

## Revelation Six

11/10/2024

Hymns: 12 I'll Fly Away                      33 When the Roll is Called Up Yonder  
          There's a New Name Written Down in Glory            Thy Word

Scripture: Psalm 101

Big idea: Wickedness in Thyatira

Election season is finally over. Are you happy to be relieved of the relentless onslaught of political ads? Some of the worst compared opponents to notorious leaders of the past like Hitler or Stalin. But what about women? Who do you think was the most **wicked woman** of all time? We're going to look at one in a few minutes as we ...

continue our **trip** through the fascinating book of Revelation. We learned that this final book of the Bible sometimes called *the apocalypse* unveils or reveals Jesus **not** in His humanity as shown in the gospels but instead it reveals Him in His glory. The imagery of Christ in the first chapter of Revelation describes a person of great majesty and power.

Yet despite Jesus having this frightening appearance, His demeanor towards His own is tender and gracious. We learned that we who know Him will receive a perfect, immortal body like His that can float through the air, pass through walls, materialize, dematerialize, and even fly through the clouds and beyond.

So far, we've visited the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos. First century Ephesus boasted a large, prosperous port and transportation hub and featured the temple of Diana, the pagan goddess of fertility. While that church did many good deeds, its heart was not right. It had lost its first love of the LORD and was **just** going through the motions. The irony of this was that that a city obsessed with *sensual* love would have a church whose prime weakness was its *spiritual* love.

Next we moved on in our travels to Smyrna, a city that lies 30 to 40 miles to the north of Ephesus on the western tip of what is now Turkey. The large, prosperous city today, called Izmir, engulfs the ruins of ancient Smyrna making them seem to be almost an afterthought as the development around the site overshadows what seems more like a city block. Jesus had only commendation and encouragement for them to persevere. He assured them that their days of persecution were numbered and would pale in comparison to the glorious future awaiting them in eternity.

Last time we traveled to Pergamos. Located about 60 miles north of Smyrna and inland about 20 miles from the sea along the Caicus River, the city on a hill called an acropolis contains extensive ruins of ancient Pergamos within the city now called Bergama. On this acropolis stood many monuments and temples. Pergamos produced an alternative writing medium called parchment. It boasted a library of 200,000 volumes, a medical center, and much more. While Ephesus was a commercial center, and Smyrna became a political center, Pergamos was a religious center.

Today, we travel to the fourth of the seven churches of Revelation to Thyatira.

The Bible mentions Thyatira one other place. Does anyone know where or under what topic? It's in

Acts 16:14 where the very early convert to Christianity named Lydia, the seller of purple, lived.

Thyatira lies about 30 miles southeast of Pergamos. The city was famous for having more commercial guilds (unions) than in any Roman city.

thi-a-ti'-ra (Thuateira): Thyatira was a wealthy town in the northern part of Lydia of the Roman province of Asia, on the river Lycus. It stood so near to the borders of Mysia, that some of the early writers have regarded it as belonging to that country. Its early history is not well known, for until it was refounded by Seleucus Nicator (301-281 BC) it was a small, insignificant town. It stood on none of the Greek trade routes, but upon the lesser road between Pergamos and Sardis, and derived its wealth from the Lycus valley in which it rapidly became a commercial center, but never a metropolis.

...

Before the time of Nicator the place was regarded as a holy city, for there stood the temple of the ancient Lydian sun-god, Tyrinnos [known more commonly as Apollo.]

[Near that temple], games were held in his honor. ... early coins of Thyatira [showed an image of] this Asiatic god ... as a horseman, bearing a double-headed battle-ax, ...

Thyatira was ... [famous] for the trade guilds which were probably more completely organized there than in any other ancient city. Every artisan belonged to a guild, and every guild, which was an incorporated organization, possessed property in its own name, made contracts for great construction [projects], and wielded a wide influence. Powerful among them was the guild of coppersmiths; another was the guild of the dyers, who, it is believed, made use of the madder-root instead of shell-fish for making the purple dye[.]. Lydia of Thyatira seems to have been a member of this guild.

...

The guilds were closely connected with the Asiatic religion of the place. Pagan feasts, with which immoral practices were associated, were held, and therefore the nature of the guilds was such that they were opposed to Christianity.

...

Thyatira is now represented by the modern town of Ak-Hissar Ak-Hissar is Turkish for "white castle," and near the modern town may be seen the ruins of the castle from which the name was derived.

...

[Today, the chief industry there] is rug-making. [If you travel there, you will not see much. Much like with Symrna, the city overwhelms the ruins (surrounded by a wrought iron fence looks more like a town square or mini park.). The rest of the ruins remain buried under the many surrounding buildings.]

Banks, EJ. "Thyatira", *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*. Blue Letter Bible. 1913. 5 May, 2003 7 Nov 2024.

With that, let's move on to what Jesus said to the church at Thyatira:

This is the longest of the seven letters to the seven churches but is still just a brief twelve verses:

### **Revelation 2:18-29**

*[18] And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things sa[ys] the Son of God,*

Jesus uses the same salutation template in each of the seven letters. This one is to the messenger in Thyatira.

Note in the description Jesus gave of Himself in chapter 1:13, He showed His glorious attributes, but referred to Himself as the *Son of Man*. That had a gentler and more human tone despite His appearance. Here though He uses the phrase *Son of God* which emphasizes His deity.

*who ha[s] ... eyes like ... a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;*

As in each of these salutations Jesus points back to specific aspects of the description of Him in glory taken from Revelation chapter 1. In this case, eyes like a flame of fire speaks of His penetrating vision while feet of fine brass emphasizes His power to judge evil. (I can't help thinking of the image of Superman using his heat vision to melt things. Perhaps this is where they came up with that idea.)

*[19] I know [your] works, and charity, and service, and faith, and [your] patience, and [your] works; and the last to be more than the first.*

*[20] Notwithstanding I have a few things against [you], because [y]ou [permit] that woman Jezebel, wh[o] call[s] herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.*

Who is this Jezebel? We're not told, but we do have a famous reference to a woman in the Bible very similar to this Jezebel. She was the wicked wife of King Ahab.

1 Kings 19

*[1] And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and ... how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.*

Ahab recounts the famous story where Elijah empowered by God took on the 450 prophets of Baal mocked them, called down fire from heaven, and then killed them (1 Kings 18:19-40).

*[2] Then Jezebel sent a messenger [ ]to Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not [your] life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.*

While Jezebel failed in her oath to slay Elijah within 24 hours, she also escaped death related to her idle threat at that time. She had more wicked work to do:

1 Kings 21

*[25] But there was none like unto Ahab, which [sold] himself to work **wickedness** in the sight of the LORD, whom **Jezebel** his wife **stirred up**.*

Here's one example of her doing just that:

Naboth had a vineyard that King Ahab wanted. Its location seemed to Ahab the perfect place for a vegetable garden. He offered Naboth a choice of either a generous payment for the property or a replacement vineyard of greater value. But Naboth turned him down flatly saying that the property had to remain with his family (Numbers 36:9) and refused to sell to the king (1 Kings 21:1-3).

This greatly saddened King Ahab. When Jezebel saw how distraught he had become, she acted on her own. Jezebel framed Naboth with a false accusation of being disloyal to the king and God and thereby justified stoning Naboth and his sons (2 Kings 9:26). Jezebel then informed her husband the king that he could now take the property that he wanted (1 Kings 21:4-16).

But then came the rest of the story.

Ahab, Jezebel's husband, was fatally wounded and died the same day when a soldier shot a bow at a venture and struck him (1 Kings 22:34-35). Her son, Ahaziah, ascended to become king of Israel's northern kingdom. But Elisha anointed Jehu as king two years later.

2 Kings 9

*[6] And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus sa[ys] the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed [you] king over the people of the LORD, even over Israel.*

*[7] And [y]ou shal[1] smite the house of Ahab [your] master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.*

Jezebel had killed prophets (1 Kings 18:4) and servants of the LORD like Naboth and his sons.

*[30] And when Jehu ... c[a]me to Jezreel,*

... the capitol of the northern kingdom of Israel.

*Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out ... a window.*

She fixed up herself to look like a queen.  
Then she mocked Jehu.

*[32] And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.*

*[33] And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he [trampled] her under*

foot.

He ran over her dead body with horses of his chariot.

[34] *And when he ... c[a]me in, he [ate and drank], and said, Go, see now this **cursed woman**, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter.*

[35] *And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.*

[36] *Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he sp[o]ke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel:*

[37] *And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as [manure] upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall **not** say, This is Jezebel.*

Her remains were unrecognizable at that point. That ugly death was fitting for a very wicked woman. So with that review of Jezebel, let's return to our letter to Thyatira.

[21] *And I gave her space to **repent** of her fornication; and she **repented not**.*

[22] *Behold, I will **cast her** into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they **repent** of their deeds.*

The LORD even waits for these wicked people to repent. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

[23] *And I will kill her children ...;*

Notice the parallel to the story of the historical Jezebel. She killed Naboth **and his sons**. She was **cast down** through a window to her demise.

*and all the churches shall know that I am he which search[es] [out heart and soul]:*

Notice those penetrating eyes that He emphasized earlier.

*and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

[24] *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as **have not** this **doctrine**, and which have **not** known the depths of **Satan**, as they speak; I will put upon you no[] other burden.*

[25] *[other than you] have already [,] hold fast **till I come**.*

[26] *And he that overcome[s], and*

That word *overcomes* is a key that sets off a promise of eternal blessings in these letters.

keep[s] my works **unto the end**,

Here come more heavenly and eternal blessings that Jesus has reserved for His own.

to him **will I give**  
power over the nations:

[27] *And he shall rule them with a rod of iron;  
as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to [pieces]:*

*even as I received of my Father.*

[28] *And I will give him the morning star.*

What is that **morning star**?

Revelation 22

*[16] I Jesus have sent [my] angel to testify [ ]to you these things in the churches.  
I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

Jesus, the morning star, promises an intimate relationship with Him.

[29] *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sa[ys] [ ]to the churches.*

He admonishes them as to all of the seven churches to pay attention.

### **Application**

So what can we learn from this letter today? Thyatira had a problem with its church leader for sure. She was leading them into bad doctrine, fornication, and idolatry. Church leadership and doctrine are very important. The LORD will judge those leaders and churches that stray from the truth of His word. But those who stay true to Him and His word can rest assured that they will both rule and commune with Him in eternity.

### **Benediction**

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen (Revelation 22:21).*