

# To the Church in Thyatira

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Date: 10 August 2023

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     the series, the book of Revelation, the book of Revelation and we're back in chapter 2. As I said last week we looked at Sardis but we're back in chapter 2 this week.

Revelation chapter 2 verse 18, the church of Thyatira, Revelation 2.18. And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, the words of the Son of God who has eyes like a flame of fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

I gave her time to repent but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold I will throw her onto a sickbed and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation unless they repent of her works.

And I will strike her children dead and all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart. And I will give to each of you according to your works. But to the rest of you in Thyatira who do not hold this teaching, who have not learnt what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden.

[ 1 : 3 6 ]     Only hold fast what you have until I come. But one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations. And he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earth and pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Amen. So carrying on our series, we jumped ahead last week to Sardis, but we said we'll go back to Thyatira this week because it connects more to, Lord willing, our Sunday service coming up this coming Lord's Day.

And we're here the same pattern. We have every week of week, if the last four or five weeks. But really, as you see, this letter is somewhat different in that this letter, it is mostly warning.

Yes, there's a bit of the end, which is encouraging, we'll get to that. But the warning and the words of warning in this letter are the harshest, we could say, are some of the harshest words that our Saviour uses as he addresses the churches.

Again, this is addressed to the angel of the church of Thyatira, the messenger, the leader, the preacher, the minister of the church. And as you see every week, imagine yourself, just now we are here in this small gathering, perhaps the size of the church of Thyatira, if not much bigger.

[ 3 : 0 7 ]     And we receive a letter from John. The letter begins, The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

We say that every week, of course, we sender Jesus, he identifies himself, and how he identifies himself every week tells us a wee bit more about how he is towards his people, his reign, his power, his control, his majesty over his churches.

And this evening, as he writes to Thyatira through John, as Jesus speaks to this church, Jesus starts off with a clear reminder just who he is.

Now, if we didn't know what the church in Thyatira was like, we would say this is quite an encouraging reminder for us. If we thought the church in Thyatira were perhaps a more pleasant church, a less sin-filled church, like perhaps, say, Smyrna, we'd think this is a great introduction.

As Jesus reminds them who he is, he's the son of God, as he reminds them as to his power, the flame of fire from his eyes, and the solidness of who he is. But because we know the situation in Thyatira, because we know what reason this letter's been written to them for, we can perhaps not empathise, but we can certainly understand to a point, the fear and the dread that these Christians had, especially the Christians, at least the members of this church, who were engaging in what we'll soon look at, the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

[ 5 : 01 ]     The two descriptions here are not reminders of his deity. They know that they are reminders put together of his majesty, of his holiness, of his perfection.

He is the son of God. Now often we see that, that reminds us of Christ's humanity, doesn't it? We think he's called the son of God in Daniel, and that's important for a second, because it shows us one is coming, who will identify with us, who will be like us, in all ways, apart from sin, who will suffer, who will die, who will feel what it is to be human.

But that's not what we see here. Here he is, the son of God, and that's coupled with the one who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

It takes us to Daniel chapter 10. Daniel 10, we see that image of the son of man, that image of the Holy One, further described as the one who is like this, who has these flames of fire as eyes, and who is sturdy on feet of burnished, solid, refined bronze.

In other words, as Jesus introduces himself, he is reminding these people, that he alone is majestic, that he alone has all the glory, that he alone is the son of God, eternal in all his ways.

[ 6 : 20 ]     That's important, because he brings them back, to the Old Testament account of Jezebel. We'll see this more in a second. This woman's name likely wasn't Jezebel, but that is a catch-all term, that is used to describe this woman, who did a similar thing, as we read off in Kings.

As Jesus takes their minds back, and compares what's going on in their congregation, to what took place all these years ago, he is reminding them, that the same one, who sent the fire down, to consume not just the offering, but the stones themselves, and the dust, and the water itself, the same one, who allowed, who instructed, the prophets of Baal, to be killed, every one of them, and not one escape, the same one, who had Jezebel, pushed out of a window, that same Lord, is writing to them just now, is addressing them just now, he has not changed in his majesty, he has not changed in his glory, and he is reminding them, that as they continue to fall into this sin, they are being watched, they are being seen, and they are known, in their actions, and their personalities, what is taking place in their lives, it is not hidden to him, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and it will not be ignored by him, whose feet are like burnished bronze, ready for battle, ready for warfare, we see that in a second, this is as we said, the most terrifying,

I would argue personally, of the letters to receive, for all these churches, we've had words of warning before, but the words of warning, in this letter, are so pointed, are so clear, are so specific, to what's going on, in the congregation, you can imagine yourselves, imagine yourselves, with fear, and terror, as this letter, is being read out to you, you have the joy, of getting a letter from John, you've heard John, sending letters, around all the churches, around the area, you've heard about Sardis, you've heard about Ephesus, you've heard about Smyrna, it's your turn now, and you think, a letter's arrived, I wonder what John, I wonder what the Lord is saying to us, through John, you open the letter, and you see very quickly, that you are in trouble, in grave trouble, but as always, Christ begins with, the positives, in verse 19, as he speaks to his people, in this church, I know your works, you have love, and the list here, is the works mentioned, we could say really, it's a list following the works,

I know your works, what are these works, your love, and faith, and service, and patient endurance, they are a church, those who are faithful, in this church, they are those working out love, and faith, and service, and patient endurance, they're not like Sardis, they're not like Ephesus, they're a church, who have somehow, still maintained, their love, their love for a saviour, their love for one another, their love for the lost, of the town, that they are serving in, they still have love, and that's the first thing, Christ commends, and it's the first thing, not by accident, because without love, then the rest of the list, means nothing, but because they still love Jesus, those who are faithful to him, because they still seek to, to show that love, to one another, as brothers and sisters, still seek to show that love, to we assume, the community, the town of Thyatira, that they are placed in, Jesus commends them, for their love, and from that love, of course then, flows their evident faith, despite their own church imploding, and being filled to the rafters, almost with so much sin, there are still some, in this congregation, who are still, full of faith, despite the waywardness, of their brothers and sisters, despite the false teachings, going on in their congregation, they're just persevering, they're just cracking on, as best they can, they're trying the hardest, to serve the Lord, and Jesus sees that, and Jesus knows that, and he commends them for it, and from that love, that base of love, followed by that base of faith, then of course, flows service, they love the Lord, therefore, they serve, the Lord, how they serve him, of course, not given to us, but looking at the previous churches, we can say it the same way, that they're placed in a city,

Fayetaira, was no less pagan worshipping, no less idol worshipping, than the rest of the cities, Fayetaira was known, again for its trades, known mostly, for its trade guilds, if you're involved in a trade, even in surrounding cities, they almost have your, of sorts, head offices, based in Fayetaira, you'd go there, to meet other fellow workers, in the trades, and discuss your work together, they had trade guilds, they're known, we know in secular sources, outside of scripture, Fayetaira is mentioned, for throwing yearly, guild feasts, for the builders, and the architects, of the day, it's a place of, of learning, and of money, a place of work, but a place of, of pagan worship, and the, the guilds, although they're there, to represent the workers, and to help educate, work, they were there also, to worship, the idols, every profession, had their own, temple, where they worshiped, a certain god, who was overseeing, that work, so the, the joiners, had their god, the builders, had their god, and so on, each guild, had its own god, we'll get back to that, in a second, why that's so important, for us, to, to understand, they also have, patient endurance, they are serving, in a congregation, that is, wayward, they are serving, among brothers, and sisters, at least, as far as they're concerned, they can't judge, brothers and sisters, who are professing Christ, but also at the same time, who are engaging, in awful sin, that's bad enough, then the other side, they're serving God, in a community, in a town, where they're hated, where the gospel is hated, where the teaching of Jesus, we know of course, what was despised, and yet, they are faithful, as they keep on doing, what they can, to serve the Lord, however, they can, and even more than that, now, this wee phrase, at the end, it means so much,

[ 12 : 49 ] I'm sure, to those Christians, who heard it, and your latter works, exceed the first, you started off well, and Christians, you've got even better, brothers and sisters, you've got even better, over the years, over the months, you're serving me, better now, than you did even, at the start, and all this is good, all this is encouraging, but we know, that there is, a great evil, ahead of us, and the truth here, shows us, that even in the best, of churches, if you were to look, or perhaps even to visit, Thyatira, you're, of us wouldn't have happened, I'm sure, you wouldn't have known, but if you were somehow, passing through Thyatira, and you were to pop in, on a Sunday morning, to this church, you would see, perhaps good service, you'd hear a good sermon, you would see happy members, you would see, a good functioning church, and the Thyatira, church reminds us, this evening, that even the best, looking of churches, and even churches, where there's great good, and great gospel good, going on, there can also, be great sin, also going on, behind the scenes, and we come to Thyatira, and we said also, last week of Sardis, we come to these churches, we think, how does it apply, to us in Tulsa, we certainly hope, that the sin, we read here, doesn't apply to any of us, here this evening, but we should never say that, solidly, and it feels silly, perhaps saying that, but dear brothers, dear sisters, if we're being very honest, and we know this to be true, and myself included, each one of us here, we all have, within us, as Calvin reminded us, the seed of every sin, the seed of every sin, is within our hearts, we are quite capable, of carrying out, every sin we see, in God's word, and many more, that aren't mentioned, we know that ourselves, let's never think, this church, could never be us, it feels extreme, but there are churches, who also once said, this church, will never be us, and before they know it, they are rebelling, as this church did, so from the positives, we see then, the tone changes, in verse 20, but,

I have this, against you, that you tolerate, that woman Jezebel, who calls herself, a prophetess, is teaching, and seducing my servants, to practice, sexual immorality, and to eat food, sacrificed, to idols, and so on, so on, again, we read in Kings, for context, Jesus is not, we can't say for certain, but, a simple reading, of scripture, gives us, the simple understanding, that, she's not called Jezebel, but Jesus is, comparing her, of course, to the reading we had, to the account we had, in Kings, where, where Jezebel, leads us, three, the king, where Jezebel, brings in, again, the worship of Baal, and from that, we see, of course, what happens, to Israel, as we read, he is teaching here, he is showing the people, Jesus reminds the people, that, among them, as one, who is teaching something, that is disastrous, to their souls, absolutely disastrous, to their souls, and, as you read, what this woman is teaching, you think, well, how are they not seeing, this themselves, how are they so, unaware, as to what's being said, in their midst, what's being done, in their midst, and the truth is, and the Christians here, brothers and sisters, we know this, in our own lives, how quickly, sin becomes normal, to us, how quickly, and at times, to our shame, how, how happily, we allow sin, just to be, common in our lives, and before we know it, the sin we once hated, becomes commonplace, and the sin that becomes, commonplace, soon becomes a pet sin, of sorts, and that becomes, eventually, all consuming, we know that, as a story,

I'm sure for some here, that is also your experience, of sins, you have repented of, you see the sin growing, and the same is here, for the church in Thyatira, perhaps they once, permitted this teaching, to take place, this teaching that she gave, but before they knew it, they're all falling into it, almost all of them, are giving way, into the teaching, now what exactly, she's teaching, we have to be careful here, but we can see quite clearly, there's two elements to it, she is teaching, immorality, and she's teaching, false teaching, we could say, to summarize, sacrifice, we covered this actually, before, we've seen this before, again and again, in the churches, that they're living, in a pagan society, so one of the big temptations, they have, is just to give in, it's much easier, to give in, it's much easier, to go to the temples, and eat food sacrificed, to idols, and here's why, it's important, we understand the layout, of the city, or the character, of the city, the city is run, by guilds, the guilds also, we know from history, run the main marketplaces, so in other words, if you went to the market, most of the food, you're buying, has been sacrificed, most of the meat anyway, to idols, worse than that, if you wanted, again we know this from history, this is not just something, we cling to, if you wanted to work, in fire tire, in any of the trades, represented by the guilds, you had to attend, these guild parties, these guild banquets, where you would have to, sit under, a service, and eat food, to eat meat, sacrificed to idols, so Jezebel is teaching, whatever it is, it is teaching compromise, you don't have to, to find other food, you can just relax, and have the food, sacrificed to idols, and there's no worry there, there's no problem there, you can compromise a wee bit, it makes life so much easier, for yourselves, otherwise you have to, go out of the town, to find food, from other markets, from close by towns, you would save yourself, such a trip, just stay where you are, have the food, go to the banquets, attend the banquets, give in, work, get a good job, for yourself, before we shake our heads, and touch too much, and touch too much, of the Christians here, who are compromising, in fire,

Tyra, Tyra, Tyra, let's not forget, there are brothers and sisters, around the world, just now, who are facing, a similar burden, we touched on this last week, who are facing, a similar burden, right now, brothers and sisters, who live in societies, and in situations, where it's very hard, for them not, to give in, and by not giving in, they're having to take jobs, which are so below their level, or have no job at all, in some societies, some towns, some areas, where if they aren't taking part, in the idol worship, of that area, they won't get a job, at least they won't get a job, it pays anything, close to what we need, to survive, this is not just some theory, that happened, a few thousand years ago, this is happening right now, it's not happening here, but also lessons for us, to be learnt here, how quickly, and how easily, we as God's people, can give in, to the immorality around us, if it's, to be being very honest, dear brother, dear sister, how often we are happy, to compromise, how often we're happy, to sacrifice,

God's holiness, and our service, towards him, for convenience, and the temptation, is there, temptation is always there, it was there, for the church, in Thyatira, it's there for us, today, as we live, in an increasingly, secular world, we saw last week, there's less than, 65,000 Christians, give or take, evangelical Christians, Christians, who call Jesus, Lord, and save us, no way to salvation, but through him, and we qualified it, last week, but save us, 70,000 that are push, we live in a country, where there's less, than 1%, of our fellow, countrymen, and countrywomen, are evangelical, Christ believing Christians, less than 1%, as the years go on, that percentage, humanly speaking, will only go down, that's what's set to happen, if nothing changes, if the Lord does not intervene, so we live in a world, of increasing, desire for us, to compromise, increasing pressure, for us to compromise, and the poor Christians, here in Thyatira, they have compromised, and they have sunk, and we saw that, they're not just eating, food sacrificed to idols, but also following, practices of sexual morality, they're following, the worship of the day, and we saw last week, the worship of the day, always required, again we say this carefully, and we preach it carefully, with children present in church, but just for ourselves, this evening to be very blunt, and not for a pulpit setting, but if you have time yourselves, in your history books yourselves, look into it, and I've got the books, you want to read them, they're graphic books, to be honest, the pagan worship of the day, it always involved, and required, extreme sexual acts, to be part of, at least to be a devoted worshipper, we said that last time, with the worshippers, of Baal, as we're going through, the book of Judges,

[ 21 : 55 ] Baal worship required, child sacrifice, living child sacrifice, and sexual morality, whilst that was taking place, and the same thing happens, for these idols, and these pagan worship, practices, you can fill in the blanks yourself, but some things don't change, we think we live in a bad day, this was taking place, on the streets, in these cities, quite literally on the streets, there's areas, in the towns, you would gather together, to do whatever you had to do, to please your God, that's the reality, that these Christians, are living and serving in, we have it bad, they had it worse, we're not there yet, but we're soon heading towards it, so let's pay attention, for ourselves, and we see these Christians, we're not just eating food, sacrificed to idols, we're not just engaging, in sexual immorality, it's even worse than that, it's even worse, look what's taking place, in verse 24, there are some, in the congregation, who are so far away, from the Lord, they are engaging, and learning, what some call, the deep things of Satan, it's almost comedic, if it wasn't so terrifyingly sad, they're so far, down the route of sin, they're now taking, to themselves, to learning, some sort of, satanic rituals, some sort of, satanic practice, whatever it was, we've got no idea, the church of Thyatira, is a warning to us, of how quickly, and how disastrously, churches can just, crumble to bits, again churches, which look the part, which sound the part, which act the part, there's good works, taking place here, but most of the church, has descended, into a sin filled, mess, and yet, we see the patience, and the love, of our saviour, verse 21,

I gave her time, to repent, that implies, there has been, previous warnings, doesn't it, that implies, there has been, previous warnings, given to this church, in some form, in sermons, perhaps, in visitations, perhaps, we don't know, but somehow, they've received, previous warnings, and she herself, as woman, as prophetess, the so-called prophetess, she's received warnings, from the Lord before, to repent, and repent, but she refuses, and those who follow her, have also refused, to repent, and the promise is, that the Lord, will not be mocked, forever, he is patient, and he is patient, and he is patient, but he will not, be mocked, forever, and we see here, the terrifying reality, thrown into tribulation, and I will strike, her children, dead, her children, being quite literally, her followers, the ones who, follow after her, she herself, and those who, follow her teachings, will be struck dead, again, Christ is not mocked, we said this before, he is patient, but when Christ, sets a group of people, to serve him somewhere, if they don't serve him, by not loving, if they don't serve him, by not serving well, if they don't serve him, as we saw in Thyatira, by grave, awful acts of sin, and rebellion, whatever the reason may be,

Christ doesn't keep a church, in a place forever, just to look good, Christ has his church, has his people, in a set area, to serve them, to be witnesses, to be salt and light, and if people are not salt and light, the warning is, that he will remove, of course we said before, he will remove the lampstand, he will remove, their presence, from that area, from all this disaster, and chaos, we see the, the beautiful words of Jesus, as he ends in verse 24, to the rest of you, in Thyatira, who do not hold this, teaching, who have not leaned, what some call, deep things of Satan, to you I say, this is to the Christians, who are persevering, to you I say, I do not lay on you, any other burden, only hold fast, what you have until I come, you have suffered enough, you have got enough burden, of these, so called Christians, around you, trying to, commit the worst sins, possible, just keep on going, keep on going, and what does Jesus, promise those, who persevere, who persevere, through this, awful reality, we're living in, the one who conquers, who keeps my works, until the end,

I will give him, authority over the nations, and he will rule, from the road of Ireland, here we see, the wording of course, we see of Christ himself, as one who will rule, and who will reign, Psalm 2 isn't it, the same wording, we have from Psalm 2, the same illustrations, being taken, and we're here, seeing the reality, that Christ reminds, these people, that you have, little power now, little power, over your own church, little power, over the sin, of the Christians, all these so called, Christians around you, you have little power, over the evil, in your midst, little power, over your congregation, little power, over your town, the day is coming, and you will join, with me in my power, join with me, in my glory, as I come, and destroy, all my enemies, and also, the promise, in verse 28, that given to them, will be the morning star, and given to him, the one who perseveres, that image of, of resurrection, that image of course, of Christ himself, who is the bright, and morning star, that reminder, that the one who perseveres, they will rule with Jesus, reign with Jesus, and they will be resurrected, by Jesus, and kept, by him, also an image of purity, as we come, to the end, of just a grim, a grim look, of this church, who is involved, in such disgusting situations, we have an image of purity, but one day soon, dear Christian, as Jesus reminds, the church of Thyatira, all the sexual morality, all the evil, all the idol worship, all the child sacrifice, to idols, all the waywardness, all the two-facedness, all the blasphemy, you're seeing, all this worship of Satan, one day, it's all gone, one day,

I will come back, clear it all the way, and my precious people, and I, we will reign, and rule, for all time, I will be their king, and they'll be my people, he is a morning star, and because he's a morning star, the Christians, in Thyatira, and us in Tolstall, we have a sure hope, no matter what we face, or witness, even for ourselves, as Christians, the church in Thyatira, the Christians in Thyatira, had chance after chance, to repent, and this letter itself, is also a further chance, for them to repent, their destruction, hasn't come yet, and this letter itself, is a chance for them, and I say this very carefully, but it has to be said, and I would not be doing, my duty at all, well, if I didn't say it, because as we know ourselves, the nature of secret sin, often secret sexual sin, is that it's secret, we don't know, who's engaging in it, until sadly, it's too late, and it's exposed, and it brings shame, not just on the person, and their family, but also the whole cause of Christ, it has to be said, that if you are, even in small elements, just now this evening, if you see, a part of your lifestyle, perhaps your secret lifestyle, reflecting, what's being said, of a church in Thyatira, derivative of your sister, the answer is simple, it's not wait to feel better, or wait to look better, it's come back, and repent, this very evening, come back to Christ, the one, who gives, who patiently gives chance, after chance to his people, who patiently, in his loving kindness, gives opportunity, after opportunity, for his people to come back, and repent, even those, who are lost, and trapped, and stuck, in repetitive cycles, of sin perhaps, the Christians in Thyatira, many of them did not listen, again, as we said last week, from Sardis, after this point, there is very little, to no mention, of a church in Thyatira again, the witness, seems to have just, fizzled up, not too long after this, the lessons, perhaps weren't listened to, the chance of repentance, was given, and ignored, and now, we know no longer, of what happened, in that town, in that church, for us here this evening, be encouraged, your brothers and sisters, as we live, in an immoral world, we have a saviour, who knows, and who sees the morality, and who sees us, seeking to serve Him well, amidst the morality, and He encourages us, to keep on going,

[ 30 : 43 ] He sees our service, He sees our love, He sees our faith, He sees our patience, and to us, as to the Christians, in Sardis, He commends us for it, but also the warning, to any here this evening, brothers and sisters, to any of you this evening, who may be struggling, with some form, of quiet sin, secret sin, not just the warning, of Thyatira, but also the encouragement, of Thyatira, that Christ says, repent, and come back, to Him, the chance is not, yet over, the door is not yet shut, you're here this evening, but still breathing your lungs, and He says, repent, and come back, to me, let's bow our heads, now, a word of prayer, Lord we thank you, for the gift of your word, we also thank you, this evening especially, for the tough challenges, we find in it Lord, we know we come to passages, and we find ourselves, despairing as we are reminded, as to the, yes the evil in the world, but also the evil, in our own hearts, and our own potential, for evil, our own potential, each one of us, for backsliding, and for sinful actions, we ask you, keep us from sin, keep us from, bringing shame, to the gospel cause, bring us, bring us Lord, back to yourself, we ask for any here, this evening, who may feel far away, from you Lord, we bring them to you, once more, we pray Lord, for a reality, of the day we live in, that we live in a day, we know where, many congregations, we can look to, we see great sin, taking place, and great falls, taking place Lord, and help us, never to look, and to shake our heads, but help us to look, and to say, and to know in our hearts, that without your grace, and keeping, that we ourselves, are the same, as those who fall,

Lord keep us, seeking after Jesus, keep our hearts, set on him, for we find, no place for evil, in our hearts, instead we turn to him, and find our full hope, our full joy, our full peace, in the risen saviour, and ask all these things, in and through, and for, his precious name, sake, amen, let's bring our time, to a conclusion, singing in the Scottish Psalter, and Psalm 97, Scottish Psalter, Psalm 97, we sing verses 1, down to verse 7, God reigneth, let the earth be glad, and isles rejoice, each one, dark clouds encompass, and in the right, with judgment dwells, his throne, Psalm 97, verses 1 to 7, to God's praise, to God's praise, to God's praise, to God's praise, to God's praise, Lord, reigneth, let the earth be glad, and us rejoice, each one, dark clouds encompass, let the earth be glad, showed Him right, with judgment wells, for God's storm, while my God's glory, thatatt ■■■■■es, it burns around, h

Hail's the matter's presence of the Lord, like what it melt a wind, in the presence of the Lord, holy and thy spirit.

Let's defend his righteousness, for man his glory see.

Our good self-created marriages, can thou yet let them be.

[ 35 : 33 ] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, both of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.