

THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA

TEXT: REVELATION 2:18-29

INTRODUCTION:

1. Thyatira was about 40 miles southeast of Pergamos (2:12-17). Of the seven letters, the letter to the church in Thyatira is the longest.
2. Thyatira was a military town as well as a big commercial center. It was also an idolatrous town with a big temple devoted to the worship of Apollo, who according to Roman mythology was the son of Zeus.
3. Thyatira was the headquarters for many of the trade guilds – the potters’ guild, the tanners’ guild, the weavers’ guild, the robe-makers’ guild, the dyer’s guild, and so forth.
4. In Acts 16:14, we read that Lydia was a seller of purple (dye) and she was from the city of Thyatira. In fact, it very well may have been Lydia who first brought the Gospel to Thyatira.
5. I have divided my exposition into three parts:

I. COMMENDATION

II. CONDEMNATION

III. EXHORTATION

I. COMMENDATION (20:18, 19)

1. Our Lord identifies Himself as “the Son of God” (2:18). This is significant. It is the only reference to this title in the book of Revelation.
2. Some Bible teachers say this is because the city of Thyatira was known for worshipping Apollo “the sun god.”
3. Others say it is because false idolatrous practices were being taught in the church of Thyatira. These false teachings would later develop into the error of Romanism – e.g., the worship of Mary as “the mother of God.”
4. Harry Ironside wrote that when Christ “addresses Himself to the church of Thyatira, He speaks solemnly as ‘the Son of God.’ Why does the Lord Jesus Christ emphasize the fact of His deity here? Because Rome everywhere has accustomed people to think of Him as the Son of Mary. I once talked with a woman who told me she would sooner go to Mary than to Christ or the Father. She said, ‘There is nobody that has so much influence with a son as his mother, and if Jesus Christ is inclined to be a bit hard-hearted, I just go to His good, kind mother, and I ask her to please say a good word to Him for me.’”

- What a caricature of our Lord Jesus Christ! Think of having to go to anybody else to win His favor. Who else could be compared with Him? Thus Christ is degraded into the position of the Son of Mary, rather than the Son of God, who came in infinite grace to save poor sinners” (*Revelation*).
5. Our Lord commends the church in Thyatira for their works (mentions twice), their charity (or love), their service, their faith, and their patience (2:19).
 6. Note that none of the three preceding churches were commended for their love or their charity.
 7. But after this brief commendation, comes a strong condemnation.

II. CONDEMNATION (2:20-23)

1. This is the age of political correctness, moral relativism, syncretism, and ecumenism. It is the day of no moral absolutes.
2. The big word today is “tolerance.” Today we are constantly being told that the #1 sin is intolerance. Furthermore, Bible-believing Christians are often roundly criticized for being intolerant. We are accused of being intolerant of homosexuality, abortion, smutty TV shows and movies, pornography, evolution, so-called "global warming," liberalism, Islam and other false religions, etc.
3. (Of course, atheists, liberals, Muslims, sodomites, and other unbelievers are very intolerant of Biblical Christianity.)
4. But when we read the Bible, we find that God Himself is intolerant of certain things (cf. 2:6, 15).
5. Furthermore, our Lord accused the church in Thyatira of tolerating “that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess” (2:20).
6. There are quite a few Jezebels in the churches today and God wants us to put them out. We need to keep God’s house clean.
7. This Jezebel is very much like her namesake of old, Queen Jezebel, the wicked wife of King Ahab. Jezebel vigorously promoted Baal worship in Israel. If it had not been for the prophet Elijah she may have succeeded in replacing worship of the true God of the Bible with Baal worship.
8. By the way, there are many individuals here in America who want to replace worship of the true God of the Bible with the worship of false gods – the gods of Mormonism, Islam, Scientology, etc.
9. Last week I mentioned that to understand the reference to Balaam (2:14), one has to know the Old Testament. Jezebel (2:20) is the most wicked woman in the Bible.

10. We are told in I Kings 18 that Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD. She was a cold-blooded murderer.
11. Jezebel had innocent Naboth stoned to death. She tried to kill the prophet Elijah.
12. “But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up” (I Kings 21:25).
13. We must not allow any Jezebels near our pulpit. According to the New Testament, the local church is to be run by a male pastor, assisted by other men (assistant pastors and deacons). This is plainly taught in passages such as I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
14. First Timothy 2:12 says, “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”
15. However, there are some women who have usurped the position of pastor and teacher. They are nothing but modern-day Jezebels. These painted, worldly lady preachers like Joyce Meyers are a disgrace.
16. Do you remember when Jehu arrived at Jezreel? Second Kings 9:30 says, “Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.”
17. Then Jehu told the eunuchs to “throw her down. So they threw her down” (II Kings 9:33). This was God’s judgment upon wicked Queen Jezebel. Elijah predicted that dogs would eat her flesh.
18. This Jezebel in the church at Thyatira was teaching the congregation to indulge in heathen worship, which involved idolatry and immorality (Rev. 2:20, 21).
19. Jezebel’s doctrine and worship is referred to in 2:24 as “the depths (deep things) of Satan.”
20. First Corinthians 2:10 refers to “the deep things of God.” God has His deep things and so does Satan.
21. It is a shame but there are many churches which tolerate lady preachers, false doctrine, and immorality. Our Lord says those who get caught up in this will be severely judged (2:22, 23).
22. God gave Jezebel time to repent (2:21). He gave those in the church in Thyatira who were mixed up with Jezebel time to repent (2:22). Perhaps the Lord is giving you time to repent.
23. In Thyatira, God turned the bed of adultery into a sickbed and then a deathbed (2:22, 23). There are many lost sinners on their deathbeds now, who a short while ago thought they were having a good time committing adultery.

24. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).
25. God judged Queen Jezebel. God judged the Jezebel in Thyatira. And God judged those in the church in Thyatira who would not repent. And God will continue to judge those who sin.
26. The Bible uses the words "adultery" and "fornication" in two different ways. There is literal adultery, and then there is spiritual adultery.
27. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4; cf. Rev. 17:1-5).
28. Vance Havner said, "When we marry, we take vows and assume responsibilities and make promises. When we confess Christ as Saviour and Lord, we do the same thing. There are church members aplenty who would not think of being untrue to their marriage vows but who have no conscience about their vows to Christ and the church. They would have all the privileges of the gospel with none of the responsibilities. That is why they prefer preachers who offer much but demand little of prospective disciples" (*Messages on Revival*).

III. EXHORTATION (2:24-28)

1. Not everyone in the church at Thyatira was following Jezebel (2:24). There were still a faithful remnant in the church at Thyatira.
2. These faithful church members were not going along with the worldly Jezebel religion.
3. They were "holding fast" till Christ returned (2:25; cf. 2:13; 3:3, 11).
4. The Bible teaches that the second coming of Christ is imminent (2:25; cf. 3:3; 22:7, 20). This is the main problem with the view that the seven churches represent seven distinct church ages from the apostolic to the apostate.
5. A better view is that these were seven literal churches in Asia Minor, and that each one is a picture of a different type of church. And, some churches can be like one of the seven churches in one way, and in some ways be like some of the other churches in other ways.
6. The church of Thyatira does resemble the corrupt Roman Catholic Church in many ways (idols, depths of Satan, etc.), but the application is to all churches and to all believers (2:29).
7. Revelation 2:26-28 refers to Christ's millennial kingdom. Rebellious sinners will be "broken to shivers" (2:27).

8. Christ “shall rule them with a rod of iron” (2:27). Psalm 2:9 says the very same thing.
9. According to Rev. 2:26, all faithful believers will rule and reign with Christ. This is what the apostle Paul meant when he said in I Corinthians 6:2, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?”
10. And in II Timothy 2:12, Paul wrote, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.”
11. Revelation 20:6 says we shall reign with Christ a thousand years.

CONCLUSION:

1. Here in Revelation 2:28, our Lord is called "the morning star." He is called “the bright and morning star” in Revelation 22:16.
2. By the way, watch out for dangerous and inaccurate Bible versions like the NIV. Isaiah 14:12 reads like this in the NIV: “How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn!”
3. The KJV says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" Not "morning star."
4. But the NIV identifies Lucifer as “the morning star," a title given to the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation 2:28.
5. The KJV says the devil is "son of the morning.” There is a big difference between the KJV and the new translations!
6. Christ is the “morning star” (Rev. 2:28) – not the devil!
7. The Lord is coming back. In the meantime He tells us to “hold fast” (Rev. 2:25).
8. Hold fast to the right doctrine.
9. And hold fast to the right Bible!