

Mount Up Wednesday
The Wednesday Night Bible Study Ministry of
East Mount Zion Baptist Church
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The Study of Revelation
The Letter to the Church at Thyatira

Message to Thyatira

“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

“I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come. The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

The History of Thyatira:

The letter to the church at Thyatira, this is the longest of the seven letters, but it was written to the church in the smallest, youngest, and least important city of all. Thyatira was known for its thriving textile industry and guilds. It was also notable for its worship of pagan gods, which challenged the early Christian community. Thyatira was located about twenty-five miles southeast of Pergamos, the present population is about 12,000. The city was founded by Seleucus Nicator, one of the generals of Alexander. It was a garrison city built on the plains, with no natural fortifications, and was captured, destroyed, and rebuilt many times. On coins found in its ruins the city is represented by a horseman bearing a double-bladed battle-axe indicating that it was a cavalry post. The name is said to signify "sweet savor of labor," or "sacrifice of contrition." Sir William Ramsay says that the name indicates "weakness made strong" and other writers give the meaning as "never weary of sacrifice."

In Acts 16:11-15, we read the story of Lydia of Thyatira, a convert by the teachings of Paul in the city of Philippi. She was a seller of purple cloth. A wealthy business woman who encouraged Paul

to remain in her home and it is believed that the Philippian church was begun because of her obedience.

Thyatira at the time of this epistle was an important manufacturing city, its citizens being mostly poor and humble laborers, just the opposite of those in Pergamos. The citizens were made contrite by sacrifices, and their lives were made fragrant by the blessings of labor. The workmen of Thyatira were organized into labor unions, or "guilds." The two leading industries were the manufacture of instruments of brass, bronze, and other metals, and the manufacture and dyeing of cloth, especially of the royal purple.

Significance of the Letter:

Jesus' salutation as being 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze' once again refers to judgement. More specifically, "eyes like flames of fire, refers to the "Divine Judgement" or Godly Judgement where the "all-seeing" eyes of Jehovah Roi not only sees but is the only one with the power to judge. He is the almighty, all-powerful Judge of all the Earth. The reference to "feet like burnished bronze" speaks to the authority to judge. This is "majestic judgement" which can only be carried out by the One who is Majestic over all the Earth.

Interestingly, the phrase "Son of God" is not included in any of the other letters. This defining phrase can be used here to indicate that Jesus has been given "all rule and authority and power and dominion, the name that is above every name." (Eph. 1:21)

The city of Thyatira was made up of hardworking individuals, consequently it is not surprising that the church was comprised of people whose works were so significant that Jesus mentioned them twice. He even made it clear that their "latter works were even greater than the former." (Rev. 2:19) Jesus' compliments of their "love and faith and service and patient endurance" (2:19) were short-lived as He immediately began a strong rebuke for the tolerance of the woman "Jezebel." Jezebel, the wicked queen of Israel, lived hundreds of years before this letter was penned. Therefore, this reference is to the "spirit of Jezebel" which was symbolized by an "apostate religious system." This system embraced sexual immorality and spiritual sacrilege. This so disturbed Jesus that He vowed to bring sickness against her (the false church) and those who joined her in this wickedness. Especially since He made a way of escape for her and she refused. Jesus even declared to kill the ones she produced as a result of her evil. This is an example that is being made so other churches will know who He is.

However, to the ones who persevered in the midst of this wickedness, Jesus promised to give authority to rule the nations with power. Essentially, He will give them Himself. Read I Kings 16:30-33; 18:13; 19:1,2

Describe the woman Jezebel, based on the above scriptures and write definition of what the "spirit of Jezebel" could represent. Explain.

What is one word that characterizes Jezebel above all others? _____

Using the scriptures in Rev. 2:20-23, compare the spirit of Jezebel from I Kings to the spirit of Jezebel in Rev. 2. What are the similarities?

Do you see examples of the spirit of Jezebel in the churches of today? Explain.

The word “children” in Rev. 2:23 refers to offspring. Why would Jesus kill the offspring?

Look at the characteristics of Jesus in the beginning of the Letter to Thyatira and the promises to those at the end. How are they connected?

The term “Morning Star” refers to Jesus. What is the significance of Jesus giving Himself to the overcomers in Thyatira?