

The Son of Man's Message To The Church In Thyatira

(Revelation 2:18-29 NASB) “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like burnished bronze, says this: 19 ‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith, and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. 20 But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality. 22 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. 23 And I will kill her children with plague, 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. 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. 25 Nevertheless what you have, hold firmly until I come. 26 The one who overcomes, and the one who keeps My deeds until the end, I will give him authority over the nations; 27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are shattered, as I also have received authority from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star. 29 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

I. Cultural Context of the Church In Thyatira



- a. Unlike Pergamum, Smyrna, and Ephesus, Thyatira was not a major port city and was a more “common” city. However it was a garrison city that had Roman troops stationed there. Thyatira functioned as an important trade center for many things like wool, linen, fabric, and bronze. The city was built around “guilds” which were, organizations combining the qualities of a modern union, a vocational school, a trading corporation, and religious association. These guilds were the primary way society functioned in Thyatira and often would hold festivals involving mandatory pagan worship.
- b. Thyatira was a center for the worship of Apollo (the “sun god”). Apollo was known as “son of god (Zeus)”. During guild festivals held within the city, Apollo was heavily worshiped and when Christians didn’t participate, they would experience societal pressure and often lose their jobs.
- c. The first mention in Thyatira is in **Acts 16** where Paul encountered a “seller of purple cloth”.

(Acts 16:14-15 NASB) “A woman named Lydia was listening; she was a seller of purple fabrics from the city of Thyatira, and a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. 15 Now when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay...”

II. The Specific Revelation of Jesus to the Church in Thyatira

(Revelation 2:18 NASB) “The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like burnished bronze, says this”

- a. Son of God – Jesus highlighted His deity and authority over any other god. This is a direct statement that confronted the reality that Apollo was called “*son of god (Zeus)*”. While Jesus walked the earth He used the term “*Son of Man*” to refer to himself more than any other title to demonstrate that though He was fully man, He was Daniel’s prophesied “*Son of Man*” (a uman that appeared to have “*God-status*”). To Thyatira and to the end-time church, Jesus makes clear that He is the very Son of God who is above all other gods that are worshiped.

(Daniel 7:13-14 NASB) “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a son of man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. 14 And to Him was given dominion, honor, and a kingdom, So that all the peoples, nations, and populations of all languages might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”

- b. Eyes like a flame of fire –This speaks to the refining nature of Jesus’ judgment. His perspective is always one that see’s through the lens of redemption. Apollo was the “*sun god*”, so this is another direct confrontation of a false deity that was worshiped in Thyatira.
- c. Feet like burnished bronze – This speaks of the works of Christ, having gone through the fires of testing, and coming out like polished glowing strong bronze. This revelation was meant to resonate with the bronzesmiths and soldiers in Thyatira. Jesus was making clear that He is a leader that has been tested and proven to be strong and glorious in all His ways.

III. Affirmation & Recognition of the Church in Thyatira

(Revelation 2:19 NASB) “I know your deeds, and your love and faith, and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.”

- a. This is the only one of the seven churches that is commended for their deeds, love, and faith together. They we’re faithful to serve and to persevere under the pressures they faced. They were known for “*sermon on the mount*” principles that they walked out. Clearly this church was thriving in areas of their character, and were being transformed into the image of God by walking out the culture of His kingdom. Even Lydia from Thyatira was known for her kindness and hospitality when she met Paul (*Acts 16:14-15*).
- b. This church had even grown to have a greater impact by doing “*greater deeds*” than they did at first. This speaks to their faithfulness to build and grow as a community of faith. They we’re faithful with small, and had now stepped into great works.

(Luke 16:10 NASB) “The one who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much; and the one who is unrighteous in a very little thing is also unrighteous in much.”

IV. Jesus’ Correction and Rebuke for the Church in Thyatira

(Revelation 2:20 NASB) “But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols”

- a. This reference to Jezebel doesn’t appear to be the name of a specific individual name Jezebel in Thyatira but, a reference to a person and/or group of people in Thyatira operating the same way that

Jezebel did during the time of Elijah (**1 Kings 16-21**). The church in Thyatira was in compromise because some were tolerating the “*Jezebel spirit*” which lead people to immorality and idolatry.

- b. In Ezekiel’s day, Jezebel had a strong controlling and manipulative influence over her husband Ahab (King of Israel), and led him to accept and promote her native (Canaanite) idols (namely Baal and Asherah). Jezebel also orchestrated the killing of the majority the Godly prophetic voices and leaders in Israel at that time.
 - i. Baal – Baal was known to be the god of fertility, called “*lord of rain and dew*” (which is why God used Elijah to command it not to rain for 3 ½ years) and “*he who rides on the clouds*” (a direct mockery of Yahweh the cloud rider rooted in **Deuteronomy 33:26**). Baal was the Canaanite equivalent for the Greek god Zeus.
 - ii. Asherah – Asherah was the Canaanite moon goddess of love, war, and fertility (seen often as a companion to Baal). The worship of Asherah was characterized by its sensuality including ritual prostitution. Priestesses of Asherah practiced divination and fortune-telling.
- c. When a person (male or female), or group of people operate(s) in the “*spirit of Jezebel*”, its often targets prophetic voices and those in leadership. “*Jezebel*” is preys on leaders by seeking to manipulate and control their decisions in order to lead them to stumble away from what God has called them to. The results of tolerating Jezebel often leads to idolatry, immorality, and depression (Elijah had a season of depression **1 Kings 19:4**).

V. Jesus’ Call to Repent & Respond

(Revelation 2:21-25 NASB) “*I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality. 22 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. 23 And I will kill her children with plague, 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. 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. 25 Nevertheless what you have, hold firmly until I come.*”

- a. Jesus’ first call to repent is for the “*Jezebel*” of that day. If the person(s) operating in that spirit didn’t repent of his/her/their immorality, Jesus was commitment to severely judging them. He would strike “*her*” with sickness and kill “*her*” children. Jesus called the teachings of “*Jezebel*” the “*deep things of Satan*”. “*Jezebel*” is always consumed with “*bitter jealousy*” and “*selfish ambition*” operating under demonic “*wisdom*”.

(James 3:14-16 NASB) “*14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.*”

- b. Cast her on a bed of sickness & Those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation – The only time God chooses to use severe suffering, sickness, and tribulation as a judgement, is when people are persistently unrepentant and functioning in direct rebellion to His purposes (i.e. the plagues in Egypt). Often, God’s judgement is simply “giving people over to their degrading passions” resulting in sickness and death. In His patience, God relents from this severe judgement until it becomes the absolute least severe means to produce whole-hearted repentance. God takes no delight in the death of anyone and desires that none shall perish.

(Romans 1:26, 28-32 NASB) “*For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions... 28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a depraved mind, to do those things that are not proper, 29 people having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit,*

and malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unfeeling, and unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them.”

(2 Peter 3:9 NASB) “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.”

(Ezekiel 18:32 NASB) “For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord God. “Therefore, repent and live!”

- c. Kill her children with plague – “her children” are those that she has convinced to walk in immorality and idolatry, those whom she “produced”. Jesus was committed to righteously cutting off this false teaching before it had the opportunity to mature and spread.
- d. Jesus was using this judgement against “Jezebel” as an example to “all the churches” as an example of His true and righteous judgment. He wanted to make known that He gives to each person according to their deeds, meaning there’s consequences for both unrighteousness and righteousness. The way He dealt with the church in Thyatira is a picture and foreshadow of how He will deal with the unrepentance and rebellion against His word at the end of the age through his 21 judgment series.
- e. For those who did not hold to “Jezebel’s” teaching, Jesus said there was no burden placed on them, but still called them to persist in faithfulness “until He comes”. Because He has not returned yet, the call to faithfulness and purity despite a “Jezebel” filled culture remains for the church today.

VI. Overcomers Promise

(Revelation 2:26-28 NASB) “The one who overcomes, and the one who keeps My deeds until the end, I will give him authority over the nations; 27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are shattered, as I also have received authority from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star. 29 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

- a. For those who respond in faithfulness and keep His deeds until the end, Jesus promises to share His authority over nations with them. Jesus identifies himself as the one In **Psalm 2**, who is appointed to rule the nations, and invites His church to the special privilege of leadership over nations in the age to come. Faithfulness to God and His ways (even in the small things) is the way for God to trust you to lead.
- b. The morning star - The morning star (The planet Venus) is the star seen in the horizon just before the sun appears. It’s always been associated to “new life” and symbolizes the faithfulness of the “new day”. In the ancient pagan world, the morning star was associated with different deities who were the ones with authority to be “torch bearers” and “light bringers to the earth”.
- c. The Morning Star - Jesus promised to give “Himself” the Morning Star (**Revelation 22:16**) to those who overcome. This promise is a pull-on Daniel’s prophecy for believers to shine like the glow of the expanse of heaven. Those who overcome, will be trusted with the message that brings light to the world!

(Revelation 22:16 NASB) “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you of these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

(Daniel 12:3 NASB) “And those who have insight will shine like the glow of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”