

Revelation

The Letters to the Seven Churches

Rev 2:18-29

The Jezebel Spirit

Following our brief visits to Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos, we have now reached the church based in the city of Thyatira. This city was commonly known for its high-quality bronze that was used to produce weapons that, when properly polished, gleamed like gold. It was also known for producing cloth dyed red or purple.

In our previous study through the book of Acts, we are reminded of Lydia in Acts 16, the dealer in purple cloth from Thyatira, who met Paul when he came to Philippi. Economically, the town was dominated by various trade guilds that mixed their trades with paganism and immorality.

Located halfway between Pergamos and Sardis, and was under Roman rule for nearly three centuries. Since the city was situated in a long valley that swept forty miles to Pergamos, it had no natural defences and had a long history of being destroyed and rebuilt. Originally populated by soldiers of Alexander the Great, it was little more than a military outpost to guard Pergamos. Nothing is really known about the church apart from this letter in Revelation. The city is called Akhisar today with 130,000 inhabitants. At the time of this letter, there were believers in Thyatira and the letter includes a number of commendations. The church had great attributes such as love, faith, service and perseverance.

This letter also included a complaint, warning and a challenge.

- **Commendation** - They had love, faith, service and perseverance - great attributes!
- **Complaint** - They allowed a false prophetess to teach and lead them into sexual immorality and idolatry
- **Counsel** - Repent!

- **Warning** - The followers of the woman will be thrown into Great Tribulation. A terrible warning!
- **Challenge** - Don't hold to her teaching. Hold fast the truth and you will be given authority over the nations in Jesus' rule!



You might remember in our early study of Revelation, the first church Ephesus was very strong in doctrine (God's Word), and did not allow false teaching to come into the church. The church in Ephesus would have been quick to spot a 'Jezebel spirit'. However, against that they had left their first love. Well this church in Thyatira is the opposite. They have love and service to the Lord and one another and are noted for it. Yet their love has become tolerance even for that which is evil in the sight of God.

What is the purest form of love? Discipline (what does Hebrews 12:6 state?)

You may have heard the name Jezebel before. In the OT we read about Jezebel and the influence (and damage) she had and caused.

From Smiths Bible Dictionary:

'Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, king of Israel. (B.C. 883). She was a Phoenician princess, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians. In her hands, her husband became a mere puppet. (1 Kings 21:25). The first effect of her influence was the immediate establishment of the Phoenician worship, on a grand scale in the court of Ahab. At her table were supported no less than 450 prophets of Baal and 400 of Eastward. By her orders they attacked the prophets and leaders of the Jewish people and put to the sword. (1 Kings 18:13 & 2 Kings 9:7).'

Points of discussion:

1. What is your overall impression of this church?
2. This is the only time in the book of Revelation that the expression 'Son of God' appears. Why do you think it's only used with this church?
3. What did Jesus commend this church for and why are these qualities so vital to spiritual growth?
4. What can we learn & apply from this church for today's 21st century church?

Next time - 'The Dead Church' (Sardis)