

## **Revelation 2:18-29 — The Church of Thyatira — The Corrupt Church**

We are now in the second section of the Book of Revelation, which deals with “the things which are” (Revelation 1:19).

### **Revision—Overview**

Chapters 2 and 3 contain personal messages from Jesus to each of the seven churches. So far we have studied the first three.

**Ephesus — the loveless church (A.D. 33 - A.D. 100)**

**Smyrna — the persecuted church (A.D. 100 - A.D. 312)**

**Pergamos — the compromising church (A.D. 313 - A.D. 600)**

The first letter was addressed to the church of Ephesus. Ephesus was the loveless church. It's so important to remember that *why we do something is so much more important than what we do. God looks at the heart.* If what we do is not motivated by love for God, then it doesn't count. It's the wood hay and stubble. The things we do that are motivated by love for God are the gold, silver and precious stones we will receive reward for at the Bema Seat Judgement (1 Corinthians 3:9-15).

The solution to leaving our first love, to leaving Jesus is to repent. Jesus tells us to do three things; remember, return and do the first works — bible, prayer and fellowship. This will cause us to be fruitful again.

The second letter was addressed to the church of Smyrna, the persecuted church. The majority of Christians were persecuted during the years 100a.d. to 312a.d. They were materially poor and were dying for their faith, but Jesus called them rich. They were rich in faith, hope and love. They were a rich poor church.

The third letter was addressed to the church of Pergamos — the compromising church. The church of Pergamos characterised or represented the church from about 313a.d. to 600a.d. Under Constantine, the Christians went from being persecuted to being in power, but to do so they had to compromise with the pagan religions. *They were a poor rich church, poor in the things of God, but rich in the things of the world.* They lost their purity and their power. What Satan could achieve by persecution and violence, he achieved by deception and flattery.

**Ephesus — the loveless church (A.D. 33 - A.D. 100)**

**Smyrna — the persecuted church (A.D. 100 - A.D. 312)**

**Pergamos — the compromising church (A.D. 313 - A.D. 600)**

**Thyatira — the corrupt church - (A.D. 601 - A.D. 1500 and on)**

Now we come to the fourth church, Thyatira, known as the corrupt church.

# The Church of Thyatira — The Corrupt Church

## Revelation 2:18-29 NKJV

<sup>18</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: <sup>19</sup> “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. <sup>22</sup> Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. <sup>23</sup> I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

<sup>24</sup> “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. <sup>25</sup> But hold fast what you have till I come. <sup>26</sup> And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

<sup>27</sup> ‘*He shall rule them with a rod of iron;*

*They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—*

as I also have received 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.” ’

## Revelation 2:18a NKJV

<sup>18</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

What was Thyatira like? **Thyatira** was the smallest and least important of the seven cities Jesus addresses in Revelation 2 and 3. In history, we have no record that the Christians of **Thyatira** suffered any significant political or religious persecution. We will find out why soon enough.

**Thyatira** was a centre of *business* and *trade*. It had many active trade guilds (like our modern day unions), each having their own patron deity from the Greek and Roman pantheon of gods.

You might remember that Acts 16:14–15 mentions Lydia of Thyatira, who was a *seller of purple* cloth from the city of Thyatira.

Thyatira was famous for the manufacture of a purple dye, and history tells us that there were powerful guilds or unions for those who manufactured cloth. So Lydia most likely had to belong to one of these unions if she was going to be successful in her business. However, this meant going to their monthly meetings which were held at the various temples and involved eating sacrifices to the pagan gods and sexual immorality. We will come back to this later. But for now, just remember that to be successful in business in Thyatira, because of the powerful guilds or unions, you had to belong to the union or you would be forced out of business. These guilds or unions had a choke hold on the various business enterprises in Thyatira. Therefore you had to attend the regular union meetings held in the temples, partake in the sexual immorality, and eat the food offered to idols. This will help us to understand what Jesus says to this church.

## Revelation 2:18b NKJV

**‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:**

v 18 **These things says the Son of God:** Jesus first described Himself with a title that emphasised His *deity*. In Jewish thought, to be the *son of* a thing meant you had the nature of that thing. The *sons of the sorceress* (Isaiah 57:3) had the nature of the sorceress. The *sons of thunder* (Mark 3:17) had a nature like thunder. So the **Son of God** has the divine nature, the nature of **God**.

v 18 **Who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:** He chooses these references from Revelation 1:14-15 because fire and brass speak of judgment.

## Revelation 2:19 NKJV

**‘I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.**

What Jesus knows about the Christians in Thyatira?

v 19 **I know your works:** Thyatira was the least significant city among the seven cities Jesus addressed, yet they were not hidden to Jesus. Likewise, you may consider yourself insignificant, but to God, everything you do is important.

v 19 **Love, service, faith, and your patience:** In many ways, the church at Thyatira was a model church. They had four great essential qualities. They had **love**, both for the Lord and for one another. They knew **service**, and had **faith** and **patience** worth mentioning.

**As for your works, the last are more than the first:** This was another compliment to the church at Thyatira. Not only did they *have* these **works**, but they had them in *increasing measure*—they were *growing* in **love, service, faith, and patience**.

## **Personal Application**

This should be said for each of us as well. Here’s a challenge for us all. Ask your friends and family, “Am I growing in love, service, faith and patience or perseverance? Am I becoming more and more like Jesus day by day? The one thing we should never be satisfied with is our depth of relationship with Jesus. We should always want to go deeper, to love more, to increase in our faith.

Now we come to the next section of the letter: What does Jesus have *against* the church at Thyatira?

## Revelation 2:20-23 NKJV

**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. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. <sup>22</sup> Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. <sup>23</sup> I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.**

v 20 **Nevertheless**: Despite all the good Jesus saw in the church at Thyatira, there were significant problems. The problems were big enough for Jesus to say **nevertheless**, which meant “Despite all the good, **I have a few things against you.**”

v 20 **Because you allow that woman Jezebel**: The centre of the corruption at the church at Thyatira was a woman Jesus called **Jezebel**. This may not have been her literal name, but a title that clearly represented a self-styled **prophetess** within the church, after the pattern of Jezebel in the Old Testament (1 Kings 16–21 and 2 Kings 9:30–37).

### **Who was Jezebel?**

In summary, the name **Jezebel** had a powerful association. If we call someone a Judas or a Hitler it means something strong. It was also a strong thing to call this woman **Jezebel**. She was one of the most evil characters of the Old Testament, who attempted to combine the worship of God with the worship of the idol Baal and used inquisition to steal land and possessions that didn't belong to her. But in the end God judged her.

So, again, who was Jezebel?

Jezebel was daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. Since Ethbaal was the high priest of Ashtaroah—goddess of sensuality and fertility—Jezebel's background had a huge negative influence on God's people. Just like Solomon's wives turned him to worship false gods, so Jezebel's marriage to King Ahab of Israel caused Israel to worship Baal. We read about this in:

1 Kings 16:30-33 NKJV

Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. <sup>31</sup> And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. <sup>32</sup> Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. <sup>33</sup> And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

Again, Jezebel's influence on Ahab and the nation of Israel was very bad — she caused them to start worshipping the false god Baal, which included the sacrificing of animals to idols and sexually immoral practices. But it wasn't just this. She introduced the art of inquisition.

What is inquisition? Here is one dictionary definition:

*“An official investigation, especially one of a political or religious nature, characterised by lack of regard for individual rights, prejudice on the part of the examiners, and recklessly cruel punishments.”*

Jezebel was a master of inquisition. For example, finding Ahab weeping one day, Jezebel asked the reason. “Our power is growing and our influence is increasing,” answered Ahab. “But a man named Naboth won't sell me his property.”

“If you're the king, you should have it,” answered Jezebel. “Leave it to me.” Then she hired some men to falsely accuse Naboth of cursing God. And, following an inquisition and mock trial, Naboth was put to death (1 Kings 21). We'll read the story from:

## 1 Kings 21:1-26 NLT

Now there was a man named Naboth, from Jezreel, who owned a vineyard in Jezreel beside the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. <sup>2</sup> One day Ahab said to Naboth, "Since your vineyard is so convenient to my palace, I would like to buy it to use as a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange, or if you prefer, I will pay you for it."

<sup>3</sup> But Naboth replied, "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance that was passed down by my ancestors."

<sup>4</sup> So Ahab went home angry and sullen because of Naboth's answer. The king went to bed with his face to the wall and refused to eat!

<sup>5</sup> "What's the matter?" his wife Jezebel asked him. "What's made you so upset that you're not eating?"

<sup>6</sup> "I asked Naboth to sell me his vineyard or trade it, but he refused!" Ahab told her.

<sup>7</sup> "Are you the king of Israel or not?" Jezebel demanded. "Get up and eat something, and don't worry about it. I'll get you Naboth's vineyard!"

<sup>8</sup> So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and other leaders of the town where Naboth lived. <sup>9</sup> In her letters she commanded: "Call the citizens together for a time of fasting, and give Naboth a place of honour. <sup>10</sup> And then seat two scoundrels across from him who will accuse him of cursing God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death."

<sup>11</sup> So the elders and other town leaders followed the instructions Jezebel had written in the letters. <sup>12</sup> They called for a fast and put Naboth at a prominent place before the people. <sup>13</sup> Then the two scoundrels came and sat down across from him. And they accused Naboth before all the people, saying, "He cursed God and the king." So he was dragged outside the town and stoned to death. <sup>14</sup> The town leaders then sent word to Jezebel, "Naboth has been stoned to death."

<sup>15</sup> When Jezebel heard the news, she said to Ahab, "You know the vineyard Naboth wouldn't sell you? Well, you can have it now! He's dead!" <sup>16</sup> So Ahab immediately went down to the vineyard of Naboth to claim it.

<sup>17</sup> But the Lord said to Elijah, <sup>18</sup> "Go down to meet King Ahab of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He will be at Naboth's vineyard in Jezreel, claiming it for himself. <sup>19</sup> Give him this message: 'This is what the Lord says: Wasn't it enough that you killed Naboth? Must you rob him, too? Because you have done this, dogs will lick your blood at the very place where they licked the blood of Naboth!'"

<sup>20</sup> "So, my enemy, you have found me!" Ahab exclaimed to Elijah.

"Yes," Elijah answered, "I have come because you have sold yourself to what is evil in the Lord's sight. <sup>21</sup> So now the Lord says, 'I will bring disaster on you and consume you. I will destroy every one of your male descendants, slave and free alike, anywhere in Israel! <sup>22</sup> I am going to destroy your family as I did the family of Jeroboam son of Nebat and the family of Baasha son of Ahijah, for you have made me very angry and have led Israel into sin.'

<sup>23</sup> "And regarding Jezebel, the Lord says, 'Dogs will eat Jezebel's body at the plot of land in Jezreel.'

<sup>24</sup> “The members of Ahab’s family who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, and those who die in the field will be eaten by vultures.”

<sup>25</sup> **(No one else so completely sold himself to what was evil in the Lord’s sight as Ahab did under the influence of his wife Jezebel. <sup>26</sup> His worst outrage was worshipping idols just as the Amorites had done—the people whom the Lord had driven out from the land ahead of the Israelites.)**

So what we see here is Ahab and Jezebel inheriting the land in a power play and an inquisition—a picture of what would happen in the church age, in particular the church of Thyatira, from A.D. 600 to A.D. 1500 and on. We will come back to this later.

Notice the power and influence this one lady had on an entire nation.

1 Kings 21:25 **(No one else so completely sold himself to what was evil in the Lord’s sight as Ahab did under the influence of his wife Jezebel.**

***Just like one woman was able to sway a nation, so one false teacher or one false teaching can sway a church.***

### ***What happened to Jezebel?***

2 Kings 9:30-37 NLT

When Jezebel, the queen mother, heard that Jehu had come to Jezreel, she painted her eyelids and fixed her hair and sat at a window. <sup>31</sup> When Jehu entered the gate of the palace, she shouted at him, “Have you come in peace, you murderer? You’re just like Zimri, who murdered his master!”

<sup>32</sup> Jehu looked up and saw her at the window and shouted, “Who is on my side?” And two or three eunuchs looked out at him. <sup>33</sup> “Throw her down!” Jehu yelled. So they threw her out the window, and her blood spattered against the wall and on the horses. And Jehu trampled her body under his horses’ hooves.

<sup>34</sup> Then Jehu went into the palace and ate and drank. Afterward he said, “Someone go and bury this cursed woman, for she is the daughter of a king.” <sup>35</sup> But when they went out to bury her, they found only her skull, her feet, and her hands.

<sup>36</sup> When they returned and told Jehu, he stated, “This fulfils the message from the Lord, which he spoke through his servant Elijah from Tishbe: ‘At the plot of land in Jezreel, dogs will eat Jezebel’s body. <sup>37</sup> Her remains will be scattered like dung on the plot of land in Jezreel, so that no one will be able to recognise her.’ ”

We will find in Revelation that this false prophet Jezebel is also judged. She is cast into a sickbed. There are many parallels to the Old Testament Jezebel and the Jezebel in the church of Thyatira.

### **Revelation 2:20 NKJV**

**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.**

v 20 **Who calls herself a prophetess:** This “**Jezebel**” at the church of Thyatira wasn’t really a **prophetess**, she only claimed to be one. Yet, it seems the Christians there *received* her as a **prophetess**, and that is why Jesus gave them this warning.

## ***Personal and Church Application***

Jesus said this would happen in Matthew 24:11: *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.* Those words were first spoken with a view to the end times, but there have always been those who call themselves prophets in the church, but are not. We need to make sure that we don't make the same mistake as the church of Thyatira did by allowing false prophets to have authority in the church.

### ***What was Jezebel's specific sin?***

v 20 **To teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols:** Here, Jesus described the specific *sin* of this woman "Jezebel." Mainly, she was an *immoral* and *ungodly* influence on others, and led others into sin. Again, Jezebel led others into immorality and idolatry, but what did this look like at the time?

Well, remember how we talked about the unions or trade guilds. Because of the powerful trade guilds in Thyatira, the **sexual immorality** and the eating of **things sacrificed to idols** was probably connected with the mandatory social occasions of the guilds. Perhaps a Christian was invited to the monthly meeting of the goldsmith's guild, and the meeting was held at the temple of Apollo. "Jezebel" would allow or encourage the man to go—perhaps even using a "prophetic" word—and when the man went, he fell into immorality and idolatry.

Quote from David Guzik:

"The draw to the guilds and their meetings was powerful. "No merchant or trader could hope to prosper or make money unless he was a member of his trade guild." (Barclay) Nonetheless, Christians were expected to stand in the face of this kind of pressure. One ancient Christian named Tertullian wrote about Christians who made their living in trades connected to pagan idolatry. A painter might find work in pagan temples or a sculptor might be hired to make a statue of a pagan god. *They would justify this by saying, "This is my living, and I must live."* Tertullian replied, "Must you live?""

v 20 **My servants:** This shows how terrible Jezebel's sin was. She corrupted the **servants** of Jesus, those who were true Christians, those who belonged to Him.

Mark 9:42 NKJV

Jesus said, But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

Later in this letter, in verse 24, Jesus would also reveal a link to the work of Jezebel and false doctrine: *this doctrine ... the depths of Satan, as they say.* It seems that this Jezebel led others in the church at Thyatira to discover *depths of Satan.*

### ***What does the depths of Satan mean?***

It's pagan and occultic religion and practices, the false, cultic Babylonian religion. "We alone know the mysteries, the deep things," said the Babylonian priests. How could Christians ever fall for *the depths of Satan?*

The deceptive reasoning might go like this: “To effectively confront Satan, you must enter his strongholds, and learn his depths or teaching in order to conquer him.” People use similar reasoning in misguided spiritual warfare today — they focus on and learn too much about Satan instead of God. You don’t need to study satanism or the occult to know how to defeat it. The bible gives us all the information we need about Satan to defeat Satan.

v 21 **And I gave her time to repent ... and she did not repent:** Jesus’ greatest accusation was that this “Jezebel” **did not repent**. She apparently rejected the work of the Holy Spirit in her heart, calling her to repentance.

In these words we see both the *mercy* and *judgment* of our Lord. **Time to repent** shows *mercy*. God gives us **time to repent**. The application here is that we should deal with others the same way.

**And she did not repent** speaks to the *judgment* of God. God gives **time to repent**, but it is not an unlimited time. There is a time when God says,

Genesis 6:3 NLT

And the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever...”

This means that when God gives us **time to repent**, we must *take advantage* of that time.

### ***Personal Application***

Psalms 139:16 tells us that every person is given a set number of days to live. God in His sovereignty has gifted some people with 10 years of life, and others with a hundred years. It’s not for us to question. What’s important is that once those days are over, the opportunity to repent is gone.

Hebrews 9:27 NKJV

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,...

We only have one life, one chance to accept God’s gift of salvation and escape eternity in the Lake of Fire.

2 Corinthians 6:2 NLT

For God says,

“At just the right time, I heard you.

On the day of salvation, I helped you.”

Indeed, the “right time” is now. Today is the day of salvation.

But what happens to the person who puts off salvation, the acceptance of forgiveness?

Hebrews 3:15 NLT

Remember what it says:

“Today when you hear his voice,

don’t harden your hearts

as Israel did when they rebelled.”

Their hearts grow harder and harder, and it becomes more and more difficult to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. This is why the majority of people who are Christians came to Christ when they were younger.

v 20 **Because you allow:** This shows the sin of the *church* of Thyatira. On the outside, they were a model church, showing *works, love, service, faith, and patience*. Yet there was significant corruption *inside* the church. The sin of the church was that they *allowed* this corruption.

It wasn't necessarily a large group following Jezebel. A little leaven affects a whole lump of dough, and a few in immorality and idolatry will corrupt the whole church—especially if they influence others the way this Jezebel did.

Again, we must root out false teaching, false teachers and false prophets, otherwise their influence will spread like cancer and they will cause believers to stumble.

2 Timothy 2:15-18

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. <sup>16</sup> But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. <sup>17</sup> And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, <sup>18</sup> who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

Again, false teaching must be dealt with because it will overthrow the faith of some. For example, some say that if a person is not healed, then it is because they don't have enough faith or there is sin in their life. Often, when a person who believes this false doctrine doesn't get healed, they walk away from God, discouraged and dejected.

**Revelation 2:22-23 NKJV**

**Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. <sup>23</sup> I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.**

v 22 **I will cast her into a sickbed:** Before Jesus told the Christians in Thyatira what *they* must do, He first told them what *He* would do. Jesus would chastise or discipline this Jezebel, and **cast her into a sickbed**, along with **those who commit adultery with her**. This is similar to what happened to the Jezebel of the Old Testament — she was judged and she died a painful death.

There are a few points to note here:

1. The reference to **adultery** is important. It speaks of both sexual **adultery** *and* spiritual **adultery**. When these Christians honoured other gods, they were unfaithful to the Lord who saved them.

2. For this reason, the figure of **a sickbed** is fitting. They were guilty of adultery, both sexual and spiritual. It is as if Jesus said, "You love an unclean bed. Here, I will give you one, and **cast you into a sickbed.**"

3. What was the **sickbed**? It could simply be an image of affliction, or it could be literal sickness that Jesus allowed in the lives of Jezebel and her followers as chastisement. We know from passages of Scripture such as 1 Corinthians 11:30 that God can use sickness as a way to chastise His people when they are in sin.

v 22 **great tribulation**: If the Jezebel spirit, prone to idolatry, is not rejected and turned from, this church—representing not only a local congregation but an epoch in church history—will go into the Tribulation period. We'll talk more about this at the end.

v 22 **Unless they repent of their deeds**: Jesus revealed the *purpose* for this chastening. First, it was to draw them to **repent of their deeds**. They wouldn't listen to Jesus before, so He had to speak louder through the **sickbed**. Second, it was to give an example of holiness to other churches: **and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts**.

*What does it mean by "minds and hearts?"*

**Minds and hearts** is literally "hearts and kidneys." In the mind of the ancient Jews, the *heart* was the place of intellect, and the *kidneys* were the place of emotion. Jesus said, "I know your every thought and your every feeling."

v 23 **I will kill her children with death**: this means her followers, those who spiritually and physically unfaithful to God along with her. Remember that we will reap what we sow.

**Revelation 2:24-25 NKJV**

**"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. <sup>25</sup> But hold fast what you have till I come.**

v 25 **Hold fast what you have till I come**: There were many faithful, uncompromising Christians in Thyatira. To them, Jesus simply said, "**hold fast**." They must not stop doing what is good. They must not become distracted or discouraged from what Jesus wants them to be and to do.

***Now we come to an important question: How long should I hold fast or stay true?***

v 25 **Hold fast... till I come**. We are to hang in there and stand strong for Jesus until He comes — either the rapture or our death. It is only *then* that the battle will be over. "Till I come" is the first promise of Jesus' return found in these letters to the seven churches. That's how we know this church goes on to Jesus' Second Coming. We will come back to this.

**Revelation 2:26-28 NKJV**

**And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—**

**<sup>27</sup> 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron;**

***They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'—***

**as I also have received from My Father; <sup>28</sup> and I will give him the morning star.**

***Now we come to the promise of a reward***

v 26 **He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end**: Even when there is the immoral and idolatrous influence of a Jezebel, Christians can *overcome* and *keep Jesus' works until the end*. We must not become overly discouraged at immorality and idolatry around us, even among Christians. God's work will still go on through His overcomers.

v 26 **To him I will give power over the nations:** Here, there is a special promise to those who overcome the threat of immorality and idolatry. To them, Jesus offered a share in His own kingdom.

### ***Personal Application***

“Those in Thyatira,” says Jesus, “who have not bought into the seductive teachings of Jezebel will be given nations to rule.” What was Jezebel’s goal? Ahab and Jezebel united in marriage to increase their power by merging countries and joining religions. The result? As seen in the story of Naboth’s vineyard, they wielded power and gobbled up land. They got what they wanted by ungodly methods, by manipulation and coercion. We can be the same. For example, the prosperity gospel or “word of faith movement” is similar to this — name it and claim it, blab and grab. It encourages people to get what they want by manipulating God, by trying to impress God with their spirituality, by demanding things from God.

But here is the encouragement, the motivation to avoid all these kinds of false teaching. “If you’re not a part of the Jezebel mentality, you will rule and reign with Me,” Jesus says. “But if you try to do it in the spirit of Jezebel—through inquisition and manipulation—you’ll be cast into a bed with other harlots in the great Tribulation.”

v 27 **He shall rule them with a rod of iron:** This quotation from Psalm 2 speaks of the authority of the Messiah when He rules over the earth. In that day, righteousness will be enforced, and those who rebel against Jesus will be **dashed to pieces** like a clay pot hit with an iron bar. Jesus includes this here to give hope to the faithful Christians of Thyatira, who felt overwhelmed by the immorality and idolatry all around them. Jesus reminds them, “You’re on My winning team.”

v 27 **rule...** “The word for ‘rule’ (Gr. *poimanei*) means literally ‘to shepherd.’ Their rule will not be simply that of executing judgment, but also that of administering mercy and direction.” (Walvoord)

v 28 **I will give him the morning star:** Jesus offered them a reward greater than the kingdom. He offered them the reward of Himself, because He is the *Morning Star* (Revelation 22:16).

### **Revelation 2:29 NKJV**

**<sup>29</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’**

v 29 **He who has an ear:** This is a letter that applies to everyone. It applies to those who are like Jezebel, who lead others into sin. It applies to those who follow the teaching of a Jezebel, and follow others into sin. It applies to those who permit a Jezebel to work her wickedness. Finally, it applies to the faithful who must hold fast.