

1. Introduction

- a. As with Pergamum, this letter indicates that the church was compromising in their moral behavior
- b. Thyatira
 - i. Smallest city of the seven yet it's the longest letter
 - ii. A working class town especially known for its trade guilds or unions
 - iii. You belonged to a guild based on your profession and membership required you to practice worship for the god of your occupation
- c. The church in Thyatira would have recognized the use of imagery: bronze, blazing eyes, iron, clay—because these were some of the various guilds
 - i. They were a working class, urban church
 - ii. What does this letter say about our work and faith?
 - iii. Our work is incredibly important, but Jesus is subtly digging at the church for having abused their work—having compromised to "get ahead" or "go along"

2. The Danger of Work

- a. Jesus faults the church for tolerating Jezebel
 - i. The real Jezebel was an Old Testament figure known for marrying Ahab and then systematically wiping out the religion which worshipped YahWeh (see 1 Kings 16:31, 18:4)
 - ii. She was known as someone who tried to lead the people of God astray
- b. In this church, the figure of "Jezebel" was essentially saying "be tolerant" in regards, most likely, to the people's occupation—that they could engage in the temple practices related to their trade guilds in order to advance their career
 - i. The teaching would have been something like this: "You're saved by faith alone, so it doesn't matter if you compromise a little for your job. You need your job to survive, pay the bills, and support your family—so it's necessary to bend a little and participate in these other activities if it means you get to keep your career."
 - ii. V. 20 uses the word "beguiling" because this compromise had been so subtle—it looked to the church that they were doing everything well, but they had actually begun to use their jobs for what it could bring them.
 - iii. The church was taking in the cultural practices most likely as it related to their stated profession
 1. It involved situations which would have morally compromised the believers (indulgent parties, temple worship, etc.)
 2. To not do this would have meant suffering in their workplace
 3. They had lost their distinctiveness (holiness) when they would just go along with the crowd

3. The Destiny of Work

- a. Jesus offers them an alternative to the compromising behaviors of this "Jezebel"
- b. Look what he promises: ability to rule (rather than be ruled by your job)—to get real significance from something greater than your work and therefore put your work into the proper place of priority in your life
- c. In order to grasp this, you need to see where you're going in the eternal sense
- d. We need to grasp the eternal significance of our work
 - i. Simone Weil: "Workers need poetry more than bread. They need that their life should be a poem. They need some light from eternity. Religion alone can be the source of such poetry. Slavery is work without any light from eternity, without poetry, without religion. May the eternal light give, not a reason for living and working, but a sense of completeness which makes the search for any such reason unnecessary."

- ii. After all, the new heaven and earth means we aren't just whisked away to an ethereal space, but rather the city comes down to earth and recreates everything
 - iii. This means your job will be transformed and there is most likely a cosmic significance to your job
- e. And he says he will give them no other burden (v. 24)
 - i. Are you burdened by your work?
 - ii. The need to perform and then be recognized for it
 - iii. Jesus here knows that we will have the burden of our work (i.e. going to the temples in order to get ahead) or we can take on him (whose yoke is light—see Matthew 11:30)
- f. Lastly, he offers the morning star
 - i. Scholars have been puzzled by what this means—and they most often relate it to the Old Testament promises of a savior
 - 1. Jeremiah 23:5 “when I will raise up for David a righteous branch”
 - 2. Jer 33:15—branch from David
 - 3. The word can be translated as “shoot,” “branch,” or, more interestingly “dayspring”
 - ii. There was going to come someone who would spring day light on the world because he was the light himself!
 - 1. What is the morning star? More appropriately, who is the morning star? Jesus!
 - a. Isaiah 14:12—refers to Lucifer, son of the morning
 - b. The most beautiful angel, when fallen, because the biggest evil
 - c. But, in Revelation 22:16, Jesus says “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star”
 - d. Jesus takes back this title and then he offers himself to you in contrast to the temptations of the “Jezebels” of our job
 - iii. He's the one who will come in the darkest time of night in your life and cast light on it (John 9:5, I am the light of the world”
 - 1. That's when the morning star appears in the east (especially Venus) right before the sun rises
 - 2. No matter how dark it gets—do you see the morning star giving you hope?
 - 3. Jesus got the darkness when he was on the cross (literally and cosmically) so that we get the morning star (hope!) without needing to sleep with the Jezebel of our work