

*“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” (Rev 2:7).*

## SEVEN CHURCHES

### I. MESSIAH’S MESSAGE TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

#### A. LETTER TO EPHESUS 2:1-7

#### B. Letter to Smyrna 2:8-11

#### C. LETTER TO PERGAMUM 2:12-17

#### D. LETTER TO THYATIRA 2:18-29

##### 1. The Church at Thyatira

Thyatira was about thirty-five miles southeast of Pergamum.

The name means “continual sacrifice.”

Politically it is the least important of the seven cities. It was known for numerous trade guilds, its wood and dyeing industry. Paul’s convert, Lydia, was a “seller of purple” from Thyatira (Acts 16:14).

Thyatira is the center and the longest of the seven letters; it introduces a point of demarcation. In the first three letters the admonition “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” comes before the Reward. While in the last four, the admonition “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” comes after the promised reward.

The last four letters also have reference to the return of Christ the Messiah.

Dr. Ryrie comments, “If these churches picture eras of church history, Thyatira—both because of its name and the activity of Jezebel—depicts the Middle Ages and the ascendancy of the Roman Catholic Church.” Word of caution.

##### 2. Salutation to the Angel:

To the Church at Thyatira Christ the Messiah presents Himself as the Divine One, “Son of God,” the only place in Revelation where He is so called. He is presented as the One with burning eyes searching “the reins and hearts” (v.23 KJV) and with trampling feet in burnished brass breaking men like clay pots (v. 27). With “eyes like a flame of fire,”

He is the executor of searching judgment and His “feet like burnished bronze.” He tramples His enemies under His feet (v.27; Ps 2).

##### 3. Commendation:

Thyatira is commended that the latter works are more impressive than their first works. Increasingly the church manifested “love, service, faith, patience and good works” (2:19). Dr. Morris states, “It may be that Lydia of Thyatira (Acts 16:13-15, 40) had left a lasting mark on the church and its members. But such attributes, vital as they are, cannot substitute for sound doctrine and godly living, and these were rapidly failing a Thyatira.”

##### 4. Correction:

The Jezebel spirit operated in Israel. (I Kgs 19-21) Jezebel, wife of King Ahab was a stranger to Israel and the source of idolatry to the Northern Kingdom. Balaam attacked Israel from without; but Jezebel was from within. Her attacks were on the servants of the LORD undermine or kill the Word. She worked through intimidation, manipulation and control. Her authority and power were self appointed. Compare with the Word in the letter to the Hebrews (Heb 5:1-4). (cont.)

At the church Thyatira, Jezebel may or may not have been her name but she was in spirit and action.

Jezebel was a self appointed prophetess who claimed infallibility in setting forth doctrine and new revelation from God. She promoted immorality and idolatry (v.20).

Dr. Ryrice believes these are “in a doctrinal context that is described as the ‘deep things of Satan’—his (Satan’s) attempt to make wrong seem right” (v. 24).

Dr Feinberg joins other scholars who state, “The dogmas of papal Rome are clearly discerned. This church leads astray by her teaching; “it is away from divine authority to man’s.” In other words, at Thyatira the teachings of man / woman had preempted the written Word.

The historical record will support that the hierarchy of the papal church resisted the Word being placed into the hands of laity, teaching they were not capable of interrupting the Scriptures.

In His grace and forbearance the LORD gave Thyatira time to repent. He sent His servants to call the church to repentance but she refused to do so. Hence, there is no call to repent in this letter; only judgment remains.

#### 5. Admonition:

The Warning is Issued: (2:22, 23) Three groups are addressed: Jezebel, those who dabble with her system perhaps from a spirit of tolerance or unity, and her children, that is her adherents. It is noted, her judgment is in the very place of her corruption.

The warning is to Thyatira as well as to all the churches past, present and future.

In summary, Walter Scott in his very fine *Exposition on the Revelation of Jesus Christ* writes “Behold, I cast her into a bed.” “The word ‘bed’ is evidently used in sharp contrast to the bed of the harlot with its illicit pleasure. It will be a bed of affliction. ‘Those that commit adultery with her.’ This is the first and only instance of the word ‘adultery’ in the Apocalypse. Those who have tampered with the evil, who have defiled themselves by association with Jezebel, are the class here referred to—an increasing company in our times, a company born of the false spirit of toleration and of indifference to evil. Her children killed ‘with death’ is a singular expression, and seems to denote the intensity of the Lord’s judgment. This finds its answer in chapters 17 and 18 of the Apocalypse.”

A remnant at Thyatira did not follow the corruptions, rather they denounced these unbiblical ways. The Lord promises to lay no other burden on them. In verse 22 the words cast them into great tribulation are the same words Messiah used in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:21).

#### 6. Reward:

The promise is to the “overcoming” believers in Thyatira, and those in other churches as well as the martyred coming out of the Tribulation will share in Christ the Messiah’s reign over the nations as set forth in Psalm 2. The reference to the “the morning star” points to Christ the Messiah Himself and the immortal life we receive from Him.

<b>OVERCOMER</b>	<b>MESSIAH'S MILLENNIAL REIGN</b>	<b>AGE TO COME</b>
Ephesus - Rev. 2:7	Eat of the Tree of Life	Rev. 22:2
Smyrna - Rev. 2:11	Receive Crown of Life, Escape second death	Rev. 20:6
Pergamum - Rev. 2:17	Eat hidden manna, receive white stone, new name	Rev. 22:4
Thyatira - Rev. 2:28	Authority over nations, Morning Star	Rev. 22:16
Sardis - Rev. 3:5		
Philadelphia - Rev. 3:12		
Laodicea - Rev. 3:21		

#### IV. THE SEVEN CHURCHES HISTORICALLY PARALLEL THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AGE

<b>LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT</b>	<b>ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY</b>	<b>PERIOD IN CHURCH HISTORY</b>
<b>1.</b> EPHESUS (2:1-7) REPRESENTS LEADERSHIP: JEWISH TO APPROX. 65 A.D.;	APOSTOLIC AGE	30 - 100 A.D.
<b>2.</b> SMYRNA (2:8-11) REPRESENTS	AGE OF PERSECUTION	100 - 313 A.D.
<b>3.</b> PERGAMUM (2:12-17) REPRESENTS CONSTANTINIAN ERA	IMPERIAL CHURCH AGE	313 - 606 A.D.
<b>4.</b> THYATIRA	PAPACY AGE	590 - 1517 A.D.