

## THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA (Rev. 2:18-29)

Read Revelation 2:18-29.

### **\*\* What Scholars Say \*\***

#### **DESTINATION**

**Rev. 2:18.** Thyatira is a small city located 40 miles southeast of Pergamos, a part of the Roman province of Asia during the New Testament era. Thyatira was situated in an area noted for its abundant crops and the manufacture of purple dye. The church was small, but it was singled out for this penetrating letter of rebuke.

In keeping with what follows, Christ is introduced as the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. This description of Christ is similar to that in 1:13-15, but here He is called the Son of God rather than the Son of Man. The situation required reaffirmation of His deity and His righteous indignation at their sins. The words "burnished bronze," which describe His feet, translate a rare Greek word *chalkolibano*, also used in 1:15. It seems to have been an alloy of a number of metals characterized by brilliance when polished. The reference to His eyes being "like blazing fire" and the brilliant reflections of His feet emphasize the indignation and righteous judgment of Christ.

#### **COMMENDATION**

**Rev. 2:19.** Though much was wrong in the church at Thyatira, believers there were commended for their works...love...faith...service, and perseverance (cf. 2:2). And the Thyatira Christians were doing more as time went on (in contrast to the Ephesus church which did less). But despite these evidences of Christian life and testimony, the church at Thyatira had serious problems.

#### **REBUKE**

**Rev. 2:20-23.** Jesus' major condemnation concerned that woman Jezebel, who claimed to be a prophetess and taught believers to take part in the sexual immorality that accompanied pagan religion and to eat food sacrificed to idols. What was acceptable to that local society was abhorred by Christ. Their departure from morality had gone on for some time (v. 21). The church in Thyatira may have first heard the gospel from Lydia, converted through Paul's ministry (Acts 16:14-15). Interestingly now a woman, a self-claimed "prophetess," was influencing the church. Her name "Jezebel" suggests that she was corrupting the Thyatira church much like Ahab's wife Jezebel corrupted Israel (1 Kings 16:31-33). Christ promised sudden and immediate judgment, called her sin adultery and promised that all who followed her would suffer intensely. He also promised, I will strike her children dead, meaning that suffering would extend also to her followers. The judgment would be so dramatic that all the churches would know that Christ is the One who searches hearts and minds.

#### **EXHORTATION**

**Rev. 2:24-25.** After His condemnation, Christ extended a word of exhortation to the godly remnant who existed in the church in Thyatira, implying that the rest of the church

was apostate. The remnant He called the rest of you in Thyatira...you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets. On this godly remnant He imposed one simple instruction: only hold on to what you have until I come. Perhaps because the church was small, Christ did not command them to leave it but to remain as a godly testimony. Judgment on Jezebel and her followers would come soon and would purge the church. In modern times Christians who find themselves in apostate local churches can usually leave and join another fellowship, but this was impractical under the circumstances in Thyatira.

### **PROMISE**

**Rev. 2:26-27.** Christ promises believers who are faithful that they will join Him in His rule (Ps 2:8-9; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 20:4-6). The word in verse 27 translated "rule" (poimanei) means "to shepherd," indicating that they will not simply be administering justice but will also, like a shepherd using his rod, be dealing with his sheep and protecting them as well. Though Ps 2:9 refers to Christ's rule, John's quotation of it here relates the ruling (shepherding) to the believer who overcomes. Believers will have authority just as Christ does (1 Cor 6:2-3; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21; 20:4,6). Christ received this authority from His Father (cf. John 5:22).

**Rev. 2:28.** In addition, the faithful will receive the morning star, which appears just before the dawn.

**Rev. 2:29.** The letter to Thyatira closes with the familiar exhortation to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

### **\*\* My Thoughts \*\***

#### **Jesus Sees All with His Penetrating Eyes (Rev. 2:18).**

##### **Jesus sees a mixed Congregation**

- 1. Works, love, faith, perseverance (not those who just said a prayer & went on their way), and Christian service.**
- 2. A false teacher – Jezebel (Baal-worshipping queen).**
- 3. Those who follow the False teacher and her teaching leading to:  
Physically = sexual sin (immorality) & partaking of food sacrificed to idols.  
Spiritually = spiritual adultery and the worship of false gods. Jas. 4:4; Hosea**
- 4. Those who got in bed with Jezebel through union with her and her teaching produce children in which Jesus pronounces the judgment of Death (physical death & suffering or spiritual death and eternal suffering).**

**Warning: This exhortation is given to all churches for all time. (Rev. 2:25, 29).**

## CHRIST'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA

### **\*\* Questions \*\***

**REV 2:18 "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:**

**These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. (NIV)**

1. Who is Jesus addressing this letter to? Why?
2. When we read the letter to Thyatira whose words are we reading?
3. How is the Son of God described? What meanings do these symbols portray?

**[19] I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.**

1. What are the strengths of this church?
2. What is the purpose of deeds or good works? Matt. 5:14-16.
3. What is the difference between good works, works of faith and works of the law? Gal. 2:16,21; Jas. 2:18.
4. How does faith express or demonstrate itself? Gal. 5:6

**REV 2:20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.**

1. Jesus has something against this church. What is it?

**[21] I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.**

1. Jesus has given who a time or space to repent? 2 Pet. 3:8-9; Rom. 2:4-5

**[22] So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. [23] I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.**

- (Verse 22) 1. God's grace spurned (to kick away or trample) will bring what?
2. Judgment comes unless there is repentance. What does it mean to "repent"?

(Verse 23) 3. Judgment is according to deeds. Reflect on Rom. 2:6-11.

**[24] Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you): [25] Only hold on to what you have until I come.**

1. What verse shows us that the instructions to walk in the light, be in the light are not just for the church of Thyatira but for our church also?

**REV 2:26 To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations--**

**REV 2:27 `He will rule them with an iron scepter;  
he will dash them to pieces like pottery'\* -- Ps. 2:9**

**just as I have received authority from my Father. [28] I will also give him the morning star.**

1. What two gifts were promised to "him who overcomes"? (2:26-28).

**[29] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**

1. In addition to the church at Thyatira, who else was commanded to pay heed to this message? (2:29).

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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