

Revelation Lesson 40  
Thyatira: The Lascivious Church (Commendation)

Revelation 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.

After Christ greeted the congregation, He as in other times in our studies issued a Commendation or “thumbs up” if you will. He will do this to all but one (Laodicea) of the 7 Churches. However, this commendation of the Church of Thyatira, caused me some headache and much time in research – well, more than the usual amount of time. Thus the finished product, will I pray, bring honour to Christ and His Word and shall also feed yall the Truth. Thus with this said let's start our look at this verse.

**I know** – As He stated to the Churches at Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos, Christ now informs the Church at Thyatira that He knows. Christ is the Omniscient (Omni = All, Scient comes from Science = Knowledge) One. Christ alone is truly our All-Knowing Lord. Now look and see what Christ says He knows concerning this Church. He says He knows:

**thy works**, - As you will recall from us reading the verse, you hopefully will remember and probably scratch your head as I did as to WHY did Christ say that He knows “thy works” Twice?? Well, let that question simmer, and we'll cross that bridge when we get there in a moment. For the present, let us understand that these works.

Back in Lesson 24 we noted the following concerning works: “McGee rightly states: *“We need to understand that He is speaking to believers. The Lord Jesus does not ask the lost world for good works.”* As a matter of fact recall Titus 3:5 *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”* I often refer back to Matthew 7:21-23 to show that if EVER there was a moment to be SAVED BY WORKS that would be it (BTW, that scene shows the Great White Throne Judgment Revelation 20:11-15) but we see NONE are saved by their works. Also, for those who are Church workaholics, please understand that all work is not necessarily well pleasing in the sight of God look at the case of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42).”

Finally understand this, that after we are saved we are to work for the Cause of Christ as per Ephesians 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Many Pastors preach Ephesians 1:8-9 concerning the Gospel but fail to mention “good works” which ARE to be done by the saved. Understand finally that ONLY the saved (and those who are filled or led by the Holy Ghost) are able to perform “good” works since God is the only One Who is “good” (Mark 10:18) thus if we are led by the Holy Ghost and “do” works then He is performing those works through us and hence they are truthfully in that sense “good works.”

**and charity**, - The Greek word behind our English word “charity” is AGAPE (G26). This word is translated in Revelation as “love” (Revelation 2:4) and here as “charity.” Agape is a “type” of love and corresponds first to God's Unchanging Love and then as believers are following the leadership of the Holy Ghost and obeying the Lord, they are able to “love others as God Loves them” thus this second manner can be seen as the unchanging and unconditional love of God manifesting in the life of a believer. In English the word charity (stemming from the word for cherish) was seen to be the highest way that someone could express love to another. You wouldn't merely say “I love thee!” but rather you'd say “I cherish thee!” Of course today charity is looked upon more as meaning benevolence or giving to the poor and downtrodden. In 1611 “charity” refers to that Love of God that is unchanging. What's more do you see that this “charity” was coming from the

church!? Notice what church it is? One of the most compromised! But more on that in a moment. So hold your horses on this point.

**and service**, - Now when we think of “service” many things may come to mind. Having a hand in retail I tend to think of “customer service” but you see the beauty of the New Testament is that when God had this written down the first time (the first copy of the one from Heaven – remember Psalm 119:89 states “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.”) it was penned in the Koine Greek language. In that language – what was written – meant what it said. For example, if you wanted to talk about: service as a slave, there was a word for that. If you were talking about willingly serving someone there was a word for that. If you mentioned serving and getting paid (or wages) for your service there was a word for that. If you wanted to talk about serving the public there was a word for that.

The word used here is “DIAKONIA” (G1248) which has the sense of serving others, serving to provide physical sustenance. One has said that a wider meaning of this word is “the discharge of a loving service.” The first instance of that Greek word actually is found in Luke 10:40 “But Martha was cumbered about much serving...” there it was translated as serving. Here in our text we find it is rendered as service. 16 times in the New Testament it is rendered as ministry and in 9 other verses as a derivative of that word. Hence this “service” seems to be connected to “ministering” to the Lord's People. In other words serving fellow believers.

**and faith**, - McGee said that: “Though it is placed after works and love in this instance, it is the mainspring that turns the hands of works and love.” The Greek word underlying the word “faith” here is PISTIS (G4102) which denotes: Good faith, faithfulness, sincerity, fidelity. The Greek word is used 4 times in Revelation and each time it is translated as “faith.” One theologian says that *Pistis* “...means “faithfulness” and more commonly (religious) “trust” or “faith,” usually in the absolute....” well which is it? “Faith as in trust?” or “Faithfulness?”

What I'm trying to get you to see guys is this, that just because the word “faith” appears you have to see what “faith” the Scripture refers to in the verse where you're at. Sure, you can go find all the 247 occurrences of the word in all 231 verses but **how** is the word used in each verse? This is why we must study! To approach the verse in our “Im-In-A-Hurry-And-Want-To-Get-Through-With-It” fast-food American attitude we're never gonna grow very deep spiritually.

So, recall that Ephesians 2:8-9 states: “*For by grace are ye saved through **faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*” So the faith (belief or trust) we have in Christ for salvation is “not of works” right? Yet this “faith” in Revelation 2:19 IS a work by the saved folks in the Church at Thyatira. So make sure you're “rightly-dividing” the Word of God, this “faith” then based on study of the word and the context is a “clinging tenacious” faith...fulness!

**and thy patience**, - From whence does “patience” come? The Bible plainly tells us. In Romans 5:3 the Bible states: “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;” So a time of tribulation or suffering leads to us developing MORE faith and in turn that produces more patience. Furthermore, James 1:3 reiterates what was stated earlier in Romans 5:3 “Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” Evidently this explains why there is so little patience within the Church in America today – we have not yet suffered as many of our Christian kindred around the world has.

2 Peter 1:5-7 tells more details about how we develop Spiritually: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

Furthermore these things are mentioned and paralleled in the Fruit (not Fruits) of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” But please don't make the mistake of thinking that “longsuffering” is just another word for patience. For “Longsuffering” refers to putting up with people. “Patience” is putting up with things, events or circumstances.

The Greek word thus behind patience here in our text is HYPOMONE (G5281) the word indeed denotes “patience” but as it was used and known in the first century there was something more related to it. The “Blue-Letter-Bible” (KJV) describes it this way: “in the NT [it is] the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.”

The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Abridged) illuminates this understanding even more: “*Hypomone* becomes a prominent virtue in the sense of courageous endurance. As distinct from patience, it has the active significance of energetic if not necessarily successful resistance, e.g., the bearing of pain by the wounded, the calm acceptance of strokes of destiny, heroism in face of bodily chastisement, or the firm refusal of bribes. True *hypomone* is not motivated outwardly by public opinion or hope of reward but inwardly by love of honour.” (page 582)

Please understand the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* or TDNT (Abridged) is the condensed form of the 10-volume work by Gerhard Kittel (1888-1948) who was the son of Rudolf Kittel (1853-1929) who produced the *Biblia Hebraica* which is the corrupted Hebrew Text used by many modern-day Bible per-versions! Gerhard Kittel became a member of the Nazi Party in 1933 and called it “a voelkisch (ethnic-people-powered) renewal movement on a Christian, moral foundation” he apparently lacked *Spiritual* discernment folks. He published many Anti-Jewish works which were influential due to his position as a Professor. William F. Albright (the late Biblical Archaeologist) wrote that, “*In view of the terrible viciousness of his attacks on Judaism and the Jews, which continues at least until 1943, Gerhard Kittel must bear the guilt of having contributed more, perhaps, than any other Christian theologian to the mass murder of Jews by Nazis.*” So, in light of that I do NOT recommend a frequent use of the TDNT. The notes on “HYPOMONE” quoted above stem from an article written by Albert Friedrich Hauck (a German Protestant Church historian). Even in light of this many Pastors regularly use the TDNT, which they “lovingly call Kittel” is it any wonder then beloved why there is so little spiritual discernment in our nation today? So one must be extremely careful in the use of outside so-called “scholarly” works. More on that in a moment. But for now, back to “HYPOMONE”

Hauck states in the TDNT (pages 583-4) that *hypomone* was used by John in Revelation “as right and necessary for believers. On the one side, it is waiting for Jesus (1:9; 3:10). On the other, it is the enduring of suffering and persecution (2:2-3; 2:19).” Thus we see this patience is a patience related to endurance. As we noted before, such patience can arise only from the Fruit of the Spirit and from the trial of our faith, hence this “patience” is not of us, but is of the Lord's work *through* us. WOW TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

**and thy works;** - Wait a minute! I thought we already covered “works” before in this verse! Why is it here again? As I said earlier you have to be very careful as to what “commentator” you might look to for “advice.” I toiled over and over and prayed over this and as I sat and mused I picked up Oliver B Greene's work on Revelation and he said: “*The word works occurs twice in this commendation to the church at Thyatira. The angel at Ephesus had decreased in love, whereas the angel at Thyatira had increased in works. The darker the night, the more devoted and zealous the godly company;*” I wasn't satisfied so I consulted Bro. D. A. Waite. He said: “He

expects us to have good works.” Commentator after commentator bypassed or gave fleeting remarks as to WHY “works” was mentioned twice. McGee didn't comment on it. Barnes did, he said: *“The word is repeated here, from the first part of the verse, perhaps to specify more particularly that their works had been recently more numerous and praiseworthy even than they had formerly been. In the beginning of the verse, as in the commencement of each of the epistles, the word is used, in the most general sense, to denote all that they had done; meaning that he had so thorough an acquaintance with them in all respects that he could judge of their character. In the latter part of the verse the word seems to be used in a more specific sense, as referring to good works, and with a view to say that they had latterly abounded in these more than they had formerly.”*

Many commentaries basically said the King James Bible was flat out wrong, take for example another “treasured commentary” many preachers appeal to: The Pulpit Commentary, note what it says: “This...is a mistranslation. The Revised Version [of 1881] is correct both in the order of the words and in the rendering. We have first the general statement, found in most of these epistles, asserting intimate personal knowledge: “I know thy works.” Then we have, in two pairs, these works particularized...” there we see beloved the seeds of doubt. These thoughts are echoed by many. What still gets me is how many Pastors are submerging their hearts and minds into books written by Bible doubters. You may say why are you doing so Preacher? I am merely showing you the many dangers that careless “under-shepherds” are engaging in and in so doing many are walking back into the pulpit more confused than they were last Sunday and in attempting to “feed the flock” they are giving out moldy bread, soured milk and stagnated water of life!

So after seeing the “suppositions” of my fellow man I turned back to the Lord to inquire again as to the meaning of this second works. I cannot be dogmatic but this is what I think the Lord is showing here. Please note, this did NOT come from any commentary, it is from – as I understand it – the Lord showing and teaching me His Word. This is what I believe the Lord taught me:

First understand that in the course of this epistle (Revelation 2:18-29 – not the whole Book of Revelation), the Lord Jesus Christ addresses the Church at Thyatira. As He does so, He breaks this letter into two addresses. Look at verses 20-23, there He addresses those that allow and hold to Jezebel. In verses 24-25 he addresses those under the “angel” or Pastor-Teacher, those that are following the Lord. See your handout. You will see a Venn Diagram to illustrate what I'm showing you. As I looked at the Scripture and prayed the Lord showed me the last section of this verse, which we will look at now to show what this 2<sup>nd</sup> occurrence of “works” means!

**and the last to be more than the first.** - Notice this. This is saying in affect, that the last (works) are more than the *first* works. As I looked at this I firmly believe the Lord opened my understanding here. But first allow me to show you just a little sample of what many commentaries add now. Many like the James-Fausset-Brown Commentary states: “Omit the second “and,” with the three oldest manuscripts and the ancient versions; translate, “And (I know) thy works which are last (to be) more in number than the first”...Instead of retrograding from “the first works” and “first love,” as Ephesus, Thyatira's last works exceeded her first.”

There is clearly an “and” there and I wondered again what did the Lord mean by such a statement. But it was there that I began to see, I believe, what the truth is. The Lord showed me: the words “last” and “first” and He reminded me of the verse in Matthew 20:16 “So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.” That verse is part of the parable in Matthew 20:1-16 of the Labourers in the Vineyard.

As I looked Christ's words “*last shall be first and the first last*” I read forward in Revelation 2:20-29. I saw the words were to the Church at Thyatira as a whole, but therein some of the words were

applicable to Jezebel and her followers (or children) and some words were applicable to those who followed the Lord and His Word. So it is then I saw the FIRST group were those in False Doctrine to a large extent. And those were the ones that “would be last” and then I saw the SECOND group addressed and those were the ones that “would be first.” Then I looked again at verse 19 and I THEN saw a DIVISION.

According to ALL the COMMENTARIES I READ AND LOOKED AT (this doesn't mean ALL of them say the same thing – for I cannot read them ALL) but all of the commentators linked all the Compliments of Christ into one grouping so to speak. Then many of the commentators who do NOT believe the King James Bible or the *Textus-Receptus* said that the last wording “and the last to be more than the first” is incorrect in the KJV and SHOULD say more or less what the “Revised Version” of 1881 stated (look at your handout):

KJV - 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.

RV - I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first.

At that point a bombshell went off!! When I looked at verse 19 I saw three “THYS” and as I looked I saw the first two “THYS” constitute 1 Group and this Group One would thus correspond to those mentioned in Revelation 2:24-25. Notice them: “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. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.” So these are said to have a “burden” they are “enduring” they are producing the works mentioned in the FIRST Section of this present verse of Revelation 2:19 and then the Lord showed me in His Rewards, the LAST (on Earth) would be FIRST (in Heaven). Those dear saints in the Church at Thyatira who were holding onto the Truth and True Doctrines were not popular and were a remnant no doubt. But the Lord commended THEM FIRST!! When the believers at Thyatira heard the Words of Christ they knew from the Holy Ghost who was being told what.

Then I looked again at verse 19 and I saw the “puzzle” of the 2<sup>nd</sup> word works there staring back at me and I smiled because God had shown me that the first (Jezebel's Group) would be last and even among that bunch who were in sin and no doubt riding a roller-coaster of the Believer's life (in sin and out of sin, close to God, not close to God) there were still works – note, performed by the Holy Ghost – in their lives.

Think about the Historical application of that. If this Church of Thyatira also encompasses an era of history in the Church Age and should that indeed correspond with the time from 606 – 1520AD look at those believers WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH who had become right with God – though still WITHIN the erroneous so-called “church” they were as individuals producing works by being obedient unto Him. Such men would be John Wycliffe, John Hus, Savonarola yes even Martin Luther (not that Communist, False Prophet Adulterer Martin Luther King, Jr.!) and Erasmus the great Greek scholar.

So WOW!! Please note that I'm not claiming to be a Bible Scholar or guru who knows everything about the Bible. I'm not claiming to be smarter or more educated than others. I'm telling you that when you are wondering about what the Bible says and means you can appeal to men whose logic so often contradicts with Scripture Itself or turn to the One, the Author of the Bible Who can and is able even today to guide you unto all Truth and all Understanding. I hope you got something out of this lesson tonight. Next week – What is Jezebel doing in the New Testament and why is she preaching!!!? Find out more next week in Lesson 41!!