

- *Thyatira continued*

Jesus puts a command, a description, a word of commendation and a complaint to the church at Thyatira. We have learned to expect next an exhortation to repentance, a promise to those who conquer, and an appeal to hear Jesus' voice. And this is indeed what we find.

1. *Jesus appeals to the church to break away from loose living (v)*

1. **Jesus appeals to the church to break away from loose living.** Jesus lets the followers of Jezebel know that their situation is dangerous. ²²*Look, I am throwing her onto a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her I am throwing into great tribulation – unless they repent so as to turn away from her works.* The woman-teacher is becoming very ill. The present tense ('I am throwing . . .') means that sickness is just taking hold of 'Jezebel' or that something is just about to happen. The verb 'throw' suggests that it is sudden and unexpected. Her disciples will also experience great trouble at any moment. But Jesus leaves open the possibility that there might be last-minute repentance. The teacher herself is beyond repentance. The woman's disciples (her 'children') will even literally die. ²³*I will strike her children with death . . .* This does not happen very often but the sickness of 'Jezebel' has already started. It should convince the church-members at Thyatira that the threat to his church was so great that the risen Lord Jesus Christ was about to take the life of those damaging his people. When it happens the church will know how searching is the gaze of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the hearts of all who claim to be his people. ²³*I will strike her children with death, and all the churches will know that I am the One who searches people's intentions and thoughts, and I will give to each one of you according to your works.* We come to our first salvation by faith in Jesus plus nothing! Faith alone is the starting point of the Christian life. Yet God expects godly actions from us and takes notice of our works – the way we live and what we do that is good or bad. 'I will give to each one of you according to your works', says Jesus.

- *The woman-teacher Jezebel is becoming very ill*

- *Her disciples will also experience great trouble at any moment*

- *The teacher herself is beyond repentance*

- *We come to our first salvation by faith in Jesus only*

- *But God expects godly actions from us*

So Jesus puts his appeal to the Christians who have not followed the ways of 'Jezebel'. ²⁴*But I am speaking to the rest of you in Thyatira, everyone who is not holding this teaching, all those who do not experience the "deep things" of Satan (as they say). I am not throwing upon you any other burden.* ²⁵*Just do this one thing: hold on to what you have until I come.*

- *To the rest in Thyatira he says 'Hold on!'*

When a church is in difficulties, they should not give up too easily! Things were in a bad state in Thyatira. Jezebel and her followers boasted they had deep understanding but John says they are experts in the 'deep things of Satan'! But Jesus does not say, 'Walk out!' He says, 'Hold on!' 'Hold on to what you have until I come.' It does not mean that the church should go on wrangling for ever, and we may note the implications of Acts 13:46. Sometimes one has to abandon persistent unbelievers. The early Christians eventually broke with Jewish unbelievers in the 'church' of Israel. But it is not a thing that should be done too lightly or quickly. One must hold on

- *Soon Jesus will come and give them an answer to their crisis*

2. Jesus holds out a promise for us (vi)

- *Those who stand firm and powerfully defeat Satan will affect nations for the Lord Jesus Christ*

until Jesus 'comes' with clear guidance – or with rescue. The Christians in Thyatira who were loyal to truth and godliness were told to hold on – to go on proclaiming the truth and the life of the gospel. Soon Jesus will come and give them an answer to their crisis.

2. **Jesus holds out a promise for us.** ²⁶*To the person who overcomes, who keeps my works to the very end, to that person I will give authority over the nations.* ²⁷*He will shepherd them with a rod of iron, as when the vessels of the potter are broken into pieces, as I also have received authority from my Father.* ²⁸*I will give such a person the morning star.* There were wonderful promises to those who stood firm for the Lord Jesus Christ: they will affect nations for the Lord Jesus Christ¹. If they will defeat Satan where they are, then God will honour them and they will defeat Satan powerfully ('with a rod of iron') elsewhere in the world, breaking his wicked influence into pieces. The work of Jesus in conquering all his enemies will be shared by the Christians. If they overcome, they are taking part in Jesus' overcoming. If they will resist Jezebel, the 'morning star' will arise. The 'morning star' is Venus. It was a 'star' that was often visible as the daytime was coming close at the end of the night. If the Christians of Thyatira will resist Jezebel, soon the great blessings of the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ will appear in their lives and in their church.

¹ 2:26

3. Jesus asks us to hear his voice (vii)

- *Not so easy – requires effort*

3. **Jesus asks us to hear his voice.** ²⁹*Anyone who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.* It is easy to be religious. It is not so easy to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even with the Bible in our hands we can miss the voice of God. Some have no ears! They are not the people of God at all. Some do have ears; they are God's people and God's voice comes to them, and there is a possibility of their hearing what he says to them. But we must make sure we do indeed hear the voice of God. 'Anyone who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says.'

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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