

Revelation 2:18-29
 The Spirit of Jezebel – Part 2
 Study 10

18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: **19** “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and *as* for your works, the last *are* more than the first. **20** 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. **21** And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. **22** Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. **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. **24** “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. **25** But hold fast what you have till I come. **26** And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— **27** ‘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; **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.””

We began our look into the church of Thyatira last week and, Lord willing, we will finish this morning.

- As we touched on last week, this is the fourth church in the list of 7 churches that Jesus writes to here in the opening chapters of the book of Revelation
 - Of the 7 letters this is the largest letter – meaning it is the longest –
 - But, ironically, it’s written to the smallest church of the seven
- But this little church had really big problems
- It was being viciously attacked
 - Not attacked like some of the other churches such as Smyrna
 - Who was known for being persecuted from outside the church
 - Thyatira was being attacked from the inside
- Where Smyrna was being ambushed from the false teachers from the world

- Thyatira, on the other hand, was being ambushed from within
 - They were being threatened from inside the church by compromise

This was a church that had allowed, tolerated really, the teachings of this woman – Jezebel

- They tolerated this woman who had placed herself in a position of authority over all people
 - A position of teaching and preaching – calling herself a prophetess of God
- And the doctrine she brought into the church was teaching the people of God that sin was acceptable by God
 - The sin of sexual immorality; the sin of idolatry
 - and the sin of making God’s people sin by the misuse of Christian freedom
 - In a nutshell, it’s what verse 24 calls “the depths of Satan”

Now, as Jesus points out in verse 19, this church was vibrant in many ways. They had a lot of evidence of a strong spiritual life

- We see the Lord commend them for a lot of good things
 - Verse 19 ““I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and *as* for your works, the last *are* more than the first”
- This was a hard working, loving fellowship that had an effective ministry in the community
 - They held to the faith with endurance and patients
 - And Jesus recognizes and praises them for their spiritual growth
 - But...Jesus was against them
- He was against the church because they were allowing and tolerating this sin - the sin of Jezebelism –
 - And He was against some in the church because they were advocating this sin
- It wasn’t merely a person here or there that were struggling with the issues
 - No, the spirit of Jezebel had permeated this church
 - And this woman was teaching it; and the people were advocating for it
 - And the result was that the church had become significantly corrupt,

- Yet, sadly, not one person in the church would deal rightly and righteously with it
 - Queue Jesus!

In many ways, this church is a representation of many churches throughout history, and even today,

- That has become defiled with sin yet do not address things.
 - Sin that enters and pervades the church, yet the leadership and the laity become apathetic to its existence
 - And thus it is allowed to seduce, teach and effect the church in unholy ways
 - And, in little time, the church becomes corrupt because the people remain unrepentant
- But this is not what Jesus would have for His church
 - In fact, as Ephesians tells us, Jesus “**4** ...chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love”
 - We are to “**13** ...gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; **14** as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; **15** but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, **16** because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:13-14)
 - 2 Cor. 11:2, Paul tells the church in Corinth: “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ. **3** But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. **4** For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

This is the problem of Thyatira. They received a different Gospel.

- It was a blended Gospel –
 - It was a blending of teachings of purity of Jesus, with the corrupt teachings of Jezebel

- It was the fusion of the Gospel of grace with the Gospel of tolerance
 - It was the mixing of the Gospel of the Spirit of the living God;
 - With the spirit of Jezebelism and the ways of Satan
- We, as the church, must be careful in guarding the purity and the simplicity of the Gospel Jesus
 - And not let the mixing of error with truth
 - As this is exactly what our adversary the devil did in the garden
 - Confusing Eve by saying: “has God indeed said” ...”
 - “You will not surely die. **5** For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Gen 3:1, 4-5)

Last week, we began to look at this “spirit of Jezebel” so that we could see what was happening within this church

- And recognize in our own day and age the warning signs of Jezebelism
 - Making our way through the first part of verse 20, we looked at a few things concerning Jezebel
- First, we recognized that this Jezebel mentioned here in Revelation is likely not this woman’s real name
 - But rather a way for the Lord Jesus to identify her
 - In one word Jesus gives the reader full understanding of who this woman was in His eyes
 - It would be like us today calling someone a Benedict Arnold – you would know immediately we were talking about a trader
 - Or calling someone a Hitler
 - The point is that whoever this woman was, she embodied the spirit of Jezebel
 - because her character and conduct was similar to that of the notorious Jezebel of the OT
- We also recognized last week that the spirit of Jezebel
 - Was one of worldly tolerance – not biblical tolerance, which is better known as the longsuffering of Christ
 - But worldly tolerance that accuses those that hold to the righteousness of Jesus of being intolerant

- Because we speak up and stand for Biblical teaching without compromise.

We also learned that the spirit of Jezebel is one of self-proclamation

- This woman called herself a “prophetess”. Claiming to be a divine mouthpiece of God
 - And then spewing unbiblical doctrine of Satan
 - They were doctrines that caused the people of God to sin
- I’m reminded of the words of our Lord in Matt 18
 - **6** “Whoever causes one of these little ones [**believers**] who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. **7** Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!
 - This Jezebel woman was causing God’s people to sin
 - And this warning of Jesus would have been good for her to read

There were two doctrines she was seducing the people with and teaching them.

- Verse 20 gives them both to us:
 - **20** 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.”
- The first one we looked at last week – committing sexual immortality
 - She was teaching that committing sexual immorality was acceptable for God’s people
 - We pointed out last week that this was an all inclusive word
 - for all types of sex outside the Biblical confines of marital sex between one man and one woman till death do we part
- The second doctrine she was seducing with and teaching God’s people was the eating of things sacrificed to idols
 - It was the same error pointed out to the church in Pergamos
 - **4** But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality”

Now, there are a couple ways of looking at this. Both are valid and both may be what the Lord is intending to communicate.

- First, and I would say most commentators hold to this view point.
 - That when Jesus condemns them for eating things offered to idols
 - That He is speaking of their partaking in idol worship
 - That when they ate meat sacrificed to idols, that they were in accord with that idol
 - Paying homage and tribute to that false deity
 - In essence they were breaking the first commandment “you shall have no other gods before Me”
- Remember, that this city was filled with what were called trade guilds
 - Similar to what we have today with our labor unions
 - But in their day, if you did not belong to a particular trade guild
 - You couldn’t work; you would not be given any jobs and therefore you couldn’t earn any money
 - And within these trade guilds was all types of debauchery
- Each guild would often have feasts that were required to attend for all who belonged to their guild
 - At which they would conduct themselves in all sorts of lewd behavior and sexual orgies
 - And each guild had their own pagan god that they would sacrifice the meat to
 - And then they’d partake in the meat – paying homage to the false deity
- And this woman, Jezebel, was telling the people to go ahead and participate in the immoral ceremonies;
 - go ahead and eat the food sacrificed to the idols.
 - It’s fine. It’s compatible with Christianity. There’s liberty is Jesus!
- But, in reality, what they were doing was worshipping the idols and then coming and worshipping Jesus
 - They would go to the feast of the idol and then come to the table of the Lord
 - And many commentators believe what Jesus is saying here is
 - When you eat the meat offered to idols in these feasts,
 - You are really worshipping a false god

This is something hear a lot of in my work outside the church.

- Costco sells what is labeled as 'halal' meat.
 - We don't sell too much of it anymore, but there are still a few locations that offer it
 - And it's marked as 'halal' – indicating that it has been slaughtered in a specific way according to Islamic law
 - And that at the time of slaughter,
 - The name of Allah – the false deity of Islam – is pronounced
 - Either by shouting it out or by blessing
- Since Costco sells it, we have had many well meaning Christian attempt to rebuke Costco for selling it
 - Many times sighting Acts 15:29 where the Apostles write a letter to the gentile churches in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia to help them in their witness to the Jews
 - In verse 29, the Apostles give the advice, “that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. (Acts 15:29).
 - This passage is instructions to the gentiles so that they wouldn't ruin their ability to witness to the Jews
 - Not a command from Jesus about idol worship
- But be that as it may, I realize that the heart of a Christian in attempting to rebuke a company like Costco for this is born out of a love for God
 - But it is unfortunate that because the verse is misused,
 - it just makes the Christian look a bit silly in the eyes of a company that is only looking at this meat as the best meat and nothing else
 - These types of rebukes would be for God's people; not secular companies who don't hold to biblical principles

That all aside, what I believe Jesus is driving at here in Revelation

- Has more to do with the stumbling block placed before the children of God
 - Than it does with idol worship (though I would not completely rule that out)
 - What do I mean?
- I think what Jesus is so displeased with is that this self-appointed 'prophetess'

- She is telling God's people that it's okay to partake in all these feasts and eat the meat
 - Because there is liberty in Christ
 - BUT...in doing this very thing
 - The exercising of their liberty is causing other Christian's to sin

Let me illustrate. Turn with me to 1 Cor 8. which deals directly with meat offered to idols

- Let me set a scene to help correlate with our passage to help us understand
 - Imagine if you will, that you are at someone's house – at a party
 - And the host is serving a steak
 - You lick your chops and can't wait to dive in
- And you're there in mixed company – there are Christians and non-Christians
 - And the host tells the guests – this meat is prime meat. The best at the market
 - And that it was offered to an idol. It was offered to Allah
- Now, to the informed Christian it's understand that an idol is nothing in the world and so it doesn't effect your conscience to eat it
 - BUT...there is there, in the mixed company, those that the bible calls 'weaker' brothers who are offended at such a thing
 - And to them this is pagan meat and want nothing to do with it
 - And maybe there are non-believers that are watching to see what you as a Christian will do with meat offered to idols
 - Testing the sincerity of your convictions
- Now what do you do?
 - Jezebel was telling the Christians to just eat; it's not a problem. There's no compromise. You can eat and be okay. Do what you want
 - But what should be done?
 - That's where 1 Cor 8 enters in

1 Cor. 8:4 “**4** Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one. **5** For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

- This is what the world tells us. This is what the Thyatirans are being told. There are many gods and many lords in existence (when we know there really isn't)

6 yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*. **7** **However, *there is not in everyone that knowledge***; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat *it* as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. **8** But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

- Look, eating certain foods don't make us better to God; nor the abstaining from certain foods make worse
 - It's just meat – Paul is saying

But here comes the warning to believers - **9** “But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours

- We do have liberty in Christ – in areas that God does not specifically call sin, there is liberty
 - We have been set free by Jesus from the entanglements of the law and traditions of man
 - We are no longer under the law; we are under grace.
 - And unless the bible says that something is sin; there is grey
 - And we are left to discern and chose
 - ““But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.”
 - Who are the weak brothers here?
 - They are the ones who believe there is an issue with the meat.
 - To them, eating this meat is a sin because it's been offered to an idol
 - But we know that an idol is nothing; it's just meat
 - But when our liberty becomes a license to do whatever we want;
 - Not caring about the effect on the brethren; even the legalistic brother – which the weak brother is here in the text
 - Then there's a problem....

10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple...

- this is exactly the problem we are seeing in Thyatira....
 - “will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?”

- Won't your partaking of the meat lead this brother into some sort of personal compromise?
 - To you, the meat is nothing – and truly it's not
 - But to this weaker brother it's an issue and your partaking of it...
 - As he's watching you, he's effected by your example
 - Verse **11** “And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? **12** But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. **13** Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.”
 - Look, we can quibble about the meat, but there is one thing that's very clear here
 - And that is, that there are certain things in this life that we willingly refrain from doing
 - Because of it's effect on others
 - This is part of our liberty. We have the liberty to refrain and bless another
 - Give an example
 - When is this right. Give context

Look at Chapter 10 “**18** Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

- Talking about the priestly offerings of Israel when the meat was offered to Jehovah
 - And
 - **19** What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? **[of course not, is the answer]**
 - 20** 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. **21** You cannot drink the cup of the Lord **[speaking about the communion cup which is talked about in the previous verses]** and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. **22** Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? (in terms of knowledge)

Now watch - **23** All things are lawful for me, **[that is, all things that are not sin]** but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.

- **24** Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being*.
 - **25** Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; **26** for "the earth *is* the Lord's, and all its fullness."
- **27** If any of those who do not believe invites you *to dinner*, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake.
 - You're invited for dinner, you're trying to win them to Christ – you're not going to make an issue over the food

28 But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," [**obviously testing you**] do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth *is* the Lord's, and all its fullness." **29** "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. [**God wants us to care about the effect of our choices on others here**] For why is my liberty judged by another *man's* conscience?

- It's not my conscience that's bothered. An idol is nothing. There's nothing wrong with the meat
 - But not all things that are lawful are not expedient; they are not beneficial; they are not helpful
 - Not all things that we have the liberty to partake in are edifying to another
 - We are not to seek our own; but the well being of others within our liberties
- **30** But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for *the food* over which I give thanks?
 - Now watch this, because this is the big lesson
 - **31** Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

"All of a sudden I realize that cultural compromise is rooted in the failure to be committed to the glory of God" (D. Hocking)

- This means that some times, to be committed to the glory of God – I don't eat the meat
 - Is that because it's a sin to eat – no
 - It's because of the Christian, or even the non-Christian – if they make an issue out of it
 - They may think that I'm giving honor and homage to that idol
 - So therefore I abstain from exercising my liberty for the sake of the conscience of those for whom Christ died

- Lest they take my example and it make them compromise their conviction – even if they are a weak brother
 - And by doing so, they believe they are committing sin before the Lord
- So often, in our selfishness, we use our liberty in Christ as a license for all freedoms
 - Never considering that it could result in causing another to sin
 - We just go about our lives happy
 - And again, Paul says in chapter 8: **12** But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ”

Now, I understand there are many branches to the conversations that 1 Corinthians brings up

- The liberties of the Christian walk and the exercise of it is a very lengthy conversation
 - And we will deal with those when we teach through the books of the Corinthians
- For the purposes of this morning, my desire is only to help bring clarity to what Jesus may be saying here in Revelation

What was happening in Thyatira?

- Jezebel is teaching the people to not care about the conscience of others
 - And in doing so, causing them to make their brethren stumble
 - And in the end, they themselves sin against Christ
 - And it all boils down to the lack of bringing glory to God
- I believe some were making it an issue of idol worship.
 - I also think that when Jesus talked about not eating thing offered to idols
 - That He may also be talking about our misuse of Christian liberties
 - In the name of freedom

This woman – the one with the spirit of Jezebel –

- She was a self-imposed authority figure in this church
 - Teaching the people of God that sexual immorality was compatible with Christianity

- And teaching them that their Christian freedoms were a license to do what they wanted
 - Regardless of what offenses and stumbling blocks it may introduce into the lives of other believers

Not only was she teaching these things, but she herself was practicing them as well.

- **21** And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.
 - As we talked about last week, Jesus' longsuffering gave this woman plenty of time to repent
 - And get her life back in order with the Lord
 - But since she didn't – since she refused...
- **22** Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed,
 - What an interesting twist of events
 - This harlot who used her bed to commit adultery
 - Will be cast into a bed of sickness
 - As one said "Her bed of whoredom will be changed into a bed of anguish."
- "Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. **23** I will kill her children with death,
 - The children she spiritually bore through her seduction and whoredom the Lord will kill if they do not repent either
 - This isn't a reference to biological offspring
 - But those who follow her unbiblical teaching.
- Converts
 - I find it interesting the description given: 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)

Verse 23 "...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."

- What is the purpose of this type of discipline?
 - What's the purpose of this type of judgment against this woman and her followers?
- The judgment of God often serves two purposes:
 - to chasten or eliminate the one being judged;

- and to also serve as warning to others who might otherwise follow a similar path (Deu. 17:13; 19:20; 21:21).
- The one who led the children of Israel to worship other gods was to be stoned so
 - “all Israel shall hear and fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you” (Deu. 13:11).
 - Also, we see in the church, when judgment fell upon Ananias and Sapphira, “great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things” (Acts 5:11).

24 “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. **25** But hold fast what you have till I come.

- I love that there’s an end to holding! Until He comes

26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— **27** ‘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”

Power over nations:

- Really it’s Jesus who has the power
 - This power can only be given to the overcomer by One who has such power
 - This authority is not innately the overcomer’s, but is *granted* to him by virtue of his *identity with Christ*,
 - Because 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)

; **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.””

- Rev. 22: **16** “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”