

**REVELATION (GOD'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH)
PROGRAM 12 (#911247)
WEEK 3 (911350)
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SERIES: Revelation (God's Message To The Church)

TITLE: Program 12 – Jezebels!

TUESDAY

OPEN

Is there immorality going on in the church and you know about it? Have you done anything about it? You say no, it's none of my business. Listen, if you are a member of your church and there is immorality going on in your church and you know about it and you haven't done anything about it, do you know what you're like? You're like the woman Jezebel. And Jezebel was the most wicked woman in the Bible.

PART ONE

It is so fascinating, Beloved, as you read the letters that Jesus sends to the churches, delivered by His messenger. It's so fascinating to see how those messages relate to something going on in that city, to something about the culture of that city. As we come to the message to the church at Thyatira He says write. Now listen to what He says. He says, "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 ...” He’s going to commend them. “... and your love and your faith and your service and your perseverance and that your deeds of late are greater than they were at the first ...,” He says, “... but I have this against you that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. She teaches and leads My bondservants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and they offer things sacrificed to idols.” We’ve read enough for me to stop now and tell you a little bit about Thyatira. Thyatira was 45 miles east, straight east of Pergamum. And when you got to Thyatira you came to a city that was a prosperous city, you came to a city that had a lot of different guilds going on. They had a lot of different trades there. Do you remember Lydia in the book of Acts, whom Paul met when he went to Philippi? He went and there was no synagogue because there wasn’t a minion and so he went down by the riverbank where he heard that the Jews met to worship God. And when he got there he met a woman by the name of Lydia. She was a seller of purple. Thyatira was known for its purple dye. Now that purple dye was very expensive to make and it was usually only worn by very wealthy people or by kings. So Lydia came from Thyatira. Lydia was a businesswoman. Lydia, in all probability, had been invited to join one of the trade guilds. They had all sorts of trade guilds. It’s interesting because they had a trade guild of bronze makers, those that worked with bronze. How does Jesus describe Himself? He says, “... with one like eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like burnished bronze.” Remember what we saw in Revelation, chapter 1 as we caught that glimpse of Jesus in all of His glory? We saw His feet like burnished bronze. Well they had a bronze guild. They had all sorts of guilds that went on in this city and each guild had their own god so each god had their own idol. And then of course you needed to have a feast for your god. And so they would have feasts for their gods and at those feasts all sorts of licentious immoral behavior would go on. I mean they were sexual orgies that would go on. If you study the worship of the gods you will see that it was common for them to go many times, to the temple of Aphrodite and have sexual relations with a person in celebration of that god. These were gods that were conceived, a lot of them, in the mind

of Homer, the blind poet. These were gods that warred like man warred. These were gods that had passions. These were gods that were unfaithful and all sorts of trysts, and things would go on among these gods. And the thing is that when you worship a god you become like the one that you worship. So as Jesus presents Himself to this church, He knows and He commends them for their deeds and for their love and He commends that their deeds are greater now than they were at the first. But He says, "... but I have this against you. I have this against you because you're tolerating this woman by the name of Jezebel." Now whether that was actually her name or whether He takes that name and gives it to this woman, who calls herself a prophetess, we don't know. But we know this: the word Jezebel doesn't have any good connected with it. Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, back in the days of kings. Ahab was the eighth king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And none of the kings, since Jeroboam, the first one, had been any good and Ahab was the one that introduced the worship of Baal and built an altar to Baal in Samaria, so that the children of Israel could worship that. And so what they were doing is they were eating things sacrificed to idols. But when it describes Ahab this is what it says: "... not only did he introduce Baal worship, but he married Jezebel." I mean that was a terrible thing for him to do. It was a great slap in the face of God. Jezebel was the daughter of the king of the Sidonians and she never should have been brought in. Well when she came in she brought Baal, she brought all of her priests that worshipped Baal and handled all the affairs of Baal. Well this is what God is saying to us. You're tolerating a woman who calls herself a prophetess, who is seducing My bondservants. You're allowing her to stay in that church. You're allowing her to operate. Now when you look at this woman, you've got to know, this was one more strong woman. This was one more woman that must have a lot of charisma and a lot of leadership ability because you see her seducing the bondservants. Listen to it and let me read it to you and we'll take a good look at it so that you catch everything that's going on because it's so pertinent to today. He says in verse 20, "... but I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a

prophetess. And she teaches ...,” and you want to circle that word teaches, even as we did when we looked at the message to the church at Pergamum because remember, their problem was also that they were allowing wrong teaching to go on in the church. And it says, “... she teaches and leads My bondservants astray.” She’s impacting the church. Now when it says she teaches and she leads, both of those are in the present tense. This is something that has been going on. This is not something that just started, but this is something that has been going on for a while. It is a habitual; it is a continual action. And it says, “... so that My bondservants, God’s bondservants, Jesus’ bondservants, so that they commit acts of immorality.” You say, can a Christian commit an act of immorality? Yes a Christian can commit an act of immorality. A Christian cannot live a life of habitual immorality, but a Christian certainly can sin in that area. It’s just not their lifestyle. And when a Christian sins in that area, there is grief, there is sorrow, there is guilt because the Holy Spirit is within and the Holy Spirit is grieved. And so He says, “... so that they commit acts of immorality and they eat things sacrificed to idols.” Now if you go back and you study about idols in 1 Corinthians, chapters 8, 9, & 10 you’re going to see that in essence an idol is nothing. I mean it’s just something that has been crafted by mans hands and designed by a man, chiseled by a man, or carved by a man or cast in a way by a man. But behind the idol there’s a demon. And in this time in history, what he’s dealing with in 1 Corinthians 8, 9, & 10 is the issue, okay, can you eat things if they’ve been sacrificed to idols? And he says yes you can eat something if it’s been sacrificed to an idol. That’s not the issue. The issue is the people that have sacrificed those things to idols. The issue is the Jews that are watching you that would never touch things like that. So what you do is you restrain yourself and you don’t eat things offered to idols, not because the idol’s something, because of what it says, because the best meat, the best meat was offered to the idols in the world at that time. And then that meat was in turn taken to the restaurants and the restaurants cooked it up and they served it and the people ate it because it was the best of the best because they gave their best to their gods. Isn’t that a slap in the face? How

often do we give our best to our God? How often, when He is the one and only true God? Now watch what you learn here in verse 21. I think it's so neat because it shows you the heart of God. It shows you the heart of Jesus Christ. Now notice I said the heart of God and notice I said the heart of Jesus Christ, because so many times we think of Jesus as the compassionate one. The Jesus of the New Testament who would say to the woman taken in adultery, go and sin no more and let her go free. And we think of the God of the Old Testament, Jesus' Father as being hard, and rigid and unmoving and unbendable because what does He say if you find somebody in adultery, then you stone them. If you find somebody participating in homosexuality, you stone them. If you find somebody participating in incest, what do you do? You stone them you get rid of them. If you find two people and a man has, forced his self upon a woman, a woman whose engaged by covenant to another man, and he forces himself, what do you do? You stone him. So you begin to think, O the God of the Old Testament is mean and hard and unapproachable and just so rigid. But Jesus, now I like Jesus, gentle Jesus, meek and mild, I like Him. Listen, Jesus said if you've seen Me you've seen the Father. So listen to what Jesus says, He says, "... and I gave her time to repent." This Jezebel, this prophetess that has been seducing the bondservants of God, He gave time to repent. What kind of a god is that? We'll talk about it after this announcement.

PART TWO

I want you to understand the heart of God. I want you to see what God gave this woman, Jezebel. He gave her grace. He gave her mercy. He gave her compassion because He's longsuffering. Let's look at that verse again, verse 21. "... and I gave her time to repent." You say well, that's what I'm doing and that's why I haven't exposed this immorality. I want to ask you a question: Have you gone to the person that you know is being immoral? Have you told them that it is wrong? Have you told them that it has to stop? Have you told them that if it does not stop immediately it is going to be

exposed? You say no I haven't. Well why haven't you? Don't you realize that it is God that uses His people to do His work, that when the Holy Spirit comes inside of us as John says, then the Spirit inside of you will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment? Don't you realize that this woman who calls herself a prophetess and who is habitually teaching this is not a woman of God? You're going to see that in just a minute because He's going to judge her, because she will not repent. And the fact that she does not repent shows what she really is. Let me read the verse and then I want to take you to Exodus for just a minute because I want you to understand that Jesus and God are one in heart, in mind, in passion. When you read John 17 Jesus prays, "Father that they might be one even as we are one." And so in verse 21 of Revelation, chapter 2 He says, "... and I gave her time to repent and she does not want to repent of her immorality. I gave her time to repent." I want you to go to Exodus, chapter 34. In Exodus, chapter 34 God is passing by Moses and as He passes, as, it says in verse 5, "And the Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the Lord ...," speaking of Moses. "... Then the Lord passed by in front of him, in front of Moses and proclaimed, God proclaimed this, the Lord ..." and that is the most sacred and holy name for the Lord. That is YAHWEH, it is all in caps and whenever it's all in caps you know that that is Jehovah, YAHWEH. The Lord, "... the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth; who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin." This is God. He's slow to anger. He's compassionate. Maybe, as I'm talking to you and I just have the feeling, maybe it's you that's in the church that's committing immorality. Maybe it's you in the church that is excusing it and saying O it's all right and God understands because we both love God and we're just drawn together and we pray together and we read the Bible together and we get in bed together. It doesn't go. It doesn't wash. It doesn't wash through the water of God's Word. That is a stain; that is a blot. So maybe you're listening because God stopped you. And what is God saying to you right now. God is saying to you I'm giving you time to repent. It's not

over. It's not done. Your fate is not sealed because I'm God, because I'm merciful, because I'm compassionate, because I'm slow to anger, because I'm longsuffering, because I forgive iniquity and I forgive sin. Sin means that you miss the standard. And iniquity means you twist the standard. And so what Jezebel was doing because she was doing this in the church was she was twisting the standard. Well we have to go on. Let's go back to Revelation, chapter 3. He says, "... I gave her time to repent; she does not want to repent. Behold, I will cast her on a bed of sickness." You know what? Many times you pick up your judgment where you committed your sin. You pick up your judgment where you committed your sin. She's committing immorality. She's teaching God's servants to commit immorality in a bed. So He's going to judge her in a bed of sickness. Think of all the people that are getting AIDS. Not everybody gets AIDS this way. But think of all the people that are saying I'm still going to have this sexual relationship even though I know that it endangers me and exposes me to AIDS. He says, "... I will cast her upon a bed of sickness and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation." I don't think He's saying the great tribulation. I think He's saying you're really going to have tribulation. You're really going to have trouble unless they repent of her deeds. Now these are bondservants that have been led astray and unless they repent of her deeds, what she is doing and they're following them, then He says, "... I'm going to take those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation ...," Verse 23, "... and I will kill her children. I will kill her children with pestilence." And the word for pestilence there is just t-h-a-n-a-t-o-s, which means death. I will kill her children with pestilence or it could mean a fatal disease like AIDS. "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." You know in Revelation, chapter 22, verse 12 Jesus says, "Behold, I am coming quickly and My reward is with Me to give to each one according to his deeds." When He starts coming, He's coming and because He has eyes like flames of fire, because He sees everything as it really is, because it's that purifying fire and He sees it and because His feet

are of burnished bronze, He will reward those with immortality and the blessings of heaven, who obey Him, who follow Him, who show by their deeds that they truly are children of God. But He will reward the others with judgment and this is why He says, He says, "... I'm the one who searches the minds and hearts. And those are those eyes aflame of fire and I will give to each one according to their deeds. But I say to you ...," now listen carefully, "... the rest who are in Thyatira ...," Now He's going to talk to the good guys in the church. He says, "... who do not hold this teaching, who do not go along with Jezebel, who have not known the deep things of Satan" Now what do they mean by that? They think that they mean that sometimes they teach listen, if you're going to relate, if you're going to do this, you have to experience sin yourself as they call them, the deep things of Satan as they call them. "... I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, you hold fast until I come." You hold your integrity. You hold your obedience. You stand firm. That was Paul's message to all the churches when he visited them. You stand firm. He says, "And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end...", it's perseverance. It's the perseverance of the saints, "... to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron as the vessels of a potter are broken to pieces, as I have also received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star." In Revelation 22:16 Jesus is the Morning Star.