

# Shadows Of Christ & His Bride

Lesson #41

Thyatira: Those Who Overcome

October 30, 2024

Rev. 2:18 These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire,  
and His feet like fine brass:

The God who does not tolerate: He is coming in severe judgment against this corrupted church.

Rev. 2:19 I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience;  
and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

The believers in Thyatira were a busy group! They were involved in sacrificial ministry for the sake of others. Their works were increasing and characterized by faith, love, and patience; so the church was not guilty of mere "religious activity."

Rev. 2:20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

- She taught believers how to compromise with the Roman religion and the practices of the guilds, so that Christians would not lose their jobs or their lives.

Powerful Reminder: No amount of loving and sacrificial works can compensate for tolerance of evil. The church was permitting a false prophetess to influence the people and lead them into compromise.

Interesting: Contrast the churches at Ephesus and Thyatira. The Ephesian church was weakening in its love, yet faithful to judge false teachers; while the people in the assembly at Thyatira were growing in their love, but too tolerant of false doctrine.

Powerful Reminder: Both extremes must be avoided in the church.

- "Speaking the truth in love" is the Biblical balance. [Eph. 4:15]
- Unloving orthodoxy and loving compromise are both hateful to God.

The Spirit of Jezebel: Without question, the Jezebel spirit is the nastiest, evil, most disgusting, cunning, and seductive spirit in Satan's hierarchy. It is the source of obsessive sensuality, unbridled witchcraft and hatred for authority. While she uses every means of sexual perversity known, immorality is not the issue: CONTROL is what she seeks.

Seiss: Then came the Thyatiran period- the age of purple & glory for the corrupt priesthood, & of darkness for truth. The age of effeminacy & clerical domination, when the church usurped the place of Christ. The witnesses of Jesus were given to dungeons, stakes & inquisitions. The age of the enthronement of the false prophetess, reaching to the days of Luther & the Reformation. In all history there is not another character which so completely represents the papal system- its character, works & worship as the unclean wife of Ahab.

She was a heathen, married to a Jew; & such is the character of the papal system in its main elements- paganism joined to an obsolete Judaism.

She called herself a prophetess, & the teacher of God's servants.

Popery claims & professes to be heaven's only infallible teacher of God's truth.

She was a persecutor & murderess of God's prophets & witnesses.

The papacy is marked by its severity towards such as stood out against its impious pretenses, & its public & secret tortures & butcheries of the saints.

She was the queen & the religious leader in charge of many prophets who worked with her to control the religious climate. In Rev., she calls herself a prophetess. She has the characteristics of a teacher who is seductive & controlling.

She has enough influence to persuade the culture of Thyatira through her teachings.

Rev. 2:21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

As you review these first four messages to the churches, you can see the dangers that still exist for the people of God. Like Ephesus, we can be zealous and orthodox, but at the same time lose our devotion to Christ. Or, like Thyatira, our love can be increasing yet lacking in the kind of discernment that is necessary to keep the church pure [Phil. 1:9-11]. Like Pergamos and Thyatira, we may be so tolerant of evil that we grieve the Lord and invite His judgment.

Wiersbe: God's exhortation to these churches, except Smyrna: "Repent! Change your minds!"

It is not only lost sinners who need to repent, but also disobedient Christians.

If we do not repent and deal with sin in our lives and in our assemblies, the Lord may judge us and remove our lampstand [Rev. 2:5].

It is tragic when a local church gradually abandons the faith and loses its witness for Christ!

Not only was the church at Thyatira tolerant of evil, but it was proud and unwilling to repent.

The Lord gave the false prophetess time to repent, yet she refused.

Now He was giving her followers opportunity to repent.

His eyes of fire had searched out their thoughts and motives. He would make no mistake.

In Hebrews > God comes in judgment with fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.

He has the power to perform devastating judgment. He is holy and will not tolerate sin.

They need to repent and change or there will be severe judgment.

Rev. 2:22-23a Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

<sup>23</sup> And I will kill her children with death, [pestilence].

Middle Age Church Resolutely steeped in a generalized apostasy, Europe indeed went through "a time of great tribulation," especially from 1300-1500 AD.

The Great European Famine of 1315 to 1317 was the first of a series of large-scale crises that struck Northern Europe. It caused millions of deaths over several years.

A. A Dreadful Famine struck at the beginning of the 14th century. During the 1300's & 1400's, the temperature of Europe began to cool which resulted in violent storms and unpredictable rainfall which dramatically dropped crop yields. The worst years were 1315-1317. Europe did not fully recover until 1322.

Results: 1. 10-50% of the population starved to death.

2. Dramatic increase in violent crime.

3. Life expectancy was relatively short, and many children died. According to records of the Royal family, amongst the best cared for in society, the average life expectancy in 1276 was 35.28 years. Between 1301 and 1325 during the Great Famine it was 29.84 years.

4. Widespread reports of cannibalism and infanticide

Those near starvation ate what they could find: the last of their livestock, cats, dogs even vermin, and then finally fellow human beings. Cannibalism was seen as a survival measure.

5. To provide some measure of relief, draft animals were butchered, seed grain was consumed, children were abandoned to fend for themselves.

Some elderly people voluntarily refused food in order to feed the younger generation.

6. The powerlessness of the Church and King to deal with the crisis began to raise questions.

In a society where the final recourse to all problems had been religion, no amount of prayer seemed effective against the causes of the famine, which undermined the institutional authority of the Catholic Church. This helped lay the foundations for later movements that were deemed heretical by the Church because they opposed the Papacy and blamed the failure of prayer upon corruption within the church.

7. The failure of the Medieval governments to deal with the crisis:

Just as God seemed unable or unwilling to answer prayers, the earthly powers were equally ineffective, with the famine eroding and undermining their power and authority.

## B. The Black Death of 1347-1351

Between 1348 and 1375, during the Black Death and subsequent plagues, average life span was down to only 17.33. The mysterious Black Death would kill more than 25 million people in Europe—almost one-third of the continent's population.

The disease was also terrifyingly efficient. People who were perfectly healthy when they went to bed at night could be dead by morning. The Italian writer Boccaccio said its victims often "ate lunch with their friends and dinner with their ancestors in paradise."

God's Punishment? Many people believed the Black Death was a divine punishment-retribution for sins against God such as greed, blasphemy, heresy, fornication and worldliness.

By this logic, the only way to overcome the plague was to win God's forgiveness.

Some people believed they should purge their communities of heretics and other troublemakers.

Many thousands of Jews were massacred in 1348 and 1349.

Some upper-class men joined processions of flagellants that traveled from town to town and engaged in public displays of penance and punishment. They would beat themselves and one another with heavy leather straps studded with sharp pieces of metal while the townspeople looked on. For 33 1/2 days, the flagellants repeated this ritual three times a day. Then they would move on to the next town and begin the process over again.  
C. Finally, the Hundred Years War [1337-1453] added to these murderous scourges.

Rev. 2:22-23 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searches the minds and hearts:

And I will give to each one of you according to Your Works.

The Lord threatened to use this assembly as a solemn example to "all the churches:"

Do Not Tolerate Evil. Jezebel & her followers would be sentenced to tribulation and death!

Consider: Worldly Christians are always worried more about those exposing evil than the evil being exposed.

Some churches and Christians pride themselves on their tolerance. God's Command >

II Cor. 6:17-18 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Truth: We must be Bereans and study God's Word to detect false teachings and ideas.

When false doctrine is being preached, those who know the truth have a duty to stand up and do something about it! When we sit back and allow wickedness to go unchecked, we invite the anger and judgment of God!

Tozer: Never allow the majority to overrule the clear teaching of God's Word.

If we let down the wall just a little and compromise with the world, the world will not stop until it has everything we value. We will be left with nothing but the anger of a holy God!

When we compromise our standards to appeal to the world, we are turning our backs on truth.

When we open the door to let the world come in, do not be surprised if the Lord walks out.

Rev. 2:24 "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

Not everyone in the assembly was unfaithful to the Lord. They had separated themselves from the false doctrine and compromising practices of Jezebel and her followers, which Christ denounces as "the depths of Satan."

Contrast: I Cor. 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit:

for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

- Note: 1. The rewards to Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos do not offer positions of great responsibility in Christ's coming Kingdom.
2. Except for the crown of life to the martyrs of Smyrna, the rewards are more of intimacy and fellowship.
3. Thus far, Jesus has expected His followers to hear His voice, be faithful and overcome the world.
4. NOW His followers must overcome false teaching which involves a battle with the enemy.

### Jesus Admonishes Those Who Do Not Have The Doctrine of Jezebel

#### A. HOLD FAST What You Have TILL I COME Rev. 2:25

Note: This is no minor warning. The tendency of believers is to lose ground rather than hold fast and move ahead. Things naturally go downhill unless there is great effort against those forces that, like gravity, tend to pull us downward. There is always the need to cling to the Lord and hold tightly through a close walk with Him in the Word.

Key Point: Jesus urges the godly remnant to Hold Fast and Await The Coming Of The Lord.

"Till I come" refers to Christ's return for His people, at which time He will reward them for their faithfulness [Rev. 3:3; 16:15; 22:7, 17, 20]. The Rapture! [I Thess. 4:13-18]

This is the first reference in the 7 letters to the coming of Jesus Christ for His church.

He presents His return as the HOPE of this remnant who are engulfed by an apostate system.

Heb. 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;

for He is faithful that promised;

Rev. 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. [2<sup>nd</sup> Coming]

Note: This is Christ's return to earth in judgment & to defeat His enemies and establish His kingdom [Rev. 19:11ff; 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming at end of 7 year Tribulation.]

#### Rev. 2:26 AND he who OVERCOMES,

In the seven letters to the churches, the overcomers can be seen as either:

- All believers are overcomers and will receive the promises to those who overcome.
- Individual believers who overcome trials & are promised rewards in the kingdom

The Scriptures seem to indicate that some believers will have special ruling privileges because of their performance or perseverance in faithfulness.

Reminder: Jesus comes to each church: I Know thy Works.

### The View: The Overcomers Are All Believers

I John 5:4-5: "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.

And this is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith.

Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

The overcomer is anyone who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, and through that faith, overcomes the world. This victory is positional, because in a practical sense, those who believe can be ashamed.

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

### The View: The Overcomers Are Faithful Believers

Jesus is addressing seven churches. While there may be unbelievers in these churches, the designation church assumes a Christian identity and reputation.

Note: There are no invitations to believe in Christ for salvation.

Only faithful Christians in these churches are granted future privileges.

Powerful Truth: In Rev. 2-3 conditions for overcoming are never stated as faith in Christ, but involve faithfulness, repentance, perseverance, and works. [2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15]

- The emphasis is on works or deeds, not faith for eternal life.

Doing works and persevering to the end is contrary to salvation by grace through faith.

Just as John's Gospel has a different purpose than I John, so I John has a different purpose than Revelation. Words must be understood considering each book's purpose.

I John 5:4-5 describes the one who has initial faith in Christ as Savior.

The overcomers in Rev. 2-3 obtain their status by ongoing faith and perseverance in trials.

The present active participle ("the one who conquers") is used to show their present activity, not past faith in Christ.

The promises in Rev. 2-3 are to individuals who overcome, not to the whole church.

If all believers are overcomers, the commands to these churches (and all commands to believers) are empty and unnecessary because they are guaranteed victory.

If all believers are overcomers there is no room for believers who fail.

- Castaway, disqualified for the prize, carnal, shipwreck their faith

I Cor. 11:30 That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.

<sup>31</sup> But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way.

<sup>32</sup> Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

Powerful Reminder: Victory in the Christian life is not guaranteed for all believers.

To give rewards to everyone for a virtue that all have does not make sense.

Jesus had to overcome to reign, which is not related to salvation.

Rev. 3:21 To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne,

even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne.

Crowns as future rewards, not eternal life, are given to the overcomers [2:10] and can possibly be lost.

Rev. 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Conclusion: In Rev. 2-3, overcomers seem to be individual believers in the church who are repentant, faithful, and persevering in the trials that face each church.

## Jesus Admonishes Those Who Do Not Have The Doctrine of Jezebel

A. HOLD FAST What You Have TILL I COME

Rev. 2:25

B. AND He Who Overcomes, And KEEPS MY WORKS Until The End

Rev. 2: 26a

Note: Some versions leave out the "and" [kai] to connect v. 25 to v. 26.

The Greek text contains this necessary connector.

G.R. Beasley: This is the nearest we have in the 7 letters to a definition of the overcomer.

1. "He holds fast [kratew, to hold firmly to something that so it is not lost] the traditions of faith delivered to the Church until the coming of Christ.

Jude 1:4b it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. [hold fast]

2. He is actively overcoming his trials, tribulations, etc. IN CHRIST.
3. He keeps [tareo] Christ's works...

Consider: One does not normally speak of "keeping" or "obeying" *deeds* or *works*.

*Tareo* can mean to obey, but it also can mean to guard.

*He who guards My works* is the literal sense of the phrase.

- Contend For The Truth And Overcome False Teachings!

4. He Keeps Christ's works till the end: whether that 'end' be the Lord's parousia [Parousia = appearance or coming of the Lord] or his own death."

Keeping His works: overcoming through the walk of faith and daily fellowship or the abiding life. Allow the Holy Spirit to appropriate His strength and power in you through the knowledge of God's Word.

Conclusion: Overcoming = Holding fast what you have until Christ comes.

And keeping His works to the end is the basis for special rewards.

Belief: I believe in the literal Millennial reign of Jesus Christ on the refreshed earth.

Jesus Christ will return [2<sup>nd</sup> coming] at the end of the 7-year tribulation.

Defeat all rulers, cast the false prophet and beast into The Lake of Fire.

All people designated as "goats" will be consigned to the Lake of Fire.

Satan will be chained in the bottomless pit for 1000 years and

Jesus Christ will inaugurate His Kingdom which was promised by God the Father in Psalm 2.

Ps. 2:6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

- It will be a righteous kingdom with perfect justice.

Ps. 2:8-9 Ask of me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

<sup>9</sup> Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Belief: I believe the promises to those who overcome in Revelation 2 & 3 are Millennial in scope.

All believers will be in the kingdom, but not all will share in His reign.

Jesus Christ will grant positions of authority and responsibility in the Millennial Kingdom.

The blessings of His Kingdom are assured to those who overcome.

Consider: These are granted because of His grace. We overcome ONLY in His strength & grace

A. To Him I Will Give Authority Over The Nations

Rev. 2:25-27 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come

And he that overcomes, and the one who keeps My works until the end, I will give him authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are shattered, as I also have received *authority* from My Father;

➤ Rule = #4165 poimaino means literally "to shepherd."

Focuses on "*tending & shepherding*", which includes guarding and guiding the flock.

Ultimately, this is only provided by Jesus Christ. This provides Spirit-directed *guidance & care* conjunction with *feeding* His people: Teaching them Scripture.

B. The Gift Of The Morning Star:

If we allow Scripture to interpret Scripture this reference clearly describes Christ Himself.

Rev. 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.

I am the root and the offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star.

The Millennial Reign will be a glorious victory of Christ over all the nations that have warred against Him. Each of those conquered nations will need a new government set up to serve King Jesus and to do His will. Every nation needs to be brought under the rule of Jesus Christ so it will be Godly spiritual, profitable and productive.

1. Christ desires each of His overcomers to share with Him in His mighty victory.
2. Overcomers will have power (due to the delegated authority of Christ) in their rulership role..

Rev. 2:29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Note: In the first three churches, the Lord calls the whole body to "hear". However, in the last four churches, due to the change in circumstances, the Lord is no longer able to place the calling to hear to the whole church. Instead, He has placed the calling after the promises to the overcomers, as if He does not expect anyone to hear the calling except the overcomers.

Sin has sprung up among the nominal and carnal Christians.

Up until now the majority of the church heeded His words. Henceforth, only a remnant heeds His words. As a result, the Lord's promise and calling can no longer be as general as before.

Now we will see a clearer & clearer distinction between God's remnant and the general majority.

Walvoord: "Here for the first time in the messages to the seven churches a group is singled out within a local church as being the continuing true testimony of the Lord."

I Cor. 2:9 What eye has not seen and ear has not heard and has not entered into the heart of man, [all that] God has prepared (made and keeps ready) for those who love Him [who hold Him in affectionate reverence, promptly obeying Him and gratefully recognizing the benefits He has bestowed].

The King is coming for a BRIDE who has made herself ready and is watching for His return