

THE BOOK OF REVELATION: VERSE BY VERSE

Darin Latham/www.broadwaychurch.com

WEEK SIX

I. THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES (Revelation 2:1 - 3:22)

A. The Repeating Pattern Of The Messages

1. A description of the character of Christ.
2. A description of what Christ knows about each church, with a word of commendation for their strengths and a word of rebuke for their sins of commission and omission.
3. A call to repentance, with a warning of consequences if they don't repent.
4. A description of the reward promised for faithfulness and overcoming.

B. The Message To The Church In Thyatira (2:18-29)

1. The historical context of Thyatira:
 - a. Probably the least significant of the seven cities, yet it received the longest letter.
 - b. It is the most difficult of the seven letters to interpret due to our limited knowledge of the city.
 - c. It was founded as a military outpost, but in John's time it had evolved into a town of trades and craftsmen; in our thinking, a blue-collar, manufacturing hub.
 - d. It was a city of tightly knit-trade guilds (first century unions). You couldn't survive professionally in the city without being a member of one of the trade guilds.
 - e. Each guild (all of them being tied to the patron 'god' of the city: Apollos) had social obligations, which included ceremonies of worship to Apollo at sexually-charged feasts.

2. The specific message to the church in Thyatira:

- a. Beginning with a description of the character of Christ:

"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." (v. 18)

- i. Christ is shown as One whose eyes can penetrate hearts and whose feet can deliver justice.
- b. Then followed by a description of what Christ knows about the church:
 - i. First, a word of commendation...

"I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first." (v. 19)

- 1.) They were growing and maturing in discipleship.

ii. Secondly, a word of rebuke...

"Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. (v. 20)

1.) Churches, like people, are not one-dimensional; we can have great strengths and weaknesses.

2.) ***"Jezebel"*** was likely not her real name, but a reference to her nature, (See 1 Kings 16-19).

a.) She was apparently teaching that one could follow Christ *and* worship with the guilds.

iii. Thirdly, a call to repentance...

"I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 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. 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." (vv. 21-23)

1.) Christ has been patient with ***"Jezebel"***, but she remains stubborn, so He will increase the pressure.

a.) ***"I will cast her on a bed of suffering and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer..."***

b.) ***"I will strike her children dead"***: In the spirit of the apocalyptic genre, likely referring to Christ causing Jezebel's followers to perish as a way of rooting out her teaching.

iv. Fourthly, the reward for faithfulness...

"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, except to hold on to what you have until I come.' To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations – that one 'will rule them with an iron sceptre and will dash them to pieces like pottery – just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give that one the morning star. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (vv. 24-29)

1.) ***"Satan's so-called deep secrets"***: Likely ***"Jezebel"*** was claiming that she was teaching "the deep things of God", but John is pulling back the veil and revealing the true source of her teaching.

2.) ***"I will not impose any other burden on you"***: An awkward way of saying that simply and purely following Christ is less burdensome than trying to follow Jezebel's ***"so-called deep secrets"***.

3.) ***"I will give authority over the nations..."***: Likely a reference to Psalm 2:8-9, depicting the Messiah's authority and our part in His end-time rule, (See Luke 22:28-30; 1 Corinthians 6:2)

4.) ***"The morning star"***: The star that usually appears at the darkest point of the night. Christ is called ***"the bright Morning Star"*** later in Revelation 22:16. Possibly a promise of us sharing in Christ's future glory.