



The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.  
Revelation 2:18-29

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English Standard Version

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## ***“The Church of Idolatrous Compromise”***

This is the 9<sup>th</sup> sermon in the series on The Book of Revelation entitled,  
***“The King’s Triumphant Return.”***

### **Revelation 2:18-29**

*“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. <sup>19</sup> “ ‘I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. <sup>20</sup> But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. <sup>22</sup> Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, <sup>23</sup> and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am He who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. <sup>24</sup> But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. <sup>25</sup> Only hold fast what you have until I come. <sup>26</sup> The one who conquers and who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, <sup>27</sup> and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I Myself 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.’”*

*Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us Your Word and making us Your people. As we look at the church in Thyatira, will You please help us? We know we’re **too** much like this church as well. We **lack** faith. We want to compromise. We want to sin. And then we want to rationalize*

*that sin. We struggle with the same temptations and the same idols. We're sinful and self-centered. So Lord, help us to meet Jesus in His glory as we see Him in these words. Do this for each of us, this morning, in Jesus' good name, Amen.*

### **INTRODUCTION: *The Mobster Dichotomy***<sup>1</sup>

As some of you know, I think the best film ever made was *The Godfather*. And if you've ever watched any of *The Godfather Trilogy*, or any other gangster movie for that matter, then you know ... at some point in the movie, one of the mobsters (usually the Godfather) will be forced to order the killing of someone who had previously been a close associate or even a family member. And before condemning this person to "sleep with the fishes," the mob boss will say this line, "It's not **personal**, it's **business**."

In other words, the person who's about to take the life of another is essentially saying, "If we lived in a world where only close relationships mattered, I'd never do this; but we don't live in that kind of world, we live in a world primarily determined by business."

I think part of the reason for the success of *The Godfather Trilogy* — with its numerous Oscars — and for the success of *The Sopranos* television series — with its numerous Emmys — is that we're simply **fascinated** by the obvious dichotomy created for those who live in the mobster's world.

A dichotomy means that you hold two opposite things together, but in tension. You are holding to two things that conflict with each other. And the dichotomy for the mob is that they hold to these intimate family commitments and cultural ties ... but they operate within a criminal value system shaped by **violence**.

We're both **shocked** and **fascinated** by people who are able to divide their commitments in such a profound way that they can say with all seriousness, "It's not **personal**, it's **business**."

The church in Thyatira found itself divided between its spiritual convictions and the economic pressures of the surrounding culture. Perhaps we can summarize their dilemma with a play on the godfather's words. The spirit of the church in Thyatira was one that tended to say, "It's not **spiritual**, it's **business**."

And that brings us, finally, to our text this morning, which was written to ...

### **v. 18: THE CHURCH**<sup>2</sup>

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**1** The Introduction is adapted from *Seven Deadly Spirits: Revelation's Letters for Today's Church* by Dr. T. Scott Daniel, page 75.

**2** The Exposition of the text is adapted from the books:

*Triumph of the Lamb* by Dr. Dennis Johnson, pages 79-82

*Discipleship on the Edge* by Dr. Darrell Johnson, pages 87-95

*What Christ Thinks of the Church* by Dr. John R. W. Stott, pages 58-73

*Seven Deadly Spirits: Revelation's Letters for Today's Church* by Dr. T. Scott Daniel, pages 73-89

*The New International Greek Testament Commentary: Revelation* by Dr. Gregory Beale, pages 259ff

*The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor in their Local Settings* by Dr. Colin Hemer, p. 106-128

*The Communicator's Commentary: 1, 2 & 3 John / Revelation* by Dr. Earl Palmer, pages 130ff

*The Revelation of St. John the Divine* by Dr. George Caird, pages 43ff

**And the sermons:**

"*The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 3)*" by Mark Driscoll, Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA, 9/7/08

"*To The Church in Thyatira*" by Dr. Kim Riddlebarger, Christ Reformed Church, Anaheim, CA, 2002, [www.christreformed.org](http://www.christreformed.org)

"*The Necessity of a Holy Life*" by Dr. Robert Rayburn, Faith Presbyterian Church, Tacoma, WA, 10/5/08

"*Thyatira: The Worldly Church*" by Rev. Ray Stedman, 11/26/89 and "*Thyatira: Be Holy*" by Rev. Ron

*“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.’”*

As we continue with our series on the Book of Revelation, we come to the fourth in a series of seven letters addressed by Jesus Christ to the churches of Asia Minor — Christ’s letter to the church in Thyatira. Remember that these seven letters are found in a larger vision which began in **Revelation 1:12** with a description of the resurrected Lord who walks among the seven golden lampstands, which are symbolic of Christ’s presence with His church. It is Jesus Christ, the Lord and giver of life, who stands in the midst of His churches, commending them for being faithful, encouraging them in the midst of persecution, and rebuking them for failing to do as they ought to do.

And now we’ve come to Thyatira.

### [Please Put Up The Map]

If you look at this map of Asia Minor, you can see that these churches form a semi-circle, lying along the road which a messenger would have used to deliver John’s letter to each of them. And the fourth church that would receive this letter was Thyatira. This letter is right in the middle of the churches addressed and Jesus says the most to this church. Thyatira is 40 miles east of Pergamum. Thyatira may have been the least important city of the seven — but in Jesus’ eyes — this church is very important. What we deem as important and what Jesus deems as important are often two very different things.

Thyatira was a military outpost founded by Seleucus I, one of Alexander the Greats’ generals, to guard one of the approaches to his empire. The city had no natural fortifications (it was out in the open valley) and depended entirely upon its soldiers to protect itself. In 190 BC the city fell to the Romans and first became part of the kingdom of Pergamum and then of the Province of Asia.

The city always a feeling of vulnerability (kind of like Winchester during The Civil War that kept changing hands because the city couldn’t be adequately defended). I mention this because the promises that Jesus holds out for the believers here all have to do with authority and ruling and sovereignty ... which is the opposite of their experience.

This is also important because one of the major industries in Thyatira became the manufacturing of weapons, since it had a large metal working trade. Thyatira was a prosperous manufacturing and trading town but was otherwise a lesser place than the other towns to which the letters of Revelation 2 and 3 were sent. It was not a seat of government, nor was it a center of imperial worship. One scholar comments, “The longest and the most difficult of the seven letters is addressed to the **least** known, **least** important, and **least** remarkable of the cities.”

Thyatira was a trading city that was made up of trade guilds. A trade guild was an association of craftsmen who worked in trades such as wool-workers, linen-workers, garment-workers, leather-workers, tanners, potters, those who made dye for clothing. Lydia, the first of Paul’s converts in Philippi, was from Thyatira, as we can see in **Acts 16:14**, “*One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a*

Ritchie, 7/14/96, both of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, CA

“*Letters from Jesus (Part 2)*” by Dr. Derek Thomas, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, 9/23/07

“*Dear Thyatira*” by Rev. Charles Biggs, Kectoic Covenant Presbyterian Church, Purcellville, VA, 10/11/09

“*Jesus speaks on Tolerance*” by Rev. Charlie Baile, Shady Grove Presbyterian Church, Derwood, MD, 9/28/08

worshiper of God. *The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.*”

In any case, most people involved in the economic activity of Thyatira would have belonged to one or another of these guilds or trade associations, in the same way that many people belong to trade unions today.

### [You Can Turn Off the Map Now, Thanks]

Once again the letter begins with an identification of Jesus Christ drawn from the vision of chapter 1. The majesty of the Lord Christ prepares the way for His stern words in verses 22 and 23. The chief god of Thyatira was Apollo, the son of Zeus, often called “the son of the most high god.” Perhaps that explains why Jesus is here called the Son of God, i.e. He is the true Son of the Living God. It’s significant that this is the only place in the whole Book of Revelation where Jesus is spoken of as the Son of God.

And so how is Christ revealed as the Son of God to this church? *“The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.”* This description comes directly from chapter one, but it seems that it’s based on Daniel’s vision of a heavenly being in **Daniel 10:6**, *“His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.”*

Although bronze-working was not unique to Thyatira, some scholars have also pointed to the bronze-workers’ guild in that city. For those who were familiar with metal working could probably envision the appearance of Jesus’ feet, which according to **Revelation 1:15**, *“were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace...”* Those who gazed into a bronze smelter and saw the molten metal inside may understand a great deal about the glory of the risen Christ.

And so after we’re given a picture of Jesus, we read that He presents this church with a

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### **v. 19: COMMENDATION**

In God’s providence, Lydia became important in the planting of the church at Philippi. Had she returned to Thyatira, and been instrumental in the establishment of a church there, too? We don’t know, Scripture doesn’t say, but by the time Revelation is written, the church does seem to be flourishing, Jesus says, *“I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.”*

Four essential qualities are singled out: love, faith, service, and patient endurance, (or perseverance). In many ways, there could hardly be a better commendation of any church than to note these characteristics. Three of them, faith, hope and love are highlighted by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 as constituting the very essence of spiritual maturity. Not only that, but they were **increasing** in virtue. Jesus says, *“Your latter works exceed the first.”* In other words, they’re now doing **more** in the areas of love, faith, service, and patient endurance than they did at first.

In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Jesus commends the Ephesians for persevering in sound doctrine. But Jesus rebuked the Ephesian church for losing their first love — their love for Him, their love for each other, and their love for the lost. The church in Thyatira has **the opposite problem**. Indeed, Jesus **commends** the congregation in Thyatira because of their love — so much so, that their love for Him, for each other, and for the lost has actually **increased** over time.

The congregation at Thyatira is a congregation that had a good reputation as a Church. It is a congregation that we would think highly of today — they’re loving, they have a strong faith,

they serve each other, and they endure patiently. They are extremely commendable as a congregation.

But Jesus also rebukes this church for tolerating false teaching within their midst. The Christians of Thyatira are loving, **but they're not discerning**. And so Jesus speaks to them a strong word of ...

**v. 20-23: REBUKE** <sup>3</sup>

*“But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. <sup>22</sup> Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, <sup>23</sup> and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am He who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.”*

The trade guilds worked hand in hand with local religious observances and to not participate posed a big problem for the economic well being of the Christians. They needed to feed their family. Furthermore, in order to make a living it was essential to belong to one of these trade guilds. To belong to a guild also meant that you would participate in what everyone else did. And to be honest, it wouldn't be hard to justify this — after all, I have to feed my family.

If the Christians involved in business didn't participate in the guilds they would lose social acceptance and economic gain. The trade guilds would enjoy common meals together and the meals were normally dedicated to some pagan god. Perhaps in order to be licensed to do business in the community, you had to be a member of a trade guild. The problem was that each trade guild was tied to the worship of a particular god. Meals would commonly be held in celebration of their god. Drinks would get flying and this often led to sexual immorality. This caused the Christians to **compromise** in Thyatira.

Apparently, a prophetess (referred to here as Jezebel) was teaching that you could be a part of these trade guilds and that Christians wouldn't suffer by participating in these immoral and idolatrous activities. There may have been a woman inside the church who claimed to have the gift of prophecy and she was powerful and influential and no one dared to confront her. Apparently, this influential lady was **quite** attractive and **quite** influential and **quite** deceptive in her charms. She may have been a successful businesswoman herself.

Now the woman here is not literally Jezebel but she's called Jezebel as a Biblical symbol of a woman who's leading God's people into idolatry and immorality. If you remember the story from 1 Kings, Jezebel caused the Israelites to be led into the worship of the pagan god Baal. Jezebel led Israel into Baal worship which was marked by idolatry and immorality.

The Old Testament Jezebel was the daughter of the king of Sidon, who became the wife of King Ahab of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, and she's remembered for having made the worship of the pagan god Baal popular in Israel. Baal was a fertility god and his worship involved the practice of sexual immorality. There were temple prostitutes, both male and female, associated with the worship of Baal. It was Jezebel who led Israel into syncretism, which is the fusing together of differing religions. And so she spread this **idolatry** until it became one of the most popular religions of the day. She herself supported over 800 prophets of

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<sup>3</sup> The story of Jezebel can be found in 1 Kings 16-21 and 2 Kings 9.

Baal, who ate at her table.

She was the one who tried to kill Elijah after his famous encounter with the false prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel when fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice. With great courage that mighty man of God had faced 480 false prophets, but when Jezebel got after him he ran for his life and asked God to take his life. She was also the one who murdered her neighbor because her husband wanted his vineyard. She was a ruthless, immoral, godless seducer of the people, and that is why Jesus selects her name for this dominant woman at Thyatira, who was also a ruthless, immoral, godless seducer of the people.

God dealt with her according to the fulfillment of a prophecy about her given by the prophet Elijah. She died when she was thrown from her palace window into the courtyard below where the dogs came and ate her body and licked up her blood. **2 Kings 9:35-37**, “*But when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands.*”<sup>36</sup> *When they came back and told him [King Jehu of Israel], he said, “This is the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, ‘In the territory of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel,’<sup>37</sup> and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as dung on the face of the field in the territory of Jezreel, so that no one can say, This is Jezebel.’ ”* Jezebel ranks as the most evil woman of the Bible.

Jesus will deal with the Jezebel’s of this world and that’s what we see here in Revelation 2. Starting in verse 21, Jesus says, “*I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.*”<sup>22</sup> *Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works,*<sup>23</sup> *and I will strike her children dead.”*

Christ promised sudden and immediate judgment, called her sin adultery and promised that all who followed her would suffer intensely. He also promised to strike her children dead, meaning that suffering would also extend to her followers. It’s a promise of severe discipline.

As Dr. John R. W. Stott wrote, “He whose eyes are like blazing fire also has feet like burnished bronze. The eyes that see into the hidden depths of our hearts can also blaze with righteous anger, and His feet can trample us to powder.”

The response of Christ’s holiness to unrepentant sin is certain judgment, either immediate or on the Day of Judgment. Any thought of harshness in the punishment is removed — the judgments of God are according to His justice. It’s just the realization of what sin deserves ... no more, no less. The justice of God is paramount. Beds of sin will become beds of sickness. The pleasures of sin will yield great tribulation. Perhaps, even more startling, are the words, “***I will strike her children dead.***” It is such words that bring home the utter seriousness of God’s judgments and the folly of **trifling with sin**. This should bring a spirit of seriousness into the church and seriousness to its oversight by the elders. The Corinthian church had experienced the reality of these threats, **1 Corinthians 11:30**, “*That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.*”

When it came to Jezebel, this church compromised. They tolerated her and her teachings and her actions. But Jesus does not. Because He knows that to compromise means to commit spiritual adultery. And spiritual adultery leads to spiritual sickness which leads to spiritual death.

And we need to understand that Jesus holds the church responsible — “***you tolerate that woman Jezebel.***” God’s not talking about it going on in the culture, but that it’s allowed **by Christians in the church**. The individual members of the church here in Thyatira were **failing** to speak the truth in love to one another. Jesus rebukes the church here for tolerating individuals

who were living in **unrepentant, persistent, compromising, lifestyles of sin.**

And we hear the voice of Jezebel all the time ... “Look, I’m all for loyalty to Jesus, but things just don’t work that way in the real world.” As though the real world doesn’t include the real presence of Jesus Christ.

Now, the most direct application for us here is to realize that wherever you work is often **the greatest place of temptation.** Work is often where Christianity meets the road of real life difficulty and the challenges of real ethical compromise. Temptations to cook the books a little to make our company look better to investors, to withhold information from a client if it’s perceived as a liability, to say something about a competitor’s product that not’s true, to make promises as a businessman that you know your customer service people can’t deliver on, to purposefully overlook something you shouldn’t when doing an audit, to copy someone else’s product even though they have a patent, to call in sick when you’re not, to fake an injury on the job, to log hours you never worked, to bill a customer for a service you didn’t provide, to fudge your taxes to avoid giving the government its due, to cover for your boss when he asks you to lie or engage in business practices that are simply unethical, or just to overcharge your customers.

Dr. Earl Palmer wrote said “The most subtle challenge to faith doesn’t usually originate in public amphitheaters but in the daily places where we earn the money we need to live.” Isn’t that the truth!

Today, it might mean going to a city with certain co-workers and then they want to take you out on the town to places where immoral activities are taking place. Christians need to stand for the truth and seek accountability and ask for prayer as they are on business travel.

The question before Christians in every culture is, “How can I do my job in a way that is pleasing to God?” Am I compromising? Am I trusting God to provide or am I trusting in my business and my own efforts? Am I getting greedy with my profits and gouging customers or employees?

Those are hard questions that each and every one of us has to face. But it seems that not everyone in Thyatira was caving in to the pressure to compromise. And to those faithful people Jesus makes ...

#### **v. 24-25: AN URGENT APPEAL**

*“But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden.<sup>25</sup> Only hold fast what you have until I come.”*

Interestingly, Jesus picks up an often used expression of the Jezebel cult at the end of the letter, referring to how they loved to speak of the **“deep things.”** An elitist claim to special knowledge and revelation, known only to the select few, has been a feature of many religions, including most Christian cults. To some extent, the epistle to the Colossians deals with this very issue, of those claimed special experiences that gave them insight into the hidden secrets of God. Those who claimed such experiences were often bound together in fraternities and sworn to secrecy. Gnosticism is perhaps the best known example.

But whatever claims they were making to knowing the **“deep things,”** Jesus’ words are pretty direct — they are **“the deep things of Satan.”** Within this church that demonstrated such love, such faith, such service, and such patient endurance, Satan was at work! Like the Nicolaitans in Ephesus and Pergamum, this Jezebel had the potential of completely undoing the church at Thyatira.

To those in the church who had maintained a good testimony despite the presence of

Jezebel, Jesus urges perseverance. They are to “**hold fast.**” Interestingly he adds, verse 24, “**I do not lay on you any other burden.**”

The phrase, “**I do not lay on you any other burden,**” appears to mirror the same thought in the letter sent to the churches after the Jerusalem Council in the Book of Acts. **Acts 15:28-29**, “*For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: <sup>29</sup> that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.*”

Christ did not place regulations and legalisms on them. They were to use their heads when it came to life and doctrine. Perhaps the instinctive reaction of the faithful at Thyatira was to retreat into a legalistic view of life. Not wishing to be tolerant of Jezebel’s licentiousness, the temptation to ensure godliness by imposing a system of rules over and above that which the Bible had given was very great. But no such “**burden**” is to be imposed. They are to live by the standards of the revealed Word of God and no more. As John was to say elsewhere, **1 John 5:3**, “*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.*”

And for those faithful members of the church, Jesus not only makes an appeal, but He gives makes them a ...

#### **v. 26-29: PROMISE**

“*The one who conquers and who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, <sup>27</sup> and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I Myself 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.*”

These verses are quoting from Psalm 2, a messianic psalm which was our responsive reading this morning. **Psalm 2:7-9**, “*The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. <sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. <sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.*”

The Lord is saying that the authority He’s been given over the nations ... will be shared with His faithful followers. And at the end of Revelation the Lord Jesus describes Himself, **Revelation 22:16**, “*I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.*” To such conquerors He promises that rejecting Jezebel will ensure the possession of nothing less than Himself. Jesus Christ would be their greatest possession.

All of that is good to know. But is it really relevant to our day and age? I think it is. And I think we ignore it at our own peril. Let me give you a ...

#### **CONCLUSION: A Modern Day Jezebel**

Her name is Oprah Winfrey. Oprah has 22 million weekly viewers and 2 million magazine readers and 115 million visitors to her website. The reason I take her to task is because she claims to be a Christian.

Here are some things that she believes. These are actual quotes, found on her website, taken primarily from her television show ...

Oprah says, “Well, I am a Christian who believes that there are certainly many more paths to God other than Christianity.”

Oprah says, “One of the mistakes that humans make is to believe that there is only one

way ... there are many paths to what you call God.”

Oprah says, “God ... in the essence of all consciousness ... isn’t something to believe. God is. God is. And God is a feeling experience, not a believing experience. And, in fact, if your religion is a believing experience ... if God for you is still about a belief, then it’s not truly God.”

Oprah says, “It isn’t until you come to a spiritual understanding of who you are – not necessarily a religious feeling, but deep down, the spirit within – that you can begin to take control.”

On January 1, 2008, Oprah and friends began to offer a year long course on miracles. There are 365 lessons in this miracles workbook and here are a few things that are taught: “My salvation comes from me. There is no sin. A slain Christ has no meaning. The journey to the cross should be the last useless journey. God is in everything I see. The recognition of God is the recognition of yourself. The atonement is the final lesson he need learn, for it teaches him that, never having sinned, he has no need of salvation.”

Every one of her quotes here is explicitly contradicted in the Bible. So contrary to what Oprah teaches, what does this passage reveal to us about who Jesus really is? Every verse of this passage implicitly assumes that Jesus is God and we’re not, **that He’s** the sovereign judge to whom we must give an account, **that He’s** the one bringing afflictions and judgment, **that He’s** the one whose eyes are flames of fire, **that He’s** the one who searches mind and heart, **that He’s** the one making promises of eternal life. All of these verses naturally assume that Jesus was **absolutely trustworthy** when **He** said, **Matthew 28:18**, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.*”

In our passage this morning, verse 23 says, “*And all the churches will know that I am He who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.*”

That’s the middle sentence in the middle letter of the seven letters and other than the standard admonition to listen, it’s the only sentence in these seven letters that refers to all the churches at the same time. That is **surely** no accident.

This morning you gotta decide who’s Jesus and who’s Jezebel?

Who’s telling the truth and who’s telling a lie?

You’re not going to give an account to Oprah or anyone else on this earth because Oprah’s not God and neither is anyone else, even if they claim to be. They don’t really care about you, Jesus does. He loves His bride and He’s a husband who’s not going to let His bride persist in spiritual adultery. He’s making a beautiful bride, without wrinkle or blemish, but a pure and holy bride. And He will present the church to Himself **in splendor**

This isn’t merely a way to get by in life — this is a promise to those who overcome — that we will share in the victory of Jesus. And He will win.

After all, according to **Revelation 19:15**, “*From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.*”

And He doesn’t like Jezebel. And He doesn’t like compromise.

And He’s the King. And He’s coming back.

Think about that. You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I’ll close.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for this revelation. Thank you that once again, it shows us our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We pray, Lord, help us to be people known for our love, faith, service, and patient endurance. Lord, enable us to hunger and thirst for truth and to be discerning when pressured to compromise. May Your Holy Spirit give us the strength to resist idolatry and immorality. We ask that You would do this in and for each one of us this morning ... in the Name of Your Son, Jesus, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.*

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**Titus 2:11-14**

*“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.”*