

The Remnant in the Central Letter to Thyatira and its Wider meaning in Revelation

Seventh-day Adventists have focused their remnant reflections on the remnant (*loipos*) of Rev 12:17. However, Rev 12:17 cannot be fully or rightly appreciated unless the first usage of the concept in Rev 2:24 elucidates the term. This paper explores the function of the term “remnant” (Rev 2:24--*loipos*) in the letter to the Church at Thyatira in the book of Revelation. This first appearance of *loipos* in Rev 2:24 reflects the local experiences of the persecuted people of God by the congregation’s false teacher, Jezebel and provides the interpretive framework for 12:17. The term in 2:24 also alludes to the covenant-in-crisis conflict at Mount Carmel within the Elijah cycle of the Old Testament (1 Kings 17, 18) and Jezebel’s war against the faithful of Elijah’s day. Thus, the first appearance of the remnant in Revelation evokes the salvation-versus-apostasy history of the Old Testament and portends the coming globalized war of the enemy powers of the Revelation upon God’s endtime people pictured in 12:17.

First, we look at the context of salvation in the Apocalypse. This context is important to gaining a thorough appreciation of this first usage of the term. Then we examine the term in the context of the letter proper. Finally, we examine the historical backgrounds and associated theological themes evoked by the term *loipos*.

The Context of Salvation in Revelation

The word remnant (*loipos*) occurs three times in contexts of salvation in Rev 2:24, 11:13, and 12:17. Therefore it is appropriate for us to examine the overarching salvation context of Revelation in preparation for the specific examination of the three aforementioned texts. New Testament scholars have documented how extensively the concept of salvation is expressed in and throughout the New Testament.¹ *Soteria* (salvation) refers to the state of being delivered from mortal danger or eschatological wrath in the broader New Testament.² According to Louw and Nida, the verb form *soteria* (‘to save’) carries the following three different meanings: (1) To rescue from danger and to restore to a former state of safety and well being; (2) to cause someone to become well again after having been sick; and (3) to cause someone to experience divine salvation--to save.³ Being more than a reclamation of salvation from Emperors and heathen deities,⁴ salvation in Revelation is associated specifically with the remnant in the following three ways:

1. ***The salvation of Revelation’s remnant is the expression of God’s power and authority.*** The victorious acclamation of Rev 7:10 confirms this fact⁵ by juxtaposing salvation and God’s sovereignty. The throne image in Revelation presents God the as the “Lord God”⁶ whose dominion is established through His might and power. Examples of narrative content in Revelation that recall God’s applied power on behalf of His people are evident in the appropriation of creation imagery from Genesis (cf. Gen 1:1; Exod 20:8-11; and Rev 14:6-7); the deliverance imagery of the Exodus (cf. Exod 15:1-3; Rev 12:14; 15:1-4); and the regnal (i.e., reigning) imagery of the eschaton (cf. Dan 2:44; 7:27; Rev 11:15). Thus, Bauckham was right when he wrote, “The theology of Revelation is highly theocentric. This, along with its distinctive doctrine of God, is its greatest contribution to New Testament theology.”⁷ This leads us to the second insight into salvation provided in Revelation.

2. ***In Revelation, the remnant experiences salvation through the paradoxical effectiveness of the Lamb’s victory.***⁸ Sweet states that “everything the New Testament says about Christ’s death can be brought under the headings of sacrifice and victory, and both stories are necessary for a full statement of the truth.”⁹ In fact, in Revelation they are intertwined

Revelation's portrayal of humanity's deliverance is illustrated in the indomitable weakness of the Lamb image."¹⁰

"Lamb" is both a cultic and subversive image for Christ. *Arnion* (i.e., "lamb") narrates the victory-through-lamb-like-suffering paradox expressed in the salvific career of Christ in Revelation. John supports this theme of the Lamb's victory through suffering by including a unique, end-time theology of the Lamb in Revelation.¹¹ Salvation is accomplished by "victory through sacrifice."¹² On this point, Beale asserted, "The slain Lamb thus represents the image of a conqueror who was mortally wounded while defeating an enemy. . . . He was physically defeated but spiritually victorious."¹³ As the prevalent symbol for Christ in Revelation, the image of the "lamb" also recalls the cultic sacrifices of Israel's covenant history.¹⁴

Further, since the theme of the Lamb's victory through suffering pervades the entire book of Revelation, the foundation for salvation in Revelation is grounded in the Messianic conquest of evil. Therefore, suffering (1:9), persecution (12:17; 13:1-13), and even martyrdom¹⁵ (2:13; 6:9-11; 20:4) is presented in Revelation as ironic, though victorious, pathways to the *imitatio Christi*,¹⁶ the imitation of Christ! This leads to the third manner in which salvation is presented in Revelation.

3. *Salvation for the eschatological remnant reflects covenantal continuity with saved Israel.* As an expression of covenant continuity, Old Testament language, titles, and events previously applicable to Israel are reallocated to Christ and His *ekklesia* in the New Testament. The New Testament explicitly establishes the identity of soteriological Israel through believers' faith in the Christ event.¹⁷ The fulfillment of the priestly vocation of Israel in Exod 19:4, 5 reappears in the believer priest/king images of Revelation.¹⁸ The Day of the Lord--with its "great earthquake" and other cosmic phenomena seen in Isa 13:12, 24:18-20; Joel 1:15, 2:1-2; Amos 5:20; and 8:9--becomes the Lamb's "day of wrath" in Rev 6:12-17.¹⁹ Thus, the oppositional powers of Israel's past history--Babylon, Sodom, and Egypt--become images of the eschatological opponents of God's end-time people (cf. 13:2; 14:8; 16:9; 18:1-24).²⁰ And the eschatological Exodus becomes the departure image of God's people from Babylon.²¹

But in what ways do the eschatological people of God share a similar covenant continuity with soteriological Israel? Revelation points out two ways in which the covenant connection is evident. The first indicator is seen in the explicit attribution of covenant language to the remnant. The second indicator comes through allusion to the covenant-in-crisis tradition of the Old Testament. We will look briefly at these below.

The Eschatological Remnant and Covenant Continuity

The first indicator that the remnant in the context of salvation stand in covenant continuity with soteriological Israel is imbedded in the covenantal language of 12:17. The eschatological remnant are described as those "*tereounton tas entolas tou theou*" ["the ones keeping (or holding) the commandments of God]. This Greek word *tereo* (to keep or guard) occurs sixty times in the New Testament. *Tereo* points readers to the commandment-keeping dimension of the Old Testament's covenant tradition.²²

Further, because 12:17 unites commandment keeping with "the testimony of Jesus" (12:17), the "keeping of the commandments" in Revelation reflects a unique Christian law-keeping. Swete's comment on 12:17 is correct when he says "the writer sees that obedience to the Law does not constitute sonship without faith in Christ. It is those who possess both marks with whom the Devil is at war."²³ However, so that none in his day would be confused,

John in 12:17 did not construe law-keeping as Qumranic or as Pharasaic legalistic particularity.²⁴ Covenant obedience in 12:17 is intimately associated with faith in Christ the Lamb (see 12:17b).

The second way in which the covenant election obligations of Israel are indicated is through allusion.²⁵ Jezebel in 2:24 images this covenant-crisis history of Israel in 1 Kgs 17-18. Old Testament Jezebel personified the violation of the covenant in 1 Kgs 19:10. She instigated persecution of the faithful of Israel’s prophets. Thus, the commendation of the *loipos* in 2:24 for resisting Thyatira’s subversive doctrinal teaching forms a thematic parallel with the “seven thousand” untouched by the “religious infidelity” embodied by Jezebel.²⁶ Before presenting research on 2:24, table 1 displays an overview of passages in which remnant language is employed by John. What follows table 1 is a deeper analysis of 2:24 in its appropriate literary and theological contexts.

We now turn to the first occurrence of *loipos* in the context of salvation found in Rev 2:24. We begin with the translation of Rev 2:24 where *loipos* appears in the Letter to the Church of Thyatira (Rev 2:18-27).

***Loipos* in Revelation 2:24**

Translation and Textual Consideration

(24) But I say to you, ***to the rest (tois loipois)*** who are in Thyatira, as many as do not embrace this teaching, everyone who has not learned the depths of Satan as they say; I will not put upon you another burden.

Revelation 2:24 represents no major difficulties for translation. Thus, we move to examine the literary structure of the passage.

Table 1 Summary Comparison of the Remnant in Salvation Contexts

	Rev 2:24	Rev 11:13	Rev. 12:17
LITERARY/ THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT	7 Churches/ Salvation Commended for Resistance to idols, fornication	Between 6 TH and 7 th Trumpet Judgment/ Plague unleashed on humanity Two witnesses’ ministry	Eschatological War of the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet on the Remnant
OT BACKGROUNDS	1 Kgs 18-19	Zech 4:1-10	Gen 3:15
ASSOCIATED ERA	Historical	Culmination of the 1260 Days and the Era of Two Witnesses	Post-1260 Days 42 months Final Crisis Reign of the Dragon, Beast, False Prophet
COMMENDATION FOR THE FAITHFUL <i>LOIPOS</i>	“I will add no other burden; I will grant you authority over the nations; I will give you	None recorded	“Here is the Patience of the Saints” (13:10; 14:12)

	the morning Star”		
RESPONSE OF THE REMNANT	None recorded	Repentance in the wake of the judgment on the city	Faithful Followership of the Lamb and Commandment Keeping
	None recorded	“Gave Glory to the God of Heaven”	Resistance of the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet’s Persecution and Deception
FUNCTION OF PARTICULAR PASSAGE ON THE LOIPOS	Redemptive	Exhortative/Redemptive	Summative/Exhortative
	Designed to encourage repentance and resistance to continued compromise	Designed to show the contrast between 9:20 and 11:13 in the face of judgment	Intended to encourage churches to persevere in the face of present and future persecution

Literary Context and Structure of Revelation 2:18-29

A significant amount of scholarly research has been done on the letter/epistolary section of Revelation.²⁷ That Rev 2:18-29 is epistolary material is widely supported.²⁸

Some scholars have further argued that the pattern of epistolary chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation are better understood as “prophetic letters.”²⁹ These 7 communiqués are organized around the phrase *tade legei* “thus says” (see 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). This pronouncement formula appears in the royal decrees and imperial edicts of Roman magistrates and emperors.³⁰ Hadorn thought that this prophetic orientation was reminiscent of Amos 2-3.³¹

Recent research, however, on the 7 letters has set aside many of the earlier source and form critical proposals in favor of a “prophetic letter” model which accounts for the influence of Graeco-Roman epistolary forms with content material driven by the prophetic concerns of the exalted Christ of John’s vision.³² In fact, a number of scholars assert that the letters in Rev 2-3 do not rigidly replicate the broad features of any ancient literary form.³³ As such, in Revelation the pattern of the seven letters follows a basic literary schema.³⁴

Most important, the seven churches form a chiasm in which the letter to Thyatira with its message to the remnant in 2:24 sits purposefully within the central panel of the chiastic structure of Rev 2 and 3.³⁵ Thus, the faithful remnant community stands as the central image of the people of God in the first half as well as in the second half of Revelation. The chiastic structure of the seven letters indicates that Thyatira’s message of judgment against God’s enemies and His salvation for the faithful constitutes the emphasis of the letter section--a critical contribution to the remnant teaching of Revelation. The remnant image in 2:24 sets the framework for a later global expansion of the eschatological remnant theme in chapters 11-19,

when global Jezebel in the form of the seductress in Rev 18 persecutes the faithful people of God in the later sections of Revelation (cf. 11:13; 12:17-14).

Further, the importance of Thyatira and its remnant message is also seen in two constants that relate to the remnant in 2:24: (1) the *oida* (knowledge) of Christ, and (2) the encouragement to *ho nikon* (the “overcomer”).³⁶ These two constants transform the letters into much more than restricted local epistles, but communiqués that become, as Schüssler Fiorenza observed, “proclamations of Christ to the whole Church.”³⁷

Such universality is also reinforced in the auditory formula “whoso hath ears, let him hear.” This formula calls persons in every church to heed each message to each church.³⁸ And not only does the formula make each message instructive beyond its local context, Beale describes how “the hearing formula was one of the means by which he called out the remnant from among the compromising churches.”³⁹ Thus the commendation of the remnant in 2:24 not only reinforces the faithful resistance of the remnant in Thyatira, but also becomes a heuristic proclamation for all the churches in Asia Minor.

Next, we turn to look more closely at the historical and Old Testament backgrounds to the remnant in the church at Thyatira. This research has identified two significant backgrounds that influence the reading of 2:24: (1) the influence of the trade guilds on the doctrinal corruptions affecting the community; and (2) the evocative influence of the Jezebel narrative of the Old Testament on understanding *loipos* in 2:24.

Backgrounds to Revelation 2:24

Trade Guilds at Thyatira as Historical Background

Thyatira was well known for its commerce and its trade guilds.⁴⁰ Guilds had a patron god, perhaps a representation of Apollo.⁴¹ Ramsay's research with inscriptions found that Thyatira had more trade guilds than any other Asian city.⁴² Paul's first convert in Europe was Lydia, a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:14) who may have had previous interaction with the guilds in Thyatira.⁴³

These Thyatiran guilds, however, proved problematic for the faith and practice of Thyatira's Christian population.⁴⁴ Morris explained their influence: "The strong trade guilds in this city would have made it very difficult for any Christian to earn his living without belonging to a guild. But membership involved attendance at guild banquets, and this in turn meant eating meat which had first been sacrificed to an idol. . . . That these meals all too readily degenerated into sexual looseness made matters worse."⁴⁵

Morris, as did Talbert,⁴⁶ rightfully connected the presence of the trade guilds to the economic condition of some in the church at Thyatira. Witherington saw that in Thyatira, “there would be considerable economic pressure on Christians.”⁴⁷ Why? Because the guilds were centers for both commerce and sexual immorality.⁴⁸ Thus, to be faithful believers in Thyatira meant their economic lives would have been impacted by the guilds’s inherent challenge of their loyalty to Christ (cf. 2:24; 12:17; 14:12).⁴⁹

Against this subtext of economic pressure versus faithful obedience in Thyatira, the local *loipos* of 2:24 points forward to 13:16-17 where the earth beast launches economic persecution against the end-time *loipos* of 12:17. The earth beast bars access to material necessities, goods, and services prior to the eschatological war (16:13-14). Interestingly, the use of economics as a tool of coercion in Rev 13 is seminally present in local Thyatira.

Old Testament Background

The second background critical to a correct assessment of the remnant in the Thyatiran letter comes from the Elijah cycle of the Old Testament. From the Hebrew Scriptures, to the LXX, to the Greek New Testament, the story of the remnant in the Elijah cycle is appropriated as a touchstone of remnant theology.⁵⁰ It contains Old Testament remnant language (1 Kgs 19:10, “*yttr*”; in the LXX “*hupoleimma*”). Commenting on the remnant in 1 Kgs 19:18, Wildberger asserts, “The remnant in this case is not merely an otherwise undefined group who assure the physical existence of the nation, but a group of the faithful who represent the core of the future people of God.”⁵¹ The same is true in Rev 2:24. The *loipos* in 2:24 represent the future of the church after the judgment promised in 2:22-23.

Further, regarding the Old Testament background to the Thyatiran letter, “Jezebel” evokes the confrontation between Ahab, Jezebel, and Elijah the prophet. According to 1 Kgs 16-21, Old Testament Jezebel was a wicked tyrant whose influence helped corrupt her husband, Ahab, and consequently signaled a war on the remnant of the nation of Israel, by promoting idolatry and pagan worship. According to Strauss, in the annals of Hebrew sacred history, “Her very name has come to be associated with evil.”⁵²

Interestingly, John uses the Jezebel figure in the Old Testament as a “prototype”⁵³ of Jezebel of Thyatira.⁵⁴ Hers was “a code-name”⁵⁵ intended to indicate an ideological affinity with the Old Testament namesake. As a self-named “prophetess,” thus indicating that she claimed direct authority from God, Jezebel of Thyatira taught “the deep things of Satan” (vs. 24).⁵⁶ Though the text is not explicit, there are many suggestions as to what the background to “*ta bathea tou Satana*” might be. Lexically, “*ta bathea*” is a substantive that describes so-called “insights” beyond the ordinary senses of human beings.⁵⁷

Some scholars see *ta bathea* as an Jezebel’s advocacy of “emancipation from traditional ethics” with a power to explore “hell, as well as heaven.”⁵⁸ One proposal suggests that “deep things” represents an early gnosticism.⁵⁹ Mounce, Charles, and Yarbro Collins thought that the background may be with the teachers of magical formulas used to control spirits.⁶⁰ Caird saw a policy of conformity to Satanic mystery religions that parodied Paul.⁶¹ Krodel thought that “deep things” may have been Jezebel’s claim.⁶²

To stay with the context as primary reference, it could be that “the deep things” may have been the positive evaluation that Jezebel and her followers placed on their own teaching.⁶³ Thus, the phrase “as they say” in vs. 24 would be Christ’s counter evaluation of their teaching. Further, if the ability to consult with Satanic cults or practices, including ritual fornication or

eating food offered to idols, was taught as a harmless experience by Jezebel to her followers, then other New Testament literature may help explain the term.⁶⁴ Jezebel's teaching, may have been underscored by an assumption that intercourse with evil was harmless for her "enlightened" followers. Tenney noticed that what was an "aberrant teaching" at Pergamum had become a "mystic cult" at Thyatira.⁶⁵ Thus the judgment threat of 2:22-23 appropriates graphically sexual language to describe the seductive Jezebel's denouement. Jezebel used sexual seduction to advance her doctrine. And God will judge her at the scene of the crime in her bedroom!

Having identified backgrounds to the text, we now turn to interpret the passage with special emphasis on the *loipos* of vs. 2:24.

Interpretation of Revelation 2:24

What follows below is a five-point summary of how Rev 2:24 contributes to an expanded understanding of "*loipos*" in the context of salvation:

1. This first usage of the term "remnant" in 2:24 is paradigmatic. In its local provenance, it reflects both **separation** and **division** within the *church*. This is consistent with the findings of chapter 2 of this research concerning the Old Testament remnant. Because no clues regarding whether *loipos* in 2:24 constitutes the majority or minority in Thyatira are provided, we can make no determinations about the remnant's quantity.⁶⁶ This ambiguity may be intentional, directing the emphasis toward the nature of the resistance of the faithful remnant and not on their number. However, the likelihood is that the remnant in Thyatira is a faithful minority, since the Elijah story constitutes its major biblical background.

2. Points of contact between Thyatira's Jezebel are verbally and thematically correlated with the universal Harlot of Rev 17:1-6. These parallels between "Jezebel" of Thyatira in Rev 2 and Queen Babylon in Rev 17 model and anticipate her apostatizing presence later in the book. Further, Jezebel's local **opposition** to the *loipos* at Thyatira previews the enemy's universal war with the eschatological remnant in 12:17 ("*meta ton loipon tou spermatos autou*").

3. The *loipos* of 2:24 reflect **resistance** to the deceptive teachings of Thyatira's internal religious enemies. This is consistent with the background of "remnant" theology alluded to in the Elijah-versus-Jezebel subtext exported from the Old Testament. Jezebel stands as an internal opponent of John and the church. By contrast, the *loipos* of 12:17 are persecuted by external enemies. The remnant of 2:24 and 12:17 "hold" (i.e., embrace) apostolic teaching and authority while the "*ta bathea*" conforms to the deception motif in Revelation.

4. The salvation of the remnant in Thyatira implies escape from the *judgment* pronouncement on Jezebel (2:22-23). That judgment is both punitive and heuristic in its intent (i.e., "all the churches will know").

5. Since the promise of eschatological *salvation* is extended to the *loipos* of Thyatira at the eschaton (vs. 25), that eschatological promise conflates separated eras under the single Parousia promise (see table 1; cf. John 14:1-3 delivered in the present tense "I come again"). This Parousia promise, by spanning prophetic eras, stands as an example of *trans-temporality* in Revelation. Revelation 2:25 connects the historical *loipos* of Thyatira with other parousia-expectant people of God across Revelation through receipt of the same promise beyond and outside of Thyatira (Rev 3:3; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20). Thus, the call to faithfulness in Thyatira is also a call to faithfulness for people of God beyond and after Thyatira. Because Mounce was correct when he wrote that "the people of God are one throughout all redemptive history,"⁶⁷ the

loipos of Thyatira symbolizes the remnant, locally *and* universally, historically *and* trans-temporally.

We now turn to interpret Rev 2:24 under the five aforementioned summaries: separation, resistance, opposition; salvation and judgment.

Separation in Thyatira

Christ introduces himself as “*ho huios tou theou*.” This is the only time in Revelation that this Christological title is used, though it occurs forty-six times in the New Testament.⁶⁸ Scholars see consonance between Revelation’s appropriation of this deific title and the title of Christ used in John’s gospel (see John 1:34, 49; 3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 20:31).⁶⁹ Jesus claimed this relationship to the Father during His ministry in Matt 11:27, 26:63-64 and Luke 10:22. Traces of the deific significance of this title may be seen in Rev 1:6, 2:27-28, 3:5 and 21, and 14:1.⁷⁰ However, Charles thinks that this title was influenced by Ps 2:7-8 since there will be a later reference to this passage.⁷¹ The rationale behind the use of this title may be twofold. Walvoord surmised that the severity of Thyatira’s situation called for a “reiteration of His deity.”⁷² Caird sees an apologetic agenda behind the use of the title, since Domitian asserted his emperor cults around the empire.⁷³ These two options, one internal to the church, the other external, are in fact complementary. This title connects the Thyatiran community and the remnant of 2:24 to the omnipotent deity of Christ expressed in the victorious language of Ps 2.⁷⁴ Once again, victory is signaled for the remnant.

The deeds of the Thyatira church point to four concrete qualities which are derived from the Spirit (cf. 2:19; Gal 5:22-23). In this list of four qualities, endurance is most significant because the word *hupomonē* (“endurance,” “steadfastness,” “perseverance”) is consistently associated with the remnant in the context of salvation in the book of Revelation.⁷⁵ *Hupomonē* functions as an *evocative* image in Revelation. When *hupomonē* appears, remnant subject matter is evoked (cf. 1:9; 2:2; 2:3; 2:19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12).

And how does *loipos* function in Thyatira? The first time in the book of Revelation that the exalted Christ spoke “*tois loipois*” (“to the remnant”) is in vs. 24.⁷⁶ He commended them for their willingness to stand apart from the rest of the church.⁷⁷ Walvoord commented on the separation of the remnant from the general church: “It is significant that having brought into judgment those who were evil in the church of Thyatira a special word is given to the godly remnant in this church. Here for the first time in the messages to the seven churches a group is singled out within a local church as being the continuing true testimony of the Lord. *The godly remnant is described as not having or holding the doctrine of Jezebel and as not knowing 'the depths' or the deep things of Satan.*”⁷⁸

In Thyatira, separation is necessary because the church consists not only of the remnant (*tois loipois*, vs. 24), but also of Jezebel⁷⁹(vs. 20), her followers (vs. 22), and her children (vs. 23).⁸⁰ This state of affairs in the Church reaches back to the division sayings of Jesus (e.g., Matt 13:25-30, 38-40, etc.). Ellul wrote perceptively: “There is a certain division between the members of the Church: The physical assembly of the Church contains members that Jesus Christ does not recognize as his own”⁸¹ Such separation is inherent in the affirmation of the remnant.

Thus, the first fact associated with the term *loipos* in the context of salvation is that *the professing general church is not identical with the remnant*. Revelation 2:20-24 exposes believers in the Thyatiran church who do not belong to the remnant.⁸² The remnant, therefore, is within Thyatira, but is distinguished from the permissive (*apheis* in vs. 20) general church of Thyatira. The *loipos* is associated with a distinct⁸³ category of the faithful in divided Thyatira.⁸⁴

We turn next to the points of contact between Jezebel and Queen Babylon in Rev 17 and 18 to show how these images relate to each other. Then we will examine how their opposition will meet remnant resistance associated with *hupmone*.

Opposition from Jezebel

Consistent with a 1 Kgs 18 background, the remnant of Thyatira are opposed by Jezebel. But they resist her teachings. Later in the book, resistance to the end-time remnant will come from a global Jezebel in Rev 17. It is clear that there are numerous parallels between oppositional Jezebel at Thyatira and Queen Babylon in Rev 17 and 18. Jezebel of Thyatira threatened the remnant by teaching believers two errors: (1) to fornicate; and (2) to eat food offered to idols. The Balaamites (a derogatory name for the Nicolaitians?)⁸⁵ also taught their followers to eat food offered to idols and to practice fornication (cf. 2:14-15). These parallels are displayed in table 2.

Table 2 Jezebel of Thyatira and Queen Babylon Parallels

Parallel	Jezebel	Queen Babylon	Texts
Theological Context	Judgment	Judgment	2:22/18:10
Spiritual Assessment	False Prophetess “deceives”	False Prophetess “deceives”	2:20/18:23
Presentation/ Appearance	Implied attractiveness-- “seduces my servants”	Outwardly attired in “purple” and “scarlet”	2:20/17:4
Moral Character	Harlot/Adulterer	Harlot/Adulterer	2:23/17:15
Cultic Practices	Eats defiled food	Drinks human blood	2:20/17:6
Old Testament Name	Jezebel	Babylon	2:20/17:5
Community	“her children” her “adulterers”	“Mother of Harlots” her “fornicators”	2:23/17:5 2:22/18:9
Divine Sentence: Destruction	“I will cast her into a bed of suffering.”	“Will be cast in the sea	2:22/18:21
Measure for Judgment	“according to your deeds”	repaid “according to her deeds”	2:23/18:6

First, consistent with Revelation, we see continuity and expansion between the images of Rev 2 and 17. Themes previewed in the Rev 1-3 are re-presented and expanded in 4-22. Both

the Jezebel and Queen Babylon images occur in the context of judgment. Where we find strong verbal parallels is in the nexus between Rev 2:20 and Rev 18:33. Here both Jezebel and Babylon *planao* practice deception. Jezebel “deceived” God’s local servants and Queen Babylon “deceives” all the nations. The trajectory between these two passages is from local to globalized deception. Therefore, Jezebel of Thyatira’s deceit is rightfully seen by Beale as “none other than Babylon herself in the midst of the church.”⁸⁶

At the point of character, both Jezebel and Queen Babylon are presented as sexually promiscuous in 2:23 and 17:15. Human sexuality is starkly dichotomized in Revelation. Faithfulness is imaged as sexual purity in passages like Revelation 12 and 14, whereas unfaithfulness is imaged as fornication in Rev 2 and 17. Thus, when it comes to the women of Rev 2 and 17, the same root stem *porn* (“*porneusai*” and “*he porn□*”) is used to describe their activities. Some commentators take 2:23 to preclude sexual sin, in favor of a spiritual application. For instance, Caird thinks that the Old Testament Jezebel was not immoral, and therefore sees 2:23 as spiritual apostasy.⁸⁷ Aune also thinks that the meaning here is apostasy.⁸⁸

However, while fornication has been an established Old Testament metaphor for spiritual apostasy,⁸⁹ given what we know about local guilds and local life in Thyatira, there is no reason to believe that real believers could not have been literal participants in the sexual immorality associated with Thyatiran guild culture. Thomas said, “The sins of participation in idolatrous feasts and sexual immorality were so characteristic of the pagan surroundings in Asia Minor that a literal sense is preferable.”⁹⁰ While I agree with Thomas on the probability of the physical seduction of believers, such an affirmation still recognizes the symbolic nature of the physical acts condemned in 2:20. Otherwise, another metaphor for the Jezebelean practice would be more useful.⁹¹

These and other points of contact in table 9 present a picture of Jezebel as the local personification of a global system of opposition to God’s end-time people--Queen Babylon. Thus, in 18:4 God’s people are exhorted to “Come out of her, my people,” “touch not the unclean thing” (Isa 52:11), and “partake not of her plagues” (see Jer 51:44). Beale said “Jezebel more precisely represents the apostate sector of the church through which the religious-economic system of the ungodly . . . makes its incursions into the church and establishes a fifth columnist movement.”⁹²

We now turn to the resistance of the *loipos* in Thyatira.

Resistance and the *Loipos*

In the Old Testament, the Jezebel figure further highlights the remnant’s resistance to idolatry. The Old Testament background (1 Kgs 17-18) points to a special feature of the remnant in Revelation.⁹³ Schüssler Fiorenza saw in the *hupomon□* associated with *loipos* the “consistent resistance” or “staying power” of the saints.⁹⁴ This same opposition to Jezebel points to the “remnant resistance” lodged in Thyatira. Kistemaker attributed their stance to the fact that they “adhered to the scriptures.”⁹⁵ Beale viewed this resistance in their decision “to continue holding fast their non-compromising stand until he comes.”⁹⁶

The image of Jezebel naturally places remnant resistance in the context of worship.⁹⁷ The Jezebel image points the reader of Revelation to the challenge and conflict between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18:16-40). At the center of the Carmel confrontation is allegiance to God or Baal. The choice is to worship idols or to worship God. The same issue of worship and allegiance to God is at the heart of this letter. As Jezebel, by

her teaching and influence, had plunged Israel into idolatry, so in Thyatira Jezebel personified a system of belief whose deviance from apostolic teaching undermined allegiance to God.⁹⁸

But the remnant in Thyatira represent determined resistance to doctrinal deviation. The resistance forces in Thyatira are described as “not having” her teaching. The word in vs. 24 for “have” is *echo*,⁹⁹ which across its more than 700 usages in the New Testament displays a remarkable array of meaning.¹⁰⁰ From “to have” to “holding” to “keeping,” this word *exho* (here combined with the particle of negation, *ouk*) conveys the sense of “not holding fast” or “not adhering to” Jezebel’s teaching in 2:24. According to Talbert, Rev 2:24 shows that the remnant refuse to assimilate.¹⁰¹

This first usage of *loipos* therefore should be seen as both proleptic and paradigmatic as it anticipates those who later in the book form a resistant coalition of covenant-loyal saints who refuse to conform to the will of the dragon, beast, and the false prophet (12:17; 14:12; 15:1-4; 20:4).

Judgment

Loipos is also associated with the Thyatiran promise of judgment, both local (2:22) and eschatological (2:26). Thyatira faces rebuke because of its tolerance of Jezebel.¹⁰² Jezebel personifies locally in Thyatira the synoptic apocalypse’s warnings against pseudo-prophets (Mark 13:5-6, 22; Matt 24:4-5, 11, 24). Jezebel, along with those Thyatirans responsive to her teaching, will receive a “punishment befitting the crime.”¹⁰³ Similar to the history of Jezebel in the Old Testament narrative, refusal to repent will bring retributive justice and judgment.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, “the entire group of her followers will be brought to an end, and *all the churches will know* by experience what they already know in theory, that the Lord *searches hearts and minds* and repays according to deeds.”¹⁰⁵

Once again the judgment theme appears in Revelation, but in this case, the remnant are promised eschatological reward based on their faithfulness. Compared to the rebuke to Ephesus (“You have forsaken your first love,” 2:4), an acknowledgment to Thyatira (“You are now doing more than you did at first,” 2:19) is quite significant. There is progress in the life of Thyatira. Whereas Ephesus has fallen away from its original spirit and enthusiasm, Thyatira has grown in love, faith, service, and patience.¹⁰⁶

This leads us the final facet of *loipos* in Thyatira--salvation. To this final dimension of *loipos* in 2:24 we now turn.

Salvation

The hope of eschatological salvation comes to the remnant of Thyatira in the form of a Parousia promise: “Only hold fast to what you have until I come” (vs. 25). Numerous commentators see vs. 25 as the second coming of Christ.¹⁰⁷ In the messages to the seven churches, the idea of “coming” occurs five times. 3 times the “coming” to the churches indicates judgment (2:5, 16; 3:3). These judgment promises appear to be a coming prior to the Parousia, but do not preclude final judgment as well.¹⁰⁸

In Thyatira and Philadelphia, two Parousia promises are made in 2:25 and 3:11 to two distinct communities, respectively. The word for “come” in 2:25 is $\square ch \square$. The New Testament employs this term in decidedly eschatological terms.¹⁰⁹ This promise however in Revelation is associated with the *loipos* of Thyatira at the eschaton/Parousia (vs. 25).

The expression *hosoi* in 2:24 clarifies the identity of “the rest (remnant).”¹¹⁰ But the

remnant are characterized by the fact that they did not hold to,¹¹¹ or participate in Jezebel's "deep things." The expression "*ta bathea*" indicates that the remnant are the ones who have not known the deep things of Satan.¹¹² *Ta bathea* ("the deep things") is a substantive that designates matters that are hidden and beyond human scrutiny.¹¹³ Thomas says, "It amounts to a claim of esoteric knowledge, perhaps even a superior morality, a higher law. If man is to know them, he must have supernatural help."¹¹⁴ The remnant do not know the deep things of Satan and, hence, refuse to participate in false worship or any type of Gnostic or mystery cult.¹¹⁵

Further, the remnant are connected to two phenomena. While the adulterers are cursed by the Son of God (vss. 22, 23), the salvation of the remnant is stipulated (vss. 24, 25).¹¹⁶ Judgment and salvation are implicitly juxtaposed by use of the same verb *ballo*, ("to cast," "to put") that appears twice in this unit. Regarding Jezebel, Christ says, "I will *cast* her unto a sickbed (vs. 22). This points in the direction of judgment. To the remnant He says, "I will not cast *on* you another burden" (vs. 24).¹¹⁷ This points to the language of the Apostolic council.¹¹⁸ The futuristic present of this verb expresses a "confident assertion about what is going to take place in the future [such that, it] is looked upon as so certain that it is thought of as already occurring."¹¹⁹

In the context of salvation, this first appearance of *loipos* indicates that the remnant is not exclusive. It is open to all in Thyatira who accept the offer to repent in vss. 26 and 29. The strongest criticism of Jezebel is her refusal to repent.¹²⁰ Repentance is twice offered to the idolaters (vss. 21, 22). Murphy points out that Jezebel's "time to repent" implies some sort of probationary period prior to her judgment.¹²¹ Interestingly, no adjective such as "*mikron*" (cf. Rev 17:1) or "*oligon*" (cf. 12:12) is connected with Jezebel's "*chronon*." This absence of an adjective suggests a period of generous duration. Swete concluded that Jezebel's heretical activity transpired during an extended period.¹²² Apparently, Jezebel had been appealed to for some unspecified length of time. In fact, the language is very clear: "She refused" or "chose not to" (*thelei*) repent.¹²³ The expression, "if they do not repent from their works" indicates that it is only when repentance is absolutely refused that punitive action will be taken.

Further, the concept of remnant in this passage has eschatological associations. The remnant are encouraged to "hold fast till I come" (vs. 25). This fact, together with the overcomers¹²⁴ who are obedient "unto the end" (vs. 26), highlights the concept of the eschatological remnant. The ideas of judgment (2:23) and the coming of Jesus (2:25) are also held together in Rev 22:12. Jesus says, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." It may also be noted that the first direct reference to the parousia appears in the letters to the seven churches and is found here (vss. 25-28). We also note that the first mention of *loipos*, as well as the first mention of the Second Coming of the Lord, is found in the letter to Thyatira. This underscores the nexus between the remnant theology and eschatology.¹²⁵

Finally, we must note that *loipos* is not necessarily a numerical minority.¹²⁶ The relative pronoun *hosoi* implies abundance and multitude, and as used here, it includes all those who are designated as "the rest" (remnant).¹²⁷ Also, *loipos* itself, as used in the New Testament, does not necessarily indicate a minority. For example, in 1 Thess 4:13, *hoi loipoi* refers to the pagan world which certainly is not a minority. In Rev 9:20, *hoi loipoi* encompasses two thirds of the whole earth (cf. Rev 19:21).¹²⁸ Ladd applies vs. 24 to a majority of the church.¹²⁹

Conclusion

The first usage of *loipos* in 2:24 stands in the central panel of the seven-panel chiasm in Rev 2-3. Thus the message to the remnant is central to the letter frame of Revelation. *Loipos*' central position sets the thematic framework in Revelation for how *loipos* will function in the later sections of Revelation. Nestor Freidrich in commenting on Rev 2:24 pointed out that the *loipoi* "underline the aspect of partiality, opposition, and conflict between those who uphold the witness of Jesus and those who follow the beast."¹³⁰ Thus, the themes of ecclesial separation, social and spiritual opposition, faithful determined resistance, local and eschatological judgment, and eschatological salvation are invoked by the first usage of *loipos* in the letter to Thyatira.

Further, the remnant are a faithful fraction of the church. Majority or minority is not the emphasis of Rev 2:24, but the faithfulness of the remnant. They resist Jezebel and her followers through their adherence to the apostolic faith. The remnant may have even suffered economic persecution because of the rejection of the guilds.

Endnotes

¹See I. Howard Marshall, "Salvation," *DJG*, 719-721; Gerald G. O'Collins, "Salvation," *ABD*, 5:907-914; Leon Morris, "Salvation," *DPL*, 858-862.

²Georg Fohrer, *AS* $\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha$, *s* $\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha$," *TDNT*, 7:1003.

³J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 21:18, 19, 27, 28. In Revelation, *s* $\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha$ occurs three times (7:10; 12:10; and 19:1). In each of the three cases the nominative use of *s* $\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha$ combined with the genitival use of *theos* suggests that salvation with its implications of deliverance, rescue, and victory is closely identified with God.

⁴Swete, clxvii. Leonard Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 134-136, traces the sources for evaluating Domitianism at the end of the first century. Bauckham, *Theology*, 34, says "The Roman Empire, like most political powers in the ancient world, represented and propagated its power in religious terms. . . . This conflict of sovereignties is often portrayed in the rest of Revelation by references to worship." See also Kistemaker, 34-36.

⁵Ford, *Revelation*, 127, concludes, "The cry in 7:10 'Salvation to our God who is enthroned and to the Lamb' is a cry of victory." Paul Ellingworth, "Salvation to Our God," *Bible Translator* 34 (1983): 444-445, concludes that *s* $\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha$ reflects the Old Testament concept of victory, and should be translated as such. The verbal parallel *phon* $\mu\epsilon\gamma\alpha\lambda\eta$ in 6:10 and 7:10 makes this cry similar to the martyrs. However, in 6:10 the cry was a cry for justice, but the multitude's cry is a shout of victory. So Osborne, *Revelation*, 320. Roloff, 98 sees a direct connection to the Old Testament where help comes only from God in Pss 3:8; 38:22; 42:11; and 43:5.

Scholars have noted that such festal implications in Rev 7:10 are clear, since Feast of

Tabernacles imagery stands behind 7:10. See J. A. Draper, "The Heavenly Feast of Tabernacles: Revelation 7:7-17," *JSNT* 19 (1983): 133-147; Hakans Ulfgard, *Feast and Future: Revelation 7:9-17 and the Feast of Tabernacles* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1989).

⁶Concerning the "The Lord God" designation, Walvoord, *Revelation*, 40, and Caird, *Revelation*, 19, have asserted that this self-designation might better fit Christ. Walvoord thinks that vs. 4 relates to God the Father. Ibid. However, the recurrence of the phrase "The Lord God" in the Old Testament (so Swete, 11), as well as its reiteration in vs. 8 indicates that vs. 8 is simply an amplification of vs. 4, with the addition of direct speech (37).

⁷Bauckham, *Theology*, 23. John opens his book with a salutation from the *Aho* \square *n, ho* \square *n kai ho erchomenos . . . tou thronou autou*" ["One who was, who is, and who is to come"]. Further clarification of the throne Deity is explicated in 1:8: "I am the Alpha and Omega, says the Lord God, the One who is and the One who was and the One who is coming, the Almighty." This passage is the first of only two direct voice self-declarations by God (the other being 21:5-8).

⁸Beale, *Revelation*, 353. Regarding sacred irony in Revelation, Beale submits that John is attempting to show "that it was an ironic manner that Jesus began to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's kingdom." Ibid.

⁹See Caird, *Revelation*, 74-75; Minear, *New Earth*, 67-69; Boring, *Revelation*, 111; Bauckham, *Climax*, 183-184. See also, Donald Guthrie, "The Lamb in the Structure of the Book of Revelation," *VE* 12 (1981): 64-71.

¹⁰J. P. M. Sweet, "Maintaining the Testimony of Jesus: The Suffering of Christians in the Revelation of John," in *Suffering and Martyrdom*, ed. W. Horbury and B. McNeil (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 114.

¹¹The blood that proceeded from the Lamb's wounds "loosed" humanity (1:5) by atoning for sin (5:6, 9). In that process, the Lamb died, but through death, overcame death (5:5-6). John's first vision of the Lamb depicts Him as wounded, but standing (5:6, 9). He is worthy of worship therefore because He paid the price of humanity's redemption (5:9). He now has been granted a dominion by God because of His sacrifice (3:21). With His redeemed subjects, the Lamb has created a kingdom and priesthood for them (5:10).

The demonic trinity will attack the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them because He is the invincible "The Lord of lords, and King of kings" (17:14). He will then return to judge the enemies of God (6:16). Those who follow Him wash their robes and make them white in His blood (17:14). He will take them to the security of His holy mountain (14:4). He invites them and any others who are willing to His marriage supper (19:9). But all do not accept His invitation (14:10). Over them, He will sit in judgment because their names are not written in His book (21:27). He will finally vanquish all opposition to His rule (17:14). After the final war, His followers will sing His song of victory (15:3). And He will sit as co-regent of the entire cosmos. He Himself illuminates an entire city for His followers (21:23) and Himself

serves as the city's temple (21:22). With evil fully vanquished, His cosmos and His people will be with Him, to follow Him wherever He goes (14:4).

¹²Mounce, *Revelation*, 144. See also Kistemaker, 210: "The Lamb slain to redeem his people symbolizes the voluntary sacrifice of the crucified Christ."

¹³Beale, *Revelation*, 351, 352.

¹⁴Keener, 187, n. 12, says "The earliest Jewish sources would think [of *arnion* in 5:6] especially of Passover or sacrifice." For a fuller treatment of Christ as Lamb in Revelation, see Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 367-373; Boring, *Revelation*, 111; Bauckham, *Climax*, 183-184; Beale, *Revelation*, 351. Mounce, *Revelation*, 145, is convinced that the image of the Lamb in 5:6 comes from Jewish apocalyptic imagery. However, given John's demonstrable reliance on Old Testament sources, such a suggestion overlooks the symbolic nature of John's visions. Horns as symbols of power are present in Old Testament apocalyptic. See Dan 7:21-25.

¹⁵See Reddish, "Martyrdom," 149-150, where he writes, "The author of Revelation views all believers to be potential martyrs. He does not, however, expect the entire church to suffer martyrdom. . . . John . . . accentuates the martyr and the martyr's rewards in order to prepare all believers to face the coming ordeal, even if it means death for them."

¹⁶See Caird, *Revelation*, 156; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 702; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:327; Roloff, 149; and Murphy, 291, for the significance of martyrdom as witness.

¹⁷LaRondelle, *Israel of God*, 103, writes, "Only in Christ could Israel as a nation have remained the true covenant people of God."

¹⁸See Rev 1:6; 5:10; and 20:6.

¹⁹For further discussion of the seismic activity mentioned in Rev 6:12, see Bauckham, *Climax*, 199-202, on "The Eschatological Earthquake."

²⁰More precisely, the historical plagues, as paradigmatic saving acts of Yahweh, become saving actions of the end-time fire and hail of Exod 9:23 recur in Rev 8:7; locusts in Exod 10:12-15 are seen in 9:14-15, etc. Moses and Elijah, agents of historical Israel's deliverance and witness, become *tupoi* (types) for God's eschatological activity in Rev 11:1-13. Balaam and Jezebel, historical seducers of Israel in the past, become symbols for the deception perpetrated on and within Christian congregations in the Pergamum and Thyatira of John's day (cf. 2:14 and 2:20). Even titles in the Old Testament that apply to Yahweh are shared with Jesus Christ in Revelation. Thus, the identity of ancient Israel is subsumed into the people of God in Revelation. The church has become eschatological Israel, and eschatological Israel is the end-time church.

²¹Bauckham, *Theology*, 70. Bauckham identifies the elements of the eschatological exodus as the Passover Lamb (Rev 5:6:9-10), and the new priesthood of Exodus 19:5-6 applied

in 5:9-10 to God's ransomed people. See also Mounce, *Revelation*, 184, who says, "As the plagues preceded the release of the children of Israel from their Egyptian masters, so also the plagues precede the Exodus of the church from hostile political powers." Emphasis mine.

²²In the Old Testament, there is a pronounced and the intimate relationship between covenant loyalty and observance of Yahweh's commandments. See Gen 18:19; Exod 15:26; 16:28; 20:6; Deut 4:2; 5:10, 29; 8:2, 11; 11:1, 8, 22; 28:9, 45; Josh 22:5; 1 Kgs 6:12; 14:8; 2 Kgs 17:13, 19; Neh 1:5, 7, 9; Pss 78:7; 89:31; 119:115; Prov 4:4; 7:2; Eccl 12:13; Dan 9:4; Zech 3:7. In summary, there is no covenantal relationship *without* the keeping of God's commandments.

²³Swete, 157.

²⁴Harald Riesenfeld, *AT□re□*, TDNT (1967), 8:144, argues that vital Christianity is linked in 12:17 and 14:12 to the keeping of God's commandments.

²⁵For instance, Beale, *Revelation*, 261, says regarding the remnant in 2:24: "This compromising teaching is explained by an allusion to the compromising relationship Jezebel had with Israel in the OT." In the letter to Thyatira, the imagery of Jezebel (2:20) evokes the covenant crisis of Israel in 1 Kgs 16:31 and 21:25 represented by the seduction and compromise of King Ahab. As King, Ahab should have been covenant adherent and leader (cf. 1 Sam 12:13-15; 15:11; 1 Kgs 2:1-4). Jezebel, a Phoenician, encouraged Ahab to worship Baal and the fertility goddess Asherah, and to construct a temple and a sacred pole (1 Kgs 16:31-33; 21:25; also 2 Kgs 9:30-37). Elijah's call to unfaithful Israel at Carmel in 1 Kgs 18:30, his rebuilding of the altar with twelve stones thus imaging the reconstitution of Israel (vs. 31), the calling down of fire (vs. 38), and an accompanying pledge of allegiance to Yahweh (vs. 39) point to the appeal for a renewed commitment to Israel's covenant.

²⁶Caird, *Revelation*, 44.

²⁷For examples, see A. M. Enroth, "The Hearing Formula in the Book of Revelation," *NTS* 36 (1990): 598B608; Ulrich B. Müller, "Literarische und formgeschichtliche Bestimmung der Apokalypse des Johannes als einem Zeugnis frühchristlicher Apokalyptik," in *Apocalypticism*, ed. D. Hellholm (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989), 599B619; E. Pax, "Jüdische und christliche Funde im Bereich der Sieben Kirchen der Apokalypse," *BLeb* 8 (1967): 264B278; William M. Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1895B97); J. Rife, "The Literary Background of Rev. II B III," *JBL* 60 (1941): 179B182; G. Rudberg, "Zu den Sendschreiben der Johannes-Apokalypse," *Eranos* 11 (1911): 170B179; C. H. H. Scobie, "Local References in the Letters to the Seven Churches," *NTS* 39 (1993): 606B624; William H. Shea, "The Covenantal Form of the Letters to the Seven Churches," *AUSS* 21 (1983): 71B84.

²⁸For examples, see David Aune, "The Form and Function of the Proclamations to the Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)," *NTS* 36 (1990): 204; Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Tübingen: J.C.B Mohr, 1926), 18, 181-183; Rife, 179-182; Caird, *Revelation*, 27-29;

Ladd, *Revelation*, 36-38; Beasley-Murray, 70-72; Sweet, *Revelation*, 77-78; Morris, 57-58; Court, 20-28; Beale, *John's Use*, 223; and Osborne, *Revelation*, 109 view Rev 2 and 3 as letters.

Scholars like Swete, 23-25; Beckwith, 446-448; Farrer, *Revelation*, 70-72; and Ford, *Revelation*, 373-375, stress the prophetic "message" dimension of the seven letters.

²⁹See F. Hahn, "Die Sendschreiben der Johannesapokalypse: Ein Beitrag zur Bestimmung prophetischer Redeformen," in *Tradition und Glaube*, ed. G. Jeremias, et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1971), 357-394; L. Hartman, "Form and Message: A Preliminary Discussion of 'Partial Texts' in Rev 1-3 and 22.6ff.," in *L'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament*, ed. Jan Lambrecht (Gembloux: Ducolot, 1980), 129-149; Ulrich B. Müller, *Prophetie und Predigt im Neuen Testament* (Güthersloh: Mohn, 1975); R. L. Muse, "Revelation 2-3: A Critical Analysis of Seven Prophetic Messages," *JETS* 29 (1986): 147-161.

³⁰Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 126-130; Lohemeyer, 21.

³¹Hadorn, 39-40; see also Lohemeyer, 19-20.

³²Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 119-125, on structure and proclamations; idem, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 274-279; David Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 242. Here Aune described the letters as prophetic proclamations modeled after royal edicts. See also Beale, *Revelation*, 224-225.

³³Hartman, "Form and Message," 142; Martin Karrer, *Die Johannesoffenbarung als Brief: Studien zu ihrem literarischen, historischen und theologischen Ort* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1986), 159.

³⁴See M. Hubert, "L'architecture des lettres aux sept Églises," *RB* 67 (1960): 349-353.

³⁵See Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in Formgeschichte* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), 337 who affirms that "the epistle to Thyatira is the centre of the series." Beale, *Revelation*, 226, forwards the following structure:

- a Ephesus--Loss of identity
 - b Smyrna--Faithful through persecution
 - c Pergamum--Some faithful, some compromised
 - d Thyatira--Some faithful, some compromised
 - c' Sardis--Some faithful, some compromised
 - b' Philadelphia--Faithful through persecution
- a' Laodicea--Loss of identity

However, a more accurate chiasm (see below) would reflect the fact that 2:23 and 24 contain one element that is missing from every other letter--a reference that "all the churches will know" of the judgment/salvation activity of the living Christ. Emphasis mine. That structure is as follows:

a Ephesus--Loss of spiritual passion--Afirst love.”

b Smyrna--Faithful through persecution

c Pergamum--Some faithful, some compromised

d Thyatira--Judgment/salvation of *loipos* (2:23-24)

c’ Sardis--Some faithful, some compromised

b’ Philadelphia--Faithful through trial

a’ Laodicia--Loss of spiritual passion

For more discussion on the chiasm in the seven churches, Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2001), 69, sees two triads, with Thyatira serving as the central hinge. Kiddle, 19-20, divides the churches into three paired groups-healthy, impaired, and bankrupt of spiritual qualities. Stefanovic, 76, compares the letter structure to seven-branched lamp stand, thus centralizing the Thyatiran letter. Beale, *Revelation*, 227, points to Christ the Judge in 2:23 as central. But the presence of *loipos* in 2:24 brings the judgment and salvation binomium together in both 2:23 and 2:24 of the Thyatiran letter.

³⁶These two constants, appearing in every letter, are therefore *Asupra*” contextual. They both transcend the local situations addressed while linking the local contexts to each other.

³⁷Schüssler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*, 52. Also, Beasley-Murray, 72; Roloff, 42; Krodel, 99; Witherington, *Revelation*, 90, all link these letters to Old Testament prophetic letters.

³⁸See Stephen L. Homcy, *A>To Him Who Overcomes’: A Fresh Look at What >Victory’ Means for the Believer According to the Book of Revelation*,” *JETS* 38, no. 2 (June 1995): 194. Here Homcy makes three convincing arguments for believing that the seven represent the entire church (1) seven is the number of completeness; (2) the refrain to each church is *AHe who has an ear, let him hear;*” and (3) experience tells us that the kind of issues addressed are found in the church throughout all ages.

³⁹Beale, *John’s Use*, 310. Beale also shows how the hearing formulas were modeled after Ezek 3:27 and especially designed to call out the righteous remnant (308-310).

⁴⁰Barclay, 1:102.

⁴¹Hemer, 109.

⁴²Ramsay, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, 324.

⁴³One theory of origin traces the beginnings of the Thyatiran church to Lydia. Lydia, together with her household, was baptized as a Christian through Paul’s preaching. She may have returned home to evangelize Thyatira and had a church in her house, as she did in Philippi. See Phillip Hughes, *Revelation*, 49; Hemer, 109.

⁴⁴Ladd writes, *A*It would be nearly impossible for a citizen to participate in trade and

industry without membership in the appropriate guild, and the question naturally arose whether a Christian could properly participate in such meals” (50).

⁴⁵Morris, 71.

⁴⁶Charles H. Talbert, *The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Revelation of John* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1994), 20.

⁴⁷Witherington, *Revelation*, 104.

⁴⁸Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*, 71, says, “You [Thyatiran believers] will be expected to attend the guild-festivals and to eat food part of which is offered to the tutelary deity. . . . Then, when the feast ends, and the real grossly immoral fun begins, you must not walk out unless you desire to become the object of ridicule and persecution!”

⁴⁹Talbert, 20. Talbert writes, “In Pergamum, Christians’ lives are threatened by the pervasiveness of the imperial cult, here their economic well being is threatened if their participation in the sacrifices by the guilds is not forthcoming.” Ibid. Refusal to participate would have forced Christians out of their society’s mainstream social events. For more information, see Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 34-42.

⁵⁰“Elijah’s lonely protest alone am left” (1 Kgs 19:10; cf. Rom 11:2, 3) and the divine response “I have seven thousand who have not bowed the knee” (1 Kgs 19:18; cf. Rom 11:4) establish this as an anchor passage for remnant teaching. See chapter 2 of this research.

⁵¹Wildberger, 1288. See also Latoundji, 573.

⁵²Strauss, 64.

⁵³So Ladd, *Revelation*, 51.

⁵⁴Morris, 70. “We may assume that the name is symbolic. Certainly no Jew would have borne it in view of the evils practiced by Ahab’s wife. ‘Jezebel’ had become proverbial for wickedness.” Ibid.

⁵⁵Philip Hughes, *Revelation*, 48.

⁵⁶Contextually, “*Ata bathea*” constitutes a deception. However, Braun, “*Plana*,” *TDNT*, 6:233, suggests that the term *plana* is often connected to sorcery.

⁵⁷See Joseph Henry Thayer, “*Bathos*,” *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: American Book, 1889), 93.

⁵⁸Beasley-Murray, 92.

⁵⁹Barr, *Tales of the End*, 58, saw Gnostics who could plumb the depths of Satan. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 207, saw in the phrase the possibility of “Agnostic motto.”

⁶⁰See Mounce, *Revelation*, 105-106; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:73; and Yarbrow Collins, 1002.

⁶¹Caird, *Revelation*, 44-45.

⁶²Krodel, 127.

⁶³Beale, *John's Use*, 264.

⁶⁴The epistle of 1 John had already entered into a polemic against persons claiming that they were without and could not sin (1 John 1:8, 10; 3:4-6, 8, 9).

⁶⁵Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, 63.

⁶⁶The *loiipoi* in Rev 2:24 may not be the necessarily smaller number. Swete, 45, noted that the rest (remnant) who have not been deceived by Jezebel of Thyatira are not necessarily a minority.” On the other hand, Minear, *New Earth*, 55, though offering no rationale for the assertion, argued that the *loiipoi* in 2:24 is probably a minority.”

⁶⁷Mounce, *Revelation*, 236.

⁶⁸Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 208-209. Lund, 337 points out that this is the only epistle in which the figure of Rev 1:14-16 is identified and *named*. John apparently saves the fourth panel of his chiasm in Revelation for naming the Christ figure. See also Lund, 338-339.

⁶⁹Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 208-209.

⁷⁰In cited passages, including 14:1, God appears as the Father of Christ. Cf. Alford, 4:573; Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 209; Sweet, *Revelation*, 98; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:68; Beckwith, 465.

⁷¹Charles, *Revelation*, 1:68. Cf. also Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (Gottigen: Vanderhoek & Ruprecht, 1906), 216; Lohse, *Die Offenbarung*, 29.

⁷²Walvoord, *Revelation*, 72. According to Walvoord, “The chief point of distinction in this description of Christ is that He is named the Son of God in contrast to the designation in chapter 1.” Sweet, *Revelation*, 93, sees closeness to the Father in activity and function.” Beckwith, 465, and Beasley-Murray, 90, thought that the title might connect with the royal Ps 2 used in vs 27. *Theology of the NT*, 248, sees in the title a correlation between his relationship to the Father and divine works--the works of God himself.”

⁷³Caird, *Revelation*, 43; Mounce, *Revelation*, 102. Also see Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 202, where he cites a letter from Augustus that began: >Autokrat□r Caisar Theou ‘L ‘Jouliou huiois

(emperor Caesar, son of the God Julius).

⁷⁴See Ladd, *Theology of the NT*, 250; Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions*, 67-68.

⁷⁵John considers himself a brother *Ain hupomonon* (1:9). In 2:2, 3, *hupomonon* is characteristic of the Ephesian church and is related with hard work and labor. Here in 2:19, *hupomonon* is associated with service. In 3:10, *hupomonon* is associated with Jesus' command for patience. *Hupomonon* in 13:10 and 14:12 is related to the faithfulness of the persecuted saints.

⁷⁶Morris, 73. Morris sees the *loipos* as "true believers" who have not been led astray by Jezebelean doctrine.

⁷⁷ Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 120, shows that the remnant of 2:24 are addressed as a particular group within the congregation." This is seen in a narrative shift of address from the dative singular *angellos* of 2:18, to direct address to the audience through use of the dative plural *tois loipois*.

⁷⁸Walvoord, *Revelation*, 76.

⁷⁹Jezebel of the Old Testament was part of the Israelites, since she married Ahab. As the prototype, therefore, Jezebel of Thyatira was also part of that church.

⁸⁰Bratcher, 29. "Some interpreters take children here to mean 'followers'. It may be better to stay with the literal meaning of the word; in this case her children are those she had by her lovers." Ibid.

⁸¹Ellul, 135.

⁸²Paul B. Duff, *Who Rides the Beast?: Prophetic Rivalry and the Rhetoric of Crisis in the Churches of the Apocalypse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 40, sees "another Christian problem" in Thyatira. However, that the rivalry takes moral overtones as is evidenced by the curse formula is seen in 2:21. The opposition led by Jezebel is in fact, non-apostolic resistance.

⁸³So Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 226: "As many as do not have this teaching' is the first way of clarifying the identity of 'the rest'."

⁸⁴Barr, *Tales of the End*, 58, points to a division in the community at Thyatira. Minear, *New Earth*, 55, considered Thyatira "another divided congregation."

⁸⁵Ibid., 122.

⁸⁶Beale, *John's Use*, 314-315.

⁸⁷Caird, *Revelation*, 44.

⁸⁸Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 204.

⁸⁹Old Testament concepts of unfaithfulness under images of harlotry are common in the Old Testament. Hosea 1:9: Rejoice not, O Israel . . . for you have played the harlot, forsaking your God.” See as examples Jer 3:6; Ezek 23:19.

⁹⁰So, Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 191, in speaking of Pergamum and the same charge against the Nicolaitans.

⁹¹Also, cf. Mounce, *Revelation*, 104, who says: ASince the eating of >things sacrificed to idols’ is undoubtedly intended in literal sense, it is best to take >commit fornication’ in the same way.” Ironically, no commentator read has Aspiritualized” the meat offered to idols mentioned in the passage--only fornication.

⁹²Beale, *John’s Use*, 311-312.

⁹³The remnant are distinguished by their refusal to participate in the sins of the harlot (1 Kgs 18:18; 19:18; cf. 2:24). Seeing the dominance of Baal worship and fearing Jezebel’s threat, Elijah lamented, AI am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too” (1 Kgs. 19:14). But God responded, AI reserve seven thousand in IsraelBall whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him” (1 Kgs 19:18). Interestingly, the *LXX* uses *kataleipo*, Ato leave behind,” or Ato reserve,” in speaking of these 7,000 remnant of faith. Their resistance, though unknown to Elijah, was acknowledged and regarded by Yahweh.

⁹⁴Schüssler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*, 191. She writes, AHere at this opposition between the worship of God, and that of the beasts, the *hypomon*□, that is, the >consistent resistance’ or >staying power’ of the saints, who keep the word of God and the faith of Jesus come to the fore.” Ibid.

⁹⁵Kistemaker, 140.

⁹⁶Beale, *Revelation*, 266.

⁹⁷For Morris, 71 AJezebel” refers to a Akind of problem” similar to the Corinthian problem. He sees the Christians under pressure to conform to the pressure of the trade guild banqueting customs in which eating meat offered to idols was a routine expectation that included sexual orgies. This might explain the highly sexualized imagery of the condemnation.

⁹⁸Sweet, *Revelation*, 94, says, AChristian prophetic women were a problem in Asia in the second century.” Sweet posits connection with Montanism, Ain which prophetesses were numerous and powerful.”

⁹⁹Hermann Hanse, *AEch*,” *TDNT*, 2:816-829.

¹⁰⁰*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon, AEch*,” Libronix Digital Library (Ontario, CA: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995).

¹⁰¹Talbert, 20.

¹⁰²Witherington, *Revelation*, 104. Witherington connects the mistaken tolerance for Jezebel to the fact that the Thyatirans had grown in love.

¹⁰³Carson, et al., 1430.

¹⁰⁴Morris, 72. “The Apunishment scene” is dramatic. Most take this to be a bed of sickness or pain. Austin Farrer, quoted in Morris, comments, “The punishment fits the crime--she who profaned the bed of love is pinned to the bed of sickness.” Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Carson, et al., 1430. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁶Ramsay, 245; Morris, 70.

¹⁰⁷See Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 93; Dusterdieck, *Revelation*, 153; Hoeksema, *Behold He Cometh!*, 108; Lenski, 121; Walter Scott, *Exposition*, 89; Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1944), 346; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 76.

¹⁰⁸This is evident in Rev 2:16 where the church in Pergamum is told to repent in 2:16, but at the same time, He promises to come against them with the Asword of his mouth.” This imagery is clearly Parousia associated in 19:11.

¹⁰⁹See Johannes Schneider, *Ach*’ *TDNT*, 2:927: “In the NT the word is used predominantly of the eschatological coming to salvation and judgment. Jesus looks forward (Mt. 8:11; Lk. 13:29) to the future of the kingdom of God and sees the Gentiles too having a share in it. In the same sense Mt. 24:14 contains a reference to the progress of eschatological events. First the Gospel will be preached in all the world and then the end will come. Revelation attests to the return of Christ in the word of the exalted Lord: *κ* (Rev. 2:25; 3:3). In 2 Pt. 3:10 the coming day of the Lord is announced with the terrible cosmic events which accompany it.”

¹¹⁰Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 225-226. “The second person pronoun *hymen* (>you’) names the addressees of Christ’s word of comfort, a designation that is further defined by the adjective *loipos* (>the rest’). This marks the faithful as those who had not been deceived by the cunning of Jezebel (cf. 1 Kings 19:18). The adjective does not necessitate that the remnant be in a minority. Possibly they were a majority in the church in light of the Lord’s praise for the church in 2:19. The group thus named is distinguished in two ways: they do not have the

erroneous doctrine of Jezebel, and they have not known the deep things of Satan.” Ibid.

¹¹¹Thomas points out that, *AKrate* is a common metaphor to describe strict adherence to a tradition or teaching either in a good sense (cf. 2 Thess 2:15; Rev 2:13; 3:11) or in a bad sense (cf Mark 7:3,8; Rev 2:14, 15).” *Revelation 1-7*, 230.

¹¹²Sweet, *Revelation*, 96, thought that “A deep things” could be an allusion to an incipient, proto-Gnosticism. He says, “A gnostically influenced Christian might indeed boast experience of the deep things of Satan because his ‘knowledge’ told him such things were unreal and harmless, or because he was so sure of his sinlessness that he considered himself immune beyond good and evil.’ The Ophites, who worshiped the serpent, and later, Gnostic sects, such as the Cainites, Carpocratians, and Naasenes may be counted among them.” Ibid. The remnant, however, composed a class of people who had not experienced the alleged deeper knowledge.

¹¹³Grimm, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. *Abathos*.”

¹¹⁴Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 227.

¹¹⁵See also Alford, 4:576; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:73; Robertson, 6:410; Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 226, who all believe that “*Ahoitines*” refers to a class or quality of persons.

¹¹⁶Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 230 says, “The best explanation is that the ‘burden’ upon the faithful is that of resisting the pressure of Jezebel and her group. Choosing to abstain from her evil practices doubtless resulted in ridicule. Christ promises to place upon them no burden other than continuing to stand against her.”

¹¹⁷Walvoord, *Revelation*, 76: “To the godly remnant, then, Christ gives a limited responsibility. The evil character of the followers of Jezebel is such that they are beyond reclaim, but the true Christians are urged to hold fast to what they already have and await the coming of the Lord.”

¹¹⁸Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, 63, sees the Jerusalem Council behind the “no other burden” phrase. Morris, 73, thinks that the phrase suggests no other burden of service. Morris’s suggestion could have merit because the graces for which the Thyatirans were commended included a growing service across time.

¹¹⁹James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1979), 80.

¹²⁰Minear, *New Earth*, 55.

¹²¹Murphy, 137.

¹²²Swete, 43.

¹²³Cf. Kistemaker, 139.

¹²⁴Thomas writes, "The substance of the promise to the overcomer in Thyatira, the only overcomer to receive a double promise, alludes to Ps. 2:8-9, a promise to the Messiah of victory over His enemies." *Revelation 1-7*, 232.

¹²⁵Cf. Walter Scott, *Exposition*, 80.

¹²⁶Thomas notes, "In 1 Thess. 4:13, *hoi loipoi* refers to the pagan world which certainly was not a minority. In Rev 9:20, *oi loipoi* encompasses two-thirds of the whole earth (cf. also Rev. 19:21)." *Revelation 1-7*, 225.

¹²⁷Grimm, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. *AHosos*."

¹²⁸Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 225.

¹²⁹Ladd, *Revelation*, 53.

¹³⁰Nestor Paulo Friedrich, "Adapt or Resist? A Socio-Political Reading of Revelation 2.18-29," *JSNT* 25, no. 2 (2002): 199.