right? And Ahab spoke to Naboth saying, Give me your vineyard that I may have it for a vegetable garden because it is close beside my house.

In other words, he's saying, I want to exercise eminent domain. For the good of the state, I want to take over your house, but I will supply you with a replacement. Okay?

So it isn't as though I'm just going to take it from you. I will give you a better vineyard than it in its place, if you like. I will give you the price of it in money. But Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.

Now, what he is saying is there is an age-old law of Moses that says that the land that is bequeathed is supposed to be passed down from generation to generation.

And I can't just up and sell this land. I have to pass it on to the next generation. You wouldn't deny me that, would you? I mean, that was lock, stock, and barrel for the Israelites. And it was on that basis that the Levirate law was instituted, where if a man died, he had a brother, and he didn't have any children.

[33 : 18] The brother of that man was supposed to go into his wife and raise up seed by her, by his sister-in-law. And that all had to do with passing on the land and the inheritance laws.

So Naboth is simply saying, this has been in force for generations. You wouldn't want me to change that. So Ahab, having been refused by Naboth, came into his house sullen and vexed.

That means you could read it on his face. He was disappointed, downcast, angry, frustrated. And Jezebel took one look at him and said, honey, what's wrong?

And... He said, I... Naboth, the Jezreelite, said he would not give me the inheritance of my fathers, of his fathers.

And he laid down on his bed and turned away his face and ate no food. This is embarrassing, isn't it? This is a male adult with a temper tantrum.

[34 : 33] And he's just mad. He's just flat out mad. So he goes and lays down on his bed and turns his face to the wall and he's pouting and carrying on. And it probably wasn't much fun to be around.

And Jezebel, his wife, came to him and said, how is it that your spirit is so sullen that you were not eating food? I'm sure they probably made some of his favorite dishes and he wouldn't eat them because he's really upset.

This is a man who is not used to anyone saying no to him. This is somebody who's always used to getting his own way and he's not handling it well.

And he said, because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, give me your vineyard and for money or else if it pleases you, I will give you a vineyard in his place. But he said, I will not give you my vineyard.

Can you imagine the brass of that guy? Can you imagine him just because he owns it? He insists that he has the right to decide what to do with it. Have you ever heard such a goal in your life?

[35 : 41] By the way, there are some modern day applications could be made to this, aren't there? But he said, I'll not give you your vineyard. And Jezebel, his wife, said to him, do you now reign over Israel?

In other words, honey, aren't you the boss here? Aren't you the one who says the way it's going to be? Isn't being king worth anything?

And she's fueling this thing. You get up and you eat your bread. This is your favorite dish.

And you eat and let your heart be joyful. Leave it to me. I'll take care of this. Now, this is called delegation.

Without him even delegating. This is one pushy broad. Don't call her a lady.

[36 : 45] Don't make that mistake. Don't associate. Neither should you associate her with femininity. She just happens to be a female of the species, but there's nothing feminine about her.

She's a coarse individual. Wicked, scheming, conniving, lying, cheating, you name it. And she says, I'll get you that vineyard.

She wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal. That's the king's seal. That makes it an official government document when that seal is put on it.

She sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city.

Now, she wrote in the letters saying, here's what you are to do. This is an order from the king. Okay? Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the table and seat two worthless men before him.

[37 : 52] That is, men who can be bought. Cheap. Scoundrels. Ne'er-do-wells. The kind of men who do anything for a buck.

And every society always has some of these characters in it. You seek these two worthless men before him and let them testify against him.

You give them money, they'll testify anything. You know, they don't care about truth or whatever. You just pay them off and they'll say whatever you want to say. And they will say, Naboth, you curse God and the king and take him out and stone him to death and the problem.

Isn't that a simple solution? Just kill him. Then his land's free to take. Simple solution. So the men of his city, the elders, the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them just as it was written in the letters which she had sent them.

They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the table. And Naboth, poor old guy, he's just dumb as dirt. He hasn't a clue as to what's going on. He's just innocent. He's just, he's just a victim.

[39 : 04] That's all. He doesn't have any idea. But here he is seated at the head table. He probably feels pretty good about this. You know, I mean, look, they've elevated me. I'm here at the head table. Wow, this is really something. And then, the two worthless men came in and sat before him and the worthless men testified against him, even against Naboth before the people saying, Naboth cursed God and the king and we heard him.

Isn't that right, Amos? And Amos says, that's right. We were there. We both heard him. Now, the law of Moses says in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall a thing be established.

Never one. Never one. Because if it's one, it's just one person's word against another person. And you can't convict somebody on that basis. But if you've got multiple witnesses, two or more, that's all it takes.

So they've got two. They took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones. This almost sounds like a repeat of Stephen, doesn't it, in the New Testament, where they had a couple of, in fact, they had multiple worthless fellows say the same thing about Stephen, that he blasphemed God and the elders and the Sanhedrin dragged him out of the city, stoned him to death.

They sent word to Jezebel saying, Naboth has been stoned and is dead. And Jezebel is saying to herself with that evil grin, mission accomplished.

[40 : 34] I can do anything I want and get away with it. And don't let your mind focus on that too much.

It came about when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead. Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise! Take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

It came about when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, to take possession of it. He's going to strut in there in all of his kingly robe.

And then, ah, here's the fly in the ointment. Fly by the name, fly by the name of Elijah. Elijah the Tishbite, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Arise!

Go down to meet Ahab, king of Israel, who is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. And you shall speak to him, saying, Thus says the Lord, Have you murdered and also taken possession?

[41 : 53] And you shall speak to him, saying, Thus says the Lord, in the place where the dogs lick up the blood of Naboth. The dogs shall lick up your blood, even yours.

And Ahab said to Elijah, Have you found me, O my enemy? And he answered, Ha, ha, ha, I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord.

Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free, in Israel. And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin.

And of Jezebel also has the Lord spoken, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.

And one belonging to Ahab who dies in the city, the dogs shall eat. The one who dies in the field, the birds of heaven shall eat. Surely, there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel, his wife, incited him.

[43 : 19] I do not think there is anything or anyone that can motivate a man to do good more than a good, loyal woman.

And there's nothing that can motivate a man to do evil more than an evil woman. One reason is because the male wants to impress the female.

It's always been that way. I don't care if you're talking about Tom Sawyer walking on the top of the fence to impress Becky Thatcher, or whether it is to do evil, even to the extent of carrying out murder.

The male has a desire to impress and to please the female. He wants to be admired by her. Sometimes it comes at a very heavy price.

Hmm. Because Jezebel, his wife, incited him. And he acted very abominably in following idols according to all that the Amorites had done.

[44 : 39] Who were the Amorites? They were the people who occupied the geography I was telling you about where they couldn't get local workmen to come in and work until they covered the pornography with sheets.

Those were Amorites. These are the same people of whom God is speaking way back in the book of Genesis when he tells Abraham that his descendants are going to be captive in a foreign land for 400 years and then I am going to bring them back to this place right here where you are, Abraham.

because the cup of the Amorites is not yet full. But in that 400 years after multiple generations it will be full and I'm going to use you coming into the land to dispossess them and chase them out.

These are the same people. These are the Amorites just separated by years. according to all that the Amorites had done whom the Lord cast out before the sons of Israel.

And it came about when Ahab heard these words that he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted and he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently.

[45 : 54] And then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite saying, Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me I will not bring the evil in his days but I will bring the evil upon his house in his son's days.

And this is a powerful passage because what it is saying is Ahab repented. Ahab humbled himself. And I have often said and so say I now again repentance has always been God's silver bullet.

There is nothing that will stay the hand of God where judgment is due like repentance. God let me put it this way God can't resist human repentance.

God is so moved and so appreciative of a human being coming to realize the light of day and aligning himself with what is right as opposed to what is wrong of changing his mind changing his way changing his attitude.

This is what repentance is. It means a change of mind that is based on information that justifies and requires you to change your mind so you do it. You do it.

[47 : 07] But if you have information that justifies you changing your mind and tells you you should change your mind because of this new information you've been given and you refuse to repent that's unrepentance.

And that unrepentance is going to characterize humanity throughout the entire book of the Revelation. Instead of hearts being softened many are going to be hardened.

They are going to shake their fist at God when they know it is God who is sending the judgment they are going to curse the God of heaven right in his face.

that is major unrepentance. That's what's going to characterize the world during this time of tribulation. So here Ahab is turning around.

We won't go on and read the sordid story about Jezebel's death but we have established I think the kind of woman that she is and I would suggest for your consideration that the main thing that characterized Jezebel and it can be ferreted out in several avenues almost like tentacles on an octopus because it was multifaceted but in general it is just wholesale deep corruption.

[48 : 35] Wholesale deep corruption that characterized this woman in all of her actions and deeds and attitudes and everything about her.

She was just a thoroughly corrupt individual. Extremely self-serving and when it became apparent to those in this church at Thyatira nobody would call her out.

Nobody would confront her. And this says the Lord is what I have against you. you tolerated that woman Jezebel.

You wouldn't call her out. Why wouldn't they? Why didn't they? Well probably fear was involved for one thing. I'm not going to call her out.

She'll come after me. Or well now listen none of us is perfect and we have our faults and who am I to judge anybody.

[49 : 41] I mean let someone cast the first stone. I mean we're all flawed and we've all got stuff in our own backyard to clean up and I now don't get me wrong.

I don't approve of what she's doing and I wouldn't do it. But far be it for me to tell her that she is wrong or evil. I mean I just you know it's not my place.

well the text says what I have against you is that you tolerate the woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess and she teaches and leads my bond servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

Now why in the world would they do that? And the answer is just because she did it. This is a woman of powerful influence.

No doubt she was envied by many because of her ability to get things done to get her own way.

[50 : 58] People were impressed. They fell in line. They tolerated. They put up with it. They wouldn't call her out. And as a result you know we really tend to lose sight of the incredible power of influence that people have over others for good or ill.

There are those who will fall in lockstep behind a figure of notoriety whether it's an athlete or a rock star or whatever and both political parties are prone to putting well-known individuals on their platform and stumping for them with their music or their sports accomplishments or whatever for one reason and one reason only is because they know a certain number of people are going to be influenced by them.

That's the whole purpose. People influence people for good or for ill. And Jezebel whoever this woman was with the Jezebel characteristics obviously had a huge sphere of influence of followers of worshippers of so on.

And she is the downfall of this congregation. they were influenced by her and their acts of immorality and by the way this absolutely absolutely has to include every aspect of sexual immorality that you can think of including lesbianism homosexuality bestiality the whole nine yards anything and everything whatever suits your fancy or your pleasure go for it.

Nobody has the right to even tell you that it's wrong. And I gave her time to repent. Do you mean to tell me that God would have actually let this woman off the hook if she were to repent?

[53 : 28] Absolutely. Absolutely. Listen. I care not how gross the sin in magnitude or in number. There is no sin or combination thereof that is beyond the grace of God.

Because if there is then the death of Jesus Christ on that cross didn't really cover everything. But we know it did. And yes there is repentance available even for a Jezebel because she has the ability to do it.

God has given her a volition. And you can use your volition for good or for ill. This is a principle of man refusing to come to the light because his deeds are evil and men love their sin more than they love righteousness.

So they go for the sin and they exercise their volition in doing so. And this is precisely what Jezebel, this Jezebel did. She had room.

God gave her space to mend her ways to repent. She had opportunity to do so. And she refused.

[54 : 45] And as a result, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation unless they repent of her deeds.

What tribulation is he talking about? He's talking about the one that is upcoming to this church. Now, if you're going to put this church back 2,000 years ago and make it a historical reality, as some do, does this fit?

No, it doesn't. But if you bring the whole book of Revelation forward and make it futuristic, this is right on target because it is either in the threshold or it is right around the corner and it is coming.

That is the tribulation, I believe, that is the 70th week of Daniel that the whole book is going to be exploring. Unless they repent of her deeds, and I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am he who searches the minds and hearts, and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them.

[56 : 14] What were the deep things of Satan? All of this depravity, debauchery, immorality, and everything that went with it. Satan is a corrupter of human morals.

You know, there's an expression in the New Testament that I never gave too much thought about until I began studying this, and it really fits in.

You remember Jesus casting out an unclean spirit? What in the world is an unclean spirit? Well, that's just a dirty spirit that never took a bath.

No, it isn't. No, it isn't. this unclean spirit is a spirit that focuses upon, that distributes, that incites to sexual impurity of every imaginable kind.

Man is a sexual being, very much so, in a good aspect and in an evil aspect.

[57 : 22] Sex is a gift of God. God. He's not against sex. He's the one that invented it. But sex, like every other gift of God, is subject to perversion and abuse and everything that goes with it.

And these are the deep things of Satan that he's mentioned. I place no other burden upon you. Nevertheless, nevertheless, what you have, hold fast until I come. Well, now, can you take that phrase, hold fast until I come, can you take that phrase and apply it to the people who lived 2,000 years ago at the time John wrote this?

They're not holding fast. They surely died and the Lord didn't come. But, if you see this in the context of future, and either in the tribulation, or on the brink of the tribulation, the hold fast until I come makes a lot of sense, because the Lord is coming, and he's coming in this book, and John's going to describe it.

And he who overcomes, that is, the one who prevails, and he who keeps my deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations.

Well, when's that coming? That's coming right after the tribulation, when Christ establishes the kingdom. Then, these positions of authority will be administered to the nations, and he shall rule them.

[58 : 54] This is a quote from the Old Testament. He shall rule them with a rod of iron, speaking of the Messiah, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from my Father, and I will give him the morning star.

The morning star will later be identified as none other than Yeshua HaMashiach himself. And it closes with the same thing that all seven churches and the letters there to close with, and it is this, he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

This Jezebel didn't, and all it is saying is the one who is predisposed to the truth, who wants the truth, who is open to the truth, tell them to listen up, because the truth is coming.

If you have an ear to hear, God will provide the truth, and we are so grateful that he does. Would you pray with me, please? Father, there is still so much about this passage that even though we understand some of it, much of it escapes us.

We are unable to see all the ramifications, but we cannot miss the central message, and that is your extreme displeasure against the ruination that man brings upon himself by exercising a negative volition and engaging in these things because of being influenced by others.

[60 : 21] We are all subject to influence, good and bad. We pray that each of us may be able to see the deeper meaning and the deeper application of the text that are involved here and understand that the principles and the policies that you've set forth regarding righteousness and truth and beauty and all the concerns it have not changed one bit, and we are to be people of truth who are open to it and eager for it and respond to it.

Thank you for these letters. We recognize that each of them contain messages of real sobriety that each of us needs to take to heart.

For anyone who may be here today struggling with the issues of right and wrong, with pornography, with some other vice, we simply want them to understand that repentance, a change of mind, because they recognize their sin as evil and displeasing to you, that repentance is always in order and you are eager for us to make that about face.

Not only so, but you are welcoming with open arms for those who turn from their sin and turn to you. Thank you for that gracious provision you've made and we trust that anyone here who has not taken advantage of it will know no peace and no rest until they find it in Christ.

We pray in his name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.