

Dr. Oscar T. Moses
Calvary Baptist Church
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ZOOM ID 760 298 447; DIAL IN 253-215-8782

W.A. R. Bible Study

The Seven Churches of Asia Minor Bible Study

The Church in Thyatira Part #1 – Lesson 6

The Church That Let It Slide!

Revelation 2:18-29

Imagine a beautiful old bridge, painted a gleaming silver. From a distance, it looks solid, strong, and well-kept. Tourists take photos. Cars pass over it daily. No one suspects anything is wrong. But beneath that paint, hidden in the joints and under the beams, **rust has been eating away the metal** for years. Inspectors finally pull back the surface and discover the structure is compromised—what looked strong was slowly falling apart. That’s the Church of Thyatira.

Outwardly, they were doing well—Jesus Himself says they had **love, faith, service, and perseverance**, and were even **improving**. But beneath all that good—**they were tolerating something deadly**: a false teacher, “Jezebel,” who was leading people into spiritual corruption. And that quiet tolerance, like hidden rust, threatened the whole structure. Sometimes in the church—and in our lives—we focus so much on what looks good on the outside: our ministries, our growth, our passion. But Jesus is looking deeper. He pulls back the paint and checks for **what we’re quietly allowing** to corrode our hearts. Compromise, false teaching, sin we justify—it all adds up. The question is: **What are we tolerating beneath the surface?** And are we willing to let Christ do the hard work of exposing and healing it?¹

Context

It was not external pressures but internal corruption that threatened the Church of Thyatira. There is nothing documented suggesting that The

¹ Author Unknown

Church of Thyatira suffered any political persecution. Thyatira's Church problems was an inside job. Thyatira was a church that was willing to let false teaching and sin slide. They turned a blind eye to false teachers and John's letter to the Church of Thyatira addresses this issue. Ironically, this is the longest letter that John writes to the seven Churches.

This is not the first mention of Thyatira in scripture. The name Thyatira means *continual sacrifice*. It was a city of trade and known for its trade guilds. In the book of Acts, Paul converts a woman by the name of Lydia who was a seller of purple in Thyatira. Thyatira was located roughly 35 to 40 miles southeast of Pergamum. It was the northernmost city of the seven mentioned in Revelation. *Thyatira was initially founded as a military outpost to guard the north-south road. The Greek garrison at Thyatira was charged with delaying invaders heading north to Pergamum. Unlike the city of Sardis, however, Thyatira had little to no natural defenses, situated on mostly flat land. For this reason, the Roman Empire swiftly conquered and annexed Thyatira in 190 BC.*²

Roman rule transformed Thyatira into a successful commercial center. A closer look at the problem at the Church of Thyatira points to what they allowed to take place within the church. Let's observe the text.

² <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/end-times/what-revelation-teach-about-church-at-thyatira.html>

The Eyes That See and Feet That Stand Firm – 18. Jesus again gives a Judgement description of Himself as one who sees all and stands firm:

These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; Jesus makes it clear that He is the Son of God. *Residents of Thyatira worshiped Apollo, the sun god under the surname Tyrimnas.*³ Perhaps this is why Jesus describes Himself in such luminous terms; to assure His radiant superiority. He affirms His flaming eyes and feet like burnished—white hot—brass. *His deity outshines the sun by far, so the church at Thyatira could view Him as far more glorious than Tyrimnas.*⁴ The eyes: *Jesus chose this description of Himself from the presentation in Revelation 1:14 to emphasize the idea that His eyes looked with penetrating judgment.*⁵ The feet: *Jesus chose this description of Himself from Revelation 1:15 to emphasize His purity because brass is pure and highly refined in the fire. It also emphasized His steadfastness, because brass was regarded as a strong and durable metal in the ancient world, and feet like fine brass would be strong and*

³ <https://www.bibleref.com/Revelation/2/Revelation-2-18.html>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-2/>

unmovable.⁶ These are judgement descriptions of Jesus to the Church of Thyatira.

The Awareness and Approval Of Jesus - 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.* Jesus assures this Church that their good works have not gone unnoticed. The Church at Thyatira is commended for the good they have done; *charity, service, faithfulness, and patience*. Jesus names four great qualities of a good church. They loved the Lord and one another. They served the Lord and one another. They had faith and patience. *And the last to be more than the first.* *This was another compliment to the church at Thyatira. Not only did they have these works, but they had them in increasing measure – they were growing in love, service, faith, and patience.*⁷ Jesus commends the church on what they have accomplished.

The Charges Against the Church of Thyatira - 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.*

⁶ Ibid

⁷ <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-2/>

Jesus begins this verse with *notwithstanding* as to suggest he commends the church for their good but *nevertheless* He has a few charges against this Church.

- *because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel:* The center of corruption places the focus on one woman and what the Church has allowed her to do. We must note here that her name was probably not Jezebel but given this title to reflect the spirit of Jezebel in the Old Testament (1 Kings 16-21 and 2 Kings 9:30-37). Jezebel was one of the most evil characters of the Old Testament, who tried to combine the worship of Israel with the worship of the idol Baal. *Some ancient Greek manuscripts state the phrase that woman Jezebel as your woman Jezebel or your wife Jezebel.*⁸ *Some Bible scholars believe the Jezebel referred to here, in Jesus' letter to the church of Thyatira, may have even been the wife of the church's pastor. Whatever her role in the church, she was extremely influential.*⁹ The church leadership has permitted her behavior.
- *which calleth herself a prophetess:* She was not sanctioned by a church, no one affirmed her, there was no laying on of hands from Church leaders, none of that. She simply was a self-proclaimed prophet but not a prophet at all. *Yet, it seems the Christians there received her as a prophetess, and that is why Jesus gave them this*

⁸ Ibid

⁹ <https://www.bibleref.com/Revelation/2/Revelation-2-20.html#:~:text=What%20does%20Revelation%202%3A20%20mean%3F%20This%20verse%20reveals,idolatry.%20Apparently%2C%20she%20promoted%20certain%20pagan%20sexual%20practices.>

warning.¹⁰ Jesus warned us to be aware of false prophets in the last days in **Matthew 24:11** - *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.* This church ignored the warning.

- *to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* Jesus describes the sins of Jezebel. Her teachings led the people of God astray. **My servants:** *This shows how terrible Jezebel's sin was. She corrupted the servants of Jesus, and they belong to Him. Jesus said, But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea (Mark 9:42).*¹¹ Jezebel influenced the church to commit fornication; not only sexual fornication but spiritual fornication by embracing other gods and their practices of eating things sacrificed to idols.

Bible Questions

1. What does the symbolism of Jesus' eyes and feet in verse 18 mean to the Church of Thyatira?
2. What was Jesus' commendation for the Church of Thyatira?
3. Explain what the Church of Thyatira did well in your groups words.
4. What is Jesus' main problem with the Church of Thyatira? Explain verse 20.

Keeping It Real

¹⁰ <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-2/>

¹¹ <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-2/>

1. Why do you feel the church often let unruly people destroy biblical foundation, faith, and fellowship within the church?
2. Do you think Satan uses people to destroy the church from within?
Give an example.
3. How should the church address influential people that sow seeds of corruption?
4. What pillar of F.O.O.M.M. does this lesson speak to? Explain.