

THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA
(The Church tempted to compromise)
Rev. 2: 18 – 29

INTRODUCTION:

1. It is an odd fact that the longest of the letters to the seven churches was written to the church in the smallest and least important of the seven towns.

2. The name Thyatira emerged in history in 290 B.C. as the name of a military center.

3. The supreme importance of Thyatira was that it was the gateway to Pergamos, the capital city of Asia.

4. Thyatira was a great commercial center:

(1) The roads which passed through its valley brought the trade of half the world to its doors.

(2) A great center of wool trade and of dyeing industry.

(3) It was from Thyatira that Lydia, the seller of purple came. Acts 16: 14

(4) Purple dye was extremely expensive.

5. Thyatira possessed more trade guilds than any other town of its size in Asia.

(1) It would seem that the danger which threatened the church at Thyatira was the direct result of the powerful existence of these trade guilds.

(2) No merchant or trader could hope to prosper and to make money unless he was a member of his trade guild.

(3) If a trader refused to join his trade guild, he would be in much the same position as a working man would be today if he refused to join the trade union.

6. But, we may well ask, why should a Christian of Thyatira not join just such a trade guild?

(1) The social activities of these trade guilds were intimately bound up with the worship of the heathen gods.

(2) These trade guilds had common meals together.

(3) The meal would begin and end with a cup of wine poured out as a libation and an offering to the gods.

(4) Such a meal would almost certainly follow a sacrifice.

(5) At these social activities, drunkenness and fornication were the accepted things.

7. There was a very real problem here that faced the Christians of Thyatira.

(1) They had to decide whether to make money or serve Christ.

8. It seemed this woman Jezebel was teaching Christians that it was alright to be a member of these trade guilds.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKER: verse 18

1. *“The Son of God”...*

(1) The gift of God. John 3:16

(2) God’s spokesman. Heb. 1: 1 – 2

(3) The way to the Father. John 14:6

(4) Man’s Saviour. Matt. 1:21

2. *“Eyes like a flame of fire”...*

(1) Eyes all-penetrating.

(2) The all-wise inspector. Heb. 4:13

3. *“His feet are like fine brass”...*

(1) Strong and durable.

(2) Able to tread under foot all evil that His eyes may discover.

II. THE CHURCH COMMENDED: verse 19

1. *“I know thy works”...*

2. Charity or love – Love is the fountain from which flows true activities. Gal. 5:6; I Cor. 13

3. Service – is the result and proof of love for God and man. John 14:23, 24; I John 3:18

4. Faith – fidelity, faithfulness.

5. Patience – perseverance under all circumstances. I Cor. 15:58; Heb. 10: 36

6. A growth in works – “*The last to be more than the first*”... I Pet. 2:2; II Cor. 4:16

(1) Thyatira had kept its love aflame.

(2) This burning flame of love and enduring faith had led to the increase of works.

(3) Today such love and faith will keep a church active.

III. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CHURCH? Verse 20

1. A sinner is tolerated – Jezebel (Jezebel is a symbolic name.)

(1) A character like Jezebel of the Old Testament, the wife of Ahab.

(2) They should have withdrawn from her. I Cor. 5: 1 – 5; II Thess. 3:6

2. Jezebel called herself a prophetess.

(1) She was a false teacher with great leadership ability.

(2) She taught it was right to:

A. Commit fornication

B. To eat things sacrificed unto idols.

(3) This doctrine was “*the depths of Satan*”... V. 24

3. Divine grace extended. V. 21

IV. A WARNING – v. 22 – 23

1. “*I will cast her into a bed*”...

(1) Afflict – pain and affliction inevitably follows sin.

(2) Also, those who have followed her false teaching. Matt. 15:14

2. ***“I will kill her children with death”...***

3. ***“Will give unto everyone of you according to your works”... II Cor. 5:10***

V. EXHORTATION

1. ***“Unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine – I will put upon you none other burden”... Rev. 2:24***

(1) It seems the ***“none other burden”*** would be their responsibility to rid the congregation of this false teaching.

(2) We know this is what Christ requires throughout the New Testament. I Cor. 5: 1 -5; Eph. 5:11; Rom. 16: 17 – 18

2. They were to ***“Hold fast”***...Rev. 2: 25

3. They were to keep Christ’s works unto the end. Rev. 2: 26

(1) The life of a Christian does not consist in ONE victory over sin.

(2) The life of a Christian is a life of faithfulness which defies every assault of sin.

(3) The life of a Christian is battle after battle with Satan, his forces, and sin.

3. The promised Reward – Rev. 2: 26 – 29

4. The Admonition – Rev. 2: 29

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