

"The Letters to the 7 Churches"

Part 4

Revelation 2:1-3:22

Introduction: Today in our study of the letters to the churches we have come to the longest of the 7 letters. It is the letter to the church at Thyatira.

Background:

This city was located about 35 away from Pergamos. It was a very small city and the church which was located here would have been the smallest of all the churches. We need to also keep in mind that this was the ONLY church in town. It was not like it is today where there is a church another church several miles down the road.

This city was known for several things. They manufactured a purple dye which came from a certain kind of root. While the city was small there was one thing which was big within the city and that was the "TRADE GUILDS". Trade guilds were comparable to UNIONS today. In Thyatira each trade had its own guild and there were many of them.

There were guilds of bakers, potters, workers in brass, tanners, leather-cutters, workers in wool and flax, and dyers. Those who worked in wool and the dyers were probably the most numerous of all. This is something which played a big part in the problem within the church. This we will see in a moment.

We do not know how the church was started but we can paint a picture that is probably very close in accuracy.

We read in Acts of Paul's first convert in Europe.

Acts 16:14-15

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.

¹⁵ And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Here we see that Lydia was from the city of Thyatira and she was saved. She was about 300 miles from home here in this passage but it is very possible that when she returned

back to her city that she spread the Gospel and from her testimony many came to know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Application:

Let me just use this for a moment and remind you of the difference one person can make when they are walking in the will of God. Let me give you another example. Remember the woman at the well in John 4? She was from Samaria and after she met Jesus she ran back to her city.

John 4:39-42

³⁹ *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*

⁴⁰ *So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.*

⁴¹ *And many more believed because of his own word;*

⁴² *And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

Don't allow the enemy to feed you the lie which says, "YOU ARE ONLY ONE PERSON AND THEY WILL NEVER LISTEN TO YOU".

So the church may have been started by the testimony of Lydia.

I. **The Greeting**

Notice Revelation 2:18

Here we see that Jesus introduces Himself as the One with the eyes as a flame of fire and the feet like fine brass. This is a picture of our Lord standing ready to judge. The eyes are piercing and they see EVERYTHING in our lives. There is nothing that is hidden from our Lord.

Romans 2:16

¹⁶ *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

His feet were like fine brass and in the Bible brass speaks of judgment. He stands looking at this church with eyes like a flame of fire and as He sees the sin which has penetrated this church He stands ready to bring judgment and chastisement upon all who are involved.

1 Peter 4:17a

¹⁷ For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:

II. **The Commendation**

Notice Revelation 2:19

This verse is amazing when we slow down and look at what is being said here. This church was a church that was very active.

1. They were working
2. They were loving
3. They were ministering
4. They were looking for the return of Jesus Christ
5. They were increasing in service

From the outside looking in this church looked like the perfect church. This reminds me of a passage in 2 Kings 2.

2 Kings 2:18-20

¹⁸ And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

¹⁹ And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

²⁰ And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

Here was a city that looked great at first glance but it was barren. Before the blossoms gave way to fruit they died. This was exactly the way the church was at Thyatira. It looked good from the outside but when we step in we shall see that it was not as it appeared.

III. **The Condemnation**

Notice Revelation 2:20

There was a woman in the church who was given a position of teaching. This started the entire mess. Let me just say that it is not wrong for a woman to teach within the church if

she is teaching children or other women. But the woman is NEVER to be given a position of authority over the man.

1 Timothy 2:11-14

¹¹ *Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.*

¹² **But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.**

¹³ *For Adam was first formed, then Eve.*

¹⁴ *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.*

Let me show you the qualifications of the Pastor.

1 Timothy 3:1-2a

This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

² *A bishop then must be blameless, **the husband of one wife**...*

So at Thyatira there was a woman who was given authority over the man. Many teachers believe this was the wife of the Pastor. The Lord refers to her as Jezebel not because that was her name but because she was just like the Jezebel of the Old Testament.

This Jezebel was teaching BELIEVERS to commit fornication and eat meat offered to idols. Now I had told you that the trade GUILDS would come into play and here it is. Each trade guild had its own god and if you belonged then you were required to go to the feasts for the god and you were required to participate in their orgies. If you did not participate then you would lose your job.

Now some would say they should just not join the trade the guild.

Listen to the words of Barclay:

"No merchant or trader could hope to prosper or make money unless he was a member of his trade guild."

So they were under great pressure. Then Jezebel came in and she began to teach that it was acceptable to participate in the worship of idols and to be involved in the fornication. When she taught this she led some of the believers right into the sinful practices.

"One ancient Christian named Tertullian wrote about Christians who made their living in trades connected to pagan idolatry. A painter might find work in pagan temples or a sculptor might be hired to make a statue of a pagan god. They would justify this by saying, "This is my living, and I must live." Tertullian replied "Must you live?"

Notice Revelation 2:21

Here we see the patience of Jesus Christ. Apparently she was warned but she refused to repent.

Notice Revelation 2:22

The Lord would cast her into a bed of sickness if she continued to refuse to repent and He would cast those who followed her into great tribulation.

When I read this I can see the long suffering of our Lord. He does not desire to bring the judgment but sin cannot be permitted to exist within the church and in the lives of His people.

Let me show you an example of God chastening one of His children.

Jonah 1:1-5

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

² Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

³ But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

⁴ But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

⁵ Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

Notice Revelation 2:23

Jesus tells them that He would KILL her children. These would be those who followed this Jezebel in her doctrine. Everyone involved in this sexual immorality would be chastened for their works. Let me remind you of what happened at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 11:30

³⁰ For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

Application:

This shows us the seriousness of dealing with the sin of sexual immorality within the church today. It also shows the seriousness of immorality in the believer's life. When I read this I am reminded of the churches today who have choose to accept the sin of homosexuality. Those who teach that it is acceptable are no different than this Jezebel at Thyatira.

When the judgment falls it will be very severe on those who have any part in the sin and especially those who teach it is acceptable.

Dealing with sexuality within the church today is often labeled, "LEGALISM". Let me just say that dealing with any sin is NOT LEGALISM. It is obedience to God's Word.

Notice Revelation 2:24

There were those in the church who had nothing to do with this sin. They hated it and spoke out about it but there was no other place to go. This was the only church in the city. They were just to continue to be faithful.

Conclusion:

Let me show you what sin does within God's people.

Joshua 7:1-5, 24-25

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

² *And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.*

³ *And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.*

⁴ *So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.*

⁵ *And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.*

²⁴ *And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.*

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²⁵ And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

Achan became an example just as the Lord would do with Jezebel and her children.