



THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Double X
(Xceed... Xcel)
2:18-19

Revelation 2:18 "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:

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

My first career was as a salesman. If one of my company's competitors had a strong relationship with a client whose business we were seeking, we'd say that the client and our competitor were "married" to each other. Our sales manager would expand on that metaphor by telling us that it was our job to "get in bed" with that client - not *literally*, but *figuratively*. We were to find a way to *seduce* that client away from our competitor. It was a very graphic and offense metaphor.

You see something similar being described in the church at Thyatira. Jesus warned the believers there that a seduction was underway:

1. The word **beguile** in verse twenty is the word for *seduce*.
2. Verses twenty, twenty-one, and twenty-two speak of *seduction, sexual immorality, and adultery*.
3. Jesus speaks of the **bed** of **Jezebel**.

The believers at Thyatira were being seduced into committing spiritual adultery. They were spiritually espoused to Jesus. He was their heavenly Bridegroom, they were His bride. But **Jezebel** was seducing them away from Jesus and into spiritual adultery.

Just who was **Jezebel**? Was she a real woman or is this just a metaphor for the evil influence of some false doctrine? Are there Jezebel's today that seduce believers?

Before we see just who or what **Jezebel** was, we need to meet the saints at **Thyatira**. Jesus addresses them, saying,

Revelation 2:18 "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:

I found out something interesting. It helps us decide just what or who is meant by **the angel of the church**. Every Jewish synagogue had two offices. One was the ruler of the synagogue. The other was called – are you ready – the **angel** of the synagogue! Commentators are split on the distribution of duties between these two men but the title of **angel** was well-known to the first century church. It referred to a man who held an important office in the synagogue. The **angel** of the church, therefore, is its pastor.

You might recognize Thyatira from studying Acts. A famous female convert of the apostle Paul's was from Thyatira. Paul encountered Lydia at Philippi but she was a seller of purple from Thyatira.

Dyes were incredibly rare and expensive in the ancient world. They were produced from certain mollusks or snails.

By the color of your robe or a portion of it a person could tell your status in society. Purple was a royal Roman color reserved for the highest echelons of society.

Perhaps that is why this is the only time in the Revelation that Jesus calls Himself the **Son of God**. He was Heaven's royalty, the one true God. No amount of purple dye could create a royalty that would compete with Him.

Jesus next described His gaze by saying His **eyes** were **like a flame of fire**. Remember that John, in chapter one, saw Jesus in the midst of **seven golden lampstands** – each with seven bowls burning with **flames of fire**.

What do we make of Jesus' flaming eyes? Most assume it is a gaze of piercing judgment. There is a serious flaw within the church at Thyatira but for now Jesus is about to commend them. I think that His flaming eyes are a good thing.

If the church is a lampstand and Jesus is in its midst flaming then their light had not gone out. It was burning brightly, revealing Him to the world.

Then Jesus said **His feet** [were] **like fine brass**. Again there is a tendency to think of judgment. In this case judgment is intended – but not against the saints. Jesus' brass feet are a reminder of a judgment already accomplished. The brass feet of Jesus remind you of the very first promise of His coming in to the world. At the very beginning of the Bible, in the first proclamation of the Gospel, God the Father told the devil that when Jesus came He would **bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel** (Genesis 3:15). We interpret the bruising of Jesus' heel to describe His suffering on the Cross. On the Cross He accomplished the redemption of the human race and bruised the devil's head.

Now we see Jesus with indestructible feet! They are the feet that have walked on earth, in our place, up the hill to the cross at Calvary. Refined through His suffering on our behalf, they are the **brass** that have bruised and will finally crush the devil's rebellion.

This description is telling the Thyatiran's that their Lord and Savior is the true King. He has already defeated every foe and will go on empowering their witness. They ought therefore to resist the seductions of Jezebel.

Having introduced Himself Jesus commends His dearly loved saints:

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

It's interesting to compare Thyatira to Ephesus. Ephesus had **works** but not love. Thyatira had **works** and **love** and was growing in both.

This is a strong commendation. It's a great review from the lips of the Lord.

Their **works** are bookends in-between which **love**, **service**, **faith** and **patience** flourish. It means everything they did was characterized by those four virtues.

Their **love** is *agape* love. It is the self-sacrificing love that can only be produced in the heart of a believer by the presence of God in his or her life. It is the kind of love that sent Jesus from Heaven to earth, from earth to the Cross, from the Cross to the grave, and from the grave back home to Heaven.

Service is the word from which we get the word *deacon*. It was used of waiters who would wait tables and be attentive to every need while remaining almost invisible.

They had **faith**. We already know they were saved so this must mean something further. It could mean a reliance upon the Lord, a conviction to trust Him in all areas of life. It's the kind of faith that has God's perspective on life no matter your circumstances.

Patience is a word that indicates a hopeful waiting for Jesus Christ.

Everything they did – their works – was done with an eye toward the return of Jesus; with ears ready to hear His leading; with a will that relied upon His faithfulness; and from the motive of revealing God's love for others through self-sacrifice.

As if that wasn't enough the Lord added **and as for your works, the last are more than the first.** **More** means both quantity and quality.

We might use the words exceeding and excellent.

Their current works were **exceeding** what they had done before. Am I doing more, exceedingly more, in serving the Lord than when I first got saved?

Their current works were **excellent** compared to their previous quality. The things I am doing to serve the Lord – are they excellently done? Are they growing in excellence and getting better?

These superlatives should not be a burden. Jesus said so in verse twenty-four. It should be a blessing to serve the Lord with an ever exceeding excellence. It is a service He empowers and that is motivated by love.

I like simple things. Two words: Exceeding... Excellent. The **Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass...** deserves no less.

Jesus deserves no less... He desires no less. The fact He doesn't demand such service is gracious – giving us space to respond from love.

- being changed to bring change -