



LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES



July 16th 2017 — Part II
“The Letter to the Church of Thyatira”

The City of Thyatira

- While not a great city of the ancient world in comparison to cities such as Ephesus, Smyrna, or Pergamum, the city was located along an overland trade route. Archeologists have uncovered evidence that the city had an extensive number of trade guilds which would have greatly affected life in the city.

The Significance of the Letter

- As the fourth of seven, the letter to Thyatira has a significant place in the structure of these two chapters, something further confirmed in that it is the longest of the letters.

The church in Thyatira is an example of both the _____ and _____ of what the church can be.

The Vision of Christ

Rev. 2:18—“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.’

The Son of God

⇒ In Psalm 2, the Messiah (Psa. 2:2) is referred to by Yahweh as His “son” (Psa. 2:7)

“eyes like a flame of fire” →

“feet...like burnished bronze” →

These descriptions convey to the church that Jesus possess authority as _____ to rule both His church in the present and the nations in the future.

Jesus’ Knowledge of His Church

Their Faithfulness

Rev. 2:19—‘I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.

⇒ Their love has been demonstrated through _____.

⇒ Their faith has been demonstrated in _____ persecution.

This single church is doing many of the things that the other churches are commended for or rebuke for having lost (2:2a, 2:5, 2:9, 2:13).

Their Failures

Rev. 2:20—But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

The Woman Jezebel

- * The OT background for these words of Christ is found in 1 Kings 19—2 Kings 9 and refers to the queen of the Northern Kingdom of Israel who was married to King Ahab.

Her influence upon the king led Israel into idolatry through the worship of Baal.

“prophetess” →

- * In light of the reference to the “deep things of Satan” in 2:24, she was probably teaching that God could be known in a “deeper” way by believers partaking in the pagan feasts and immoral revelry associated with the trade guilds.

The sin of the church is that this woman’s false teaching and her immoral actions are _____!

The Consequences for the Unrepentant

Rev. 2:21-23—²¹ I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. ²² Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, ²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.

The Negative: She and her followers will experience temporal _____!

The Positive: The churches will be reminded of Christ's concern for the _____ of His people!

The Exhortation to the Faithful

Rev. 2:24-25—²⁴ But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. ²⁵ Only hold fast what you have until I come.

“hold fast”— κρατέω (*krateō*)— “To grasp or hold. To adhere strongly to.”

The faithful in Thyatira are to persevere in their good works and to continue to _____ false teachers.

The Promise & Prophetic Call

Rev. 2:26-29—²⁶ The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS, ²⁷ AND HE WILL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS WHEN EARTHEN POTS ARE BROKEN IN PIECES, even as I myself have received authority from my Father ²⁸ And I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Psa. 2:8-9—⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

Observations

- 1) Messiah was promised authority over the nations in order to rule over them (shepherd), a promise repeated of Christ in Revelation (Rev. 12:5, 19:15)
- 2) These believers were ruled by pagan powers and thus faced incredible pressures from the surrounding culture which made it difficult to maintain faithful witness to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
- 3) They also faced internal pressures from within the church in the form of false teachers and immorality, as well as the willingness of some to tolerate such behavior.
- 4) The faithful must have been tempted towards despair and discouragement because of their lack of authority.

Jesus' exhortation and promise to them was rooted in His own faithfulness on their _____!

Because they are “in Christ,” what belongs to Him has also become their _____!

The Morning Star → _____ (Num. 24:17, 2 Pet. 1:19, Rev. 22:16)

Believers can be assured that they will rule and reign with Christ!

1. When He returns (Rev. 19:11-16, 20:4-6)
2. When the New Heavens and New Earth are established (Rev. 22:1-5)

Questions for Reflection

In what ways am I tempted to be discouraged by the surrounding culture? By the things I see in the church?

What are the things that give me encouragement and strength to persevere faithfully?