

## **Week 6 Biblical Text (Revelation 2:18–29)**

<sup>18</sup> And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

<sup>19</sup> 'I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. <sup>20</sup> But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. <sup>22</sup> Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, <sup>23</sup> and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. <sup>24</sup> But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. <sup>25</sup> Only hold fast what you have until I come. <sup>26</sup> The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, <sup>27</sup> and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup> And I will give him the morning star. <sup>29</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

## **Intertextual Parallels**

Son of God (Rev 2:18; Psalm 2:7)

- John introduces Jesus as Son of God.
- The psalmist uses the language of divine sonship for the royal offspring of David (Ps 2:7)
- 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 89:26-27 support this idea.

Jezebel (Rev 2:20; 1 Kgs 16–22; 2 Kgs 9–10)

- John refers to someone as "Jezebel." There is no need to assume this is the person's actual name.
- Given the idea of outside political figures coming into the church, we see Jezebel, a political leader, turn the people of God away from true worship.

Ruling with a Rod of Iron (Rev 2:27; Psalm 2:9)

- Another connection to Psalm 2.
- Christ's receipt of authority means he has the power to confer that authority on the overcomer.

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## **Intratextual Parallels**

Deception (Rev 2:20; 12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20:3, 8, 10)

- Three entities engage in deception: the devil, the second beast, and Babylon.
- Deception connects Jezebel to the satanic empire.

Reward According to Works (Rev 2:23; 14:13; 18:6; 20:12–13; 22:12)

- This is not salvation by works.
- What you do matters.
- The works of believers follow them (14:13).
- The wicked are judged (20:12–13).

### **How does Jesus appear?**

Jesus appears as the Son of God. He has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like burnished bronze. Although a lot of speculation revolves around the description of Jesus' eyes and feet, it seems likely that this connection reflects the tremendous amount of metalworking for which the city was known.

### **The situation for those in Thyatira**

Trade guilds in the area were pertinent to economic prosperity. Membership in the guilds involved religious, sexual, and idolatrous activity. At the same time, participation could grow one's business and aid in establishing financial security. Failure to participate meant being economically ostracized.

With all the metalworking in the city, the god of fire and metalworking, Hephaestus, served as the workers' patron deity. Apollo, the son of Zeus who was believed to manifest physically as the emperor, was yet another deity with whom the church had to contend.

### **Engaging the Church**

- Unlike the church in Ephesus, the congregation in Thyatira is known for love.
- The church "permitted" Jezebel. Some translations note that they tolerate her. The congregation had the power to keep her out, but they did not. They let her in. They let her stay. Christ will deal with Jezebel, but he will also deal with the church for its inactivity regarding Jezebel.
- The church is not engaged in a battle with the outside government or culture. Instead, they *should* be involved in maintaining THEIR integrity as the people of God.
- The church is divided. You have those who follow Jezebel and those who do not hold to her teaching. What does this say to us today? Are we welcoming secular political and non-Christian religious frameworks into our life of following Jesus?
  - Is the church letting in external issues?
  - Is the church divided today over issues that are external to the church?
- Conquering and keeping Christ's works are required. Those individuals receive political power. Maybe the aim isn't for political power in this age. Maybe the objective is to live in the age to come under the perfect rule of Christ.

### **Additional Notes:**