

Letters to the 7 Churches: Thyatira

Revelation 2:18-29

Context

God calls His church to be holy for He is holy. We are to live lives of purity by addressing sin—always repenting and forsaking. The church has the responsibility to come alongside those who are weak and help gently restore them. If we do not, and progressively tolerate sin, the Lord has some things to say.

1 Peter 1:16—because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”

Matthew 18:15-17—*If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.*

1 Corinthians 5:1-5—*It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. ²You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. ³For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. ⁴In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

When we observe what the Lord has said thus far to the 4 churches in Chapter 2, there is a progressive worsening to their condition; they are more and more influenced by evil. That will continue until the final letter to the church at Laodicea. Notice it started with a love that grows cold (Rev 2:4) and now is into “the deep things of Satan” (Rev 2:24).

7 noted points for each of the 7 churches

I. Identification of “The One”

Revelation 2:18—*“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:*

Revelation 1:13-15—*and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. ¹⁴His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.*

- **Son of God**—emphasis on Christ's deity as Judge
- **Son of Man**—emphasis on Christ's humanity as sympathetic High Priest

- **Hebrews 2:17-18**—Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.
- **Eyes like a flame of fire**—piercing, nothing hidden, all is laid bare before Him
 - **Hebrews 4:13**—And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.
 - cf. Revelation 19:12; Daniel 10:6
- **Feet are like burnished bronze**—representing purity and holiness as He stomps out impurities (cf. Rev 19:15)

II. Identification of the church

Revelation 2:18a—And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write...

- Angel (Aggelos)—messenger. This is a representative from the church who will take the letter back to the church—likely an elder or pastor.
- There are no other specific biblical references to this church; however, there are some references to it.
 - **Acts 16:14-15a**—A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵And when she and her household had been baptized...
 - **Acts 19:10**—This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

III. Identification of the city

Revelation 2:18a—“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

- Approximately 40 miles north east from Pergamum
- The city was known for its production of wool and dyed goods—especially purple.
- There were a fair number of trade unions in the town and each union or guild had its own deity to worship. Not worshipping that deity put your business in jeopardy.

IV. Identification of what they did well

Revelation 2:19—I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

- Notice the list: **Deeds, love, faith, service and perseverance**

- **Your deeds of late are greater than at first**—they were progressively getting better. They were growing stronger in grace and maturing in their Christian walk in terms of their actions.

V. Identification of what they did not do well

Revelation 2:20—*But I have this against you, 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 issues for this church were not external, but internal—they compromised from perversion within

- **Jezebel**—a female who had significant influence as a teacher/preacher within the church.
 - **1 Timothy 2:12**—*But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.*
 - **1 Kings 16:30-31**
 - **2 Kings 9:30-37**
- **Calls herself a prophetess**—leading others to be defiled
 - **Matthew 18:6-11**—*but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.⁷ “Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! ⁸ “If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. ⁹ If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell. ¹⁰ “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.*

VI. Identification of how to change

Revelation 2:21—*I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.*

- **Time to repent**—God is patient and gracious
 - **Psalms 103:8**—*The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.*
 - **John 3:19**—*This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.*

VII. Identification of exhortation and promise

Revelation 2:22-23—*Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they*

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

- Refusal to repent has consequences:
 - **Throw her on a bed of sickness**—likely death and hell
 - **Great tribulation**—distress and trouble; not Rev 4-19 tribulation
 - **I will kill her children with pestilence**—“kill them with death”; these are spiritual children that follow her.
- **James 3:1**—*Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.*
- **All will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts**—a reference to the omniscience of God
- The issues for this church were not external, but internal—they compromised from perversion within
- I will give to each one of you according to your deeds—The fruitfulness of their lives would determine the pending reward or punishment.
 - **Matthew 7:16a**—*You will know them by their fruits.*

Revelation 2:24-25—*But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. ²⁵ Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.*

- **The rest**—those who do not hold to false teaching
- **Who have not known the deep things of Satan**—the teaching of Jezebel was so deep and demonic and the whole time she was deceived (as well as her followers) that God would not bring punishment. [cf. **Proverbs 30:7-9**—lies and deception]

Revelation 2:26-29—*He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; ²⁷ AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority 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.*

- Promises are connected to “**he who overcomes**” (1 John 5:4-5)
- **He shall Rule with them, authority over the nations, rod of iron**—God will grant overcomes the right to rule with Him in the millennial kingdom over the nations who try and rebel against Christ.
- **Authority from My Father**—Jesus was granted authority to rule from His Father (Jn 5:22, 27).
- **Morning Star**—Christ Himself will be given Rev 22:16, 2 Peter 1:19).
- Each of the 7 letters ends with “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*” Pay attention! Listen up!