

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

Message 12

Words: 6249

Scripture: Revelation 2:18-29

INTRO: We are dealing with the fourth of the seven churches the Lord had addressed in the book of Revelation. It is my view, as well as that of many others who hold to a pre-tribulational return of Christ, that these seven churches give us a prophetic overview of the entire church age. However, these letters first have their historical significance. They were meant for the readers of 2,000 years ago. Then they have a typical purpose. They typify a certain kind of church that may be in existence at any time in history. A church may be like the Ephesian church or the church of Smyrna etc. And last, they have a personal purpose. Each believer needs to see what part of any of these churches speaks of his or her life. If there is wrong, it needs to be repented of. Where there are commendations, the believer can learn what he or she should be living like.

We are presently in the historical purpose of the letter to the Thyatiran church. We have looked at some of the history of the city of Thyatira and some of issues that were there. We saw that strategically, it was in a place any army that was headed for the capital city of Pergamos would have to pass by. And so a band of soldiers was placed here to slow the advancing army down enough to give Pergamos a chance to prepare and fortify itself against the invading army.

Second, we saw that after Rome had more or less established the safety of the inhabitants that it became a place of commerce and it had many guilds, and we saw some of the dangers these guilds presented to the believers there.

This morning we want to look at the commendation and then at the criticism the Lord gives to the church at Thyatira.

3) The commendation (2:19)

We have come to the commendation of this church and what a commendation it is. Look at what the Lord says in verse 19:

2:19 I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

So consider now that for the fourth time the first thing the Lord does in the commendation is to commend them for their works. By now the message should come through to us that the works of the Church and the individual believers are very important.

As a matter of fact, by the stress on works here, one might easily come to the wrong conclusion that one is saved by works. Look at verse 19, "I know your works", and then at the end of the verse, "the last are more than the first." The plural in the original wording here indicates that *the last* refers to the works. And then verse 26, "And he who overcomes and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations."

But one must be ever careful to guard against two dangers. The first danger is to think our works determine our salvation. Turn to Matthew 25. It is easy to make the error that one is saved by one's works in such passages as we have in Revelation 2-3. The second danger is to understand that we are saved by grace through faith and come to the view that our works are unimportant. That is also wrong, and we learn that here. So we begin in Matthew 25:30:

31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

33 *"And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*

34 *"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

35 *'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;*

36 *'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'*

Would you not say it sounds like they are saved by their works? Now look at the lost in verses 41-43:

41 *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:*

42 *'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;*

43 *'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'*

Now one might conclude that they are going to hell because they failed to do the right works. But look at verse 32 once more. He sets the sheep on His right hand and the goats on the left, not on the basis of what they did, but on the basis of what they are. We notice they are separated on the basis of what they are; sheep or goats, not on the basis of what they did.

So follow this carefully. A sheep does not become a sheep on the basis of what it does. A sheep does what it does on the basis of

what it is. It does not eat mice or rabbits because it is a sheep. Sheep don't do that. Goats do what they do because they are goats. I saw a shepherd boy with some goats and sheep in Israel on my first trip there. And when he wanted to separate them he ran towards them waving his stick. The goats went flying and the sheep huddled into a bunch. They do what they do because of what they are.

I took care of my son-in-law and daughter's farm some years ago. And they said I should keep an eye on the one goat, it was due to have young at any time. Well, sure enough I came there one morning and there were two little goats. In the pen a root from a poplar tree protruded out of the ground about four inches, and the one little goat was trying to get all four feet on top of that root. It did that because it was a goat.

Well, the Lord says, *I know your works*. So Christians do what they do on the basis of what they are. Second the Lord says He knows their love. This is agapee love. I have spent much time in the past on the four Greek words for love and this is agape love. This speaks of a love the Greeks did not hold in high esteem. They exalted sensual love, *eros*. But, as I understand this, *agapee* love is the one love that is not based on feelings or emotions. It is a logical, fact based love. When we read the love chapter of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13, we equate that with the love between a husband and wife. So many who are getting married equate the love of that chapter with what they are feeling for each other, and they have missed the meaning of *agapee* love altogether. This church was known for their *agapee* love.

Strauss has an interesting comment. He says, "At once we notice a contrast between the church at Thyatira and the church at Ephesus.

Ephesus would not tolerate evil and was waning in love (2:2,4); Thyatira was gaining in love but tolerating evil. These two extremes are with us today. They have never departed from the churches" (64), end quote. There is a warning for us.

Second, they were commended for their service. Now the word is *diakonia*. Turn to Romans 16. You see, we get our word 'deacon' from this word. Deacons have a special area of service in the church. And from this word some have concluded that the early church had deaconesses. Romans 16:1-2 says, "I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.."

Now the word translated servant is *diakonos*. A deacon is a *diakonos*. So some have concluded that she was a deaconess. I won't take time to explain other than to say that Acts 6 specifically said they were to seek out seven 'men'.

Then the Lord commends them for their faith. And like the Church at Ephesus, He commends them for their patience, and we have had some study on the word *hupomee*. It means to bear up under. They carried some heavy things, but they bore up under the weight of those things. May I ask you this morning, what do you bear up under? What weight do you carry for the Lord's sake?

But then the Lord closes their commendation by saying that the last are more than the first. I mentioned earlier that this refers to their works.

4) The criticism (2:20-23)

The Lord had quite a lot of good things to say about this church, but we come to the ominous words, "Nevertheless I have a few things against you..." So we go to verses 20-23. In these verses we have some very serious issue to deal with. Verse 20:

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 fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols.*

21 *"And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, 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.*

Is it not amazing, almost beyond comprehension, that a church can have the commendation we just saw in a previous point, and find that they are so very sick within? By their commendation one would conclude, as I did years ago when I first studied this, that their works were a sign of a healthy church. William Barclay wrote this in the 1950's: "Here is a warning. A Church which is crowded with people and which is a hive of energy and a dynamo of activity is not necessarily a real Church. It is quite possible for a Church to be crowded, because its people come to it to be entertained instead of instructed, and to be soothed and petted instead of to be challenged and confronted with the fact of sin and the offer of salvation. A Church may be so full of

energy that it becomes a restless ferment instead of a haven of peace. A Church may be packed with many activities, but in the abounding energy the center may have been lost, and it may be a highly successful Christian club rather than a real Christian congregation. The state of things in Thyatira is something designed to give us searchingly to think" (129).

Well, we need to address three great issues raised in these verses. First, who is this Jezebel? Second, what is the meaning of what she taught? Third, what does it mean that she will cast into a sickbed and great tribulation?

-Who is Jezebel?

So our first question is, who is this Jezebel at Thyatira? There are a number of views and the Bible Teaching Ministry of Galwyn Miemers summarizes them like this. First, she is:

1) *The wife of one of the elders. The Greek word for "woman" and "wife" is the same word. In some ancient manuscripts the word "your" is found here, making the phrase read "your woman/wife Jezebel." This has led some to assume that Jesus is referring to the wife of one of the leaders.*

2) *The famous local prophetess at the shrine of Sambathe. (A female oracle called the Sambathe presided over a lucrative fortune-telling business. The preoccupation with female religion may have been an influence on this church, as it allowed the corrupt ministry of Jezebel.)*

3) *Lydia. "It has been suggested that, when Lydia returned to Thyatira, she found her Christianity clashing with her business interests and urged the church to the way of compromise and accommodation. That theory is merely a slander on Lydia!" (William Barclay, Letters To The Seven Churches, p. 60).*

4) *The name is merely symbolic, and does not refer to any one person but to a "corrupt faction" within the congregation (J.T. Hinds, p. 51).*

5) *A real woman in the congregation. Her real name may have been Jezebel, or she may have been called "Jezebel" because she exhibited qualities similar to the Jezebel of the OT. This view seems to be the most likely.*

Barclay concludes on these views like this: "The only reasonable conclusion is that we have no idea who this Jezebel was, although we can with certainty trace the kind of person she was" (131).

I was teaching a certain course in a Bible school once and a man around 35-40 years of age who had left his work to go to Bible school said, "I came to Bible School to get answers, and all I've got is more questions." When you set out to study many passages you find out there are no easy answers but there are a lot of opinions. And then we have to do what we are often not willing to do, and that is study. Here is one of those things we are not certain about, and that is who this Jezebel was.

I believe there was a very influential woman in the church at Thyatira whose methods of operation could best be likened to that very wicked woman in the OT whose name was Jezebel.

Who was the Jezebel of the OT? Turn to 1 Kings 16. She was the daughter of Ethbaal, who was the king of the Zidonians. She married Ahab, the king of Israel. That was around 850 years before Christ. She did not reject her father's belief and brought it to Israel. We begin in 1 Kings 16:30:

30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.

31 *And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.*

32 *And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.*

33 *And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.*

You will remember that she fed 450 prophets of Baal at her table. She killed all the true prophets she could lay her hands on. When Elijah had her prophets slain she threatened Elijah, and if ever a man of God was intimidated by a woman, it was Elijah.

Well, she succeeded in bringing Israel down further and further. So our second question is:

-What was Jezebel's teaching?

In light of this our second question is, what was the teaching of the woman referred to in Revelation 2 as Jezebel? Well, we are told in Revelation 2. Verse 20 says:

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 fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols.*

Now notice she taught and she seduced. She seduced through her teaching. What she seduced them to do was to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols. I would recommend this progression: 1 teaching.

2 seducing. 3 commit fornication. 4 eat things offered to idols. Through a progression she taught them that which would end them up in idolatry. The key issue is the word *fornication* and we will look at that in a moment.

But before we look at that, let me make a few other observations. First, the leaders in this church allowed her to teach the things she was teaching. When I was in a certain ministerial group, they had their wives present for the meetings and they had input just like the men. It is amazing how certain women can intimidate men. If you read of Jezebel in the OT, you will see how she could intimidate a king. When you allow certain things, you set yourself up for trouble.

Second, she called herself a prophetess. Now, it seems that God gave certain women in Scripture the gift to be a prophetess. There was a certain woman named Anna who was a prophetess and recognized Jesus as the Messiah when He was born. Philip, the evangelist had four daughters that prophesied. So, a prominent woman could have shown from Scripture that she was not usurping a forbidden ministry. But notice that the leadership in this church allowed her to go beyond the position she claimed. The Apostle Paul said, "I do not allow a woman to teach a man or to have authority over him." Notice as well that she was a self-proclaimed prophetess. She called herself that. Obviously they accepted that.

Now I set about to deal with the word fornication in our text. There were a few things I could not reconcile, and because of the difficulty of the subject matter and that the topic was hard to cover in an audience with children I left most of it out.

I further felt that at least much of this has to do with the metaphorical use of the word pornia. Barclay said, "The question is this - Is this reference to fornication to be taken literally, or, is it to be taken in the metaphorical sense which is common in Scripture? Is this reference to sexual immorality, or, is it to spiritual infidelity to God?" (Barclay 135). Now I think it could be both, but I want to deal with the metaphorical idea because it runs throughout the OT and is at least included here.

The metaphorical meaning of fornication or pornia means to worship false gods when one is or has claimed to be a Christian. It is unfaithfulness to God with other gods, rather than unfaithfulness in a physical sense. It is used like that many times in the OT.

So we begin with verse 20:

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 fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols.

I expect that this happened both literally, and it happened metaphorically. Because of the temple prostitutes that were so common among the Romans, very likely through them they were led into idolatry. This I believe happened with the doctrine of Balaam as well, and has in it the licentiousness of the Nicolaitans.

How could Christians of whom the good things that are said of this church, allow such things? It is amazing what liberalism can do. Some 10-15 years ago I read articles put out by the Bergthaler Mennonites of Manitoba, showing how God is not against homosexuality. It was amazing the arguments they put forth. But it is wrong, dead wrong.

So let me suggest how this woman might have taught. I want you to understand this is not what I believe, but what she might have taught. She might have taught along these lines:

Is it wrong to go to temple prostitutes? No! You misunderstand the Bible completely! Check the Bible. God never condemns any man, married or not from visiting such women. Adultery? Yes. God is very strong on that, but not this. If something is a sin, the Bible gives a consequence of that, but you will not read of any consequences for this. It is not a sin. As a matter of fact, this can really teach you wonderful things and help conform you to the image of Christ. Haven't you read about Judah? What did God say about that? Didn't the spies of Israel visit a harlot? Did she not save them? Surely if this was so bad God would have said so there.

Look at Samson. Look at whom he stayed with. And what did God say? Does not Hebrews 11 list Samson in the hall of faith? Did not God command Hosea to marry an harlot? He was in God's will! Only three passages in the OT forbid this profession and when you understand them you understand it is not for the reasons we think it was.

Oh no, let me show you from the Bible how the Holy Spirit can use this to bring great glory to God. Read the genealogy of Christ. Look at the kind of women God chose... etc... etc... And you will forego entering the guilds because of things being sacrificed to idols and because of visiting these temple women? Not only is this not bad, it can prove very helpful to your spiritual lives and you can prosper in business too. You have to understand Christ and the cross rightly. Don't let these legalists take you from your God given liberties. You can have all of this

and grow in your God given liberties and in spiritual stature too. God made all this to be enjoyed, now away with your inhibitions, enjoy life and learn to be like Christ.

Well, I won't go further lest someone begins to believe this. But it is amazing the case that can be made. Whoever this woman was, she was very influential.

Now I might jump ahead to the time period most premillennialists believe this church pictures. William R. Newell, in his commentary on Revelation says of the Roman Catholic Church, "The confessional teaches children to discover and speak of the lowest abominations of the human heart; the result of which is to familiarize them with such things, stifle conscience, and finally open the flood gates of indulgence of the flesh, especially with Rome's Babylonian priests, with whom to sin, is, by their teaching, no sin" (56).

Then in a footnote, as if some might argue with what he has said, he says, "I defy any sincere one to read McGavin's "Protestant," or "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome," by Father Chiniquy."

He further gives a note from McClintock and Strong who show how idols were not accepted in the church in the first 300 years and then how they were first allowed part way in the church and then all the way and then argument was made that they were not worshipping idols, but that which they represented. They quote Thomas Aquinas who lived some 800 years ago, and who is getting more popular in Evangelical circles today, as saying, "A Picture, considered in itself, is worthy of no veneration, but if we consider it as an image of Christ, it may be allowable to make an internal distinction between the image and

its subject, and adoration and service are as well done to it as to Christ."

J.B. Smith says of our passage, "There may be a prophetic forecast of the Dark Ages (near A.D. 1000) known as the Period of Pornocracy when popes were the playthings of vile women, one of whom posed hypocritically as a man in a man's clothing" (77).

So look now at verse 20:

21 "And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, and she did not repent.

Rome has never repented of idols. A number of years ago a man kept the clippings from newspapers of accounts of Catholic priests who lived in fornication. In a short time he had a stack, if I remember correctly, about 2 inches thick. So fornication and idolatry saturate this church. If you travel in a Roman Catholic area and see their churches you will see idols everywhere. It has only grown worse. Our third question now is:

-What is the sickbed and the tribulation?
Verse 22 says:

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.

The word for *bed* here is not the regular bed. It is a *kleenee*, and occurs quite a few times in the NT because it often had to do with sick people. It was a sickbed. That is how the bed is described that she will be cast into.

The Lord then says he will cast her into great tribulation. What does this mean? I think it literally means the seven year tribulation that is to come. Turn to

Revelation 17. In this chapter we are, I believe, in the closing year of the tribulation.

But notice now how great God's mercy is. If they have been drawn into her sinfulness, if they repent, they can be forgiven still. It also implies they will not experience the sickbed and the tribulation.

We begin in 17:1:

1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,

2 "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

This refers, I believe, to the Roman Catholic Church. If this is the same city as that of chapter 18, then she is destroyed in one

hour! This church will go through the tribulation.

Now I want us to notice something in our passage. It is God's great mercy and what it hinges on. God says He will cast them into a sickbed and into great tribulation, 'unless they repent of their deeds.' Now notice in verse 20 that Jezebel seduced the Lord's servants. And when it says, 'unless they repent', it refers to those who have been seduced by her. Now the clear teaching is that if they do not repent, they will also suffer Jezebel's judgment.

So we go to verse 23:

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.

What does this mean, I will kill her children with death? The Jamieson, Faucett and Brown commentary thinks this is a Hebraism which means to, "...slay with most sure and awful death." They give Genesis 2:17 which literally says, "dying you shall die." They also give Numbers 16:29 where they say it has the idea of not dying the common death of man. Some think it refers to eternal death. I think it may well be that it means they will not die a natural death. He will see to their premature death.

I mentioned earlier that Jezebel fed 450 prophets of Baal at her table. She killed all the true prophets she could lay her hands on. When Elijah had her prophets slain she threatened Elijah, and he was greatly afraid of her. Later, when Elijah heard that Jezebel had killed an innocent man in order to get a vineyard for her husband Ahab, he prophesied her death, and that she would be eaten by

dogs. Well, she did not die a natural death. Jezebel taunted Jehu from a window high up and Jehu asked those who were on his side to throw her down. It is quite a gory story but later, when they wanted to bury her, they found the dogs had eaten all but her skull and the palms of her hands.

Jehu, who was responsible for Jezebel's death also slew Ahab's 70 sons. Notice that our text said he would kill her children with death. No doubt Jezebel's children were among them if she had children with Ahab. Jezebel did not die a natural death nor did all of Ahab's children.

After this, our verse tells us there is something for every church to learn from this. It says, "...and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts." And if you are using the KJV it says it says the reins and the hearts. What is the difference between the mind and the heart or the reins and the heart? In these words is a very important lesson for each one of us as a Christian.

Barclay says, "The *reins* are the *kidneys*; strange as it may seem in Hebrew psychology it was believed that the seat of the emotions was in the lower viscera, the kidneys and the bowels; and the seat of the thoughts was in the heart" (138).

Well, there is a very good reason why Hebrew psychology is the way it is. It is based on how the body works. Now I have mentioned numerous times that neither the Hebrew OT or the Greek NT has a word that means what our word *mind* means. That idea is expressed by the word 'heart'.

Now in our text, the kidneys and the heart are paired as they are in numerous Scriptures. In the Scriptures the bowels are

the seat of the emotions, not the heart. Let me quote from my notes on the course; Man, Sin and Salvation:

What is the connection between the heart and the kidneys in the physical world of man? The connection can be easily made for the connection is blood. The heart takes in and pumps out blood thus circulating it. Encyclopedia Britannica says, "Each kidney contains 1,000,000 to 1,250,000 nephrons that filter the entire five quart water content of the blood every 45 minutes—an equivalent of 160 quarts a day. Of this only 1 1/2 quarts are excreted; the remainder is reabsorbed by the nephrons." (By the way, the word translated 'minds' in our text is nephron.)

What is the function of the kidneys? To quote Britannica again, "The more advanced kidney...is a paired compact organ whose functional units filter initial urine from the blood, reabsorb water and nutrients, and secrete wastes, producing the final urine which is expelled."

The urine which is removed by the kidneys is waste and not fit for use by the body. That which is fit for use goes back into the bloodstream, therein lies the connection to the heart.

Scripture tells us that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. What makes the heart wicked? It is the thoughts that flow through it (Matt. 15:19).

God promises on a number of occasions that He will give a new heart to those who come to Him. How does He give man a new heart? By changing man's belief thus changing his thoughts. This change is called repentance (change of mind). When I change my mind about things the old is expelled by the kidneys and that which is good is retained in the bloodstream.

Paul speaks about the renewing of the mind in Romans 12. How is this done? By repenting or changing my mind about wrong things and putting in truth. All bad or poor or useless thinking should be strained out by the kidneys. You see the kidneys are a way of getting bad stuff out of the blood and recycling good stuff.

So God tests our kidneys from time to time to see what we accept and recycle and what we get rid of... It is not that God did not know in these cases what was in their heart. But I may not know what my heart is like until I am tested. Then I find out what my heart is really like" end quote.

So when our verse says: I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts? It means He searches every thought and all the thought processes we go through.

I mentioned in that quote Romans 12:1-2. Turn there. We have read that the Lord's eyes are like a flame of fire. He is capable of knowing everything in our hearts. He is also able to instruct us on how to deal with our heart. Romans 12:1 says:

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

There, in brief, is how we are to deal with our bodies. They are to be presented to God a living sacrifice. A sacrifice did not have a will of its own, it obeyed the will of the master. Our bodies are to be holy, and acceptable to God. Verse two then says:

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,

that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

And do not be conformed to this world. The word *conformed* is the word *skeema*. It is that which we see, the externals. We are not to be externally conformed to this world. Why? It impacts what we are inside. Instead of being conformed to this world, we are to be transformed. The word is *metamorphow*. We get our word *metamorphosis* from this word. It means to be changed like a tadpole or a cocoon. It changes from the inside out. We are to be changed from the inside to the outside.

And how do we do that? Romans 12:2 tells us how. It is by a renewing of the mind. Now you might say, "I though you said the Greek did not have a word for mind." That's right. It doesn't. This word translated mind is the word *nous* and it is only a part of what we call the mind. The *nous* is where we store information. How do we change our externals? By changing what we store in our mind. And the kidneys, spiritually speaking, are what renews the blood which goes back into the heart. If the kidneys do not do their job, bad blood gets circulated.

You see, we have had a number of times when we came across the word 'to repent' in our studies in the seven churches. Repentance has to do with this storage part of the mind. The root word of the word to *repent* is the root word here translated *mind*. There is one way to change our lives. Old thoughts that are not right need to be put out, repent; new clean thoughts need to replace them. How? Read the Bible go to church, memorize Scripture etc...

CONCL: Well, in conclusion, here was a church that had a lot going for it. They were commended for their love, their service, their faith and their patience. But with all that,

they were intimidated by some powerful woman and they allowed her to mislead the Lord's servants. And the Lord said He would deal with her. That will have its complete fulfillment in the tribulation, which the Lord says she and her followers will experience.

And the Lord says when He does that all the Church's will know that He is the One who tries the kidneys and the hearts. The mind is the battlefield where either God or the devil wins and the choice is ours. Last Sunday predestination was mentioned here. We are not predestined to heaven or to hell. I do not find that the unbeliever is predestined at all. It is the believer that is predestined, and that predestination does not determine outcome. It tells us what God wants to happen. He wants us to be conformed to the image of Christ.

That happens by being metamorphosed by a renewal of the mind. I read the other day that children that read their Bible have a much greater chance of remaining with their Christian profession.