

Revelation Chapter 2 Third Continued

Revelation 2:18 "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet [are] like fine brass;"

(590 to 1517 A.D.). The Papal Church, the danger of moral compromise

The city of Thyatira was a vital commerce and trade center located about 40 miles southeast of Pergamos.

This church had been under Roman rule for nearly 3 centuries (ca. 190 B.C.). Since the city was situated in a long valley that sweep 40 miles to Pergamum, it had no natural defenses and had a long history of being destroyed and rebuilt. Originally populated by soldiers of Alexander the Great, it was little more than a military outpost to guard Pergamum.

This Thyatira is the same as where Lydia lived. In (Acts 16), we read:

Acts 16:14 "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard [us]: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

The church at Thyatira, many believe, is representative of the Roman Catholic Church and the period of that churches' prominence. I would not belabor that point.

"Eyes like unto a flame of fire" (see note on 1:14).

Jesus commended the church here at Thyatira for its good works.

Jesus shows this church His penetrating "eyes", which can even discern the intents of the heart. With His feet of "fine brass", He shows them that He truly is the final Judge (compare 19:15-29; see note on verse 14).

Many Christians are not aware that they are worshiping idols. Some are so full of pride and self-deception that their spiritual eyes are blinded from seeing the areas of their lives where they have refused to let Jesus reign as Lord. Many believers today have made moral compromises. They no longer hold high standards of integrity. If you are guilty of moral compromise, spiritual adultery, then you must do what Jesus told these believers to do: Repent and then hold fast! Hold on to your integrity. Guard your Godly standards. Don't fall prey to moral compromise.

We are looking at the spiritual and trying to see all of the seven churches in our modern churches today. Wherever possible, not pointing fingers or calling names. We must examine ourselves before we start pointing fingers.

Speaking of idols, what could some of these be? Material possessions, various lusts, recreation, entertainment, career and selfish ambition. (dwell carefully as you think about the answer).

We are looking at the spiritual and trying to see all of the seven churches in our modern churches today. Wherever possible, not pointing fingers or calling names. We must examine ourselves before we start pointing fingers. The worship of the sun god was very prevalent in this surrounding area; and, perhaps, that is why we see Jesus offering the Morning Star to those who believe. Of course, Jesus is symbolically the Bright and Morning star (see verse 28 below).

Revelation 2:19 "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last [to be] more than the first"

Once again, Jesus sees beyond this outward display of good works and exposes a stronghold of Satan right in the midst of the church. The church of Pergamos was allowing a woman who called herself a prophetess to teach others that it was all right to mix pagan religions with Christianity. She was teaching and seducing people to commit fornication and compromise morally.

We are looking at the spiritual and trying to see all of the seven churches in our modern churches today. Wherever possible, not pointing fingers or calling names. We must examine ourselves before we start pointing fingers.

It seems that this church here in Thyatira has great love and compassion and is a working church trying to improve the condition of the less fortunate around them. This church is patient, which is gained by much tribulation. This is not a stiff cold church, as some of the other churches are, but is a loving caring church. It seems that the works of this church improve as they go along, because the last is more than the first. This is really a very nice statement that Jesus made about them.

Revelation 2:20 "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

Throughout the Old Testament, this union of that which is holy with that which is impure is considered by God as spiritual adultery. It was an abomination in His sight!

This false teacher is referred to as "Jezebel," which may or may not have actually been her name, but certainly refers to her spirit. It references Jezebel in the Old Testament, who was the wife of King Ahab. She was an idolatrous woman with unscrupulous methods, to perpetuate her power. Jesus warned the church of Thyatira of coming judgment to this false teacher and all those who commit spiritual adultery by moral compromise. This "Jezebel" was given time to repent, but refused (Rev. 2:21).

Now, those who had been deceived by her teaching were given the choice to repent or face severe judgment. In the Church today, most believers are not tempted to worship pagan idols of wood or stone, but they do worship other idols!

This is one of the scriptures that is often used by certain denominations to say that women should not teach and preach. If we carefully look at this, we will realize that Jezebel here is not a woman

actually, but a system of evil, whether taught by men or women. Fornication is the issue here, not that there is a woman in the church. Just as the Nicolaitans were not really a particular country and Baal was a symbol of evil and not a specific place and person.

We need to look at fornication and see what it is. Fornication is incest or adultery of either sex that are indulging in unlawful lust. Everyone would agree that any minister of God who promoted any of these sins would be a Jezebel to Jesus.

Men and women who are believers in Christ are all the Bride of Christ. I do not believe that this Jezebel is all women who minister the Word of God, but just those who teach evil lust.

In Galatians, we read that with God there is no male and female.

In Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

The same Paul that wrote for women to be silent in church (in 1 Corinthians 14:34), wrote this in Galatians.

We also need to look at (Acts 2).

Acts 2:17-18 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:" "And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"

There is something we are not understanding, or else the Bible contradicts itself. We know the Bible does not contradict itself. We must look more carefully at what the Scriptures mean. The error comes in evil messages that some women or men bring. The Jezebel here could be a woman, but if she is, it is not the fact that she is a woman that is wrong, it is an evil message that is wrong. Let's look at one more Scripture in Acts.

Acts 21:8-9 "And the next [day] we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was [one] of the seven; and abode with him." "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." There are many examples just like this of Philip's daughters.

We must all be careful about criticizing others in their ministry. Look carefully at the context it is written in, before speaking out against others.

Jezebel calls herself a prophetess. It appears whoever this is or whatever group this represents, they are promoting feelings of the flesh not the Spirit.

Throughout the Bible we are warned not to eat things sacrificed to idols knowingly.

Revelation 2:21 "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."

We must carefully look at what must be repented of. The sin here is fornication. She was not to repent of preaching, but repent of fornication. In the days that John wrote this, there were evil churches that even had harlots working in the church for the convenience of the members.

In our day, the satanic churches promote sex. Some churches teach that homosexuality and lesbianism are alternate life styles. My Bible says they are an abomination to God (Leviticus 18:22). You can easily see spiritually this church in Thyatira in these churches. Not only did Thyatira need to repent, but modern churches who teach this abomination.

Revelation 2:22 "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."

“Cast her into a bed”: Literally “bed”. Having given this woman time to repent, God was to judge her upon a bed. Since she used a luxurious bed to commit her immorality, and the reclining couch at the idol feast to eat things offered to false gods, He was to give her a bed in hell where she would lie forever.

Here this could be both physical and spiritual adultery. The people who get involved in these sex sins are guilty also. It is no excuse to sin just because your minister tells you that you are not guilty. Try every message you hear by what the Bible teaches. Do not be deceived by any false prophet, male or female. Their repentance is of their deeds, not whether they were male or female.

Revelation 2:23 "And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

“Her children”: The church was about 40 years old as John wrote, and her teaching had produced a second generation, advocating the same debauchery.

The word translated reins means "the inner most mind", perhaps the subconscious mind. The heart will be judged. The motive behind our deeds is just as important as the deed. God has perfect, intimate knowledge of every human heart; no evil can be hidden from Him (Psalm 7:9; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 11:20; 17:10; 20:12).

In the Scripture above, we see that God will not always overlook sin in the church. When His judgment falls, it will begin in the church. Punishment will be swift and so severe that other churches will look and tremble at the punishment.

The works spoken of here are the works of the heart and mind which come to maturity in actual deeds. Good or evil actually begins in the mind and heart. Just as beautiful words cannot come from an evil heart, beautiful deeds cannot either. What we are inside will show in what we do for God.

“According to your works”: Always the basis for future judgment (20:12-13; Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6). Deeds or works do not save (Eph. 2:8-9), but they do evidence salvation (James 2:14-26).

Revelation 2:24 "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden."

"The depths of Satan": This unbelievable libertinism and license was the fruit of pre-gnostic teaching that one was free to engage and explore the sphere of Satan and participate in evil with the body without harming the spirit (see introduction to 1 John: Background and Setting).

What doctrine is spoken of here? The doctrine of fleshly lust and fornication. The doctrine that says you can do what you please as long as you are baptized. Jesus wants a chaste virgin for a bride. Jesus wants us to be holy as He is holy. Sin must not be practiced, if we are Christians.

Jesus will forgive us of our sins if we ask Him, but we must not go back into that sin over and over. Our heart must desire to live above sin.

Revelation 2:25 "But that which ye have [already] hold fast till I come."

Notice here also, that even though this particular church spoken of is promoting sin, an individual can repent and be saved even in this situation. God does not judge groups. Jesus judges us one at a time. It would be a terrible burden to have no other church to go to than one that taught fornication. He tells them to hold fast to sound doctrine until He comes.

Revelation 2:26 "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:"

"Overcometh" (see note on verse 7).

You see here that Jesus specifies His works are what is to be done. It also means that we should not just do a little and get self-satisfied, but stay with the Lord's work to the very end. Just as Jesus told the parable of the good servant (in Luke chapter 19), we must be a good servant and bring the fruits of our labor to Jesus.

Jesus says the servant (in Luke 19:17), was to rule over ten cities. He also promises that His faithful will rule. Remember the power is Jesus'. He gives us our power. This power is to do His will as we rule. We are working under Jesus' direction. He is our leader.

Revelation 2:27 "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."

The "rod of iron" means the rule will be strong, unbending.

Literally "shepherds them with an iron rod". During the millennial kingdom, Christ will enforce His will and protect His sheep with His iron scepter from any who would seek to harm them (compare Psalm 2:9).

The rule will be as a shepherd leads if they follow Jesus, but if not, they shall be broken to pieces. This rod spoken of could be a shepherd's or a king's. Whichever it is, the rod of correction will be used in love. Jesus was given all power on earth, under the earth, and in heaven by the Father.

“Shivers” means pieces.

Revelation 2:28 "And I will give him the morning star."

Jesus is the Bright and Morning Star. He promises to give Himself to those who will follow Him. Although the morning star has already dawned in our hearts (2 Peter 19), someday we will have Him in His fullness.

Revelation 2:29 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Notice again this message is not just given to this one church of Thyatira, but to churches, plural. We must take heed to the warnings. Open the ears of our heart and receive Jesus in His fullness.

Revelation Chapter 2 Third Continued Questions

1. Who did Jesus call Himself to the church at Thyatira?
2. What do the eyes of fire mean?
3. What do His feet of brass indicate?
4. In Acts, we read about a woman of Thyatira, who was she?
5. What do many believe this church at Thyatira is symbolic for today?
6. We must not point fingers at others, but _____.
7. What false god did most of the heathen here worship?
8. Jesus' penetrating eyes can even discern the _____ of the _____.
9. What five things did Jesus praise them for?
10. What brings patience?
11. What did Jesus have against them?
12. What was this evil one teaching?

13. What is fornication?
14. Who wrote Galatians?
15. Who wrote Corinthians?
16. Do these two opposite teachings mean that there is an error in the Bible?
17. Who will prophesy in the end times?
18. What evangelist's four daughters prophesied?
19. Where is the Scripture found?
20. This Jezebel church was promoting what?
21. When God gave time to repent, what happened?
22. What was to be repented of?
23. How should we try every message?
24. In verse 23 what does reins mean?
25. What is just as important as our deeds?
26. Where does good and evil actually start?
27. The doctrine in verse 24 is what?
28. What does Jesus promise to the overcomers?
29. How long should we work for Jesus?
30. What does the rod of iron mean?
31. Where is Jesus' power?
32. Who is the Bright and Morning Star?
33. Why does it say churches instead of the church at Thyatira in verse 29?
34. What do you think God is saying to our church in this church at Thyatira?