

## Revelation 2:18-29 Jezebel

### Review:

**Outline:** The book of Revelation has 22 chapters and can be divided into two parts (**1:19**):  
Chapter 1-3—"things ... that are" (Epistles to the Seven Churches)  
Chapters 4-22—"things ... that are to take place after this" (Prophecy)

My premise is that the things "that are" are now things that *were*, and even the things that "are to take place" are now things have *already* taken place (orthodox preterism).

### Performance Review: Thyatira

#### Thyatira:

- 1) Was 40 miles southeast of Pergamum (notice that so far, all these cities have been about 40 miles apart). If we superimposed the seven churches onto a clock, Ephesus is 7:00, Smyrna at 9:00, Pergamum at 11:00, and Thyatira at 1:00.
- 2) Was not a capital city, not a major religious center, and was fairly off the beaten path.<sup>1</sup> One commentator wrote: "The longest and most difficult of the seven letters is addressed to the least known, least important, and least remarkable of the cities."<sup>2</sup>
- 3) Was a manufacturing center full of trade guilds with wool, linen and leathers workers, garment makers, dyers, tanners, potters, and bronze smiths. One major product produced in there was purple dye. Lydia, Paul's first convert in Philippi, was originally from Thyatira (**Acts 16:14**) and was a seller of purple,
- 4) Worshipped the local version of the Greek sun-god Apollo, acclaimed to be the son of Zeus (there was a huge altar to Zeus in Pergamum).<sup>3</sup>

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**How did Jesus describe Himself in 2:18?** Pulling details from the vision of **1:12-16**, Jesus described Himself as **1)** the Son of God (the only place in all of Revelation), with **2)** eyes like a flame, and **3)** feet like burnished bronze. These aspects of the vision had significance to the situation in Thyatira.

It is possible Jesus described Himself as the Son of God because the local deity (a version of Apollo) claimed to be the son of Zeus. Jesus is the only and true Son of God.

**What does burnish (2:18)?** It means to polish something by friction to cause it to glow or shine.

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<sup>1</sup> Gregg, *Revelation*, 70.

<sup>2</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 101.

<sup>3</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 101-102.

## 2:19

\*\*\*\* **According to 2:19, what was in the church in Thyatira doing right?** They had **1)** increasing good works (an upward trajectory!), plus they had **2)** love, **3)** faith, and **4)** service and **5)** patient endurance.

**Observation:** Love and faith are the basis for good works and patient endurance.

**Application:** *Are these things true in our own church and personal lives?*

## 2:20

\*\*\*\* **What did Jesus have against them (2:20)? What's the "but" about?** They allowed a false teacher to lead some into sexual immorality.

**What word in 2:20 describes the church's relationship to Jezebel?** Jesus criticized the church because it *tolerated* Jezebel, who evidently was an active church member in good standing.

**What does it mean to tolerate sometime (2:20)?** It is to endure something disliked without interference.

**Why do you think the church tolerated such evil in their midst (2:20)?** **1)** Perhaps they thought they would win her over solely by loving her. **2)** Perhaps they thought discipline and love were mutually exclusive. This is similar to the way some parents think it unloving to discipline a child by spanking.

ESV **Proverbs 13:24** Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

Some today express the fear that if church discipline were practiced, others would be upset and stop coming to church. They thus tolerate feminism, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and transgenderism. They are cowards who fear lost revenue, lost popularity, or retaliation. It is easier to look the other way.

**Instead of tolerating Jezebel, what *should* they have done (2:20)?** They should have followed the **Matthew 18** church discipline process against her. The Corinthian church had this same problem: tolerating a man who was openly having relations with his father's wife (**1Co 5**).

ESV **1 Corinthians 5:1-2** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans.... And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

ESV **1 Corinthians 5:11** ... I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

**It is difficult to strike the right balance between being loving (2:19) and judging sin. The Ephesians judged sin but lacked love. The Thyatirans were loving (2:19), but tolerated sin. Which is worse: being unloving orthodoxy (Ephesus) and being lovingly tolerant of sin (Thyatira)?** Both are bad. Jesus threatened to take away the lampstand from the church in Ephesus, and kill those who were sinning in Thyatira. Theirs was a love that kills. Furthermore, sin has a contagious effect on others.

**Do you think her name was *really* Jezebel (2:19)?** No Hebrew parents would name their daughter Jezebel. This is a symbolic name for a bad woman who had Jezebel-like character.

**What do we know about the Old Testament figure named Jezebel?** See *1 Kings 16:30-33, 19:1-2*. Jezebel was the archetype of an evil woman. She was the pagan queen of the apostate Israelite King Ahab. She murdered Naboth so Ahab could have his vineyard, introduced the worship of her false gods, killed many of God's true prophets in Israel, and opposed both Elijah and Elisha.<sup>4</sup>

**New Covenant Theology:** Even though Christians are in covenant with God through the New Testament rather than the Old Testament with ancient Israel, this reference to the wickedness of Jezebel shows the importance of knowing the content of the Old Testament.

ESV **1 Corinthians 10:11** ... these things happened to them as an example ... they were written down for our instruction ...

**What sins was Jezebel encouraging (2:20)?** She was seducing the church to practice **1)** sexual immorality and **2)** eat food sacrificed to idols (they two are interconnected).

**Based on the wording of 2:20, was Jezebel, in fact, a prophetess?** No; like Balaam (2:14), she only "calls herself" a prophetess. Whereas the church in Ephesus had to deal with false apostles, the church in Thyatira had to contend with this false prophetess. Perhaps she was claiming new revelation from God that under the new covenant, sexual immorality was no longer immoral.

**Women Prophets:** There are several examples of true, legitimate prophetesses in the Bible (such as Deborah, Huldah, Miriam, Anna, Philips's four daughters). Jezebel was not one of them.

**Was there anything wrong with the simple fact that she was teaching (2:20)?** Even though *what* she taught was far worse than *that* she taught, she violated Scripture by the very act of teaching the church:

ESV **1 Timothy 2:11-12** ... I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man ...

A woman may and should teach her own children, and older women are to train younger women, but women are not to serve as teachers to the whole church.

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<sup>4</sup> "Jezebel", Britannica.com. Accessed December 8, 2020.

**3) What does it mean to “seduce” someone (2:20)?** The Greek is *planao*, “to lead astray, cause to wander” (from the right way).<sup>5</sup> A related Greek word, *planétés*, was an astronomical term that is where we get our word “planet.” However, unlike what we think of when we think of a planet that has a known orbit, in Greek it was used to refer to a wandering star (an asteroid or meteor).<sup>6</sup> Jude described false teachers this way:

**ESV Jude 1:12-13** These are blemishes on your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, looking after themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

**Beware.** That Jezebel was so effectively able to lead some within the church astray and yet continue to be tolerated shows how persuasive and seductive a sinful woman can be when dealing with men. Another example is how easily Eve talked Adam into eating the forbidden fruit. The man is supposed to be the head of the woman, but women have tremendous powers of persuasion and influence over men, even as Jezebel did over Ahab.

**4) What is the connection between sexual immorality and food sacrificed to idols (2:20)?** Paul made it clear in his writings that there is nothing inherently wrong in simply eating meat sacrificed to idols (**1Co 8-10**). The problem was that ancient pagan religion was often associated with feasting and temple prostitution. Immorality was an integral part of pagan religion

**How is what Jezebel taught (2:20) different from what the Balaam taught (2:14)?** In effect, there was no difference; same song, different verse.

**ESV 1 Thessalonians 4:3** For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality ...

### 2:21

**\*\*\*\*What grace had Jesus shown Jezebel in 2:21?** Jesus had given her time to repent (but she had not done so).

**Time & Church Disciple:** Like the church in Thyatira, most churches today tolerate evil and never exercise church discipline. The few who do dare to discipline must take care not to be in a rush. The sinning person must be given time to repent, just as Jesus gave Jezebel time to repent.

### 2:22-23

**\*\*\*\*What fate awaited Jezebel and her children (2:19-28)?** Sickness, tribulation, and death awaited them (**2:22-23a**).

**ESV Hebrews 13:4** ... let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

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<sup>5</sup> Bauer, *Lexicon*, 665.

<sup>6</sup> Bauer, *Lexicon*, 666.

**What is a “sick bed” (2:22)?** “Bed” is from *kliné* (basis for “clinic”). A death bed is the bed a person was laying on when he died. Similarly, a sick bed simply refers to a bed one lies in when sick.

**Do you think that people were literally committing adultery *with* Jezebel (2:22)? Why?**

Perhaps, but more probably they were committing adultery *along with* Jezebel because of her teachings.

**What “great tribulation” do you think Jesus had in mind for these people (2:22)?**

ESV 1 **Corinthians 11:30-31** For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

**What escape clause did Jesus offer in 2:22b?** The word “unless” flags a necessary condition that must be met to escape judgment. If they repented of her works they could avoid judgment. Thus, those committing adultery with her were asked to repent of “her” works, that is, to repent of accepting her teachings and thus end their sexual immorality and participation in pagan worship.

**Who were Jezebel’s “children” (2:23)?** These were probably not her literal children, but rather those who followed and lived out her vile teachings. Those who have the faith of Abraham are Abraham’s spiritual children. Those who followed the teaching of Jezebel were her *unspiritual* children!

**What universal application did Jesus make in 2:23b?** Jesus intended for all the churches would see what became of Jezebel and her children, and realize that Jesus knows and will judge our thoughts and motives. **Gregg:** “the downfall of this corrupt movement in the church will be a wake-up call for the morally lax in all the churches who hear about it ...”<sup>7</sup> After the Lord stuck down Ananias and Sapphira, Luke recorded that:

ESV **Acts 5:11** ... great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

ESV **Zechariah 4:10** ... the eyes of the LORD ... range through the whole earth.

ESV **Jeremiah 17:10** I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

ESV 2 **Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

**From context, was it a good thing or a bad thing that Jesus would give to each of them according to their works (2:23b)?** Since they were following Jezebel’s immoral teaching, it would be a bad thing.

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<sup>7</sup> Gregg, *Revelation*, 72.

**How does Jesus' self-description in 2:18 fit the problem this church had (2:22-23a)?** His eyes, like flames of judgment, search mind and heart. His feet of polished bronze trample in judgment.

### 2:24

**\*\*\*\*Not everyone in the church was following Jezebel. What instruction did Jesus have for the rest of them (2:24)?** Aside from the fact that they should have done church discipline against Jezebel and her followers, Jesus had no criticism for them, nor were they lacking in anything.

**Smyrna had a synagogue of Satan. Pergamum had Satan's throne. What did Thyatira of Satan's (2:24)?** The deep things of Satan were being taught there through Jezebel. Perversely, Jezebel probably claimed to be teaching the deep things of God.

NAS **1 Timothy 4:1** ... the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons ...

**What are some modern examples of the deep things of Satan?** The Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Unitarianism, Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code*, and theological liberalism in nearly every denomination, all reflect the deep things of Satan.

### 2:25

**\*\*\*\*What time frame are we given for this coming of Christ in 2:25?** Since Jesus asked them to hold fast until his coming, it sounds plausible that the **2:25** coming would be within their lifetimes. He didn't say hold fast until you die of old age.

**What was it Jesus would come to do in Thyatira (2:25)?** He would come in judgment against Jezebel and her followers.

**Is this coming of Jesus (2:25) the same as the second coming?** See 2:22-23. The coming of 2:25 refers to Jesus' soon coming judgment against Jezebel, not to the second coming.

### 2:26-27

**\*\*\*\*What did Jesus promise conquistadors (2:26-27)?** He offered some type of co-regency: authority to rule the nations with a rod of iron (whatever that means).

**What is it that Jesus wanted them to conquer (2:26); conquer what?** In context, He wanted them to conquer the false teaching of Jezebel and carry out the works of Jesus rather than the works of Jezebel.

ESV **Romans 8:37** ... we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

**To what end does “until the end” refer (2:26); the end of what?** It could refer to **1)** the end of Jezebel’s influence, which ended at Jesus’ local coming, **2)** the end of the Jewish age in A.D. 70 (which Revelation is about), **3)** the end of their lives.

**Has 2:26-27 been fulfilled yet? Does the church, at this moment, along with Jesus, have authority to rule the nations with a rod of iron?** *Explain.* This seems to be a free rendering of **Psalm 2:8-9**.

ESV **Psalm 2:8-9** Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

These same phrases are found at the end of Revelation:

ESV **Revelation 19:15** From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

**1) Physical Authority:** Many see this as a reference to a coming time when the church will rule the unbelieving world in a way that it does not now (by force and coercion, with a rod of iron), as exemplified in the prayer, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

**2) Spiritual Authority:** It should be considered that what Jesus promised in **2:26-27** came true in the first century and is still true today. It refers not to physical, political rule but spiritual rule. The promises to Abraham initially concerned physical descendants, a physical land and nation, and physical prosperity. These physical things were mere types and shadows of the ultimate fulfillments we have in Christ: spiritual descendants (the Church), a heavenly country (Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world), a spiritual nation, and spiritual prosperity (justification by faith). The authority the church has is over spiritual powers behind the nations—the authority to break down *spiritual* strongholds that resist the spread of the Gospel, even as an iron rod can break a clay pot.

#### **Before the cross:**

ESV **Luke 10:1, 17-20** ... the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.... The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

#### **Through the cross:**

ESV **Colossians 2:15** He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them....

**Adrian Rogers:** "We do not fight for victory, we fight from victory. The victory was won a Calvary!"<sup>8</sup> "God doesn't want you to serve Him in *your* poor little old weak way. He wants you to serve Him in *His* mighty, dynamic way."<sup>9</sup>

**After the cross:**

ESV **Matthew 28:18-19** ... Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ...

ESV **Ephesians 2:4-6** ...God ... made us alive together with Christ ... and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus ...

ESV **Ephesians 6:12** ...we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

ESV **Romans 16:20a** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

ESV **1 Corinthians 15:25-26** ... he [Christ] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

**Conclusion:** Satan is not alive well on planet earth, but he is alive and hobbled on planet earth:

ESV **Revelation 20:2-3** And he [an angel] seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer ...

**Example:** In a football game, a 275 pound defensive tackle exhibits a brute force that can be intimidating both on and off the playing field. But you know what? A little man in a striped shirt, half the size of the tackle, can blow a whistle and order him off the field. **Why does the 275 pound tackle obey?** Because the striped shirt signals authority, and the football player must recognize and obey it, or he is not allowed in the game. **Application:** Jesus has given you a striped shirt and a whistle. You have kingdom authority and power over that terrible creature who bedevils the earth. It is time that we whistled him off the field!

**2:28**

\*\*\*\***What other reward did Jesus promise to over comers in 2:28?** He promised to give them the morning star.

**To what does the morning star refer (2:28)?** Jesus left the meaning of this unexplained, and no satisfactory explanation has been put forth.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps it refers to Jesus Himself:

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<sup>8</sup> Adrian Rogers, *Adrianisms* (Collierville, TN: Innono Publishing, 2015), 139.

<sup>9</sup> Rogers, *Adrianisms*, 142.

<sup>10</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 107.



ESV **Revelation 22:16** I, Jesus ... am ... the bright morning star.

### **So What?**

#### **2:29**

#### **\*\*\*\*How does 2:29 flag that all this applies to more than just the church at Thyatira?**

Whoever has an ear is to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. See also back to 2:23b.  
ESV **Revelation 2:23b** ... all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve.

#### **The saints in Thyatira tolerated the teachings of Jezebel. How can we avoid their mistake (2:18-29)?**

- 1) Realize that Jesus searches and rewards each of us based on what we do, 2:23b.
  - 2) Realize that wrong teachings can come from gifted teachers. Don't be misled.
  - 3) Realize that big problems can happen in obscure little places (like Thyatira): Don't be surprised.
  - 4) Realize the importance of maintaining a pure fellowship through church discipline.
- \*\*\*\* = Ask this question aloud before having someone read the text.
  - These lessons are designed for 45 minutes and are based on the ESV.
  - You can hear this lesson taught at [SermonAudio.com/NTRF](http://SermonAudio.com/NTRF).
  - Stephen E. Atkerson NTRF.org Revised 12/27/2020