



LETTERS OF LENT

Thyatira | Wk. 5

March 24, 2024

[Worship Music Playlist](#)

Prelude – King of Glory by All Sons and Daughters

WELCOME | (cards & community)

CALL TO WORSHIP | Psalm 9:1-10

I'm thanking you, God, from a full heart, I'm writing the book on your wonders. I'm whistling, laughing, and jumping for joy; I'm singing your song, High God. The day my enemies turned tail and ran, they stumbled on you and fell on their faces. You took over and set everything right; when I needed you, you were there, taking charge. You blow the whistle on godless nations; you throw dirty players out of the game, wipe their names right off the roster. Enemies disappear from the sidelines, their reputation trashed, their names erased from the halls of fame. God holds the high center, he sees and sets the world's mess right. He decides what is right for us earthlings, gives people their just deserts. God's a safe-house for the battered, a sanctuary during bad times. The moment you arrive, you relax; you're never sorry you knocked.

Song #1 – Only You by Young Oceans

Song #2 – Jesus Our King by A Jesus Church

Dismiss Kids

CALL BACK & ANNOUNCEMENTS | **Family Meal & Meeting (April 7th)**
& King & Prophet

In the church calendar, today is Palm Sunday, the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem to the halleluiahs of the crowd saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Luke 19:38). And so it is fitting that today's letter of Lent, our final letter before Easter's peace and glory shine unhindered, that we see Jesus in his most splendid depiction, as King *and* Prophet; a ruler *and* one whose words consume, refine, and steady, transforming death and decay into life bright and holy.

Will you join me in opening our ears to hear what the Spirit says to the church of Thyatira and Christ City Church today? Pray with me as _____ comes to read our text this morning.

PRE-SERMON READING | 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.'

SERMON |

Our final Lenten letter is to the faith family in, and I quote a sentiment echoed across all scholarship on the subject, “*the least important of the seven cities* to which John is instructed to write.”¹ A city which history has passed over— literally, built over—and is all but forgotten. There are no ruins of Thyatira in museums, only scatterings across parks and vacant lots in the modern-day city of Akhisar, Turkey.

Unlike Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum, Thyatira could not boast of being the most influential, beautiful, or significant city. It was not the leading city in politics, economics, education, culture, civic pride, religion, or the like. Though Thyatira could not claim top billing in any area, it was a prosperous city. By all accounts, it was a city with plenty of jobs, space, and stability—a city organized geographically and socially around business.

Located along multiple trade routes, Thyatira was home to a host of artisans and industries, from bakers to painters, tanners to potters, and workers in wool, linen, and metal (chiefly copper). It was the home of Lydia, the dealer in purple cloth worn by royals and the wealthy. The same Lydia who moved to Philippi, where she met Paul and became an apprentice of Jesus, as Luke recounts for us in Acts 16. Because it was a trade city, Thyatira became known for its many trade guilds, shaping the city’s economic and social life. Guilds controlled different “squares” or districts in the city’s structure, providing associations for mutual profit and a social fabric where the artisans’ lives were weaved. Like the other cities, making a good life was presumed to be contingent upon a blending, merging, or marriage—if you will—to the city’s ideals, structures, and systems that worked a life and made life work for the envisioned good of the participants.

Most of these trade guilds paid homage to the city’s gods, Apollo and Artemis, who, along with Ceaser, were marked as “the Sons of Zeus” on the local coinage. Like any good networking group, these guilds were not all business but also communal, throwing parties and festivals to honor their trade and the gods of their craft. While our modern minds picture debaucherously pagan parties in which every participant, caught up in the gyrations of cultic worship, is partaking in every form of lustful and twisted perversion and gratification, the historical data suggests a much milder picture. Indeed, honor was paid to the divines for the industry’s prosperity, and the unused parts (usually the good parts!) of sacrificial offerings made a delicious meal. Still, the parties were focused as much on social business as they were on the spiritual. Perhaps that’s where the heart of the issue sprang, in the rather pedestrian collusion of vocation, friends, **and faith under the cultural norms and values.**

Unlike in Smyrna, there was “no threat of persecution [hanging] over the Thyatiran church,”² yet there was *the issue of living like Jesus in the roles and relationships of everyday life.* **What would it look like to follow Jesus’ words and way amid the religion of a good life?**

Stuck in a reasonably good city with a sufficiently good economy, the faith family of Thyatira had to navigate loyalty to the words and way of Jesus amid the economic and social constructs of ordinary life. It sounds a lot like our lot today! To a family of faith living enmeshed in their city’s economic and social structures under the spirit of their cultural moment, living amid one kingdom while loyal to another, even in the least significant

¹ J.L. Trafton, *Reading Revelation: a literary and theological commentary*, 41.

² William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, 112.

city with the most ordinary of challenges, Jesus writes his most lengthy and ornate correspondence. Beginning with his most magnificent self-description.

To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. (2:18)

Remember, Jesus' addresses always begin by acknowledging the complex reality of the church's existence. The church is both the seen people and the unseen spirit/angel. The church is never just what we see; neither are our everyday roles and relationships. Even in the ordinary locale of Thyatira, there is more going on than our eyes can see. Luckily for the church, Jesus' eyes penetrate much deeper than our perceptions.

Jesus always "introduces himself with a description...**that most suits the situation of [that specific faith family].**"³ To understand Jesus's relevance to the context of this faith family, we need a few dots connected to what would have been familiar passages and pictures for first-century Christians (especially ones with Jewish backgrounds). This means we will read a lot of scripture, so stay with me!

The first thing we notice about Jesus' self-description is the title, "the Son of God." We read or hear that title and glance over it, for it is common for us to refer to Jesus in this way. However, Jesus doesn't call himself the Son of God in any other place in the Revelation. So, perhaps Jesus wants us to pick up on the title's uniqueness and remember where we'd heard it before.

For those who learned to read, write, and worship through the Psalms, they'd hear Jesus' words and think Psalm 2. Along with Psalm 1, the shepherd king, David, paints the picture of how life really is, shaping the foundation of reality from which we learn to pray. As we read this psalm, notice how Jesus references several phrases, ideas, and images throughout his letter to Thyatira.

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? [Why does the good life in God sometimes feel like a battle with the rest of life?]

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, [the people and places of authority and power seem to set the "game of life" in opposition to the Way, the Truth, and the Life] saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." [It's as if the making of a good life happens when we are not bound to God but independent/autonomous to pursue what every person wants/needs in the way that works best for us at this moment.]

He who sits in the heavens [that is, whose rule encompasses what we see and what we cannot see] laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. [Do we think life on our own would be better? Do we really believe we can win the game of life by rules set out by others like them?] Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set *my King* on Zion, my holy hill." [The truth is, there is another rule setter, the King of kings, God's King. Who is he?]

³ G.K. Beale, *The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text*, 239.

I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “*You are my Son*; [God’s Son is the King] today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, [not just “a” nation, but every nation his inheritance, under his authority and rule and care] and the ends of the earth your possession [everything in the world functioning for his purposes].

You shall shepherd⁴ [some translations say “break” or “rule”] them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” [i.e., Under His authority and care, He keeps what is out to destroy from being able to destroy entirely, breaking the cycles and systems, and is repeated nearly verbatim in Rev. 2:27.]

Now, therefore, O kings, *be wise; be warned*, O rulers of the earth. [Repent. God always gives an opportunity for repentance, a warning for wisdom to be heralded, honored, and refused. As Jesus did the “Jezebel” in today’s letter.]

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. *Kiss the Son*, [Be loyal to God’s Son] lest he be angry, and you perish in the way [die from the sickness of life on your own, as Jezebel and her followers/children do: Rev. 2:22-23], for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (Psalm 2)

Jesus’ self-description as the Son of God is the image of a King of kings penned by a shepherd king, claiming his heritage, the peoples, structures, and places of the earth as his own to shepherd in a way that breaks rebellion and protects life. In a city where the coinage depicted the “sons of Zeus” as the kings of a good life, Jesus is *the* Son of *the* God whose Kingdom encompasses all kingdoms, whose words and ways set the rules for a good life.

Jesus is King. He is also a Prophet with “eyes like a flame of fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.” Jesus having eyes aflame means he penetrates the source of our ordinary challenge and transforms it. Eugene Peterson says that,

“Christ’s gaze penetrates and purifies. He doesn’t look at us; he looks into us. We are not a spectacle to Christ; we are invaded by him.”⁵

To be invaded by Jesus is to be consumed by him; as the writer of Hebrews says,

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken [feet of burnished bronze], and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is *a consuming fire*. (Hebrews 12:28-29)

George MacDonald once said on this subject, “It is not that the fire will burn us if we do not worship...but that the fire will burn us until we worship...yea, will go on burning within us after all that is foreign to it has yielded to its force, no longer with pain and consuming, but as the highest consciousness of life, the presence of

⁴ Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, TNICOTNT, 90.

⁵ Eugene Peterson, *Reverse Thunder: the revelation of John & the praying imagination*, 34.

God.”⁶ Jesus searches our hearts and minds (v. 23) until we can live like him in the relational authority (loyally with royal responsibility) over the world He has made for us to live, move, and have our being, as he does (vs. 26-27).

Two passages in Daniel help us recognize the gracious foundation of Jesus’ X-ray ruling. The first is Daniel 2, where Daniel describes and then interprets a dream of Nebachnezzar (the earthly ruler of a kingdom opposed to God’s people and his rule). Notice the description of the “great image” and how it differs from Jesus’ image and why that matters.

You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, *its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.*

[Verses the bronze feet of Jesus. Bronze being a mixture of iron and copper.]

As you looked, a stone was cut out *by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.* Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. [The stone, which was not made of human hands, proved more stable and eternal than the great image.]

And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. [There is no denying that the mixed kingdom has its apparent strengths and advantages, but it is a fragile existence.] As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another *in marriage*, [we’ll come back to the importance of this marriage and mixing with Jezebel shortly] but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. [The marriage doesn’t turn out for the betterment of either, for wholeness and flourishing.]

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall *break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever* [breaking to rule, so that the goodness of God’s kingdom should fill the earth]. (Daniel 2:31-35, 42-44)

The mixture of iron and clay can not hold, but bronze (the mix of iron and copper (a commodity of Thyatira)) is sure. To a city/kingdom that is by all appearances stable, Jesus is the one who reveals their instability and establishes a firm and forever base: His life, His words, His way.

Now to Daniel 10, which combines the two features of Jesus and tells us why he has come.

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks [because of the difficulty and lengthiness of being in one kingdom and loyal to another, for the longing of seeing God’s kingdom restored and whole.]. I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river

⁶ George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons*, 44.

(that is, the Tigris) I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, *his eyes like flaming torches*, his arms, and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, [i.e., Jesus of Thyatira] and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground. And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.

And he said to me, "O Daniel, a man *greatly loved*, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, *for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.* (Daniel 10:2-12)

Because the Thyatiran church had set their heart to understanding life with God, were humble and hungry for the rule and reign of Jesus, His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, this is how Jesus revealed himself as the Son of God with eyes aflame and feet firmly established in this world. We know they were hungry for God's kingdom, like Daniel, because of how Jesus encouraged them.

I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. (2:19)

Jesus is "thoroughly acquainted with the labors of love the believers in Thyatira..."⁷ Their "works" are making the good life in love through faith, service, and endurance (hope). James, Jesus' brother, calls this work, this making a good life in love, fulfilling "the royal law."

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. (James 2:8)

The men and women of Thyatira are living the good life; they are acting royally, taking part in their heritage by participating in Jesus' kingdom (witnessing his work) amid another kingdom. And they were not merely sharing in Jesus' work and witness; **they were growing, maturing!** As one commentary notes, "The church could receive no greater praise than that given in the words 'your last works are greater than your first.'"⁸

Unlike Ephesus, who stagnated because they lost their first love, the women and men of Thyatira were becoming more and more like Jesus in their "works." They looked and lived more like Jesus, abiding in and

⁷ Kistemaker & Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 137.

⁸ Ibid.

bearing the fruit of love, letting their faith shape their everyday roles, responsibilities, and relationships within their communities and vocations. What higher compliment could you receive from Jesus?!

Yet, Jesus has something against them. None of us, even the mature (and maturing), are ever without the need for a heart check (an examination), for there is always something going on in and around us that we cannot see, but Jesus can.

But I have this against you, that you *tolerate your wife* Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and is teaching and deceiving my servants to *practice* sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. (2:20)

Okay, a lot is going on here in this chunk of the letter—more than we have time to parse out, but let me say a few things. First, just like in the last address, the real-time troublemakers within the community of faith are described with reference to a memorable OT story. So, the reference is figurative/metaphorical, not literal.

There is no literal Jezebel in Thyatira. It is also unlikely that the leader of this group was a woman—though it is not impossible, as women prophets were not unusual in the church in the first century. Whether a person, persons, or, more likely, an idea proliferated by persons, a manipulative force was coming amongst the faith family.

Second, and probably most apparent to you, is that the phrase, which in most of our English translations reads, “that women Jezebel,” is more accurately translated as “your wife, Jezebel.”

Again, this phrasing would help the hearer connect the dots back to the actual Jezebel, who was *married* to Ahab, the king of Israel. **She was married to the earthly royal meant to live loyally and act royally on behalf of God because of what was given to him by God.** In other words, the very thing the Thyatirans are praised for doing. The Thyatirans lived loyally and acted royally like King Ahab was meant to. And while their way of “ruling” was maturing in a different direction than Ahab’s, they, like Ahab, too, were being subtly manipulated by their wife “Jezebel” (someone/thing they had entered a union with) to question the sole “enoughness” of Jesus’ words and ways and thus to blend loyalties, which ultimately leads to acting disloyally (1 Kings 21:25-26).

Jezebel—and I think this is important—was the princess of Sidon, a people, and place whose lineage traces back to the Canaanite peoples of Genesis who were in collaboration with divine beings that were in opposition to the rule of God, the very ones whom the Psalmist says were trying to shake off his yoke and reset the rules for good and evil. So, Ahab, the one ruling on God’s behalf, joins himself with a person and people who are not just into “their truth,” or living a different but neutral way, but who was active in opposition to the one who gave Ahab his role and responsibility (i.e., freedom). And Jezebel was no dummy. She knew, as did Balak and Balaam, that the way to overthrow God’s kingdom—i.e., keep and expand their own—was not by direct force, but by seduction and deception—build a little alter here, let her priests and prophets mingle with theirs, and we can coexist in harmony. That is, until she had twisted the heart of Ahab and Israel in a way that gave her the authority and gall to go directly at the prophets of God. So through marriage, as Daniel said, the kingdoms mixed, and there was no foundation to stand on once they mixed.

There is no indication that Jezebel was a harlot or even promiscuous. While ancient religious worship often had—at least for some—a sexual layer, the inclusion of it was to point to the union of physicality and spirituality—the joining together of body and soul with the divine or Spirit. Throughout most of our scripture, that concept of a spiritual and physical union in the sometimes practiced sexual immorality of idol worship was metaphorical, a metaphor for adultery (notice that word in vs. 22), the cheating on God, with other gods, other ways of making a good life. In other words, they were submitting themselves to the authority and leadership of something/someone less than God—and their loyalty showed in their practicing of “her works” (2:22b).

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 [kill them with death, the end of our her sickness becomes their end too]. 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. (2:20-23)

God shows his patience by revealing himself, and thus, the people's hearts aligned with a similar spirit to Jezebel's so that they might repent. Turn specifically from “her works,” [a different way of making a life good] of looking for more than the words and ways of Jesus for life. They don't, and so they suffer the consequences of all who have tried to live life their way since Adam and Eve: separation from the source of life, i.e., death.

The issue in Thyatira was not much different from the issues in the other cities we've looked at: the accommodation of Jesus's way (works) with the way (works) of the cultural moment. Again, it is not the people who are the enemy (though they suffer the same fate as the one they follow—which is sad)—but the force behind their issue and the entanglement (adultery) of their hearts and minds.

There is a difference, though, and the difference in Thyatira is two-fold. One, they “tolerated” this teaching, which is called “deception.” This is the only place in the Revelation where the church is deceived. Usually, the ones deceived are the outsiders. The Greek word tolerate is more robust than what we initially hear. It is more kin to the idea of *passive affirming*. They allow something to happen out of laziness or unwillingness to stop it/stand against it. The issue (the heart and unseen forces issue) exists because they let it exist in their midst. And part of the reason may be the second difference.

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. (2:24-25)

While the Nicolaitans in Ephesus and Pergamum were a group that leveraged freedom as their means for accommodating to the culture, the group in Thyatira were leveraging “the deep things” of God (which were actually of Satan) to deceive. In other words, they were leveraging the maturity and maturing of the Thyatirans against them. They claimed in some way that there was more than the words and way of Jesus, deeper (more profitable, practical, more effective) ways of God that would free them to live well in the world they needed to discover. Deceived into thinking/believing/living as if Jesus' life (words, way, work) was just the beginning rather than the beginning, the middle, and the end. Yet Jesus says he didn't add to their burden of

following him but instead encourages them to hold fast to what they had and were doing. It is enough, more than enough, “blessed” and fruitful to keep the words and works of Jesus in love. To live by faith in service and patient endurance. Jesus, the King, sees our hearts and minds and has established his reign forever; he is satisfied, and those who keep his works experience what we have been gifted and created to be joyfully responsible.

The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will shepherd them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, in the same manner I have received authority from my Father. (2:26-27)

Quickly, the promise is two-fold. First, to have authority over the nations, to rule in God’s kingdom, in the same manner in which Jesus rules—which was through the power of God’s Spirit, in submission to the Father’s will, and through the loving sacrifice of his life for those who hated him, rejected him, and would rather live their lives apart from him. That’s why Jesus says the one who conquers is the one who “keeps my works until the end,” those same works that the Thyatirans were doing and encouraged to hold fast to—be with, be like, and do what Jesus did until he is here again! The way of Jesus is the way that lasts, and it is proven over time—ancient and everlasting. But that’s not all,

And I will give him the morning star. (2:28)

Second, they will be given “the morning star,” another way of saying, “I will give you myself.” The image is the “dawn of eternal life,” the light of Easter morning, or resurrection! Ironically enough, it is a phrase that links back to Numbers 24 and comes as a blessing from the one paid to curse. What the world wants, you get in Jesus, so don’t give up and don’t give in—make the good life within love, through faith, service, and with patient endurance (hope). “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (2:29)

REFLECTION |

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Examine me and know my disquieted thoughts. See if there be any grievous (harmful/out of alignment) way in me, and lead me in the way ancient and everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)

COMMUNION |

Almighty God, unto You our hearts are open, our desires known, and no secrets are hid; Make new and right the thoughts of our hearts and the response of our lives by the leading of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You and all that is Yours. Being perfected by love, let us worthily magnify your Name; through Jesus our Lord in us and through us. Amen

Song #3 – Rebel Heart by Lauren Daigle

Song #4 – Christ Was Lower Still by Porter’s Gate

BENEDICTION | Jude 24-25

As we rest in the day made for us, we prepare to enter into the work for which we are made [**LIGHT THE CANDLE**], remembering:

And now to him who can keep you on your feet, standing tall in his bright presence, fresh and celebrating—to our one God, our only Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Master, be glory, majesty, strength, and rule before all time, and now, and to the end of all time. Yes.

THE HEART OF IT | Jeremiah 17 is another OT text that speaks to the Words of Jesus to the faith family of Thyatira.

The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, [Where is there sin? While I am sure there are actions of sin, the home of sin, the stronghold of sin, is in the heart.] and on the *horns of their altars* [it's also in the representations of power and purpose], while *their children* remember their altars and their Asherim, beside every green tree and on the high hills, on the mountains in the open country [i.e., practice what they see as Jezebel's children do (Rev. 2:20)].

Your wealth and all your treasures I will give for spoil as the price of your high places for sin throughout all your territory. [What you wanted to gain through these practices will be taken away, and hard times, tribulation, will befall you (Rev.2:22).] You shall loosen your hand from *your heritage* [There is that word again. But it is not just to God's Anointed, but "your" legacy. His people's inheritance. The word spoken to the King of kings is assumed to also be for the King's people. They, too, were meant to partake and participate in the heritage, to live with royal responsibility.] that I gave to you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger, a fire is kindled that shall burn forever. [Like last week, not lively loyally and royally puts you on the wrong side of what you are after.]

[What's ultimately the issue?] Thus says the Lord: Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, *whose heart turns away from the Lord*. [Same issue as the "world" leadership/structures in Psalm 2.] He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. [He will not flourish.]

[What is the solution?] Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit. [Some of the people in the church of Thyatira do not trust that following the words and way of Jesus will get them all of what they want and need. They think that to flourish, they must take advantage of the structures (and spirit) their cultural moment makes available. Looking not to his words and way but to the advertised and assumed ways of life constructed within their good enough but not eternal city. Does it sound like us? And again, where does the issue reside?]

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick [the source of their sickness is not God but their heart, like Jezebel and those married to her (Rev. 2:22-23)]; who can understand it? [Good question, since we've seen that we, the church, are not always keen to see our hearts.] *I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.* [As Jesus said in verse 23, there is no being self-deceived with God, no infection that won't be exposed, no way of living that won't prove whose way you are following. No walking the wrong way in which you won't be encouraged to turn around. No making of a life that will not be proven out/tested to show what that life really is, temporal or forever.]

Like the partridge that gathers a brood that she did not hatch, so is he who gets riches but not by justice; in the midst of his days they will leave him, and at his end he will be a fool. [What you are after and think you find (a good life) eventually leaves you, makes you feel like a fool. Isn't that true for the good life our culture sets for us?]

A glorious throne set on high from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary. [Again, those who trust the Lord get to rule, take part in the heritage, to rule as Rev. 2:26 says.] O Lord, the hope of Israel, all who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be written in the earth [i.e., die], for they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living water. [they die of thirst, having left the source of life itself.]

(Jeremiah 17:1-13)