

Letter to the Church in Thyatira

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Revelation 2:18-29

This is the fourth in a series of lessons on the seven churches of Asia addressed in Revelation 2-3. Through John, Jesus sent a letter to each church, which He also shared with the others and with us as well. The letters described challenges they were facing, what they were doing well, what they needed to correct, and more. In studying these seven letters, every church can find encouragement and/or warnings that apply to them. We will notice these are we go through our study.

About the City of Thyatira

- One of the notable characteristics of the ancient city was the strong presence of trade guilds – these were associations of craftsmen or merchants who would regulate and protect their trade; similar situation in Ephesus with Demetrius and the tradesmen (Acts 19:23-27); Christianity was a threat to them because it would turn people away from idol worship
- We know one individual from Thyatira – Lydia, a seller of purple fabrics (Acts 16:14); she heard and obeyed the gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:15); she also welcomed Paul after his imprisonment (Acts 16:40)

Letter to the Church

- Description of Jesus – eyes like a flame of fire (v. 18; cf. Revelation 1:14); perception, able to see through them; feet like burnished bronze (v. 18; cf. Revelation 1:15); able to tread them under His feet
- Current circumstances – not facing persecution as others were; had a woman identified as Jezebel who was tempting Christians to commit immorality and participate in idol worship
- Commendations – love, faith, service, perseverance (v. 19); “deeds of late are greater than at first” (v. 19); their growth and progress was commendable
- Condemnations – they were tolerating “Jezebel” leading Christians astray; not opposing her; she was leading them to compromise the faith in order to be like the world; not all of them were caught up in this (v. 24), but some of them had been led astray
- Punishment for sin – tribulation for “Jezebel” and her followers (v. 22); judgment that would be apparent to others (v. 23), after she refused to repent (v. 21)
- Reward for faithfulness – authority over the nations (v. 26-27); reign with Christ; morning star, which was Jesus Himself (Revelation 22:16); fellowship with Him

Main Lesson

- Don't tolerate sin – in some ways, this was like the situation in Corinth (1 Corinthians 5:1-2); temptation to become arrogant over their “tolerance” rather than deal with sin; the Corinthians were told to deliver such a one to Satan (1 Corinthians 5:4-5); “Jezebel” was following and promoting “the deep things of Satan” (v. 24); sin can spread like leaven (1 Corinthians 5:6); this happened in Thyatira
- This is the lesson for us today – we cannot be tolerant of sin; if someone is caught up in sin, we need to restore them (Galatians 6:1); if someone is weak, we need to bear with them and encourage them (1 Thessalonians 5:14); however, if someone refuses to repent, we cannot continue fellowship (1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Matthew 18:15-17); doing so could be destructive to the church (1 Corinthians 5:6)

Conclusion

- We face temptation to sin all of the time – sometimes, this can even come from within the church; if tolerated, it will spread; eventually, even those around us will no longer see us as the church
- We need to continue in love, faith, service, and perseverance – also avoid becoming like the world