

“What Does God Have Against My Church?”
Revelation 2:4, 2:14, 2:20

Introduction: In Revelation chapters two and three, John pens the messages to the seven churches, which are in Asia (1:4, 1:11, 1:19-20). Each of these was literal local New Testament churches referring to the present period (1:19- “...and the things which are...”). However, they also represent a timeline of the church dispensation describing their spiritual history. Therefore, three views should be taken when studying all seven churches. First, they should be looked at historically as being seven literal churches in Asia. Secondly, they should be perceived as prophetically giving a sketch of the church dispensation. Thirdly, they should be looked at personally asking what personal application is given to the individual believer (II Timothy 3:16- “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”). It is this third view that we will concern ourselves with. In the text verses, our Lord had something “against” the churches. Historically speaking, when God has something against you, you are in trouble! Notice:

1. The Lord Had Something Against Sodom and Gomorrah
 - a. The Problem Genesis 18:20-21
 - b. The Judgment Genesis 19:12-13, Genesis 19:24-25, Genesis 19:27-28
2. The Lord Had Something Against Pharaoh
 - a. The Problem Exodus 5:1
 - b. The Judgment Exodus 5:2
 - (1) First Plague—Water into blood Exodus 7:20
 - (2) Second Plague—A frog invasion Exodus 8:6
 - (3) Third Plague—Lice Exodus 8:17
 - (4) Fourth Plague—Flies Exodus 8:24
 - (5) Fifth Plague—Cattle disease Exodus 9:6
 - (6) Sixth Plague—Boils Exodus 9:10
 - (7) Seventh Plague—Hail mingled with fire Exodus 9:24
 - (8) Eighth Plague—Locusts Exodus 10:13
 - (9) Ninth Plague—A three-day darkness Exodus 10:22
 - (10) Tenth Plague—Slaying of the firstborn Exodus 12:29
 - Pharaoh still did not want to let the Israelites go and notice what happened. Exodus 14:26-28
3. The Lord Had Something Against Nebuchadnezzar
 - a. The Problem Daniel 4:28-31
 - b. The Judgment Daniel 4:32-33
4. The Lord Had Something Against Ananias and Sapphira
 - a. The Problem Acts 5:1-4, 7-9
 - b. The Judgment Acts 5:5-6, 10-11
5. The Lord Had Something Against Herod
 - a. The Problem Acts 12:21-22
 - b. The Judgment Acts 12:23

Body: According to Webster's dictionary, the word "against" means, "In opposition; a disproving; dislike; contradiction; in an opposite direction; opposite in place." Let us notice what it was that the Lord had against these churches that made Him oppose, disapprove of, dislike, contradict, and speak in opposition against them.

- I. The Church at Ephesus had a Problem with Christian Devotion Revelation 2:4
- II. The Church at Pergamos had a Problem with Christian Dignity Revelation 2:14
- III. The Church at Thyatira had a Problem with Christian Doctrine Revelation 2:20

➤ In each of these churches we will notice a careful analysis and then a clear application.

- I. The Church at Ephesus had a Problem with Christian Devotion Revelation 2:4

- A. A Careful Analysis

1. The first church in our study is the church of Ephesus. It was a church that was commenced by Paul, cultivated by Timothy, and concluded with John. How was this church disbanded?
2. Even the physical characteristics of the city allude to its removal. This city was located at the chief port in Asia Minor. John Phillips describes, "Its harbor was given to change because of its continual silting. What was water became land; what was land became water. This shifting character of the city is reflected in the Lord's letter for the Ephesian assembly." Although Ephesus was strong in standards, they were drifting in their love for the Master. They even drifted to the point that her tides never came back to the shore. They lost their first love, which led to their removal of their candlestick out of his place. Revelation 2:5
3. Paul had previously written to Ephesus concerning their acquaintance with the love of God in Ephesians 3:17-19. "*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*"
4. However, when we come to Revelation 2:4 we see that Ephesus is having a problem comprehending this love of God.
5. "The word for love is the deepest and most meaningful word for love found in the Greek language." (Walvoord)
6. "Though they had not departed completely from love for God, their love no longer had the fervency, depth, or meaning it once had had in the church." (Walvoord)
7. "The furnace was still there, but the fire had gone out." (Phillips)
8. "Labor is no substitute for love; neither is purity a substitute for passion." (Wiersbe)
9. "It is only as we love Christ fervently that we can serve Him faithfully." (Wiersbe)

10. Notice in Mark 12:30 how we are to love the Lord. *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.”*
- a. The scribes, in v. 28, were challenging Jesus as to which commandment to keep. “The scribes had determined that the Jews were obligated to obey 613 precepts in the Law, 365 negative precepts and 248 positive. One of their favorite exercises was discussing which of these divine commandments was the greatest.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. Our Lord made a reference to Deuteronomy 6:4-5- *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”*
 - c. “There is only one God. He must be enthroned in the life of the individual so sovereignly and so supremely that:
 - (1) Every emotion is a God-centered emotion—*“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart...”*
 - (a) “Thou shalt love him supremely, more than all other beings and things, and with all the ardor possible.” (Barnes)
 - (b) “To love him with all the heart is to fix the affections supremely on him, more strongly than on anything else, and to be willing to give up all that we hold dear at his command.” (Barnes)
 - (2) Every thought is a God-centered thought—*“... and with all thy soul...”*
 - (a) “Or, with all thy ‘life.’ This means, to be willing to give up the life to him, and to devote it all to his service.” (Barnes)
 - (b) It means, “to live to him, and to be willing to die at his command.” (Barnes)
 - (3) Every decision is a God-centered decision—*“... and with all thy mind...”*
 - (4) Every deed is a God-centered deed—*“... and with all thy strength...”*

B. A Clear Application

1. Our Love for Reading Our Bibles is Gone
 - a. The Big Question: Mark 12:10- *“And have ye not read this scripture...”*
 - b. Matthew 22:29- *“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”*
 - c. Notice how we should be in the Word:
 - (1) Psalms 119:42- *“...for I trust in thy word.”*
 - (2) Psalms 119:74- *“...I have hoped in thy word.”*
 - (3) Psalms 119:133- *“Order my steps in thy word...”*
 - (4) Psalms 119:148- *“...I might meditate in thy word.”*
 - d. John 5:39- *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”*

- e. Acts 17:11- *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*
 - f. Deuteronomy 11:18-20- *“Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates”*
 - g. I Peter 2:2- *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”*
 - h. Psalm 119:148- *“Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.”*
 - i. The Bible can be read through completely in seventy hours and forty minutes at the tempo usually read in public services.
 - (1) The Old Testament can be read in 52 hours and 20 minutes.
 - (2) The New Testament can be read in 18 hours and 20 minutes.
 - (3) To read all the Psalms will take better than four hours.
 - (4) To read the gospel account of Luke will take about three hours.
 - (5) And yet, there is such widespread ignorance of the Bible!
 - j. If you only read three chapters in the Old Testament and one chapter in the New Testament every day:
 - (1) You would read through the Old Testament in 310 days
 - (2) You would read through the New Testament in 260 days
 - (3) This is reading your Bible through at the least once a year
 - k. There are 929 chapters in the Old Testament and 260 chapters in the New Testament. This totals 1,189 chapters in the Bible.
 - (1) If you read 10 chapters a day, 5 in the Old Testament and 5 in the New Testament then:
 - (2) You would read the Old Testament twice in a year (must read seven more chapters)
 - (3) You would read the New Testament seven times a year (must read one more chapter)
 - l. We read everything (Sports Afield, Buck Masters, Home and Gardening, fictional books, etc.) but our Bible.
2. Our Love for Praying is Gone
- a. I Thessalonians 5:17- *“Pray without ceasing.”*
 - b. Ephesians 6:18- *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”*
 - c. Careful for nothing, prayerful for everything, thankful for anything.
 - d. Luke 18:1- *“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint”*
 - e. Psalm 55:17- *“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”*

- f. Daniel 6:10- *“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”*
- g. Psalms 5:3- *“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.”*
- h. Mark 1:35- *“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”*
- i. If you do not pray, it is a good sign you have not been saved!
 - (1) Romans 8:15- *“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”*
 - (2) Galatians 4:6- *“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”*
- j. Why do some of you not have a desire to come to prayer time?
- k. Matthew 26:40- *“And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?”*
- l. “Perhaps little praying is worse than no praying. Little praying is a kind of make-believe, a salve for the conscience, a farce and a delusion.” (E.M. Bounds)
- m. A man without prayer is like a tree without roots. Seven days without prayer makes one weak.
- n. Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.
- o. Prayer can do anything that God can do.
- p. Satan trembles when he sees; The weakest saint upon his knees.
- q. Prayer girds human weakness with divine strength.
- r. “In prayer it is better to have a heart without words, than words without a heart.” (John Bunyan)
- s. “Prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan.” (John Bunyan)
- t. “All the Christian virtues are locked up in the word prayer.” (Spurgeon)
- u. “Don’t pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it.” (Corrie Ten Boom)
- v. It is not that prayer changes God, or awakens in him purposes of love and compassion that he has not already felt. No, it changes us, and therein lies its glory and its purpose.
- w. “Prayer is not learned in a classroom but in the closet.” (E.M. Bounds)
So let’s quit talking about prayer and pray.
- x. Luke 11:1- *“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”*
- y. Prayer is the most important thing in my life. If I should neglect prayer for a single day, I should lose a great deal of the fire of faith.

- z. Prayerlessness is a Sin! I Samuel 12:23- *“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way”*
3. Our Love for Worship is Gone
- a. Psalm 22:22- *“I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.”*
 - b. Psalm 34:1- *“I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”*
 - c. Psalm 35:18- *“I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.”*
 - d. Psalm 67:3- *“Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.”*
 - e. Psalm 119:171- *“My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.”*
 - f. Psalm 96:8-9- *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name...O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness...”*
 - g. Psalm 9:14- *“...I will rejoice in thy salvation.”*
 - h. Psalm 68:3- *“But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.”*
 - i. Psalm 42:4- *“When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.”*
 - j. Psalm 5:11- *“But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.”*
 - k. Psalm 32:11- *“Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.”*
 - l. Psalm 35:27- *“Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.”*
 - m. Isaiah 12:6- *“Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”*
 - n. Psalm 47:1- *“O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.”*
 - o. II Samuel 6:16- *“And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.”*
 - p. II Samuel 6:23- *“Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.”*
 - q. Psalm 63:4- *“Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.”*
 - r. Psalm 134:2- *“Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.”*

- s. Ezra 3:10-11- *“And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.”*
 - t. Ezra 3:12-13- *“But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.”*
 - u. Nehemiah 8:6- *“And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.”*
 - v. Nehemiah 9:5- *“Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, Stand up and bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.”*
 - w. Psalms 119:62- *“At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.”*
4. Our Love for Soul Winning is Gone
- a. Proverbs 11:30- *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”*
 - b. What is it to win a soul? This may be instructively answered by describing what it is not to win a soul. (Spurgeon)
 - (1) We do not regard it to be soul winning to steal members out of churches already established.
 - (a) We count it utter meanness to build up our own house with the ruins of our neighbors’ mansions.
 - (b) Our grand object is not the revision of opinions, but the regeneration of natures.
 - (2) We do not consider soul winning to be accomplished by hurriedly inscribing more names upon our church-roll.
 - (a) To introduce unconverted persons to the church is to weaken and degrade it. Leading sinners to make a profession by undue pressure is ill judged.
 - (b) If there is no increase, you may calculate with considerable accuracy that there is not much being done. If there is a clear decrease among a growing population, you may reckon that the prayers of the people and the preaching of the minister are not of the most powerful kind.

- (3) Nor is it soul-winning, dear friends, merely to create excitement.
- (a) Do not aim at sensation and “effect”, thus planning their production.
 - (b) It very often happens that the converts that are born in excitement die when the excitement is over.
- c. Psalm 126:6- *“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”*
 - d. Matthew 4:19- *“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”*
 - e. Matthew 28:19- *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”*
 - f. Romans 11:14- *“If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.”*
 - g. I Corinthians 9:22- *“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”*
 - h. Galatians 4:19- *“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you”*
 - i. I Timothy 4:16- *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”*
 - j. James 5:20- *“Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”*
 - k. Jude 1:22-23- *“And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”*
5. Our Love for Giving is Gone Luke 6:38- *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”*
- a. Have you noticed the offerings lately? Only ¼ of the people in this church give in the offerings lately.
 - (1) But preacher, I’m retired and do not have any money coming in! Yes, and it probably will stay that way when you do not give.
 - (2) But preacher, times are tight and we are in a recession. I need my 401K to stay in place. Don’t worry, Obama will take care of your 401K.
 - (3) II Corinthians 8:1-2- *“Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.”*
 - b. Some of you will spend \$1,000 on a gun, but will turn up your nose when an offering is taken. You will spend \$20,000 to \$40,000 on a vehicle, but you will turn up your nose when an offering is taken.

- c. You borrow money from banks, credit cards, and lay-aways for houses, cars, boats, motorcycles, vacations, time shares, etc., but you will not borrow \$10.00 to complete an offering.
- d. You spend money on everything from: bullets to beauticians, computers to cosmetics, cars to cell phones, fishing to flowers, hunting to hiking, knitting to knives, perfumes to pontoons, sports to salons, toys to tools, tree stands to toe nails, but you do not have money for an offering.
- e. You spend money on:
 - (1) Boats, bobbers, baits, balls, bats, and ballgames, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - (2) Chips, cokes, cookies, cakes, coffee, and candy, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - (3) Dogs, doodads, decorations, doctors, and deodorants, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - (4) Guns, gold, gardens, gum, and gyms, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - (5) Mowers, makeup, makeovers, and manicures, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - (6) Restaurants, radios, recreations, romance, and roses, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - (7) Some of you are addicts to flea markets, yard sales, thrift stores, Salvation Army, Goodwill, and Wal-Mart, but you do not have money for an offering.
- f. Malachi 3:8- *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.”*
- g. Matthew 6:21- *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*
 - (1) “Materialism will enslave the heart (Matt. 6:19-21), the mind (Matt. 6:22-23), and the will (Matt. 6:24).” (Wiersbe)
 - (2) “We can set our affection on things on the earth, or we can set our affection on things above. We can lay up treasure on earth, or we can lay up treasure in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-20). The Lord laid it down as a principle that our heart will be where our treasure is (Matthew 6:21).” (Phillips)
 - (3) “In Bible times much of what was treasured was in the form of costly fabrics—purple, and fine twined linen. Alongside that, the Lord laid the word ‘moth’. Other treasure was in the form of costly metal. Alongside that, the Lord laid the word ‘rust’. People put their treasures in safe places. Alongside that precaution, the Lord laid the word ‘thieves’. When accumulating earthly treasure, we must beware of that which rots, that which rusts, and that which robs.” (Phillips)
 - (4) “The Lord did not condemn all desire to accumulate treasure, but what He condemned was the useless practice of laying up treasure for oneself on earth.” (Phillips)

- (5) “It is not wrong to possess things, but it is wrong for things to possess us.” (Wiersbe)
- (6) “The passion for possessions is not reviled but redirected. So we have a choice of loves. We can be taken up with things earthly or heavenly, and the Lord told us which of the two He would have us choose.” (Phillips)
- 6. Our love for our Bible, praying, worship, soul-winning, and giving is gone.
- 7. “America is filled with ‘Ecclesiastical corpses in beautiful caskets’.” (Simpson)
- 8. Revelation 2:5 “The church that loses its love will soon lose its light, no matter how doctrinally sound it may be.” (Wiersbe)
- 9. Revelation 2:5 “Religious activity without love is a sin that calls for repentance!” (Simpson)

II. The Church at Pergamos had a Problem with Christian Dignity Revelation 2:14

A. A Careful Analysis

- 1. Similar to the church in Smyrna, Pergamos had their round of persecutions. However, after Constantine ascended the throne in Rome, things began to change. It was during his conquest to conquer the world, around A.D. 312, that he supposedly saw a cross in the sky. The words “In this sign thou shalt conquer” were over the cross suggesting to Constantine that if he would embrace the cross that he would be victorious. When he consented to this supposed vision, Constantine proclaimed that Christianity would be the religion for the Roman Empire. His first attempt to “Christianize” Rome would be to baptize his armies, making them “Christians”. Through his efforts, he tried to combine the state and the church, making them one. (DeHaan) With the emperor as the head of the “church”, things began to become intolerable. Roman Emperors would now dictate not only the powers of government, but also the powers of religion. The “churches” became filled with unregenerate sinners that tried to lead the nation, and church, spiritually. Only complete chaos and heretical doctrines followed. This was where the doctrines of the Nicolaitans and Balaam took root in the church in Pergamos. Several professed Christ, but only few possessed Christ. This is why the Lord had a few things against the saints at Pergamos, because they too began to mix paganism with Christianity.
- 2. The doctrines of Balaam can be seen in Numbers 22-25
- 3. Notice Balaam’s teaching in the Scriptures:
 - a. II Peter 2:15- “*following the way of Balaam*”
 - b. Jude 1:11- “*the error of Balaam*”
 - c. Revelation 2:14- “*the doctrine of Balaam*”
- 4. “Balaam was a true prophet who prostituted his gifts in order to earn money from King Balak, who hired him to curse the people of Israel. God prevented Balaam from actually cursing the nation—in fact, God turned the curses into blessings!—but Balak still got his money’s worth. How?

By following Balaam's advice and making friends with Israel, and then inviting the Jews to worship and feast at the pagan altars." (Wiersbe)

5. "If you cannot curse these people, then corrupt them." (Phillips)
6. According to Ironside, the two meanings of Pergamos are "marriage" and "elevation". It depicts the church at Pergamos as being elevated to a place of prestige, having married themselves to worldliness. Uniting with the Roman government, Pergamos mixed their faith with paganism.
7. Revelation 2:14 "They ate meat from idolatrous altars and committed fornication as part of heathen religious rites. Twenty-four thousand people died because of this disobedient act of compromise." (Wiersbe)
8. "Why did this bit of ancient history apply to the believers at Pergamos? Because a group in that church said, 'There is nothing wrong with being friendly to Rome. What harm is there in putting a pinch of incense on the altar and affirming your loyalty to Caesar?' Antipas refused to compromise and was martyred; but others took the 'easy way' and cooperated with Rome." (Wiersbe)
9. Revelation 2:14 "Fornication was a tolerated practice in this town." (Simpson)
10. "Demosthenes stated, 'We have prostitutes for the sake of pleasure. We have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation. We have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately and of having a faithful guardian of our household.'" (Simpson)
11. Revelation 2:17 "Instead of eating 'things sacrificed unto idols', the believers in Pergamos needed to feast on God's holy food, the bread of life found in Jesus Christ through the Word." (Wiersbe)

B. A Clear Application

1. I Thessalonians 5:22- "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*"
2. James 4:4- "*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*"
3. James 4:17- "*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*"
4. Woman's Attire
 - a. Bobbed hair on women I Corinthians 11:15- "*But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.*"
 - b. Immodest dresses (V-necks, low-necks, tight fit, slits, miniskirts, 2" rule people, thin material, loud and colorful material, sleeveless. Proverbs 7:10- "*And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.*") I Timothy 2:9- "*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array*"
 - c. Women Wearing Pants Deuteronomy 22:5- "*The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.*"

5. Man's Attire
 - a. Long Hair on Men I Corinthians 11:14- *"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?"*
 - b. Worldly T-shirts (ball teams and witness wear) and Baggy Pants (pull up your pants; tuck your shirt in; pants should not be tight or have holes in them revealing your nakedness) II Corinthians 6:17- *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you"*
 - c. You should button up your shirt and put a tie on for church. No flashy suits or materials.
 - d. Tank tops and sleeveless shirts are not acceptable.
 - e. Tattoos Leviticus 19:28- *"Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD."*
 - f. Shorts Revelation 1:13- *"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot..."*
 - (1) Exodus 20:26- *"Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon."*
 - (2) Revelation 3:18- *"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear..."*
6. Worldly Entertainment
 - a. Sports (Football, Baseball, Basketball, Racing, Wrestling, etc.) II Timothy 3:4- *"...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God..."*
 - b. TV, Movies, Internet, and Video Games
 - (1) Deuteronomy 7:26- *"Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing."*
 - (2) Psalms 101:2-4- *"I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person."*
 - (3) Some people's excuse is that I get it for the news. Psalms 101:7- *"He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight."*
 - c. Dancing, Mixed Swimming, Masons, Shriners, Playing Cards, Lottery, Eating where they Serve Alcohol, Eating Out on the Lord's Day, and Cussing
 - d. Ungodly Music—Country, Contemporary, Classical, Rock, Rap
 - (1) Ephesians 5:19- *"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"*
 - (2) Colossians 3:16- *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and"*

hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

III. The Church at Thyatira had a Problem with Christian Doctrine Revelation 2:20

A. A Careful Analysis

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Revelation 2:20 “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)
4. “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)
5. “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) I Kings 16:29-33

6. “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)
7. “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)
8. “Jezebel’s spiritual heir and successor was in the church at Thyatira. She was the ultimate source of all the trouble.” (Phillips)
9. “...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)
10. “Idolatry and compromise are, in the Bible, pictured as fornication and unfaithfulness to the marriage vows (Jer. 3:6ff; Hosea 9:1ff).” (Wiersbe)
11. “The worship of God was swept aside and idolatry put in its place.” (Phillips)
12. “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)
13. “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)
14. 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)
15. “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. A Clear Application

1. Notice the study of Doctrine in the Bible:
 - a. The Perversion of Doctrine I Timothy 4:1- “*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*”
 - II Timothy 4:3- “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears*”
 - Ephesians 4:14- “*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of*

- doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”*
- b. The Preaching of Doctrine I Timothy 4:13- *“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”*
 - c. The Purity of Doctrine Titus 2:1- *“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine”*
 - d. The Perpetuation of Doctrine Ephesians 4:5- *“One Lord, one faith, one baptism”*
 - (1) It Came from the Father John 7:16- *“Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.”*
 - (2) It was Preached by the Apostles Acts 2:42- *“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*
 - (3) It is to be Continued Through the Church II Timothy 2:2- *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*
 - e. God want us to Live by the Same Doctrine Philippians 3:16- *“Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”*
2. Revelation 2:22 “The Lord would much rather pardon than punish.” (Phillips)
 3. 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?

Conclusion: If God had a problem with Sodom and Gomorrah’s sin being very grievous, and destroyed their cities with brimstone and fire; if God had a problem with Pharaoh disobeying the command of the Lord in letting His people go, and brought plagues in his and his people’s lives; if God had a problem with Nebuchadnezzar’s pride, and humbled him by making him insane in that he ate grass like an ox; if God had a problem with Ananias and Sapphira lying in the house of God, and killed them on the spot; if God had a problem with Herod allowing himself to be worshipped like God, and smote him with flesh eating worms that he died; what makes us think that God will not move in judgment in our lives when He has something against us? When our devotion, dignity, and doctrines are “against” God, what makes us think that God will not move in judgment in our lives? It is not a matter of “if” God will judge me, but a matter of “when” God will

judge me! The only remedy to our bad devotions, dignity, and doctrines is to get right with God and change our course of actions. Will you do that right now?