

# KEEP THY HEART

A Bible-Based Devotional

Turn to: **Revelation 2:18-29**  
“**Jezebel's Judgment**”

If you were to visit the church at Thyatira, I imagine you would find a church that was bustling and active, growing in size, having a lot of programs and community outreach. Yet I think you would also notice the overall immodesty in the church, as well as a general spirit of inappropriate flirtatiousness. Let's look at five points from this letter, from which we can learn how to fight a spirit of immodesty in our churches today.

**1: God's knowledge (v18-19).** God's **eyes like unto a flame of fire** represent, I believe, the piercing gaze of Jesus Christ, Who sees every motive, thought, and reason behind what we do. He sees what goes on behind the scenes at churches and throughout the world. He sees a person's day-to-day life, not just what they choose to present on social media. He sees what you watch on TV or on the computer; He hears which radio stations or songs you play. But just as we need to be careful about what we see and hear, we must be careful where we go; Jesus' **feet are like fine brass**, remaining perfectly pure. Would you walk into that bar if you could see Jesus Christ standing beside you?

**(v19)** While Jesus' omniscience can be intimidating if we're doing something wrong, it is an awesome thing when we are living right. He **knows our works**, even about every cup of cold water we give to a disciple, which might take us only 10 seconds! And He knows this church's **charity** and all the good they were doing, as well as their special **service** projects for God, and He knows that this church was actually *growing* in that regard.

**2: God's intolerance (v20).** Yet God reminds this church that they **tolerated** a wicked woman in authority; she was probably pushy, but leadership must learn to say "no" to the Balaam's and **Jezebel's** of the church. False teachers are sneaky, **calling themselves prophetesses** or prophets; isn't it hard to argue with someone who says, for example, "I know beyond any doubt that God has called me to lead

this youth group"? How do you argue with that? She was probably quite knowledgeable in the Bible. I would imagine that there were some in the church who should have been teaching who had shirked their duty, leaving an open gap for Jezebel to fill. When we don't do what God calls us to do, whether that be witnessing or serving Him, we leave a void that Satan is eager to fill. If God wants you to teach a class and you refuse, you may be helping to open the door for Jezebel; if God wants you to witness to a person and you fail to, you may be providing an opportunity for Balaam to proselytize them.

Notice that her strategy is the opposite of Balaam's from the previous church. Balaam started with the "soft stuff" and then led people to worse things; but Jezebel starts with the outright evil, **seducing God's servants to commit fornication**, and then throws in the more nebulous **eating of things sacrificed to idols**. Each strategy is more effective with different people. Jezebel likes to "shock" people with incredible evil so that they will feel like the gray zone is safe by comparison, becoming desensitized to lesser evils.

Do we tolerate sin and false teachers? Do we just ignore wolves? Do immorality and sin bother us, or are we okay with it? Those with leadership responsibility should especially push back against the tide of indecency.

**3: Warnings (v21).** God **gave her space to repent of her fornication**; maybe a guest speaker came and addressed these issues. Maybe a few godly women and men in the church confronted her with their concerns. Sadly, though, **she repented not**. God gives all of us second chances; don't let it be said that you did not repent of, for instance, watching bad movies or having a lying tongue. Those who go to hell do not go without any warning; instead, they must voluntarily ignore a host of flashing lights and sirens and must run through many roadblocks along the way.

**4: Judgment (v22-23).** Often, when someone stubbornly refuses God and chooses to sin, God allows it, and they get what they asked for; but God can make it loathsome to them (Numbers 11:18-20). Perhaps "**they that commit adultery with her**" were people in the church who others did not suspect, like some deacons or Sunday School teachers. Maybe God sent **great tribulation** in the form of disease;

yet still, the threat is **except they repent of their deeds**, meaning that the door to repentance is *still* open until the end.

**(v23)** Her children may refer to those who followed Jezebel's example; and the phrase "**kill...with death**" may seem redundant, but I think this refers to pestilence, or very death itself. **All the churches would know** and hopefully fear so they wouldn't commit the same sin. Jesus is not a passive witness to sin, but more like a detective—He **searches**. And He can search as deep as the **reins**, which I take to mean the part of you which makes simple decisions for or against God, including the motivation. And then these sinful decisions can bubble up to the **hearts**, where they become increasingly messy and complex. One day, God will have a great payday (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

If you are unsaved, are you ignoring God's payday? As good as you may appear to some people, God has seen and written down everything that you have done, including what you have thought, and even the reason behind why you thought it. Not even the smallest mite will fail to be exacted in hell (Luke 12:59, Psalm 10:15), which is why we need the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ so desperately.

**5: Reward (v24-29)**. Even in a worldly church, there are usually members who **do not have this doctrine** and who want to live godly lives. And thankfully, these had not **known the depths of Satan** and were probably clueless regarding just how awful the situation was. Perhaps some members in the church were engaged in witchcraft; but fornication and worldliness are also "the depths of Satan" (Proverbs 2:18-19; 7:27); and Satan's sea is dark, murky, and confusing. It's nice that for the godly people, Jesus **puts upon them none other burden**; sometimes, good church members don't really have the authority to correct the situation; and so we can't set our expectations *too* high for what influence we'll have. But we can do our part.

**(v25)** Correcting the bad doesn't mean forsaking the good; i.e., this church should keep up their liveliness and growth and charity and works, just with a spirit of modesty and godliness. You don't need to show bad movies to make youth group exciting. You don't need fog machines and immodest musicians to manufacture an ungodly sort of energy. Our energy should come from the joy of the Lord

(Nehemiah 8:10), not from a carnal love for evil things.

**(v26)** True Christians will **keep Jesus's works unto the end**; they don't fall away from the faith. The speed of the fastest runner won't do him any good if he quits the race (Matthew 13:20-21). And what is one of the rewards for those who **overcome**? They are given **power over the nations**; this benefit is interesting in the context of morality. You may be morally better than Jezebel or Balaam; but if you are saved, then as a future ruler, it is important to avoid even the very *appearance* of evil.

**(v27)** Have you ever played the game "Rock, paper scissors" as a child? On the count of three, if you choose the rock by making that shape with your fist, you win against someone who chose scissors, since the rock can "pound" the scissors; scissors can cut paper to win, and paper can wrap around a rock to win. Well, here, Christians are in effect choosing "**iron rod**," and the unsaved are choosing "**clay pot**." And just as obviously as an iron rod wins over a clay pot, so Christians will rule and prevail over the unsaved. Sadly, the unsaved become hard and brittle, like clay; and when they break, it is "without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1; see Psalm 2:9). Perhaps an uprising attempt will take place early on during the Millennium, but Christians with Jesus Christ will put down any rebellion. And this "rod" we are given is straight from heaven's artillery, as Jesus gives us what He **received of His Father**.

**(v28)** I.e., Jesus Christ **gives us "the morning star"**, which is really Himself (II Peter 1:19, Revelation 22:16)! Jesus encourages us with our bright future, as the morning star tells of the coming dawn. **(v29)** Hear what the **Spirit** of God says; don't follow the immodest spirit of this world.

Immorality and immodesty are problems in our modern churches. Remember that God has the password to your computer and phone and media accounts. Realize that He is *intolerant* of sin in the church, contrary to today's over-emphasis on tolerance. He gives us warnings to get right, but if we ignore them, judgment will come. But if we live for Him, our reward will be well worth it!