

LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA

- I. Salutation Revelation 2:18 a
- A. It is not known how, when or by whom this church was founded.
 - B. Thyatira is mentioned only one other time in Scripture, in Acts 16:14, as the home of Lydia, a seller of purple.
 - C. Thyatira was home to numerous trade guilds.
 - 1. Skilled workers had to join a guild (union) in order to find work.
 - 2. These guilds possessed property, issued contracts, and wielded wide influence.
 - 3. They were also connected to the worship of false gods since each guild had its own deity as its guardian and patron.
 - 4. Thus, members of the guilds were expected to participate in acts of devotion and feasts to their god or goddess.
 - 5. Those who refused to join a guild were ostracized from the business world and had little hope of financial gain (cf. Acts 16:13-14).
 - D. It was also known for many small, shallow streams that were home to leeches used for medicinal treatments throughout eastern Europe.
 - E. The sun god, Apollo, was the principal deity of Thyatira.
- II. Description of Jesus Revelation 2:18 b
- A. Jesus is called the "Son of God."
 - 1. In Thyatira, they worshipped the sun god, Apollo.
 - 2. But the Son of God is Jesus the Christ.
 - B. Jesus is called the One with eyes like "a flame of fire."
 - 1. Apollo was connected to the idea of flaming fire.
 - 2. But Jesus' eyes of flaming fire remind the Christian that only He is the all-seeing, omniscient God of Heaven.
 - C. Jesus is called the One with feet "like fine brass (or, burnished bronze)" (cf. Daniel 10:6; Ezekiel 1:7; Revelation 10:1).
- III. Commendation Revelation 2:19
- A. They were commended for their love.
 - B. They were commended for their faith.
 - C. They were commended for their endurance.
 - D. They were commended for their service.
 - E. They were commended for their works (cf. 1 Thes. 4:1; John 15:2).
- IV. Condemnation Revelation 2:20
- A. Despite these good qualities, there were some problems in the church.
 - B. They were condemned for tolerating the false prophetess, Jezebel.
 - 1. Jezebel was the wife of King Ahab in Israel (1 Kings 16:30-31).
 - 2. She was also the daughter of Gentile king, Ethbaal.
 - 3. Her pagan influence brought idolatry into practice by King Ahab.
 - a. Baal was believed to provide rain for the earth.
 - b. He was implored by offering sacrifice – often innocent children.

The Book of Revelation

Lesson Seven

Revelation 2:18-29

- c. It is no wonder why Elijah prayed that it would not rain in Israel for 3½ years while Baal was worshipped by Ahab (1 Kings 17:1; 18:1; James 5:17-18).
- 4. Thus, she became symbolic of wickedness and corruption, especially in women.
- 5. She went as far as to attempt to kill God's true prophets, including Elijah (1 Kings 18 – 19).
- 6. In Thyatira, Jezebel was a manipulator of the church – leading Christians into sin and error.
- 7. Likely, her error had to do with encouraging Christians to go along with the practices of the trade guilds.
- C. They were condemned for compromising with sin and error.
 - 1. It would be easy to justify one's participation in the sins of a trade guild when one's very livelihood was at stake.
 - 2. But God views it as fornication – spiritual unfaithfulness.
- D. What a contrast between faithful Lydia and sensual, seductive Jezebel.

V. Warnings

Revelation 2:21-23

- A. First, there was a warning to repent.
- B. Second, there was a warning that the time for repentance was expiring.
- C. Third, there was a warning of tribulation for those who refused to change.
 - 1. A contrast is made with the harlot's bed and the sick bed.
 - 2. Not only was Jezebel spiritually sick, but also those who were seduced by her doctrines.
 - 3. As a result, they would endure great suffering for their sins.
- D. Finally, there was a warning of death for Jezebel and her followers.
 - 1. An extraordinarily strong expression of the Hebrews – "*shall surely be put to death.*"
 - 2. We must not overlook the eternal tribulation and death of Hell.

VI. Exhortations

Revelation 2:24-25

- A. There were those in Thyatira who had not followed the heresy of Jezebel.
- B. Thus, they had not known the depths of Satan.
- C. They are encouraged that there is laid upon them no other burden but to continue to remain steadfast in contention against the evil among them.
- D. Thus, they are exhorted to hold fast to Christ, His Word, and their own purity.

VII. Blessings

Revelation 2:26-29

- A. Those who overcome will rule with Christ over the nations.
 - 1. As Christ rules over the nations through the Gospel, when the church is victorious over Satan and his forces, the faithful followers of Christ will rule with Him (cf. Psalm 2).
 - 2. This reign takes place now as man lives by the authority of Christ.
- B. Those who overcome will receive the morning star.
 - 1. The morning star heralds the dawning of a new day.
 - 2. Likewise, the church is given assurance that – even in the darkness of suffering and sin – a new day is dawning.
 - 3. Jesus is the morning star (Revelation 22:16)!
 - 4. Jesus and His church will be victorious over the enemy.
 - 5. Heaven will be ours!