

Thyatira

Christ commends the church of Thyatira for its Christian works of witness, condemns it for its permissive spirit of idolatrous compromise, and exhorts it to overcome this in order not to be judged but to inherit end-time rule together with Christ.

Commendation

Jesus commends these Christians for their persevering love for Him and a persevering witness to the outside world. They are doing these deeds in an ever increasing way. There is economic persecution, but there does not seem to be any intense persecution from the Jews or Roman government.

Complaint

The church in Thyatira was harboring false teachers in her midst. Here, a woman who Jesus compares to Jezebel, the wicked wife of King Ahab, is leading this church away from the exclusive worship of Christ.

Her intent is to deceive God's people by persuading them to adopt a life style that would allow them to be accepted in the world and to continue membership in the church.

She calls herself a "prophetess" meaning that God has chosen her to deliver His word, that is the message of syncretism to the church. *Syncretism is the blending of faiths or religions.*

It is hard to know this woman's human motivation for preaching this message in the church. She may have believed her teachings were truth, or she may have known exactly what she was doing, and therefore, was truly a Jezebel.

Correction

Christ has had enough of this woman's lies and the church's tolerance of her. Christ directly and/or Christ through faithful members of the church have confronted her before this letter, and both have patiently waited for her to repent. Yet, she, and apparently those in the church who listened and followed her, refuse to turn from their syncretic and idolatrous ways.

Consequences

This prophetess and all in the church who follow her, Christ will punish through suffering.

—Christ will cast her on a bed of suffering through diseases that are the result of a promiscuous lifestyle (temple prostitution). Spiritual adultery leads often times to physical ailments.

—To those in the church who followed her ways, however, Christ is willing to extend grace and mercy by allowing them more time to repent. Yet, if they do not repent, they show that they are her children, and Christ will send this same suffering also.

The result of this suffering is death - both physical and spiritual.

Their physical death is the result of their physical sin; their spiritual death is the result of their spiritual sin. Their spiritual sin is apostasy and syncretism. They show their true colors - they were never God's in the first place.

This is why it is *imperative* that the church confront sin in her midst and in the lives of her individual members - call the errant to repentance. Hebrews 10:26-31.

When all the churches hear what happened to the false teachers and her apostate children in Thyatira, they will know that nothing escapes Christ.

Christ says He will reward each church member for who their true Lord is.

Sooner or later, who or what is your Lord will be exposed.

In v. 24, Christ now addresses those in the church who have not followed the teachings of this Jezebel nor have remained silent about her influence in the church. He commends them for not listening and doing the word of God according to her.

—This word of God is really the "the deep things of Satan." They are lies. The lie here is this: *It is possible for Christians to participate in some degree of idolatrous situations, thus having some experience with the satanic realm, and yet not be harmed spiritually by such participation.*

—Christ goes on to say that the only real concern for those who remain faithful is to continue holding *fast* to their non-compromising stand until He comes in His second coming. In other words *persevere until He comes or you die*.

Covenant

Christ promises, that those who "overcome" or conquer the sin of compromise and discipline this woman and all who follow her, will reign with him in his kingdom at the end of their existence on earth and when He comes back to earth at His second coming.

The first promise to the overcomer comes from the messianic Psalm 2.

Jesus applies the Psalm to Himself - He is the Messiah who has the authority to give His authority to whomever He chooses, and He chooses to give it to those who have remained faithful, just as He remained faithful to His Father and to the purpose for which He came to earth. With Christ the believer who overcomes will have authority to rule, to discipline and to judge the nations.

The second promise to the overcomer is the gift of the morning star.

—Here again is a reference and symbol to Christ's rule as the Messiah which Christ will use in reference to Himself in 22:16. Balaam, in Numbers 24:17 prophesies that a "star" and a "scepter" will come from and rise out of Jacob (Israel).

—Both of these symbols represent royalty. At the end of time, believers will be kings and queens who reign with Christ over unbelievers.

Roman emperors claimed to have descended from the goddess, Venus. Roman generals built temples dedicated to the star and it was the sign carried on the standards of Roman legions.

When Christ says He is the "morning star," He is claiming His true world sovereignty over and in contrast to the claims of evil world empires like Rome.

There is one other morning star - the sun.

—The sun is the sovereign of the physical world. All of physical life is dependent upon it. When it rises in the east, humans have the promise of another day of life.

—When Christ, the Son of God returns, He will rise out of the east, and His appearing will be the sign to all overcomers, past and present, that their faithful Lord and Savior is keeping His promise that they will be with Him and reign with Him for all eternity