

Sunday, November 1, 2020  
Sooke Baptist Church  
7110 West Coast Road  
9am and 11am

# A JEALOUS GOD

Also on Facebook Live Stream  
and YouTube

Revelation 2:18-29

Coffee/Question:

When does tolerance become intolerance?



REVELATION  
2:18-29

**v.18 – To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.**



Thyatira was a prosperous commercial center.

William Barclay says, “The roads which passed through Thyatira brought the trade of half the world to its doors.”

Thyatira was known for its unusual number of trade guilds.

William Ramsey says there were guilds for wool and linen makers, dyers, leather workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave dealers, bronze smiths and shoemakers.

DJ, p.88.

To do business in Thyatira, one had to belong to a trade guild.

About membership in these trade guilds William Barclay writes:

Such membership required participation in the social activities of the guild.

**Meals together, began and ended with a cup of wine poured out as an offering to the gods, and frequently involved a token piece of meat being sacrificed to Apollo, the patron god of many of the city’s trade guilds. The rest of the meat would eaten by the guild members.**

**Similar to Pergamum, many of these meals frequently degenerated into drunkenness and immorality.**

**William Barclay**

DJ, p.88

Remember from last week.... participating in an idol feast was **not a neutral act.** It involved an intermingling with unseen fallen angels whose intent was to yoke the souls of participants to themselves.

But if one wanted to do business in Thyatira, one had to belong to a trade guild. And belonging to a trade guild required participation in an idol feast.

What were the believers to do?

Was there any way to navigate this conundrum?

We'll come back to this question as we work our way through the message of Jesus to his church at Thyatira.

### **v.18 - These are the words of the Son of God...**

The citizens of Thyatira had two deities they worshiped as sons of Zeus – Apollo and the Roman emperor. Beale, p.71

Jesus impressed upon his church at Thyatira, that he is the Son of God.

The Bible understands the title... Son of God to mean...

Jesus is “the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.”

Hebrews 1:3

This also means that Jesus is the Judge of the earth.

**See Acts 17:30-31.**

When Jesus promised to give authority to his overcomers in v.27, he quoted from **Psalm 2:7-12**, a messianic psalm where the Son of God is entrusted by the Father “to execute authority and judgment on the earth.” Beale, p.71

What this says to the church is that Jesus is not only the Judge of the earth, but the Judge of his people.

### **v.18 - ...whose eyes are like blazing fire...**

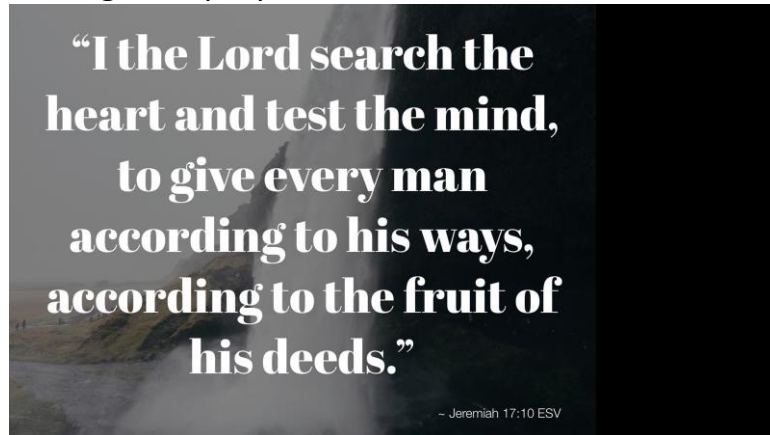
What does that mean?

Why does Jesus look at his church with eyes like blazing fire?

Jesus explained what he meant in v.23 – his eyes see everything.

Jesus is like the Father.

Through the prophet Jeremiah the Father had revealed himself, 17:10....



Like the Father Jesus cannot be conned or manipulated.

There is no secret that can be hidden from him.

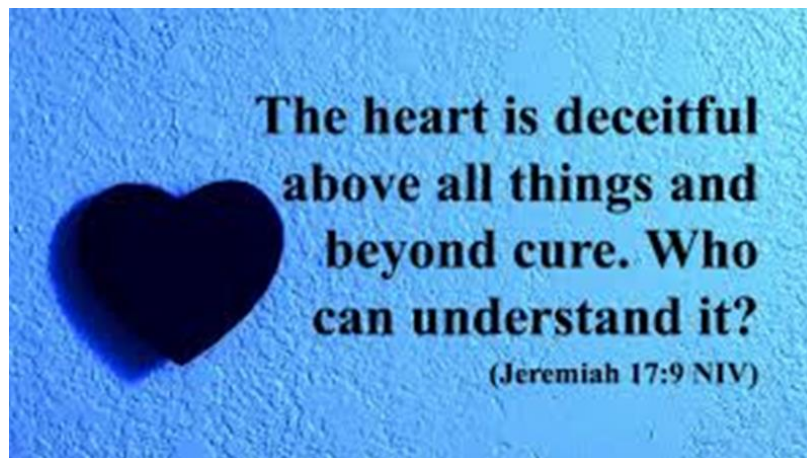
His person brings everything out into the open.

Why does Jesus do this?

This morning we can only answer from the perspective of the believer.

Jesus searches our hearts and minds in order to reveal... who we are... and the things that are in us.

In Jeremiah 17:9 Yahweh said...

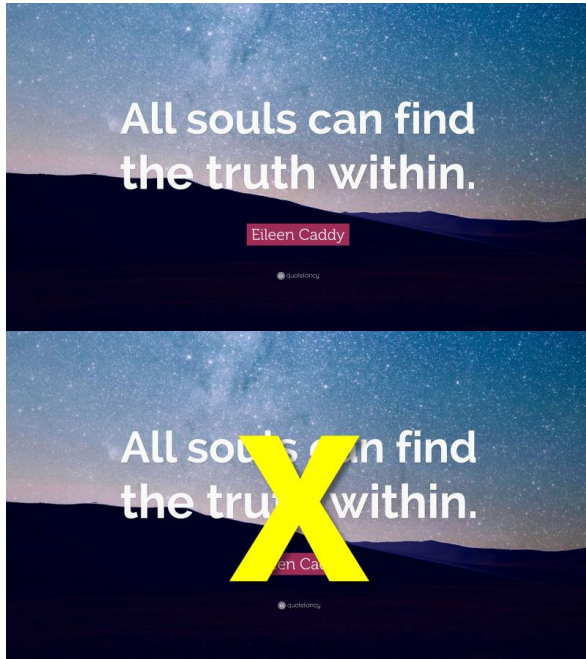


Who here has never said, “I don’t know why I did or didn’t do that... or said or didn’t say such and such?”

Our hearts can lie to us...deceive us.

Important sidenote:

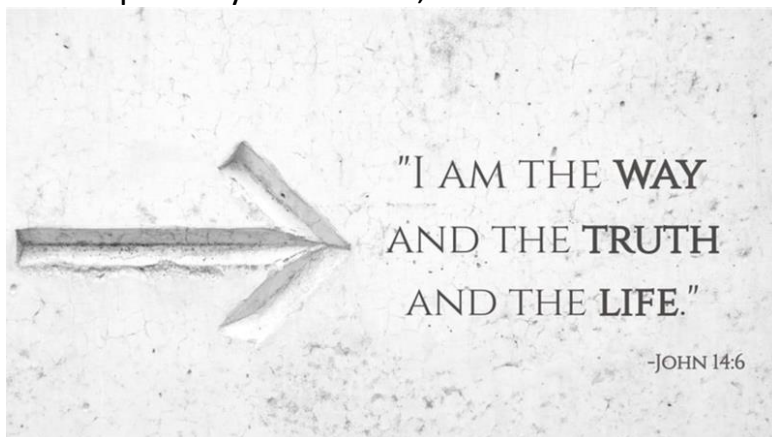
This is why in our culture the counsel which is often repeated...



... is such a dangerous lie.

Because sin has corrupted the human heart...the answers we need...of how to live...of what is good... are not to be found in us.

We desperately need Jesus, who is the Truth...



... to reveal truth to us...the truth of who we are...the truth of who he is... the truth of what he has done to rescue...the truth of how the life that is truly life can be entered into and lived to the full.

Darryl Johnson writes that this reality of Jesus' person... eyes like blazing fire... in addition to being of grace.... is also of great comfort. It speaks of the commitment of the triune God to finish in us what he began.

Jesus searches our hearts and minds "not simply to find information but in order to transform. He looks at us... and through us... to free us." p.93.

### **Whose feet are like burnished bronze.**

Can anyone juggle?



Come on up.

Try and juggle – one thing, then two, then three...

Feet like burnished bronze speaks of Jesus' capability.



**Hebrews 1:3**

**[Jesus sustains] all things by his powerful word.**

Are you able to imagine the power required to do that?

In the creation...

In the universe...

In our lives.

Now add this breath-taking realization.... our powerful Lord Jesus who sustains all things... is good.

Do you remember this scene well C.S. Lewis' book - The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe...



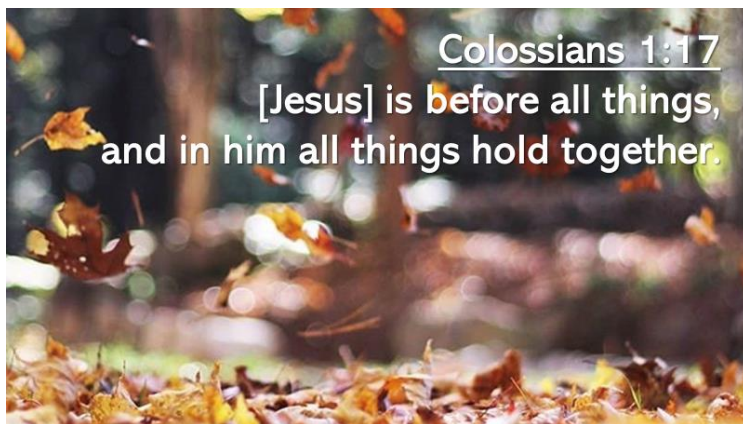
...when Mr. and Mrs. Beaver tell the children about Aslan the lion... who is the Jesus figure in the story?

Susan, one of the children, asks the beavers the question:

“Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”

“That you will, dearie, and no mistake,” said Mrs. Beaver. “If there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without his knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or just silly.”

“Then he isn’t safe?” said Lucy. “Safe?” said Mrs. Beaver. “Who said anything about being safe? Of course, he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He is the King, I tell you.” DJ, p.93.



Does not the goodness of the king of heaven and earth...fill your heart with gratitude?

**v.19 – I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.**

This is a most remarkable statement.

The church at Ephesus had begun well... and along the way lost their first love.

This was not the situation with the church at Thyatira.

They were doing more at that moment than when they had started.

Their love and faith had grown, as had their service and perseverance.

**v.20 – Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.**

We are now back at the quandary experienced by those who followed Jesus in Thyatira.

How could they do business in that city without belonging to a guild... that required participation in idol feasts?

Jesus identified by name a particular woman...who called herself a prophet... who was misleading his church through her teaching.

Was Jezebel her real name? Maybe. Maybe not.

What we do know with certainty is that by calling her Jezebel, Jesus intentionally pointed his church back to the OT story of Queen Jezebel, who was instrumental in introducing into the nation of Israel the worship of a rival god named Baal.

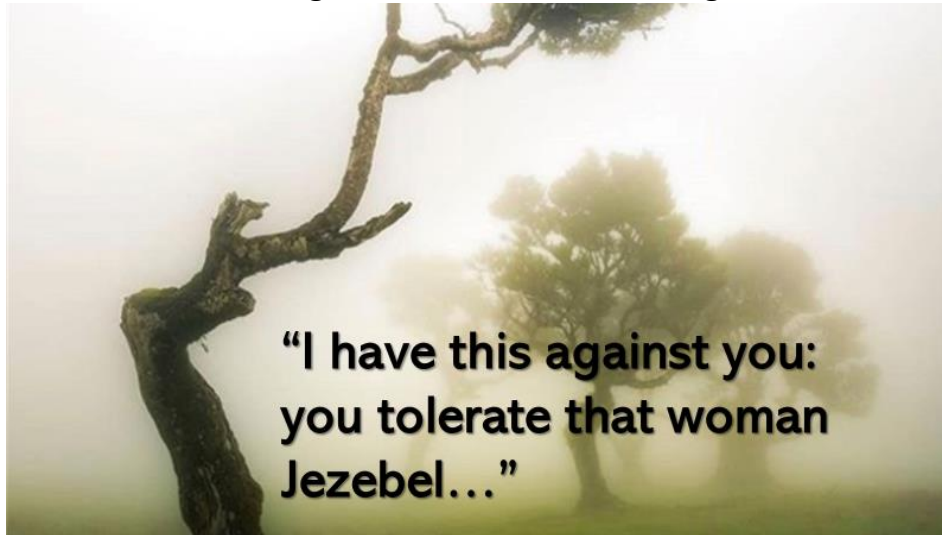
**1 Kings 16:30, 33** says of Queen Jezebel and her husband...that they did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before them.

Jesus said to his church that Jezebel of Thyatira had a similar corrupting influence...and because they hadn't dealt with her, he would.

Tom Wright says Jezebel twisted the teaching of the Bible on grace... and the keeping power of the Holy Spirit who lives in the believer... advocating that a believer had the spiritual freedom to go boldly into idol feasts... where fallen angels intermingled with participants... engage in sexual immorality... and experience no spiritual harm." Revelation, NT Wright, p.26.



Jesus addressed a significant misunderstanding in his church regarding love.



This has great implication for us today...because of how our culture has championed tolerance.

Archbishop Charles Chaput reminds us...

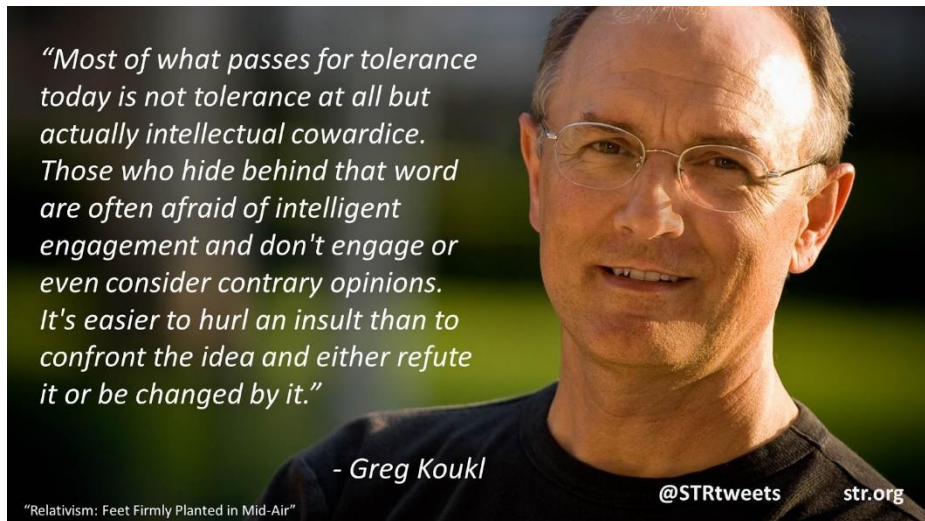
**"Tolerance is not a Christian virtue.  
Love, justice, mercy, chastity, temperance,  
honesty – these are Christian virtues."**

**Archbishop Charles Chaput**

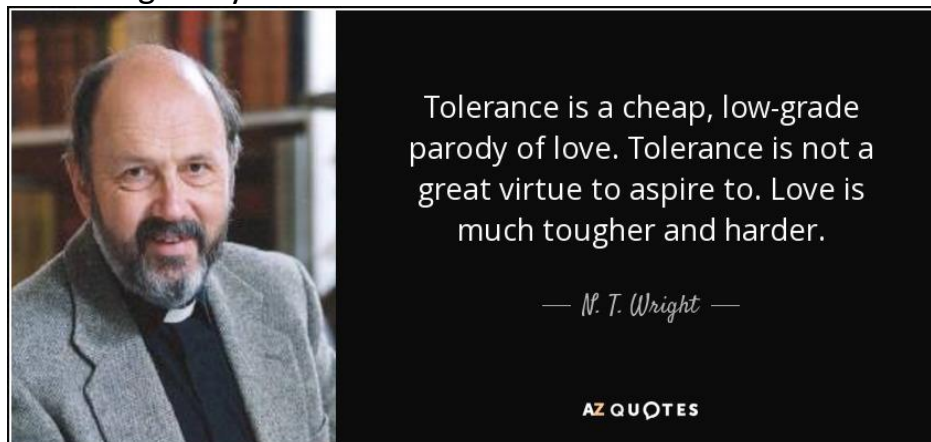
In recent years the understanding of what is meant by tolerance has undergone a radical reconstruction.

It now means, not only is one to be respectful of other's differences, but additionally, it is expected that those differences are to be celebrated and never questioned.

Greg Koukl, a Christian apologist, and founder of the Christian apologetics organization "Stand to Reason," says,



Tom Wright says...



In Thyatira, there were many good things the church was doing – motivated by love and faith, service and perseverance.

But their tolerance of Jezebel was an act of sin... and not a virtue to be celebrated.

Jesus viewed the teaching of Jezebel as a moral and spiritual cancer that had to be removed.

Why do you think Jezebel and her teaching had been tolerated?

Jesus didn't say.

Maybe her teaching provided a solution of how to do business in Thyatira.

Maybe the believers were weak in understanding... biblical love.

Maybe they didn't know the scriptures well.

However it had happened... the end result of tolerance... was compromise with truth.

As I thought about this, Matthew 7:13-14 came to mind.



“Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

**v.21 – I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.**

What strikes you about this statement?

Jesus is patient.

He said, “I have given her time.”

What this also tells us is that this was not the first time Jezebel had been confronted by Jesus.

Jesus had already spoken to her.

He had already told her to repent.

Of what?

Here again, we see Jesus speaking the truth in love.

It is a human tendency to airbrush sin.

Jesus does no such thing.

He told Jezebel to repent of her immorality.

He called her sin what it was.

The other thing that struck me about this verse was Jezebel’s stubbornness.

It wasn’t that she didn’t know.

It wasn’t that Jesus hadn’t warned her.

Her issue was a hard heart.

She was unwilling to repent.  
She didn't want to change.  
This was why the discipline of Jesus would be severe.

**v.22-23a – So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead.**

We need to understand this aspect of God's person.



## **a severe mercy**

God is love... and he is patient... and his mercy and grace are great.  
But he will not give up his people... to be dominated by sin.  
He will utilize what is necessary to break sin's beguilement and grip on them.  
And that can include suffering, and even early death.

**v.23b – Then all the churches will know that I am her who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.**

Through Paul, God said to the church at Corinth,

1 Corinthians 10:6, 11

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they (the nation of Israel) did...

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come...

In the very next chapter, through Paul, God said that if his warnings are not received and acted upon, then his discipline will increase in severity...

1 Corinthians 11:30-32

That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.

Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

Jezebel refused to respond to God and repent of her sin and trust in the sacrifice Jesus made for her to pay her spiritual debt.

Because she refused to lay hold of Jesus and his grace...then there was no other option...but for Jesus to allow the consequence of her deeds to come upon her... with the hope that she would come to her senses...repent of her sin...and be restored to fellowship with God.

Darryl Johnson says...

**“Jesus does not protect us from the psychosomatic illnesses that come from serving false gods.**

**But when we lay hold of Jesus, we inherit the consequences, not of our sin, but of his righteous life and deeds.”**

Darryl Johnson

p.94.

Does this hope not fill your heart with gratitude?

Gratitude that Jesus will not let his followers go.

Gratitude that he will do what is necessary to rescue his people from sin.

Gratitude that he is... that committed to finish in us what he began.

**v.24-25 – Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan’s so-called deep secrets, ‘I will not impose any other burden on you, except to hold on to what you have until I come.’**

A number of commentators believed that the phrase “Satan’s so-called deep secrets,’ was said with sarcasm.

Possibly Jezebel had referred to her teaching as the deep secrets of God.

Or naively and foolishly she believed Christians to be immune to Satan’s influence ...no matter what they do.

Regardless, Jesus had exposed Jezebel’s teaching as error to be decisively rejected.

What did Jesus ask of his church?

Only one thing - hold on to what you have.

This is an emphasis repeatedly made by the triune God – Father, Son and Spirit.



1 Thessalonians 5:12

...hold on to what is good...

Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess.

1 Corinthians 15:58

...stand firm. Let nothing move you.

Holding on to our faith in Jesus, standing our ground as his people... is how we overcome and are victorious.

Yes, we may experience pressure to compromise our faith.

Yes, great pressure may come upon us to deny Jesus.

But Jesus stands with us and he is greater than all.

We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

**v.26-27 – To the who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations – that one will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery – just as I have received authority.**

As our call to worship stated, the follower of Jesus has been raised up with Christ. God has seated us with him in the heavenly realms.

**Things are not as they seem.**

In this present time.... we share in the victory of Jesus.

In the age to come, the incomparable riches of God's grace will be seen in that along with Jesus we will rule with him over the creation.

This is what human beings were originally created to do.

When we forfeited that responsibility and became slaves of sin, cursed by death, Jesus entered this world and became a man in order to rescue us.

When our salvation is complete...body, soul and spirit...that original responsibility will again be entrusted to us.

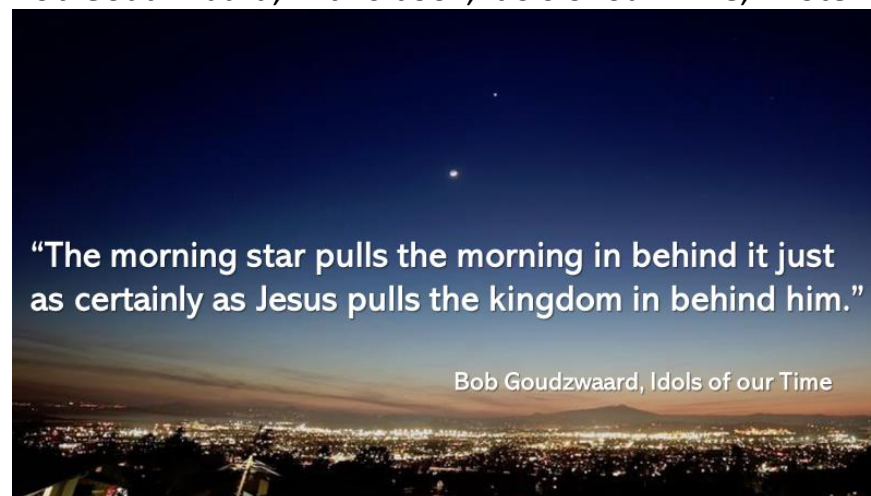
But there is more!

**v.28 – I will also give that one the morning star.**

In 22:16, Jesus identified himself as "the bright Morning Star."

Let me remind you... the morning star appears at the darkest time of the night, when there is yet... no sign of the dawn.

Bob Goudzwaard, in this book, *Idols of our Time*, wrote:



DJ, p.95

When we gaze across the span of human history, the Bible tells us that the night is almost over; this present time of living in the shadowlands is drawing to an end.

How do we know that?

Because of Jesus – he is the morning star!

He has given himself to us.

We know him.

He lives within us.

We experience fellowship with him.

But there is a fuller, greater reality that is coming.

God will make all things new and will live among us.

**v.29 – Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**

What is the application for us?

- **It is to be reminded that our commitment to Jesus can be described by nothing other than wholehearted and undivided.**
- It is to understand the passion of Jesus for his church to be holy.... and the lengths to which he will go to discipline us when needed.
- **It is to realize that compromise is a strategy which our spiritual adversary Satan uses with great effectiveness.**
- It is to draw upon the resources of heaven to hold on to Jesus and to stand firm to the end.

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