



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Revelation 2:18-29 Revelation

“Vice Among The Virtues”

Revelation

TRANSCRIPT

Our text this morning is Revelation 2:18-29. This is the Lord’s fourth letter of the seven letters to the seven churches, and this is the longest of the letters, the message to Thyatira. Revelation 2 beginning with verse 18.

“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

‘The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:

“I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have *this* against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit *acts of* immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed *of sickness*, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received *authority* from My Father; and I will give him the

morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ ”  
May the Lord bless this reading of His Word. Let’s bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for the time we have together. Thank You for this text of Scripture that gives us warnings, admonitions, and also a great encouragement. We pray that we would receive both well, that You would instruct us, build us up in the faith, and that is possible only by your grace. And we know that You do that by opening our hearts to receive the truth. And so, Father, we pray that You would do that. We cannot really open our own hearts. We cannot perceive these things in our own strength and ability. But by Your grace every child of God, every believer in Jesus Christ has a new heart, has new capacities, has the ability to understand things; and a guide, a teacher in the Holy Spirit, to open them up to us, to illuminate the page of Scripture and give us understanding and show us how to apply all of this to our lives and where these things apply.

And so, Father, I pray that as we study together, You would direct our minds in that way and show us where these issues apply to us and enable us to change and be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ and be like Him. This is a work of the Spirit. It’s a spiritual work altogether, and yet we do have our responsibilities, and I pray that You would enable us to act upon them.

Father, we pray not only for our spiritual condition. We pray, first and foremost for that, but we also pray for our material needs, and there are many of those on the prayer list, and there are many. We pray for them. We pray for their health. We pray for their emotional condition. You know the needs of each individual, Lord, physical, spiritual, emotional, in all areas of life, Father, we are needy people. But some are in very difficult circumstances, and we pray for them. Others whose names are listed here that need Your mercy and Your healing grace, and we pray for that. We pray that You’d give encouragement in the meantime. And we know that Your will for each one of us is according to perfect wisdom.

And so, Father, we pray that we will all yield to that gladly, whatever it may be. We know that our future is certain in the Savior and You have made it so. We give You the praise for that and pray that those who are afflicted in this present time would take great comfort in that, and the things that we’ll read about and study this morning,

the great hope that we have for the future. That puts life in perspective for us, and I pray it will do that for these and many others, Father, some whose names aren’t listed.

You know our needs completely. We pray that You’d bless. Give employment where people lack it. Give strength in the midst of hard circumstances and in the home or in the workplace, or in school, or wherever it may be. We know that there are families that have strife and struggle within the home. We pray that You’d give help and wisdom there. We pray for all of these things, Lord, and look to You as the sovereign Lord to bless, and we know that You can and will. We take great comfort in that. And we pray these things in Christ’s name, Amen.

We come to a text this morning that challenges us about what it means to be a Christian. Not how we become a Christian, but what it means to be a Christian. What we are as believers in Jesus Christ is stated simply in one word: Saints. That’s how Paul identifies Christians in his letters. All Christians are saints, all of us. And saints are holy ones, sanctified ones, people set apart to God and are, therefore, to live for God. We are to be holy. Paul expresses that in 2 Corinthians 6:17, where he quotes the prophet Isaiah, who said, “Come out from their midst and be separate, and do not touch what is unclean.”

Well, we want to touch oftentimes, and there is a lot that we can touch. Paul and the prophet were not giving us a call to asceticism. They were not saying, “Get ye to a nunnery,” or “join a monastery.” We’re not denying all contact with the world in that command not to touch. We’re in the world. We’re not to retreat from it. The gospel is not at all, in my opinion, promoted by withdrawing from the world. We are to be engaged with the world. But the question is how much? And that’s a question that we must continually be asking ourselves. We are to be holy. So how far can we go in accepting the world’s fashions and standards and practices without becoming like the world, without becoming worldly and compromising in our faith?

Christians are always under the pressure to conform and compromise. That’s always the challenge. It’s always been the challenge. It was the problem for Israel. We see that particularly in Elijah’s day. In his famous confrontation with the 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, he accused the nation of hesitating between two opinions, between worshiping Yahweh and worshiping Baal, between compromising their faith. And we face the same issue today. Are we going to follow the Lord or

live for the world? Compromise and conform. It’s a perennial problem. The church at Pergamum faced it and that’s the issue that Christians in Thyatira faced, as well. Some did not meet the challenge well. That’s the issue addressed in this fourth of the seven letters: moral compromise, moral conformity.

Well, this is the longest of the seven letters, which is interesting. One of the older commentators, R.H. Charles, pointed out that the longest letter is addressed to the least important of the seven cities. Thyatira was located about 40 miles southeast of Pergamum. So the postman delivering these seven letters begins to make his circle as he heads south from Pergamum to deliver the fourth letter. Thyatira was located between two valleys, so it was in a good position for trade. In fact, it was known for trade. It was a commercial city, a city of merchants and craftsman, which had a lot of trade guilds, which were very much like fraternities or unions today. The British archaeologist Sir William Ramsay says, “More trade guilds are known in Thyatira than any other Asian city.” Inscriptions have been found there of guilds of wool workers, linen workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leather workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave dealers, bronze smiths, and so on.

The guild for dyers is particularly important to us because Lydia may have at one time been a member of it. Lydia was from Thyatira. She was, you’ll remember, the first European convert under Paul’s ministry. Lydia was in Philippi with a group of women listening to Paul preach at the riverside when Luke tells us in Acts 16:14, “the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.” Well, we’re told that she was “a seller of purple fabrics.” She was a successful businesswoman and may have been instrumental in establishing the church in her hometown of Thyatira.

By the end of the first century, when John is writing these letters to the churches, Thyatira had a vigorous church, though probably a small church in the smallest and least important of these seven cities. And yet, small though it was, the Lord speaks of it and speaks to it in the warmest words and in His longest letter, which shows that God’s values are different from man’s values. No one is small to our Lord. No one is unimportant to Him. He gives the most attention here to those who are the least significant by worldly standards. But the Lord’s standards are not the same as the world’s.

Now the length of the letter makes it unique of the seven. So does the title the Lord uses. This is the only place, interestingly, in the book of Revelation where Christ is called the Son of God. He’s called that other places in the New Testament, but in this book, where we would really think that that would be a very prominent title, this is the only place in the book where we find it.

John says He has “eyes like a like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze.” Well, that means His feet are stable and He is absolutely stable in all things and inflexible. But it also may suggest with these feet of burnished bronze that He is able to crush all opponents. His eyes “a flame of fire,” are able to penetrate, are able to see into the most distant and dark places. I think the eyes of our Lord must have been very special, must have been something to see them and to look into them. And there are texts in the New Testament that suggest that.

For example, in Mark chapter 3, Jesus is in the synagogue and there is a man in the synagogue who is to be healed, and there are those in the synagogue, the religious leaders, who are there to see if the Lord will do it and are going to criticize Him if He does do it. And Mark tells us that He looked around the synagogue and was grieved at the people’s hardness of heart. And they must have felt the piercing gaze of those eyes, those eyes of fire, just as the disciples, on the other hand, must have sensed the great warmth of those eyes later on in Mark chapter 10, when it says He looked at them and gave them words of encouragement.

Now there must have been something very impressive about our Lord’s eyes. But there’s something very impressive about them here in the vision that John was given and the way the Lord is described to this letter to the church of Thyatira. They are “like a flame of fire.” They see with penetrating insight and perfect justice. He saw what was happening in Thyatira. He knew clearly what the church was doing.

And it was doing some very good things. He commends it in verse 19, where He praises the people of Thyatira, the Christians there, for their “love, faith, service and perseverance.” Four virtues. The first two, love and faith, give the motivation of Christian activity. Saints live holy lives because they’re motivated out of love and faith to do that. Well, the second two, service and perseverance, give the results that flow from that motivation, that desire to please our Lord. Not out of compulsion that we do that. We don’t serve and we don’t persevere because we must and we feel it’s

a duty. It is a duty. I don’t deny that. But that’s not the great motivation in a child of God. It’s love and faith. He sees all of this in this church and he adds that their “deeds of late are greater than the first.”

Now, this was a small church, as I say, but it understood that the Christian life is a life of growth. And we are either advancing in the faith or retreating in the faith. We are either progressing or regressing, and this church in Thyatira was progressing. The great church at Ephesus was backsliding while the small church at Thyatira was moving forward. Ephesus, you’ll remember, had left love, while Thyatira was increasing in its works of love. John Stott likened this church to “a beautiful garden in which the fairest Christian graces blossomed.” Well, that’s true, but there was a weed in the garden and the Lord, who sees everything and doesn’t miss anything, saw it.

There was a vice among the virtues and it was a terrible one. A woman, a self-styled prophetess was in the congregation exerting unusual influence over some there. The Lord calls her “Jezebel.” I doubt that that was her actual name, but that’s the name that He gives her because she resembled Ahab’s wicked queen. Jezebel in the Old Testament sponsored Baal worship and led Israel into apostasy. King Ahab was, in some ways, evidently a strong man. He was a warrior. He liked going out into battle. We find him doing that. In fact, he dies ultimately in battle.

But when it came to the home, it came to being the head of the home, he was a weak man. He lacked moral conviction altogether. And that only served to strengthen his wife. He didn’t oppose her, and so if he didn’t oppose her ideas, she only increased in strength and influence in the home and in the nation because she then very soon became the spiritual guide of the northern nation and led it into idolatry by combining the worship of Baal with the worship of Yahweh, with Baal as the chief god. And there’s really no compromise. You cannot worship Baal and Yahweh at the same time. You cannot worship the Lord and Mammon. You cannot serve two masters. You can serve one. You may give lip service to two. But Baal worship was chief in the northern kingdom.

And something very similar was happening in Thyatira, where this woman was leading some into compromise with the world so that we could say what Elijah said to Israel in Jezebel’s day. They were halting or hesitating between two opinions. Now,

not all were doing that. Not all followed her. Most were growing. Most were advancing in the faith. In verse 24, the Lord commends those who did not know “the deep things of Satan,” which is a description of her teaching. He commends them. They were not following that. But the church was tolerating her. We’ve seen that problem before in these letters and you see it in other places, in Corinth, where they tolerated the man who was in sin with his stepmother. It’s easy to do that. It’s easy to avoid the confrontations that are sometimes necessary in relationships, and they were tolerating her and not exercising discipline. They were, in some ways, as weak and spineless toward this new Jezebel as Ahab was toward the old one.

As a result, many were being led away into sin. The Lord describes how “she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit *acts of immorality* and eat things sacrificed to idols.” Now that’s probably to be understood in the context of the local situation, a context that was probably rather common in the ancient world and that is to be understood in connection with the many trade guilds in the city, the unions in the city, which required participation in pagan religious practices for membership. It wasn’t just a union of people like we would have today serving the interests of the laborer, for example. This was more than that. It had a religious tone to it, and what these guilds usually involved was a banquet dedicated to some pagan deity, which by the end of the evening, the banquet degenerated into an orgy. Christians, of course, couldn’t participate in any of that. They couldn’t toast a false god. They couldn’t do that even if it was a mere formality, a mere ceremony in the union, the trade guild, and the feasts that they would have. Oftentimes, they probably didn’t take these things seriously. It was just a formality.

But nevertheless, Christians couldn’t engage in that and certainly couldn’t engage in the immorality that followed. Now that was very clear, but still it presented a big test. It presented a challenge to these people because membership in a guild was necessary in order for a person to practice his trade. So they faced a choice, being loyal to the Lord, which would result in being out of a job. They could make that choice or they could compromise. They could conform.

Now, I can sympathize a little bit with that because somewhere after my freshman year in college, I got a job as an airplane mechanic, which is still funny to me as I think about because at the time I probably didn’t know the difference between

a wrench and a screwdriver. But when you know the boss’s daughter, you can get those kind of jobs. And that was the case with me and a friend of mine. And so I got this job as an airplane mechanic. And I remember the day that he hired us. He said, “Now, the workers down there are going to invite you to join the union. You don’t have to do that. Legally, you’re fine.” So it wasn’t halfway through the first day when I started getting invitations to join the union. They weren’t friendly invitations, either. So after a few days of getting those invitations, I made a decision and what do you think that was? I joined. And then after the summer, I went off and went back to college and I joined a fraternity. So I know all about joining and conforming. But that was when I was young.

This was a little different from that, though. In Thyatira, it was a person’s livelihood that was at stake. It was a person’s life. A man had to feed his family, and that was the real test here. It came down to that. It was a matter of life and death. And then a woman in the church, Jezebel, began to offer advice and give her counsel. Maybe she cited such texts at 1 Corinthians 8:4, where Paul says that an idol is nothing at all. From that she reasoned that it wasn’t necessary to lose a job over this. I mean, idols are nothing. Paul tells us that. You can salute Apollo as lord because you know that he isn’t. Idols are nothing. He’s no god. He’s nothing at all. And the party that follows that won’t hurt you. We’re justified and free, and so go along with the guild. Practice its idolatry and keep your job. And I’m sure that when people heard that, to some it was a great relief. They’ve got a reason not to put themselves in a dangerous position.

So this is what she was teaching. She was teaching Christians to compromise. She was assuring them that they could sin with impunity. That they could, quote the Proverbs, take fire to their chest and not be burned. That’s the essence of so much of the temptation that we get. That’s the essence of Satan’s temptation, isn’t it? “You will not surely die,” he tells them. So this is what she was saying. And evidently, she was justifying all of this from the Bible because she claimed to be a prophetess. She claimed to speak God’s Word.

She called her teaching “deep things.” That’s how they are described in verse 24. But the Lord gives the true description of them by calling them “the deep things of Satan.” Now it says in verse 24, “the deep things of Satan, as they call them.” I



don’t think that means that she was saying, “I have deep teaching of Satan that I want to present to you.” She was saying – and I think this is what the text means – that they said they were the “deep things.” Probably the deep things of Christ. But the Lord is giving the true meaning here when He says, “No. They’re the deep things of Satan.”

Now we see in all of this how Satan attacks the church. He has different methods. And they really don’t change over the centuries. He’s clever. He’s cunning. He basically sticks to the same plot and plan, though. We find this all through the book of Revelation. He applies pressure from without, from the hostility of the world, through persecution, through the threat of death. But if that fails, then he’s got a more subtle, cunning way of working, and that is within the church, by sowing seeds of error. And here, the teaching of Jezebel allowed people to rationalize their behavior and compromise their faith in order to avoid the hard decisions and make the sacrifices that we are sometimes called upon to make.

You can just imagine how people justified their actions. They took Bible verses out of context and they argued from the tortured reasoning of Jezebel’s teachings. And then they said something like, “Well, anyway, man’s got to provide for his family. A man has to eat. I have to live, don’t I?” But the answer to that is no. You don’t have to eat. You don’t have to live. You have to obey. And if you’re a saint, if you’ve been called out of this world, you’ve been called to a holy life, and you will live a holy life.

Many in Thyatira did. Not everyone fell. But as I said earlier, everyone seemed to tolerate this. Everyone seemed to let it happen. They didn’t exercise the church discipline that they should have and, as a result, the problem continued and it would only spread. A little leaven leavens the whole lump, and Paul tells the Corinthians that. They don’t deal with that little bit of leaven, cast it out, then it will only stay, and increase, and spread, and affect the whole lump. And so because they weren’t dealing with it, the Lord says that He’ll deal with it. And not hastily.

The Lord is never impulsive in His judgments. We’ve said it many times, need to say it many times. The Lord is long suffering. The Lord is patient. He was patient with Jezebel of Thyatira. The Lord says in verse 21, “I gave her time to repent.” That is He gave her time to turn away from and disavow this false teaching that she was spreading, this instruction that led to compromise with the world. He gave her

opportunities. He gave her time to repent. But she wouldn’t. Evidently, I take it from that that someone in the congregation did speak to her. Someone did exert some kind of influence and rebuke her in the past, but she would not listen.

The Proverbs tell us that fools despise instruction. And it is foolish to presume upon the patience of God. Because while it’s true God is long suffering, God is patient, His patience has an end, and it will come to an end, and it will pass and punishment will certainly follow. And it did for Jezebel. The opportunity for repentance ended and the moment of retribution arrived, verse 22, the Lord says she would be thrown onto “a bed.” Now, the Greek text only has the word “bed.” But the idea is certainly, as many of the translations put, “a bed of sickness, a bed of pain.” And probably with the implied contrast to a bed of adultery. She refused to repent and continued to commit adultery, so the bed of sin would be exchanged for a bed of sickness. “God is not mocked,” Paul says, “for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.” And immorality often reaps a lot of sickness, physical diseases. And that was probably true in this case.

Still, the Lord holds out mercy to her and the others because the verse ends, “unless they repent of **their** deeds.” The Lord is slow to anger. He loves to show mercy. In fact, discipline is designed to lead to repentance. When there is a refusal to respond, discipline only becomes more intense. So in verse 23, the Lord warns of worse things to come for Jezebel’s children. Now, these aren’t literal children of hers, but her spiritual offspring who follow her antinomian teaching. Verse 23, “And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.”

So just like the sons of Ahab and Jezebel who were killed in a great purge, so too these people were doomed to death if they did not repent. And if they didn’t they would be made an example to the churches to remind Christians that Christ requires holiness from His saints. And He knows. He knows what’s in our hearts, and He knows what we do in the secret things of our life. He sees everything. His eyes are “like a flame of fire.” He sees into the most distant and dark places. He searches the hearts, He says. He knows our thoughts and motives, as well as He knows all of our deeds, and He expects us to live righteously. Not like the world. Not to be

conforming to it. To be living a different life, even if that means making very difficult choices and hard sacrifices. But remember who we serve. Remember who this One is: the beginning and the end. He’s the sovereign Lord. He can provide for us when the world shuts us out. He’s greater than the world. We need to know that. We need to realize that and we need to walk by faith and be obedient and trust in Him.

I know that’s hard to do because we can face what seem to be insurmountable obstacles in life. So I confess that’s an easy thing to say and it’s very difficult when you are faced with such a challenge as these Christians in Thyatira were. And so facing that, Christians sometimes do fail, and some in Thyatira did fail. The spirit in all of us is willing, but the flesh is weak in all of us. And it was true there in Thyatira.

But Christians, God’s children, live holy lives. That’s what characterizes us. That’s what John tells us in 1 John 5:19. He writes, “We know that no one who is born of God sins.” We know that those born of God do sin. In fact, earlier in the book he says, “If you say you have no sin, you deceive yourselves and the truth is not in you.” So we know we sin. But what he means is we don’t go on sinning. We fail, certainly. We fail every day and we do that in thought and deed. And genuine Christians can fall into terrible sins. They do. And often persist in them for a time. But there will be repentance in a true child of God. And the bent of our behavior will be toward obedience, not disobedience. That’s what characterizes a Christian. That’s what characterizes a saint: holiness even unto sacrifice. And history’s filled with people who remain faithful in very trying times and suffered for their faith. We have it in this book. In Pergamum, there was Antipas, who lost his life for the faith.

And this is true with so many. Remaining faithful to the very end. And there were many in Thyatira who did that. And the Lord encourages them in verse 24, “But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you.” The promise of putting no other burden on them raises a question other than what burden? Probably it means no burden besides the one of Christian service that’s already upon them. The wording here is very similar to Acts 15:28-29, where James and the apostles tell Paul that the Gentiles will have no other burden placed upon them other than these four that they give. And so probably the prohibitions that they

give are they’re not to eat meat that’s sacrificed to idols and they’re not to commit immorality.

That’s probably the meaning here. The Lord was saying, “I’m not going to lay extra rules on you,” as though by putting extra rules on you, that will hem you in and make you more righteous. That’s not the way the Christian life works. He’s saying, “Just stay faithful to what I have given you in the New Testament.” Stay faithful to the instruction of the apostles. The Lord doesn’t weigh us down with lots of rules and regulations.

In Matthew 11:30, you remember that great invitation that the Lord gives. He invites people to come to Him, the weak and the weary, and to take His yoke upon them. And His yoke is not heavy. It’s not a great burden. In fact, He says it’s easy and it’s light. It’s a yoke. I think that’s important to notice. And that means there are principles of conduct that we must follow, but it is light for those motivated by love for Him, for those who have trusted in Him. Love gives joy in obedience and the Holy Spirit gives the power to make that easy, to bear that yoke without difficulty.

So here He doesn’t lay excessive burdens on His people, as though that could keep them in line and keep them from straying. It doesn’t work that way. It never does do that. We’re not kept in line and caused to live a righteous life by adding rules to our lives. What He does is He encourages faithfulness in the way already laid out in Scripture. He reinforces that in verse 25 by exhorting them to continue in faithfulness to their Christian profession and rejection of the world. Continue to reject the world in terms of compromising in any kind of way. “Hold fast until I come,” He says. Those who do will remain faithful.

Those who do who overcome, as He puts it, are given a great promise in the last verses. First in verse 26 and 27, where Christ quotes Psalm 2 and the promise of ruling the nations. “He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;” The saints will share in the Lord’s messianic rule in the millennial kingdom at the end of the age. Now, Christ promised that throughout the Gospels. We have it, for example, in Matthew 5:5, that at least is the meaning of His promise where He says that the meek or the gentle “will inherit the earth,” where the kingdom will be established. It will be established between His second coming and the new heavens and the new earth.

In Matthew 19:28, He promised that in the future, in the – as He calls it – the regeneration, in that age to come when the earth will be renewed and glorified that they would rule with Him. And the same promise is given in Luke 22:30. His disciples, He says, would eat and drink at His table, which is the messianic banquet. And they will sit on 12 “thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel.” In 1 Corinthians 6:2, Paul says that the saints “will judge the world.” All of that is a promise of the kingdom to come. That’s the promise given here. It runs throughout the book of Revelation. In 5:10 of this book, John says that the saints “will reign upon the earth.” And then in 20:4, he writes that they will “reign with Christ for a thousand years.” So there is a promise of a thousand year reign on the earth in which we will participate with Christ in that glorious reign.

The Oxford commentator G.B. Caird, speaking of that promise in 20:4 points out that this can only mean that they will reign over a population other than themselves. In other words, that the saints will rule over the nations. That’s the promise given to the Messiah in Psalm 2:8. “Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance.” And here, that’s what Christ is promising to share with those who overcome, those who are faithful, to share in His glorious reign.

Well, He adds a second promise to that in verse 28. He says that He will give the overcomer “the morning star.” The morning star is Venus. In ancient times Venus was a symbol of sovereignty. Roman generals owed their loyalty to her. Roman legions would carry the sign of Venus on their standards. So some feel that this image of the morning star of Venus was borrowed from all of that, from the Roman standards and generals and customs of that day, which was a very familiar symbol of power to everyone of that day. And borrowed in order to signify that power over the nations will be given to the faithful. The Romans claimed to have it, and the Lord is saying, “No. It’s really going to be to you.” And so that’s certainly possible. That’s how some interpret that. But also we know from Scripture – and I’m more inclined to this view – that the morning star represents Christ Himself. In fact, later on in Revelation 22:16, Jesus says, “I am the bright Morning Star.”

So He may be giving the promise that those who resist the entanglements of the flesh, “the deep things of Satan” as they’re called, will have the deep things of the Son of God, of Christ Himself, who is the star, the Morning Star. They will share in the

things of Christ. They will share in His authority over the nations. They will rule with Him in complete fellowship in His bright light and in His holiness and His love. They’ll share in all of that. All of that is certainly true. We will rule the nations with Christ. That is the promise given to the faithful of Thyatira. The smallest of the churches, isn’t that interesting? To the smallest of the churches, this church that seemingly, from the world’s standards is the most insignificant, the least to be beheld. One that they could overlook because it’s so small. One that the nations wouldn’t think much about. He says to them, “I’m going to give you authority over the nations.” To this, the smallest of the church and the smallest of the seven cities.

Well, I think we can draw some appropriate applications from that. First of all, that you may be small. Your work may not measure up to greatness as the world counts greatness. You may be overlooked in many ways by the world, but don’t despair and don’t despise the day of small things, as Zechariah says. Be faithful where you are and with what you have. Live obediently. The small shall be great. The last shall be first. That’s the way God’s grace works. And in the meantime, He tests us, tests our character to bring us to maturity. Grace works with the small and the insignificant to make them great. May God help us to become strong by not hesitating between two opinions. By not compromising with the world and conforming to its standards. It’s so easy to do that. But we’re to be different from that. We are to come out from their midst and be separate, not to live apart from the world, to be in the world, but not of the world, and that’s what he’s recommending to the Christians of Thyatira.

Well, if you’re here, though, without Christ, we give you the invitation to come to Him. These are great promises here that are set forth for those that know Christ, those who have joined themselves to Him, promises of eternal life and glorious activity, reigning as kings on the earth, having life that never ends with a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ forever. Well, those are great promises, but they’re possessed by the believers. So if you’re here without Him and if you long for the things that He promises. If you long for eternal life, believe in Him. Trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He is the Son of God who became a man and died for sinners. He paid it all. There’s nothing to do but simply receive Him and the gift that He has. And may God help you to do that and help all of us to live a life conforming

to His Word and not the standards of the world. We can do that by His grace. Let’s seek that grace. Let’s pray.

Father, we do seek that grace. We ask You to bless us with the desire to serve You faithfully. Life’s full of challenges. It’s full of temptations to draw us after itself, and we tend to do that. We’re prone to wander and all feel that. But we can remain steadfast by Your grace. We pray for that. We pray for the ministry of the Holy Spirit within us, that He would strengthen us and cause us to walk faithfully and be pleasing to You and a good witness in the world. Pray these things in Christ’s name, Amen.