

The Letter to Thyatira. Revelation 2:18-29

In this letter Jesus describes Himself as the Son of God, and this is the only time in Revelation that Jesus is given that title. Once again Jesus re-emphasises John's vision of Jesus in Revelation 1:14, eyes like blazing fire and feet like burnished bronze; very similar to Daniel's vision in Daniel 10:6. According to Wikipedia Thyatira was an industrial town producing bronze which was used in the production of weapons. Possibly Jesus was likening Himself to that town's dominant employer.

The other mention of this city is in Acts 15:16. It was Lydia's birthplace.

Like some of His other letters, Jesus starts with high praise before criticism. To Thyatira the praise is high praise indeed. I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. Revelation 2:19. He's saying that the church started off good and then got even better. So think about our church's strengths and positives and ask ourselves, can we improve even more? Of course we can so let's work even harder to do even better. If we become self complacent, we risk losing our first love like the Ephesians, Revelation 2:4

As seems to be the pattern with these letters, congratulations followed by criticism. This was restricted to one woman and the damage to the church that she was causing and this church's failure to deal with her. Jesus calls her Jezebel. Let's look at the original Jezebel.

1 Kings 16:29-33. She was a princess, daughter of the king of the city of Sidon in Lebanon. She married King Ahab who in so doing disregarded God's instruction in Exodus 34:16 and 1 Kings 11:1-2 and as per God's warning, Ahab worshipped the god Baal and Baal's mother and lover, Asherah and then went on to build a temple and a wooden image for people to worship. So Jezebel not only corrupted her husband but also a large proportion of Israel's population. Ahab was awarded the dubious accolade of, provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger more than all the Kings of Israel before him.

1 Kings 18:3-5 Jezebel orders the massacre of the prophets of the Lord. In 1 Kings 18:40 God gets His revenge. 1 Kings 19:3 Jezebel threatens Elijah. Jezebel was a woman steeped in violence.

1 Kings 21, the story of Naboth's vineyard. She writes instructions to the city elders 1 Kings 21:9-10. She was greedy with ruthless ambition. In 1 Kings 21:23-24 Elijah prophesies Jezebel's fall from power.

Ahab is killed in battle and their son Joram succeeds him and follows in his father's footsteps. Elisha anoints a guy called Jehu as king, he forms an army and heads off to kill Joram. 2 Kings 9:22-26. Then Jehu goes after Jezebel 2 Kings 9:30-36.

However despite all these faults I don't read in any of this sexual immorality, for that we have to rely on archaeology. So let's look at Baal, It, or he, was about prior to the formation of the nation of Israel. He was one of the gods of the Canaanites and sadly he was still prevalent after the Israelites invaded and conquered Canaan Judges 2:13. Baal and Asherah were fertility gods. Baal later morphed into the Greek god, Zeus.

Add to all of that the matter of eating food offered to idols.

The definitive passage is 1 Corinthians 8:1-13.

In short, of itself it doesn't matter. However it is and can be a potent stumbling block for weaker Christians and this woman was using this food to weaken and undermine the faith of weak and vulnerable Christians. Almost as bad, the church wasn't doing anything about it.

Despite all of this Jesus wants this woman and her victims to repent and be saved, affirmation of 2 Peter 3:9.

Jesus gives them an ultimatum, turn or suffer horrifically. Their punishment even extends to their children.

The rest of the letter is addressed to the rest of the church, those who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets. What were Satan's deep secrets? Pleasures of the flesh. Another example of Satan's deep secrets - Genesis 3:4-5. His deep secrets are lies.

Let's look at verses 24-25

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.'

These members have been tested by Satan and prevailed. Jesus's message to them is to keep on keeping on.

Revelation 2:26-27 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 scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery'—just as I have received authority from my Father.

Psalms 2:8-12 and Revelation 19:14-15 and vs 19-21. There will come a time towards the end of Jesus's 1,000 reign that armies will line up against each other. Jesus will intervene causing mayhem and a massive death toll Isaiah 11:4. It seems there's also a role there for His church.

Lessons from the letter to the church in Thyatira -

Deal with corruption within the church in its early stages before it gets a hold.

On a more personal note, get to hate sin in all its forms whether it be sexual, alcohol, gambling, drug addiction or anything else.

If you do find yourself on that slippery slope, turn back to God and repent immediately the Holy Spirit convicts you of it. Satan will give you logical reasons why you should tolerate it: but don't, it's a trap. How can we escape that trap that we call addiction? John 8:31-36

Thyatira is now called Akhisar. There is no church in Akhisar and no known believers.