

Shadows Of Christ & His Bride

Lesson #38

Thyatira: Jezebel

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Charles Erdman: The letter to the church in Thyatira begins the 2nd group of letters to the churches of Asia Minor. In the first group, the church at Ephesus [Apostolic - weeded out heresy] was characterized by a loyalty to Christ which was lacking in love. In the church of Smyrna, loyalty was tested by fire. [Satanic opposition] In the church of Pergamos the loyalty was lacking in moral passion. Yet all three churches were true to the faith and had not yielded to the assaults of evil. However, the case of the church at Thyatira, as of the churches in Sardis and Laodicea, the situation was far more serious. Here not merely a small minority was indifferent but large numbers had actually yielded to the demoralizing influence of false teaching, and of sin. The church of Thyatira represents the period between 590 AD to 1517 AD, known as the Dark Ages, the "Devil's Millennium." What began in Pergamos comes to full bloom in Thyatira.

Rev. 2:18 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;

Note: Jesus uses the part of His nature which best describes His relationship to this church.

The descriptive terminology used in these seven letters is drawn from the vision of Christ in Rev. 1:11-16 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

¹⁴ His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

➤ Jesus addresses Thyatira: He declares He is The Son of God.

Note: In Rev. 1:13, He chose the title: Son of Man. Rev. 2:18 Title: SON OF GOD

Note: The title "Son of God" is used 47 times in the New Testament,

but only once in Revelation > Rev. 2:18 > Letter to Thyatira

Jesus identifies Himself as the true Son of the true God. He is THE Son of God.

Background Information: Zeus, the chief god of the Greeks, was the supreme god over all the others that existed. Zeus would have taken the place of YHWH and considered sovereign in the minds of the Greeks.

- Apollo, Zeus' son, was considered a son of the supreme god.
- A temple in Thyatira was dedicated to Apollo, the sun god.
- Apollo, Satan's counterfeit, had flaming rays and wheels burnished like bronze.
- The local cultic worship of Apollo was merged with that of the emperor [identified as Apollo incarnate] so that both Apollo and the emperor were acclaimed as sons of Zeus.

Consider: The true 'Son of God, Jesus, would have been an affront to the state religion and to the religion of Thyatira which worshipped Apollo, the son of Zeus, Satan's counterfeit and to the emperor, the incarnate son of Zeus.

Consider: By reminding them of His unique divine Sonship, Jesus elevates His own words over and above the authority of anything that would have as its origin, the cult religion that existed in Thyatira.

Pure devotion to Christ was impossible if he is only thought of as 'one son of god among many.

Matt. 16:15-17 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona:

for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Question: Is it any wonder the Lord would address Himself as Deity > The Son Of God?

The Saving One > The Son of God. He is the Savior and He alone is worthy of worship.

This Messianic title emphasizes the deity of Christ and establishes His supreme authority.

Thyatira needed to see Jesus as the "Son of God" because they have been compromised and distracted by the influence of a false prophetess known as Jezebel.

Rev. 2:18 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;

- He is coming as the God who does not tolerate.
- He is coming in severe judgment against this church.
- To see His anger, note Rev. 2:23. He says, "I will kill her children with pestilence."

Rev. 2:19-29 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.

Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You allow [tolerate] that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit sexual immorality and eat food sacrificed to idols.

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

²³ And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searches the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

²⁴ But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

²⁵ But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

²⁶ And he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: ²⁷ And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: 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.

Can you imagine what happened in this church when this letter was delivered and read? What led to the church's corruption and spiritual darkness which lasted almost 10 centuries? When Constantine became Emperor of the Roman Empire in 313 AD, paganism was "baptized" and Satan joined the church. Pagan practices and idol worship began their poison corruption of the church. During this period, the church of Pergamos compromised and accepted the teachings of the Doctrine of Balaam. This led to accepting the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans which Jesus hated. Stumbling blocks, snares and traps were being laid to entice God's people to sin against Him and incur His anger. A religious "elite" clergy was developed who lorded over the people. A doctrine of a "license to sin" was being proclaimed. The corruption deepened due to the apathy of the church. Where were the believers to stand for truth? Jesus' condemnation to the church of Thyatira: Because you allow and tolerate. It is a clear example of the results when believers or churches are led astray and accept or tolerate a false system of worship. Just as the rule of Queen Jezebel was the worst period in Old Testament history, the church of Thyatira is condemned because they allow and tolerate the "spirit of Jezebel." This results in the church and society being plunged into the "Dark Ages" which lasted for almost 1000 years from 590 to 1517 AD.

What had been a "synagogue of Satan" in the church of Smyrna became the "seat of Satan" in Pergamos. As we enter the years of the Dark Ages, the church of Thyatira will plunge into the "depths of Satan."

The Church At Thyatira: Jezebel's Church: Poison In The Pulpit

The message to the church of Thyatira is the 4th prophetic message to the Christian Church and covers the Dark Ages from the 6th-16th centuries.

Jesus Confronts the church to expose Jezebel's teachings and her judgment.

Jesus Confronts The Problem in the Church The church in Thyatira was being led away from the Lord by the teachings of an influential woman in their congregation.

Acts 20:29-30 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

I Tim. 4:1 Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Jesus Confronts The Tolerance Of This Church

The Church Has Become Intimate With A False god & System Of Worship.

Christ's Condemnation: Rev. 2:20 Nevertheless [in spite of all the good] I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess [has direct communication to God], to teach and seduce [lead out of the right path] My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

This letter shows the depth of sin that compromise ultimately leads to...full-scale idolatry, full-scale immorality, and worst of all, tolerance of both. This church, infiltrated by the world, tolerated sin, absorbed sin and error and lived happily ever after with it. It faced a problem that has troubled many churches through history > a strong internal movement advocating compromise with worldly interests.
Einstein: The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them and do nothing.

Who was Jezebel? "The Woman Who Was A She-Devil"

For more than two thousand years, Jezebel has been saddled with a reputation as the bad girl of the Bible, the wickedest of women. "The Woman Who Was A She-Devil"

Scripture References—I Kings 16:30-31; 18:4, 19; 19:1-21; 21:5-25; II Kings 9:10, 30, 36
A. Name Meaning— Jezebel's name literally means, in its original form, 'exalted of Ba'al.' She supported and provided for 450 prophets of this god. Jezebel means "Where is the lord?" The name Jezebel is an Anglicized version of the Hebrew name 'Izebel. The phrase "'ēze ba'al" is a ritual cry that was used during worship ceremonies for Baal. This cry was used when Baal was thought to be in the underworld. She was a voluptuary, [a person devoted to luxury and sensual pleasure] with all the tawdry arts of a wanton woman. [Lascivious or promiscuous; Exciting or expressing sexual desire: a wanton pose. Marked by unprovoked, gratuitous maliciousness; capricious and unjust].

B. Family Connections—As the daughter of Ethbaal ["a man of Baal], king of the Sidonians, and both king and priest of Baal worshippers, she sprang from an idolatrous stock. She practiced witchcraft. [II Kings 9:22]. She used her power and ruthlessness to promote the worship of Baal.

C. Political Marriage It is believed the heathen Phoenician princess married Ahab, king of Israel, to seal a profitable trade alliance between Israel and Phoenicia.

The Phoenicians were a remarkable race, and outstanding as the great maritime peoples of the ancient world, but they were idolaters who regarded Jehovah as only a local deity, "the god of the land."

- The first time a king of Israel allied himself by marriage with a heathen princess.
- As a Jew, Ahab sinned against God's Law in taking as his wife a heathen.

Jezebel, ambitious and proud, eagerly seized the opportunity to share the throne of a king. As queen, Jezebel exerted an evil influence in all public affairs of the northern kingdom and the worship of the God of heaven.

I Kings 16:31 Ahab took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.

II Kings 17:17 And they [Israel] caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

I Kings 16:33 Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

Jezebel Possessed an Extraordinary Force of Character

Savage and relentless, this proud and strong-minded woman carried out her foul schemes.

1. A gifted woman, she prostituted all her gifts for the furtherance of evil.
2. Her misdirected talents became a curse.
3. Persuasive, her influence was wrongly directed.
4. Resolute above other women, she used her strength of character to destroy a king and her own offspring, as well as pollute the life of a nation.

Jezebel Was a Corrupt Tree: Jesus used a striking figure to illustrate the continuing influence of evil, emanating from a life destitute of Godly principles.

Matt. 7:16-20 Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ... a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.... a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.

Jezebel was a rotten root and branch, and thus everything connected with her was contaminated. Her offspring imbibed and continued the wickedness they grew up in.

1. Jezebel's evil influence was revived in her daughter Athaliah of Judea.
2. Her malign character reappears in her eldest son, Ahaziah, a devout worshiper of Baal.
3. Her second son, Jehoram or Joram, was another corrupt fruit from a corrupt tree.

Jezebel Was a Treacherous Schemer

The tragedy of Naboth and his vineyard reveals how despicable a woman Jezebel was.

- Life was cheap to such a female who had murder in her veins.

Ahab & Jezebel had a beautiful palace in Samaria called "the ivory house." They also built a second palace in Jezreel, 25 miles north, in a more moderate climate in the winter.

King Ahab coveted this fruitful vineyard which belongs to Naboth. Ahab offered to buy the vineyard, but it was not for sale. Israelite law and custom dictate his family maintain their land (*nachalah*) in perpetuity (Numbers 27:5-11). God had forbidden the Jews to sell their paternal inheritance (Lev. 25:23-34). Naboth was simply obeying the law of the Lord.

Note: As an Israelite, Ahab should have understood.

Thwarted in what he coveted, Ahab took to his bed and refused food.

Jezebel learns of the situation. With her Phoenician background where the wishes of a king were never questioned, Jezebel could not understand that even the king in Israel was subject to the laws of God.

I Kings 21:7 Then Jezebel his wife said to him, "You now exercise authority over Israel!

(You can take anything you want.) Arise, eat food, and let your heart be cheerful;

I [false religious system; harlot] will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezerite."

The Treacherous Scheme Unfolds - I Kings 21:8-24

Jezebel's false accusations and slander were a method to control people she hated or whose possessions she coveted. She was prepared to murder to gain the desired possession.

1. Jezebel ordered, by letter, stamped with the royal seal, a public fast. [throw in religion]
 2. Seat Naboth with high honor among the people.
 3. Seat two men, scoundrels, to bear witness against him for blasphemies against God and the king.
 4. They took him outside the city and stoned him with stones until his innocent life was beaten out of him.
 5. Jezebel tells Ahab: "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezerite.
Naboth is not alive, but dead."
 6. Ahab took possession of the much-coveted vineyard.
Naboth's sons were also stoned to death, so there would be no heirs, & the land would revert to the possession of the king. Such a single-minded determination to have one's way, no matter who is destroyed in the process, is a characteristic of the Jezebel spirit.
- Isa. 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

Consider the sins King Ahab and Jezebel committed and the commandments of God they disobeyed.

Idolatry: Ex. 20:3-4 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image... [commandments 1 & 2]

Jezebel brought Baal worship into Israel. Ahab permitted it to spread throughout the land.

Truth: When you turn away from truth, it is evidence you're believing lies, then you start loving lies, and soon you're controlled by lies.

Covetousness Ex. 20: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's. [#10]

I Kings 21:1-4 - Ahab and Jezebel had a summer palace at Jezreel, and Ahab wanted a vineyard convenient to the palace. Powerful people acquire one thing after another, but in all their acquiring, there's never any real satisfaction.

Thoreau: "A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone. Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessity of our soul." "Thou shalt not covet" is the last of the 10 Commandments, but perhaps it is the most difficult one to obey. It deals with the hidden desires of the heart.

A covetous

heart often leads us to disobey all the other commandments of God.

False Witness: Ex. 20:16 "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." [#9]

Truth is the cement that holds society together.

When truth is gone, everything starts to fall apart.

Orwell: Truth: it's the new hate speech.

"During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act."

Isa. 59:14 Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off;

For truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

Jezebel was a resolute woman who never allowed the truth to stand in the way of what she wanted. She fabricated an official lie, on official stationery, sealed with the official seal. However, no amount of royal adornment could change the fact that Ahab and Jezebel were breaking God's law.

Murder - Ex. 20:13 Thou shalt not kill. [#6]

I Kings 21:11-13 - The procedure Jezebel outlined was in agreement with the law, [Deut. 17:6-7; 19:15; Num. 35:30] BUT the accusation was false, the witnesses were liars, and the judges had been bought off by royal intimidation. In every town there were "men of Belial - worthless fellows" who would do anything for money or to become important.

NOBODY but Ahab [possibly Jezebel] heard Naboth's refusal to sell.

There was NOTHING in his words that could be interpreted as blasphemy.

Stealing - Ex. 20:15 Thou shalt not steal. [# 8]

I Kings 21:14-16 - The weak rulers in Naboth's city followed Jezebel's orders, conducted their illegal trial, took Naboth and his sons [II Kings 9:26] outside the city, and stoned them.

Nobody in the family was alive who could inherit the land, so Ahab felt he was free to take it.

BUT the land did not belong to Ahab.

Truth: The vineyard did not even belong to Naboth - it belonged to the LORD.

Ahab was actually stealing property from God.

I Kings 21:25 But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel [harlot; false religious system] his wife stirred him up.

She Was an Ardent Idolater

Ahab and Jezebel ushered in the worst period in Old Testament history by re-introducing the worship of Baal and the Asherah to Israel. [I Kings 16:31-33; I Kings 11:1-8].

For over 60 years idolatry made terrible inroads upon the life and ways of the Israelites, dragging the nation to new depths of degradation.

At first, it seemed as though Jezebel and Ahab were content with religious pluralism. Israelites could worship Yahweh, or Baal, or both. It is this kind of pluralism we see in America today.

The one intolerable thing: make any exclusive claims regarding one's faith or one's "god."

To think your religion is a way to God is fine; to say your religion is The Way To God is intolerable. [John 14:6 I am THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE...]

Consider: She is the outsider who comes into the land of Israel and is passionate and determined to establish HER RELIGION in the people of Israel.

Jezebel was not content for Israel to have the option of serving whatever god or gods they chose. She wanted the worship of Yahweh eliminated. [Spirit of Babylon]

450 prophets of Baal were installed in the magnificent temple to the Sun-god, Baal.

Another 400 prophets of Ashtoreth were housed in a sanctuary Jezebel erected for them.

These prophets were housed in the palace and fed in royal style.

Their duties were to promote the worship of Baal, with its cruel and licentious rites, and Ashtoreth throughout the land.

- Idolatry produced spiritual and moral disintegration among the people which was accentuated by her effort to destroy the worship of Jehovah.

Attributes of Jezebel: devoted to luxury, lascivious, malicious, unjust, evil, shameless, ambitious, proud, persuasive, revengeful, cruel, wicked, lead astray, false system of worship, massacre God's people, malice, corrupt, schemer, slander, covetousness, etc.

The Jezebel Spirit

Seeks out other individuals they feel are weaker to control, influence & dominate.

Has an unnatural sense of self-importance.

Requires excessive admiration and attention.

Shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes.

Lacks self-control, unable to control emotional outbursts.

Unconcerned with effecting others

Exploitative, abusive, takes advantage of others to achieve his/her own goals

Totally void of empathy; will falsely mimic empathy to seduce & control their victims.

Jealous & envious of others, yet delusional in believing others are jealous/envious of them

Defensive and combative whenever confronted about anything

Fantasies about themselves having unlimited admiration, beauty, power and success.

The fruit of Jezebel is people-control and even control the surroundings.

Jezebel never produces self-control. A Jezebel spirit is cold and calculating and uses clever deceptions to manipulate others to achieve what it wants.

Jezebel spirit thrives where the leadership is weak and afraid of confrontation.

For every Jezebel, there is an Ahab who is passive and unwilling to confront Jezebel.

God had to send Jehu to take her out because Ahab could not.

She was not satisfied to just establish her religion in Israel.

She sought to stamp out every remnant of Jehovah worship

Her goal > Exterminate the worshipers of Jehovah and ALL people in Israel serve Baal.

Her goal > Dominate and control others.

So Jezebel began to systematically kill off the prophets of Yahweh.

Mass Murder: I Kings 18:4 Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD and replaced their altars with those of Baal. [Obadiah rescued 100]

Her spirit was virtually responsible for corrupting an entire nation and causing **millions of** Hebrews to bow to Baal and "forsake the covenant, destroy the sacred altars and kill the prophets." [I Kings 19:14-18]

Note: She became the first religious female persecutor in history.

Her ardent religious zeal inspired her to exterminate the worship of the true and living God.

- She almost succeeded in the attempt.