

NOTES – TO THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA

The Thyatira message is longer and invokes Jezebel as a prophetess of the deep things of Satan. Before we explore that meaning, here is some background on the city. In Roman times, and before, it produced purple cloth said to be more valuable than gold. Why so precious? The purple dye came from mucus of small sea snails.

According to Pliny the Elder, it took thousands of snails to produce one ounce of dye. Once the snails were harvested from the sea, the mucus glands were removed and placed in a lead pot filled with brine. The pot was then slowly heated for about ten days until the mixture turned a reddish-purple color.

We can imagine an industry raising special sheep (or cotton) to make special wool that is sheared, cleaned, spun into yarn, dyed, woven, distributed and sold. Each step would employ many people in different little factories or fields. They had guilds that had to be blessed by the gods—particularly Apollo. Records that have been found show that even city officials belonged to the guilds. They believed that people who didn't pay homage to the gods would bring their disfavor and everyone would suffer. The worship of the gods involved eating the food sacrificed to idols and sexual rites. To be a Christian could mean loss of your livelihood and being ostracized by family, friends and the whole city.

2:18 Son of God. Divine title. The only begotten son of the one true God vs. Apollo sometimes referred to as the son of God.

Eyes like a blazing fire. Sees through everything

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Heb 4:13

Feet like burnished bronze. Christ's feet. He walked among us on his feet. His feet were pierced. Tried by fire. Now, all things under his feet. His enemies will be where? Under his feet. Will tread the winepress of the wrath of God (Rev 19:15, Isaiah 63:3). These burnished bronze feet will trample his enemies.

2:19. High praise for the faithful in this church. Why talk about their works so much? His grace has been established throughout the NT. These messages to the 7 churches are about their works. What are they doing right and what are they doing wrong. We will see more in a few verses about how much their works matter.

The story of Jezebel

Wife of Ahab – the worst in a long line of evil kings

Canaanite princess from Tyre – don't marry the pagan women

Daughter of a Phoenician king. Phoenicians worshipped Baal (comment of pronunciation)

She essentially wanted to make Baal worship the state religion

Baal prophets ate at her table (guess what they ate?)

Killed prophets of the LORD

What did Jezebel have in common with Balaam? Both caused many in Israel to sin in worshipping other gods.

I Kings 16:29-31 reigned 22 years. Married daughter of Sidonians. Evil above all that were before

I Kings 18:13 she killed prophets of the LORD

18:19 and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

Jezebel 1 Kings 21:25 (There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited.

Jezebel in this Thyatira context:

- Calls herself a prophetess
- Teaching and seducing believers, inciting them to sin
- Fornication as a mystery religious rite
- Eat food sacrificed to idols
- Refuses to repent (maybe she could have)

Same Satanic attack as Balaam. Alluring women seducing God's people to sexual sin as a religious rite and eating the food sacrificed to idols. This is always a powerful temptation to those who have come out of paganism. It was all around them, but she is bringing it into the congregation of God's holy people who are supposed to have left that behind.

Lord Jesus is affirming the instructions that the council of apostles and elders gave to the Gentiles in Acts 15.

- It was a surprise to the apostles and elders that Gentiles were coming into the faith.
- The big question was do they need to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses.
- "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." Acts 15:28-29
- See also I Thess 4:2-3, I Cor 10:19-21.

This is to the church— not Israel. This is in the administration or dispensation of grace. Bullinger and other dispensationalists said that Revelation is after the church has been raptured and it is to and about the God's dealings with Israel. That is obviously wrong here because it is affirming the instructions to the Gentiles in the Church Age. These are key commands for Gentiles in the church age because, first, these things offend God... He hates them, and second, He knows how toxic they are to His people. It puts them back in the dominion of Satan, from which He has rescued them.

2 Kings 9:7, 10, 22, 30,

9:7 servant of Elijah to Jehu, And you shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, so that I may avenge on Jezebel the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord.

9:22 "What peace can there be, so long as the whorings and the sorceries of your mother Jezebel are so many?" spoken by Jehu, the king who overthrew Ahab's heirs

2 Kings 9, 36-37 her death fulfills prophecy, so it should be understood as the work of God.

Rev 2:22-23. This affliction and death that Christ pronounces against Jezebel and her followers also shows his power and authority and glorifies him and sends a message against tolerating those who try to damage the body of Christ through this kind of teaching.

2:24-25. All of this severe rebuke and threat of destruction is for the Jezebel gang. He has told the other believers there that he is pleased they are doing very well.

Notice exact same words as Acts 15 "lay no other burden on you". The Lord Jesus reaffirms the decree of the apostles and elders for the Gentiles. This confirms that this is for the church age, not a different administration.

2:26-27. There is great reward to those who keep his works to the end.

In the current Church Age, the consistent message is great grace, but works still matter

- and I will give to each of you according to your works - Rev 2:23
- The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end - Rev 2:26
- 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. - 2 Cor 5:10
- knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. - Col. 3:24,25

2:28-29 He is the morning star. He gives the power to do the works. Remember Eph 2 says we were created unto good works, right after it says we are saved by grace and not by works.

He gives the divinely empowered endurance we need by His grace

He makes us overcomers... more than conquerors

He rewards us for walking in it.

The morning star is the brightest thing before the dawn. It is the promise of morning. When the LORD God promised and covenanted that a descendant of his would reign forever. That promise was like a morning star promising a new day. At the end of Revelation he is telling another promise that he is coming and bring the day. See Rev 22:16