

Thyatira





- Military outpost protecting Pergamum
- Center for the Trade Guilds



Modern Ak-Hissar or Akhisar

- The name "Thyatira" means "the castle of Thya"
- Ak-Hissar is Turkish for "white castle"
- Re-foundation of a small settlement on the Lycus River as a military outpost by Seleucus I about 282 BC.



Interesting note about the name:

Because the message to this Church includes a reference to "**that woman, Jezebel**" (Rev. 2:20), many believe that the name *Thyatira* comes from the Greek words, *thea*, "a female deity, goddess," and *tyrannos*, "a tyrant or ruler." In this way they conclude that *Thyatira* means "ruled by a woman."

There are others who say the name comes from *thuo*, "to sacrifice" and means "continual sacrifice" and refers to the martyrdoms at the hand of the Romans.

IDOLATRY/DEMON WORSHIP

- Before it was rebuilt by Seleucus, it was regarded as a holy city.
- It had two temples:
 - 1st was the temple of the ancient Lydian sun-god/demon, Tyrimnos.
 - Macedonian name for the Greek god Apollo.



IDOLATRY/DEMON WORSHIP

- 2nd was a temple dedicated to the worship of the Chaldean goddess, Sambethe.
 - At this temple was a prophetess who was well known in the city and who claimed to receive knowledge directly from the pagan god. She then imparted this information to the worshippers who came to the temple.
 - Some suggest that this well known prophetess was represented as the Jezebel referenced in Rev 2:20.



The Lycus River



Archaeological remains of the ancient city are preserved in a fenced off archaeological park (*dark square*) in the "Tepe Mezari" area of downtown Akhisar.



Thyatira road and architectural fragments



Remains of a portico which once stood on the west side of a column-lined street.

... ΤΟΝ ΔΟΜΙΑΝΟΝ
... ΤΟΝ ΤΙΕΡΟΝ ΟΜΗΡΟΥ
... ΑΝΤΑ ΤΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΚΥΡΗΝΗΙΟΝ
... ΤΟΝ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΑ ΜΑ
... ΕΥΣΕΒΗΕΥΤΥΧΟΝ
... ΤΟΝ ΥΠΕΡΤΕΛΕΥΧΟΝ
... ΚΑΙ ΤΗ ΤΥΧΟΝ
... ΤΗ ΣΤΑΛΙΔΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΗ ΤΥΧΟΝ
... ΤΗ ΑΡΑΤΗΣ ΘΕΙΑ ΤΥΧΗΣ ΑΥΤΟ
... ΤΗΡΟΝ ΑΙΩΝΑ ΕΙΣ ΕΛΛΑΣΤΙΚΟΝ
... ΑΥΤΟΥ ΣΤΕΙΟΝ ΤΡΟΠΥΘΙΟΝ
... ΕΙΣ ΑΠΑΣΑΝ ΤΗΝ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗΝ
... ΘΙΝΑ ΦΕΙΣ

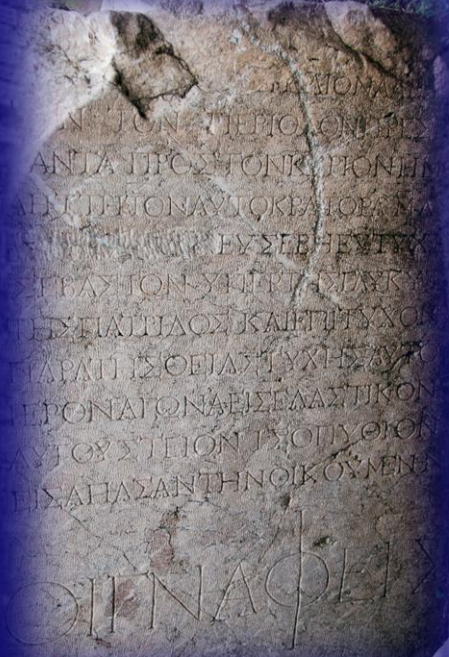


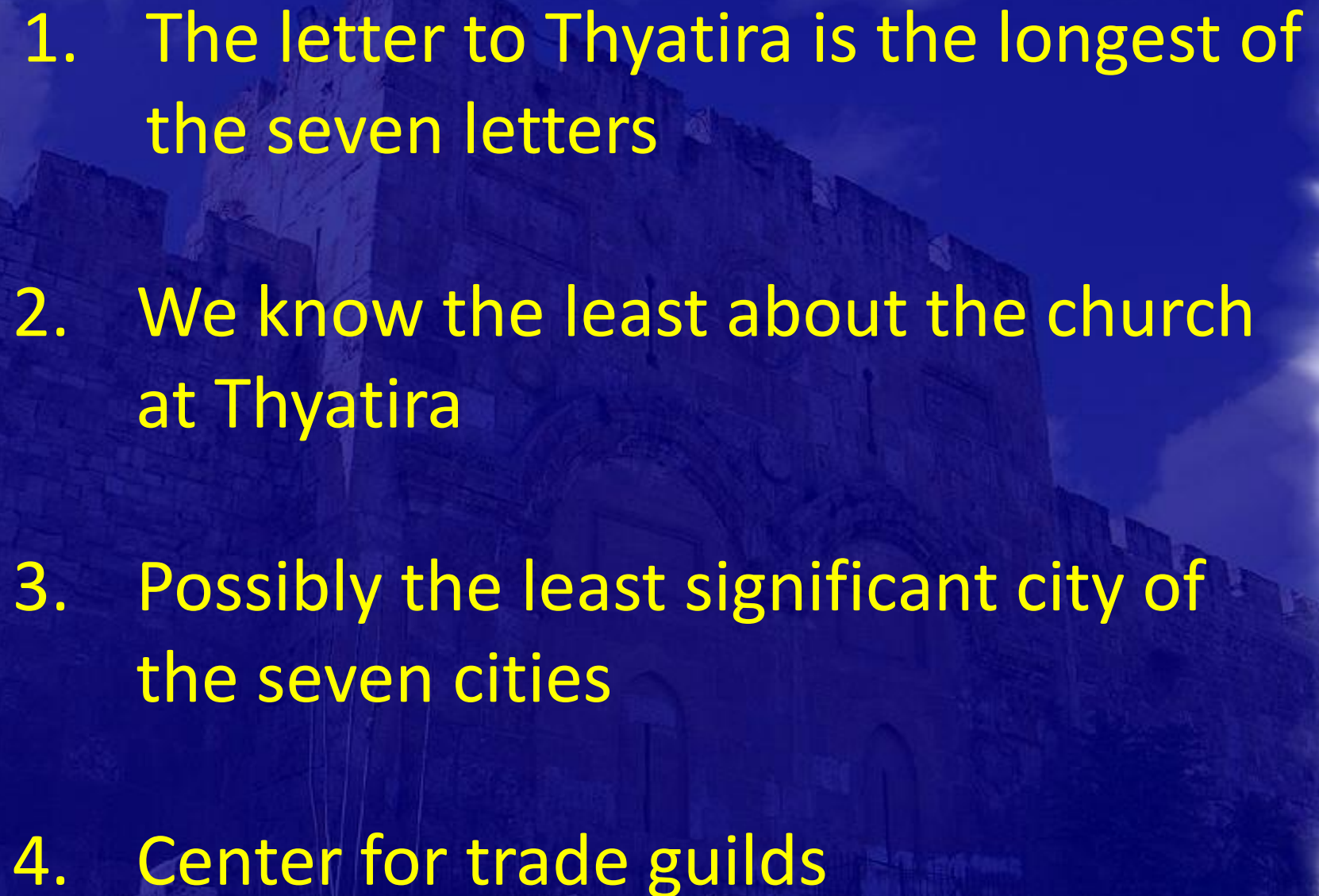
A Greek inscription lying among the ruins. On the fifth line from the top, notice how the emperor's name has been scratched off the inscription (*damnatio memoriae*)!

Could it have been the not-to-popular Domitian (A.D. 81–96).

Damnatio Memoriae

- Latin Phrase literally meaning "condemnation of memory"
- A judgment that a person must not be remembered.
- A form of dishonor that could be passed by the Roman Senate upon elites, emperors, traitors or others who brought discredit to the Roman State.
- The result is to erase someone from history.



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1. The letter to Thyatira is the longest of the seven letters
 2. We know the least about the church at Thyatira
 3. Possibly the least significant city of the seven cities
 4. Center for trade guilds

The city of Thyatira is mentioned four times in the Bible

1. Acts 16:14
2. Revelation 1:11
3. Revelation 2:18
4. Revelation 2:24



Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods
(Acts 16:11-15 ESV)



Acts 16:11-15

Thyatira was a “blue collar” town

- Thyatira was an important center of activity. It was on the ancient roads from Byzantium (Istanbul) to Pergamom, Sardis, Ephesus.
- It was and still is famous for its dyeing. Among the ruins, inscriptions have been found relating to the guild of dyers in that city in ancient times.



“...no where else is the water so well suited for the dyeing of Fezzes to Turkish Red, than that of the Lycus River.”





During Roman control, Thyatira derived its strength and wealth from being in a central place for communications. Archaeology has turned up many Thyatiran coins indicating a thriving commercial system.



Coin from Thyatira (c. 2nd-1st centuries BC) with head of Zeus and winged thunderbolt within a wreath



Coin from Thyatira with head of Apollo and double-headed battle-axe, similar to those represented on Hittite sculptures.



Coin from Thyatira with a bust of Septimius Severus (r. 193-211 AD) and two standing figures: Asklepios of Pergamum on the left facing Apollo Tyrimnos, the patron god of Thyatira.

Active Trade Guilds in Thyatira

- Wool workers
- Linen workers
- Makers of outer garments
- Dyers
- Leather workers
- Tanners
- Potters
- Bakers
- Slave dealers
- Bronze smiths

More trade guilds have been identified as existing in Thyatira than in any other Asian city of its time.

Identification:

[18] “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.

1. The identity the Lord.

- The Son of God
 - The only time this phrase is used in Revelation
- Eyes like flame of fire
- Feet like burnished bronze
 - Daniel 10:6
 - Contrast to Apollo?

Commendations:

[19] “I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.

- A hard working church
- A loving and faithful church
- A church that perseveres and continues to work
- A church who ministers to those in need

Conclusion:

This is a good church!

Food for Thought

How does the concept of an all seeing God make you feel?



Complaint:

[20] 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.

- Same problem as Pergamum
- That Women
 - γυνή/ *gynē*
 - Pastor's wife?
 - Prophetess at temple of Sambethe
- Dilemma:
- Choose Livelihood & Financial resources for self & church, or
- Choose faith and loose livelihood



2 Kings 9:30

Food for Thought

Does the church's toleration of the woman described as Jezebel represent the culture of our world?

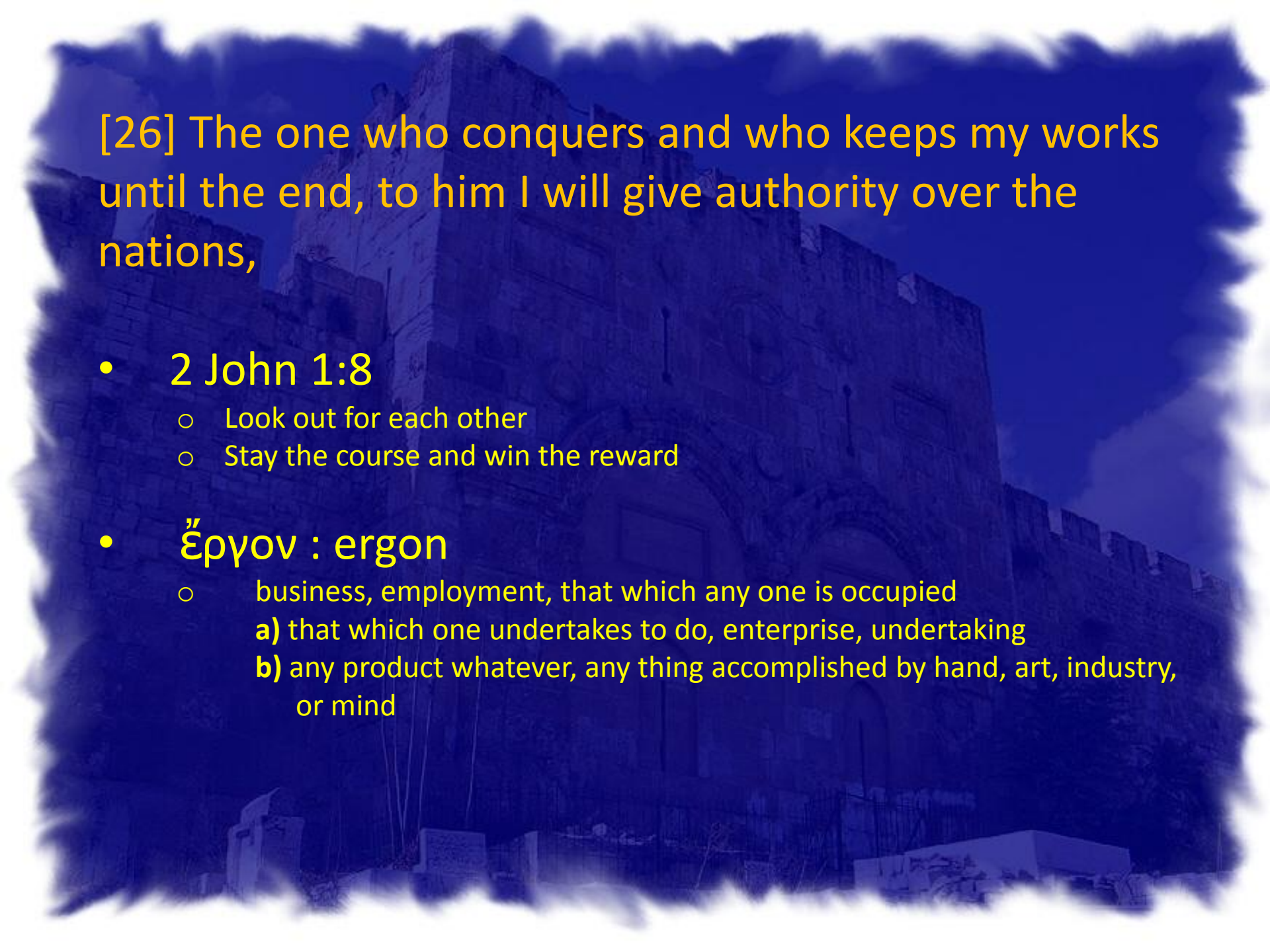
- Inclusive
- Tolerance
- Non-Judgmental
- Accepting different versions of the "truth"

[21] I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. [22] 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, [23] 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.

- Jesus warning to the members
 - Gives a time to repent
- 1 Kings 21:25
 - Incited/urged to worship idols
- James 4:4
 - Choose friend or foe

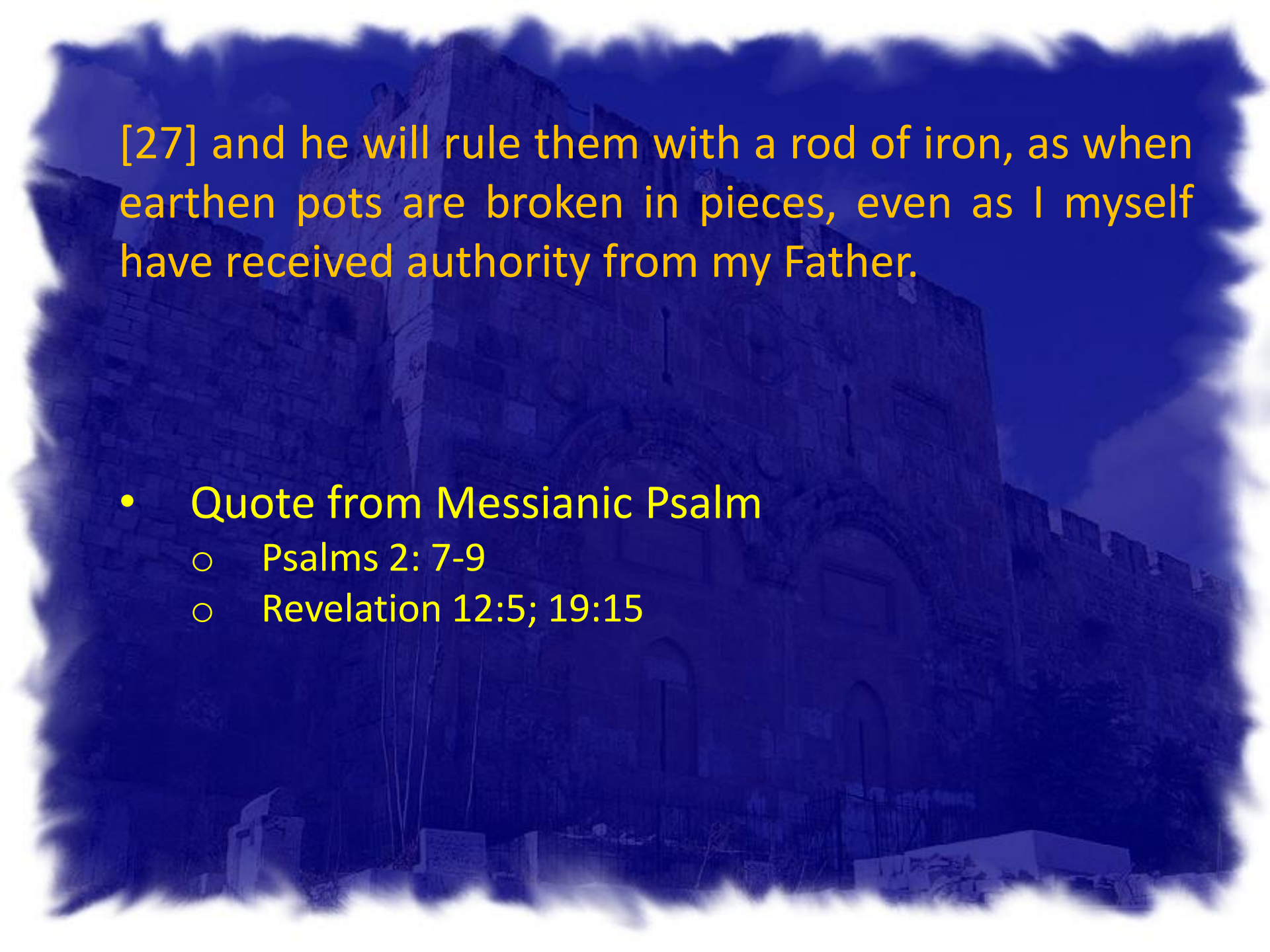
[24] But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. [25] Only hold fast what you have until I come.

- Jesus speaking to the faithful members
 - These did not compromise
 - These resisted sexual immorality
 - These resisted eating food sacrificed to idols
 - They do not know Satan's deep secrets
- Hebrews 3:13-14
 - Uplift each other
 - Hold fast



[26] The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations,

- 2 John 1:8
 - Look out for each other
 - Stay the course and win the reward
- ἔργον : ergon
 - business, employment, that which any one is occupied
 - a) that which one undertakes to do, enterprise, undertaking
 - b) any product whatever, any thing accomplished by hand, art, industry, or mind



[27] 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.

- Quote from Messianic Psalm
 - Psalms 2: 7-9
 - Revelation 12:5; 19:15

[28] And I will give him the morning star. [29] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- Refers to Jesus Himself (the Morning Star)
 - Rev:22:16
 - 2 Peter 1:19
 - Holy Spirit
 - “God’s guidance and leadership in the dark hour of trials” *Summers*
- What is the practical application that can be made for today’s church from this letter?