

Session Eleven:

Revelation 2:18-29 The Church Of Thyatira

I) History Of Thyatira

- A) Along the circuit of the Seven Churches, the Church of Thyatira is mentioned as the fourth Church of **Revelation 2-3**. It was located in a valley between Pergamos and Sardis. This city is the smallest and least important of the seven cities mentioned.
- B) But it's also the city that receives the longest letter from Jesus related to their ministry. Thyatira was a small military outpost on the way to Sardis. It wasn't known as either a highly religious or political city. The main thing Thyatira was known for was their numerous trade guilds.
- C) Recent findings in Thyatira have unearthed inscriptions that attest to the many trade guilds including; wool-workers, linen workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leather-workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave dealers and bronze smiths. These trade guilds were the forerunner to what we know now as modern trade unions.
- D) The difficulty with these trade guilds, was to work meant you also participated in pagan celebrations with gods, goddesses and sexual immorality. To work was to attend the guilds parties and not attending the parties meant you didn't work which led to great social and financial pressure.
- E) The Church of Thyatira (**2:18-29**) was totally opposite of the Church of Ephesus (**2:1-7**). Ephesus had loved Doctrine to the detriment of people, and was decreasing in love. But Thyatira loved people to the detriment of Doctrine and were increasing in love for Jesus.

II) Jesus' Address To The Church Of Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29)

- A) **Revelation 2:18** *"And to the angel of the Church in Thyatira write, these things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass..."*
 - 1) Jesus' **Address** to the Church of Thyatira is the same as it has been to the previous three Churches. It's for the leadership of the ministry.
 - 2) From Jesus' Address to the Church, He now applies to Himself **Attributes** that He previously revealed to John in **Revelation 1**.
 - 3) Jesus reveals three different facets of Himself as He says *"...says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass..."*
 - 1. **The Son of God (Rev 1:11)** = This is speaking about His divinity as opposed to His humanity (Smyrna). Jesus is making it clear that He has power, as God to intervene in their ministry.
 - 2. **Eyes Like A Flame Of Fire (Rev. 1:14)** = This is speaking about His passion to help and deliver weak, struggling Christians, or to judge rebellious Christians who refuse to repent. Our response to Him determines what the fire of His love means.

3. Feet Like Fine Brass (Rev. 1:15) = This is speaking about His eagerness to step into the affairs of His people and crush sin, rebellion and immorality.
 - (a) Jesus will either deliver us from sin in partnership with Him, or He will do it Himself. **Revelation 2:16** tells us either we fight against sin with the Sword of His Word, or He will fight against us with the Sword of His mouth.
- 4) **Revelation 2:19** *"I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first."*
 1. Jesus now begins His **Approval** of the positive things they are doing. This list includes five things; *love, service, faith, patience and greater works*. This appears to be the only Church of the seven that are functioning well in both commandments (Love and Service).
 2. I love that in great tenderness, Jesus usually affirms us prior to correcting us.
 3. As God, Jesus is making it clear to them that He sees and knows of their patient endurance in the midst of persecution.
- 5) **Revelation 2:20** *"Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow (tolerate) that women Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants into sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."*
 1. From Jesus' Approval of them, He moves into His **Accusation** against them. Jesus' correction of us, isn't the same thing as His rejection of us. Jesus can give correction without rejection.
 2. Jezebel was a female, self proclaimed, influential prophetic teacher in the midst of this ministry who was preaching and teaching a cheap grace message which empowered the people of God to sin under the banner of the "grace of God."
 - (a) **Jude 4** *"For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."*
 3. The Church was under severe social and financial pressure because to not attend the trade guild parties meant they lost their livelihood. Jezebel was teaching many in the Church that God was okay with them attending these parties which included idolatrous practices, sexual immorality and pagan worship.
 - (a) **Titus 2:11** *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age..."*
 4. The Old Testament Jezebel of **1st Kings 16:31** was thrown from a window and trampled underfoot by Jehu in **2nd Kings 9:33**. And the New Testament Jezebel of **Revelation 2:20** is threatened by Jesus Himself, with His feet like bronze that He is ready to also trample her if she doesn't repent.

- 6) **Revelation 2:21-23** *"And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works."*
- It's clear that Jesus is patient with struggling sinners, but never tolerant of our sin and immorality. Many people mistake God's Approval of them with His Acceptance of their sin and compromise.
 - 2nd Peter 2:3** *"...for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber."*
 - Romans 2:4** *"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance."*
 - Jesus, in His post-resurrection is continuing with His **Accusation** against this ministry by telling both Jezebel and her followers that He is committed to doing three primary things;
 - "...I will cast her into a sickbed..."* = The Greek word here for sickbed is Bed. It's the Greek word #2825 and it means couch for sleep, sickness or bed. It's the same word used in **Matt. 9:2,9:6; Mk. 4:21, 7:30; Lk. 5:18, 8:16, 17:34** which all speak of sickness.
 - Jesus is willing, in love to make people sick who won't stop sinning (**1st Cor.11:30-32**).
 - "...those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds..."* = It's not just Jezebel that He will send into great trouble, but those who commit adultery with her. Those who cause others to sin and those who sin with them receive judgment from Jesus.
 - The Greek word # for tribulation is 2347 and it means pressing, pressure, affliction and distress. This isn't the eschatological great tribulation of **Matthew 24**, but it's the same exact word. In fact it's the only word used for Tribulation from Matthew to Revelation.
 - "I will kill her children with death..."* = Jesus warned of killing her children or those that followed this teaching. In love, Jesus is committed to killing His own people.
 - Jesus is wanting people **to know** that He has zeal to deliver His people from immorality and that others **would know** when He casts unrepentant believers into a sickbed.
 - Our life before God is personal, and separated from the Church. *"And I will give to each one according to your works."*
- 7) **Revelation 2:24-25** *"Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come."*

1. Jesus now shifts from His Accusation to His **Advice** for the Church of Thyatira.
 2. In His Advice to them, He is calling them to repent and calling this teaching by Jezebel **"the depths of satan."** The cheap grace message which fills much of the Church today, is considered the depths of satan because of the deception it steeps well meaning Christians in.
- 8) **Revelation 2:26-28** **"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations, he shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potters vessels, as I also have received from My Father, and I will give him the morning star."**
1. Jesus is now closing His letter to the Church of Thyatira by giving them **Assurance** of a reward if they overcome.
 2. Our often western Gospel, which tells people that if you repent, you will become healthy, wealthy and happy is something totally different than what Jesus preached. Jesus is promising this Church reward in the age to come, if they overcome the adversity set before them in this age.
 3. For the Church of Thyatira to overcome, they have to lose their livelihood, endure persecution and provide for their families without a social connection.
 4. Our understanding of the pre-millennial reign of Christ and the eternal age are critical in order for us to overcome life in this age. Jesus is promising this Church ruler-ship in the age to come over nations in order for ruling their bodies through the power of the Holy Spirit in this age.
 5. The reward in the age to come has three facets;
 - (a) Power over nations = Power
 - (b) Ruling with a rod of iron = Ruler ship
 - (c) The morning star = The experience of Glory (Revelation 22:16)
- 9) **Revelation 2:29** **"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches."**
1. Jesus now closes with His fervent **Appeal** that this wouldn't be a powerful conference, summit, letter or service, but a warning from God to repent and endure, looking beyond this age and into the age to come.