

# Christ's Letter to Thyatira

*How It All Ends*

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**Bible Text:** Revelation 2:18-28

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If you'll turn to Revelation 2:18 in the church of Thyatira. This is a very small church, in fact, you might remember from another book of the Bible, Lydia was from Thyatira (Acts 16). I mentioned before that it's funny to me that it would be such a small city and appear to be insignificant to men but to God it's very significant. It's the longest letter to the churches of all the churches we're going to study. So, there is special emphasis on this church. Why would God put special emphasis on this church? We need to start reading there in verse 18, if you'll follow along with me there. It says,

“18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; 19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.”

We have to think about what does each word mean and God did not by any mistake use the word “Son of God.” Usually when Jesus refers to himself, he calls himself the “Son of man.” So, if I use the “Son of Man” I'm referring to my human-hood. This comes to a church that is struggling with some things.

Another thing it says is that he “hath eyes like a flame of fire.” Do you think that eyes with flames of fire are able to see everything that's going on? Well, sure. They are a flame of fire. In fact, when I think of flames, I don't think of, you know, those are kind eyes, those are loving eyes. I think flame of fire much more judgment eyes. They have emphasis on the, “Alright, something's coming. I saw what you did.”

And also with the feet that are fine brass, maybe we could come to that a little bit later and we'll talk about how when you have feet that are strong yet fine and pure, they are strong enough to stamp out evil but they're pure enough, if you will, to discern good from evil and I hope I'm not taking that too far.

“Son of God” is only used once in the book of Revelation as to refer to his authority as God. It's kind of a reminder of his authority. Eyes, flame of fire: he sees the sin and he's bringing judgment. Feet of fine brass: he can stamp out the judgment. This echoes a passage back in Daniel 10:6, if you wouldn't mind turning there real quick. I won't have

you turn to too many passages outside of Revelation. Starting in verse 6, it says, “His body also was like the beryl,” which is a precious stone, “and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.” So, I see the words “his eyes are lamps of fire” and the feet are the “colour of polished brass.”

Revelation 2:19, “I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.” So, not only does he repeat the word “works” but he uses the word “charity” which we normally translate to “love” and “service,” so they do service to help other people. They have faith unlike some of the other people. This is kind of contrasting another church that we talked about earlier that was lacking that first love but now these people, they have faith and they have this patience that they need to have.

Well, is it important for us to have patience? Of course it is because of all these things that Jesus is talking about in these chapters, he’s talking more than anything about “have patience until I come. You’re going to go through a lot of different things. You’re going to go through tribulations, you’re going to go through hardships. Again, that’s not the only thing he says. He gives one verse of commendation and I think that’s a good lesson to us. If we’re ever trying to help somebody or correct somebody and we know they did wrong, we don’t want to come at them and just say, “These are the things that you’ve done wrong.” Jesus gives us a good example here, he gives them something they did right and then goes into something they did wrong.

“20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee,” a few things, more than one, “because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.”

The church of Ephesus had a problem with apostasy. The church of Smyrna had a problem coming about them where they were very persecuted. Then Pergamos had both, apostasy and persecution. I think here in Thyatira, it’s more specifically focused on immorality but we can even see later that immorality can result in apostasy, can result in a false religion, can result in a belief against God.

First question I see right away is: who is this woman Jezebel? Remember back in 1 and 2 Kings, there but there was really a person named Jezebel. She had a husband, King Ahab, who ran the country at that time. He had a problem because his wife told him everything that he needed to do. In fact, his wife stepped in and ran the kingdom for him. He wanted something so badly that she actually stepped in and killed the person that had it so that he could have it. She helped him fulfill selfish desires. I mean, that’s the definition of coveting right there: “I want something so bad that you have that I’m willing to kill you for it so that I can have it.” Also, David wanted that wife so bad that he actually killed her husband in order to take her as his wife. Again, I think that’s the same problem there so there’s a usurping of authority.

The true story of Jezebel is that Jezebel usurps her husband's authority, fulfills the selfish desires there which I think will be a reoccurring trend and leads the nation into a great trouble. One of the results, this was back in the prophet Elijah's days, one of the results of all the problems that she caused in the kingdom of Israel was that there was no rain. Elijah held back the rain per God's order that there would be no rain and when there's no rain, crops do not grow very well. I would say that would be a great trouble, that would be a big problem that they had back in those days. That's the true story of Jezebel. Now, we would assume that the church of Thyatira either knows the story of Jezebel from the Old Testament or they could find it. They would have 1 and 2 Kings in some way, shape or form that they could go back and read about it so that could be why John is using Jezebel as an illustration here.

Then he says that there currently is a woman, Jezebel, in the church or Thyatira, a real person. Now, was her name Jezebel? Maybe not but I don't think that's what's important in this section here. He points out that this woman Jezebel claims to be a prophetess. Now, if somebody comes to me and says, "I'm a prophetess," she's taking authority that not necessarily she was supposed to have. "I'm a prophetess. I know what's coming. You should listen to me." She caused God's people to sin or commit fornication. This is another story of another Jezebel usurping authority and causing the people of God to commit fornication.

They also were made to eat food from idol worship. Now, you might think, "Okay, what's the big deal with that?" Turn back a little bit in 2:14, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." This is the same kind of problem: they believed in this doctrine of Balaam that they should eat things that are sacrificed to idols.

From Revelation 2:14 we said that happened in the other church so, again, it's happening in Thyatira. They are eating that food to idols because of who? Because of Jezebel, this Jezebel person, whether that's her name or not. This woman is causing them to commit fornication and to eat foods sacrificed to idols which causes a stumblingblock to the other Christians. So, her and hers are cast into a great tribulation. Let's go back to the verses here.

"20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."

She is cast into a bed. What's a bed? The Greek word for bed is used ten times in the New Testament, and those ten times it was either talking about a physical bed like one

that you would sleep in as in Mark 9:2 and 6; or, in Mark 7:30, Luke 5:18 and Acts 5:15 it's someone that's on their sickbed—someone that's dying. So, if I'm going to cast somebody into their bed, they're going to come on with a great sickness unto, possibly, death.

First of all, I will cast her into a bed, a death bed, and them that commit adultery with her will be in great tribulation which brings us to our next question here: what is great tribulation? I think it goes into kind of detail here by the next few verses so let's read that one first,

“23 And I will kill her children with death,” kind of redundant I think but if you think about it this way, it's using it as an adjective. It's saying, “I will kill them unto death. It will be a deathly death. It will be a real death.”  
“I will kill her children with death and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”

Again, this is not according to your works as in the good works, this is according to their bad works, I think, that we're still staying in context here with what we're talking about, the people that are really committing a lot of sins and causing others more stumblingblocks and causing more fornication. Those are going to get the worst of it; they're going to get that great tribulation.

And it also says “so that other people know that I search the hearts.” So, is it necessarily talking about a physical sin? Something that they physically did with Jezebel? Maybe, since Jesus is trying to prove a point here that “I can search your heart and I know what you're thinking,” that there are fornications of the heart. There are problems with the mind. There are people being led astray and caused a stumblingblock to that are just thinking the wrong kinds of things which is causing them to sin even in their mind because this is the way because of that great tribulation that Jesus is going to prove that he is the one that searches the reins of the heart because when we think about sin, we want to do sin which causes us to sin which, again, results in the punishment of sin.

Christ gave this horrible person that led many astray space or time to repent of her fornications and then the saddest news of all: She repented not. Grace is still given to the Jezebel. She was given a place, a time to repent and she did not.

The only other time that word “great tribulation” is used is in 7:14. Those are the only times that it's used. In fact, the word “great” is the word, I love this word in Greek, *meGas* or mega. I think we all understand that, mega tribulation. So, God uses these great tortures, these mega tortures, this horrible time on the earth when everybody is being just tortured. I mean, some of them want to die and they can't die. We'll read about that later when we study the tribulation period and believe me, again, eschatology, I'm not that strong on but I know that the whole reason God did that is he's still giving them one last chance to repent. In that whole process, I mean, there's a time when they're given over

and they're not having any more chance because they've taken the mark and that's it. But God still gave them one last chance. He might be giving you one last chance today.

Now, we don't repent of each and every sin because I don't, to be honest, I don't remember every sin I've ever done. I mean, if I had to repent of every single sin I've ever done, then I'm in trouble because I won't remember them all. But it does say that when I change my mind, when I repent and turn in a different direction, now I'm facing God and now I'm following him. I'm changing what I was doing before.

"24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira," as in, the rest of these people that aren't committing fornication yet, these people that aren't wrapped up in the sin of Jezebel. "And unto the rest in Thyatira as many as have not this doctrine," what doctrine? Verse 14, what doctrine? The doctrine of Balaam. That doctrine where they cause others to be stumblingblocks and they commit fornication. "As many as not have this doctrine and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak," so maybe you know somebody that's going through these kinds of problems in their life. You've heard them speak, you know the depths of Satan, you know the depths of the sin that they're in. They don't even want out at this point.

"I will put upon you none other burden." Thank the Lord. None other burden is put upon you. You've been doing good works and in verse 19 it says, "The last to be more than the first." What you started off doing, what you are doing really good, that's great because now you're even doing more than you were doing before. That's great. You had a little bit more love than you loved before. Keep that up. "I put unto you no other burden other than to keep doing what you're doing." Keep that up.

Then in verse 25, "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come." Hold it fast. Hold fast to faith. Hold fast to love. Hold fast to patience. Hold fast to service.

"27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers," little pieces, that's what shivers is, "even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

There are lots of stars but there is a star, the star, but later in the book of Revelation (22:16), you'll see that there is a Morning Star. The Morning Star is Jesus. So, who does he give or what does he give to the overcomer? He gives them Jesus. He gives them salvation. He gives them a sonship.

"And power over the nations." So, we will rule with him. We will rule with him so Christ also promises a reward at the end of the book here. These overcomers come in 19:15, it says that they'll have "powers over the nation, they'll rule with a rod of iron." Again, being in charge to the point where it says that those "clay vessels could be easily broken by your rod of iron." That means you really are in charge.

“I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” So, I am the root, I am the offspring, I am the bright and morning star. Jesus is the bright and morning star that he offers to the overcomer. And to overcome something means you had to have it first so, again, there are people in this sin of fornication following after Jezebel that are people of God, and they overcome that sin and they do receive salvation and they do persevere in the end and they do have that reward.

Is the reward in 2:27 to those in the millennium or to the New Heaven or to the New Earth, the New Jerusalem? Well, I don't think that's clear because it says that “I sent mine angel to testify unto these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” This is all after the great tribulation so it has to take place either in the millennium or in the New Jerusalem. I think that's open to interpretation and chapter 19:15 it says, “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth,” you tread with feet, feet of brass, “the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” So this, again, after the battle of Armageddon at the great tribulation, that's when they start beginning to rule with a rod of iron. Take joy in that for yourself because you are an overcomer simply by believing on Christ. You get that reward, to be rulers with a rod of iron and you receive Jesus the bright and morning star. I don't know whether it's in the millennium or New Heaven or not, it doesn't matter to me. Either way, it's good so God richly blesses no matter when this is fulfilled.