

I. Church of Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29)

A. Historical Context – The city of Thyatira is about 30 miles inland in Turkey, surrounded by rivers. The modern city of Akhisar now exists on the site of Thyatira. It was a wealthy city made up of trade guilds (labor unions) for garments, pottery, bronze workings, weavers, leather workers, linen makers, etc. You were required to partake in the guild if you wanted to be successful. These guilds worshipped the patron deity of the trade. General practices involved eating meat sacrificed their particular trade god, drunkenness and sexual immorality.

1. The woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, came from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:14). We know the earliest settlers of the city were the Jews, and there was a large colony of Jewish settlers known to be living in the city throughout the centuries.

B. The Letter to the Church in Thyatira

1. The Revelation of Jesus – The Son of God, the One who has eyes of fire, and feet like fine brass.
 - a) The Son of God – Jesus uses an identity of Himself that is not in the 24 descriptions of Jesus from the opening chapter of Revelation. Jesus as fully God has the authority of ultimate supremacy over the created order. The Son of God has the right, power, and mission to destroy the works of darkness through His righteous judgment. (Is. 46: 3-11, 1 Jhn. 3:8, Lk 4:3,9,41)
 - b) Eyes of Fire - Eyes speak of His attentiveness to and desire for His people and what they do. Fire symbolizes the impartation of consuming holy love and the release of judgment of anything that hinders that love. (Deu. 4:24, Heb. 12:29)
 - c) Feet of Fine Brass - Jesus' feet of fine brass speak of His perfect leadership as a mighty warrior committed to confronting and triumphing over every obstacle as the author and finisher of our faith. His decisions and plans are flawless, righteous, and perfect in every way. (1 Cor. 1:4-9, Heb. 12:2)

2. Affirmation and Edification – Their love for Jesus and others came from a genuine heart and they gave themselves to growing in greater measures of love as the years went by. They understood and walked out ministry with humility desiring to serve one another rather than promoting themselves. They constantly stirred up one another’s faith to the point that the level and steadfastness of their faith was recognized by Jesus and commended. They had also endured persecution and trouble. To top it all off the believers in this city were maturing and growing. Their love-based actions were more numerous and common than they were when they first received the gospel. (Heb. 10:24)

3. Correction provoking Love – There was a female leader in their midst that had city-wide influence and was a self-proclaimed prophet. There were main church leaders in Thyatira who knew her teachings were false and wicked yet allowed her to teach un-checked.
 - a) The “woman Jezebel” brings us back to 1 Kings 16-20. She had incited King Ahab and Israel to compromise and “fornicate” by worshipping Baal. It appears the “woman Jezebel” here in Thyatira was teaching Christians that it was not a bad thing to participate in the guilds of the city. (1Kings 16:31-32, 21:25-26, 2 Kings 8:18, 9:22)

 - b) Apparently, she had a reputation for accurate prophetic revelation. This prophetic manifestation was mistaken by her followers as authority to teach. I believe the “depths of Satan” was the true title for what she and her followers were calling the depths of God. Those accepting her teachings prided themselves on their falsely enlightened convictions on the subject of immorality and idolatry.

 - c) Thyatira was an incredibly sexually broken city and its no surprise that there was sexual brokenness in the Christians that lived there. The issue with this church was not the fact that sexual immortality existed among them but rather that it was not confronted by the truth and resisted. False teaching was allowed because of the pressure of cultural relevancy and lack of love based accountability. This is a rampant issue in the western church today and it’s squelching the fullness of love for Jesus.

4. Exhortation to Respond – Jesus informs the leadership of this church that He has spoken to this woman clearly and she has refused to repent of teaching false and wicked doctrine. Her teaching is so toxic to the heart that he must deal harshly and swiftly even though His hope was that she would have repented through a lesser means of shaking. His judgments will be a sign and wonder in order to make a clear statement about how he feels about open compromise in the midst of His people. (Jer. 17:10, Heb. 12:25-29)
 - a) He is going to bring some form of affliction upon her so intensely and severely that she will be bed ridden. (1 Cor. 5:1-5, 11:30-32)
 - b) To those that are currently sitting under her teaching and receiving it He will cause great tribulation to come upon them in hopes that they turn from following her false teaching.
 - c) To those who have seared their conscience to the truth and have fully hardened their hearts through her teaching and subsequent lifestyle He will kill them with death. (Acts 5:1-16, 1 Tim. 4:1-2, Heb. 6:1-15, 1 Jhn 5:11-21)
5. Promise to Overcomers – To overcome in the city of Thyatira was to hold the line on the truth of the lifestyle of holiness that positions us to grow in love. Jesus has called us to live out this holy lifestyle in the face of hardship, rejection, and persecution. To those who will maintain this obedience to Jesus and His word to the end will receive 2 distinct eternal rewards.
 - a) Positions of authority in the age to come – Jesus spoke often of the promise that we will rule and reign with him in the age to come. Each believer will receive various levels of authority and responsibility based upon their response to His leadership and their love based works.
 - b) They will receive the morning star - This promise speaks of increased revelation of Jesus and deeper relationship with Him. The morning star is the brightest star (planet Venus), seen just before the dawning of a new day. (Num. 24:14-20, Titus 2:13, 2 Pet. 1:19, Rev. 22:16)