

## **Spiritual Maturity**

### **The Church in Thyatira: The Enticed Church**

- \* Incredible compliments were given to the Church in Thyatira!
- \* Jesus explains that each person is responsible for their relationship with Him and encourages them to “stay faithful until the end!”
- \* Thyatira was smaller than Pergamos and located about 40 miles to the southeast.
- \* It had been a Roman city since 133 B.C. and was an important point on the Roman road system to Laodicea.
- \* You will recall one of its citizens; Lydia, the “seller of purple”!
- \* She became a believer under Paul’s ministry while in Philippi! She was said to be in the area on “a business trip” selling her merchandise.
- \* Thyatira was well known for its garments and dyes, pottery, bronze and brass!
- \* The water was rich in minerals and “madder root” and therefore was a source of the purple or scarlet coloring and dyes. It was said there was nothing else like it in the known world!
- \* I have actually had the opportunity to observe this while in Turkey. Once you get it on you, it has to wear off!
- \* Because Thyatira was such a manufacturing hub for the region, it had many “trade guilds” or “unions” that unless you were a productive member of it greatly hindered your business success and prosperity!
- \* This was the source of great “persecution” for the Christians there because unless you participated in “pagan ritual” and “worship of guild deities” your ability to do business suffered!!
- \* Alexander the Great developed a military garrison in Thyatira and thus commanded worship of Apollo, the “Son of God”!
- \* The Christians of Thyatira were under tremendous pressure from all parts of society. Employment opportunities, business ventures, family security and simple peer pressure was a constant threat!!
- \* As you read the letter Jesus had John write to Thyatira, notice His symbolism and analogies that only they would understand!!!!

#### **Revelation 2:18-29 (NIV)**

“To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. 19 I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. 21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. 23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who

searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

24 Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you, 25 except to hold on to what you have until I come.' 26 To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— 27 that one 'will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery'—just as I have received authority from my Father. 28 I will also give that one the morning star. 29 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

I. We are once again pointed toward Jesus, as the answer to every need, no matter where we live and what the condition of our lives!!!! Don't become "enticed" into believing anything else!

A. Notice that Jesus introduces Himself as the "Son of God" with "blazing eyes and feet like bronze!" (verse 18)

1. Jesus is reaffirming His deity and His power over all situations in our lives!!!

### **Colossians 1:15-20 (NIV)**

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

2. Much of the symbolism in this chapter seems to be used to reinforce Jesus divinity!

3. "Eyes like blazing fire."

4. "Feet like burnished bronze."

5. This is a characteristic of scripture in general and we will misinterpret many passages if we do not recognize this principle.

B. Jesus encourages Thyatira and commends them as a Church!!

1. "I know your deeds/works."

2. "I know your love and faith."

3. "I know your service and perseverance."

4. "...and that you are doing more and more." They were growing in faith!!

C. But Jesus then says..." You are being enticed by the world!"

II. Throughout scripture believers are encouraged to:

A. Be students of Scripture. Think about this.....

If you only hear or study the scripture during my Sunday morning messages, you are getting 30 minutes of scripture per week!  
No wonder there are so many anemic Christians today!!!

### **2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)**

15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

1. Most people know more about their traditions than they do the Holy Scriptures! The very foundation of our faith!
2. It is of utmost importance that you know why you believe what you believe. (The whole council of God!!!)
3. "Well that's what I was always taught" is not good enough.

B. There is spiritual authority in scripture, not in your tradition!

### **2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)**

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

1. You see, Thyatira was plagued with teachings that enticed all kinds of behavior. Some immoral and others more innocent.... just wrong!
2. It is said that they "lacked a zeal for sound doctrine!"
3. The church in Thyatira is strongly rebuked for tolerating these "teachings of Jezebel."

C. Remember, Thyatirian society was a manufacturing society with labor guilds and unions!!!

1. If you didn't "tow the line" you did not continue employment or your business had no patrons!
2. This hit people where it hurts.....the pocket book!!!
3. What would be our response today? What IS our response?
4. It is believed that "Jezebel" refers to a literal person in that society that "carried a lot of weight. Obviously not their real name, but a reference to the Jezebel in scripture who tried to control the prophet and his message!

D. The message and issue here is “spiritual adultery.”

**2 Corinthians 11:2 (NIV)**

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

James 4:4 New (NIV)

4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

1. The Greek word for “friendship” in James 4:4 is “philia.”
2. It means “affection and fondness.”
3. Paul is saying that he wants us to “stay faithful” to the Lord!
4. In I Corinthians 10 and 11 Paul spends much time encouraging the Church to stay faithful and not become idolatrous by being “too cushie” with the world. He sounds broken by his words!!

III. Remember, Jesus encouraged the Church in Thyatira, by saying they were growing in their faith!!!

A. This is what the scripture calls “discipleship”! Becoming more like Jesus!!

**Philippians 3:12-14 (NIV)**

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

B. We are told throughout scripture that our redemption is only the beginning of us becoming like our Lord!!!

1. II Cor. 3:18 says we are being transformed into the image of God!
2. Ephesians 5:1 says we are to imitate or act like God!
3. Ephesians 4:15 says we are to grow up in Christ!