Revelation 2:18-29

Don't Tolerate Worldliness

Christ's Message to the Church in Thyatira



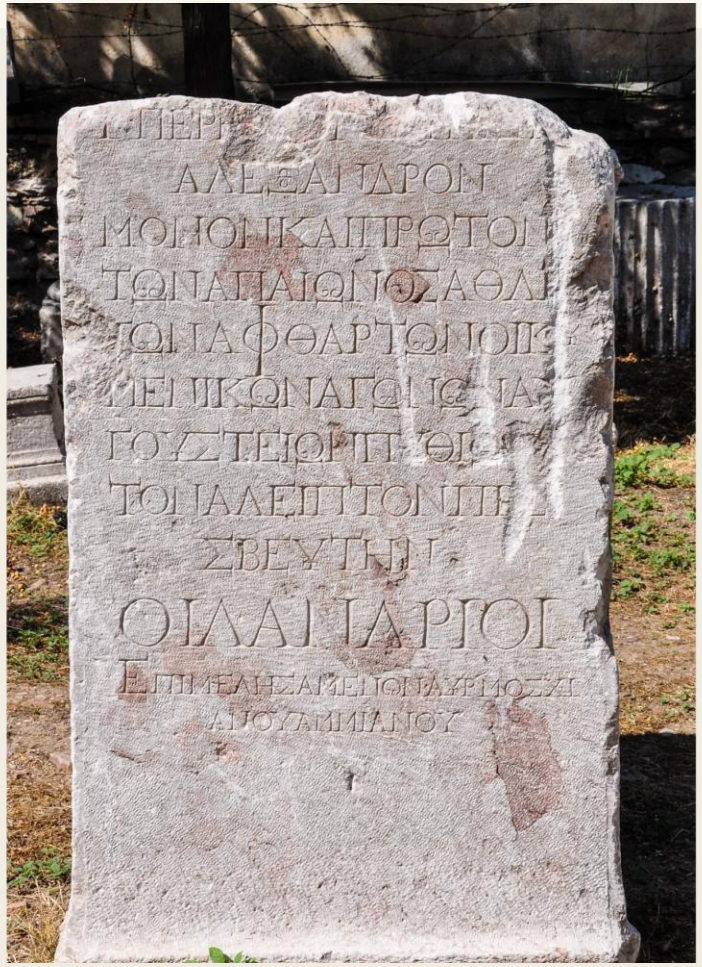
Thyatira: Small City, Big Business

- Smallest of the seven cities, only 20-25,000 people
- Commercially significant, with many trade guilds: bakers, cobblers, tanners, woolworkers



Thyatira (modern Akhisar) – Agora with Stoa columns

Guilds Were Almost Compulsory



Wool Workers inscription

- Guilds were like modern trade unions
- Joining meant idolatry, food sacrificed to idols, and at times immorality

A Church in a Heathen Business World

- Christ placed this church in the midst of that environment
- Lydia, seller of purple fabrics from Thyatira, may have been influential in starting it (Acts 16:14)



Decorated white stone altar in Thyatira

Purple Dye Plant



- Lydia, Paul's convert in Philippi, sold purple fabrics
- Purple dye came from the roots of a plant growing in Thyatira

Summary of Christ's Letter to Thyatira

Church: Thyatira

Christ's Strength: Son of God, whose eyes are blazing fire

Commendation:

I know your deeds, faith, love, growth, perseverance

Condemnation:

You tolerate a false teacher who is leading people astray

Warning:

I am coming to judge her and remove her influence

Promise:

I will give you authority over the nations

Summary:

REMOVE SIN

Four Actions to Remove Sin from Our Fellowship

The longest of the seven letters, showing how seriously Christ takes tolerating sin

The matter is urgent, so Christ gives four actions

01

Purify

02

Put off

03

Portray

04

Practice

Action 1 · Revelation 2:18

Purify Yourself before the Lord Who Hates Sin

A. He Rules Our Lives

"Son of God": the most exalted one, equal with the Father in Godhead and authority

In God's house, Christ visits us in holy evaluation

Used only here in Revelation, implied in 1:6; 2:27; 3:5, 21; 14:1, nearly equivalent to "Messiah"

Allusion to Psalm 2, echoed in Rev 2:26-27

Son of God in Scripture

Luke 4:41 "You are the Son of God!" ... they knew Him to be the Christ

John 10:36 "whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world"

B. He Knows Our Hearts

Eyes like a flame of fire: Jesus is judge, searching and evaluating this congregation

He knows the good and the scandal and sin in this church

His omniscience is personal and intimidating, the highest level of accountability

The church is a solemn place of fellowship with God; awe and submission should shape our worship

C. He Burns against Our Sin

Feet like burnished bronze: He moves among the churches and individuals

Shining purity is metal still aglow in the crucible (Ezek 1:13, 27; Dan 10:6)

Better fits judgment over a church playing with sin

Ezekiel 1:27 "something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it ... a radiance around Him."

Action 2 · Revelation 2:19-20

Put Off Devotion without Doctrine

A. The Good (19): *Four Commendations*

Love (*agapen*)

Sacrificial commitment to God and others; Thyatira is the only church singled out for love

Faith (*pistin*)

Conviction based on hearing

Service (*diakonia*)

Voluntary ministering to others

Perseverance (*hupomonen*)

Refusing to throw in the towel

B. The Bad (20): *You Tolerate Jezebel*

The danger was internal, not external: a false prophetess, not a pagan deity

They permitted it to remain; love and fervency became divorced from the Word

"Jezebel" is a symbolic name, like Ahab's infamous wife, claiming to be a prophetess

Her teaching: idols and guild meals won't hurt us, we need to do business in the world. Antinomianism, early contextualization

Action 3 · Revelation 2:21-23

Portray the Seriousness of Christ in Judging Sin

A. He Is Patient (21)

"I gave her time to repent": Christ sent others to call her to repentance

She argued and out-talked them all, preferring her teaching to the Word

She hardened her heart, like a runaway truck on a mountain, hard to stop

B. He Is Severe (22-23)

Severe discipline: a bed of sickness and great tribulation

Those who violated the marriage bed get a bed of torment

"I will" appears three times: Jesus Himself brings discipline

I will kill her children with pestilence

"I will give to each one of you according to your deeds"

Acts 5:11 *"And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things."*

Action 4 · Revelation 2:24-29

Practice a Satisfying Separation to Christ

A. Keep It Simple and Scriptural (24-25)

A remnant is progressing in purity and avoids the "deep things" of Satanic worldliness

"I place no other burden" echoes Acts 15: stay pure without legalism beyond the gospel

"Hold fast": be so satisfied with Christ that the world cannot call you

Cling to Christ and He will draw you upward

Acts 15:28 *"no greater burden than these essentials"*

B. Remind Yourself of Heavenly Reward (26-29)

Authority over the nations: the overcomer's promise, from Psalm 2

We will share in Christ's millennial rule, so don't be enamored by worldly guilds

"I will give him the morning star": Christ Himself is our guide

Revelation 22:16 *"I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."*