In the middle of believe *is a lie, and they war against each other. Are you going to believe the TRUTH or a lie.*

Toni Hart

REVELATION CHAPTER TWO-Verses 18-29
THE SEVEN CHURCHES-PART FOUR
A Look at the Church of Thyatira: The Church in Idolatry, condoning Jezebel and Pagan Practices

Handout Six
Prayer Study 405
First Love Ministries of Perry, Georgia USA

THYATIRA

Thyatira was formerly known as Semiramis. Without going into a lot of detail, (which is unnecessary for this study, and which is historically unproven, and which contains many different historical variations), I will show why the name Semiramis is an important clue to understanding the philosophy of Thyatira. Semiramis (Ishtar, Asherah, Isis) was the mother and later wife of Nimrod. Nimrod, the son of Cush and the grandson of Ham and the great-grandson of Noah, was a very wicked man. Most Bible scholars believe he was behind the building of the Tower of Babel. Many secular and Biblical scholars also believe that he invented polytheism to corrupt his subjects' faith in the God of Genesis and invented Free Masonry and the occult. It is said that he practiced divination, idolatry, and cannibalism. The word *cannibalism* is derived from combining the name of Nimrod's uncle, Canaan, with the name of the demon god he worshiped, Baal. Nimrod was the first man to seek power for its own sake, and he used his power to rule harshly and ruthlessly. Semiramis is also known as the Queen of Heaven, a Babylonian concept, and was equally as wicked as Nimrod. Their child was Tammuz. (see Micah 5:6; Genesis 10:8-12; 1 Chronicles 1:10, Ezekiel 8:14-15, Jeremiah 7:18, Jeremiah 44:15-27). With such a name as Semiramis, it is no doubt that this city was steeped in occultic practices and idolatry.

The city of Thyatira in New Testament times was a frontier fortress. Today is a small town, Akhisar, of about 30,000, one hundred fifty miles from Istanbul. It was a center for trade guilds and was known for its dyes. In fact, Lydia, the first documented Christian convert in Europe-she was led to Christ by Paul-was from Thyatira, but was living in Philippi as a saleswoman, selling purple dyed cloth, which only the wealthy could afford.

This particular letter is the longest of all the seven letters. It has the distinction of being the first of the seven letters to have a reference to the 2nd Coming of Christ. Prophetically, the Church of Thyatira represents the Medieval Church or the Church in the Dark Ages when there was much corruption and immorality and buying of church offices and putting children into high church positions in the Roman Catholic Church. Many of the

Popes in this period had and bragged about having illegitimate children and insisted that all men must obey the word of the Papacy and opposed the scriptures being translated into the common language. In fact, those brave men who did translate the Bible were put to death. They also crushed any opposition, during and with the Inquisition and the Crusades, and burned many people at the stake, without a trial, simply because someone accused them of something, an accusation that often was blatantly false.

Thyatira was not a center for emperor worship or the Greek and Roman gods. The local hero god there was a god of fortune telling. The church at Thyatira was not experiencing persecution but did have some problems within the church.

18 And to the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church) in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, Who has eyes that flash like a flame of fire, and Whose feet glow like bright and burnished and white-hot bronze:

Thyatira means *odor of affliction*. This first verse uses imagery- *eyes of fire, feet of bronze*-that symbolize judgment.

19 I know your record and what you are doing, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your recent works are more numerous and greater than your first ones.

Surprisingly the Lord finds much good to commend the saints of Thyatira. Their walk is good in love and faith and service and endurance, and they are improving. That sounds pretty good to me!

20 But I have this against you: that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess [claiming to be inspired], and who is teaching and leading astray my servants and beguiling them into practicing sexual vice and eating food sacrificed to idols.

This woman Jezebel *called herself* a prophetess. She is rebuked by the Lord for teaching the people to commit sexual sin and to eat food sacrificed to idols. Thyatira was a commercial community with many trade guilds. Membership in these guilds was necessary if one wanted to have a successful business, he had to be a member of one of these guilds. Unfortunately, membership in the guild required that the member attend the guild's luncheons, which often met in one of the temples in town and always included meat that had been offered to idols. To not attend would cut one off from guild membership. Jezebel was urging the people there was no need to cut themselves off from the guilds most probably because she wanted to protect her own business interests. The sexual vice could be literal but is more probably referring to spiritual infidelity.

This is not the Jezebel who married King Ahab, gave Elijah fits, and died centuries before this time of John's writing Revelation. Most likely this is a Jewish idiom, such as we would say something like, "*He is the real McCoy!"* or "*He is a Romeo*!" Most likely this woman was not named *Jezebel* but showed the characteristics of the previous Jezebel.

The Jezebel of the Old Testament was deeply involved with Baal worship. This demonic power is still in the world today and is even a great influence in things happening in the United States. We do not have time to look at modern Baal worship now, but this would make a fascinating study.

At any rate, in order to understand the problem at Thyatira, we have to briefly look back at the characteristics of a *Jezebel*. Jezebel was the daughter of the king of Sidon. This king had murdered his predecessor so he could seize the throne of Sidon. He arranged the marriage between Ahab and Jezebel to seal a profitable trade alliance between the two nations, Israel and Phoenicia. Jezebel set out to exterminate the prophets of Yahshua (1st Kings 18) and to bring in Baal worship (1st Kings 16:30-33). She, therefore, ushered in the worst period of time in the Old Testament. Her ultimate aim was to control the nations. Elijah wrecked her plans by having a show-down with the prophets of Baal against the One True God.

You read many times of the failure of Jewish kings to remove the high place, which were often surrounded by groves of trees carved to look like phallic symbols (Deuteronomy 16:21). The Jews never had their temples on top of hills. Only pagan temples were built on top of hills or mountains.

Jezebel's main characteristic is a desire to control. To do this, a Jezebel, which can be male or female, starts off trying to gain favor with leadership, often using flattery and seduction of some kind, but in the end tries to discredit pastors and others in authority. A Jezebel subtly seeks positions of power, authority, influence and favor. This spirit is motivated by an insatiable desire for power and control. Sexual seduction is often the tool that Jezebel uses to bring down leaders. Many Jezebels are homosexuals or adulterers. I believe that an Absalom Spirit is very similar, if not identical, to a Jezebel Spirit. Reverend Joel Budd from Tulsa, Oklahoma, lists the following attributes of the Absalom Spirit, which are identical characteristics of a Jezebel:

a. An Absalom Spirit is rooted in a basic distrust and resentment of one's authority-either justifiable or exaggerated (2nd Samuel 13:20-21).
b. An Absalom Spirit is rooted in a basic independence and self-dependence (2nd Samuel 13:20).
c. An Absalom Spirit is rooted in camouflaged bitterness/unresolved disappointments, fears, anger, etc. (2nd Samuel 13:22).
d. An Absalom Spirit is rooted in pride (2nd Samuel 14:27-30).
e. An Absalom Spirit is rooted in rebellion (2nd Samuel 14:27-30).
f. An Absalom Spirit is rooted in a deep-seated desire to be close to/next to/in a

place of favor with the one in authority, but not with purity of heart (2nd Samuel 14:30-33).

g. An Absalom Spirit is rooted in impressing and stealing the hearts of the people who are under authority in order to eventually "dethrone" and replace the one in authority (2nd Samuel 15:12).
h. An Absalom Spirit manifests in self-promotion (2nd Samuel 15:1).
i. An Absalom Spirit manifests in opportunism/self-advancement at the expense of others (2nd Samuel 15:2).
j. An Absalom Spirit manifests in divisiveness, antagonism, and negative criticism of authorities to promote self (2nd Samuel 5:3).
k. An Absalom Spirit manifests in false humility (2nd Samuel 15:5).
l. An Absalom Spirit manifests in religious hypocrisy and hype, "…while offering sacrifices…" (2nd Samuel 15:12).
m. An Absalom Spirit manifests in betrayal (2nd Samuel 15:12).

Agents who promote the Jezebel or Absalom Spirit:

1. **Ahab the Provoker:** Ahab is not weak but has insecurities and is easily seduced and will allow Jezebel to come in and take over, usurping his authority and allowing Jezebel to do his dirty work. He is usually contentious and argumentative and hostile towards God's true prophets, especially towards the Elijah's of God who turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. In most cases, Jezebel cannot operate without an Ahab.
2. **Eunuchs, the servants of Jezebel:** A eunuch is a castrated male or virgin or celibate male. Matthew 19:22 says that some are born that way, some have been made that way by others, and some choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom. In the case of Jezebel, however, the connotation of eunuch is evil. They carry Jezebel's messages, are "spies" in meetings, look for Jezebel's interpretation of scripture, warn him or her of impending harm or negative talk about him or her, are Jezebel's spiritual children, and often ask Jezebel for permission to do something in the church instead of asking the spiritual authority whom the Lord has place there. They lack real spiritual strength.
3. **Baal:** Jezebel's god is Baal, which is a god of prophetic divination, which, of course, is witchcraft. Baal is the son of Dagon who was known as the god of fertility or erotic lust. Baal is associated with the horoscope, fantasy, and Mother Earth. He was the god of the Philistines. The golden calf that the children of Israel pulled from the fire was called Baal.
4. **Ashtoreth:** Ashtoreth is the goddess of sex and the goddess of war. This is a strong connection between the Ashtoreth spirit and homosexuality. The worship given Ashtoreth was often accompanied with human sacrifice, the burning of incense, sexual rites, gross sensuality and lasciviousness including homosexual

acts and cult prostitution.

5. **Joram:** Jezebel's son, Joram's, name means "*the exalted one.*" He is a type of those who exalt themselves against God. He was killed by Jehu.
6. **Ahaziah:** Another of Jezebel's sons was Ahaziah. He represents those who steal our possessions or our spiritual inheritance. He also was killed by Jehu.

Jehu was the one who destroyed Jezebel. His name means "*Jehovah is."* His father was Jehoshaphat, whose name means *"Jehovah judges."* His grandfather was Nimshi, whose name means *"one who sets free."* Combining this heritage of Jehu, we get *"Jehovah is the one who judges and sets free."*

21 I gave her time to repent, but she has no desire to repent of her immorality [symbolic of idolatry] and refuses to do so.

I have hardly ever seen a person with a Jezebel spirit repent. Bondage to this spirit is an evil form of slavery and so I feel deep sorrow for them.

22 Take note: I will throw her on a bed [[a]of anguish], and those who commit adultery with her [her paramours] I will bring down to [b]pressing distress and severe affliction, unless they turn away their minds from conduct [such as] hers and repent of [c]their doings.

The Lord takes a Jezebel in a church very seriously. He had given Jezebel time to repent. Since she did not, He will bring sickness and distress and severe affliction to not only her but also to her followers.

23 And I will strike her children (her proper followers) dead [thoroughly exterminating them]. And all the assemblies (churches) shall recognize and understand that I am He Who searches minds (the thoughts, feelings, and purposes) and the [inmost] hearts, and I will give to each of you [the reward for what you have done] as your work deserves.

These children are Jezebel's followers. This death refers to the second death or eternity in Hell. The Lord searches our entire beings and knows everything, even the thoughts and intentions of our hearts, and we will be awarded accordingly.

24 But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not explored and known the depths of Satan, as they say—I tell you that I do not lay upon you any other [fresh] burden:

Not all of the church members at Thyatira had fallen under the spell of Jezebel. These last verses are especially for these believers.

25 Only hold fast to what you have until I come.

This is the first place in the letters to the Churches where there is a reference to the 2nd Coming. All four of the last of the seven churches will have a specific reference to the coming of Christ.

26 And he who overcomes (is victorious) and who obeys My commands to the [very] end [doing the works that please Me], I will give him authority and power over the nations;

Jezebel's ambition is to have power over all the nations. Jesus gives this only to those who overcome and walk in obedience to the very end.

27 And he shall rule them with a sceptre (rod) of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, and [his power over them shall be] like that which I Myself have received from My Father;

J. Vernon McGee says that this verse refers to the Millennial Reign of Christ, when believers will rule and reign with Him.

28 And I will give him the Morning Star.

Jesus is the Bright and Morning Star (Revelation 22:16). He is our hope and what we all who are Christians want. Titus 2:13 tells us, "*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."*

29 He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the [Holy] Spirit says to the assemblies (churches).

The children of Jezebel will not hear, but those who walk in the Spirit will hear.

In Thyatira, we see:

- **Name of Church:** Thyatira, according to *A Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names,* means *odor of affliction.* Therefore, it is interesting to note that the Lord said that He would bring down those who did not turn from Jezebel to pressing anguish and severe affliction.
- **Title of Jesus Christ:** Jesus uses His title, Son of God, and expounds on His power to judge the nations with the symbols of judgment, eyes like a flame of fire and feet like brass.
- **Encouragement:** The Lord commends them for six things:
  a. Their works: (James 2:14-18-*What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*)
  b. Their love: (John 4:7-8-*Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*)
  c. Their service: (Colossians 3:22-24-*Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.)*
  d. Their faith: (Hebrews 11:6-*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.)*
  e. Their patience: (1st Thessalonians 1:2-4-*We give thanks to God always for you all making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.)*
  f. Their improvement: (Philippians 3:13-14-*Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.)*
- **Correction:** The Lord corrects this church in one major area: They tolerate Jezebel who seduces them to commit sexual immorality (which could be physical and spiritual) and to eat things that had been sacrificed to idols.

- **Consequences for not repenting:** The Lord will cause sickness to come upon her and will bring great tribulation and spiritual death to her unrepentant followers.
- **Rewards for repenting (overcoming):** The Lord will not put on those who have not followed Jezebel any other burden and will give these overcomers power over the nations and the morning star. Who is the Morning Star? In Isaiah 14:12, Isaiah refers to a morning star, which had been cast to earth, an obvious reference, backed by other scripture, to Satan. Yet Jesus in Revelation 5:5 unmistakably identifies Himself as *the* Morning Star. The morning star outshines all others. Satan was a beautiful creation before the fall and was *a* morning star, but Jesus, God incarnate, is *the* Morning Star. We know that Satan is a deceiver and a counterfeit to the real thing. There are other similar expressions in scripture that have to be read in context to understand who is being spoken of. For example, Peter in 1st Peter 5:8 compares Satan to a lion going about seeking whom he can devour. Yet Jesus is referred to as *the* Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5). Similarly, Satan comes as an Angel of Light (2nd Corinthians 11:14), but Jesus is the Light of the World (John 9:5).
- **Conclusion:** ***He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*** (Revelation 2:19)

In summary, so far, we have looked at four churches:
Ephesus, which the Lord called to devotion and first love to Him, not just doctrine; Smyrna, where the church was under great persecution; Pergamos, where they were called to stand fast against the world; and finally, Thyatira, where the Lord rebuked their pagan practices, and specifically had this against them, that they tolerated Jezebel.

Symbolism of Chapter Two of Revelation
Kevin Conner

2:7	**Tree of Life**	Eternal Life (Genesis 3:22)
2:7	**Paradise**	Third Heaven, Holiest of all (2nd Cor 12:2-4)
2:10	**Crown of Life**	Eternal Life (James 1:12)
2:13	**Satan's seat**	Satan's throne of power (Rev 13:1,2)
2:17	**Hidden Manna**	Word of God by the Spirit (John 6:35)
2:17	**White stone**	Priestly Revelation (Exodus 28:15-28)
2:17	**A new name**	Priestly Revelation, Insight (Ex 28:21-29)
2:22	**Bed of adultery**	Spiritual lust, fornication (James 4:4)
2:27	**Rod of Iron**	Power over nations (Psalm 2:9)
2:28	**Morning star**	Morning light, new day (2nd Peter 1:19)