

“The Church in Thyatira” **Revelation 2:18-29**

Introduction: Is love a means by which we can excuse sin in our congregation? If a believer has charity, does this suggest that they must overlook the faults of another, not dealing with their error? These unanswered questions were the contributing factors that led our Lord to send a fiery message to the saints in Thyatira. The saints at Ephesus were a complete contrast with the believers at Thyatira. Those in Ephesus would not tolerate heresy, but they had no love, while the assembly at Thyatira had love without dealing with the corruption in their congregation. This is the sum of the message sent to Thyatira, that there must be a balance in the Christian life when relating to love and separation. Our Lord was trying to get them to understand that love without separation was just as wrong as separation without love. Therefore, we see the stern warning sent to the church to repent, or face the consequences. By way of introduction notice:

1. The Announcement v. 18- “*And unto the angel...*”
 - a. A Divine Announcement Revelation 1:11- “*I am Alpha and Omega*”
 - b. A Direct Announcement- “*unto the angel*”
2. The Angel v. 18- “*the angel of*”
 - a. The Meaning of an Angel
 - (1) “angel” (Strong’s)- “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, a messenger from God”
 - (2) “angel” (Webster’s)- “A minister of the gospel, who is an ambassador of God. Literally, a messenger; one employed to communicate news or information from one person to another at a distance.”
 - b. The Message of an Angel- “*write*” Revelation 1:11- “*write in a book*”
3. The Assembly v. 18- “*the church in Thyatira write*”
 - a. The Explanation of Thyatira
 - (1) “A city of Asia Minor, on the borders of Lydia and Mysia. Its modern name is Ak-hissar, i.e., ‘white castle’.” (Online Bible)
 - (2) “The city had been established as a Macedonian colony by Alexander the Great after the destruction of the Persian empire.” (Walvoord)
 - (3) “It was and still is famous for its dyeing. Among the ruins, inscriptions have been found relating to the guild of dyers in that city in ancient times.” (Online Bible)
 - (4) “Thyatira was a military town as well as a commercial center with many trade guilds. Wherever guilds were found, idolatry and immorality—the two great enemies of the early church—were almost always present too.” (Wiersbe)
 - (5) “...there is a possibility that the testimony of Lydia might have played a part in the founding of the church at Thyatira.” (Phillips)
Acts 16:14-15
 - b. The Era of Thyatira- A.D. 500-1500

Body: The Bible is clear to teach that women are to be in silence in the church (I Corinthians 14:34- *“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.”*), not usurping authority over the man. (I Timothy 2:11-12- *“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”*) When a woman oversteps her boundaries within an assembly, Satan can use this to lead the congregation astray. This was the scenario at Thyatira. They had allowed a woman, typified as Jezebel, to lead their congregation into false doctrine and lewdness. Through her seduction, saints were leaving the precepts of God’s Word and following false prophecy. Our Lord, in response to their straying, gave them an allotted amount of time to repent, or He would bring great tribulation on them. Because they would not repent as a whole, they faced the period known as the “Dark Ages” (from Constantine to the Reformation), the time of their great tribulation. Let us look at the ignored message sent to them in order to prevent this great time of persecution.

I. The Overseer of the Church v. 18- *“These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass”*

A. A Description of His Family- *“These things saith the Son of God”*

1. “The city boasted a special temple to Apollo, the “sun god,” which explains why the Lord introduced Himself as “the Son of God” (the only time in Revelation this title is used).” (Wiersbe)
2. “Why did the Lord Jesus Christ in writing to this church emphasize the fact of His deity? Because Rome everywhere has accustomed people to think of Him as the Son of Mary.” (Ironsides)

B. A Description of His Fire- *“who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire”*
Revelation 1:14

1. “There was more than enough in this church to make the Lord’s eyes blaze with indignation.” (Phillips)
2. “This speaks of His holiness and righteousness.” (Ironsides)

C. A Description of His Feet- *“and his feet are like fine brass”*

1. “Bronze, in the Scriptures, is always a symbol of judgment.” (Phillips)
2. “As the Lord looks at Thyatira and sees what a harvest of wickedness will grow from this Satanic seed being sown by the woman Jezebel, He shoes His feet with bronze. Judgment must begin in the house of God.” (Phillips)

II. The Occupation of the Church vs. 19-25- *“I know thy works...”*

A. The Continuation of their Faith v. 19- *“...and the last to be more than the first.”*

1. Growth of their Love- *“and charity”*
2. Growth of their Loyalty- *“and service”*
3. Growth of their Learning- *“and faith”*
4. Growth of their Load- *“and thy patience”*
5. Growth of their Labor- *“and they works”*

- B. The Compromise of their Faith v. 20- “...*thou sufferest that woman Jezebel... to teach and to seduce my servants...*”
1. The Liability for their Compromise- “*Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee*”
 2. The Leader of their Compromise- “*because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess*”
 - a. “The name is symbolic: Jezebel was the idolatrous queen who enticed Israel to add Baal worship to their religious ceremonies (see 1 Kings 16-19).” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “She taught believers how to compromise with the Roman religion and the practices of the guilds, so that Christians would not lose their jobs or their lives.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. “Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, was not by birth a daughter of Abraham, but a princess of idolatrous Tyre, at a time, too, when its royal family was famed for cruel savagery and intense devotion to Baal and Astarte. Her father, Eth-baal, a priest of the latter deity, murdered the reigning monarch Phales, and succeeded him. Ahab, king of Israel, to strengthen his kingdom, married Jezebel, and she, aided and abetted by Ahab, introduced the licentious worship of Baal into Israel, and killed all the prophets of the Lord she could lay her hands on. And this influence she exercised, not only while her husband was alive, but also during the reign of her two sons, Ahaziah and Jehoram. Moreover, the marriage of her daughter Athaliah to Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, introduced idolatrous worship into Judah, and it was not long before there was a house of Baal built in Jerusalem, and so Jezebel caused all Israel to sin after the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.” (Larkin) 1 Kings 16:29-33
 - d. “Ahab, the king of Israel, married Jezebel to strengthen his kingdom—Just as Constantine, the Roman Emperor married the Church to strengthen the Roman Empire.” (Simpson)
 - e. “Old Testament Jezebel was a colorful character in more ways than one. She would spend the first part of the day putting on her war paint and the rest of the day on the warpath!” (Phillips)
 - f. “Jezebel’ s spiritual heir and successor was in the church at Thyatira. She was the ultimate source of all the trouble.” (Phillips)
 3. The Lessons of their Compromise- “*to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols*”
 - a. Lessons on Sensuality- “*to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication*”

- (1) "...the Scripture teaches that a woman is susceptible to error in spiritual things, and for that reason the woman is refused permission to teach in the church." (Phillips)
- (2) "Idolatry and compromise are, in the Bible, pictured as fornication and unfaithfulness to the marriage vows (Jer. 3:6ff; Hosea 9:1ff)." (Wiersbe)
- (3) "The worship of God was swept aside and idolatry put in its place." (Phillips)
- (4) "The word 'Thyatira' means literally 'a continual sacrifice'. It was during the centuries typified by the Church of Thyatira, called the Dark Ages, that the completeness of the finished work of Christ was denied, and to it were added works, ceremonies, rituals and sacrifices." (DeHann)
- (5) "Jezebel was the wife of the wicked king of Israel, Ahab, and she caused Ahab to commit idolatry and to turn from the pure worship of the true God." (DeHann)
- (6) "It was during these years that the Vandals, the Huns and the Goths overran Europe and brought with them their own idolatrous pagan worship." (DeHann)
- (7) "The Church, in a spirit of compromise, seeking to win them to professing Christianity, adopted part of their pagan idolatrous religion of these heathen, with the result that there emerged from this age a Church that was partly Christian, partly Judaistic and partly pagan." (DeHann)

b. Lessons on Sacrifices- *"and to eat things sacrificed unto idols"*
Exodus 20:4-5

C. The Corruption about their Faith v. 21- *"she repented not"*

1. The Time for Repentance- *"And I gave her space to repent of her fornication"*
2. The Turning from Repentance- *"and she repented not"*

D. The Condemnation about their Faith v. 22- *"...I will cast her into... great tribulation..."*

1. The Expulsion for their Condemnation- *"Behold, I will cast her into a bed"*
 - a. "Jezebel's bed of sin would become a bed of sickness!" (Wiersbe)
 - b. "Three things are revealed about the Lord's ways in judgment in the enunciation of these 'I will's'." (Phillips)
 - (1) v. 22- *"I will cast her into a bed"*
 - (2) v. 23- *"I will kill her children"*
 - (3) v. 23- *"I will give...according to your works"*
 - (4) v. 24- *"I will put...none other burden"*
 - (5) v. 28- *"I will give him the morning star"*

2. The Extent of their Condemnation- *“and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation”*
 - a. “Judgment is not only disciplinary; it is exemplary.” (Phillips)
 - b. I Timothy 5:20- *“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”*
 3. The Exception to their Condemnation- *“except they repent of their deeds”*
 - a. “Prophecies of doom are usually uttered in hopes that they might never have to be fulfilled.” (Phillips)
 - b. “The Lord would much rather pardon than punish.” (Phillips)
- E. The Commendation for their Faith v. 23- *“I will give unto every one of you according to your works”*
1. The Assassination of the Seducers- *“And I will kill her children with death”*
 2. The Awareness of the Saviour- *“and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts”*
 3. The Awards for the Saints- *“and I will give unto every one of you according to your works”*
- F. The Certainty about their Faith v. 24- *“I will put upon you none other burden”*
1. They have a Separate Doctrine- *“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine”*
 2. They have a Separate Depth- *“and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak”* (Contrast I Corinthians 2:10)
 3. They have a Sure Deliverance- *“I will put upon you none other burden”*
- G. The Contending for the Faith v. 25- *“But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.”*
1. Their Possession- *“But that which ye have already”*
 2. Their Protection- *“hold fast till I come”*
- III. The Overcoming of the Church vs. 26-28- *“And he that overcometh...”*
- A. Their Persistency v. 26- *“and keepeth my works unto the end”*
 - B. Their Power v. 26- *“to him will I give power over the nations”* Revelation 20:4
 - C. Their Presiding v. 27- *“And he shall rule them with a rod of iron”* Psalms 2:8-9
 - D. Their Pulverizing v. 27- *“as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers”*
 1. “Rebellious men will be like clay pots, easily broken to pieces!” (Wiersbe)
 2. “The ironic here is that of the vessel of a potter—a fragile vessel of clay—struck with a rod of iron and broken into fragments. That is, as applied to the nations, there would be no power to oppose His rule; the enemies of his government would be destroyed. Instead of

remaining firm and compacted together, they would be broken like the clay vessel of a potter when struck with a rod of iron.” (Barnes)

- E. Their Potentate v. 27- *“even as I received of my Father”* John 5:22
 - F. Their Promise v. 28- *“And I will give him the morning star.”* Revelation 22:16
 - 1. “Morning Star is proverbial for brightness and beauty.” (Source Unknown)
 - 2. “It is the forerunner or the messenger sent ahead of a new day.” (Source Unknown)
- IV. The Obligation of the Church v. 29- *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*
- A. The Prerequisites of Hearing- *“He that hath an ear”* Matthew 13:9
 - B. The Purpose of Hearing- *“let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”* Matthew 11:15

Conclusion: What could the one thousand year period, known as the “Dark Ages”, been like if only Thyatira would have repented? How many churches could have been planted and mighty works accomplished if only the congregation turned from their wicked ways? Untold multitudes of Christians were martyred and tortured during this time, but would this have occurred, if Thyatira heeded the voice of the Spirit? Certainly, it is unimaginable what could have been done during this time, but we must remember Thyatira is now history. Those valuable years will never be reclaimed. It is over. However, in our days, the Spirit is still speaking. The Lord, even today, desires to work through His church. How much damage can we avoid if we listen to the Spirit?