

Revelation of Jesus Christ Study 17

Rev 2:18-29

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:

19 I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

24 Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

25 But hold fast what you have till I come.

26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations--

27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'-- as I also have received from My Father;

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." '

We are looking at the church at Thyatira, and we have learned from our study last week that this church was lacking in church discipline and that because of that they had running rampant in the church those who would subvert the gospel and try to wed it to pagan activities and worship.

The call was to repentance or suffer the consequences of their sin. Judgment would come.

We learned that the practice of church discipline that Christ instituted was to maintain holiness in the church and therefore had two purposes

- 1. To call sinning believers back to righteous behavior**
- 2. To purge from the church those who stubbornly cling to their sin.**

Again either purpose would lead to maintaining the purity of the church

We saw that the Correspondent was Jesus Christ who is depicted as the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass

His approach to this church is one of judgment for their sin. Eyes that see everything, and feet to trample out the sin.

He is the one sending this message to the church, He is the one who will judge the church.

We talked about the church itself which most likely began from the ministry of Paul in Ephesus. It was the church where Lydia and her family worshipped.

And we looked at the city of Thyatira with its different phases under different rulers at different times.

So now let's look at the commendation Christ gave to this church;

THE COMMENDATION

Rev 2:19

19 I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

As He had with the churches at Ephesus and Pergamum, Christ commended the church at Thyatira before voicing His concerns about it.

He assured them that He had not forgotten their righteous **deeds** (Heb 6:10) which he divided into four categories.

1st The believers at Thyatira were showing **love** for God and for one another, although that love was apparently fragile, since there was not a strong foundation of unified sound doctrine.

In some ways, Thyatira was strong where Ephesus was weak; in fact, it is the first of the seven churches to be commended for its love.

2nd Christ commended them for their **faith**. *Pistis* (**faith**) is better translated “fidelity,” or “faithfulness”

The true Christians in Thyatira were dependable, reliable, and consistent; faith and love are frequently linked in the New Testament:

1 Cor 13:2, 13;

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

2 Cor 8:7

7 But as you abound in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us--see that you abound in this grace also.

Gal 5:6

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Out of faith and love will grow service and perseverance.

3rd Service, those who love will express that love through service, meeting the needs of others. Their service was consistent

4th Perseverance, their faithful perseverance was growing stronger. They were growing in grace, maturing in their Christian lives, and advancing the cause of Christ.

1 Pet 1:5-8

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,

6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,

7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only did the Thyatiran Christians possess these virtues, but also their **deeds of late** were **greater** in number **than at first**.

Their loving service was becoming more consistent, and their faithful perseverance growing stronger. And for that behavior they were to be commended.

THE CONCERN

Rev 2:20-23

20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

Despite the commendations they received, all was not well with the church at Thyatira.

**The problem was not external persecution, but internal compromise;
Not vicious wolves from outside the flock, but perverse people from within.**

It was the very thing Paul had warned the Ephesian church about when he was on his way to Jerusalem.

Acts 20:29-30

29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

The penetrating gaze of the Lord of the church had discerned serious error, causing Him to warn them, “*I have this against you*”, The use of the singular pronoun points this admonition especially to the leader of the congregation.

The indictment is *“that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”*

The sin apparently involving the majority of the Thyatira church’s members was that they **tolerated the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess.**

They compounded their error of permitting her to teach by allowing her to teach error.

As a result, Jesus declares, *“she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols”.*

Jezebel undoubtedly was not the false prophetess’s real name, but like the infamous wife of King Ahab, she was Satan’s agent to corrupt God’s people

Therefore the Lord branded her with the symbolic name Jezebel.

God looks very seriously and considers it a very serious sin to lead other Christians into false doctrine or immoral living and gives it the more serious punishment.

Listen;

Matt 18:6-10

6 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

8 If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.

9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

10 "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

The little ones who believe in Christ are not physical children, but spiritual children, believers.

It is so serious to lead another believer into sin that the Lord said death by drowning was a better option.

The imagery of maiming oneself is language depicting the need for drastic action in dealing with sin.

We discussed the fate of the Old Testament Jezebel, and her judgment, it was a gruesome end.

2 Kings 9:30-37 gives us the account for those wishing to check it out.

The Lord gave the false prophetess at Thyatira time to repent, but illustrating the sad truth that people love darkness rather than light (*John 3:19*) she did not want to repent of her immorality.

Her blunt and final refusal to repent would lead to a terrible judgment, introduced by the arresting word **behold**.

Because Jezebel refused to repent, Christ declared **I will throw her on a bed of sickness**.

The words **of sickness** are not part of the original Greek text, but were supplied as conjecture by the translators.

In light of the finality of Jezebel's refusal to repent, it is more likely that the **bed** refers to death and hell, the ultimate resting place for those who refuse to repent.

Divine judgment was about to fall on not only Jezebel, but also on **those who commit adultery with her**. The Lord threatens to cast them **into great tribulation**, not the eschatological tribulation described in *Revelation 4-19*, but distress or trouble.

Christ also names a third group facing divine judgment, "**I will kill her children with pestilence.**"

These were not her biological children but her spiritual children.

The church was about 40 years old when John wrote, so that her false teaching had been around long enough for a second generation of errorists to have arisen.

As He did with Ananias and Sapphira, the Lord threatens to **kill** these errorists **with pestilence (Literally kill them with death)**

It was too late for **Jezebel**, her heart was hardened in unrepentant sin.

But the Lord Jesus Christ mercifully warns her disciples to repent while there is still time.

Again all of this judgment that is promised is revealing the heart of our Lord concerning the purity of the church.

When He judges He will receive glory and all the churches would know that He is the One who searches the minds and hearts.

It is now known how many in that congregation responded to Christ's warning, but tragically, the Thyatira church as a whole apparently did not heed it.

History records that it fell prey to the Montanist heresy (a movement led by a false prophet who claimed continuing revelation from God apart from Scripture) and went out of existence by the end of the second century.

Christ then addressed a word of comfort to those true believers in the Thyatira church who had not followed Jezebel's false teaching: **I will give to each one of you according to your deeds**.

Christ's unerring judgment would be based on each person's **deeds**.

So not everyone would be included into the judgment, those faithful would not be included.

Matt 16:27

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

Judgment must begin with the household of God (*1 Pet 4:17*)

But Christ's judgment will fairly reflect each person's deeds, a reality that should bring fear to those who teach and practice false doctrine, but comfort and hope to those whose faith is genuine.

THE COMMAND

Rev 2:24-25

24 Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

25 But hold fast what you have till I come.

Having warned the practitioners of false doctrine to repent, Christ addressed words of comfort **to the rest who are in Thyatira, who did not hold** to Jezebel's false **teaching**.

They are reminiscent of God's words of comfort to those in Malachi's day who feared being swept up in divine judgment:

Mal 3:16-17

16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.

17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him."

Christ further defines the true believers as those **who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them**.

On them, He promised to lay no further burden. They had enough in the way of burdens with the confrontation and discipline of those who would corrupt the church from within.

But He instructs them, saying; **what you have, hold fast until I come**.

1 Cor 10:12

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

In a wider sense, all believers are to "cling to what is good" (*Rom 12:9*) until Christ's return.

THE COUNSEL

Rev 2:26-29

26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations--

27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'-- as I also have received from My Father;

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." '

To the one **who overcomes (a true believer)**

1 John 5:5

5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

And keeps Christ's deeds until the end, Christ promises two things;

1st Christ will **give such people authority over the nations; and they shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces.**

This promise is taken from *Psalms 2:7-9*;

7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "

This promise is that they will participate in the Millennial reign of Christ.

Those who remain faithful to Christ despite being beaten and despised in this life will rule with Him in His earthly kingdom.

He will delegate authority to them as God has delegated authority to Him.

2nd He promises them **the morning star.**

We need to see Christ as the morning star here, so he promises Himself to them, His presence and all that that brings.

Rev 22:16

16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

2 Pet 1:19

19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

Christ promised believers Himself in all His fullness;

1 Cor 13:12

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

He is the One whom we "now know in part, we will then know fully just as we are known.

The concluding words, **he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches**, are a charge to heed the message of the letter to the church at Thyatira.

Three important truths stand out.

1st this letter reveals the seriousness of practicing and tolerating sin, and that God will judge continued and unrepentant sin in the church

2nd A pattern of obedience marks true Christians.

3rd God's gracious promise to His own is that , in spite of struggles with sin and error in churches, they will experience all the fullness of Christ as they reign with Him in His kingdom.

Those churches like Thyatira, who fail to heed the message will receive divine judgment; those who do heed its message will receive divine blessing.