

THYATIRA: Increased Outreach Yet Immorality (Rev. 2:18-29)

¹⁸ 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...²⁰ Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow (tolerate) that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality... ²¹ I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. ²² I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent...²³ I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. I will give to each one of you according to your works....²⁶ 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.' (Rev. 2:18-29)

I. THE PRIMARY MESSAGE

This church is affirmed for its increase in outreach ministries but they lacked zeal for moral purity. Jesus commended them for their faithfulness and service while warning them to not tolerate immorality.

II. THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA

- A. Ancient Thyatira is the city of Akhisar today. It was about 30 miles inland being surrounded by many rivers. It was a wealthy city being a center for trade guilds or “Labor Unions” (garments, pottery, and bronze workings, dyers, tanners, weavers, leather workers, linen makers, etc.).
- B. All employees in the “unions” had to attend worship feasts for Apollo the Sun-god who was second in power to his father, Zeus. All employees were required to join guilds (unions) which honored their patron god which involved going to idolatrous feasts which included much drunkenness and immorality. Those who refused the feasts were not allowed to be hired.

III. JESUS' REVELATION OF HIMSELF

¹⁸ Says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass... (Rev. 2:18)

- A. This description reveals aspects of Jesus' personality and ministry. This emphasizes zealous attention over His people. Their compromise required that He intervene with judgment.
- B. **Son of God** – emphasizes Jesus' deity and power to judge. The Son of Man (Rev. 1:13-15).
- C. **Who has eyes like a flame of fire** – emphasizes His desire to impart passion (Lk. 24:32; Acts 2:1-4) and/or to convict of sinful deeds. Fire is the symbol of love and holiness.
- D. **His feet are like fine brass** – burnished bronze feet symbolize a mighty warrior who walks over his enemy and brings all sin under His feet. Brass is a symbol of judgment against sin.

IV. AFFIRMATION FOR FAITHFULNESS

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

- A. *I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience – They were greatly affirmed for the zealous ministry and love and patient endurance in persecution. Both to Ephesus and Thyatira great affirmation is given then strong rebukes (Rev. 2:2). This is only the Church commended for both love and service.*
- B. *As for your works, the last are more than the first – Jesus affirms their increase of work. The deeds of this church were more in number and quality than their earlier days which was opposite of the Church in Ephesus (2:5; Mt. 12:45; 2 Pet. 2:20).*

V. CORRECTION FOR COMPROMISE

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...²⁴ 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... (Rev. 2:20, 24)*

- A. *I have a few things against you – Jesus spoke of things against His people on three occasions in the seven letters. The saints in Ephesus left their first love (Rev 2:4). The saints in Pergamos had some who held to the doctrine of Balaam (Rev 2:14). The saints in Thyatira allowed Jezebel to teach and seduce His servants to commit sexual immorality (Rev 2:20).*
- B. *You allow Jezebel to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols – they allowed her to teach “liberty in grace” in context to attending pagan idol feasts which involved immorality. Immorality is at the top of almost every list of sins in the NT and it is emphasized in the Book of Revelation as one of Satan’s primary weapons against the Church in the End-Times (Rev. 9:21; 14:8; 17:1-4; 18:2-4, 9-10; 19:2; 21:8).*
- C. *Jezebel called herself a prophetess – she was a leader in the church who claimed to be a prophetess. She acted like the Jezebel in the OT who was a daughter the idolatrous king of the Sidonians (1 Kgs. 16:31-33; 2 Kgs. 9:30-37). The Israelite king Ahab married her and was then seduced to engage in her idolatry and immorality. She led Israel into immorality and Baal worship. The NT Jezebel may have deliberately taken this name in her brazen boldness to show her confidence in endorsing sin. In the OT, she hated Elijah and killed the prophets. The NT Jezebel killed the prophets spiritually by seducing them to immorality.*
- D. *This doctrine was referred to as the depths of Satan – the deep things of Satan spoke of her false teaching on grace that allowed people to embrace immorality with confidence in God. Jezebel taught that Christians can participate in immorality without fear of judgment. This constitutes the depths of satanic deception.*

VI. EXHORTATION TO RESPOND (WITH A WARNING)

²¹ *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. 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 Hold fast what you have till I come. 26 He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations (Rev. 2:21-26)*

- A. *I gave her time to repent of her immorality, and she did not* – Jesus is patient even with Jezebel.
- B. *I will cast her into a sickbed* – her bed of judgment was in contrast to her bed of immorality. Believers are sometimes made sick and even die in context to God’s judgment on immorality. Elijah prophesied of the death of Jezebel (1 Kgs.21:17-24). The prophetic spirit will oppose her.
¹ *It is reported that there is sexual immorality among you...⁴ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together...⁵ deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord... (1 Cor. 5:1-5)*
- C. If we will not judge ourselves then the Church must judge us, if they do not then Jesus will.
³⁰ *For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep (physically dead). 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Cor. 11:30-32)*
- D. *I will cast those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent* – those cast into great tribulation refers to judgment on Jezebel’s disciples in that generation. This is not a reference to the Great Tribulation at the end-of-the-age (Rev 7:14).
- E. *I will kill her children with death and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts* – Jesus warned of making these disciplined believers an example to others.
- F. *Unless they repent* – the option to reverse God’s judgment remains open to any who repent.
- G. *I will give to each one of you according to your works* – our decisions have great consequences.
- H. *To you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine* – there were two groups in this church indicated by the language, “I will kill her children” and “But I say to you.” There was a faithful group who refused her teachings yet they tolerated her (verse 20) instead of disciplining her like the Ephesian church did (Rev. 2:2, 6).
- I. *I will put on you no other burden. Hold fast what you have till I come* – it takes diligence to hold fast to the doctrines of purity. It is not automatic. Jesus comes in seasons to “evaluate” us.

VII. PROMISE FOR OVERCOMERS

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. (Rev. 2:26-29)*

- A. *He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end* – we must maintain the obedience that we are walking in today until the end of our life, not just for a season. Augustine (400 AD): "Lust yielded to becomes a habit, and a habit not resisted becomes necessity (addiction)."
- B. *To him I will give power over the nations as I also have received from My Father* – reigning in the Millennial Kingdom (Lk. 19:11-27; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 3:21). Some will receive greater authority than others (2 Cor. 5:10). The reward for faithfulness in resisting immorality is to reign with Christ in His earthly kingdom. Not all believers will reign in the Millennial Kingdom.
- C. *He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels* – David prophesied this of Jesus' Millennial Kingdom (Ps. 2:8-9). Iron is symbolic of an unbreakable and inflexible rule. The nations will be dashed into pieces as easily as a brittle clay vessel is shattered by an iron rod (Rev. 12:5; 19:15).
- D. *I will give him the Morning Star* – revelation of Jesus, His Word and authority. The morning star is the brightest star in the sky (planet Venus) seen just before the dawning of a new day. Jesus will prophetically lead His faithful with light as the new Millennial day draws near. This reward refers to Jesus sharing his authority with us along with nearness of His presence and increased prophetic insight as the darkness of the Tribulation increases and the day draws near.
- E. The Morning Star is a reference to Jesus. A deep relationship with Jesus is promised here.
¹⁶ *I, Jesus...am the Bright and Morning Star. (Rev 22:16)*
- F. Jesus is the star or king from Jacob's family line who was given dominion over the nations.
¹⁷ *A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult...19 Out of Jacob One shall have dominion, and destroy the remains of the city. (Num 24:17-19)*
- G. Receiving the morning star refers to receiving greater understanding of prophetic Scriptures.
¹⁹ *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... (2 Pet. 1:19)*

VIII. THE TIME PERIOD PROPHETICALLY SPOKEN OF BY THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA

This church points prophetically to the Church in the middle ages under the rule of the papacy until the Reformation associated with Martin Luther (approx. 600-1517 AD).