

THE GRACE OF WRATH

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Text

Chapter 2:18-29

Topic

Jesus exposes a woman in the church in Thyatira who claims to be a prophetess but is more like a notorious witch and harlot from the Old Testament

Title

***“WooHoo Witchy Woman
She Got the Saints in Her Sights”***

A judge in New Zealand granted a young girl's request that she be made a ward of the court so that she could legally change the name her parents gave her. What was her name, you ask?

Talula Does The Hula From Hawaii.

One reader left this comment on the article: “My unusual name hasn't affected me at all; in fact, it has helped me make friends and improve my confidence, especially since leaving school.” It was signed **Russell Sprout**.

We all remember the boy who had to fight his way through life on account of his deadbeat, absent father naming him Sue.

There are a few names that have become notorious and are commonly used as insults:

- ⇒ Judas and Benedict Arnold are used to describe a backstabbing, double-crossing traitor.
- ⇒ Scrooge describes a penny-pinching, cheapskate miser.
- ⇒ Nimrod, used by Bugs Bunny to describe an idiot.

One woman's name stands out as the most notorious. Two days after Kamala Harris was sworn in as vice-president a pastor took to [twitter](#) with this:

"I can't imagine any truly God-fearing Israelite who would've wanted their daughters to view **Jezebel** as an inspirational role model because she was a woman in power."

- ⇒ The Bible identifies Jezebel as a harlot who practiced witchcraft (Second Kings 9:22).
- ⇒ The dictionary says the name denotes "a wicked, shameless woman."
- ⇒ The synonyms listed in the thesaurus... Well, I don't feel comfortable mentioning them in church.

Jesus boldly called a woman who was attending church in Thyatira 'Jezebel.'

That would have certainly got Jesus banned from all social media.

Jesus' bride, the church, was being seduced and like the jealous Bridegroom He is, the Lord was taking action.

The seduction of Christians is a constant strategy of the devil. 'Jezebel's' of various kinds are to be expected and strongly resisted.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Jezebel Is In Church To Seduce You**, and **#2 Jesus Is In Church To Secure You**.

#1 - Jezebel Is In Church To Seduce You (v18-23)

Jesus used language that pictured a betrothed bride being seduced. He thereby urged Thyatira, as a Bridegroom would His bride, to remain pure for their wedding.

Rev 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:

"Angel" means *one who brings a message*. In this case, the message to be read was Scripture. The apostle Paul instructed Pastor Timothy to "devote yourself to **the public reading of Scripture**" (First Timothy 4:13). The "angel" is therefore most likely referring to the pastor.

The apostle John was the inspired human author of the Revelation. In chapter one he saw Jesus and described Him. Jesus introduced Himself to each church using one or more of those descriptions.

The description(s) He chose spoke directly to the circumstances of each church. To Thyatira He was "the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass."

Read commentaries and you'll encounter dozens of suggested meanings for "eyes like torches of fire" and "feet like solid brass." Which is correct?

We need to take a broader view. It turns out that there is a verse in the Old Testament Book of Daniel *that introduces a Person with fiery eyes and brass feet:*

Daniel 10:6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, **his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color... "**

(Note: Other Bible versions translate "fine brass" in Revelation 2:18 as "burnished bronze" (e.g, ESV.)

Daniel saw the Lord in a pre-incarnate appearance.¹

Jesus described Himself to Thyatira in a way that referred them back to this passage.

Whatever else flaming eyes and brass feet might suggest, their primary purpose here in the Revelation is to identify Jesus as the Glorious Man Daniel saw.

How did this description of “the Son of God” address the situation in Thyatira?

- ⇒ After he saw Jesus, Daniel gets an earful of prophecy regarding the Second Coming.
- ⇒ In the second section of this letter, the Second Coming is prominent.

The saints in Thyatira likely knew that Jesus would be returning with His bride, the church, at His Second Coming. If they did not know, they would when the reading got to chapter nineteen.

Whoever this woman in the church was, they were to think of her as a seductress leading the pure, precious bride of Jesus into both physical and spiritual adultery.

A betrothed bride ought to recognize and decisively reject seduction.

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

¹ Some commentators say it could not have been Jesus because the chapter goes on to describe this Person being temporarily detained by a mighty malevolent fallen angel called the Prince of Persia. As one of my favorite Bible teachers said, “There is no reason to think that there’s only this one, gold-girded being and no one else with Daniel in the rest of the verses. What seems to be happening is that Daniel sees this Glorious Man, an appearance of Pre-Incarnate Christ, and then *another* heavenly being (an angel) comes to speak with Daniel about what he’s seeing” (Gene Pensiero, Jr.)

I absolutely did not expect this commendation to a church that was allowing a Jezebel to operate in its midst. It tells me that there were many genuine believers who had not been seduced by her.

- ⇒ Their "love" is *agape*. It is the self-sacrificing love that is produced in the heart of a believer by the presence of God in his or her life.
- ⇒ "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." Here it indicates faith working, or we would say, "faithfulness."
- ⇒ "Patience" is a word that indicates a hopeful waiting.

Rev 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.

In order to form an alliance with the pagan Sidonians, King Ahab of Israel took for his wife Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal. Queen Jezebel introduced the worship of her gods, Ashera and Baal, to Israel.

Fast forward about a thousand years to the church in Thyatira. Their Jezebel was claiming to be a "prophetess," but her prophecies were satanic, and were seducing the saints "to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols."

In Thyatira, you could not work if you did not belong to a trade guild. Each guild was dedicated to, and worshipped, a pagan god or goddess. Each year it was mandatory for you to attend a feast to the god or goddess of your guild.

- ⇒ At that feast, the food you were served was first openly offered as a sacrifice to the idol of the god in a pagan religious ceremony.

⇒ At that feast, the god or goddess was honored by rituals that involved the guild members having sex with the temple priestesses.

Those guild meetings were TripleX-rated orgies complete with temple prostitutes. *Christians had trouble with this.* How far *could* or *should* they go as mandatory members of the trade guilds?

A woman in the church claimed to receive prophecies that encouraged them that it was alright to attend the guild meeting *and* to partake in the pagan practices.

The church's leaders "allow[ed]" her prophecies to go unchallenged.
Footnote: The Holy Spirit isn't quenched by church leaders disallowing certain teachings or behaviors. In fact, it is necessary for the spiritual safety of the church.

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

Our gracious God is longsuffering with sinners, withholding judgment, not willing that they perish, ,but receive eternal life.

The literal wording of "time to repent" is "she does not wish to repent." It was her conscious, free-will decision.

If you are not yet a believer in Jesus Christ, His grace is operating on your heart to free your will so you can repent, and be saved.

You can repent...Do you wish to?

Rev 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.

Rev 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.

Jesus explained His use of 'great tribulation' as a "sickbed," and by saying, "I will kill her children with death." He was not going to consign her and her followers to **the** Great Tribulation. *He was about to make them sick and kill them.*

In the Old Testament story, first her children, and then Jezebel, were "killed with death." Jezebel was thrown out a tower window, stomped, then eaten by wild dogs until "they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of *her* hands" (Second Kings 9:30ff).

There are references in the New Testament to individuals being "kill[ed] with death":

- ⇒ Ananias and Sapphira sold their land and then lied about the amount of the proceeds they donated to the church. They were "kill[ed] with death," one after the other.
- ⇒ In the church in Corinth some of the believers were misbehaving at the pot-luck that preceded the Lord's Supper. They were hoarding their food and getting drunk. Some of them were being disciplined by God with sickness; some were "kill[ed] with death."

Caution: While sickness and death can be God's discipline, it is rare. If you are sick or dying, it is *not* discipline for sin, unless you are a Jezebel, or are committing particularly heinous sins that endanger the church.

Jesus said, "All the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts." His dealings with the children of Jezebel would become a matter of public knowledge among the churches. It reminds us of the killing of Ananias and Sapphira bringing fear upon the church.

"And I will give to each one of you according to your works." His gifts to us for eternity, for our "works," far surpass the temporary sinful indulgences of this world.

There were Nicolaitans in Ephesus. There were Nicolaitans *and* Balaamites in Pergamos. Jezebel attended in Thyatira.

Attending church has proven to be a successful strategy for the devil.

Having the devil in church creates a hostile “works” environment.

#2 - Jesus Is In Church To Secure You (v24-29)

Jesus *also* attends church.

In chapter one, He compared the churches to lampstands, and said that He was “in the midst of the seven lampstands” (v13).

A Bridegroom and a harlot walked into a church...

- ⇒ One has *secured* you by giving you the indwelling Holy Spirit as an engagement gift of His abiding love.
 - ⇒ The other *seduces* by appealing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
- Who are you going home with?

Rev 2:24 "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.

Jezebel’s “doctrine” was to encourage sexual immorality and participation in the sacrifices to idols.

What were “the depths of Satan?” And who are “they” in “as **they** say?” Language scholars conclude that “they” means Jezebel and her followers. They openly claimed to have tapped into the same deep spiritual power source as Satan. The power was neutral, they said, and could be used for good or for evil.

It's an old satanic teaching. Essentially, it was the Force, but without the cuteness of Grogu. What Christian would believe such nonsense?

⇒ Some time ago, one of the prominent churches in Hanford was strongly promoting a book by Paul Yonggi Cho, titled *The Fourth Dimension*. Cho claimed that there is a fourth spiritual dimension we can, and should, tap into, just as other supernatural beings do - to do good or evil. AKA, "The depths of Satan."

⇒ When so-called 'Christian' psychology first made its assault on the church in the 1980's, its adherents compared it to the children of Israel "spoiling the Egyptians" by taking their riches on the Exodus. The principles and practices of modern psychology were said to be the valuable "spoil," a veritable treasure for us. Never mind that one of the most renowned secular psychologists whose "spoil" we were to use is Carl Jung. He openly admitted he had dialog with a spirit being he named Philemon. AKA, "The depths of Satan."

Jesus had no "other burden" to put on them. One commentator explains it this way:

The "burden" upon the faithful was that of resisting the pressure of Jezebel and her group. Choosing to abstain from her evil practices doubtless resulted in trouble. Jesus promised to place upon them no burden other than continuing to stand against her.

Rev 2:25 But hold fast what you have till I come.

They were victorious, still "hold[ing] fast," and they both *could* and *should* continue to "hold fast."

I emphasize they absolutely *could* "hold fast." It was a choice to be empowered by God the Holy Spirit.

If you are a believer, you know that you can have victory over seduction because you've experienced it.

I got saved and immediately sin was unattractive to me. I didn't need to try to quit sinning. I was transformed into a new creation.

Ah, but as time goes on... Satan has his strategies to seduce us. He knows what buttons to push.

Rev 2:26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations -

- ⇒ Overcomer is more-or-less synonymous with being born-again.
- ⇒ "My works" is in contrast to keeping Jezebel's works. We "keep" by walking in the Spirit rather than in the flesh.

My simple paraphrase: "Keep on following Jesus being *led along* by the Spirit rather than being *led astray* by a Jezebel."

Rev 2:27 '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;

"Power over the nations" (in v26) is defined by quoting Psalm Two (in v27). That supremely Messianic psalm proclaims the Second Coming of Jesus to rule over the nations of the world.

Rev 2:28 and I will give him the morning star.

Pages and pages have been written about "the morning star." It is especially controversial because the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, in chapter fourteen of his book, identifies Satan using the phrase. But then Jesus calls Himself "the Morning Star" in Revelation 22:16.

What's up? A large part of the confusion comes from the translation in the KJV & NKJV of "morning star" in Isaiah 14:12 as "Lucifer." It makes "morning star" sound like a *name* rather than a *description*.

Morning star is *not* a proper name; It is a description.

Apologist Don Stewart explains:

The reason Lucifer has been understood to be a proper name of the Devil has to do with the Latin translation of the Hebrew term Helel. This word was understood... to be a proper name for the king of Babylon. It means "light bearer," or Lucifero in Latin. The Latin title became a popular name for this evil figure. When the King James translators rendered the Hebrew term into English, they kept the popular term "Lucifer" for the Devil.

Listen to this commentary on Isaiah's use of the phrase:

The first reference of "morning star" [in Isaiah 14] is not to the devil but to the human king of Babylon.

*The whole section is directed to the king of Babylon, who is clearly depicted as a human ruler. Other kings of the earth address him; he is called "the man"; and he possesses a physical body. **At the same time,** Isaiah 14:12-15 seems to go beyond a description of a mortal king. **A double-fulfillment prophecy is thus probably in view.***

The facts are these:

- ⇒ Isaiah uses "morning star" as a *description* of a human king.
- ⇒ Isaiah also uses "morning star" as a *description* of the devil.
- ⇒ Jesus uses "morning star" of Himself in His Second Coming as the rightful King of kings.

"Morning star" was, and it is, a description for someone, human or supernatural, who aspires to rule over the nations of the earth.

- ⇒ In Revelation 2:26 we read, "I will **give** [you] power over the nations."
- ⇒ Jesus said, in verse 28, "I will **give** [you] the morning star."

They are two ways of saying the same thing; "Power over" the nations and "morning star" are interchangeable.

Jesus is coming in "power" to rule over the nations.

When He does, we will be ruling with Him. He will **give** us the "morning star," means that He will share with us His authority over the nations of the earth.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Jesus' words to *each* church are for *all* the churches, both then and now.

Sexual immorality leading as it does to spiritual adultery is a prevalent strategy being employed against the church *right now*.

I don't think it is necessary to point out any of the multitude of examples, both internationally and local.

It will be getting much worse. **We** can nonetheless hear the Lord say, "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and *as* for your works, the last *are* more than the first."