

Study Guide

The Lord's Word to His Church: Thyatira

Revelation 2:18–29

We live in a hostile world. The church always lives in a hostile world because, the world is always hostile toward the church. And that is the context for the letters that we read in chapters 2 and 3.

If the church is anything in the world, it is God's holy people. Churches should be known by how they exalt righteousness and how they condemn unrighteousness

The first instruction ever given to the church in Matthew, chapter 18, was to confront sin. Still, churches throughout history have defied the will of the Lord and tolerated sin in many forms; and that is the case even now. It was the case with the church at Thyatira.

Revelation Chapter 2:18-29

“And to the messenger 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 – ’ and now the Lord Himself dictates the letter, ‘ – I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bondservants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 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.

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.

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.

Nevertheless, what you have, hold fast until I come. He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; 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; and I will give him the morning star.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

This letter shows what compromise with the world leads to. It leads to full-scale idolatry and immorality.

Into this church, in Thyatira, the evils of idolatry had pressed from the culture and penetrated very deeply. This had come through the influence of apparently a woman who was a preacher or teacher who had succeeded in leading the corruption of this church.

Smyrna was assaulted by a synagogue of Satan, Pergamos was literally in the throne of Satan, but Thyatira had plummeted into the deep things of Satan. There is a flow in that progression. When love is left behind, compromise follows and leads to toleration of sin. When you love your Lord less, you love the world more, and it infiltrates your life and you tolerate sin.

There has been, in this church, a growth, an increase in deeds, at the end of **verse 19: “Your deeds of late are greater than at first.”** In other words, you’re doing more things. But, sadly, evil has established itself; and, consequently, this church is in some serious trouble.

“To the messenger 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.”

We saw in chapter 1 that that’s a picture of judgment.

But there’s a single difference between the picture in chapter 1 and what our Lord says here. In chapter 1, the one identified there is identified as the Son of Man, the Son of Man. Here He is identified as the Son of God.

Such are the eyes of the Son of God that pierce all masks and all coverings, that search the remotest recesses of the corners of every heart and see the hidden things of every soul from which there is no escape.

Chapter 19 and verse 15 says that when He comes with His feet, He will **“tread the wind press of the fierceness and the wrath of God.”** It’s a picture of devastating judgment. And as in the other letters, the introduction of the author, the language borrowed from chapter 1 to introduce the author fits the character of the letter.

Judgment must begin – ”`1 Peter 4 says, “ – at the house of God.”

As far as we can tell in history, this church disappeared sometime toward the end of the 2nd century

19: “I know your deeds, your love, faith, service, perseverance, and your deeds of late are greater than at first.” That’s a very wonderful commendation. *“I know your deeds, your works,” erga. “I know your works, they’re works of love. You maybe have what Ephesus needed.”*

They were characterized by service. That’s the word *diakonia*, voluntary meeting of needs.

There was a certain perseverance there, *hupomon* meaning steadfast endurance that springs from faith.

Love wasn’t their problem; they had love. Faith wasn’t their problem. Ministry wasn’t their problem. Endurance wasn’t their problem. Their problem was they were tolerating sin.

verse 20: “I have this against you, 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. My slaves, my slaves, you have lead astray into idolatry and immorality because you tolerate this woman Jezebel.”

2 Kings chapter 9, verse 33: They went to bury her, but they found nothing more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. Therefore, they returned and told him. And he said, ‘This is the word of the Lord, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, “In the property of Jezreel, the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the corpse of Jezebel will be as dung on the face of the field in the property of Jezreel.”’”

She was Jezebel-like. She introduced immorality and idolatry in the church. She is symbolically called Jezebel in the way that Jerusalem be symbolically called Sodom and Egypt in its time of iniquity.

It is just shocking that this woman, whoever, whatever her name was, was a Jezebel to the church in Thyatira in the way that Jezebel brought iniquity and wickedness to Israel. She literally made the people comfortable with their pagan idolatry and immorality.

I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.”

I'll throw her on a bed all right. She wants a bed, the bed of immorality, I'll throw her on a bed, and I'll throw those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence."

What do you mean, her children? "All who follow her pattern, all who follow her example, all in every age who fall into that kind of life, all the offspring of debauchery and iniquity, I will kill them." The word pestilence is "death." .

First Corinthians 11 "Many of you are sick and some of you are dead because of how you treat the Lord's Table."

First John 5:16 says there's a sin unto death.

Why would the Lord do this?

Verse 23: "So that 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."

Jeremiah 17:10. "I have intimate knowledge, perfect knowledge. I know the depths of sin, and I will give to each one of you according to your works."

You hear people say, you know, "*Wouldn't it be great if the Lord would bring a reformation, bring a revival, do a great and mighty work.*" It needs to start in the church.

And if the church is going to have a new reformation – and it desperately needs it – it’s going to have to refresh its first love for Christ, it’s going to have to stop the compromises with the world, and it’s going to need to confront sin.

verse 24: “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. Nevertheless, what you have, hold fast until I come.”

The Lord knows them that are His.

“I know you, the rest of you. You have no other church to go to; there’s only one in Thyatira. I know you don’t hold this teaching.”

What’s the teaching? The teaching is some kind of antinomian, libertine teaching that you can live any way you want and still be okay with God, that salvation is by grace, that you believe all of that. But reality is, you’re free to sin because you can’t do anything about it anyway.” That’s the old dualistic idea.

You are saved unto holiness, unto righteousness. You have to stop the old pattern of life; and in that pagan world, it involved worship connected to immorality.

Hang on, hold fast, don’t listen, don’t buy in, be strong – ” that’s what *krateo*, hold fast means. “It won’t be easy, but that’s all you’ve got. That’s your church and there’s no other.”

And then comes a promise: “He who overcomes and keeps My deeds until the end – ” in other words who demonstrates true saving faith. The overcomer, 1 John 5:5, “The one who overcomes is the one who has faith in Christ.”

“to you overcomers – ” verse 26 “ – I will give authority over the nations. I will give authority over the nations.” What an amazing statement. What does that mean? You will reign with Christ. You will share His millennial rule.

Chapter 1, verse 6: “He made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – to Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever.” We are a kingdom of priests.

“I will give you a place with the King in His kingdom to rule, and He shall rule them – ” verse 27, taken out of Psalm 2, that great passage, verses 7 to 9, “ – 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.”

Now it’s an amazing thing to think about the future. The world is such a mess. Christ is coming to set up His kingdom. When He comes to rule – that word “to rule” in verse 27 is, interesting enough, from *poimain* which means to shepherd, to pastor.

“If you’re faithful – ” He says, “ – I will share My authority with you.” Those of us who are glorified believers in the kingdom, when Christ sets it up on earth, will assist Him in judgment and the care of His own. Amazing promise.

But there’s more. Not only will we be given the privilege of authority, but **verse 28** simply says **“and I’ll give him the morning star.”** What is that? What is the morning star? Well, we know the answer because in **Revelation 22:16** we hear this: **“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and descendant of David. I am the bright morning star.”**

What does it mean, “I will give him the morning star”? It means this: “I’ll give him Christ.” “If you’re among the faithful, I will give you the kingdom, I will give you the King. That is to say all that God has – the kingdom and the King.

So, a final word in **verse 29**, common in all the letters: **“He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”** Are you listening? .