

**The Problem with Compromise
The Fourth Church – Thyatira
Revelation 2:18 – 29**

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We have been dealing with the fourth church, Thyatira, that Jesus writes to in Revelation. This is the first church that He refers to still be extant at the time of the tribulation. In other words, the problems of this church will also be evident in churches at the time just prior to the rapture of the church. Only one reason of many we need to pay attention. As with the first three churches, this is a real church with real problems located in Thyatira. It is also a picture of a type of church that exists in every age of church history, but it also uniquely addresses the church that is best known as the church of the middle ages

Revelation 2:18–29

“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: ‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. 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. I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 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. 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. 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. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 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; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’” (NASB95)

We have spent a lot of time talking about just some of the compromise in terms of doctrines and worldly issues that have come into the church as a result of actions during the middle ages. Since this is also a church that has continued on, there continues to be threats to the church from the world, false teachers, and internal influences within the church even today. We have identified that the spirit of Jezebel is alive and well today. This spirit has survived since this letter was written and continues to cause mayhem in churches around the world.

Compromise, as an issue, shows up throughout the scriptures but starts in Genesis 3. Jude and Peter invested some time and discussed the issue of compromise. More specifically, they discussed how it shows up in the church. Jude started off his letter with one intent, but the problem of compromise overwhelmed his thoughts and the Holy Spirit led him elsewhere. Jude 3–4 “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” (NASB95)

For Jude, it was these ungodly persons who were bringing compromise into the church. It appears that the goal for them is the aggregation of temporal power, but they do not know what they are doing and who, ultimately, they are messing with. Jude 10–13 “But these men revile the things which they do not

understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.” (NASB95)

Peter also addressed the problem in 2 Peter 2:1–19. “But false prophets arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. These false teachers will infiltrate your midst with destructive heresies, even to the point of denying the Master who bought them. As a result, they will bring swift destruction on themselves. And many will follow their debauched lifestyles. Because of these false teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their condemnation pronounced long ago is not sitting idly by; their destruction is not asleep. For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but threw them into hell and locked them up in chains in utter darkness, to be kept until the judgment, and if he did not spare the ancient world, but did protect Noah, a herald of righteousness, along with seven others, when God brought a flood on an ungodly world, and if he turned to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when he condemned them to destruction, having appointed them to serve as an example to future generations of the ungodly, and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man in anguish over the debauched lifestyle of lawless men,(for while he lived among them day after day, that righteous man was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard) —if so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from their trials, and to reserve the unrighteous for punishment at the day of judgment, especially those who indulge their fleshly desires and who despise authority. Brazen and insolent, they are not afraid to insult the glorious ones, yet even angels, who are much more powerful, do not bring a slanderous judgment against them before the Lord. But these men, like irrational animals—creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed—do not understand whom they are insulting, and consequently in their destruction they will be destroyed, suffering harm as the wages for their harmful ways. By considering it a pleasure to carouse in broad daylight, they are stains and blemishes, indulging in their deceitful pleasures when they feast together with you. Their eyes, full of adultery, never stop sinning; they entice unstable people. They have trained their hearts for greed, these cursed children! By forsaking the right path they have gone astray, because they followed the way of Balaam son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, yet was rebuked for his own transgression (a dumb donkey, speaking with a human voice, restrained the prophet’s madness). These men are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm, for whom the utter depths of darkness have been reserved. For by speaking high-sounding but empty words they are able to entice, with fleshly desires and with debauchery, people who have just escaped from those who reside in error. Although these false teachers promise such people freedom, they themselves are enslaved to immorality. For whatever a person succumbs to, to that he is enslaved.” (NET)

Yep, definitely the spirit of Jezebel.

Today we are not dealing with the original Jezebel type identified by Jesus, but we are dealing with her children. Again, remember our background on the original Jezebel.

Jezebel was a foreigner who taught her idolatry to the Israelite king who married her. She was thus one who did not belong to the people of God, who infiltrated the people of God, and who led the people of God into idolatry. (Hamilton, Jr. 2012, 97)

The person we see in Thyatira is a self-proclaimed wolf in sheep’s clothing who practiced leading others into compromise. This is a foreigner to the body who is teaching idolatry; and the church at Thyatira tolerates her. How many churches around us today do we see the same thing going on?

We need to remember that in Thyatira there are three types of people there; those who are true to the word and faithful to Jesus, those who are compromising the word, and those who want to get along with the world. Jesus as well as Paul referred to the compromisers as leaven. Jesus used the Pharisees as an example of this, leaven is just one of the terms He referred to the Pharisees by.

Paul addresses the compromising problem he saw in the church in Galatia in Galatians 5:7–10. “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.” (NASB95) Unlike the revelation provided by Jesus to John, Paul had no idea who was causing the kerfuffle in Galatia.

Jesus has called this false prophetess to repentance. He gave her time to repent and she has refused to do so. John may have even referred back to Jezebel in his epistle of 1 John.

1 John 2:18–19

“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.” (NASB95)

By refusing to repent, Jezebel declared that she did not belong to the people of God. Once she made this plain, the church in Thyatira had a responsibility to tell her the truth—she was not right with God. They had a responsibility to protect the flock. They had a responsibility to exclude her from the church. Instead they were tolerating her, and as a result of the church’s failure to act, she was leading the servants of Jesus into sin. (Hamilton, Jr. 2012, 98)

The leadership in Thyatira was not doing what Jesus would have them to do. They were not caring for the flock they were responsible for. They were accepting of her alternative lifestyle and the untruths she was spouting in and among the body. The result, she was leading them into sin. There are reasons why we want to know what is being taught in a growth group and whose book is being used. Unlike in Thyatira, we take seriously the charge to care for the flock we are responsible for.

In her own eyes, Jezebel’s alleged special revelations from God qualified her as an authoritative teacher in the church. Some others agreed and she became a recognized leader, the critical problem being that she was leading people astray. (Thomas 1992, 215) Unfortunately, in the church today, we see the same conduct. Solomon was right, there really is “nothing new under the sun.”

You would think that somewhere in the body there would be a group opposed to what is happening and what is being taught, but that was the problem. “There was no serious, general, active opposition to her; and therein lay the fault of the whole congregation; she had firmly established herself in the approval of the congregation; and, as we have seen, she was so respected because by her liberal and zealous and energetic life she had deserved the public esteem.” (Ramsay 1904, 336)

This kind of conduct, being stubborn and refusing to repent is a problem the nation of Israel confronted time after time, and they paid for it with exile. Paul discusses this conduct existing in the church in Romans 2:5–8. “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.” (NASB95)

Jesus lets us know what He will do with this false teacher and leader of immorality. It includes her followers.

Revelation 2:22

“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.” (NASB95)

Again, this is also a picture of the church of the middle ages which today we see manifested as several churches, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, and Coptic.

What we see here though is that as part of the judgement on Jezebel, the representative churches, the ones who let it go on, will go through the Tribulation. Not all, but those who have fallen for the lies. This also now brings up the idea that this church is a mix of believers and non-believers. An unequal yoke that is firmly disapproved of in the scriptures.

Jezebel has been on probation, but that probation is about to end in judgement. Even with the judgement about to fall, there is a desire by Jesus to see repentance and to end the judgement. But if there is no repentance, Jesus refers to the ultimate end.

If there really was a specific woman named Jezebel in Thyatira, she would by now be long dead and, therefore, would not be cast into the Great Tribulation. Yet the prophecy is very specific: she and her children will be cast into it. Only if Jezebel is representative of a system can this be true. And again, when a woman is used symbolically, it symbolizes a religious system or entity. (Fruchtenbaum 2003, 60)

The context strongly implies that “Jezebel” was going to experience the destructive consequences of her activities. (Mulholland Jr. 2011, 442)

Her bed of adulteries shall be exchanged for a bed of tribulation; a figurative bed of penalty for the literal bed of sin. (Whedon 1880, 352)

She threw herself at pagan gods and lay on a bed of debauchery. Christ would now throw her into illness and pain, and she would lie on a sickbed of suffering. She would taste the bitter fruits of her folly. Note the progression of intensity in the punishments—from illness to intense suffering to death. Even here there is an opportunity to escape the punishment, for Christ adds, “unless she (her followers are also implied) repent of her ways.” (Osborne 2016, 63)

Though fornication referring to sexual immorality in general is frequently mentioned in the book of Revelation, this is the only place where adultery is indicated, with more particular reference to violation of the marriage vow. Those in Thyatira who had sinned in this way had not only violated the moral law of God but had sinned against their covenant relationship with the Lord which bound them to inward purity as well as outward piety. (Walvoord 2008, 74)

The bride of Christ is the Church, and as such there is an expectation of Jesus that there will be loyalty to Him only and to no one else. Thanks to “Jezebel,” compromise had come in, and for Jesus, there is no sharing, there is to be only exclusivity. Jesus made that crystal clear in John 14:6. “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (NASB95)

It should be noted that this particular church, and others like it (or more precisely those people in such churches who are, in effect, followers of the false prophetesses and false prophets—the Nicolaitanes and Balaamites—who have deceived them and led them to deny the truth of Christ and His Word) will indeed experience great tribulation, whether (as will be true of many adulterous churches at the end of the Church Age) they will go through the great tribulation or will experience great tribulation in other ways and times. (Morris 1983, 61-62)

Yes, we are under grace. Yes, this is the church age and yes, some of these are seriously misguided believers. Jesus is calling them to live a life that reflects being a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. He loves the church and He loves those who are misled. Since they would not listen to Jesus when He initially offered repentance, but rejected that, He is now moving to the next step of the sickbed. But there is still one more step if repentance does not take place and that is death.

Revelation 2:23

“And I will kill her children with pestilence (death), 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.” (NASB95)

There are several layers here in this verse. If we are discussing the church at Thyatira and the false prophetess and her followers, it is entirely possible that as a result of their licentious living, there may indeed be illegitimate children. Recall what took place with David. David engaged in activities not consistent with him being a follower of YAHWEH as well as being the anointed King of Israel. With Bathsheba, he engaged in an affair, and followed up with treachery, murder, cover up and denial. There was a child born as a result of the illicit affair. When confronted with his sin, David repented, but there was a price to be paid for the sin.

2 Samuel 12:13–23

Then David exclaimed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD!" Nathan replied to David, "Yes, and the LORD has forgiven your sin. You are not going to die. Nonetheless, because you have treated the LORD with such contempt in this matter, the son who has been born to you will certainly die." Then Nathan went to his home. The LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and the child became very ill. Then David prayed to God for the child and fasted. He would even go and spend the night lying on the ground. The elders of his house stood over him and tried to lift him from the ground, but he was unwilling, and refused to eat food with them. On the seventh day the child died. But the servants of David were afraid to inform him that the child had died, for they said, "While the child was still alive he would not listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He will do himself harm!" When David saw that his servants were whispering to one another, he realized that the child was dead. So David asked his servants, "Is the child dead?" They replied, "Yes, he's dead." So David got up from the ground, bathed, put on oil, and changed his clothes. He went to the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then, when he entered his palace, he requested that food be brought to him, and he ate. His servants said to him, "What is this that you have done? While the child was still alive, you fasted and wept. Once the child was dead you got up and ate food!" He replied, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept because I thought, 'Perhaps the LORD will show pity and the child will live. But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Am I able to bring him back? I will go to him, but he cannot return to me!' " (NET)

David realized he would one day see his child again. If there were actual children from this activity, we understand that the judgement is on their parents. Most likely though, here in verse 23, it probably is more likely that it is those who are her followers who are being targeted by Jesus.

The figure is borrowed from the fate of Jezebel's followers and children in the Old Testament—the former were pursued and destroyed; the latter put to death. (Baines 2005, 41)

This judgment of tribulation will become so well known that it will be evident to all the churches that Christ is the judge he claims to be (in v. 18), since he is able both to know who is guilty and righteous and to recompense accordingly. (Beale 1999, 264)

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." (NKJV)

Kill with death is a Hebraism for slay with most sure and awful death; so "dying thou shalt die" (Ge 2:17). (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown 1997, 558)

This judgement will fall on all of the followers of Jezebel which could only be possible with God since we are talking multiple generations of compromisers within the church. This may be an allusion to the fall of spiritual Babylon which we see later in the book of Revelation.

This is a threat that could very well be implemented as part of the fourth seal judgment during the future period of tribulation (cf. Rev. 6:7–8). (Thomas 1992, 222)

Moreover, and precisely because Christ can “search the hearts and minds,” he will repay each of you according to your deeds. One should not miss the sudden change of personal pronouns at this point in the letter. (Fee 2011, 41)

‘Her children...all the churches...I will give to each one of you...’

Here in the center of this section of scripture we see that Jesus is aware of who is involved in this activity and He indicates that He will judge them, giving to each one, according to their deeds. Jesus is speaking specifically to this church, yet He is also speaking to all of the churches and to us today. He is also talking directly to those who would engage in this type of activity. He wants them to know, personally, it will not end well for them.

1 Corinthians 3:10–15

“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master-builder I laid a foundation, but someone else builds on it. And each one must be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than what is being laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, each builder’s work will be plainly seen, for the Day will make it clear, because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test what kind of work each has done. If what someone has built survives, he will receive a reward. If someone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as through fire.” (NET)

Matthew 16:27

“For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.” (NASB95)

There is accountability for the believer, as well as for those who do not know Jesus. For the believer, the issue of our salvation has been settled, but what have we done for Jesus? How have we done ministry? How have we done life? Are we staying true to His word and remaining faithful?

Is there always a danger that adding to the scriptures or altering them may result in something that is not truly of God? Yes! Always. Compromise always is not of God and anything that results from it is not of Him.

Adding or subtracting something from the scriptures and then attributing that to the supernatural is a real danger. This is why some false teachers today assert that they are receiving direct revelation from God. This is why some groups have decided that their leadership and what that leadership says has the same weight as scripture. Jezebel was active in this type of compromise. The spirit behind that is still around. Paul’s warning in Galatians 1 echoes a warning of compromise that appears to have been written specifically for the present-day cult of the Mormons. It also echoes in Islam as well.

Galatians 1:6–9

“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!” (NASB95)

In Mormon thought, angels are on a kind of spiritual continuum between manhood and godhood. Upon their deaths, certain righteous men become angels. Later, presumably, they become gods. Mormons like to say that a man or woman is a “baby-god” or a god-in-embryo; an angel is an adolescent god; and an “adult god” is a full-fledged deity like the LDS god, Elohim. A well-known example of this is the supposed prophet/general Moroni in the Book of Mormon. He was said to be a righteous, mortal man who died at the end of the Book of Mormon civilization (c. A. D. 421). Today it is very common for Mormons to refer to him as the “Angel Moroni.” He allegedly appeared in angelic form to the young Joseph Smith and ultimately led him to the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. It is for this reason that the “Angel Moroni” is

one of the most popular figures in LDS iconography. Indeed, gold-plated statues of him adorn the top spires of most LDS temples. (Decker 1995, 283)

The Quran is held to be God's perfect and final revelation to mankind. It was revealed by God to Muhammad over a 23-year period through the medium of the angel Gabriel. The first revelation took place in the year a.d. 610 to Muhammad at the age of forty. This lasted until the latter's death in a.d. 633. (Morey 2003, 4)

In Thyatira, there were many who had not been hoodwinked by Jezebel. We see this also throughout the ages that there have always been those who are followers of Jesus and in some cases, they wound up being persecuted by those of the opposite viewpoint and held themselves to be the church. The spirit of Jezebel is alive and well leading churches astray to the degree that they believe they are actually serving God by putting believers to death and then taking their property. Actions that were seen in the inquisition.

Revelation 2:24

“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.” (NASB95)

Something we may be seeing here is the beginnings of Gnosticism. Mounce makes reference to this.

It is more likely, however, that knowing Satan's “deep secrets” is a reference to the view that in order to appreciate fully the grace of God one must first plumb the depths of evil. Later gnosticism boasted that it was precisely by entering into the stronghold of Satan that believers could learn the limits of his power and emerge victorious. On the basis that a believer's spirituality is unaffected by what is done with the body, Jezebel could argue that the Thyatiran Christians ought to take part in the pagan guild-feasts (even if they were connected with the deep secrets of Satan) and thus prove how powerless is evil to alter the nature of grace. (Mounce 1997, 89)

YAHWEH made crystal clear His viewpoints on this type of thinking

Deuteronomy 32:15–22

“But Jeshurun became fat and kicked, you got fat, thick, and stuffed! Then he deserted the God who made him, and treated the Rock who saved him with contempt. They made him jealous with other gods, they enraged him with abhorrent idols. They sacrificed to demons, not God, to gods they had not known; to new gods who had recently come along, gods your ancestors had not known about. You have forgotten the Rock who fathered you, and put out of mind the God who gave you birth. But the LORD took note and despised them because his sons and daughters enraged him. He said, “I will reject them, I will see what will happen to them; for they are a perverse generation, children who show no loyalty. They have made me jealous with false gods, enraging me with their worthless gods; so I will make them jealous with a people they do not recognize, with a nation slow to learn I will enrage them. For a fire has been kindled by my anger, and it burns to lowest Sheol; it consumes the earth and its produce, and ignites the foundations of the mountains.” (NET)

1 John 3:4–12

“Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; indeed, sin is lawlessness. And you know that Jesus was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. Everyone who resides in him does not sin; everyone who sins has neither seen him nor known him. Little children, let no one deceive you: The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as Jesus is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed: to destroy the works of the devil. Everyone who has been fathered by God does not practice sin, because God's seed resides in him, and thus he is not able to sin, because he has been fathered by God. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed: Everyone who does not practice righteousness—the one who does not love his fellow Christian—is not of God. For this is the gospel message that you have heard from the beginning: that we should love one another, not like Cain who was of the evil one and brutally murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his deeds were evil, but his brother's were righteous.” (NET)

Romans 6:1–7

“What shall we say then? Are we to remain in sin so that grace may increase? Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united in the likeness of his resurrection. We know that our old man was crucified with him so that the body of sin would no longer dominate us, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. (For someone who has died has been freed from sin.)” (NET)

This teaching may also have emphasized the spiritual dimension to such a degree that the physical world was considered unimportant, so that one’s presence in an idolatrous temple or at an idol’s feast table had no effect on one’s faith. Or these teachers may have held that if one’s relationship with God was close enough, even involvement with sin and the demonic realm could not hurt that relationship. Perhaps the false teachers reasoned that God’s grace could be appreciated most fully by learning the real nature of sin by experiencing it in the midst of Satan’s stronghold. (Beale 1999, 266)

1 Corinthians 10:20–24

“Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.” (NKJV)

For believers, there is no other burden. They are to hold fast up to the coming of Jesus. In this church which has a mix of people as we have discussed, those who are faithful need to remain so.

Therefore, ὃ ἔχετε (ho echete, what you have) refers to the body of accepted Christian doctrine in contradistinction from the heretical teachings they must oppose. In short, the true believers in Thyatira are commanded by the Lord to maintain a firm grip on the truths of the faith against the false teachings of Jezebel and the other Nicolaitans. (Osborne, Revelation, Bakers Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 2002, 164)

For us today, it means to hang in there and hold on. Jesus is coming soon! It simply means to hold on and remain faithful up to the time that Jesus returns. In light of the compromises we have already reviewed, this is not easy.

We have to guard against false doctrine yet not lose our love for the Lord and for the lost as a result. We have to stay faithful to the Word of God and faithful to Jesus.

Acts 17:11

“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.” (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 10:12

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.” (NASB95)

Revelation 2:26–28

“He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 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; and I will give him the morning star.” (NASB95)

Remember, we are in a war. We have sided with the one who is already victorious, but we are still here looking for others who will come over from the other side and join us.

It is a different quality of life that is demanded from the Christian. To the end, for the Christian life is not a battle but a campaign. Perseverance is important. (L. Morris 1987, 77)

Matthew 24:12–13

“Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.” (NASB95)

Keeping His works requires abiding (μένω [menō]) in His word (John 8:31-32). To abide is to “live, dwell, lodge . . . [and is used] of someone who does not leave the realm or sphere in which he finds himself”. Thus, we are to be immersed and live in His Word. Otherwise we will not be His disciples and whatever we keep won’t be His works. (Garland 2006, Re 2:26)

For the overcomers, there is a promise that only Jesus can fulfill.

Galatians 4:4–7

“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.” (NASB95)

Romans 8:16–18

“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (NASB95)

This authority is not innately the overcomer’s, but is granted to him by virtue of his identity with Christ, for it is Christ who is destined to “rule all nations with a rod of iron” (Rev. 12:5; 19:15). The overcomer will “reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6). (Garland 2006, Re 2:26)

The followers of the Messiah will share in his victory over his enemies. (Robertson 1933, Re 2:26)

Jesus is the “bright and morning star” in Revelation 22:16. “Overcomers (all true Christians) will be raptured to be with Christ at the time of the Rapture (when Christ comes as “the morning star”) (2:28)— See Rev. 22:16.” (Gingrich 2001, 24)

Titus 2:11–14

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” (NASB95)

Revelation 2:29

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (NASB95)

The children of Jezebel will not hear, but the true children of the Lord Jesus will hear, for the Holy Spirit opens the “blood-tipped ear.” (McGee 1997, 912)

Thyatira begins in the 7th century, and goes right on into the Great Tribulation, and manifests herself at last as Babylon the Great. Her children are to be judged; but wherever there is a remnant found who “have not known the depths of Satan,” the Lord owns them as His, and exhorts them to hold fast what they have until He come. To the overcomer He promises what Rome has always sought—power over the

nations. They will rule with Him when He comes again. Thus the hope of the Second Coming of Christ is put before them, and henceforth has a large place in each of these church-letters. (Ironsides 1920, 57-58)

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