

- 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.
- 25 Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.
- 26 And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations.
- 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; like the vessels of a potter they shall be broken to pieces, as I also have received from My Father.
- 28 And I will give him the morning star.
- 29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

18 One of the most significant things about the city of **Thyatira** was the dominance of trade guilds over the local economy. Every imaginable manufacturing industry was strictly controlled by the guilds: In order to work in a trade, you had to belong to the appropriate guild. And to be a member of a guild meant also to worship pagan gods; heathen worship was integrally connected with the guilds, which held their meetings and common meals in pagan temples. Two central aspects of the required pagan worship were the eating of meat sacrificed to idols, and illicit sexual relations. Any Christian who worked in a craft or trade was thus presented with severe problems: his faithfulness to Christ would affect his calling, his livelihood, and his ability to feed his family.

The local god, the guardian of the city, was Tyrimnos, the son of Zeus; and Tyrimnos-worship was mixed in Thyatira with the worship of Caesar, who was also proclaimed the incarnate Son of God. The conflict of Christianity and paganism in Thyatira was immediate and central—and so the first word of Christ to this church is the proclamation that He alone is **the Son of God** (the only place in the Revelation where this specific designation of Christ is used). The letter to this church begins with an uncompromising challenge to paganism and statism, affirming the definitive, absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

19-20 There was much that could be commended in the church at Thyatira. It was active in **love and faith and service and perseverance**—in fact, its activity was increasing: **Your deeds of late are greater than at first**. But, in spite of all good

works of the church, its great doctrinal and moral laxity (the opposite number of the doctrinal errors of the church at Sardis) were allowing false doctrine to take root again. The church at Thyatira again calls the heresy by a specific name (*Nikolaos* and *Balaam*); this is **Jezebel**, the wicked queen of Israel who led the covenant people into the worship of pagan gods (1 Kings 18). Her actions are specifically condemned. The “Jezebel” of the Thyatira church is a promise with paganism. Of course, the church’s theology would have accompanied its actions; after all, there is only one God, and the worship of pagan gods is “really” offered to God. The pagans in their religious service were offering Christianity; or, that going to church was a means for Christians to survive rather than to prosper; perhaps that all religions have value and that we Christians should learn from the heathen traditions, thus combining the best of both worlds, which answers the needs of the church.

Regardless of the ratio of good to evil, and was not to be tolerated here: **You tolerate** this woman, tolerating her, the elders and the church, for **she teaches and commits fornication and eats** the fruit of her idolatry. It must be clearly understood: **Or else you will be under judgment**; God will judge the church. God will say that Christians should not tolerate her; that Christians should not take, idiosyncrasies, and tolerating her, when it comes to clear violation of doctrine, the government should put a stop to it before it is too late.

“Jezebel” was, figuratively, a woman who led the church into fornication and idolatry. The condemnation of the Christian church