

## “JEZEBEL IN CHURCH”

Small Town, Big Trouble [It’s often assumed the worst problems are in big cities, while small towns are safer—BUT Columbine HS and Sandy Hook ES, while not as frequently violent, were still places of **MASS** violence. The truth is, evil, violence, drug abuse and prostitution are everywhere, not just the big cities; so let’s turn to the smallest town and church in the letters to seven churches]

“*Write this letter to the angel of the church in Thyatira.*” (Revelation 2:18a)

Thyatira had the longest letter, but was the least significant city [...and the most obscure of the seven churches of Asia Minor found in Revelation 2 & 3]

Geographically: it was isolated [Located in out-of-the-way territory; if it weren’t for Route 419, Cornwall would be considered off the beaten track also!]

Religiously: it was minor [There were no major pagan temples, and only the one church; Cornwall is smaller than Good Shepherd UMC to our north and the Sacred Heart RCC to our immediate east, but we’re a medium-sized church compared to the smaller congregations like the Quentin UCC Church to our west, and the Mennonite and Evangelical Congregational churches in Rexmont]

Militarily: expendable [It was a sentinel town designed to be captured by an enemy, if necessary, to delay aggression against a more strategic city; here we have Indiantown Gap, but it’s more of a training or retraining base than a primary battalion station, through their cemetery will someday be the largest in the country, and is second only to Arlington already! But in another military way, I’m not sure how alert, prepared, and prayerful Cornwall is regards spiritual warfare!]

Politically: overlooked [Thyatira had little influence, and I’m guessing Cornwall Borough—while the largest in square miles in PA—probably doesn’t have much influence in PA politics either]

Commercially: mixed [There *were* many small trades, and its biggest claim to fame overall was being the site of purple dye manufacturing, which was a luxury item in the first century A.D.; but like Cornwall, it didn’t have many other big industries]

Jesus As Judge

“This is the message from the Son of God, Whose **eyes** are like flames of fire, whose **feet** are like polished bronze.... Then all the churches will know that I am the One Who **searches out** the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever **you deserve.**” (Revelation 2:18b, 23 b-c; **emphasis added**)

**eyes/searches out** = penetrating discernment [Jesus sees and knows all, so His judgment is always just, factoring in and weighing all things in a balanced manner]

**feet/you deserve** = purity of standing [Jesus is holy and righteous, so His judgment is always fair, consistent with HIS character as **our** uniform and universal standard]

A Quick But Comprehensive Commendation [NOTE that while v. 19 is the short summary, He adds more words of commendation in vs. 24-26 which reinforce some of the positives of v. 19]

“I know **your works**—your **love**, your **faith**, your **service**, and your **patient endurance**. And I know your **last works are greater than the first**.... But I also have a message for the rest of you in Thyatira who **do not hold this teaching**, who have not learned what some call “the deep things of Satan”, I do not lay on you any other burden; only **hold fast** to what you have until I come. To everyone who conquers, and continues to do my works **to the end**, to them I will give authority over all the nations.” (Revelation 2:19, 24-26; **emphasis added**)

**your works/service** = the word “works” can be either bad or good for two reasons [1-outcome: did we do the wrong/bad thing or right/good thing; and 2-motive: did we do them in an effort to save oneself/bad because we CAN'T, or as an expression of gratitude for Jesus saving us/good, because we're meant to BE like Jesus and do what He did. The fact that the meaning **here** is good things done as an expression of gratitude **for** Jesus and to be **like** Jesus becomes clear when Jesus shortly after uses the word **service**, because Jesus called His followers to serve as He served]

**love** = “agape”; the purest, most sacrificial love [It is the highest, most divine of loves; it is an all-encompassing love; that Jesus uses this word is a high commendation indeed!]

**faith/do not hold this teaching** = belief in and loyalty to Jesus [They not only followed Jesus, they also remained faithful to His TRUTH; in a bit we'll see the false teaching of the Jezebel in the church who was leading people down wrong paths]

***endurance/hold fast/to the end*** = determined perseverance [...through whatever falsehoods, temptations, persecutions, and troubles they faced, they remained true through it all: “*Through it all, through it all, I’ve learned to trust in Jesus, I’ve learned to trust in God; through it all, through it all, I’ve learned to depend upon God’s word.*”—**Andrae Crouch**]

***last works greater than the first*** = increasing maturity [Praised for growing in their faith]

Goodbye Jesus—Hey There, Jezebel! [Last week in Pergamum we dealt with **supernatural** evil; today in Thyatira, we see **human** evil at work]

“*But I have this against you. You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who **calls herself a prophet** and is **teaching and beguiling my servants to practice fornication and to eat food offered to idols**. I gave her time to repent, but **she refuses to repent of her fornication.**’” (Revelation 2:20-21; **emphasis added**)*

***calls herself a prophet*** = false prophet [self-appointed and self-proclaimed, giving the appearance of divine authority, but really in opposition to it]

***teaching and beguiling my servants*** = perverted leader [Perverted BOTH in terms of seducing people with inappropriate sex and improper food, **as well as** in distorting the truth, meaning, and values of correct biblical teaching. She is untrustworthy as a leader, and she’s worse than the blind leading the blind, because this ungodly woman is **knowingly and purposefully** leading down a path different from the one Jesus would have us take]

Jezebel advocated for inclusivity in many ways [She believed you could worship Jesus AND other gods, including claiming Caesar is divine; further, you could be married or not married and still have sex with multiple people; and lastly, you could eat food NOT offered to idols as well as food that WAS offered to idols]

Jesus advocated for exclusivity in many ways [As I shared last week, He calls us to holiness, to be set apart, which will cause us to be exclusive in ways: sex is limited to a man and woman who are married exclusively; food offered to idols was to be excluded; and when it comes to worshipping gods, the claim of Christianity is not that Jesus Christ is one of the Saviors, nor even that He is chief of the Saviors, but that He is the **ONLY** Savior!!!]

*she refuses to repent* = unrepentantly immoral [Arrogant hubris coupled with godless self-justification]

Self-Examination: Adulterous or Affirmed?

“*Beware, I am throwing her on a bed, and those who commit adultery with her I am throwing into great distress, unless they repent of her doings.*” (Revelation 2:22)  
[We can repent, or we can suffer!]

“*I also received **authority** from my Father. To the one who conquers I will also give the **morning star!***” (Revelation 2:28; **emphasis added**)

**authority** = divine power (Revelation 2:26)

**morning star** = divine presence (Revelation 22:16)

The REAL Supreme Court Has But ONE Sovereign Judge! [And His name is **Jesus!**]

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Lord Jesus Amen.

**BENEDICTION:** May AMEN.