

July 7, 2019

I Know Your

Revelation 2:18-29

2:18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

2:19 “‘I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.

2:20 But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

2:21 I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.

2:22 Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works,

2:23 and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.

2:24 But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden.

2:25 Only hold fast what you have until I come.

2:26 The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations,

2:27 and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

2:28 And I will give him the morning star.

2:29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

1. Christ's Eye

Christ appeared to the church of Thyatira in the form of “eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.” (verse 18). The “eyes like a flame of fire” shows that Christ “searches mind and heart.” (verse 23) Christ sees the church and knows its faith and deeds, just as in every message to the seven churches the words “I know ...”

Christ sees the progress of the church in Thyatira and praises it. “I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.” (verse 19) It says “love and faith and service and patient endurance,” but “the patience” comes from “hope” as 1 Thessalonians 1:3 says, “work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope.” The church of Thyatira was praised in the “faith, hope, and love,” as the church of Ephesus was praised in “the works (of faith), the toil (of love) and the patient endurance (of hope).” (Revelation 2:2) In the case of the church of Ephesus, they retreated from “the first love,” but in the church of Thyatira, the actions that came from faith, hope and love “became superior to the first.” It was making progress.

The church on earth is “the church in fight” that struggles against its own sins and the evil of the world. It is “the church on the way” and “the pilgrim church” aiming at heaven. No matter how respectable church, there is no perfect church in all of “faith, hope, and love.” There is a chip, a weakness, and short-comings somewhere. Some churches are standing firmly in “faith,” but some churches are losing their “early love” to Christ like the church of Ephesus. Some lose “hope” and are discouraged in difficult times like the church in

Smyrna. The Church of Thyatira had a weak side in keeping the “truth of faith” and allowed the false teachings to spread into the church. Thus, it is the church on earth that has various problems. None is perfect.

So, there are those who say, “The church is not different from the world, and let the church as a secular organization,” but that is not the case. Christ looks at the church with his warm eyes, but when there is impure thing in the church, Christ looks at it hard. Because Christ really loves the church, he can not keep silent about seeing the church poisoned by false teachings. The Lord does not say that we do not repent of our sins and say that “we are sinners anyway,” and that we will not stay in them. It is true that “the church is a gathering of sinners.” But in that case “sinner” means “one who is repenting of sin, being forgiven and sanctified from sin.” A “sinner” means a person who falls in front of the holy God as a “guilty sinner.” “Because of being a sinner anyway” is a word of “defiant or so-what attitude” and that you do not really know that you are a sinner.

Christ looks at us with a warm eye. But at the same time, even our hidden thoughts are overlooked by the “eyes like a flame of fire.” If you really believe in him, you would like to repent, live in the joy of forgiveness, and grow into faith, hope and love. Even if there is something missing, if you can move forward by the grace of the Lord, he will be glad and will have a warm eye for it.

2. Christ’s Foot

Christ also has “feet like burnished bronze.” The “feet like burnished bronze” represents the fact that the foot will overthrow the enemy, that

is, the powerful judgment of Christ. As Psalm 60:12 says, “With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.” God will judge those who have stepped on the righteous. He will tread with his foot.

Here is written the judgment of a false prophet called “Jezebel” and who obeys the teachings. Just because this false prophet is called “Jezebel” does not mean that it is a woman. “Church” is a female noun in Greek, so it is called “her” in pronouns. The nation is also treated as a woman, and it is the same as America being called “her.” For the song “God Bless America Again” I learned recently sings,

God bless America again
you see all the troubles that she’s in
Wash her pretty face dry her eyes and then
God bless America again

So, the words “her face” and “her eyes” are used for the United States. The church is “the bride of Christ” and has been called “the mother of believers.” The church swears devotion to Christ and feeds the believers, but another woman is against the church and eats the believers. So, she is called in the name of Jezebel, an evil woman in the Old Testament.

It is written from 1 King chapter 16 to 2 King chapter 9 how Jezebel was a bad woman. Jezebel was a princess of Sidon, and she married to Ahab a king of Israel. At that time, she brought the Baal, a god of her country, to Israel, and promoted Baal worship. King Ahab has a weak point, and it was Jezebel who actually moved the royal palace. One day King Ahab wanted a field of Naboth next to his royal palace and tried to buy it. King Ahab became displeased because

Naboth rejected it. When she asked the king why he was moody, he spoke the circumstances. Then Jezebel put Naboth on the crime of cursing God and the king, and killed him and made the field his own. The Bible writes about Jezebel: “There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited.” (1 Kings 21:25)

Jezebel sifted power as the king’s mother, even when King Ahab died and his son Joram became king. The false prophet who were in Thyatira, like this Jezebel, were ruining the church in a jealous and forceful way. “Those who commit adultery with her” (verse 22) are those who have abandoned their allegiance to Christ and are accepting the teachings of Jezebel. “Her children” (verse 23) are the leaders and successors of this division, and in the days of the Old Testament, as Jezebel was judged, they also would be judged by Christ.

In accepting the false prophet Jezebel’s teachings, it seems that there has been some ritual equivalent to the church’s baptism. What is called “the deep things of Satan” (verse 24) seems to be that. Christ made no special request to the believers who were influenced by this teaching but eventually joined it. He says, “Only hold fast what you have until I come.” (verse 25) The Lord asked for keeping firmly the truth of the faith. For those who mislead, destroy, and step on the church, Christ is stomped on his “burnished bronze feet”. At the same time, Christ teaches believers to have “burnished bronze feet” that stand firm in the truth of the faith.

3. Our Footworks

There have been many times in the history since that the Thyatira

church has been misled by the false teachings. The same thing still exists. The church on earth is the army of the Lord who fights for the truth, and the believer is his soldier. Ephesians 6:14-17 contains the “the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the readiness given by the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” We need to be equipped with these things. “Preparation of the gospel of peace” reminds us of the words, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” (Romans 10:15) “The readiness given by the gospel of peace” refers to bring the gospel as a messenger soldier.

And at the same time, “Wearing the gospel on your feet” means that we believe in it, understand it, and live it before we preach the gospel. Footwear is necessary for walking and running, and in the Bible the life of faith is illustrated by the words, “walking” and “running.” So, “wearing the gospel” is also what the Bible says, “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.” (Philippians 1:27) If our lives are so different from what we say in the mouth, it does not mean “living the gospel” or “live worthy of the gospel.” We want to be a person who speaks the gospel not only by words but also by daily walks.

Roman soldiers have worn sandals for the battlefield when they fought. I thought that they could not protect their feet enough with sandals, but when crossing a river, sandals would move more quickly than boots, so it was better to move around quickly. Just as sandals fit perfectly in soldiers’ feet, as the gospel leads us all our actions, we will be able to keep the truth through in our spiritual battle.

There is no time when the power to pull us away from the truth

works so hard as we do today. “The son of Jezebel” happens and disappears, disappears and happens and tempts us. But Christ sees all the falsehood and steps on it with his feet. He is “the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.” Keep our eyes on this Christ and keep standing in the truth by him.

(Prayer)

Holy God, even though we are not fit for your holy eyes, you have seen us through the eyes of the Lord Jesus and have given us the grace to stand before you. We can come humbly in front of the Lord because of his grace. We can find comfort in the Lord’s knowledge of all of us. Keep us in this grace. We pray this in the name of the Lord Jesus.