

I. The Church at Thyatira

- A. Thyatira was about 30 miles inland in Turkey being surrounded by many rivers. The modern city of Akhisar now exists on the site of Thyatira. It was a wealthy center for trade guilds or "Labor Unions" (garments, pottery, and bronze workings, weavers, leather workers, linen makers, etc.). It was between Pergamum to the north and Sardis to the south.
- B. All employees in the "unions" were required to attend the worship feasts for Apollo the sun-god. They gave thanks to Apollo as their patron god by going to idolatrous feasts which included much drunkenness and immorality. Refusal to participate would lead to them losing their job.
- C. Lydia in Acts 16:14, the dyer of purple garments was from this city. Archeological inscriptions have been found on the ruins of this city that refer to the guilds or unions of dyers.
- D. Reading: Revelation 2:18-28 (NLT) *“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Thyatira. This is the message from the Son of God, whose eyes are like flames of fire, whose feet are like polished bronze [Rev 1:14-15]: ‘I know all the things you do. I have seen your love, your faith, your service, and your patient endurance. And I can see your constant improvement in all these things. ‘But I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman—that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet—to lead my servants astray. She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality. ‘Therefore, I will throw her on a bed of suffering, and those who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent and turn away from her evil deeds. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve. ‘But I also have a message for the rest of you in Thyatira who have not followed this false teaching (‘deeper truths,’ as they call them—depths of Satan, actually). I will ask nothing more of you except that you hold tightly to what you have until I come. To all who are victorious, who obey me to the very end, To them I will give authority over all the nations. They will rule the nations with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots. They will have the same authority I received from my Father, and I will also give them the morning star!’”*

II. Jesus Commends and Warns

- A. Jesus commends them for their *love, faith, service, and patient endurance*, however with all these qualities, He then warns them not to compromise regarding sexual immorality and idolatry.
 1. They were rebuked for 'tolerating' *“that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet,”* who was teaching believers to *“commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols.”* That

is the message of this age just as in those times – compromise and toleration!

Satan's strategy has not changed for 1000's of years and it is still working today.

- B. The woman Jesus referred to was teaching that some sin is acceptable (immorality and idolatry). Biblical truth is – no sin is acceptable in the sight of our Holy God.
1. We know from Romans 6:23 that the *"wages of sin is death."* Jesus paid the price once for all and paid our debt. We had earned death, but His finished work on the Cross is enough that we might have eternal life. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus, old things passed away, all things have become new.
 2. Unfortunately, that woman who called herself a prophet, had lost sight of her identity in Christ and was no longer walking after the Spirit but after the flesh.
 3. She undoubtedly had allowed the sins of immorality and idolatry to become part of her life, and had not only rationalized it to be ok, but also was leading others astray with her teaching.
 4. Jesus who is gracious and merciful had given her time to repent, so the Holy Spirit had been dealing with her heart, but her heart had become hardened from habitual sin.
- C. Tolerating sin in our lives does have consequences. The "sowing and reaping" principle applies.
1. When we sow to the flesh we reap corruption.
 2. Jesus turns her over to the consequences of her sin – a "bed of suffering" and the death of her children.
 3. You might be thinking, that's some pretty tough stuff.
- D. Jesus goes on in verse 22: *"those who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent and turn away from her evil deeds."*
1. Jesus offers the solution to the sin problem: repentance. God's kindness leads us to repentance, but His character is both loving and just.
 2. When she chose to not repent (turn from her evil deeds), justice demands consequences.
 3. If verse 22 sounds tough, check out what Jesus follows up with in verse 23: *"I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve."*
 4. Pretty sobering when you think about the consequences of sin, which only seems pleasant for a little while.
- E. Jesus has a word for those in the church at Thyatira that have not fallen to temptation or followed the woman's false teaching: *"hold tightly to what you have until I come."*
1. Endure, be steadfast, immovable, unshakable, like a solid rock.
 2. Who does that sound like? – Jesus. Yes, let the Christ in you, who is our Hope of Glory, come out!

- F. Jesus then promises this blessing: *"To all who are victorious, who obey me to the very end, To them I will give authority over all the nations."*
1. We will be given the same authority that Jesus received from the Father.
 2. It may be the Millenium before we are given authority over the nations, but after our last 3 months in Zambia (AMT), I am convinced more now than ever that we have been given authority now in the nations.
 - i. *"Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession."* Psalms 2:8 NLT

III. Closing:

The Jesus in us wants none to perish but all to come to repentance. We have been given all we need to live a godly life and a great commission!

- *"By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence."* 2 Peter 1:3
- *"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."* Matthew 28:19 NLT
- *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* Acts 1:8 NLT