

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

Read Revelation 2:18-29. (NIV)

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.

**** 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. It was the hometown of Lydia, Paul's first covert in Macedonia (Acts 16:14). **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 the longest letter of the seven churches in Revelation.

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 Lordship.

The symbolism of His **eyes** and **feet** are clear: with such eyes the Son of God can see into the most distant and darkest places, with such feet he can stamp out all opposition to His rule.

Rev. 2: [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.

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.

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

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). 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**.

Rev. 2: [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.

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.

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' --**

just as I have received authority from my Father.

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] I will also give him the morning star.

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

Rev. 2: [29] *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

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-worshiping 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 (Rev. 2:18-29)

**** 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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