

**To the Saints of God at Topeka, Kansas
July 12, 2015**

The church at Thyatira (4th church, Revelation 2:18-29)

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

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.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: 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 none other burden.

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, 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 shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.



Thyatira was about 35 miles from Pergamos. It is now a city in Turkey. Thyatira was on a major road of the Roman Empire. It was a relatively small city and probably the least important of the seven cities where these seven churches were. It was known for its commerce and trade guilds including bakers, bronze smiths, wool workers, potters, carpenters, linen weavers and tanners. Thyatira is where Lydia was from.

“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us...” Acts 16:14.

The citizens of Thyatira largely worshipped Apollo, the god of sun, light, music, poetry, art, and knowledge.

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience...

Christ is speaking, as the Son of God, from His throne and out of His rightful power and authority to His angel or “messenger” at Thyatira. That is, principally the writing is to the pastor, bishop or elder there. When He speaks about His eyes and His feet he is talking of offense and vengeance. *His eyes like unto a flame of fire.* Beloved, fire consumes all. *In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2Th. 1:8).* These eyes of Christ, are all-seeing and all-knowing and can cut through the gross darkness of sin and consume it. His feet are like fine brass, showing strength and stability. In warfare feet are used (by soldiers) to tread to pieces or tread down the enemy.

Christ knows... and the inference is that He is pleased... with their “works.” That is, their outward facing works to the world.

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works (Heb. 10:24).

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:13-14).

Christ is also pleased with their charity, that is, their “brotherly love, affection, good will, and benevolence” in how they treat one another, all men and for their love for God.

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth (2Th. 1:3).

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:34-35).

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned (1Ti 1:5).

Let all your things be done with charity (1Cor. 16:14).

Christ is pleased with their “service.” The word “service” means ministering or ministration - especially of those who execute the commands of others, and promote religion among men. I take it to be similar to their outward facing works and their promotion of his Word in a diligent and serious manner.

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God (Heb. 9:6).

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Ro. 12:1).

Christ is also pleased with their faith.

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6.).

And He said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith (De 32:20 – the Song of Moses).

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul (Heb. 10:38-39).

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God (not the “big bang”) so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Heb. 11:1-3).

According to Strong’s the word “worlds” in Heb. 11:3 means “universe,” “perpetuity of time,” or “eternity.” One atheist says “a great claim demands great evidence” – meaning he wants to see God before he believes that He is. God says, “No!” you must have faith that I am.

Christ is pleased with their patience in waiting on Him, their steadfastness, and their enduring of their fight of affliction in a consistently calm and longsuffering manner. The human condition is inherently impatient, discontented, rash, prideful, and insistent that everything revolve around them. This is the world and the flesh talking – we must put that off. Our

reasonable service is to recognize that our will is inferior to God's will and see our proper place is to wait on the Creator with great patience, respect and humility.

In your patience possess ye your souls (Lu 21:19).

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer (Ro 12:12).

So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure (2Th 1:4).

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (Jas 1:4).

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience (James 5:7-10).

... and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

The quality and quantity of the works of the Church at Thyatira were better at the end when John was writing than when the Church first began. That is, their *service* to God had improved. It was the opposite of what happened to the Church at Ephesus, who left their first love. That is, their love for Christ and for one another weakened as time went on. The Church at Thyatira had actually "moved the dial," and improved in their faithful service to God, their patience in suffering affliction and their love for one another. Their *fruit* (John 15:16) was sweeter, richer in quality, more in number, more mature and totally better in every way than when they first began. ...[W]e

beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more” 1Th 4:10. The natural course in a race is to get tired at the end. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Ga 6:9). But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing (2Th 3:13). Beloved, we want to finish our race strong. We want to run “negative splits” where you are running faster at the end of the race, than you did at the beginning. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain (1 Cor. 9:24). This church was active and busy in the things of the Lord and they had learned and perfected how to do somethings better than before. That is what we want to strive for beloved. We do not want to become slack, lax and slothful relying on our past good works, so that our best works are behind us and we can only look forward to inferior acts and works. That is not in whatsoever we do, doing heartily unto the Lord (Col. 3:23). That is not there is a shout of a king among them (Nu. 23:21).

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

Notwithstanding the good things previously mentioned, the Lord Jesus Christ is offended at the church at Thyatira. The church members and specifically the elder, whose job it was to have oversight of the church “sufferest” a Jezebel-like woman to teach filthy practices in and to the church. The word “sufferest” means “to allow one to do as he/she wishes, not to restrain, to let alone.” The elder and members restrained her not. It is reminiscent of when God said of Eli in 1Sa. 3:13 *For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* Beloved, it was not charity to allow this conduct to persist and it severely jeopardized the candlestick of that church. That is false or feigned charity.

Because Christ makes specific reference to “Jezebel,” a once living/breathing and historical woman in the Old Testament, we need to take a little time and explore that. This woman Jezebel is fertile preaching ground in our day and

age. I do not believe this Jezebel-like woman was a pastor at the church at Thyatira. I am certain she was an influential member of that church. Clark says that he thinks that this woman was the pastor's wife. That view is consistent with Jezebel's abuse of King Ahab's power and authority, so Clarke may have something there. If she was the pastor's wife, she would have significant power and authority. Of course, in this day and age, women are pastors on their own, but often they are also co-pastors with their husbands. Here is the standard on this topic:

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law (Gen. 3:16). And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (1Cor. 14:34).

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (I Tim. 2:11-14).

*... If a **man** desire the office of a bishop, **he** desireth a good work (1Tim. 3:1).*

*A bishop then must be blameless, the **husband of one wife**... (1Tim. 3:2).*

*Let the deacons be the **husbands of one wife**... (I Tim 3:12).*

*... ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, **the husband of one wife**... (Titus 1:5-6).*

There is somewhere in the vicinity of 16,000 female preachers in the United States or around 12% of all pastors and this number is growing rapidly. The denominations with the largest percentage of female pastors are: Unitarian-Universalists with 58%, United Church of Christ with 35%, Evangelical Lutherans 24% and Presbyterians with 19%.

God hates female preachers – what part of *Let your women keep silence in the churches* and *I suffer not a woman to teach* do you not understand. There is no ambiguity on this issue. God had no female priests in the Old Testament. He had no female elders, bishops, or deacons in the New Testament. There were no female writers in the Old Testament. There were no female writers in the New Testament. Jesus had no female apostles. This issue is not negotiable. The fact that this is unpopular and is not compatible with the current societal philosophy of “*I am woman hear me roar*” is not of consequence to God’s people, who desire to be in subjection to Christ. There are many wonderful places for women in the church, but this one God did not reserve or provide for them in.

Just because we reach this reasonable conclusion from the Bible does not mean we are supposed to mistreat our women in anyway. It is a great sin for the men in many of the Muslim countries to treat their women like property, to treat them like slaves, to treat them like dogs, to burn them, to refuse to allow them to be educated and to otherwise misuse them and be cruel to them. It is equally wrong for the men of this society to beat them and misuse them. That is a sin. Women are to be treated with respect, they are to be loved, treated well, and to be treated like we want to be treated. They are to be treated as Christ treats the Church, His bride. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets* (Mat. 7:12). Strong’s says that word “man” means: a human being, whether male or female. Our duty of charity applies equally to men and women.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus (Joh 11:5).

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also (2Ti 1:5).

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself (Eph. 5:28).

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised (Pr. 31:30). God bless our God fearing women. They would not dare violate this instruction and rule.

Having been a young man once I will say that young men in particular must use great fidelity to show respect to their mothers and their sisters (whether they be biological or spiritual). They deserve your respect.

For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven (Mat. 22:30). This verse seems clear that in the next life there is no distinction of sexes – there is no evidence to show there are any sexes of the angels. And, with a perfectly spiritual body, there is no need of a help-meet.

The text says that Jezebel and by implication this Jezebel-like woman, *“calleth herself a prophetess.”* Jezebel and this woman had self-described notions that they were religious and had been called by God to prophecy and teach and preach. The word “prophetess” means: *a woman to whom future events or things hidden from others are at times revealed, either by inspiration or by dreams and visions.* There are only a few prophetesses mentioned in the Bible:

And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron... (Ex. 15:20).

And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time (Jud. 4:4).

So Hilkiah the priest went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum... (2Ki. 22:14).

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel... (Lu 2:36).

...And we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, and the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy (Acts 21:8-9).

These were all God fearing, women, called prophetesses sent by God to do his bidding. There is however another false prophetess mentioned in the Bible (in addition to Jezebel).

My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear (Ne. 6:14). Noadiah was a false prophetess that hindered the work of Nehemiah.

Jezebel and this woman at Thyatira had called themselves out as a prophetesses but they were not. God had in fact not called them, not sent them and was angry with them for their heresies. These women were boastful, loud, proud, deceived, full of great sin and had great rank and stature. Queen Jezebel had great influence in Israel and in Tyre and Sidon.

She was influential, both in terms of working her will through her husband King Ahab but also through her own pedigree. Jezebel and her cohort here in Thyatira were teachers of fornication, by their example of being whores and also by their words and deeds. There is no question in my mind that these women were full of sexual perversion. They also *“seduce[d] my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.”* Seduce means: to persuade to disobedience or disloyalty, to lead astray usually by persuasion or false promises, to carry out the physical seduction of enticement to sexual intercourse. These are words of subtly, deception, and guile. When you read this description of this church you see that Christ uses several sexual connotations. This church was full of unclean sex practices and perversions. And, Christ will later refer to the sexual practices and idolatry (which go hand-in-hand) in this church as being of the “depths of Satan.”

We will finish this church of Thyatira, Lord willing, next Sunday.

I love you all, Amen.