

The Deep Things of Satan

Revelation 2:18-27

I. Jezebel

A. The *Spirit of Jezebel*.

1. One who takes on the character and disposition of Jezebel.

B. The story of Jezebel—1st and 2nd Kings

1. Married Ahab, the king of Israel who worshiped the pagan god Baal.
2. Her goal was to rid Israel from Yahweh worship, the only One true God.
 - a. She ordered the extermination of all the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 18).
3. Elijah took Jezebel and defeated her on Mt Carmel.
4. Known for her promotion of sexual immorality and idol worship.

II. Jesus in the letter to the Thyatira church (V.18)

- A. “The Son of God”—the only place in Revelation.
- B. “Eyes like a flame of fire”—His omniscience, the ability to know all things.
- C. “Feet like burnished bronze”— strength, splendor, stability, and judgement.

III. Thyatira, the city.

- A. About 40 miles S.E. of Pergamos.
- B. Of the seven cities, the least significant.
- C. Known for its trade guilds: wool, linen, leather, bronze, purple dye (Indigo).
 1. Lydia (Acts 16) came from Thyatira, a merchant in purple fabric, possibly key in founding the church in Thyatira (as well as the church in Philippi).

VI. The church at Thyatira (V.19).

- A. Many good things:
 1. Good deeds, loving, faithful, servants, persevering, and improving every day.
- B. BUT—one thing not so good—they tolerate the woman “Jezebel” (V.20).

V. Tolerance:

- A. ***Can be a good thing***—accepting people’s differences
- B. ***Christians are called to something higher***—We aren’t to “tolerate” our neighbor, we are to love him.
- C. ***Can (and usually is today) a bad thing***—When it goes against God’s standards.
 - 1. we cannot give unqualified, unconditional affirmation to every belief and behavior.
 - 2. Principle— Love what God loves, hate what God hates.

VI. Jesus’ warnings to the church (V. 20).

- A. Guard against elevating personalities.
- B. Guard against an authority problem.
- C. Guard against theological issues.
- D. Guard against a morality problem.

VII. Jesus’ correction.

- A. REPENT! Change your mind, change your direction.
- B. For those who don’t repent— Great tribulation will be their lot (per Jezebel).
 - 1. “*Thrown on bed of sickness*”—disease, illness, even death.
 - 2. “*I will kill her children with pestilence*”—Jezebel’s offspring: the evil and spiritually unregenerate.
- C. *The deep things of Satan*—the esoteric or hidden knowledge that distorts true Christian doctrine, often enticing believers away from the truth—the spirit of Jezebel.

VIII. He who overcomes (VS. 24-27)

- A. Co-authority over the millennial kingdom.
- B. Receive the “morning star”—Jesus Christ!

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Revelation 2:18-27

Back on our first Sunday in Revelation... I said that this book is highly connected the Old Testament... the Old Testament is a key to unlocking many of the mysteries in this great book....we come across an old Old Testament name this morning...notorious....

Jezebel... a name that all of us have heard before regardless of our biblical knowledge... *has anyone in this room personally ever known a person... a human being named Jezebel?*...I have never encountered ANYONE with the name Jezebel!

I don't know who said this... but I love it... *"We name our sons David and Paul, and our daughters Mary and Rachel...but we name our dogs Goliath and Nero... and we name our cats... Jezebel!"*

There's a reason for that... there was a Jezebel in in the Old Testament... as far as we know she was the first with that name...and possibly the last... the reason that there has been none since... and why only cats are named after her... is because her notoriously immoral, idolatrous, life has stigmatized the name.

Perhaps you have heard the term *"The Spirit of Jezebel"*... which is the description given to an individual... man or woman who has taken on the character or disposition resembling that of Jezebel and was doing the same types of things...the wicked evil things Jezebel did.

It is that sense of the term that Jesus refers to this mysterious person that infiltrated the church at Thyatira causing much spiritual damage... I think it helps to know something about the Old Testament Jezabel to understand what is going on in Thyatira...

Jezebel's story is found in 1 and 2 Kings. She was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre/Sidon and priest of the cult of Baal, a cruel, sensuous and revolting false god whose worship involved sexual degradation and lewdness.

Ahab, king of Israel... a Jew of all things... married Jezebel...big mistake... and led the nation into Baal worship (1 Kings 16:31). Ahab and Jezebel's reign over Israel is one of the saddest chapters in the history of God's people.

There are two incidents in the life of Jezebel that characterize her and may define what is meant by the "Jezebel spirit."... One trait is **her obsessive passion for domineering and controlling others**, especially in the spiritual realm.

When she became queen... she began a relentless campaign to rid Israel of all evidence of Yahweh worship.... She ordered the extermination of all the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 18) and replaced their altars with those of Baal.

Her strongest enemy was Elijah, who demanded a contest on Mount Carmel between the powers of Israel's God and the powers of Jezebel and the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18). Of course, God won... but despite hearing of the miraculous powers of the Lord, **Jezebel refused to repent** and swore on her gods that she would pursue Elijah relentlessly and take his life.

Her stubborn refusal to see and submit to the power of the living God would lead her to a hideous end ...I'll spare you the details. (2 Kings 9:29–37).

The second incident involves a righteous man named Naboth who refused to sell to Ahab land adjoining the palace... rightly declaring that to sell his inheritance would be against the Lord's command (1 Kings 21:3; Leviticus 25:23).

While Ahab sulked and fumed on his bed, Jezebel taunted and ridiculed him for his weakness, then proceeded to have the innocent Naboth framed and stoned to death... Naboth's sons were also stoned to death, so there would be no heirs, and the land would revert to the possession of the king. She had such a single-minded determination to have her way, no matter who is destroyed in the process, is a characteristic of the Jezebel spirit.

So infamous was Jezebel's sexual immorality and idol worship that Jesus Himself refers to her in this warning to the church at Thyatira...but the purpose of the letter to Thyatira was not centered on Jezebel... but rather on how some in the church *responded* to this person...God is most interested in how we respond to evil....the key word in this letter is “**tolerate**”... the verb form of the noun ***tolerance***...

Tolerance—*sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own...the act of allowing something...that is contrary to your beliefs.*

This letter speaks volumes to the church today....let's go through it.

Read 2:18-27

If you've been with us since we began looking at these seven letters to the seven churches...you've noticed I hope the pattern each letter follows... the apostle John is writing down the words Jesus Christ Himself dictates to him... each letter gives us a different insight into Jesus,

The first letter, to Ephesus... Jesus calls Himself **the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven lampstands...** the seven stars are the seven angels, messengers, possibly pastors of the seven churches... Jesus holds them...the seven

lampstands are the seven churches.... Jesus is present with each of them... He walks among them.

The letter to the church of Smyrna... the persecuted church... Jesus says of Himself **the first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life**... Nothing can encourage a persecuted church better than the gospel....the good news of Jesus Christ.

To the church at Pergamum Jesus says He's **the One who has the sharp two-edged sword**...the One who righteously judges...

And now... to this church in Thyatira... verse 18... **And to the angel of the church at Thyatira write... This is what the Son of God, the One who has eyes like a flame of fire and His feet like burnished bronze... says.**

This is the first and only time Jesus refers to Himself as **the Son of God** in the book of Revelation....He's not beating around the bush...nobody in Thyatira hearing or reading this letter has an excuse for being confused who Jesus is... He is the Son of God... this is who we listen to.

He is the One with **eyes like a flame of fire**... we need to remember this... all day long in all that we do... that Jesus has **eyes like a flame of fire**... it would change how and what we do all day long!

It is a picture of His omniscience... His having all knowledge...have you thought about that attribute of Jesus... what it means?... His knowledge extends way past the surface... there is no limit to His knowledge.

He has eyes that can penetrate the surface... Jesus doesn't just look at you... *Oh look at Dan, preaching, what a good guy!*...no... He looks at Dan and sees right through him!... He doesn't just see my heart... He penetrates into my heart!... He sees my real intentions... my real motivations... what's beneath my attitude...

Sometimes after I preach...like on Monday mornings... now I don't hear audible voices or anything...you have to go to a different church to get a pastor like that... but I am certain that Jesus has said to me... *Did you hear what you preached yesterday? YOU!?*

The One with eyes like a flame of fire... is emphasized later in verse 23 **...I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give each one of you according to your deeds...**

I think we should think about that every day... we are fully exposed.

His feet are not so shabby either!... **(18) His feet are like burnished bronze**... One of the things Thyatira was known for was it's bronze industry... so this would be a natural comparison... valuable bronze... strength... splendor... stability... and judgement.

Eyes and feet like the one's Jesus describes He has, plays as a warning to the church... as we will see... Thyatira looks very good as far as churches go... as Jesus commends them for what they do that is pleasing to Him... He sets in their mind the reality that He sees underneath the good... what is real.

Before we go any further... **what about Thyatira**... the city?...out of the seven cities... Thyatira is the least significant as cities go... it is the fourth in the circular line of seven cities that form a mail route for Asia Minor.... it is the smallest of the seven...about 40 miles Southeast of Pergamum...

No significant features such as a university or magnificent temples like the other cities... what was notable were the trade guilds... a new concept... the precursor of our trade unions...they had trade guilds...It was a working man's city...trade guilds for the wool and linen industry...leatherworkers...bronze workers... and one of the most famous of the trades... manufacturing of purple dye... indigo ink.

You may have heard about Lydia in Acts 16... perhaps the most famous person from Thyatira... Lydia was originally from Thyatira but was living in Philippi when she met Paul on his second missionary journey.

She was a seller of purple cloth... which Thyatira was famous for, being a center of indigo trade. Lydia apparently had two houses... one in Thyatira, her home town and eventually in Philippi...she went to Philippi to practice her trade in that city.

Archaeologists have found among the ruins of Thyatira inscriptions relating to a dyers' guild in the city. It is likely that Lydia was a member of this guild...some have speculated that because of Lydia's passion for the gospel... she possibly helped start or even initiated the church in Thyatira...

What's important about the trade guilds is not so much the trades...but the practices of these guilds... each guild would have their own pagan deity... and to worship these deities... they would regularly have religious feasts where all the members of the trade guild was expected to participate in.

These feasts would serve the meat that had been offered as a sacrifice to the pagan gods... and usually ended up being wildly immoral sex orgies...you can see the problem for the Christians who were in the trades...as just about everyone was.... who were expected to participate in these feast...A tough, tough situation to be in for a believer....a tough place for a Christian church.

But really... the church at first glance is doing really well in Thyatira... and Jesus begins by telling them the good things He sees the church doing.... He points out six things... that's pretty good!

If you remember when we looked at the church at Ephesus... Jesus began listing all the good things they were doing as a church... I think I even said at the end of reading those things... *what could possibly be wrong with this church?...so many good things!*

Well... the church at Thyatira has an even greater list...

1. **I know your deeds**—*Church, you do so many good things! Things that honor Me...good job!*
2. **And your love**—*You are a loving church!...He didn't say that to the other churches...In fact... Ephesus lacked this love...remember the apostle Paul in that classic passage 1 Corinthians 13... lists all these great works...giving to the poor... prophesying... gaining biblical knowledge... faith to remove mountains BUT IF I DON'T HAVE LOVE I AM NOTHING!... Thyatira's got the love!*
3. **They've got faith!**...
4. **They serve others...**
5. **They persevere...** moving forward in spite of adversity.
6. **They're getting better and better as time goes on...** *your last deeds are better than your first. This is a church on the move!*

You know... if I was sitting in a coffee shop downtown and someone came up to me and said *Trinity is a great church... they do good things, they love others, great faith, they serve others, they don't give up they just are getting better and better...* I'd come out of there thinking we've arrived!...a dream church!

(20) **But I have this against you...** wow...Isn't Jesus being a little fussy?...this is a warning to all churches...all Christians... You can seemingly have it all together... and still not have it all together... Charles Swindoll said of the Thyatira church "*there was a dark spot of cancerous sin eating away from the inside*"

See... it was on the inside!... everything on the outside of this church looked great!... But Jesus with **eyes like a flame of fire** sees the inside...He sees the underlying sin... Here's where Jezebel enters the scene...

(20) **But I have this against you...that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and deceives My slaves so that they commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.**

Jezebel is a problem... a big problem in this church... but **the reason she is a problem is that the church is tolerating her**... the church at Pergamum was the church that *compromised*...compromise is the cousin to *tolerance*.

If you have had your ears open for the last few decades... a word you would have heard more than enough is the word “tolerance”... I thought a lot about “tolerance” this week preparing for this morning... is tolerance a bad thing?

I concluded that **1. tolerance can be a good thing...** and **2. The Christian is called to something higher...** and **3. tolerance can be a bad thing...** which it is most of the time.

Tolerance a “good thing”

We should be tolerant with people who have different political views that we do... I don’t want people who disagree with me to be discriminated against... tolerance... I think we should be tolerance in letting people believe what they want to believe... to practice their faith without interference...

Basically tolerance is a good thing when we tolerate other people’s differences...

As Christians we are called to something higher than just tolerance.

Christians are to tolerate others when they have different beliefs about God. But are we to expect tolerance in return?... Luke 6:22 says **we are blessed when others reject us because we follow Christ...** John 15:18 says that **when the world hates us, we need to remember they do so because they hated Christ first.**

It is foolish to expect tolerance from others toward our Christian beliefs, even if they demand tolerance for their own. God has told us clearly: we will not get it....we are to rise above that.

The Christian is to work at a higher level than tolerance... we aren’t just to tolerate our neighbor!...right?... what are we to do?... love our neighbor.....we are not to tolerate our enemies.... No!... we are to love them!

God has also told Christians what our response should be when we are faced with intolerance.... Matthew 5:43-48 says we are to love our enemies and pray for them....not just tolerate them. Romans 12:20 says we are to provide for them. We do not play by the world's rules. We do not respond to intolerance with fear and hate. Instead, we express the love of Christ in us.

For the Christian...tolerance sets the bar too low...

Tolerance as a bad thing

but this passage is looking at a damaging tolerance... a tolerance of something evil... a patience we should NOT have with immorality.... **The bottom line is that the Christian cannot be tolerant of all things because God is not tolerant of all things.**

Listen carefully... we can respect differing opinions... treat all people fairly with respect... but we cannot give unqualified...unconditional affirmation to every belief and behavior.... All you parents out there understand this!

You are NOT a good parent if you give unqualified, unconditional affirmation to everything your child does!

You come out of the house and you see your five year old playing in the middle of the busy street... do you say *who am I to judge?*... later... the same five year old gets into the knife drawer and pulls out a 10" butcher knife and begins wielding it... well... *to each his own... I want you to grow up and think for yourself!*

That's not loving tolerance!...it's stupidity!... when it comes to tolerance... **the rule is to love what God loves and hate what God hates**...this is where the church at Thyatira fails... as an aside...for all the noise for everyone to be "tolerant"...our culture has become the most intolerant...

The world expects Christians to tolerate and accept everything and everyone... yet the world is completely intolerant of anything Christian... the world is also always in a state of flux when it comes to what it tolerates and what it doesn't.

I was listening to a podcast awhile ago that shared a little history on this...they were pointing out how in one point of history culture is tolerant of some things and intolerant of others... and in time... they often switch.

Fifty or sixty years ago in America we were very laissez-faire about food but had strict views regarding sex... now... we have laissez-faire attitudes about sex and very strict about food...all the labels you have to read... in some mom's groups you would receive more nasty looks for feeding their children "Fruity-Pebbles" than you would for announcing that you were leaving your husband for an affair...

"Ahh... tell me more about that?....FRUITY WHAT?! How dare you serve your kids fruity pebbles... so is the guy cute?"

Love what God loves... hate what God hates.....

(20) **...you tolerate the woman Jezebel...**we began with Jezebel's story... there's a bit of a mystery who Jesus is talking about here... some say that there actually was a woman in the church at Thyatira named Jezebel...That would make two Jezebels in existence for all time.

I don't think so... I think there was a woman who came into the church having the evil qualities and methods of the Jezebel in the Old Testament... By Jesus calling her Jezebel... everyone would immediately make the connection... he wouldn't have to explain everything.

There is so much baggage attached to the name "Jezebel"...By just saying the one word "Jezebel"...Jesus communicated

I see four warnings Jesus is making here for the church:

1. Guard against elevating personalities... you tolerate the woman Jezebel... this is one slick, powerful lady...remember what I said in the beginning about the real Jezebel...the “Jezebel spirit.”...*her obsessive passion for domineering and controlling others, especially in the spiritual realm.*

She was smart... Influential... powerful in speech...and very, very persuasive...easy to follow because often she made real sense!... In that all personalities are fallible human beings at best... and evil wicked at the worst... you’re setting yourself up for great trouble if you follow a person rather than the revealed Word of God...

We are a personality driven culture... we love celebrities... movie stars tell us how to vote... we like the big name preachers... the size of their name often matches the authority we attribute to them.... How about this... have this book as our authority!

RULE—*Anyone or anything that gets your eyes off Jesus is not of God. Anyone who minimizes the gospel(or adds to it!) is not of God .*

2. Guard against an authority problem...notice in verse 20 it says **the woman Jezebel WHO CALLS HERSELF A PROPHETESS...** God did not call her one of His prophetesses... the people of the church did not call her a prophetess.... SHE self-proclaimed herself as a prophetess!...self-proclaimed having authority from the highest....

The warning for the church is to be aware of self-proclaimed leaders coming into your church!...false teachers are usually self-proclaimed leaders... I could spend a lot of time on this and get into trouble so let’s move on.

3. Guard against theological issues...she teaches and deceives... deception usually results from mixing truth with lies... when someone just lies to you, you are less likely to be deceived than when they mix in truth...

God is love... For God so loved the world...Jesus loves..."And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Christians are to love everybody...how do you do that?... by accepting them as they are..... if you don’t accept the lifestyle of the gay... the lesbian... if you don’t embrace gender affirming surgery for those who want to change their gender... YOU DON’T LOVE LIKE JESUS LOVED...this definition of love is based on total complete acceptance regardless of what you are accepting!

Nowhere does Jesus says He loves everyone just as they are... He loves you but He never wanted you to stay the person you were before He met you... *Repent!...turn from your sin... you must be born again!*

The church at Thyatira was so loving... that the very thing Jesus commends them on became susceptible to such distortion that it becomes the very thing Jesus condemns them for.

Listen how truth and lies are blended in this actual church statement on their website... *When we baptized you into our community...we promised we would never take it back, no matter what you discover about yourself or what others discover about you along your life's journey...we believe that baptism places each of us into the body of Christ and that lasts forever.*

*Some are baptized as infants, others as adults... some are sprinkled, some are **emersed** (stop there... that should be "immersed"...emersed is partially in water.... Immersed is totally in water)... some reclaim their baptism from a previous church life...for each of us however, baptism is big enough, strong enough and cleansing enough to last forever...*

We believe that everyone, old, young, straight, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgendered, physically, emotionally challenged, rich or poor, sure or unsure...lost or found. Democrat or republican has a place in the body of Christ... Baptism is the message that you are a full member of the church and no one can take that away from you.

Could you pick out the truth?... it is there!....doesn't everybody have a place in the body of Christ?...Yes!...and still practice those lifestyles?... I hope you can pick out the lies...subtle...

If we put this in the situation at Thyatira... and even our church... they knew the truth... we know the truth... they were a loving church... I like to think of us as a loving church...but even though they and we KNOW these things... mixed with lies... we could start to accept a gospel that is not the gospel.

We must guard against theological issues... truth mixed with lies.

4. Guard against a morality problem...she teaches and deceives My slaves so that they commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. Two things God hates...In Thyatira... the problem centered on the guilds as I said earlier...

Jezebel was telling this church... look people... you have your faith... you are loving and strong... but if you are going to make it in this dog-eat-dog world...you're going to have to make some allowances... you will offend them if you don't eat the meat offered to idols... you will come across as judgmental legalist if you cause a riff over our orgies...

If you don't compromise a little... you can kiss your job goodbye!...that same situation is what we all face as Christians in the world today....I wish I had the time to expound on this... let me leave this point with a quote from Dan Aiken

*When the church **looks** like the world...you have a sick church.*

*When the church **acts** like the world...you have a impotent church.*

*When the church **plays** with the world...you have an unfaithful church*

And I would add... you will soon have no church.

Thyatira is one of the lampstands...leant to be light to a lost world... God does not leave them without a measure of correction... their dark sin beneath was tolerance... tolerance of evil in the church... He has one word for this church... **REPENT!**

Repent... change your mind... change your actions... change your course... come back to the pure truth of God....interesting how Jesus gives this message... through Jezebel... some of the toughest words in the New Testament:

Read verses 21-23

All Jezebel needed to do was repent... but with a hardened heart calls on herself God's righteous judgment...I think we can identify a principle... **Great tribulation will be their lot unless they repent.** Look at Jezebel's tribulation:

Thrown on a bed of sickness—disease, illness... could even be death. Have you ever stopped to consider that for the believer, an unrepentant heart could result in physical death?....

1 Corinthians 11:20 - 11:30

20 Therefore when you meet together in the same place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, 21 for in your eating each one takes his own supper first, and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 For do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you. 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was being betrayed took bread, 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But a man must test himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

And I will kill her children with pestilence. You don't preach on that verse if you're trying to make a mega-church!...Jezebel's children, **her spiritual offspring**...the lost and unregenerate.

Serious consequences for the unrepentant sinner!... But not everyone in the church has embraced such subversive evil.

Read verse 24

The "**deep things of Satan**" refer to esoteric or hidden knowledge that distorts true Christian doctrine, often enticing believers away from the truth.... the things Jezebel incorporated to deceive the church at Thyatira...

This concept is linked to early heretics known as Gnostics, who claimed access to secret knowledge denied to others. The "deep things" are described as hidden and secret, suggesting they can be found even within the church.

Additionally, they may involve lies that Satan spreads about God and His Word, serving as a warning to remain vigilant against deception. Ultimately, the desire for such knowledge reflects a longing for understanding both good and evil.

Read verses 25-19

HOLD ON...NEVER LET GO...KEEP CHRIST'S WORDS

LOVE WHAT HE LOVES...HATE WHAT HE HATES.