

Revelation: Thyatira, Tolerating Jezebel (Revelation 2:12-29).

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (5/24/2015)

Introduction

1. Christ introduced Himself to Thyatira as the Son of God with eyes aflame and feet of polished bronze (see 19:12 and Dan. 10:6).
2. The reference to “the Son of God” may be because Thyatira was known for its worship of the twin sons of Zeus, Castor and Pollux (Acts 28:11).
3. Thyatira may have been the least significant of the seven cities. It is the modern city of Ak-hissar (“White Castle”). It occupied an important position in a low-lying “corridor” connecting the Hermus and Caicus valleys, serving as a commercial center and frontier garrison.
4. Thyatira (as with other of these seven churches) outwardly demonstrated faith, service, and perseverance, but inwardly they were infected with apathy and apostasy.

I. The Son’s War

1. This revelation of Jesus as the Son with burning eyes and bronze feet is reminiscent of Psalm 2.
2. Believers seem to be very good at holding true to the faith in the face of outward threats, even thriving in such circumstances (v. 19, see 13:7-10; 14:12).
3. Satan understands that the best offensive is not a direct assault but subtle deception (Gen. 3:13; Deut. 11:16; Prov. 14:8; Rom. 16:17, 18; 2 John 7; Rev. 12:9; 13:14).

II. The Enemy’s Tactic

1. Paul warned: “*Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons*” (1 Tim. 4:1). Some in Thyatira learned “*what some call the deep things of Satan*” (v. 24).
 - a. The false teaches at Thyatira probably lured people with promises of their experiencing the “*deep things of God*” (1 Cor. 2:10), which were anything but.
 - b. The false hope centered in the deception was probably the expectation of relief from the continual onslaught of outward persecution through some deeper spiritual experiences offered by false teachers.
2. A woman in the church at Thyatira was Satan’s agent to deceive the gullible (like Jezebel of old, 1 Kings 16:31).
 - a. Both Christ and the apostles gave repeated warnings that false teachers would invade the church (2 Pet. 2:1; Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29).
 - b. The deception is in the attractive nature of the false teaching, usually enhancing one’s place of superiority over others, not in any blatant denial of the gospel itself.
3. The nature of the false teaching of Jezebel was the same as that of the doctrine of Balaam (v. 14, cf. v. 20), showing that it came from the same source.
 - a. Why does the Lord allow these false teachers? In order to expose the false believers (2 Thess. 2:9-12).
 - b. The issue was not fear that true saints would fall into apostasy (they would not) but with true saints tolerating the propagation of error within the church (v. 20).
4. The seriousness of the Jezebel situation is noted.

- a. In Pergamum, Christ had only a “few things” (v. 14); in Thyatira, Jezebel led the church astray (v. 24).
- b. The woman refused to repent, suggesting that attempts were made (v. 21; note 1 Tim. 2:12-14).
- c. The language used in the text closely parallels that used of the harlot system (her methods: 13:14; 18:13; 19:20; her judgment: 17:1, 2; 18:3, 8, 9).

III. Judgment and Reward

- 1. Christ’s threats of judgment are serious.
 - a. The true servants who are led astray by her teaching will, unless they repent, suffer death (v. 20; see 1 Cor. 5:5). Christians do suffer and die because of disobedience.
 - b. As Matthew 7:20-23 warns, not everyone who professes Christ or serves Christ will enter the kingdom.
- 2. Christ is serious in His judgments, searching minds and hearts with knowledge and understanding that pierces to the core of our being (v. 23).
 - a. He returns to each according to the true nature of his deeds.
 - b. This descriptive is, no doubt, taken from Jeremiah 17:10, where it is used in the context of Judah’s persistent sin (note vv. 5-13).
- 3. To the rest, the few who resisted the false teaching, Christ gives encouragement and promise of reward.
 - a. He places no further burden on them but that they keep holding fast until He comes.
 - b. They are already overcoming (v. 26), so will be given authority to rule over the nations (Psa. 2:8, 9).
 - c. They will receive the “*morning star*”—they will have Him (22:16; Num. 24:17) as they truly rule in His kingdom, although they seem to be nothing in the world’s estimation.

Reflections

- 1. The letter to Thyatira should warn every Christian to live in holy fear of God’s righteous anger but also to be comforted by His care for the purity and survival of His church.
- 2. This letter should remind every believer that disobedience will be judged and avenged.