

## Letters from Jesus: Thyatira!

Revelation 2:18-29

Abraham bought himself a fancy new computer. He was showing it to Isaac one day. "Look at all the wonderful programs it has on it. And look at all the neat things it can do..."

Isaac was impressed, but a little concerned..."But dad, I don't think your computer has enough memory."

Abraham said "Don't worry son; the Lord will provide the RAM."

We have been working our way through the 7 letters from Jesus to the churches in Revelation. The first 3 churches, Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamum were all true to faith and didn't yield to the evil assaults, but the next 4 churches don't fair as well. We will see in them a progressional decline.

### I. Correspondent, church, city

Revelation 2:18, "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze."

Jesus clearly identifies Himself as the Son of God here emphasizing His deity.

The "eyes like blazing fire" shows us that He sees all, we can hide nothing from Him.

The "feet like burnished bronze" depicts purity and holiness that tramples out impurity. They are feet that hold fast!

This intro of Jesus foreshadows the coming role of Jesus as judge.

1 Peter 4:17, "For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"

Keep this verse in mind as we unfold this letter.

So, what do we know about Thyatira? Thyatira is about 40 miles south, southeast of Pergamum. It was founded by Seleucus, one of the successors to Alexander the Great.

The city was built on a plain and was one of the greatest sources for wool and dyed goods in that day.

It was a city that worshipped the Greek sun god Apollo.

Now, take a look at:

Acts 16:14-15, “One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.”

So, Paul was preaching in Thyatira and Lydia comes to Christ and invites Paul and his team to come and stay at her home. Who do you think was the first member of the church in Thyatira?

## II. Commendation

Revelation 2:19, “I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.”

Jesus knew their deeds and this is what observed they were doing well:

1. They loved God and one another.
2. They had strong faith.
3. Out of their love and faith grew service and perseverance.
4. Their good deeds increased over time.

As time went on, they did more and more for the Kingdom of God! How are we doing?

## III. Concern

Revelation 2:20-23, “Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. 21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. 23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.”

There is a lot here to unpack. So, hand on tight.

This woman, Jezebel which is probably not her real name, gave herself the title of prophetess. How humble of her. She is a false teacher.

Here is the worst thing she did: She lead people astray. And not just away from Jesus, but she led them to acts of immorality.

This is what Jesus says about the person who leads people astray:

Matthew 18:6-7, “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!”

Hey, when the best thing that can happen to you is having a millstone hung around your neck and getting tossed into the sea, well, you are in a really bad place. Seriously bad place.

Now, notice this in verse 21, Jesus said He gave her time to repent. Isn't that just like God. No matter how bad we as humans can be He offers grace, He

gives time for us to turn from our ways. Today He may be reaching out to you. Do you need to lay some sin at the altar?

Jezebel doesn't respond to this opportunity to repent and as a result she is placed on a bed of suffering. I believe the best interpretation of this bed of suffering is actually a death bed.

Paul, in writing to Timothy, records a story of 2 men who also refused to repent. He writes in:

1 Timothy 1:20, “Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.”

Sin is serious. Paul adds this in:

1 Corinthians 5:1-2, “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?”

Then in verse 5:

1 Corinthians 5:5, “hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.”

In his follow up letter to the Corinthians Paul writes to them reminding that they are promised to Christ as His bride and that we should be pure for Him.

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians tells them this:

Ephesians 5:25-27, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

Do we understand the price Jesus paid to make His church holy? To be a church holy and without blemish. And Jezebel leads that same church into immorality. But she wasn't the only person bearing fault in this church.

The second group Jesus is judging here is those who committed adultery with her. These are the ones who believed her lies which led many into tribulation.

This group is set to suffer, not die like Jezebel, until they repent.

A third group is also addressed here, “the children.” These are those who followed Jezebel as disciples in her teaching. These were also set to die as Jezebel.

With this judgement all would know that Jesus knows their minds and their hearts. There is no hiding from Jesus. What are we trying to hide from him today?

They will be judged according to their deeds. Works don't get you into heaven. Works are what non-believers are judged by. This is because in seeking salvation by works rejects the gift of Jesus.

So, if one thinks that they can replace Jesus with their works they will be judged by their works and they will be convicted by those works. You see, failure to be perfect results in eternal separation from God.

#### IV. Command

Revelation 2:24-25, “Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, ‘I will not impose any other burden on you, 25 except to hold on to what you have until I come.’”

Jesus' command here is to those who didn't follow Jezebel's teaching is to hold onto the truth of the gospel until Jesus' return.

That is our charge as well. We are to hold unto the truth of Scripture and the only way to do that is to know the Scriptures. Have you read the Bible at least once? If not, that is where you begin. Then you read it again and again and again for it is the daily bread.

Just as you don't eat only one meal in your life, it is the same with the Bread of God. You eat it daily.

#### V. Counsel

Revelation 2:26-29, "To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— 27 that one 'will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery'— just as I have received authority from my Father. 28 I will also give that one the morning star. 29 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

This passage provides 2 promises. They are:

1. Authority over nations.

This means ruling over nations. This promise is taken from Psalm 2:7-9 and is a promise of participation in Jesus' millennial kingdom.

Catch this, if you and I remain faithful we will rule with Jesus during the millennium. Imagine this, during that era there will be nations, all obedient to Jesus.

There will be no death, but babies will still be born. The earth will be filled and under the rule of Jesus all will have food, shelter, peace. His rule will be perfect, and we will rule with Him.

We will also have:

2. The Morning Star.

We are promised the Morning Star. The Morning Star is Jesus! We will have Jesus right there with us. We will know Him, we will see Him face to face.