

March 18th, 2026

“The lie of exclusivity.” Revelation 2:18-29

“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.

“‘I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. 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. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. 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, 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. 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. Only hold fast what you have until I come. The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, 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. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

“The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.” We didn’t see the vision that John the apostle saw. We didn’t see this majestic and terrifying being who has eyes like a flame of fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. We didn’t get frightened as John did.

But... even imagining that such being speaks to us, and that He identifies as the Son of God, it really should put us on our tippy toes, it should make us pay full attention to what He is going to say. For these words written to the church in Thyatira are addressed to us as well.

And as usually, first the majestic Risen Lord Jesus acknowledges good things. “**I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.**” This is almost the opposite of what the Risen Lord commanded to write in the first letter sent to Ephesus.

They were praised for being faithful and not tolerating false teachings and teachers, but what they were lacking was love. This message is spoken to Christians who do care, who do love and serve and patiently endure. Good things. Many good and praiseworthy things. But something crucial is missing.

March 18th, 2026

“But [He continues] 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.”

We don't know whether that woman Jezebel was a specific person, or perhaps, that was just a way to refer to what she represented. It seems that what she represented was a particular sin that was manifested in that congregation.

It is believed that the issue that the Risen Lord is talking about was syncretism. That is a fusion, a mix of different religions and belief systems. One of the best-known sayings that summarize the very essence of syncretism is the famous: “Different paths up a mountain all lead to the same summit.” Meaning, that all paths lead to God, or that all religions lead to the same destination.

It sounds so friendly. So non-confrontational. So enlightened. So spiritual. Whatever you believe is fine. It's all the same. So inclusive. So superior compared with every other narrow set of beliefs that makes claims like: **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”** [John 14:6]

Sounds so cold. So narrow. So exclusive. In the Greco-Roman world, which was a gigantic melting pot of all the religions that existed at that time, to say that Jesus is the only way, or that the Triune God is the only true God sounded so arrogant. That would immediately put your listeners off.

And it isn't much different today, is it? This is one of the most often voiced arguments against the Christian faith: “So you think that only you are right and all the other religions, all the other ways to God are wrong, really? So exclusive and narrow!”

It wasn't pleasant to get such an attitude back then, and it is not pleasant to get it now. And we want to be on good terms with others. Some in the Thyatira congregation had embraced this sweet position, mixing the truth with lies. And the rest of the congregation had tolerated it. As if that was not such a big deal.

However, first, it is a big deal. For it is a matter of salvation. Of eternal life or condemnation. It is a very big deal. No one should ever be lukewarm when the lies are spread that endanger someone's salvation. And second, that belief that Christianity is narrow and exclusive is so wrong. So ridiculously wrong.

The Christian faith, the Good News, the Gospel is the most inclusive message that there exists. Without competition! It is the devil that confuses people and makes us believe that white is black and black is white. He is good at that.

And we are good at being deceived. But what then is the truth? The truth is that there are only two kinds of religions. That there are only two ways how someone may try to get to God or paradise, or wherever they want to get.

That's right. Only two. The first kind is all the religions and belief systems that tell you what you need to do to reach that ultimate destination, whatever it is. They don't get you there, they just give you the set of tasks that you need to complete.

March 18th, 2026

The rest is on you. So, who is responsible for your salvation, or whatever that ultimate destination is? Who? Yes, you! Always you. This is true for every religion. And only that exclusive group who manages to complete those tasks, only those who succeed, only those who are good enough, lucky enough, only they may hope to get there.

And it is so different with the Gospel. With Jesus. You are saved by God. By His grace. He comes and offers you salvation and eternal life. He has done all the doing and He offers salvation as a gift. Just accept it and it is yours. He offers it to everyone. No conditions attached, no hurdles to overcome.

Whoever you are, whatever you have or haven't done, whatever good or accomplished you are, or whichever way you have failed and made a mess of your life. The salvation is yours, as God's gift. To anyone who wants to receive it.

There are only two options, either you need to toil for your salvation, never knowing whether you will succeed or not, or - Jesus gives it to you as His gift. It is yours. Now. Whoever you are. So, which of these two is inclusive and which is exclusive?!

“Behold, I will throw her [Jezebel] onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead.” Unless they repent of her works...

We are quick to judge, condemn and give up on someone. Not so the Lord Jesus. Even in this situation He is still trying to bring the lost back. He uses what often works so well with us - afflictions and challenges of this life - to bring them to repentance and to save even those who had turned away from the Gospel and embraced falsehood.

“But to the rest of you [...] hold fast what you have until I come. The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron [...] even as I myself have received authority from my Father.”

The one **“who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze”** sees everything and is unshakable in His resolve. He sees the good in you, and He sees where you fail, where you compromise the truth, where you fear people more than you fear true God. But He never gives up on you; His voice keeps calling you so that you are made aware of your blunders and failures and can find a way back to Him.

For He wants everyone to make it. Everyone! Our Lord Jesus has prepared so much that He wants to share with you. To Him all authority is given in heaven and on earth, and He longs to share this authority and whatever it involves with His brothers and sisters. With you. Honestly, this is far beyond our comprehension. Nevertheless, the one who conquers will reign with Him forever and ever. That's His promise.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Hear His voice today, let His words enlighten you and show where you fail, let His Spirit help you to turn away from anything that displeases our God, so that with His help you can conquer and then reign in everlasting blessedness forever and ever. Amen.