



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 060: Letters to Seven Churches 4 – Thyatira

Study Author: Michael Button

Read Revelation 2:18-29

Introduction. Thyatira was a thriving commercial centre, noted for its textile dying and its trade guilds. Guilds were 'closed shops' for traders, so Christians who refused to join them, because they involved formal meals in honour of idols, would be unable to trade.

1. The sender (v18). Here was the clearest ever, irrevocable statement from Jesus that He is the Son of God. Consider the significance of the "eyes like flames of fire" (compare 1 Cor 4:5) and "feet like fine brass" (contrast Dan 2:34).

2. Commendations (v19). There was clearly a lot of good to be found in the Church at Thyatira. Reflect on these five commendations. To what extent would you say they describe a full-orbed Christian?

3. Problem (vs 20-21). We cannot be sure who this 'Jezebel' is, but she was undoubtedly so called because, in her influence, she resembled Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, who led Israel into Idolatry with its associated immorality. Consider how the New Testament 'Jezebel' might have been a bad influence in the church at Thyatira (maybe "calls herself a prophetess" is significant here?). What should the church have done and why (1 Cor 5:1-15)?

4. Discipline (vs 22-23). A tough punishment is meted out for Jezebel and those she has led astray (her 'children'). Why do you think the punishment was such a strong one?

5. Rewards (vs 24-29). As always in the letters to the Churches of Asia Minor, promises are given to those who overcome. What are they (and we!) to overcome? There are two promises to the overcomers at Thyatira. Neither promise is easy to interpret, so you will need to read two or three commentaries and assess their comments:

"Power over the nations" (v26). This is a quotation from Psalm 2:8-9, where it is a prophecy of Messiah's rule. Here, in Revelation, it suggests that the overcomers will rule with Him.

"The morning star" (v28). Literally, this is the bright star that heralds the coming of the morning with its greater light. Jesus describes Himself as the "Morning Star", in Rev 22:16, and Peter refers to the Star "rising in your hearts" (2 Pet 1:19). Putting these three references together might throw some light on the meaning (no pun intended).

To think about: Bearing in mind the problem encountered with trade guilds at Thyatira (see Introduction above), the problem with Jezebel may well have been advocating compromise with worldly practices. How serious might such compromise be to the Church of today, or indeed to the individual believer?

To dig deeper: Find out what you can about Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, in 1 Kings 16:29-33 and related commentaries, and how her influence led to the downfall of Israel. Then see what the commentators say about the 'Jezebel' at Thyatira.