



Empowering People to Change the World

## **The Church at Thyatira: A Compromised Church**

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## The Church of Smyrna-Pergamos-Doctrinal Compromise Revelation 2:12-17

- **PP:** 7 churches—mail route.
- The theme of Revelation in these first 3 chapters, looking at these 7 churches is being an overcomer: God empower you to overcome any situation, problem, struggle, sickness.
- Revelation is a “Training Manual on Overcoming.”
  - Revelation assumes you know the whole Bible: no greater integrity to this book.
  - This is “God’s Intelligence Briefing” of the last days.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Church is at Ephesus—a church that was working hard, persevering, but had lost its first love: Revelation 2:7 - **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Church is at Smyrna—crushed under great persecution and God saw their suffering: Rev. 2:11 - **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”**
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Church is at Pergamos—a church veering off God’s Word into strange doctrines: Revelation 2:17 - **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”**
- Thyatira is about 35 miles west of Pergamos, if you are interested in last week’s study or the past 5 weeks, go online and you can listen or watch.
- These churches are all in modern Turkey.
- John is writing from the island of Patmos, out in the Aegean Sea, where he has been exiled.

**Revelation 2:18-29**

**18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,  
‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and  
His feet like fine brass:**

**19 “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for  
your works, the last *are* more than the first. 20 Nevertheless I have a few  
things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls  
herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual  
immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time to  
repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. 22 Indeed I will  
cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great  
tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 I will kill her children with  
death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the  
minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your  
works.**

**24 “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have  
this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will  
put on you no other burden. 25 But hold fast what you have till I come.  
26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will  
give power over the nations—**

**27**

**‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron;  
They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—  
as I also have received 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.”’**

- The church at Thyatira is located in a beautiful valley on a trade route founded by Seleucus, one of the successors of Alexander, as a military outpost.
- It was a key city in the north south trade route connecting Pergamum and Laodicea and Smyrna.
- This location caused Thyatira to become a very successful and flourishing commercial center.
- First city to develop trade guilds, the most of any Roman city.

- Acts 16 Paul came to the city of Philippi and met Lydia a seller of purple “from the city of Thyatira” and she probably was the first believer in Thyatira.
- This deep dye came from a portion of the snail and madder root, dried and crushed this and make a dye from it...like Prince, the Romans loved purple.
- Different from the other cities, where pressure came from the outside, through emperor worship, in Thyatira, the pressure came from within their jobs...
- Each trade guild had its own diety or god or goddess and they worshipped this idol that kept the trade flourishing.
- So these guilds would have feasts to honor this patron god of their guild.
- There were drugs used, drinking...so if the Christians started backing away from these feasts and this brought problems because:
  - That was disrespectful to the gods.
  - It meant the gods were not going to bless the trade guild.
  - This was a struggle for the Christians because they were struggling with the fellowship with the believers and the fellowship of their company.
  - Some of you may struggle with this too!
  - This is nothing new!! Christians have stood strong for thousands of years.

But this is not the only thing...they are also being seduced sexually into sin.

First time “adultery” is used in Revelation! Fornication is used often, but the first time “adultery” is used.

#### **Vs. 18**

**'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire,**

- **Jesus can See it All! Same phrase used in Revelation 1:14 and 19:12, as well as Daniel 10:6.**
- Eyes like a flame-perceiving, seeing all, discerning.
- Feet like fine brass-holy and pure. (Thyatira was famous for its beautiful burnished bronze and brass)
- God can see through the false religious spirit...He can see it all.
- God's eyes examine leaders, churches, pastors, and nations.
- Note vs. 23, "I am He who searches the minds and hearts."

#### **Vs. 19**

**"I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.**

- **Jesus can See the Good "Works."**
- "Works" are mentioned twice in this verse, and 5x in the letter to this church: This is a hardworking church.
- It is filled with spiritual good works.
- Martin Luther once said, "We are saved by faith alone, but not faith that is alone."
- Our faith in Christ will always result in doing good works!
- You can do good works on the outside but be spiritually dead on the inside.
- Probably the church today is doing many good works, more than ever in the history of the church:
  - Hospitals

- Building homes
  - Medical clinics
  - Taking care of the poor
  - Orphanages
- Buddhists don't build hospitals or orphanages! Muslims don't feed the poor...Christians do.
- Never forget the history of a church, so many great churches and great denominations have lost their way, but God gives them another chance to come back and repent...He see's what they have done and wants to bless them again...
- Jesus see's hard work, love, service for the kingdom, faith, and perseverance! Those are wonderful qualities!
- And yet, Jesus see's some major heresy within the church...

#### **Vs. 20-23 The Jezebel Church System**

**Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.**

- Again using an Old Testament situation like he has done with the doctrine of Balaam, in the church at Pergamos. So, I don't think there is an actual person named Jezebel, but there is a spirit, a teaching that is not unlike the ways of Jezebel in the Old Testament. (1 Kings 21)
- This teaching was probably from a woman who was a false prophetess who was leading the men of the church into idolatry and sexual sin.
- This was not someone actually named "Jezebel"...I mean who would name their child "Jezebel"? I've never known a child or adult named Jezebel.
- So, this is a system, a "Jezebel System" of idolatry and sexual sin:
  - Jezebel in the Old Testament was a vile and evil woman who led the Israelites into the worship of Baal.

- This seems to be similar to the cult of the Nicolaitans and the “doctrine of Balaam:” compromising holiness, leading to idolatry and sexual sin.
- I think that she was probably a leader in the guilds and began to teach that “hey we are free—grace; these guilds and their patron gods don’t mean anything...they are not really gods. You can attend the feasts! It means nothing...besides, how are you going to evangelize if you don’t fraternize?”
- This compromise was leading to adultery and probably religious syncretism.
- It is interesting how often that spiritual fornication usually leads to sexual fornication; spiritual compromise leads to sexual compromise.
- She is called a “prophetess?” Often leaders will lead people under the premise of “hearing from God” through vision, dreams and prophecies that lead to self serving bondages and sexual sin.
- Today, we see a “Jezebel System” whenever a church builds a system with someone or a prophecy or a spiritual gift greater than the Word of God.
- The pastor or leader will not allow himself to be judged by the Word of God.
- Whenever the “prophecy” given becomes more authoritative than the Word of God, you are moving into a “Jezebel System” that will lead to heresy and falsehood.
- There was a church in Denver years ago that fell into having “soul mate prayer partners” that was meant for prayer and led to fornication. The pastor’s wife had several affairs and broke up the marriage and the church...

**Vs. 21**

**And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.**

- He gives her time to repent...Jesus has given this church time to repent but they won't repent.
- God always gives us time to repent.
- Have you entered into sexual immorality? Are you morally impure? Are you sleeping around? Are you living with someone who is not your wife/husband?
- Sexual immorality is a perversion of God's plan! God has a divine order for the home and for relationship and we have perverted it.
- We have sowed the wind and reaped the worldwind with AIDS, STD, Abortions, and we are reaping this stuff...
- Pray for America...we are sex saturated culture! The church is caving in and endorsing sexual immorality: producing death in the church.
- The church is embracing this stuff...the Episcopal church is being torn asunder by ordaining homosexuals.
- God is giving the American Episcopal Church a time to repent.
- You always get found out! Jesus knows what you're up to...and He will give you time to repent and turn back to him, but if you don't, watch out...
- Jesus gives us a "Repentance Time Frame" and then exposes the whole thing...
  1. The Holy Spirit speaks to our inner selves; our conscience (through the Bible, our own knowledge of right and wrong, etc.)
  2. If we reject that, the Holy Spirit uses outer things-people, close Christian friends, to remind us of our error.



3. If we reject that, Jesus widens the circle and exposes us to a more public arena, often leading to humiliation and public knowledge that can ruin our careers and our homes.

**Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.**

- **Repent or Die**
- At the feasts of the guilds were these large sofa's and beds where sexual immorality would happen...the picture here is a play on words. She will be cast onto her own "bed."
- The original Greek doesn't have "sick" but only "bed."
- This is her bed...she made it and now she will sleep in it.
- It could also mean "death bed." She will be sent to hell.
- Consequences of her sin: sickness and death...I wonder how much sickness we bring upon ourselves just by breaking kingdom principles in our lives...AIDS, lung cancer, heart attacks, etc.
- These churches that cannot make up their minds about God's divine order for the home are dying!
- Sin makes you stupid...sin also brings distress, heartache, and tribulation...
- Death! Wow, God is serious about heresies and cults. Have you studied cults? What happens to their leaders; so many end up with untimely deaths and destruction: Joseph Smith and Mormonism...Branch Davidians and David Koresh...it is a story of God's judgment...
- God gives to "each one according to his works" We are judged by our works! We will reap what we sow.

**Vs. 24-25**

**24 “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. 25 But hold fast what you have till I come.**

- This is actually a play on words: “the depths of Satan” They were being taught that this was the really “deep teaching” and Jesus calls it the “depth of Satan!”
- It is always seen as some new deep teaching-sexual freedom, you don’t have to follow the Bible or the 10 commandments, you can just be free!
- Hold fast to the basic tenets of the faith! You don’t need some new teaching, some new deep knowledge that is outside God’s Word.
- Every Easter, Every Christmas, Newsweek and Time magazines come out with this question on the headlines: “Who is God?” “Who is Jesus?” They still don’t know after all these years...they ask the movie stars, and these professors who say, “We don’t know where Jesus was born!” Why don’t they ask us! You only have to be able to read first grade English to read ~~that Jesus was born in Bethlehem!~~ Constant undermining of the Word of God.
- We are warned all the through scripture to beware of the “leaven of the Pharisee’s and Saducee’s” of adding to or taking away from God’s Word. (Gen 3; Deut. 8; Rev 22)
  - The Pharisee’s were the Ritualists...they added to the Word of God with traditions and rituals.
  - The Saducee’s were the Rationalists...they subtracted from the Bible.
  - In early church history, ~~the first 400 years~~ was the sin of “Pharisaism” of adding to the Word of God:
    - Adding to Jesus.
    - Rituals of confessionals.
    - New traditions of the Apostolic succession.

- Added teachings of Purgatory; Indulgences; Confessionals to Priests instead of God, etc.
- Today is the “leaven of Saduceeism” that subtracts from God’s Word.
- The Word of God has no power.
- The Word of God doesn’t mean what it says.
- We can vote on God’s Word...the Bible is not a democracy.
- The Kingdom of God is an order, not a democracy...you don’t vote in the kingdom of God.

**And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—**

**27**

**‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron;**

**They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—**

**as I also have received 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.”**

- The work of God will continue through the overcomers!
- The Jezebel Church System will be destroyed!
  - The Pharisaism will be destroyed.
  - The Saduceesim will be destroyed.
  - We will share in God’s triumph over all evil and evil doers.
- Christ will return for the faithful overcomer!
- The first time He came in a stable and entered the city on a donkey...but the next time He will come in power and majesty ruling with a rod of iron...it was palm branch before, it will be a rod of iron the next time.
- ~~Jesus~~ Jesus is the morning star, heralding a new day. A new day is dawning!