



THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

"The Best Offense Is A Good Defenestration"

2:20-23

Revelation 2:20 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.

Revelation 2:21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

Revelation 2:22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

Revelation 2:23 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.

In 2004, Merriam-Webster's dictionary users named "defenestration" as one of their favorite words of the year

Defenestration, from the Latin *de* (from; out of) and *fenestra* (window or opening), is the act of throwing someone or something out of a window. The term was coined around the time of an incident in Prague Castle in the year of 1618.

In 1617, Roman Catholic officials ordered the cessation of construction of some Protestant chapels on land which the Catholic clergy claimed belonged to them. Protestants, who claimed that it was royal (not Catholic Church) land and thus available for their own use, interpreted this as a violation of the right of freedom of religious expression. At Prague Castle on May 23, 1618, an assembly of Protestants tried two Imperial governors for violating the Letter of Majesty (Right of Freedom of Religion), found them guilty, and threw them, together with their scribe, out of the high windows of the Bohemian Chancellery.

Since then there have been many other famous defenestrations. In 1941 mafia informant Abe "Kid Twist" Reles fell to his death from a window on the sixth floor of the Half Moon Hotel on Coney Island on the eve of his scheduled testimony. The angle of trajectory suggests that he was defenestrated.

The most famous defenestration of all is in the Bible. It was when Queen Jezebel was thrown from her window.

Jezebel is a prominent person in the letter to Thyatira. This was almost certainly not her real name. She was a real woman in the church at Thyatira who was similar in character and conduct to the notorious Jezebel of the Old Testament.

- being changed to bring change -
In order to form an alliance with the Sidonians, King Ahab of Israel he took for his wife the daughter of their king. His name was Ethbaal; hers was Jezebel.

King Ethbaal was a priest of Astarte, the Phoenician equivalent of the Greek Aphrodite and the Roman Venus. Astarte was either the sister or the cohort of the god Baal. Once enthroned as queen, Jezebel introduced the worship of Astarte and Baal to Israel. She persuaded Ahab to build a temple to Astarte in his capital, Samaria. She supported eight-hundred fifty prophets of Baal and systematically killed-off any true prophets of God she could get her hands on. She was well-known for what the Bible labeled harlotries and sorceries (1Kings 16:30-32; 18:4; 21:25-26; 2Kings 9:22). Worship of Baal involved gross sexual immorality. The priestesses were really sacred prostitutes.

After Ahab's death Jezebel continued to rule through her son Ahaziah. When Ahaziah was killed in battle, she exercised control through her other son, Jehoram. Jehoram was killed by Jehu, who confronted Jezebel in Jezreel and urged her servants to kill her by throwing her out a window. They complied, tossing her out the window (defenestration) and leaving her corpse in the street to be eaten by dogs. Only her skull, feet, and hands remained.

Fast forward about a thousand years to Thyatira. Thyatira was noted for its many trade guilds. You could not work if you did not belong to a guild representing your trade. Each guild was dedicated to and worshipped a pagan god or goddess. Each year you were invited to attend a feast to the god or goddess of your guild. At that feast, the food you were about to eat was first offered as a sacrifice. At that feast, the god or goddess was honored by ceremonies and rituals that involved grossly immoral practices.

Christians understandably had trouble with this! How far *could* or *should* they go as members of the trade guilds? As they were struggling to answer these issues a woman in the church claimed to receive prophecy from God that encouraged them to partake fully of all the pagan practices. **Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess...teach[es] and seduce[s] My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.**

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Go ahead and eat the food sacrificed to the idols; go ahead and participate in the immoral ceremonies. *This* was the seduction that was taking place; *this* was the spiritual adultery the believers were being led into.

Sometime in your life, perhaps less obviously, you will face this kind of dilemma. Some “Jezebel” will encourage you to participate in the idolatry or immorality of the world, but you’ll have to take a stand. It could cost you your profession or your popularity.

Count the cost and commit yourself to remaining pure for your heavenly Bridegroom!

Revelation 2:21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

We don't know what form the warning took but somehow the Lord had made it clear the prophecies of this woman were false. The Lord is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish. The **time** He gave her put believers in danger but they were not defenseless. They had His word, they had His warning.

Lots of terrible things happen every day. God remains longsuffering, not willing that any should perish eternally. It's dangerous out there but we are not defenseless. We have the Word of God to lead, guide, and strengthen us. We have the warnings of the Word – especially regarding prophecy and the end of all things.

Her sexual immorality probably meant both her relaxed standards for believers and her own lifestyle.

The literal wording is *she does not wish to repent*. God's longsuffering always has an end after which repentance is impossible.

Revelation 2:22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

The Thyatiran **Jezebel** had already influenced some of the church. Jesus graphically describes them as in bed with her. Let's hope it was a figurative description and not a literal one!

Note the Lord's longsuffering with them. There was still time, still opportunity, for them to **repent of their deeds**.

What great tribulation would they face if they refused to repent?

Revelation 2:23 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.

The biblical Jezebel had two sons, Ahaziah and Jehoram. They were both killed. The Thyatiran Jezebel's followers and advocates were considered her spiritual sons. They would be **killed with death**. There are several references in the New Testament to believers being disciplined by God by being killed:

1. Ananias and Sapphira sold their land and then lied about the amount of the proceeds they donated to the church. God struck them dead, one after the other.
2. In First Corinthians eleven some of the believers were misbehaving at the Agape Feast that preceded the Lord's Supper. They were hoarding their food and getting drunk! Some of them were being disciplined by God by sickness and death.

It was apparently not uncommon for errant believers to be struck dead by God in the early church. The followers and advocates of Jezebel were warned.

The effect of God killing believers was that **all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts**. I am thankful God is sooo longsuffering with sin! But there is also a sense that it can create bratty Christians.

Let me put it this way: If we dealt with our kids the way God deals with us we'd raise spoiled brats. We'd be counting... threatening... warning... but never or rarely bringing discipline. When dealing with our own kids we need to be swift!

Unlike human parents God is able to **search the minds and hearts** of His children. We may not be manifesting outwardly our disobedience and sin but God sees it forming. He sees it fomenting. We should therefore bring our minds and hearts to Him and ask Him to search us and reveal to us those things that are not pleasing to Him.

God doesn't want to kill you! He wants to **give to each one of you according to your works**. There was still time to repent. There was still time to get back into verse nineteen:

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**.

Pick your verse! Do you want to be in verse twenty-three? Or verse nineteen? To quote 'Paul,' *Get back to where you once belonged.*

Thyatira was allowing Jezebel to exist in their midst. They needed a Jehu to come along and tell her servants to throw her out the window of the church! Not literally, but with the power of the Word.

The best offense is a good defenestration.

