



# FAITH PRINCETON SUNDAY SCHOOL

## REVELATION 2:18-29 Thyatira

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2026

### THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA

Here is a little bit of history about THYATIRA from *Halley's Bible Handbook*.

**Thyatira** was perhaps the least illustrious of the seven cities of Revelation. Its history was uneventful, and it is scarcely mentioned by ancient writers. Coinage suggests that, lying as it did on a great highway linking two river valleys, Thyatira was a garrison town for many centuries.

The city was a center of commerce, and the records preserve references to more trade guilds than those listed for any other Asian city. Lydia, whom Paul met in Philippi, was a Thyatiran seller of "turkey red," a purple dye for which Thyatira was famous (Acts 16:14).

Necessity for guild membership in a trading community must have strengthened the temptation to compromise. Thus it is appropriate to find a woman, named (or nicknamed?) after Jezebel, the princess who by marrying Ahab sealed his trading partnership with the Phoenicians, leading a party of compromise in the Thyatiran church (Revelation 2:20–21). Thyatira played no significant part in the later history of the church.

**The church at Thyatira is a church of compromise.** The people have some good qualities. They are noted for their "love and faith, service and perseverance." They are growing in zeal, "their last works are more than their first" (v. 19)—just the opposite of Ephesus, which has "forsaken its first love" (2:4). But, like Pergamum, they were tolerant of false teachers, only worse—they tolerated Jezebel in their midst.

**Who Was Jezebel?** Thyatira was famous for its magnificent temple of Artemis (another name for the goddess) and influential people in the city and who, attracted to the growing cause of Christianity, attached herself to the church, militantly insisting, however, on the right to teach and practice licentious indulgence and

claiming inspiration for her teaching. She was called "Jezebel" because, like Jezebel the devilish wife of Ahab, who had introduced the abominations of Astarte worship into Israel (1 Kings 16), she was introducing the same vile practices into the Christian church.

Not all of the pastors in Thyatira accepted her teaching. But in an attempt to be tolerant, and thinking that she might be a help in winning the whole city to the name of Christ, they accepted her as a fellow pastor. With that the Lord was greatly displeased. And, in a stinging rebuke He presented Himself "with eyes like fire and feet like brass" (v. 18). No trifling with such a church!

**Satan's so-called deep secrets** (v. 24). This is the third mention of Satan in the seven letters. In Smyrna, Satan directed the casting of Christians into prison (2:9–10). In Pergamum, "Satan's throne," he was persecuting the church and corrupting it from within by false teachings (2:13–14). Here in Thyatira, Jezebel's teachings were known as "Satan's so-called deep secrets" (v. 24). Later he is mentioned as the enemy of the church in Philadelphia (3:9). God in all His great mercy has given those people who follow Jezebel's teaching "time to repent." But they are unwilling. Their punishment will be suffering and the death of their children. The morning star (v. 28). Those who "overcome" are promised the "morning star." Jesus Himself is the Morning Star (22:16). One of the earliest prophecies concerning the Messiah calls Him a "Star" (Numbers 24:17). Those who resist Satan will have no other burdens. These faithful believers are instructed to hold on until Christ returns. By faithfulness, not by compromise, will the church attain true leadership.

## REVELATION 2

### Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme \_\_\_\_\_

### Message to Thyatira

<sup>18</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:

<sup>19</sup> ‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. <sup>20</sup> But I have *this* against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit *acts of* immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. <sup>22</sup> Behold, I will throw her on a bed *of* sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. <sup>23</sup> And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. <sup>24</sup> But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. <sup>25</sup> Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. <sup>26</sup> He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; <sup>27</sup> AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received *authority* from My Father; <sup>28</sup> and I will give him the morning star. <sup>29</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

## **Enduring Word Commentary:** **Revelation 2:18-29 Letter to THYATIRA**

**David Guzik** Jesus' Letters to the Churches (Cont.)  
Jesus' letter to the church at Thyatira.

### 1. ([Revelation 2:18a](#)) The character of the city of Thyatira.

“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

a. **Thyatira:** This was the smallest and least important of the seven cities Jesus addresses in [Revelation 2](#) and [3](#). In history, we have no record that the Christians of **Thyatira** suffered any significant political or religious persecution.

i. “The elder Pliny dismissed Thyatira with the almost contemptuous phrase ‘Thyatira and other unimportant cities.’” (Barclay)

b. **Thyatira:** Still, this city was a center of *business* and *trade*. It had many active trade guilds, each having their own patron deity from the Greek and Roman pantheon of gods.

i. [Acts 16:14-15](#) mentions Lydia of Thyatira, who was a *seller of purple cloth* from the city of Thyatira. “Thyatira was famous for the manufacture of a purple dye, and numerous references are found in secular literature of the period to the trade guilds which manufactured cloth.” (Walvoord)

ii. “From the inscriptions which have been found in the neighborhood it is clear that Thyatira possessed more trade guilds than any other town of its size in Asia.” (Barclay)

### 2. ([Revelation 2:18b](#)) Jesus describes Himself to the church at Thyatira.

‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:

a. **These things says the Son of God:** Jesus first described Himself with a title that emphasized His *deity*. In Jewish thought, to be the *son of* a thing meant you had the nature of that thing. The *sons of the sorceress* ([Isaiah 57:3](#)) had the nature of the sorceress. The *sons of thunder* ([Mark 3:17](#)) had a nature like thunder. So the **Son of God** has the divine nature, the nature of **God**.

b. **Who has eyes like a flame of fire:** Jesus chose this description of Himself from the presentation in [Revelation 1:14](#) to emphasize the idea that His **eyes** looked with penetrating judgment.

c. **His feet like fine brass:** Jesus chose this description of Himself from [Revelation 1:15](#) to emphasize His *purity* because **brass** is pure and highly refined in the

fire. It also emphasized His *steadfastness*, because **brass** was the strongest known metal in the ancient world, and **feet like fine brass** would be strong and unmovable.

### 3. ([Revelation 2:19](#)) What Jesus knows about the Christians in Thyatira.

“I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and *as for your works, the last are more than the first.*”

a. **I know your works:** Thyatira was the least significant city among the seven cities Jesus addressed, yet they were not hidden to Jesus. Like each one of the churches, Jesus said to the church at Thyatira “**I know your works.**”

b. **Love, service, faith, and your patience:** In many ways, the church at Thyatira was a model church. They had four great essential qualities. They had **love**, both for the Lord and for one another. They knew **service**, and had **faith** and **patience** worth mentioning.

c. **As for your works, the last are more than the first:** This was another compliment to the church at Thyatira. Not only did they *have* these **works**, but they had them in *increasing measure* — they were *growing* in **love, service, faith, and patience**.

### 4. ([Revelation 2:20-21](#)) What Jesus has *against* the church at Thyatira.

**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. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.**

a. **Nevertheless:** Despite all the good Jesus saw in the church at Thyatira, there were significant problems. The problems were big enough for Jesus to say **nevertheless**, which meant “Despite all the good, **I have a few things against you.**”

b. **Because you allow that woman Jezebel:** The center of the corruption at the church at Thyatira was a woman Jesus called **Jezebel**. This may not have been her literal name, but a title that clearly represented a self-styled **prophetess** within the church, after the pattern of Jezebel in the Old Testament ([1 Kings 16-21](#) and [2 Kings 9:30-37](#)).

i. The name **Jezebel** had a powerful association. If we call someone a Judas or a Hitler it means something strong. It was also a strong thing to call this woman **Jezebel**. “She was

David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary: Revelation 2:18-29 THYATIRA*

one of the most evil characters of the Old Testament, who attempted to combine the worship of Israel with the worship of the idol Baal... Jezebel herself had a most unenviable record of evil.” (Walvoord)

ii. Some ancient Greek manuscripts state the phrase **that woman Jezebel** as *your woman Jezebel* or *your wife Jezebel*. Based on this, some (like Dean Alford) think that **Jezebel** was the pastor’s wife, or that Jesus meant **Jezebel** was the pastor’s “woman” in a symbolic sense.

c. **Who calls herself a prophetess:** This “**Jezebel**” at the church of Thyatira wasn’t really a **prophetess**, she only claimed to be one. Yet, it seems the Christians there *received* her as a **prophetess**, and that is why Jesus gave them this warning.

i. Jesus said this would happen in [Matthew 24:11](#): *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many*. Those words were first spoken with a view to the end times, but there have always been those who call themselves prophets in the church, but are not.

d. **To teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols:** Here, Jesus described the specific *sin* of this woman “Jezebel.” Mainly, she was an *immoral* and *ungodly* influence on others, and led others into sin. Jezebel led others into immorality and idolatry.

i. Because of the strong trade guilds in Thyatira, the **sexual immorality** and the eating of **things sacrificed to idols** was probably connected with the mandatory social occasions of the guilds. Perhaps a Christian was invited to the monthly meeting of the goldsmith’s guild, and the meeting was held at the temple of Apollo. “Jezebel” would allow or encourage the man to go — perhaps even using a “prophetic” word — and when the man went, he fell into immorality and idolatry.

ii. The draw to the guilds and their meetings was powerful. “No merchant or trader could hope to prosper or make money unless he was a member of his trade guild.” (Barclay) Nonetheless, Christians were expected to stand in the face of this kind of pressure. One ancient Christian named Tertullian wrote about Christians who made their living in trades connected to pagan idolatry. A painter might find work in pagan temples or a sculptor might be hired to make a statue of a pagan god. They would justify this by saying, “This is my living, and I must live.” Tertullian replied, *Vivere ergo habes?* “Must you live?”

iii. **My servants:** This shows how terrible Jezebel’s sin was. She corrupted the **servants** of Jesus, and they belong to Him. Jesus said, *But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea* ([Mark 9:42](#)).

e. Later in this letter, Jesus would also reveal a link to the work of Jezebel and false doctrine: *this doctrine... the depths of Satan, as they say* ([Revelation 2:24](#)). It seems that this Jezebel led others in the church at Thyatira to discover *depths of Satan*.

i. In the days of the New Testament, many non-Christian religions (such as the Ophites and various Gnostic groups) said they knew the “deep things of Satan.” The ancient Christian writer Tertullian said if you asked a Gnostic about their cosmic mysteries, they furrowed their brow and said, “It is deep.” It may be deep — but deep into a dangerous pit.

ii. How could Christians ever fall for *the depths of Satan*? Perhaps the deceptive reasoning went this way: “To effectively confront Satan, you must enter his strongholds, and learn his depths in order to conquer him.” People use similar reasoning in misguided spiritual warfare today.

f. **And I gave her time to repent... and she did not repent:** Jesus’ greatest accusation was that this “Jezebel” **did not repent**. She apparently rejected the work of the Holy Spirit in her heart, calling her to repentance.

i. In these words we see both the *mercy* and *judgment* of our Lord. **Time to repent** shows *mercy*. God gives us **time to repent**, we should deal with others the same way. **And she did not repent** speaks to the *judgment* of God. God gives **time to repent**, but it is not an unlimited time. There is a time when God says, *My Spirit shall not strive with man forever* ([Genesis 6:3](#)). This means that when God gives us **time to repent**, we must *take advantage* of that time.

ii. “‘In space comes grace’ proves not always a true proverb.” (Trapp)

g. **Because you allow:** This shows the sin of the *church* of Thyatira. On the outside, they were a model church, showing *works, love, service, faith, and patience*. Yet there was significant corruption *inside* the church. The sin of the church was that they *allowed* this corruption.

i. It wasn’t necessarily a large group following Jezebel. A little leaven affects a whole lump of dough, and a few in immorality and idolatry will corrupt the whole church — especially if they influence others the way this Jezebel did.

##### 5. ([Revelation 2:22-25](#)) What Jesus wants the church at Thyatira to do.

**Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 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. 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. But hold fast what you have till I come.

a. **I will cast her into a sickbed:** Before Jesus told the Christians in Thyatira what *they* must do, He first told them what *He* would do. Jesus would chastise this Jezebel, and **cast her into a sickbed**, along with **those who commit adultery with her**.

i. The reference to **adultery** is important. It speaks of both sexual **adultery** and spiritual **adultery**. When these Christians honored other gods, they were unfaithful to the Lord who saved them.

ii. For this reason, the figure of **a sickbed** is fitting. They were guilty of adultery, both sexual and spiritual. It is as if Jesus said, “You love an unclean bed. Here, I will give you one, and **cast you into a sickbed.**”

iii. What was the **sickbed**? It could simply be an image of affliction, or it could be literal sickness that Jesus allowed in the lives of Jezebel and her followers as chastisement. We know from passages of Scripture such as [1 Corinthians 11:30](#) that God can use sickness as a way to chastise His people when they are in sin.

iv. The ancient Greek word used here for **bed** “is also the word for a *banqueting couch*; and if that meaning is taken, the meaning is: ‘I will strike her down as she sits at her forbidden feasts.’” (Barclay)

b. **Unless they repent of their deeds:** Jesus revealed the *purpose* for this chastening. First, it was to draw them to **repent of their deeds**. They wouldn’t listen to Jesus before, so He had to speak louder through the **sickbed**. Second, it was to give an example of holiness to other churches: **and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts**.

i. **Minds and hearts** is literally “hearts and kidneys.” In the mind of the ancient Jews, the *heart* was the place of intellect, and the *kidneys* were the place of emotion. Jesus said, “I know your every thought and your every feeling.”

c. **I will kill her children with death:** “All men die, but all are not killed with death... Oh, it is a woeful thing to be killed with death.” (Trapp)

d. **Hold fast what you have till I come:** There were many faithful, uncompromising Christians in Thyatira. To them, Jesus simply said, “**hold fast.**” They must not stop doing what is good. They must not become distracted or discouraged from what Jesus wants them to be and to do.

i. Jesus also told them *how long* to **hold fast: till I come**. We are to hang in there and stand strong for Jesus until He comes. It is only *then* that the battle will be over.

## 6. ([Revelation 2:26-28](#)) The promise of a reward.

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

‘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; and I will give him the morning star.

a. **He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end:** Even when there is the immoral and idolatrous influence of a Jezebel, Christians can *overcome* and *keep Jesus’ works until the end*. We must not become overly discouraged at immorality and idolatry around us, even among Christians. God’s work will still go on through His overcomers.

b. **To him I will give power over the nations:** Jesus promised that His people will reign with Him. Here, there is a special promise to those who overcome the threat of immorality and idolatry. To them, Jesus offered a share in His own kingdom.

i. **He shall rule them with a rod of iron:** This quotation from [Psalm 2](#) speaks of the authority of the Messiah when He rules over the earth. In that day, righteousness will be enforced, and those who rebel against Jesus will be **dashed to pieces** like a clay pot hit with an iron bar. Jesus includes this here to give hope to the faithful Christians of Thyatira, who felt overwhelmed by the immorality and idolatry all around them. Jesus reminds them, “You’re on My winning team.”

ii. “The word for ‘rule’ (Gr. *poimanei*) means literally ‘to shepherd.’ Their rule will not be simply that of executing judgment, but also that of administering mercy and direction.” (Walvoord)

c. **I will give him the morning star:** Jesus offered them a reward greater than the kingdom. He offered them the reward of Himself, because He is the *Morning Star* ([Revelation 22:16](#)).

## 7. ([Revelation 2:29](#)) A general exhortation to all who will hear.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

a. **He who has an ear:** This is a letter that applies to everyone. It applies to those who are like Jezebel, who lead others into sin. It applies to those who follow the teaching of a Jezebel, and follow others into sin. It applies to those who permit a Jezebel to work her wickedness. Finally, it applies to the faithful who must hold fast.