

Revelation 2:18-29

18“*And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:*

The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:

19*I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. 20 ‘But I have this against you, 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. 21 ‘I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 22 ‘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. 23 ‘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. 24 ‘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. 25 ‘Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. 26 ‘He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27 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; 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.’*

(Note: I'm not doing this for my health and enjoyment. I've spent real hours studying this stuff and seeking God in it. I'm not saying anything new. You can take what comes out of these little efforts and compare it to reformation and puritan doctrine and it would hold up quite well.

Here's my point. When we come across things in the Word of God that we as a body are not doing, we need to change. The scripture is authoritative over us. As a body and as individuals. We need to be aligned with it as individual christians, and as a local body. If the word of God is not informing us in a real tangible way, we're wasting our time.)

Last week we only got to the beginning of verse 20.

I have this against you, that you tolerate . . .

Thyatira was the church that tolerates sin.

We talked last week about how the tone has changed with this letter. Suddenly the church, if it does not repent, is the enemy of the Son of God.

In the first 3 letters, the pressure comes from outside. The onslaught comes from the world, in different forms, but the enemy is from without.

With this letter, there is a shift. The enemy has moved inside. The enemy is from within. Rotteness, like a cancer, grows in the body itself. Sin, allowed to remain, is that cancer.

We'll see that progression continue with one exception, Philadelphia. Thyatira is sick. Sardis is dead. Laodicea doesn't even register. Rotten from within.

From the poet, Jeremiah;

1Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

2“Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD,

“I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth,
The love of your betrothals,
Your following after Me in the wilderness,
Through a land not sown.

3“Israel was holy to the LORD,
The first of His harvest.
All who ate of it became guilty;
Evil came upon them,” declares the LORD.”

4Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.

5Thus says the LORD,
 “What injustice did your fathers find in Me,
 That they went far from Me
 And walked after emptiness and became empty?

11“Has a nation changed gods
 When they were not gods?
 But My people have changed their glory
 For that which does not profit.

12“Be appalled, O heavens, at this,
 And shudder, be very desolate,” declares the LORD.

13“For My people have committed two evils:
 They have forsaken Me,
 The fountain of living waters,
 To hew for themselves cisterns,
 Broken cisterns
 That can hold no water.

James 4:4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

The poet and the preacher are saying the same thing.

Do we understand that loving the world and friendship with the world are two different things.

We're commanded to love the world. Yet, in that loving, if we become "friends" with the world, we lost it. We become enemies of God if we become friends with the world.

This is a difficult line to draw in the sand. Not easy. If the world is

standing back and having a hard time seeing anything different about us, chances are we crossed over that line a long time ago.

That's what Pergamum did, and that's what Thyatira did.

Let's look at some of the details.

Vs. 20 'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My slaves astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.'

No one names their sweet little girl Jezebel. This name signifies the parallel with the original Jezebel.

The story of Jezebel is in 1 & 2nd Kings. She was the daughter of a Phoenician King. Her father was Ethbaal, king of Tyre. She married Ahab in an alliance between Israel, the northern kingdom, and Phoenicia.

She convinced Ahab to abandon the God of Israel and worship the gods of Tyre and Sidon. Baal worship. She led all of Israel astray in her evil. She had the prophets that wouldn't come over to Baal worship, killed.

Elisha appointed Jehu king and he had her servants throw her out of a window to her death.

Later they went to collect her remains to give her a burial, but the only thing left of Jezebel was her hands, and feet and skull. She was eaten by dogs. She became dog feces on the land of Israel, an answer to prophecy about her.

That's what God thinks of a woman who leads His slaves into sin. Dog feces.

In 1 Tim 2:12, Paul says; *I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.*

Women SHOULD teach. Other women. And children. Paul is clear. In the church, women neither teach or hold positions of authority over men.

That's the rule. It's not my rule. I believe Paul was just as inspired by God when he wrote that command to the church as he was at any other time.

So why is this woman in a position of authority over men and women alike at Thyatira?

Well, she claimed to be a prophetess. She probably argued that Paul was a woman hater and that her prophetic gift was proof that Paul wasn't inspired. I'm speculating, but, that's how it goes.

Once she had a following, she led them into sexual immorality. Idolatry. Eating things sacrificed to idols.

In the first Jerusalem council of the church, when Paul went down to Jerusalem to get a settlement once and for all from the apostles concerning the works salvation that the judaizers who followed Paul around and taught that you had to become a jew first, and be circumcised and follow all of the jewish law in order for Jesus to save you.

Here is what the apostles sent back with Paul;

28“*For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials:*

29*that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well.*

This speaks directly to the problem in Thyatira. Fornication and idolatry. What isn't included speaks indirectly to their other problem. The jews did not allow women to have authority over men in the synagogues. It would be the perfect time to change *that*.

The guilds at Thyatira may have been part of the problem too. To be in good standing in your guild, perhaps temple prostitution and feasting with the rest of the guild on meat offered to idols was part of what the local world was doing.

These guilds probably had a social aspect to them. Not unlike the Mason's, or the Elks. Friendship with the world. And Jezebel was telling them, it's OK, don't sweat it.

21 'I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 22 '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. 23 'And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts;

On the surface, this means exactly what it says. Remember in the first 3 churches, with Smyrna not included because it was pure, there is a call to repentance. Repent, and it'll be forgiven and all will be OK. Not here! She's already had time to repent, and did not. This woman did not want to give up her "authority". No repentance. No change. Time goes by.

Then in verse 22, most of the versions add in italics (of sickness). It isn't there. Just the word for bed is there. Same word as when Jesus told the lame man, take up thy bed and walk.

So what the Son of God is saying here is more like, she likes a bed so much, I'll throw her on a bed! And everyone that commits spiritual adultery with her, her and her bed and all of those folks, great tribulation, and vs. 23 pestilence and death.

Did it happen? We just don't know. We have no further record. Does what God says he'll do, happen? Yes.

We've taught many times the phenomenon that prophecy can have more than one fulfillment. More than one completion.

This is the mind of God. And the power of God, to say something is

going to happen at a future time, and to fulfil it in some way immediately or close to the giving, and also to fulfil it again more broadly in the future.

Look at those 3 verses again and put your thinking caps on.

We've said the we believe these 7 churches, in some sense, loosely look like a picture of church history over the centuries. Lots of overlap. Nothing dogmatic, and if you don't see it that way, that's OK too.

So Ephesus type churches were dominant in the apostolic age until John's death around 96AD.

Then Smyrna type churches look like the next age from 96 - ish to about 312 AD when Constantine declared the whole roman empire, christian. The age of the persecuted church.

Then from 312 AD to perhaps 604 AD when the roman empire dissolved and Pope Gregory assumed Papal Supremacy to include rule over the old roman empire in some form. The age of the "christianized" (in name only) world.

Then, after that, and that's why I like this guy's chart, though it has its own problems, you see how the final 4 churches have aspects that go all the way to Christ's return.

So the papal church, if you will, is still very much with us. Thyatira is a picture of that church. Spiritual adultery. Idolatry. Immorality.

That gives a whole new set of possibilities to the warning given to this church in verses 22 and 23. While I'm sure there was an immediate fulfilment of the prophecy expressed in the warning to this church, within a very few years, I see a further future possibility here also.

First, has the papal church ever repented? No. Gives a whole new meaning to "*I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.*"

What will happen to the papal church at the rapture? It will go into the great tribulation. It will experience the pestilence and death prophecied for that time.

and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts;

Anytime you see that phrase, and it's all over the Old and New Testament, Then they will know. Then they will know, over and over, it's ultimately talking about the events of the time period when God takes back the kingdom of this world from Satan. The events that we'll peer into beginning in chapter 4 are real

Vs. 23b...and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. 24 '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. 25'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.

and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

Do deeds get us into heaven? NO

But they have everything to do with rewards, or punishment, eternal punishment.

I believe there will be real tangible rewards for christian folks who feed orphans and widows in their distress. Especially when it's done in the name of Jesus.

Who do you give your money to? The NRA? The Republican or Democratic National Conventions? A gazillion (I've been picking up my mom's mail) other 'open immediately, the earth hangs in the balance' type causes? Wood Hay and Stubble.

Do you know what I mean when I throw that out there. Is everyone familiar with that expression?

1 Cor. 3:11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Don't waste your money on good causes that will go up in flames. I'm very stingy this way. At work we're pressured to give to a corporate campaign like United Way. Each manager wants his org. to have 100%. That's a feather for his cap. I give a dollar. I want my manager to have his feather, but I don't have money to waste on wood, hay, and stubble.

I've been selling some of my antique cameras and lenses and sending the money to Kathy Gouker and Alice Wise who have served faithfully feeding and clothing hungry haitian children for the glory of Jesus since 1975. Lately I've been sending some to Katie Davis in Uganda. I buy these paper necklaces for \$20 because it helps widows in distress. I'm trying to be smart about my investment in heaven.

and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

This works 2 ways. If you do not have that foundation which is forgiveness of sin purchased in Jesus blood, deeds will be used in a trial against you that will send you to hell. Deeds will NOT save you; but they WILL condemn you if you don't have Jesus.

What does Paul say in Romans 8:1? There is therefore now, no condemnation for those who are IN Christ Jesus.

24'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. 25'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.

...the rest who are in Thyatira. 2 distinct groups. The slut group. The

rest who don't hold her teaching.

Pam asked, what did the remnant look like in this long era of darkness. The reformation hadn't happened. How did that work.

First, God ALWAYS has a remnant. In every age, some that are His.

The papal church made it nearly impossible. The word of God was removed from the people. No personal interpretation separate from the pope was tolerated. What was available was in Latin, so the uneducated, if they did get a glimpse, couldn't understand. That's why it was called "The Dark Ages"

A world with the word of God locked up is dark indeed. So to answer that question, I can only say, I don't know. Difficult. It probably looked like Luke 18:13 *"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 'I tell you, this man went to his house justified"*

What are the deep things of Satan?? Take what I say here and \$3.93 and get yourself a gallon of gas. I'm out on my proverbial limb making educated guesses.

See that term, *have not known*? The word is *egnosas* which is a past tense for the word *gnosis*, to know.

Later in the church, and beginning when this letter was written, but not necessarily named yet, was a group called the Gnostic's. They get their name from this greek word *gnosis*. To know. And what they taught was a "deeper knowing". Which also lends itself to Jesus use of the "deep things" of Satan.

"have not known the deep things" seems a good fit with this group, the Gnostics. And what they taught was a deeper knowing, a further revelation beyond scripture, thus the "deep" but it's a satanic "deep" if it goes beyond scripture.

And they taught a dualism. Body Soul Spirit. God saves the spirit. He doesn't care about the body. You have no real control over it, and it doesn't matter any way. So a spiritual salvation that allows the body to stay in sin and do whatever it pleases with no restraint. All acceptable and pleasing to God.

Lots of forms of Gnosticism but that's the basic tenet. It lead God's slaves into licentious living. License. It's OK.

So when Jesus says "have not known the deep things of Satan" it may be a good clue about exactly what was going on with this Jezebel lady.

By the way, I'm sure she probably was not a real christian, and I'll also guess that many of her 'children' were not real believers, but anytime Jesus uses the term, doulos, in a possessive sense, 'my slaves', it is talking about real spirit indwelt christians.

Jesus gets really REALLY angry when someone causes His little ones to stumble. Better that a heavy millstone were tied around that persons neck and cast into the sean . . angry. He means business with this lady. She is His enemy!

But if you're not in that group...*I place no other burden on you. 25
'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.*

If you're not in that group, you can take all of the commendations with none of the condemnations. But hold fast. It isn't easy to be pure in a defiled church. Hang on!

Finally the promise.

*26'He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27AND 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; 28and I will give him the morning star. 29
'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'*

He's speaking here to the true believers who were in Thyatira. They were the little group who kept His deeds. Who weren't fooled into stumbling by the harlot who had done the power grab.

Overcomers are evidenced by keeping those deeds "until the end." There is an end. A goal. When Jesus returns and takes back this earth. Overcomers keep His deeds, even if it means open animosity with this world, until the end.

The big word these days is "tolerance" isn't it. It's so much easier in this tolerant world to just join hands with them, and tolerate a bit of sin, so we can all be like Rodney King, and just get along.

Caution: Jesus hates that.

Start telling the world that the only way to God is forgiveness of sin through the spilled blood of Jesus and that the rest who don't accept that will perish and you'll find out immediately just how tolerant the world is. They'll brand you as an extremist. You become the problem, not the solution.

That leads us into the next part of His promise.

TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27AND 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;

Ultimately we tolerate sin so that we can have some standing, some acceptance, some authority in THIS world. That's the underlying reason. Acceptance, by the world. We don't like being pond scum . . like the apostle Paul. We want a little bit of power. A little bit of authority. So we tolerate sin to purchase that.

Jesus says, NO. Be the pond scum of this world, and later on, if you keep MY deeds to the end, then you'll have authority, over those folks who hated you.

TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27AND 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;

That's the promise. You can have it now (and be an enemy of God) or you can have it later. Please church! Choose later! Don't make treaty's with this world!

Then finally, this; vs 28 *and I will give him the morning star.*

We've come full circle to where I started.

They have forsaken Me,
The fountain of living waters,
To hew for themselves cisterns,
Broken cisterns
That can hold no water.

I'll give you the morning star. The fountain of living waters. Israel abandoned that fountain and chose empty cisterns. Let me just dig here in the desert. I'm soooooo thirsty, I'll just dig a little cistern here in Tonopah.

Don't you see it's the same thing. I'll give you the morning star! That's one of Jesus' names! Rev. 22:16 *"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."*

Satan was a morning star. Before sin was found in him and he was cast out of heaven.

The church that tolerates sin has made a treaty with that morning star when it could have the Real Morning Star. Israel could have had fountains of Living Water instead of cisterns in the sand. The church can have the Morning Star instead of a treaty with satan.

29 *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the*

churches.'