

EP34 Revelation 2:18-29 P1

The Church at Thyatira

Overall Theme1: The Word of God Must Be Our Ultimate Authority.

Overall Theme 2: God Really Does Hate Religion—All the Unauthorized Things Done in His Name.

Let's read our text as adjusted for the **Code**.

Revelation 2:18-29

And to the angel of the church of Thyatira write: "The Son of God, who is now having eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like burnished bronze, now says this:

I know your deeds, and your *agape* love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late greater than at first. But I now have this against you, that you now tolerate the woman Jezebel, who is now calling herself a prophetess, and she now teaches and leads My bondservants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, and she has not now determined to repent of her immorality.

Behold, I now throw her on a bed, and those who are now committing adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches will choose to know that I am He who is now searching 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 now hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they now call them—I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless, what you now have, your commanded to hold fast until where I may come.

And the one who is now overcoming, and the one now keeping 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 NOW CASUSED TO BE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who is now having an ear, they are commanded to hear what the Spirit now says to the churches."

Historical setting

This letter to the church at Thyatira is the longest of the 7 letters (sorry about that). Unlike the other cities, we do not know a lot about this city. It is believed that the name *Thyatira* comes from the Greek words "*thea*" (a female deity or goddess) and "*tyrannos*" (a tyrant or ruler)—literally, "ruled by a woman." Clearly, this is not a coincidence given Jezebel's role.

All these little details, just like the name of Smyrna, sure can make one a believer in **Yahweh Adonai**, the sovereign God whose Spirit ensured every little detail was and is exacting and not to be overlooked or washed over—even down to the names of these cities. Amazing!

Of the 7 cities, Thyatira is considered the least important to Roman Asia. There was nothing remarkable about the city. It was a place of idolatry for sure, but it did not have any key temples or major structures worth noting. It was, however, on a trade route that connected Pergamum to Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, linking up with both Smyrna and Byzantium (modern Istanbul). It was the road by which the imperial post traveled.

Strategically, Thyatira acted as the first line of defense against any conquering armies heading to Pergamum. However, since it had no natural defense structures, as it sat in an open valley, all it really could do was slow down an invading army giving Pergamum a chance to prepare for the battle. They were, if necessary, the sacrifice, so-to-speak.

Essentially, Thyatira was a commerce town and the one thing it had in common with the other cities was the trade-guilds. More guilds have been identified from its ruins than any other city in the Roman province of Asia. Inscriptions have been found which mention the following: woolworkers, linen-workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leatherworkers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave-dealers, and bronze-smiths. One of its primary trades was the garment industry, specifically the dyeing of woolen goods.

We must not miss the significance of these trade guilds. If one wanted employment, then they needed to be a member of these guilds; however, what came along with membership was the required worship of the guild god. It was a mandatory part of the profession. This put a severe stumbling block before believers. Do they work and be responsible to provide for their family, or do they suffer? It is a terrible choice, but this dynamic plays into the core issue in this letter.

The principal deity of Thyatira was the ancient Lydian sun-God, Tyrimnos, who was identified with the Greek sun-God, Apollo. Tyrimnos was thought to be son of Zeus. He was represented figuratively (as Apollo) with rays of light beaming from his head and feet of bronze. Over time, the worship of Apollo/Tyrimnos was joined with the Roman Imperial cult—they were melded together.

Of lesser status in the pantheon of god's which they worshiped was Boreitene, a goddess identified with Artemis, the sister of Apollo. Thyatira also paid homage to the goddess Sambethe, who was a Sibylla (or a prophetess) who claimed to speak for Apollo. It is all "strangely" fitting to our story.

Eyes of Fire

Revelation 2:18

And to the angel of the church of Thyatira write: "The Son of God, who is **now** having eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like burnished bronze, **now** says this:

For those who have ever said that Jesus never directly said He was the actual, literal, Son of God, they just did not read far enough or careful enough. In **John 3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4** Jesus also referred to Himself as the "Son of God". So, this is not a new title.

Declaring that these are the words of the “Son of God” was like pulling out the ultimate trump card. This was a direct stab at both this church’s current source of authority, a prophet who claimed to speak the words of God, and at the sun-God Tyrimnos, who was believed to be the son of God, the son of Zeus. Jesus wants to cut through all the cultural clutter and just reset everyone’s perspective on things. He is the “**Son of God**” and there is no other!¹

First, this prophetess, Jezebel, used her spiritual gifting as the basis for her authority in the church, notwithstanding the fact that she was channeling a spirit other than the Spirit of God. Therefore, Jesus makes a clear distinction between His words and her words. His are the words of the “**Son of God**”. Thus, His words trump those of this prophetess, and His words are the ones to which they should give heed. Jezebel is just a vessel; in contrast, He is the source of ultimate authority! As we have learned, **the source matters, the source is everything!**

Second, Jesus made the point that although those in Thyatira believe that Tyrimnos rules the sun, He is the “**Son of God**” and therefore rules all of creation. He is now having eyes like a flame of the sun, which means that His gaze penetrates all things in judgment. Like the sun which shines upon the darkness, there is nothing that is hidden from His sight, all is laid bare before Him.² His gaze is so intense, like the flame of the sun, that it penetrates our thoughts even before they are formed in our minds, which by the way is an unfathomable concept. Nothing stays hidden from His penetrating eyes.³

Just think back to the time when Jesus walked on the earth. All the Pharisees tripped when they heard Him speak because He always knew what they were thinking. He always spoke to the secrets hidden in their souls and exposed those areas of darkness before all the people. And the funny part is that they never learned. They kept coming up to Him trying to trap Him, and He would absolutely humiliate them each-and-every time exposing their motives and shining light on their darkness.

His eyes, which are burning like the sun, also penetrate all things, and therefore miss nothing—not a thought, not a motive, nor even an intention of the heart. He sees it all.

Feet of Bronze

His “*feet like burnished bronze*” is a statement regarding His purifying judgment. It brings up the image of those furnaces that had to be dug out from the earth to forge bronze, since no man-made container could handle the intensity of the heat. Thus, with an intense heat and powerful force, He will stomp upon all that is needing judgment.

On-the-one-hand, this is not a comforting image to those who will undergo judgment; yet, on-the-other-hand, to the body that needs to be purified to remain faithful to the end, these are words of promise and **HOPE**, as the “**Son of God**” will personally intervene to preserve the church.

I know Your Deeds

¹ See *Isaiah 45:5, 6, 14, 21, 22, 46:9*

² *Hebrews 4:13*

³ *Psalm 139:2; 94:11; Isaiah 66:18; Ezekiel 11:5; Matthew 9:4*

Revelation 2:19

I know your deeds, and your *agape* love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late greater than at first.

Agape Love

This starts remarkably like the letter to Ephesus, **your** deeds, **your** love ... versus the letter to Pergamum, which focused on how they held tightly to all that was sourced in God, hence, “**My** name, **My** faith, **My** witness. And remember, **the source matters, the source is everything!**” So, this beginning immediately gives us an uncomfortable feeling; yet this initial comment is also remarkably different than what Jesus said to Ephesus. There is more going on here in Thyatira than there was in Ephesus.

After all, Jesus comments on their *agape* love. This is a love that can only be expressed if the Spirit of God was the one doing the work in-and-through their lives, as God is *agape* love, and the fruit of the Spirit is *agape*.⁴ Thus, this is not a love that they could manufacture on their own.

Jesus therefore is acknowledging that their deeds, their faith, service, and perseverance are all rooted in Him, in His *agape* love. Thus, unlike with the believers in Ephesus who had left this relationship rooted in *agape* love and exchanged it for their own personal zeal of religious intolerance, those at Thyatira had not fallen from grace and were not all caught up in their religious performance trying ridiculously hard to be good for God.

As we have learned, it is not the “deeds” in themselves that matter, it is the **source** of the deed. If what we do derives from God as we bet our lives on who He is, then it is a “good” deed for it is an expression of His life in ours. However, if what we do derives from our *flesh* (albeit our extremely religious *flesh*), it is worthless regardless of our intentions or the results. **The source matters, the source is everything!**

Contrasting with those in Ephesus who were counseled to return to their “*first deeds*,” for their latter works were lacking, those in Thyatira were continuing to grow in their deeds because they were rooted in God’s *agape* love. They continued to bear the fruit of love.

For those who are deeply imbedded within the religion of Christianity, this concept tends to be very hard to grasp and difficult to emotionally accept. They see all the “good” that comes from their own service to God, and the service of others, and all the amazing ways that God uses them; so, they assume that they are “good” with God. But Jesus made it clear that even great works such as casting out demons, performing miracles, and prophecy, all performed in His name by those who call Him Lord, can be unauthorized, lawless, or an expression of their own *instinctual religious wisdom*.

As such, He says that there will be a day when **many** (yes, **many not a few**) who are convinced of their service to Him and their service of Him, those who said to Him “Lord, Lord”, will be cast out from His presence. He will declare to them: “*I never knew you; now depart from me you who have chosen to now be practicing lawlessness.*”⁵

Those are some of the most chilling words Jesus ever spoke. After all, it is unfathomable that they

⁴ 1 John 4:8, 16; Galatians 5:22

⁵ Matthew 7:21-23

could be a vessel for all those great works done **in His name**, works that changed people's lives, and still they meant nothing to God because they were not sourced from the Father—they were in effect, lawless (or said another way, they were not perfect works). And all lawlessness is sin.⁶

This is mind-bending, but when it comes to our relationship with God and what is produced from our lives, **the source matters, the source is everything!** The outcomes of our lives all belong to God, and He will use any vessel to perform His work, just like He did with Balaam or Balaam's donkey for that matter. But His willingness to use someone does not validate the quality of the vessel which He used. Once again, we saw this with the church at Ephesus. They did great works with their toil and perseverance, but those works were not sourced from His *agape* love; in fact, they had left His *agape* love. Thus, impressive as their works seemed to be, they were simply **NOT** good with God as they were lawless works. They had departed and left their first love for sin.

Jezebel

Revelation 2:20-21

But I **now** have this against you, that you **now** tolerate the woman Jezebel, who is **now** calling herself a prophetess, and she **now** teaches and leads My bondservants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

Now, except for two words which are in the *aorist* tense, this is presented to us primarily in the *present* tense. The verbs "have," "tolerate," "calls," "teaches," and "leads," are all in the *present* tense, but "commit," and "eat" are rendered in the *aorist*. As such, we need to sharpen our focus to understand what the Spirit now says to the churches—what He is says to us in our now. But let's hold on to that thought, there is more to come on the implications of these verb tenses.

What Jesus has against these believers raises many issues that tend to be problematic within Christianity, such things as spiritual gifts, authority of leaders, authority of the word of God, and spiritual deception.

This woman Jezebel, who is now calling herself a prophetess, is described to us in **Code**, but we must turn to the **Codex** to get our understanding.⁷ In the same way that the story of Balaam set for us our contextual understanding of the letter to Pergamum, so too does the story of **Jezebel** frame for us the context of this letter to Thyatira.

Jezebel was a queen of Israel, married to King Ahab. However, she was the daughter of Ethbaal, a non-Jew, the king of Sidon, who ruled from Tyre.⁸ In addition to being king, Ethbaal was the high priest of Baal (ironically known as the "sun god"), which made him more than a mere follower, He was an absolute devotee. Ethbaal represented Baal on earth—he was Baal's Vicar. His name means "together with Baal" or "in place of Baal."

⁶ **1 John 3:4**

⁷ "calls" is rendered in the *present active participle*

⁸ **1 Kings 16:31-33**

The kingdom of Tyre was also considered to be a spiritual kingdom of Baal, and its high priest ruled as supreme king over the peoples of the land. This sheds some light as to why the king of Tyre and his kingdom is used in the **Codex** as a metaphor for Satan and his kingdom on earth.⁹

This kingdom represented the anti-kingdom of God, or the kingdom of the antichrist. And, in the same way that Satan seduced Eve to sin, Ethbaal seduced King Ahab to sin through marrying his daughter, Jezebel. Yes, Jezebel, a non-Jew, became Queen of the Jews. We will discover that this relationship has overtones to the issues we studied in the letter to Pergamum.

In the letter to Pergamum, we addressed the unauthorized union of true believers with those who were believers in name only. Under the guise of personal freedom, and influenced by the power of their leaders, believers begin to take what they thought they needed and wanted in relationship, notwithstanding what God desired. In Thyatira, things take another step down the slippery slope of apostasy as it addresses the effects (and the destruction) that comes from unlawful relationships between believers and flat-out unbelievers, pagans, or non-Christians, all imaged through this union of a Jewish King and a non-Jewish Queen.¹⁰

Jezebel of Tyre was given in marriage to Ahab, the King of Israel to secure a lucrative trade deal between the two countries. In effect, Ahab married himself and the nation of Israel to Baal to secure their financial future. In effect, this sort of compromise for financial security is the same type of pressure put on the believers in Thyatira by the trade-guilds in Roman Asia.

Thereafter, instead of the law of God governing the people, the law of Baal governed the people of Israel. Ethbaal, through this unlawful marriage, usurped the power of God and the power of the king of Israel, and put in place the rule and authority of Baal. **And He did it from within.** He did not have to go to war to conquer Israel, rather, he placed his spy, his corrupting influence, within the center of Israeli life, and from within conquered the people. Jezebel, on behalf of Baal, persecuted both the true prophets of God and the remnant of faithful believers, insisting that Baal is the God of the land.¹¹

Please take note, this is exactly how Satan, emblematically represented by the King of Tyre, will accomplish His goals, for he also works from within. Even the man whom we call the Antichrist will take his seat of authority from within the temple of God, from within the collection of true believers who are now the temple of God in which the Holy Spirit (or the Shekinah glory) now dwells.¹² And it is from within that he will work his corruption and deceit, ultimately declaring that he is God (an event that is referred to as the *Abomination of Desolation*).¹³

This whole scene encapsulates the **apostasy of Korah** (the boastful pride of life) through the usurping of what is to be the true leadership in the church—the Word of God—with a substitute that bases their authority on power through the avenue of the prophetic. As it says in the **Codex**, “*For people are using it (prophecy) to give authority to their own ideas, turning upside down the words of our God, the living God, Yahweh Sabaoth (the Lord of Heaven's Armies)*”.¹⁴ This is exactly what Jezebel was doing.

⁹ **Ezekiel 28**

¹⁰ **1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18**

¹¹ **1 Kings 18, 19**

¹² **See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21**

¹³ **2 Thessalonians 2:4**

¹⁴ **Jeremiah 23:36**

A Side Note on the Future

There are some who have asserted that this union between Ahab and Jezebel is a picture of the coming kingdom of the Antichrist—a union between religion and power depicted in the activities of the Catholic Church. After all, historically the Vicar's of Christ (the pope), who purportedly represents the spiritual rule of God on the earth, took power and authority over the kings of the earth. For centuries, the kings of England, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and so on bowed in obeisance to the Vicar of Rome. As we know, history does tend to repeat itself.

Well, that outcome is speculation. But what we do know is that the demon (the Beast), who will possess the man we call the "Antichrist", will use the vehicle of religion (captured in the image of the woman who rides the beast) to subdue and gain control over the peoples of the earth. Again, many have speculated that it is through the Catholic Church that he will arise to power. He will then use that same religion to persecute true believers (of which the Catholic church has a long and notorious history of slaughtering millions of true believers).

This is what has happened in the past, and many believe that it provides a foreshadowing of the future. We do not know if this is true, again it is speculation. Undoubtedly, the Catholic Church along with many of our trusted religious institutions within protestant Christianity will likely have a significant role to play in the **End Times** having been captured by the Woman who rides the Beast.

What we do know is that the man we call the Antichrist (who will become possessed by the Beast) will rise to power leading the "people of God" into the **apostasy of Cain-6** (just as we saw in the church of Ephesus and Pergamum), the apostasy of **Balaam-6** (as we saw in the church of Ephesus and Pergamum), and the apostasy of **Korah-6** (as in the church at Thyatira). It is a trifecta of trifectas: **666** all coming out from within the church.

Power and Authority

Without question, Jezebel was a force with which to be reckoned. She was artful, persuasive, and capable of exercising broad influence over others because of her position and her keen ability to use power in the form of spiritual governance, all backed by her team of prophets. She was unscrupulous, immoral, and she successfully led both Ahab and the people of Israel in the worship of Baal and Asherah.

She financially supported 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah. She was also well known for her witchcraft.¹⁵ It seems that King Ahab was so taken by her that he gave her full permission to do whatever it was that she wanted.

The Apostasy of Korah

By using this imagery of Jezebel, Jesus communicates that this prophetess's authority within the church was widely permissive and destructive, but it also usurped the actual authority and leadership of the church, much like the **apostasy of Korah**. Her claims to be a prophetess, were exerted so forcefully that those in the church not only "tolerated" her but they also submitted to her authority, despite her obvious heresy and dictatorial rule.

¹⁵ 1 Kings 18:19, 2 Kings 9:22

The **Code** states that she *is now claiming* to be a prophetess.¹⁶ This gives us a hint that she lusted after the power and authority that her gift provided, and she lived off the power and authority her gift afforded her. Therefore, to secure her role in everyone's life, she is now making sure that everyone knows that she is a prophetess and that she has the power. Clearly, the use of the *present active participle* brings all this forward into the Thyatira church of our day.

In this we find the “boastful pride of life” – again, the **apostasy of Korah**. What we studied in **Jude 11** is now demonstrated to us in the letters to the churches and the trifecta of **666**. The spirit of the antichrist (the Beast) is even now active in the world¹⁷ and this spirit is found to be operating deep within in our churches and within the leadership of the religion of Christianity.

- In the letter to Ephesus, we saw **THE LUST OF THE FLESH, the apostasy of Cain, and the first number of the Beast (6)**
- In the letter to Pergamum, we saw **THE LUST OF THE EYES, the apostasy of Balaam, and the second number of the Beast (6)**
- And now in this letter to Thyatira, we see **THE BOASTFUL PRIDE OF LIFE, the apostasy of Korah, and the third number of the Beast (6)**.
- Collectively, in the churches of Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira: **666**.

In the Greek, the word translated “tolerate” (*aphemi*), means to send forth. So, it was not that Jezebel was off in some corner somewhere working her evil deeds to a few followers and they just “tolerated” her behavior; rather, they literally took her words and sent them forth over the body as the authoritative word of God, and all fell under her rule. They embraced this prophetess.

Perversion of Spiritual Gifts

This woman was obviously gifted, but her gift had been perverted. The corruption likely came because of the deference, power, and position that she was granted by others simply because of the unique nature of her gift; after all, we all want to receive a vision or a word from the Lord. But in seeking the gift and granting deference to the gifted, these believers failed to discern what “words” were from the **Spirit of God** and what were from another spirit or from her own authority and ideas.

The spiritual gifts of God are indeed a blessing, as they are intended to be used for the common good, for the equipping of the saints, to the building up of the body in *agape* love.¹⁸ But just because someone has a gift, especially a very demonstrative gift like prophecy, teaching, or leading, it does not guarantee that the gift will be used for God. Remember, **the source matters, the source is everything!**

Thus, we can never make decisions of authority, leadership, or direction for the church, and especially for our lives, just because a prophet speaks a word. We must “*test all things*” to ensure that a given word is from the Spirit of God. Hence, the Spirit tells us not to despise prophetic utterance, but to examine everything and to hold fast to that which is good.¹⁹

¹⁶ “claims” is rendered in the *present active participle*

¹⁷ **1 John 4:3**

¹⁸ **1 Corinthians 12:4-7; Ephesians 4:11-16**

¹⁹ **1 Thessalonians 5:20-21**

The implication is that some prophecies, or even aspects of a prophecy, can be corrupted, will be corrupted, unauthorized, and influenced by the prophet themselves, or by another spirit. A prophet is just a person, and if they are not walking in the Spirit of God, if they are not “in Christ”, then there is a chance that their attitude, emotional construct, presuppositions regarding relationships, or just the pressures of life, might make them vulnerable to their own thoughts as well as to other voices from beyond.

The True Authority: The Word of God

This brings us to the next issue, and that is the source of authority over our lives. The Word of God is to be the absolute and ultimate authority over our lives. The **Codex** tells us that “*all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*”²⁰

Thus, if a prophetic word does not line up or is in any way inconsistent with the Word of God, then we are to not let it have a voice of authority in our lives. That does not mean we are to reject the prophet and stone them as they did in the Old Testament, it just means we are to reject and in effect “stone” the prophecy. We are to put the lie or the deception to death.

Personally, I have received many prophecies that were from the Spirit of God and many, so many, that were not. The ones that were not were sometimes obvious in that the words attempted to strike fear, guilt, shame, duty, condemnation, confusion, division, and other such things in my heart (and in the hearts of others). But often the error was not that obvious, and these prophecies created a lot of confusion in my heart (which is another tell-tale sign). I had to learn that confusion, fear, guilt, shame, condemnation, and so on, is not how God communicates. Those errant prophecies sounded far more like the way Satan talks than the way God talks.

**IT IS CRITICAL THAT WE LEARN HOW GOD SPEAKS, THEN WE WILL BE ABLE TO
DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN COMPETING VOICES AND KNOW WITH ALL CLARITY WHEN
WE HAVE RECEIVED A WORD FROM THE SPIRIT OF GOD OR FROM ANOTHER SPIRIT.
THIS IS HOW WE TEST OR EXAMINE ALL THINGS.**

This is a principle that rings true for our own gifting as well. We must keep in mind that if there are areas in our life where we are living in fear, if we are accommodating our *flesh* and giving room for its desires (whether those are desires for security, stability, connectedness, being wanted, needed, special, or just plain lustful), if we are giving ourselves to another so-called god by looking to the **ME** (our own wisdom or gifting), or to that of some “prophet” or “leader” to manage and direct our lives, then it is likely that we are ruled by our *flesh* and not by the Spirit. And even though we might be thoroughly convinced that we are doing God’s work and using our gifts for Him, the truth is that our lives will produce death and decay.²¹

This issue of what is the true authority over our lives is a big deal. The Word of God is to be the **ultimate authority** over our lives, as well as our **absolute priority**, for if we are neglectful in this way, there is a

²⁰ **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

²¹ **Romans 8:5-8**

good chance that we have fallen from grace or that we will fall from grace, it is just a matter of time.

Role of the Prophetic

When we have someone in our lives who is gifted with powerful leadership, is a skilled teacher, or with an amazing supernatural gift, it is extremely easy to be captured, enthralled, and mesmerized by that person. Especially, if they are the one who brings the prophetic word of God into our lives. As such, in Thyatira (both then and now), Jezebel both teaches and leads Jesus' bondservants astray.

Faith & Fear

This is likely the reason why many within Christianity reject the prophetic, they see it as too big of a danger and quite uncontrollable. Yet, the Spirit specifically told us **NOT** to reject prophetic utterance, but to test it, or examine it thoroughly, and hold fast to that which is good.²²

In my experience, this is difficult because even in our examination of prophecy, we are biased by what we want to hear and what we do not want to hear. Few of us are open to correction from the Spirit of God, which is evidenced through the removal of the candlestick of Ephesus and the disappearance of any record of their being a church at Pergamum. We tend to read into words of correction what we think is true, what our own delusion tells us is true, and we miss the words of God that are true.

We are also often captured by the "power" and "authority" of the person delivering the message or by our lack of respect for the person or how they delivered the message. If we do not like how they said it or what they said, we tend to filter the message, using our own wisdom (or our emotional judgment) to determine if the message was from God.

And quite frankly, we can often be confused by the images and layered meaning of things. As we have learned, the Spirit of God talks in His own language (in **Code**), and if we are not now having ears to hear, we will likely miss what He now says attempting to understand it all through our own language. The Spirit of God loves to communicate in images, numbers, phrases, colors, metaphors, and so on; and to Him time operates in a totally different construct than the way we like time to operate. It can all be very confusing.

Nevertheless, if we in any way restrict prophecy due to the **fear** of our own capabilities to properly discern prophecy, or the fear of things getting wild and out of control because everyone wants to hear something from God, then we will have decided in the *flesh*.

Faith and **fear** are the antithesis of one another. Thus, even if we are trying to protect believers from error, a decision based on fear will always produce death, regardless of our "good" intentions (remember, intentions are worthless to God).

**AGAIN, A DECISION BASED ON FEAR WILL ALWAYS PRODUCE DEATH, REGARDLESS OF
OUR "GOOD" INTENTIONS.**

Therefore, despite its problematic nature, we are not to despise prophetic utterance, but we are to carefully and humbly, with the help of the Holy Spirit, examine all things and **wait** for the Spirit of God to

²² **1 Thessalonians 5:20-21**

reveal the meaning of what was communicated. It may take time (a very long time), and we know time is one of our worst enemies, but we must learn to **wait**. If it is truly a message from God, He will ensure that, in His time, we come to know what He wanted us to know. After all, that is why He spoke.

Let's stop here and we will pick up in our next podcast and discuss how Jezebel, with her prophecy, leads the Lord's bondservants astray—she leads them to compromise.