

THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA, May 19, 2021

Opening prayer - Sister Shelbia:

Father God, thank you so much for each one of these ladies. I know you know I can't do this myself and I'm depending on you. I pray that each person gets something from this lesson. I ask a special blessing on David Jeremiah and Brother Jack, who is suffering from Parkinson's in that nursing home. Thank you for their wisdom because we are benefitting from it. In God's name, Amen.

Word review:

EPHESUS - lost first love. Their mandate was to remember how it was when first saved, to repent and repeat how it was when they were new to Christ.

Remember, repent, repeat

SMYRNA - suffering circumstances

PERGOMOS - liberal church with a lot of deception. We talked about Balem. Joshua 13:22 tells us how he ended up. He died with the enemies of Israel.

THYRATIRA - Pagan worship.

Two common mistakes about satan:

- 1. Assume he doesn't really exist*
- 2. Imagine that he is like God. He is not all powerful and all knowing. God created satan. He can't be in more than one place in one time. He has 1/3 of the angels.*

David Jeremiah's session on THYRATIRA:

I don't think I've ever seen the church of Jesus Christ in such disarray and confusion as it is today. Almost every city is filled with storefront churches of every ilk. Every time someone gets an idea that they want to have a church, they just go rent a building that's been vacant and start; and some of those are very vibrant and good.

But the church in terms of its stability and its purpose, why its here in the first place, seems to have gotten lost in a lot of confusion.

Interestingly enough, many of the problems that we are facing today are the problems that were a part of the early church.

Just stop for a moment and think we began with the church of Ephesus - it was a good church, it was a vibrant church, it was reaching all of Asia with the gospel. But the problem there is they had settled into their faith and lost their first love for Jesus.

So, they became a very complacent congregation who just showed up on the weekends but had lost their dynamic for Christ. Satan doesn't really care how he destroys the church as long as he can do his work.

Then we looked at the church in SMYRNA, which is the suffering church. We discovered that this church was facing great persecution; and that they were under incredible pressure to bow down to the Roman emperor in their community. And many of them did not, but they were being persecuted and the church was being strangled by the pressure of the Roman Empire.

Then we looked at the church in PERGAMOS and we found that this church has almost completely given itself over to satan in satan's city. There was some strength and vitality there, but they found themselves in a very difficult environment where demonism and satanism was running strong and many of them had allowed that pressure to change who they were.

That sounds very interesting doesn't it?

Because those are all the kinds of things that happen in almost every age of the church. It happened in the early church and those things are happening in our church today.

The church we are going to study is the church of THYATIRA. This church has an even more modern malady than the ones we've discussed before. This church struggles with an issue that is very much a part of the struggle of today's church. Before we get to the issue, let me tell you a little bit about this church: The letter was written to the church of THYATIRA. You will find it in Rev 2. Unlike the cities we have read about, the city of THYATIRA was not located on a mountain. It was located in the valley between 2 cities. It had no natural fortification; and was protected throughout its history by a Roman Garrison.

It was located about half way between PERGAMOS and SARDUS on the great circular road of the province of Asia. The journey from PERGAMOS to THYATIRA would be about 40 miles.

It was a bustling trade center, boasting numerous guilds and bakers and bronze workers and clothiers and cobblers and weavers and tanners and dyers and potters, all organized in trade unions in THYATIRA.

It was a city of enduring sacrifices and shallow ritualism. To this church located in that city, is written the longest letter of the 7 letters, even though by the estimate of the most, it is the least important of the 7 cities.

Now, you don't know very much about THYATIRA, but let me tell you something that you probably do know. There was a woman who was from THYATIRA. Her story is given to us in the book of **ACTS 16: and her name is Lydia.**

13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

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.

The Bible says that Lydia was a business woman. She traded in materials that were treated in THYATIRAS special purple. She was described by Luke as a seller of purple goods. She probably went to Philippi and Masadonia, of which THYATIRA was a colony; and while she was there she heard Paul preach the gospel and Lydia became a Christian. She's the most famous citizen of THYATIRA in the Bible. And many believe that she was the agent that God used to established the church back in her home town, having been converted by Paul in an evangelistic meeting. She went back to THYATIRA and she began to build a concensus of people around the gospel and a church was formed there. We do know from Christ's words that there was a good church in THYATIRA at the time the letter was written.

THE DESIGNATION OF THE LORD - in all the letters we have studied, we find that Jesus addresses himself to each of the churches in a different way. **Rev 2:18** contains the letter written to the church of Thyatira. It is the longest letter written to any of the churches.

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

Notice that in *2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;* In every instance, the Lord speaks to the church out of his essence as God and uses the description that is necessary for the problem that is in the church. The problem we are going to discuss in the church of THYRATIRA was more of a secret problem. More of a kinda thing that was done, not necessarily always out in the open but behind closed doors yet known by all.

To that church, The Lord Jesus Christ addresses himself as *the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire,*

To PERGAMOS, he presented himself as he who has the sharp two edged sword, but to the Christians in THYRATIRA, he presents a word that shows Jesus has authority. He is called the Son of God...

All these descriptions find their origin back in the first chapter of Revelation where there is an extended section that describes who Jesus is. Out of this extended section the writer of the letters, pulls little phrases and addresses them individually to all the 7 churches. The description of the Son of man refers to his humanity; but the description of the Son of God draws attention to his deity.

In Chapter 1, John sees Christ in his glory as the Son of man ministering to the 7 churches. But here in the letter to the church of THYRATIRA, he sees Christ as the Son of God!

This title is used intentionally to add solemnity to the message which is about to be delivered to this church.

If you had the choice to meet the Son of man or the Son of God, you'd probably choose the Son of man, even though they are one and the same person. Something's about that phrase, 'this is the Son of the living God' that brings a little seriousness to the discussion, which is what is necessary in this passage.

The authority of Jesus is followed up by **THE AWARENESS OF JESUS:**

The designation of Jesus is followed up by the awareness of Jesus. Notice the description in verse 18.... *who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire,*

His eyes are described this way so that we might know the eyes of Jesus pierced the darkness and flash with the flame of moral anger.

One writer has said there is nothing more piercing than flaming fire. Everything yields and melts before it. It penetrates all things, consumes every opposition, sweeps down all obstructions, and presses its way with invincible power. And of this sort are the eyes of Jesus.

They look thru everything; pierce thru all masks and coverings. They search the remotest recesses and they behold the most hidden things of the soul. There is no escape from the eyes of Jesus. As the Son of God, he is omnipotent, as well as almighty.

John 21:17 Peter said to Jesus after the resurrection, ***17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.***

Isn't it true, that the Lord knows all things?

After listening to Jesus teach in the upper room, the disciples said to him, ***John 16:30*** ***Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.***

To the church that tolerated the secret sins of immorality, Jesus is presented as the Divine heart knower with eyes of flaming fire.

Rev 2:23 seems to be underscoring this aspect of his character.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. This talks about the authority and awareness of Jesus, notice there's one little phrase about the anger of Jesus.

THE ANGER OF JESUS:

Rev 2:18 "...and His feet like fine brass."

Fine brass was a hard alloy that when adequately polished, looked like gold. In the Greek language, fine brass is just one word. It could be translated by burnished brass or bright bronze. It is found in the New Testament only in the first and second chapters of Revelation. And it reminds us that Christ takes on this visage of judgement. Brass was a symbol of judgment.

The Lord Jesus is going to present himself to this church after describing the good things in the church; He's going to present himself as an all knowing Lord who sees what is really going on and brings adequate judgment to those that are involved.

JUST HOLD THAT IN THE BACK OF YOUR MIND!

Now that's the designation of the letter. Notice what the Lord Jesus knows about the church in THYRATIRA.

THE DIAGNOSIS OF THE CHURCH:

Rev 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

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23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

In many ways, the service in the church of THYRATIRA was better than any of the other churches. She had preserved the faith that was in jeopardy in PERGAMOS, and shared with SMYRNA the patience that you need to suffer. As we examine the THYRATIRA church we discover 4 positive things that Jesus says about her:

1. THYRATIRA WAS A LABORING CHURCH - I know your works and your service. The word works appears twice in this verse. It's found at the beginning of Christs statement and it's found at the end of His statement. The repetition of this word adds a sense of emphasis. This was a working, laboring church.

The word service is the same as the word for deacon. DIAKONIAN - means they serve a deacon. A deacon is a server, a servant and the Bible says the church of THYRATIRA was a serving church.

2. THYRATIRA WAS A LOVING CHURCH - I know your works, love, service.... The church in THYRATIRA was a match for the church in EPHESUS. The church of EPHESUS was known for its energy and devotion, but it had also kept the warm glow of love which Ephesians had long lost. What was waning in Ephesus was gaining in THYRATIRA. Love for one another is so important in the Bible and so important in these churches because love is important to God.

Someone has pointed out that as John grew older, (the writer of these letters) his teaching grew simpler. He spoke always and only of one thing. The love of God.

According to an old tradition, one of his disciples complained to him about this. They said to John in his old age, John why don't you talk about anything else except love? And John answered, I don't talk about anything else except love because there isn't anything else except love.

THYATIRA was a laboring church and loving church.

3.. THYRATIRA WAS A LOYAL CHURCH

Jesus said I know your faith. PISTOS which means more faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty. The Christians in THYRATIRA were dependable people. They did what they said they would do. They stood behind their word. The ministry of the believers in this city was continued in spite of criticism. They fulfilled the one requirement of a servant that we read about in *1 Corinthians 4:2*

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

(It is required of a servant that he be faithful). They were a faithful church, a loving church, a laboring church, and a long suffering church.

4. THYRATIRA WAS A LONG SUFFERING CHURCH.

Rev 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

The word patience is a word in the language of the New Testament is made up of two words which convey the idea of staying power under adverse circumstances. In other words, when the pressure was on they didn't quit. They didn't walk away. They didn't lose their furver for Christ. In the midst of all the pressure they felt, they were patient in tribulation.

As we read about in *Romans 12:12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*

And they were tested under tribulation

James 1:3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

(Their testing produced their faith.)

The church in THYATIRA had a very humble ministry. And yet it produced in its members the three graces Paul often discusses in his letters. It produced faith, hope and love. And this is a church that if we stopped reading right now, we would say, where's the address and how do you get there? I'd like to attend that church. The Lord Jesus adds, perhaps the most important truth about that assembly.

Notice *Rev 2:19and thy works; the last to be more than the first.*

This is a church that was getting better and better. It wasn't losing its first love like the church of Ephesus. This church was getting better and better and it was growing. And there was a general

statement about this church that would seem to be the qualifications of everything we've already said, they were growing in their work. They were growing in their love. They were growing in their patience. They were growing in their service. This church was growing. It was moving. It was not diminishing.

They were continuing to grow in their good deeds. *'For your last works are greater than your first.'* Most likely, this is intended quantitatively and qualitatively. They were more good deeds and they had more impact where those deeds were played out. So let me just stop and give you a final word about the Church of THYATIRA. It was a good church! It did a lot of good things!

But how many of you know that good churches start out good and don't stay there? You know satan doesn't bother bad churches. He's already got them. You've got a church that doesn't preach the Bible; doesn't talk about Jesus; talk about the plan of salvation? Why would satan want to mess with that? They are part of his wheelhouse. But good churches...churches that have something going for God, they have a target on their back. satan goes after those churches. He went after a loving church in Ephesus and tried to destroy it with their malaise. He went after the church of SMYRNA which was a good church. One of the two churches that didn't have anything evil said about them, and what he couldn't do with malaise in the church of SMYRNA, he did with persecution. What happened with the church of PERGAMOS - they were in the city of satanism and so they got corrupted with the throne of satan. He doesn't care how he destroys a good church. He will do anything he can, no matter what it is, and if he tries one thing and it doesn't work, he'll back away and try something else. He is a relentless enemy. The church of Jesus Christ is the one thing he fears more than anything else, except the Lord Jesus himself. So now let me share with you what he did in the church of THYATIRA.

THE DENUNCIATION OF THE CHURCH:

How many of you know when you see the word nevertheless in the Bible, you've had all the good news and the bad news is about to come?

Rev 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

That almost seems like it doesn't belong here. We've heard all these great things about this church and then all of a sudden, this expression.

In the beautiful body of this church, so positive described, the Bible tells us there was a cancer that was being allowed to grow in the church. In this fair garden were some weeds. John Scott has reminded us of satan's strategy in this matter, if the devil cannot conquer the church by the application of political pressure or the propagation of intellectual heresy, he will try the insinuation of moral evil. This was the dragon strategy in THYATIRA.

THYATIRA had everything going for it except one thing, holiness.

It was doing all the word of God, going thru all the motions, seemingly to produce the right product.

When we think back to the church of EPHESUS we remember a body that could not bear evil, but the body had no love.

THYRATIRA had love, but tolerated evil. The difference between the two is only the difference in the strategy of satan as he tries to come after the church.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

The Bible says that Gods will for us is to be holy. This is the will of God, your sanctification that you should abstain from sexual immorality.

Ephesians 1: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Titus 2:14 Who (Jesus Christ) gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Here was the problem in THYRATIRA. Let me ask you if it doesn't seem like it has application today? It was a good church. They did a lot of good things, but the lifestyle of the people wasn't much different than the city where the church was planted.

Today's, as you read the statistics that come out from some of the surveys that are being done, you shutter to think that the moral failure in the church statistic is almost at the same level as the statistics in the world.

In that situation, satan has infiltrated the church with this attitude that 'it doesn't matter what you do morally'. Little by little it becomes sort of a comfort thing within the church. Notice how this is described in the letter.

The church tolerated a satanic woman. Here is the story of Jesabell. Notice, it says you have Jessibel in your church. Now they didn't have the actual Jesabell from the Old Testament, but let me tell you what is going on here.

If you know the story of Jezabell, you know she was the wife of Ahab. One of the most wicked kings of Israel. Her father was a priest of Astarte. Under Asterof or Astarte, religion was divorced from morality. And in that religion, sexual immorality was made a part of their worship. You read in the history books about them actually having temple prostitutes.

Does that sound like a disconnect if you've ever heard one? Temple prostitutes.

Prostitutes who worked out of the temple where the goddess Astarte was worshipped.

When Jezebel married Ahab, she brought her wicked religion with her.

She persuaded Ahab to build a temple and an altar to Astarte in Symaria. She supported 850 prophets of her immoral code and she killed all the prophets of Jehovah that she could find.

King Jehu referred to her ways as harletrys and sorcery's.

2 Kings 9: 1 And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramothgilead: 2 And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber;

3 Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.

4 So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramothgilead.

5 And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain.

6 And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, even over Israel.

7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.

8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel:

9 And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah:

10 And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. And he opened the door, and fled.

11 Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication.

12 And they said, It is false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel.

13 Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

14 So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramothgilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria.

15 But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, then let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel.

16 So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram.

17 And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace?

18 So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again.

19 Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me.

20 And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously.

21 And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.

22 And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?

23 And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Ahaziah.

24 And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.

25 Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him;

26 Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the LORD.

27 But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there.

28 And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David.

29 And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.

30 And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.

31 And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?

32 And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.

33 And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot.

34 And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter.

35 And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.

36 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel:

37 And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel

Ahab didn't have the spiritual courage to stop his wife. He just let her go.

Marcus Sloan describes the effect that she had on the nation of Israel. She brought into their drab complacent way of life a riot of color and excitement and they succumbed to the glamor of her charm and beauty.

Ahabs court was filled with luxury and his people caught the intoxication. There were priests of Baal, and sun worship and a temple and an altar in the heart of Symaria. There were works of art and music. There was harletry; sorcery, and this was all in the service of Baal.

She swept men off their feet. All her wickedness was so attractive, they forgot the simplicities of David. They forsook the austerities of Moses; their way of life was changed before they were aware of it and they began to dance to her music and to fall down before her gods. In the church, in the city, the harletries of Jezebel.

If you review the life of Jezebel, you discover she was responsible for killing Naboth and possessing his vineyard for her husband. And beside killing all the prophets of Baal she could find, and prophets of the Lord she could find, she did what she could do to try and kill Elijah too.

So evil is Jezebel's character that she is singled out by Elijah for a special prophesy....that she would come to a sudden end and that her body would be eaten by dogs.

That prophecy was fulfilled in ***2 Kings 9:33-36. 33 And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot.***

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37 And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.

Without question, she was epitome of sudden corruption and the symbol of immorality and idolatry in her day. She was a wicked woman!

If you have a little girl, don't call her Jezebel! I don't know anyone who has a daughter named Jezebel, but if they did, they should change her name.

That's the story of Jezebel, but obviously, Jezebel didn't live in THYATIRA. The spirit of Jezebel was in THYATIRA.

By the time Christ writes to the church in THYATIRA, this woman Jezebel had been dead for nearly 1000 years. Her spirit however, had been revived in a prophetess who had become Prophetable in THYATIRA.

Claiming to be a prophetess of God, this new Jezebel was causing the Christians in THYATIRA to engage in immoral practices.

Some think the Christians were being enticed by Jezebel to attend in ceremonies and festivals of the local trade unions. And these ceremonies were dedicated to some pagan god and usually incorporated sensuality or sexuality as part of the festival.

The followers of Jezebel of THYATIRA prided themselves in the deep things which they had mastered. They had come to believe they possessed information that the average Christian didn't know. The Christians in THYATIRA either had a poor conscious or weak courage. Their refusal to rebuke the Jezebel was just like Ahabs refusal to deal with his own wife. And all the while this wicked woman was contriving to tempt the servants of the Lord to sin.

If it is God's purpose to make us holy, satans purpose is to frustrate that. He is seeking ceaselessly both to entice individual Christian believers to sin and to insinuate evil into the churches where he cannot muzzle the churches persecution from without, he resorts to persecution from within. So in this church satan had infiltrated with his evil ideology. This idea that God wants everybody to be happy; that no restriction should be upon pleasure; that even though you claim to be a Christian, you should not be concerned about entering into the frivolity that was so present in the city of THYATIRA.

THE DECLARATION TO THE CHURCH - *Rev 2:23 And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Ahaziah.*

This message to the church is presented in 3 packages:

1. One part of the letter is addressed to the cult of Jezebel
2. One part of the letter is addressed to the few Christians who are still standing strong.

3. One part of the letter is addressed to those who would be overcomes.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CULT:

Rev 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

This scripture is a pretty strong statement! First of all, a threat of distress, “Cast her into a sickbed”.

Almighty God says to this church, if you do not deal with the Jezebel cult in your church, I will cast her into a sickbed. Because she was given a chance to repent and time was allotted for her consideration, and she did not respond to this grace, now the Lord promises that she will be cast into the bed of affliction and those who participated with her and her evil deeds, will be cast into tribulation. The Lord will transform Jezebel’s couch where she has been committing her sin, into a bed of pain and suffering and death. Those who had shared in the sin of Jezebel, will share in the suffering of Jezebel.

I don’t know what that all meant in that church. What I do know is that the Bible said in *1 Corinthians 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (die).*

Do you know that we don’t do a lot with church discipline these days, but almighty God is still at work in disciplining churches. There was the threat of distress but there was also the threat of death.

THE THREAT OF DEATH: “I WILL KILL HER CHILDREN WITH DEATH”. Like the sons of the original Ahab and Jezebel, these children are also doomed. Perhaps this reference is to the illegitimate children of Jezebels promiscuity.

I don’t know...its more probable that this points to the spiritual children of the Cultic family.

Just as Paul referred to his convert son in the faith, Timothy, so these evil teachers bore spiritual children as well.

Such literal punishment as spiritual death are within the scope of the literal statement. This was an era of an Ananias and Syphira. Remember that? That was pretty swift, wasn’t it? They lied to the Holy Spirit.

Remember this story from Acts. Their fellow Barnabas had sold a bunch of property and had given the money to the Lord. He got a lot of pats on the back for it. Ananias and Syphira had a lot of property too and they decided that if Barnabas was going to get recognition, they should to. The Bible says they went out and sold their property but they didn't give it all to the Lord. They deceived the church as if they were giving it all to the Lord, but they kept back part of it for themselves.

A lot of people misunderstand that story. They weren't killed because they didn't give all the money to the church. They were killed because they said they gave it all to the church, and they were deceitful and the Lord God in the early days of the church wanted to make a statement about holiness.

Somebody said the sheet was white and that little black spot on the sheet showed up like you wouldn't believe.

In the immediate moment of time, the Bible says they were both killed.

ACTS 5: tells this story - 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

'The feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out'. That is the judgement of God and we don't hear much about that today, in fact, I don't hear about it at all!

In fact, some of you are probably setting there thinking, I think Jeremiah's been staying up too late at night. But that's in the Bible isn't it?

Whether we like to accept it or not, God has his tolerance point within his family. You won't lose your salvation, you just get an early exit out of life and go to be with the Lord. So the message to the cult was **LIVE YOUR LIVES IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST; KNOW THAT HE HAS EYES LIKE THE FLAME OF FIRE AND YOU MAY NOT THINK ANYONE ELSE KNOWS WHAT YOU'RE DOING, BUT HE DOES! HE SEES BEHIND THE CLOSED DOORS YOU THINK NOBODY KNOWS ARE NEVER OPEN TO ANYONE'S VIEW. THAT'S WHY HE'S DESCRIBED IN THIS LETTER.**

The message to the Christians is in verses *Rev 2:24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.*
25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

The Lord Jesus here is just saying to the Christians in that town, who aren't caught up in this, 'I don't want to put any more burdens on you. Just hold fast'.

Not everyone in the church of THYATIRA had become part of this evil cult. There were still some who did not follow Jezebel and her teaching and therefore, they had not known the deep things of satan.

This is the first time in the messages of the 7 churches that a group is singled out within a local church as being the continuing, true testimony Of the Lord. To this group of Christians, Christ gives some clear instruction: He says they are to carry no other burden. They are to go forward and hold onto their faith.

You know, that's probably an important word, because sometimes in churches where you are in a small group or you're involved with folks and you hear about stuff, and you wonder...wow! Am I the only one? I use to think everybody thought that. That was No No! That's not the way it was. There's a kinda acceptance within the body of Christ of things today that would have never been accepted in earlier days. And some folks who still don't accept those things are singled out for special treatment of the avant guard members of the church sometimes.

When I tell people I've never smoked, and I've never had a drop of alcohol that I'm aware of (somebody might have put it in my food or something), I've never taken drugs, been unfaithful to my wife, you are almost looked at like, 'what's the matter with you'.
I mean, aren't you going to experience life?

Well, I have no intention of experiencing that life! I have a desire to be a part of that group who decides not to do that.

***1 Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.
13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful,
who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation
also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.***

By saying that I realize I put myself in jeopardy but its alright not to be part of the cool bunch. It's alright to be faithful to the things of God and stand for the things you believe. Many people in this church who have those feelings, have those desires are frustrated because its become so easy to have the standards broken down in our churches; in this church.

That's the message to the cult and to the Christians; and then finally, there's a message to the conquerers.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CONQUERERS:

Rev 2:26-29

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

As with all other letters, Christ closes the message to the church of THYATIRA with a promise to those who are over-comers. He says, those who overcome will receive the power to rule.

Do you know what that means? That means, your faithfulness to God, to His holy plan in your life and to the responsibilities he's given you hear and now, your faithfulness to that will determine your power to rule in the millennium.

When we rule with Christ on this earth as a part of His kingdom. And I don't know how much responsibility you believe you should be given, but the responsibility you're given to rule with Him will be related to your faithfulness in the responsibility you have been given now and your faithfulness to carry that out with Godliness, righteousness, and faithfulness. The millennium is going to be quite a revelation, is it not?

He's the one with the flaming eyes. He sees what really happens and what really goes on. Those who endure will receive the power to rule and then those who endure will receive the **PROMISE OF THE RAPTURE!**

To the overcomers also is given the promise of the morning star. ***REV 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.***

And this promise to the faithful, is a promise of Christ. It apparently refers to Christ as the returning one to rapture the church before the dark hour, preceding the tribulation and the millennial kingdom.

Now that's a long letter with some very forward statements.

Andrew Bonnard tells how he woke up at 4 o'clock on an autumn morning back in 1849. He said, the morning star was shining directly before our window in a bright sky. One part of the window was misty with frost and the other was clear. Thru the clear part the star shone most vividly. I thought of Christs words, he wrote, the bright and morning star. Christ is all this to me in this world until the day breaks. I fell asleep and when I next awoke, the sun was shining thru my room. Shall it not be thus in the resurrection? Some night I shall fall asleep and the bright and morning star will come and take me to be with my father again.

You don't go to heaven because you live perfectly as a Christian. But you are rewarded for your faithfulness.

Whatever else we take away from this letter and the other letters we have studied, let us learn that churches aren't much different today than they were back then. The same issues that they fought, are the same issues we fight.

If you could talk to the leaders of the evangelical church they would all say, what we have discussed is basically the same issue we have today.

I realize that satan is alive and well today and his target is the church! If he can allow the church to lose its influence because of moral failure, he will have accomplished a great goal in his life.

**LET US PRAY IT NEVER HAPPENS....
NOT HERE, NOT NOW, NOT EVER!**

Sister Shelbia:

So whats amazing about that is when he started, he said the church today is not much different from the world. This is very interesting that he pointed out the confusion and chaos in the church today.

We have our work cut out for us. The end is close.

This THYATIRA brings into focus the union of the church and the world. This bothers me. The Catholic Church came out of this period. He says this church is continuing where Pergamon left off. Paganism was added to the church in 607 who was made the first pope.

Shelbia reviewed the Catholic things:

The Spanish Inquisition tried to do away with Christians.

Exile, confiscation of property, disqualification of inheriting property and in some cases, death. The Bible being forbidden to laymen.

1439 - doctrine of pergratory was introduced.

1950 - dogma of taking up body of Virgin Mary after her death.

1967 - Mary declared mother of the church.

Brother Jack gave this list -

607 AD - Boniface the III made first pope

709 AD - Kissing the pope's foot

786 AD - Worshipping of images and relics

850 AD - Use of 'holy water' begun

998 AD - Fating on Fridays and during Lent

995 AD - Canonization of dead saints

1079 AD - Celibacy of the priesthood

1090 AD - Prayer beads/the rosary

1184 AD - The inquisition began in earnest; (the detection and punishment of heretics 'so called' and the persons guilty of any offense against Catholic orthodoxy); punishment included: (excite, confiscation of property, disqualified from inheriting property, and in some cases, the death penalty); ALL DONE IN THE NAME OF CHRISTIANITY!!!

1220 AD - Adoration of the water (host)

1229 AD - Bible forbidden to Laymen

1414 AD - Cup forbidden to people at communion

1439 AD - doctrine of purgatory decreed

1545 AD - tradition granted equal authority with Bible

1546 AD - Apocryphal books put into Bible

1854 AD - Immaculate conception of Mary (The Roman Catholic doctrine that the Virgin Mary, though conceived naturally, was from the moment of conception free from any stain of original sin)

1870 AD - Infallibility of Pope declared

1950 AD - Assumption of the Virgin Mary (The dogma of the taking up of the Body and soul of the Virgin Mary into heaven after her death)

1965 AD - Mary proclaimed Mother of the Church

Sources for this information include, Encyclopedia Britanica; Layhay; Dr. Ironsides; this is in our book.

The deception of satan is in our churches today.

Jan Markel and Amir say there are very few people who are actually born again evangelical believers - as low as 9% in some churches. The % of true evangelical believers is low.

We have a feel good church; a tolerant church.

This THYATIRA was known as a lax and tolerant church. They were deceived.

In our day and time, everything is about being politically correct.

The true church, from the day of Pentecost got watered down pretty quickly.

You don't feel an anointing in churches today. The churches don't go along with God's word. They have traditions made by man.

Kay Arthur said God is more concerned with our Holiness than our happiness. Holiness means 'set apart'.

There is something that has happened. You can be so busy for the Lord that you don't have time for him. I was on the way to the savior and I never made it to him because I was so busy. If things are going to interfere with our Relationship with God, we shouldn't do it. Things have to be done thru Jesus!

A pastor should never be burned out because his energy comes from the Lord. Shelbia thinks God fills his Pastors, keeps them going, and keeps them fresh.

Jesus knows our Hearts and he's looking all the time.

Judgement is going to happen one of these days to all of us.

Sometimes church becomes too routine. Some go because it is expected to go, but you should have a desire to learn and grow.

So we've got our work cut out for us. There will be no slack time. The Middle East is heating up. It is not normal, what has been happening for 70+ years.

Watch the John Hagee, you tube video from March 16, 2021, where he foretold what would be happening in May, 2021 in Israel.

Watch for Ezekiel 38!

Jean thinks as a nation, we are very blessed.

When you think of world wars, people got very close to God during that time. World War I and 2 are not in the Bible.

2 Timothy 3: Tells us we will have some persecution before we are raptured. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 3:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

Shelbia thinks things will happen quickly and suddenly now. She heard somebody use the phrase "quickly and suddenly". Hesbolah started bombing from Lebanon today.