

TEXT: Revelation 2:18-23

THE PUNISHMENT DESERVED

2:22 cast her into a bed
cast them into great tribulation
2:23 kill her children with death

Remember that these things are what God did to deal with Queen Jezebel and those in Israel whom she led to worship idols.

REPENTANCE

2:21 Jesus Christ is so merciful to sinners, that He gave space for repentance even to a woman who was like Jezebel!

2:22 Even those who have joined in sin with Jezebel, Jesus Christ will not punish if they will repent.

REPENTANCE AND REMISSION / FORGIVENESS

Luke 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

Luke 5:31-32 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. (32) I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke 24:46-47 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: (47) And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 5:30-31 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. (31) Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

REMISSION / FORGIVENESS BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS

Notice that the last couple of verses we read mentioned that Jesus Christ had died and been raised to life again just before talking about repentance and remission or forgiveness. See the connection explicitly stated by our Lord Jesus.

Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE

The punishments threatened in Revelation 2 include suffering and death. But they would not be carried out on those who would repent.

Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

REPENTANCE TIED TO FAITH

Notice that Peter said not perish, but instead come to repentance.
We are used to hearing that a sinner may not perish by believing or faith.

John 3:14-21 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (18) He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. (21) But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

The reason this can be said either way is that faith and repentance, although not the same thing, are graces that the Holy Spirit works together in the heart of the sinner.

Acts 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why should you die in your sins? Why should you perish? Even if you have sinned with Jezebel, even if you have played the Jezebel, the cry goes out to you:

Repent and be forgiven, by the blood that Jesus Christ shed for sinners on the cross!

Revelation 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Knollys:

Here followeth the manifestation of Christ's patience; "I gave her space to repent of her fornication," that is, Christ did forbear to punish her for a time, expecting that she should repent both of her corrupt doctrine, and also of her wicked life. "And she repented not," notwithstanding all his patience and long suffering, she remained impenitent.

Gill:

Jezebel had a space given her to repent in, from the time that Elijah declared the word of the Lord, that the dogs should eat her... for the time for, and means leading to repentance may be given, yet if the grace of repentance itself is not given, men, either particular persons, or whole bodies of men, will never repent of their sins.

Clarke:

"This alludes to the history of Jezebel. God first sent Elijah to Ahab to pronounce a severe judgment upon him; upon which Ahab showed tokens of repentance, and so God put off his punishment. By these means the like punishment pronounced against Jezebel was also put off. Thus God gave her time to repent, which she did not, but instead of that seduced her sons to the same sins. See 1 Kings 21:1-29. According to the Mosaical law, the punishment of idolatrous seducers was not to be delayed at all, but God sometimes showed mercy; and now much more under the Christian

dispensation, though that mercy is often abused, and thus produces the contrary effect, as in the case of this Jezebel. See Ecc_8:11.

Barnes:

It is true of almost every great sinner, that sufficient time is given for repentance, and that vengeance is delayed after crime is committed. But it cannot always be deferred, for the period must arrive when no reason shall exist for longer delay, and when punishment must come upon the offender.

Revelation 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed,

Knollys:

that is, consider what I say, and how I threaten this false prophetess, or wicked woman, and lay it to heart; she is past recovery, having lived impenitently in her whoredoms, both corporal and spiritual fornications...This "bed" is a bed of great tribulation, some corporal and some spiritual judgments are hereby threatened.

Clarke:

“This again alludes to the same history. Ahaziah, son of Ahab and Jezebel, by his mother’s ill instruction and example, followed her ways. God punished him by making him fall down, as is supposed, from the top of the terrace over his house, and so to be bedridden for a long time under great anguish, designing thereby to give him time to repent; but when, instead of that, he sent to consult Baalzebub, Elijah was sent to pronounce a final doom against his impenitence. Thus the son of Jezebel, who had committed idolatry with and by her advice, was long cast into the bed of affliction, and not repenting, died: in the same manner his brother Jehoram succeeded likewise. All this while Jezebel had time and warning enough to repent; and though she did not prevail with Jehoram to continue in the idolatrous worship of Baal, yet she persisted in her own way, notwithstanding God’s warnings. The sacred writer, therefore, here

threatens the Gnostic Jezebel to make that wherein she delighteth, as adulterers in the bed of lust, to be the very place, occasion, and instrument, of her greatest torment. So in Isaiah, the bed is made a symbol of tribulation, and anguish of body and mind.

Barnes:

There is evidently a purpose to contrast this with her former condition. The harlot's bed and a sick-bed are thus brought together, as they are often, in fact, in the dispensations of Providence and the righteous judgments of God. One cannot be indulged without leading on, sooner or later, to the horrid sufferings of the other: and how soon no one knows.

Ellicott:

The chamber of voluptuousness will become the chamber of sickness. The spot of the sin shall be the scene of punishment. (Comp. 1Ki_21:19.)

JFB:

The place of her sin shall be the place of her punishment. The bed of her sin shall be her bed of sickness and anguish. Perhaps a pestilence was about to be sent.

and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Knollys:

but yet those that have been seduced and enticed by her doctrine to commit fornication, shall have some longer time of repentance.

both spiritual and corporal whoredom, which is called by Christ "their deeds."

Poole:

pains and torments of conscience, or afflictions more corporal, either from the more immediate hand of God, or the hands of men.

this is to be supposed to all God's threatenings of judgments, the execution of them ordinarily may be prevented by repentance, and such is the patience of God, that he gives the vilest sinners a space to repent.

Gill:

There seems to be an allusion in this verse to Ahaziah and Joram, sons of Ahab and Jezebel, who followed their mother's idolatrous practices, and were cast upon a bed of sickness, 2Ki_1:2.

Barnes:

Great suffering; disease of body or tortures of the soul. How often - how almost uniformly is this the case with those who thus live! Sooner or later, sorrow always comes upon the licentious; and God has evinced by some of his severest judgments, in forms of frightful disease, his displeasure at the violation of the laws of purity. There is no sin that produces a mere withering and desolating effect upon the soul than what is here referred to; none which is more certain to be followed with sorrow.

It is only by repentance that we can avoid the consequences of sin. The word "repent" here evidently includes both sorrow for the past, and abandonment of the evil course of life.

Ellicott:

Here, as before, we are reminded that true repentance is a repentance whereby we forsake sin.

JRY:

See in our society the trouble people have brought on themselves by embracing adultery decades ago.

Revelation 2:23 And I will kill her children with death;

Knollys:

"her children" are those that she seduced by her doctrine to commit fornication. And by children here, we are to understand some members of this church, who being seduced by Jezebel's doctrine, did commit fornication, that is, both spiritual and corporal whoredom, which is called by Christ "their deeds."

By "killing her children with death" is meant, that they shall be destroyed by God's just and righteous judgments.

Clarke:

"That is, I will certainly destroy her offspring and memory, and thereby ruin her designs. Jezebel's two sons, being both kings were both slain; and

after that, all the seventy sons of Ahab; (2Ki_10:1); in all which the hand of God was very visible. In the same manner God predicts the destruction of the heretics and heresies referred to; see Rev_2:16. It should seem by the expression, I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts, that these heretics lurked about, and sowed their pernicious doctrines secretly. But our Savior tells them that it was in vain, for he had power to bring their deeds to light, having that Divine power of searching into the Evilly and affections of men; and hereby he would show both them and us that he is, according to his title, The Son of God; and hath such eyes to pry into their actions, that, like a fire, they will search into every thing, and burn up the chaff which cannot stand his trial; so that the depths of Satan, mentioned in the next verse, to which this alludes, (Christ assuming here this title purposely) shall avail nothing to those who think by their secret craft to undermine the Christian religion; he will not only bring to light, but baffle all their evil intentions.

Barnes:

If it is to be taken figuratively, then it refers to those who had imbibed her doctrines, and who, of course, would suffer in the punishment which would follow from the propagation of such doctrines. The reference in the word “death” here would seem to be to some heavy judgment, by plague, famine, or sword, by which they would be cut off.

Ellicott:

This is to be understood of her followers. The so-called prophetess led the way in looseness of morals, under the pretence of some deeper knowledge. She had her associates and their disciples; the evil and the evil consequences would grow; the disciples outrun their teachers, and more than tribulation—death—is their penalty.

JRY:

Does He mean that He will get rid of them out of the congregation by other means, since the members would not?

and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts:

Knollys:

This is another testimony of Christ’s omniscency. Before he told the churches that he knew their works; and now he gives them to understand, that he knows their hearts also: And the Churches shall know, that is, shall understand, confess and acknowledge that Christ hath been trying,

searching, and examining the reins and hearts, that is to say, the inward bent and frame of the spirits of men.

JFB:

to be judged not according to the mere act as it appears to man, but with reference to the motive, faith and love being the only motives which God recognizes as sound.

and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Knollys:

Those works faith, love, patience, charity and service, which Christ commends, shall be rewarded; Christ will own them and crown them with acceptance, and with reward of grace and glory, saying, Well done good and faithful Servant, enter into the joy of thy Master.

And those works or deeds of fornication and other evil doings, which Christ reprov'd and gave them space and time to repent of, and they repented not, Christ will also reward by executing his righteous judgments upon them, even unto death and eternal condemnation {Ro 1:18; 2Co 5:10; Ro 2:5-6,11} except they repent.

Barnes:

To every one of you; not only to those who have embraced these opinions, but to all the church. This is the uniform rule laid down in the Bible by which God will judge people.