

## Background

1. This is the longest letter Jesus wrote to the seven churches.

The city of Thyatira (or Thyateira) was about 42 miles from the Aegean Sea, in the valley of the Lycus River, a branch of the Hermus. It stood at the junction of three main roads leading to Pergamum (37 miles northwest), Sardis (37 miles southeast) and Smyrna (47 miles southeast).

2. Thyatira was a growing city of trade and manufacturing that was recovering from many years of decline.
3. It was the home of a number of trade guilds, such as, dyeing, cloth-making, pottery, and brass making.
4. These guilds often had meals together in some temple or in a place where a sacrifice was offered to some god or goddess.
5. Drunkenness and idolatry were associated with these pagan feasts.
6. It is interesting that Lydia was from this city (Acts 16:14), but she was in Philippi at the time of her conversion. (Acts 16:12, 13, 15).

ACT 16:12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were staying in this city for some days.

ACT 16:13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.

ACT 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

ACT 16:15 And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

- a. It appears that she and her family had moved to Philippi - "come into my house and stay." (Acts 16:15).
- b. It is possible she even had an influence on the establishment of the church in Thyatira or at least had visited the congregation there.
- c. No one knows when the congregation in Thyatira was established or what relationship Lydia had to it.
- d. It is only mentioned 4 times in the New Testament. (Acts 16:14; Rev. 1:11; 2:18, 24).

## Church In Thyatira

Rev. 2:18-29

**REV 2:18 "And to the angel [messenger] of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:**

1. "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write" - see notes on Rev. 2:1.
2. Description of Jesus.

a. "The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire" (Rev. 1:14; 19:12).

1) Jesus refers to Himself as "the Son of God." It is found only here in the book of Revelation. In the gospels Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of God. (Matt. 16:16, 17; 26:63,64; Matt. 27:43; Jn. 10:36; Lk. 22:70).

MAT 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

MAT 16:17 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

MAT 26:63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God."

MAT 26:64 Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." By the words "You have said it yourself" Jesus is acknowledging He was and is "the Son of God."

MAT 27:43 "He trusts in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He takes pleasure in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

JOH 10:36 do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?

LUK 22:70 And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am."

2) McCord translates the words "like a flame of fire" as "a fiery flame."

REV 1:14 And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire;

REV 19:12 And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself.

b. "and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this" (Rev. 1:15).

REV 1:15 and His feet were like burnished bronze [glowing brass], when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

### **What Was Right With The Church**

**REV 2:19 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.**

1. "I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance" - The word "know" is used here in a positive sense of approval.
2. "and that your deeds of late are greater than at first" - The Lord praises many in the church because their "deeds of late are greater than at first."
  - a. We do not know what this church had previously been like in these areas, but they had made substantial improvement.
  - b. The Lord commended them for their deeds, love, faith, service, perseverance.
  - c. It is essential that they and we keep growing in these areas as individuals and as a congregation.

## What Was Wrong With The Church

**REV 2:20 'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.**

1. “But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel”
  - a. The Jezebel of the Old Testament was a notoriously wicked queen, and she forever ruined that name because of her great wickedness. In the days of Elijah she led Israel into idolatry, fornication, etc.
  - b. We do not know if “Jezebel” was the real name of this wicked lady or if it was a name applied to her because of her great wickedness. It really makes no difference
2. “who calls herself a prophetess” - She falsely claimed to be a spokes lady for God, but this was far from the truth.
  - a. There were “prophetesses” in the church, but this lady was not one. (Acts 21:8, 9; 1 Cor. 11:5).

ACT 21:8 And on the next day we departed and came to Caesarea; and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.

ACT 21:9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.

1CO 11:5 But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, disgraces her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved.

- b. One who was a prophetess would never do and teach the evils that this wicked lady did, but would lead men to God by faithfully proclaiming the gospel.
3. “and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols”
  - a. She taught and influenced Christians to “commit acts of immorality.”
  - b. She also led them to “eat things sacrificed to idols.” Immorality was a part of these sinful feasts.
  - c. She most likely advocated compromise with the pagan cults perhaps to convert them or to gain their acceptance.
  - d. She was advocating the false teachings of the Nicolaitans though this word is not used here. (Rev. 2:6, 15).
  - e. Jezebel of old led Israel into idolatry in her promotion of Baal worship, and this woman named Jezebel or was a woman, like Jezebel, doing the same things she did.

### Time To Repent And Warning

**REV 2:21 'And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality.**

1. “And I gave her time to repent” - We do not know how much time He gave her, but it had been enough time for her to come to her senses and repent.
2. “and she does not to repent of her immorality” - She refused “to repent of her immorality” and kept leading others into this sin.

3. God desires all to come to repentance. (2 Pet. 3:9).

4. Repentance should be **now** since no one knows how long he/she has to repent. (Prov. 27:1).

**REV 2:22 'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.'**

1. "Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness" - The Lord did not overlook her immorality, but He was going to discipline her with "a bed of sickness."
2. "and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds" - Those who were committing adultery would also be punished "unless they repent of her deeds."

**REV 2:23 'And I will kill her children with [by] pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.'**

- "en thanatos" [ehn **thah** nah tahs] is literally "in (with) death."
  - Because this is redundant with the words "I will kill" it is better translated "with pestilence."
1. "And I will kill her children with pestilence" - "Her children" would be killed "with pestilence."
    - a. "Children" could refer to her biological children if they were following in the steps of their mother.
    - b. It is possible that "children" refers to those in the congregation who were under her influence and practicing her evil deeds.
  2. "and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts" - The Lord knows the thoughts and feelings of all. (Heb. 4:13).
    - a. He was fully aware of their evil thoughts and their actions.
    - b. The Old Testament describes God in this way. (Jere. 11:20; 17:10).

JER 11:20 But, O Lord of hosts, who judges righteously, Who tries the feelings and the heart, Let me see Thy vengeance on them, For to Thee have I committed my cause.

JER 17:10 "I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

3. "and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds"
  - a. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament declares God's requital of man according to his deeds. (Psa. 62:12; Prov. 24:12; Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10).

PSA 62:12 And lovingkindness is Thine, O Lord, For Thou dost recompense a man according to his work.

PRO 24:12 If you say, "See, we did not know this," Does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work?

MAT 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.

2CO 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

b. Each person will reap what he/she has sown. (Gal. 6:7,8).

### **Words Of Comfort To Faithful**

**REV 2:24 'But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them-- I place no other burden on you.**

1. "But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira" - The words "the rest" are not defined, but refer to the faithful in the congregation.
  - a. These brethren had remained true to the Lord and His teachings.
  - b. They had avoided "the deep things of Satan" as the false teachers called them.
  - c. The so-called "deep things of Satan" are not defined, but one can be sure they all related to evil.
2. "who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them--"
  - a. Some were seeking to explore evil as much as possible.
  - b. They perhaps boasted they knew "the deep things of Satan" and this made them superior.
  - c. Some, in the first century, argued that one is saved on the basis of his superior knowledge, and what the body did was acceptable or did not count spiritually.
3. "I place no other burden on you" - They were to keep separate from what Jezebel was doing and teaching.
  - a. The Lord was going to discipline Jezebel and her followers.
  - b. The Lord had earlier criticized them for tolerating this evil woman and her followers.

**REV 2:25 'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.**

1. "Nevertheless what you have hold fast"
  - a. This is a reference to their Christian qualities praised in this letter.
  - b. They were to continue in their faithfulness to the Lord.
2. "until I come" - "I come" meant they were to be faithful to the end of life.
  - a. Jesus might or might not make His final return during their lives.
  - b. No one knows when Christ is coming again to raise the dead and judge mankind. (Matt. 24:36, 42).
  - c. These churches were going to experience great trials - some would come from the Lord in the form of discipline and others would come from the enemies of Christianity.

### **Promise To Faithful**

**REV 2:26 'And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;**

1. “And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end”
  - a. “End” is undefined, but likely refers to the end of their lives or to Christ’s second coming whichever came first.
  - b. The words “he who keeps My deeds” affirms Jesus expects His followers to be faithful. (Rev. 2:10).
  - c. One must do the will of God to be saved. (Matt. 7:21).
2. “to him I will give authority over the nations”
  - a. Believers are God’s servants in heaven. (Rev. 22:3). The “rest” of Revelation 14:13 does not mean the redeemed in heaven will not have work to do.
  - b. Revelation chapters 21 and 22 reveal the glory His saints will have in heaven in the presence of the Lord.
  - c. They would reign with Christ in glory and share in the blessings of Christ’s heavenly reign.
  - d. “Authority over the nations” must be understood spiritually as referring to their future reign with Christ in heaven. See Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:17.

**REV 2:27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father;**

1. “and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces” - See note on this page.
  - a. The meaning of these words is unclear, but point to the fact that the righteous will be in heaven and the wicked will be destroyed, that is, cast into hell. (Matt. 25:41, 46).
  - b. Heaven is the home of the righteous. (Matt. 5:10-12; Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Pet. 1:4).
  - c. Even the Patriarchs were looking for a heavenly home. (Heb. 11:13-16).

HEB 11:13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

HEB 11:14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

HEB 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

- d. In heaven the wicked will never again tempt or harm Christians or pose any threat to them.
- e. The enemies of Christ and believers will be utterly defeated and “cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:15). See Matt. 25:41,46.

**Note:**

- The language of 2:27 is used in a destructive sense in Revelation 12:5 and 19:15.

REV 12:5 And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was

caught up to God and to His throne.

REV 19:15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

- The language here agrees with Psalms 2:9, a Messianic psalm, speaking of Christ's victory over His enemies.

PSA 2:9 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.' "

- The word of God frequently speaks of Christ defeating His enemies. (Matt. 22:44; Mk. 12:36; Lk. 20:43; Acts 2:35; 1 Cor. 14:25; Heb. 1:13; 10:13).
2. "as I also have received authority from My Father" - Jesus received this authority before His ascension into heaven. (Matt. 28:18). See Jn. 17:2.
    - a. He is exalted at the right hand of God, and His kingdom will never be overthrown. (Acts 2:32, 33; Dan. 2:44).
    - b. He will rule until He comes again to bless His followers and condemn the wicked to hell. (Matt. 25:31-46).

**REV 2:28 and I will give him the morning star.**

1. "and I will give him" - This is a promise to those who overcome.
2. "the morning star" - This is Christ Himself. (Rev. 22:16).

REV 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

- a. "The morning star" was often used of the planet Venus that at certain times of the year appears beautifully in the East and seen with the first rays of sunlight.
- b. Christ is **the light** of the world. (Jn. 1:9; 8:12).
- c. He is the One who shines brightly in a world of sin, and will bless those who obey Him and walk in the light.
- d. The faithful will enjoy His presence and blessings now and in eternity.

**REV 2:29 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'** See Rev. 2:7, 11, 17.

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