

I believe that the book, like all of Scripture, is spiritual and deals with things that cannot be seen—with eternal and precious things. It is not written for curiosity, but for faith. It speaks of real things as seen from heaven. Things are going on all the time that we know nothing about, but this book tells us about them, and that they are all directed from Heaven.

I think that what I say this morning will be relative to you and me, no matter which school of interpretation you prefer, for I will try to speak to the universal, not the particular. Everyone agrees that there were seven such churches in Asia Minor, and these letters are to them; but they are also to us.

We will recognize in these churches good things, some of them bad things just as there are today. There are warnings and instructions and promises. Christ is Lord of all the churches and gives warnings and blessing to them. His words to John are things that John saw, things that are, things that will be. 1:19

The messages are to the “angels” or messengers, the pastors and overseers of the churches. The seven lamps would represent the perfection of the work of the Spirit in the world, Who has honored the church by naming her the pillar and ground of the truth.

But let us read the message to the Fourth Church, the church at Thyatira. We find this letter in the book of Revelation, Chapter 2, beginning with verse 18:

“18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass; 19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first. 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. 24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. 25 But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”
(Re 2:18-29)

There are again, three things to observe that will be profit to you and me. I. The Good. II. The Bad. III. The Promise. The Good, the Bad, the Promise.

Introduction: But first, by way of introduction, let us look at the description that is given of our Lord Jesus, in His speaking to this church. He is called; “The Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.”

1. 1:13 calls Him the Son of Man. He would remind us that He who is the Son of Man is also the Son of God. He is the Son of God from eternity, who was begotten of the Father before the worlds were made. He has all the attributes of God, including judge of the whole world and the God of all the nations.
2. Precious it is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of man, that He is a mediator, a high priest who understand all our infirmities and weakness, our sorrows and our pains, for He became man and dwelt among us; but equally important is it to remember that He could be no real mediator if he were not also true God.
3. Flame of fire: means that nothing is hidden from His eyes that burn into the very depth of our souls, burning and purifying. So many figures in Scripture speak of the same thing: Fire is one of them: tongues of fire sat upon the heads of the 120 on the day of Pentecost; John spoke of a baptism of fire. God is a consuming fire. Fire speaks of judgment and purification, both of souls and the nations and creation. Testing and tribulation and final judgment. Jesus is the Son of God to churches and He will test and try them and purge them, or He will cast them away, if they do not repent.
4. Feet of brass: Speaks of judgment, but also His presence in the midst of the fire. 1:15. A reference perhaps to Daniel’s friends in the furnace of fire, when the Son of God was with them in the midst of the fire. This reference could be both a comfort and a warning to the church.

I. The good things about Thyatira: verse 19.

- A. Jesus knows: His eyes of flame penetrate to the works of the church and He knows the difference between the good ones and the bad one.
- B. They remained faithful in their witness: charity, service, and faith. This was their outward witness to the world, which is not to be despised. We are to honor that which is honorable, and this was honorable. Of course, God calls us to consistency so that there is oneness and unity in our profession and our deeds, but that perfection is found only in the Lord Jesus; we have a struggle between the flesh and the spirit. The Lord gives credit where credit is due.
- C. They were patient; they continued in the way they had started. This also is good. They continued to do what they set out to do. Tradition and continuing is good; Revolution always tries to overthrow everything and overturn, overturn, overturn and those with rebellious and revolutionary tendencies are to the resisted. Change for change sake is the spirit of revolution, not of faith and patience. Just because it is old doesn’t mean it is bad.
- D. They had not left their first works. In fact they had become better; in this respect they were compared favorable with Ephesus which had left its first love and were called to do the first works again. All was not well at Thyatira, but all was not wicked either.

II. The Bad Things about Thyatira. Verse 20-24

A. The extended reference:

1. The Bad things are highlighted by an extended comparison with Israel during the days of Ahab and Jezebel and their contention with Elijah. This passage becomes much more clear when that history is read. It is found in I Kings 17-22; II Kings 9-11 and related passages.
2. King Ahab of the Northern kingdom of Israel had married Jezebel, the daughter of the high priest of Baal from the city of Sidon, notorious for idolatry and wickedness.
3. Baal worship was the worship of power and authority and was popular in the ancient world for it clothed rulers with divinity. For the same reason sex was worshipped and obscene rites were associated with Baal worship and one manifestation of power and authority. Ritual rape and human sacrifices were also common. It was a horror.
4. Jezebel brought Baal worship into Israel, and through intermarriage with the family of Jehoshaphat of Judah brought it also to Judah, the southern kingdom.
5. The prophet Elijah was called by God to be a lone witness and to raise the standard against Ahab and Jezebel and the wicked, adulterous, pagan, spiritual fornication and abomination. God sent a three years' famine into the land to get their attention and the conflict between Baal and Jehovah was on. Elijah by himself and Ahab, Jezebel, 400 prophets of Baal and 450 prophets of the groves. At a famous confrontation at Mt Carmel, God overwhelmingly gave Elijah the victory and the 850 prophets were slain and Elijah earned the undying hatred of Jezebel. But God sent Elijah to anoint Elisha as his successor, Hazael as king of Syria, and Jehu as king of Israel, for God was still king of the whole earth.
6. It took several generations but Ahab finally was slain at Ramothgilead, and Elisha made Jehu king and Jehu wiped out Baal worship in both Judah and Israel, slew Jezebel and all the seed of Ahab and Jezebel in both kingdoms. It was a bloody climax indeed. Jehu was not a godly man, but a bloody instrument in the hands of the Son of God.

B. There was no doubt emperor worship at Thyatira, just as there was a Pergamos, and people were being seduced by this. Whether there was actually a woman name Jezebel there, or a woman like Jezebel, or simply the spirit of Jezebel does not matter. The result was the same; compromise with the ungodly worship of power and sex.

C. There was to be no compromise with Baal worship and those who advocated it. Vs. 22-23 are a clear reference to the troubles and their resolution in the days of Ahab and Jezabel, and the apostle John is pointed to the similarity of the sin and the judgment to come, which would involve the church as well as the city and state. God is a jealous God and will brook no rival in church or state.

D. God is patience: vs. 21 He gave them space to repent.

E. God has respect to the 7000 had not bowed the knee to Baal: vs. 24

F. Depths of Satan: idolatry is a bottomless pit and when men start down that road, they will find no bottom to the pit. They even seemed to glory in their knowledge of evil and were experts on it.

G. But God will judge his people and all the spawn of Ahab and Jezebel will be destroyed just as they were in ancient times. Vs. 23. What a horrible picture of the results of

idolatry we find in 2Kings 10 about the destruction of Ahab and Jezebel’s family by Jehu.

III. The Promise: Vs. 26-29

A. The extended reference to Psalm 2

1. The crucifixion and glory of the Son of Man/God 1-6
2. He is the Son of God with power: The mediator has the power; not the kings. Vs. 6-9
3. Kings are subordinate of Christ. Vs 10,11
4. The Son of God is to be kissed; not the sons of Baal. You will perish with them.

B. If we suffer with Christ, we will reign with Christ. This is where the real power; not in the kingdoms of the world, but in the Kingdom of God.

C. We reign with Christ in the breaking of the nations and bringing them into the kingdom of God: “All power is given to me.....” Go and make disciples.

D. The Morning Star: See Rev. 22:16. If you have Jesus Christ; what need have you to bow to Baal. “For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen. Ame

Application:

A. Kings, like Ahab, are to be called to righteousness and faith and obedience to Jesus Christ, that they truly be terrors to evil works and rewards of the good. Whether of the church or the state.

B. Nothing of Christ’s is to be given to Caesar. Caesar endures only for a while, but the Lord God and His Christ endure forever and ever.

What belongs to Christ alone: what we pray for in the Lord’s Prayer.

1. We worship the true and living God in heaven alone. Our Father is in Heaven.
2. We hallow only that Name.
3. We will work, pray, and labor for His rule in the earth as it is in heaven. What we pray for, we work for.
4. We look for our daily bread from Him.
5. We look to Him for forgiveness of our sins, and nowhere else. He will tell us what our sins are; not Caesar.
6. Lead us not into temptation: God will keep us from sin; not Caesar’s regulations.
7. Deliver us from evil: Only God can do this.
8. The kingdom, the power, the glory belong to God alone.

C. Let us be willing and joyful to endure hardship for Jesus Christ, acknowledging Him and our only Prophet, Priest, and King; for to Him alone is the power, the honor, the glory, the wisdom, the righteousness, forever and ever. Amen.

D. Let us always remember that we war a good war and fight a good fight, but the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but of the Word and Spirit; What Jehu and Elijah did the church is not called to do; but the church is called to be the pillar and ground of the truth; to declare the truth of Christ and His kingdom to all the world.

E. Let us Overcome Satan and all His vaunted kingdom:

- Revelation 12: 7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
- 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.
- 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.
- 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.
- 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.