

Revelation 2:18-29 Letter to Thyatira

BACKGROUND TO THYATIRA

Thyatira was 80km east of Pergamos and was strongly linked to that city. Historically, Thyatira was famous for its dye trade and was the city of faithful Lydia: **Acts 16:14-15**. But in the ecclesia was another woman, "Jezebel", named after the most powerful and effective evil influence in Israel's history. She was the prototype of the great harlot system in **Rev 17-18**. This ecclesia had 2 distinct classes of believers, those who were of Jezebel and those with works of faith like Lydia, the pure bride of Christ: **2 Cor 11:2-3; Rev 19:7-8; 21:2,9**.

OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND: 1 KINGS 21

Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, gained power in Israel because of a mixed marriage: **1 Kgs 16:31**. She was a Sidonian princess, and a worshipper of Baal, succeeding in seducing Ahab: **1 Kgs 16:32-33; 21:25-26**. She also attempted to destroy all God's prophets: **1 Kgs 18:4,13**. When Elijah succeeded in destroying the prophets of Baal, she determined to take his life: **19:1-2**. Elijah fled "for his life" and was sustained in the wilderness by an angel: **19:3-7**. He came to Horeb, where he was told that there remained 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

In **1 Kgs 21:3** Naboth refuses to give his vineyard to Ahab: "The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." For Jezebel it was simple. She killed Naboth and his sons. A vineyard takes time and effort over many years. Likewise, our ecclesias have been built up over many years. It is not for us to sell that inheritance to false religion.

Israel is likened to a vineyard in **Isaiah 5**. In **Mark 12** Jesus gives a parable of the vineyard in response to the question "by what authority do you do these things?" **Mk 11:27-33**, even though initially it may appear like he is avoiding the question. That parable taught that Christ's authority came because he is **Son of God**.

THE REVEALING OF JESUS CHRIST IN JUDGMENT

v18 The Son of God: The only time in Revelation he is called "Son of God". This is significant in the context of this letter. This title is expressive of *power and authority*: **Jn 5:25; Mt 26:63-64**. The Son inherits his Father's vineyard: **Mk 12:1-12; Heb 1:4-5**. Jezebel took away Naboth's inheritance, his vineyard: **1 Kgs 21:3**. Jezebel in Thyatira was taking away the ecclesia's inheritance, their vineyard. Christ has the *power and authority* to give it back when he comes in judgment, because **he is the heir**. **Heb 1:2-5**.

Psa 2:6-10 "thou at my son... I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance... thou shalt break them in pieces with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potters vessel."

Eyes a flame of fire: See notes on **1:14**. God is all seeing. Angels are the eyes of Yahweh: **2 Chr 16:9; Gen 11:5; 18:1**. Immortal saints will be "the eyes of Yahweh" in the future: **Zech 4:10**. The cherubim have "rings full of eyes": **Ezek 1:18**. Fire symbolises anger and judgment: **Isa30:27; Rev 10:1; 19:12,20**.

Colour code: Blue (God and Jesus Christ); Red (sin/devil/judgment of wicked); Green (Kingdom); Orange (important words & phrases); Purple (return of Jews to the land); Yellow (practical exhortation). Prepared for Rathmines Bible School Teenagers.

Feet like fine brass: See notes on **1:15**. **The revealing of Christ and the saints in judgment.** He treads down the wicked, as Jehu trod down Jezebel: **2 Kings 9:33**. **Key verses** are **Mal 4:1-6; Rev 19:11-15** where Christ and the Saints tread the winepress of the wrath of God.

THE LORD'S COMMENDATION

v19 Charity: Gk. *agape*: **Jn 21:16-18; 1 Cor 13:4-8; 1 Jn 3:16-18**. **Service:** Care of others: **1 Cor 16:15**. **Faith:** See notes on **Rev 2:13**. **Works:** Re-emphasised again, cp. **1 Cor 15:58**. **Patience:** **Jas 1:3**. **Last to be more than the first:** NIV "you are now doing more than you did at the first"

THE LORD'S DISAPPROVAL

v20 A few things: Not in the original. **Against thee:** Dramatic change from **2:19**. **That woman:** Why say this? There are 2 women in Revelation, the pure bride and the apostate harlot. **Jezebel:** Ironically her name means *chaste*. The first stage of false religion, in the ecclesia. Next, in **12:1-2** she is pregnant and in government. Then in **17:1-6** she is a harlot, in control of all Europe. **Prophetess:** A teacher of false religion. **Teach and seduce my servants:** cp. **1 Tim 2:12** "I suffer not a woman to teach". **Prov 7** tells the story of this woman. False religion deceives: **2 Cor 11:2-3**. See the *Revelation Overview* summary. **Commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols:** see notes on **2:14**.

v21 Repented not: cp. the events of **1 Kgs 18:36-19:2**. A constant theme in Revelation: **2:5,16; 3:3,19; 9:21; 16:11,15**. See notes on **2:5**.

v22 Cast her into a bed: Punished in the place of her sins, cp **1 Kgs 22:37-38; 2 Kgs 1:1-8; 9:36**. **Them that commit adultery:** Particularly Gog,

v18 And unto the angel of the church in ^bThyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, ^cwho hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

v19 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.

v20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman ^eJezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to ^fcommit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

v21 And ^hI gave her space to ^grepent of her fornication; and she repented not.

v22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they ^hrepent of their deeds.

v23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth ⁱthe reins and hearts: and ^jI will give unto every one of you according to your works.

v24 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 ^kSatan, as they speak; I will ^lput upon you none other burden.

v25 But ^mthat which ye have already hold fast till ⁿI come.

v26 ^oAnd he that overcometh, and keepeth my works ^ounto the end, to ^phim will I give power over the nations:

v27 And ^qhe 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.

v28 And I will give him ^rthe morning star.

v29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.



European leaders and false Christian churches: **Dan 11:36-39; Ezek 38:1-12; Rev 18:3**. **Into great tribulation:** Her final destruction: **Rev 14:7-11; 16:17-21; 18:1-3,21; 19:2**. **Except they repent:** Christ's reign will begin with a proclamation to the nations: **Psa 2:9-12; Rev 14:6-7; 18:4**. **v23 Kill her children:** She is the mother of Christian daughter churches: **17:5**. In **2 Kgs 10:7** Jezebel's sons and descendants were slain. See also **2 Kgs 1:16-17; 9:21-27; 10:20-27**. **All the ecclesias shall know:** Not only Thyatira. This is prophetic of a *future* judgment seen by all. **Reins and hearts:** **Psa 7:9; Jer 11:20; 20:12; 17:10; Jn 8:6; Heb 4:12-13**. **According to your works:** **Mt 16:27**.

EXHORTATION

v24 Unto the rest: The faithful, like the 7000 in Jezebel's day: **1 Kgs 19:18**. **Not known the depths of satan as they speak:** A group of adversaries using deceptive teaching. NIV "not learned Satan's so called deep secrets". **Rom 1:22** "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools", cp. **1 Cor 1:20-21**. Examples in **1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 2:17; 1 Jn 4:1**. **I will put on you none other burden:** Except Jezebel be cast out: **Acts 15:28-29**.

v25 That which ye have: The same lesson Elijah learnt. **Hold fast till I come:** See **3:2,11**. Hold fast to **truth** and protect the ecclesia: **2 Cor 11:2-3; Col 1:23; 2 Thess 2:15; 1 Tim 6:19-20**.

THE PROMISE OF RULERSHIP AND JUDGMENT

v26 Keep my works unto the end: **Mt 10:22; Rom 2:7**. **Power over the nations:** The saints *inherit* the authority of God's Son in the Kingdom because they are "in Christ", heirs of the kingdom: **Gal 3:29; 1 Pet 3:7; Jas 2:5; Rev 21:7**.

v27 Rule them with a rod of iron: Gk. "shepherd them". Quote from **Psa 2:9**. It is a *rod of judgment* for Catholic nations. But also a *shepherd's rod* to bring Israel home: **Mal 4:5-6; Jer 51:19; Ezek 20:37**. After Armageddon, the grand contest of **Babylon (Jezebel) v Zion (Elijah)** comes to a climax in Europe: **Psa 2:1-12; Rev 14:18-20; 17:14; 19:11-21**. **Vessels of a potter broken:** **Jer 18:2-6; 19:1,11**. First phase of God's judgment, striking the feet (clay/iron) of Neb's image: **Dan 2:34**. **As I have received of my Father:** Emphasis again! He is **Son of God**, see notes on **2:18**.

v28 Morning star: Jesus Christ: **22:19**. See **Mal 4:2; Mt 13:43**, cp. **Isa 14:12**. **v29 He that hath an ear:** See notes on **2:7,11**.

