

UNRAVELLING THE BOOK OF REVELATION | SESSION 15

THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA

*CONFRONTING AND RESISTING
IMMORALITY, IDOLATRY
AND COMPROMISE*

(REV. 2:18-29)



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Do you know that Immorality and Idolatry are two of the four major sins at the End of the Age (Rev. 9:21)? The term “sorcery” used in Revelation 9:21 is just another form of idolatry. Why? Because idolatry is not just about bowing down to and worshipping idols. Let me define what immorality and idolatry is.

Immorality is interaction in the sexual realm that is outside the will of God.

This includes pornography, premarital sex, adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, etc.

Idolatry is interaction in the spirit realm that is outside the will of God.

This includes sorcery, witchcraft, geomancy, etc.



Immorality and idolatry often work hand in hand in attacking God's people. In the nation of Israel, the first wave was immorality, followed by idolatry (Num. 25:1-3).

In the End Times, immorality and idolatry will be a major strategy that Satan uses to attack the Church (Rev. 9:21; 14:8; 17:1-4; 18:2-4,9-10).

The onslaught has already begun. What is currently happening will lead on to something far darker and far more evil than what we are seeing now.

This is why the Holy Spirit is warning the Church to take heed!

There are two primary messages in the letter to the Church of Thyatira:

- 1. Jesus is calling the Church to confront and resist compromises in the area of immorality and idolatry.**
- 2. Jesus is calling the Church, especially the End-Time Church, to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor. 7:1).**




The letter to the Church of Thyatira is a paradox. Jesus gave one of the highest affirmations to them (Rev. 2:19). Yet in the same breath, He gave one of the strongest rebukes and the most severe warning.

Jesus affirmed them for **their works**. They were hardworking and were advancing the kingdom of God. Unlike the Church of Ephesus, they were praised for **their love**. Jesus valued **their servant heart**, how they served people out of genuine love and humility. He also affirmed them for **their faith and perseverance** in the midst of tremendous pressure.

Moreover, **they were continually growing and increasing in all these five areas** (Rev. 2:19b). All the pressures and ministry **did not cause their love or their faith to diminish**. But instead, they grew more and more fervent.

Nevertheless, Jesus had three issues with them:



1 THEY TOLERATED THE
PRESENCE AND THE PRACTICE
OF IMMORALITY AND IDOLATRY.

2 THEY TOLERATED THOSE
WHO **TEACH AND ADVOCATE**
IMMORALITY AND IDOLATRY.

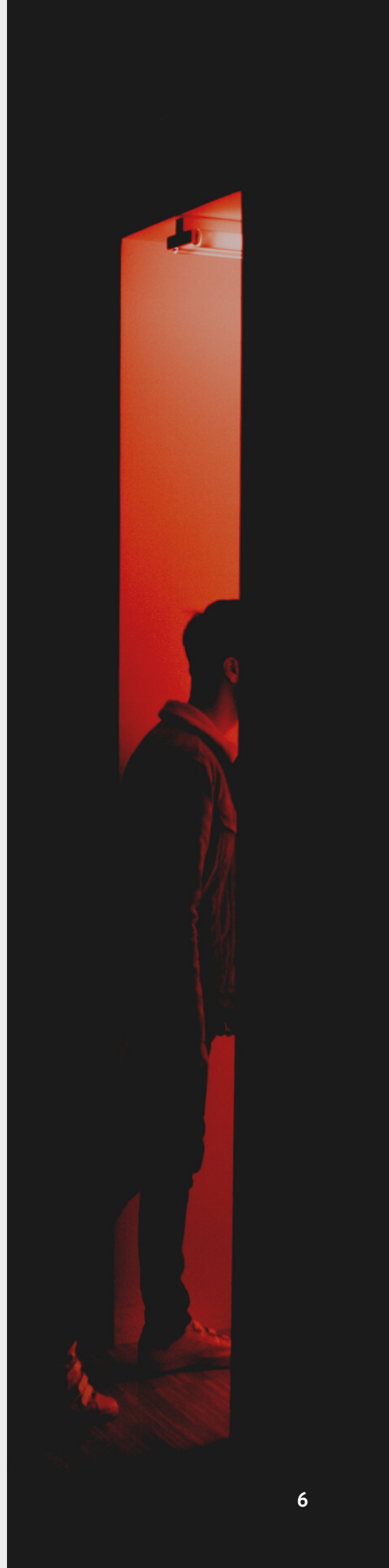
3 THEY **DID NOT RESIST**
OR **CONFRONT** IMMORALITY
OR IDOLATRY IN THE CHURCH.

THE FIRST THING IS THAT WE ARE **NOT** **TO TOLERATE SIN.**

God wants us to confront one another in love (Gal. 6:1). If we see believers living in sin, or having wrong attitudes or values, we are to confront them in a loving way. Confronting is actually love!

The Bible has this principle that we should examine ourselves. This means that we are to judge ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5).

If we don't judge ourselves when we are in sin, then the church has to judge us. If the church does not judge us, Jesus will judge us (1 Cor. 11:28-32), and He will also judge the whole community. This was what happened to the Church of Thyatira. And why does Jesus judge us? **He chastens us out of love**, so that we may not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. 11:32).





There was a key person who taught the Church of Thyatira that it was okay to practise immorality and idolatry — **Jezebel**.

There is a Jezebel in the Old Testament in the time of prophet Elijah (1 Kings 16:31-32; 18:4; 19:1-2; 2 Kings 9:30-37) and one in the Church of Thyatira (Rev. 2:20).

They are two different persons, but both operate in the same spirit; the Jezebel spirit. The Jezebel spirit is the spirit of seduction (Rev. 2:20). This is the major strategy that Satan will use at the End of the Age, primarily to seduce us into immorality, then idolatry.

IMMORALITY

WILL OPEN THE

DOOR

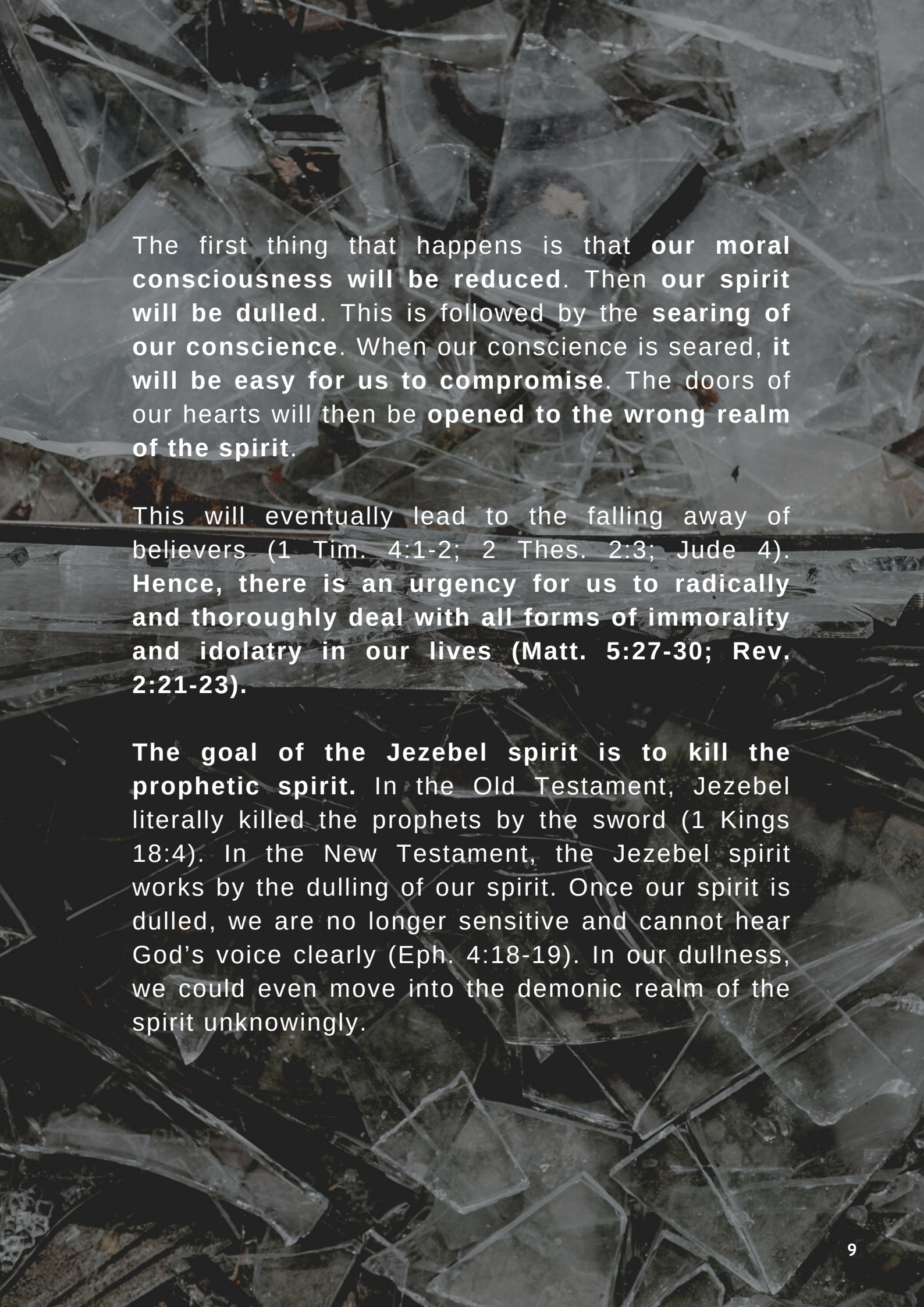
OF OUR

HEART

TO THE

WRONG REALM

OF THE SPIRIT.



The first thing that happens is that **our moral consciousness will be reduced**. Then **our spirit will be dulled**. This is followed by the **searing of our conscience**. When our conscience is seared, it **will be easy for us to compromise**. The doors of our hearts will then be **opened to the wrong realm of the spirit**.

This will eventually lead to the falling away of believers (1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Thes. 2:3; Jude 4). **Hence, there is an urgency for us to radically and thoroughly deal with all forms of immorality and idolatry in our lives (Matt. 5:27-30; Rev. 2:21-23).**

The goal of the Jezebel spirit is to kill the prophetic spirit. In the Old Testament, Jezebel literally killed the prophets by the sword (1 Kings 18:4). In the New Testament, the Jezebel spirit works by the dulling of our spirit. Once our spirit is dulled, we are no longer sensitive and cannot hear God's voice clearly (Eph. 4:18-19). In our dullness, we could even move into the demonic realm of the spirit unknowingly.



Because of His jealousy for the Church to be holy, **Jesus came as the Son of God with eyes like a flame of fire** to confront and judge immorality and idolatry (Rev. 2:18). The fire of God could either be an enabling fire or the fire of judgment. If we are willing to deal with our sin, God's fire of grace will impart holy fire for us to overcome immorality and idolatry.

However, if we resist Him, He will come with that fire of judgment, where He will remove everything that hinders wholehearted love and purity. **"Feet like fine brass"** speaks of Jesus coming like a mighty warrior to judge sin.

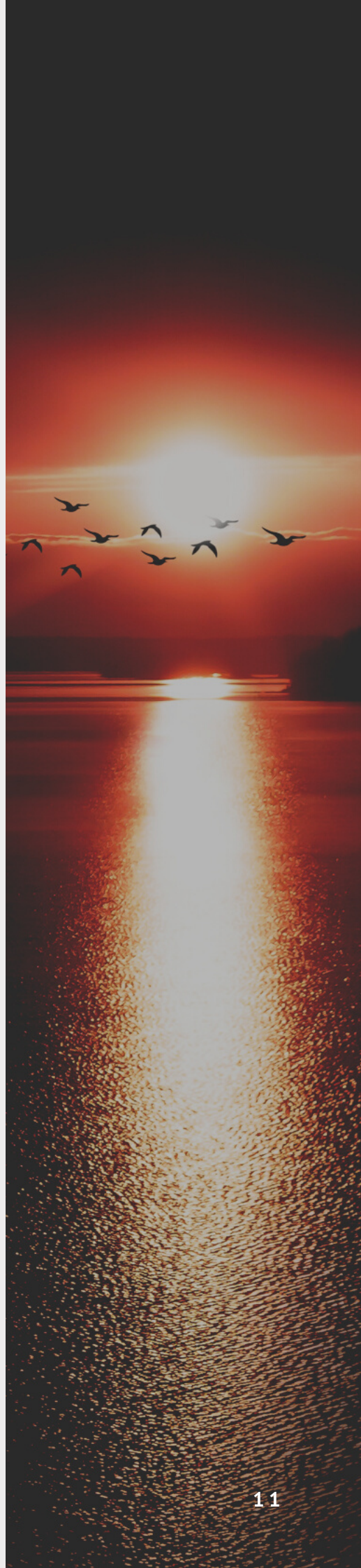
In Revelation 2:21-23, Jesus exhorted Jezebel and those who tolerated or practiced immorality and idolatry to repent. He also warned them of the consequences of their sin. But before releasing judgment, Jesus actually gave time for Jezebel to repent. Such is the grace of God!

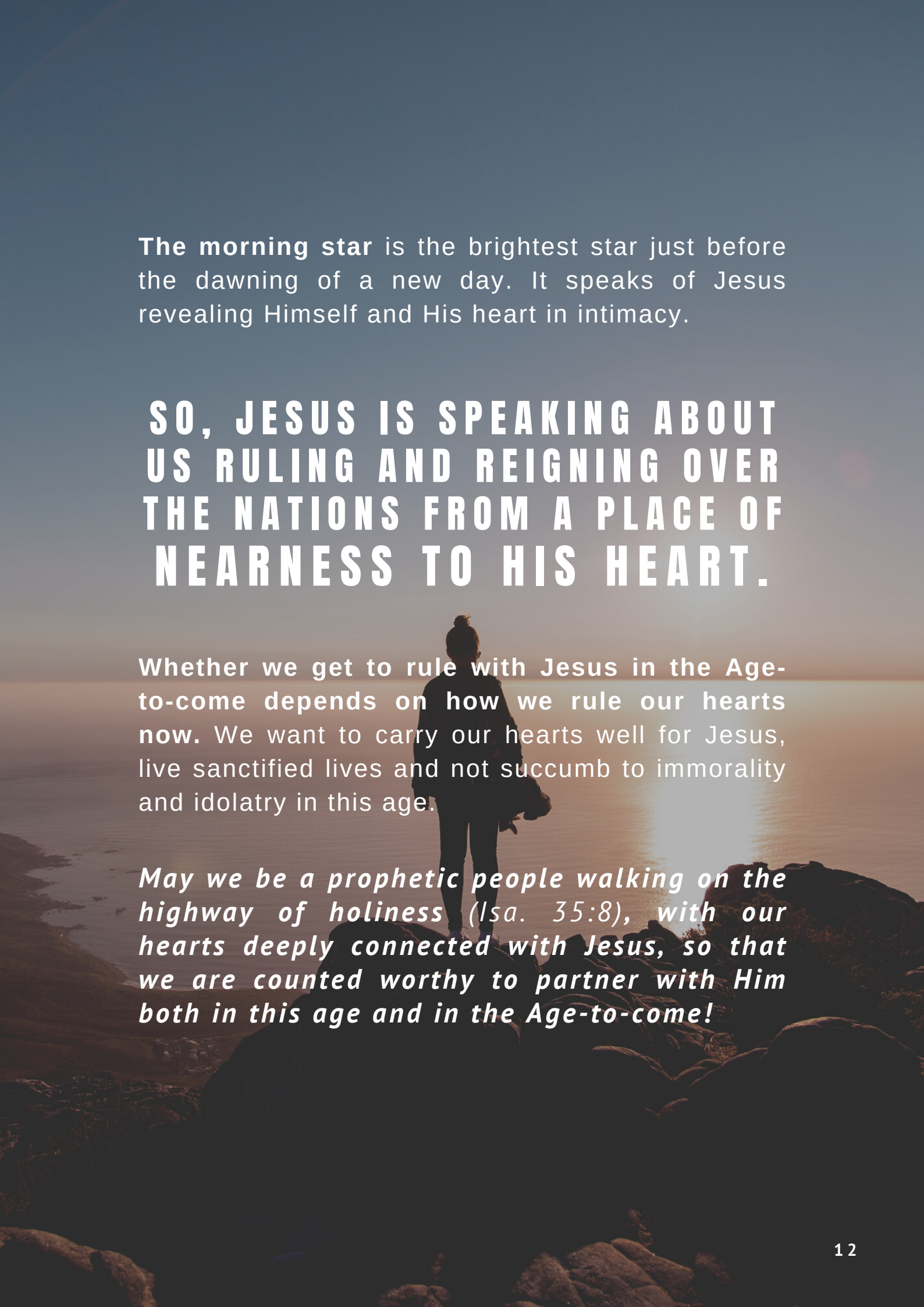
But what if believers refuse to repent?

We see in verse 22 that Jesus could actually send sickness because in His mercy, He desires the Church to come to repentance (Rev. 2:22; 1 Cor. 11:28-32). If they still refused to repent, Jesus could even take away their lives (Rev. 2:23)!

We see an example in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, where Paul commanded the Corinthian Church to deliver the unrepentant person to physical death so that his spirit may be saved in the Day of Judgment. It is a terrifying thing to come under the judgment of God, but it is out of His kindness and His love that God judges.

Jesus then exhorts the Church to be diligent to hold fast to purity, not just for a season, but until He returns (Rev. 2:25). He has two rewards for those who overcome and keep His works until the end – **He will give the morning star and we will rule and reign with Him** (Rev. 2:26-28).



A person with their hair in a bun, wearing a dark jacket, stands on a rocky shore looking out at the ocean. The sun is setting or rising, creating a warm, golden glow over the water and sky. The person's silhouette is visible against the bright horizon.

The morning star is the brightest star just before the dawning of a new day. It speaks of Jesus revealing Himself and His heart in intimacy.

**SO, JESUS IS SPEAKING ABOUT
US RULING AND REIGNING OVER
THE NATIONS FROM A PLACE OF
NEARNESS TO HIS HEART.**

Whether we get to rule with Jesus in the Age-to-come depends on how we rule our hearts now. We want to carry our hearts well for Jesus, live sanctified lives and not succumb to immorality and idolatry in this age.

May we be a prophetic people walking on the highway of holiness (Isa. 35:8), with our hearts deeply connected with Jesus, so that we are counted worthy to partner with Him both in this age and in the Age-to-come!



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