

THYATIRA: THE CHURCH THAT TOLERATED JEZEBEL
DR. ROGER BARRIER
Revelation 2:18-29
S-1612; JesusNext #6

Last week we talked about compromise as we discussed the church in Pergamum. Compromise has a good side and a negative flip side. Learning to compromise is a sign of maturity and reality. But compromising our values, morals, ethics, character or bodies is not.

Today, as we discuss Thyatira, we talk about tolerance. There is a good and bad side to tolerance. It is critically important that we love and respect and get along with people even if they are not just like we are. See 1 Corinthians 13; Romans 12; Romans 14; and Ephesians 4. But, on the other hand, there is a flip side to tolerance: If you have cancer you don't live and let live. It will kill you. You don't tolerate it. You cut it out.

Today we have a twisted concept of tolerance. The "new tolerance" means that every individual's beliefs, values, lifestyle and perception of truth claims are equally valid. As a result, we are creating a society which will tolerate anything—except those who have convictions and values and who dare to express them.

Last week we saw the church that compromised. This week we see a church that tolerated. Watch the progression among the churches in Revelation that had problems. First there is the loss of first love (Ephesus). Second, there is compromise with the world (Pergamam). Third there is a tolerance of sin (Thyatira). When the church fools around with the world it soon takes a light view of sin.

Revelation 2: 18: To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

Thyatira was the smallest of the seven places. It was rather insignificant. But it is not unimportant to the Lord. In fact, the longest of the seven letters is written to the church in the most insignificant place.

Note the "Superman X-Ray vision" which reads right into the heart.

Integrity is determined more when people are not watching than when they are.

Here we have an all-seeing judge who now He reveals what He has seen.

Revelation 2: 19: I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

These Christians had five sterling qualities. In fact they had all that Ephesus had—and love.

Here is a beautiful garden in which the fairest of Christian graces blossomed – faith, hope, and love. We see here the marks of a true Christian church.

Their dreams were greater than their memories. What they had in front of them was even greater than their history.

Charles Swindoll shares three characteristics about churches whose best days are still ahead.

1. They stay excited about the truth.
2. They love youth and encourage the young to grow.
3. Their eyes remain fixed on the Lord. They don't follow one man.

Revelation 2: 20-21: Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality

and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.

Who is Jezebel? We need some Old Testament background from *1 Kings 16-21*.

Who is this Jezebel at Thyatira?

1. "The Pastor's wife"

2. There was a woman teaching and living this kind of lifestyle in Thyatira.

The teaching of Jezebel centered around false doctrines, idolatry, sexual immorality and poor ethics.

The Jezebel Spirit is a threat to churches of every generation:

1. Rebellion against authority

2. Seduction to undermine and control established authority

3. Rationalization of sin ("We love each other so it must be ok." "Since God forgives we can commit sin because He has to forgive us.")

King Ahab (Jezebel's husband) failed to lead Israel to worship the real God. He led Israel into idolatry. Ahab failed to properly lead and guide his wife. In Thyatira the church elders failed to stamp out her false teaching, sin and idolatry. In Thyatira the church elders failed to properly lead and guide the woman prophetess and bring her under subjection and control.

God expects that we deal with manifest sin in the midst of the church (1 Cor. 5:4-7; Gal. 6:1-2)

Revelation 2: 22-23: So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. Revelation 2: 23: I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

"Salvation is always according to faith. Judgment is always according to works."

Read Acts 5; 1 Corinthians 11; Hebrews 10:26-31; and 1 John 5:16, to see how God may well deal with His sinning children today. God disciplines His children in this life (Hebrews 12:1-12). He doesn't tend to deal with Satan's children now. There is no judgment for God's children in the next life. God will deal with Satan's children then in judgment.

God wants everyone to repent (2 Peter 3:9). Jezebel didn't wish to repent. She'll get judgment.

Revelation 2: 24: Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you):

The deep things of Satan contrast the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10; Rom. 11:33; and Eph. 3:18).

Revelation 2: 25: Only hold on to what you have until I come.

Revelation 2: 26-27: To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations--'He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery'--just as I have received authority from my Father.

When His Kingdom is established on earth for a thousand years we will return and assist with Him in the governing of the nations as He serves as the King of Kings (Psalm 2:8-9).
What is morning star?

Revelation 2: 29: He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

This entire teaching is best summarized in Matthew 7:24-27.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

- The qualities that we want in the church are the same qualities we want in our own lives. The sins that we cannot tolerate in the church are the same sins we cannot tolerate in our own lives.
- The Christian life is one of growing to maturity. We want to be doing more now than we did at first.
- More people are bitten trying to let go of snakes than trying to grab them—so don't pick it up in the first place.
- We must uphold Biblical truth and values at all costs while remembering that sinful, hurting people are often the victims of sin—not an enemy to defeat.