

# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

## LESSON 05

The Seven Churches 04

# THYRATIRA

“Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Revelation 3:22

Revelation 2:18-29

A Call for Faithfulness and Endurance

## TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA

### Revelation 2:18-29 (CSB)

<sup>18</sup> “Write to the angel of the church in Thyatira: Thus says the Son of God, the one whose eyes are like a fiery flame and whose feet are like fine bronze: <sup>19</sup> I know your works—your love, faithfulness, service, and endurance. I know that your last works are greater than the first. <sup>20</sup> But I have this against you: You tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and teaches and deceives my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat meat sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality. <sup>22</sup> Look, I will throw her into a sickbed and those who commit adultery with her into great affliction. Unless they repent of her works, <sup>23</sup> I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who examines minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your works. <sup>24</sup> I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who haven’t known “the so-called secrets of Satan” —as they say—I am not putting any other burden on you. <sup>25</sup> Only hold on to what you have until I come. <sup>26</sup> The one who conquers and who keeps my works to the end: I will give him authority over the nations— <sup>27</sup> and he will rule them with an iron scepter; he will shatter them like pottery — <sup>28</sup> just as I have received this from my Father. I will also give him the morning star. <sup>29</sup> “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

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

<sup>18</sup> “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. <sup>19</sup> I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

<sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> 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, <sup>25</sup> except to hold on to what you have until I come.’

<sup>26</sup> To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—

<sup>27</sup> that one ‘will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery’<sup>[b]</sup>—just as I have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup> I will also give that one the morning star. <sup>29</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

## REVELATION FOR EVERYONE:

N.T. WRIGHT

Revelation 2:18-29 (N.T. Wright's Translation)

18"Write this to the angel of the church in Thyatira. "These are the words of the son of God, whose eyes are like flaming fire and whose feet are like exquisite brass. 19I know what you have done: I know your love, your faith, your service and your patience. I know that your works have been more impressive recently than they were before. 20But I have something against you: you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and teaches my servants (in fact, deceives my servants!) to practise fornication and to eat idol-food. 21I gave her time to repent, but she had no wish to repent of her immorality. 22Look! I am going to throw her on a bed, and those who have committed fornication with her will have great distress, unless they repent of the works into which she has led them. 23I will utterly slaughter her children, and all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts. I will give to each of you what your deeds deserve. 24For the rest of you in Thyatira, those who have not held this teaching, who haven't discovered the so-called 'satanic depths': I'm not going to put any other pressure on you. 25Just hold on tightly to what you have until I come. 26To anyone who conquers, who keeps my works right through to the end, I will give authority over the nations, 27to rule them with a rod of iron, as when clay pots get smashed! 28That is the authority I myself received from my father. What's more, I will give them the morning star. 29Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the spirit says to the churches:"

### **Read *Revelation For Everyone* pages 23-28, *Letter to Thyatira***

Jot down any insights, notes, or quotes that inspired and encouraged you in this reading.

What did this reading teach you about the city of Thyatira? How does it help you understand the message that Jesus is conveying in this letter to that church?

What questions or concerns do you have based on this reading?

## Small Group Lesson 5: Letter to Thyatira

### **OPENING ACTIVITY:** Designing Church Building Meaning

*For lessons 2-8 your small group will be doing an activity to your group help connect the themes of Revelation 2-3 and have fun along the way. Your small group leader will have the supplies you need to complete this activities and they will build on each other as the weeks progress.*

### **Week 4: Remove church.**

**Instructions:** Rip up your church. Destroy the building, decorations, people and backdrop.

**Share:** How did it feel to remove the church?

**Discuss:** What are some things that might benefit our church if they were removed? How are they causing problems?

### **OPENING PRAYER:**

*Heavenly Father, give us eyes to see and ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to us, our church, and all your people. Give us the strength to remain faithful and endure. In Jesus Name, Amen.*

### **READ REVELATION 2:18-29**

Write to the angel of the church in Thyatira: Thus says the Son of God, the one whose eyes are like a fiery flame and whose feet are like fine bronze: I know your works—your love, faithfulness, service, and endurance. I know that your last works are greater than the first. But I have this against you: You tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and teaches and deceives my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat meat sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality. Look, I will throw her into a sickbed and those who commit adultery with her into great affliction. Unless they repent of her works, I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who examines minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your works. I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who haven't known "the so-called secrets of Satan" —as they say—I am not putting any other burden on you. Only hold on to what you have until I come. The one who conquers and who keeps my works to the end: I will give him authority over the nations— and he will rule them with an iron scepter; he will shatter them like pottery — just as I have received this from my Father. I will also give him the morning star. "Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

### **NT WRIGHT: REVELATION FOR EVERYONE:**

#### **Letter to Thyatira pages 23-28**

*Before this week's session you were invited to read and reflect on insights from N.T. Wright about the letter to Thyatira. As a group, share your insights, inspiration, and encouragement from the reading.*

What were some insights, notes, or quotes that inspired you in this reading?

How did this reading help you better understand the letter to Thyatira?

How did this reading encourage you to remain faithful and endure?

What questions or concerns do you have based on this reading?

### **SERMON REVIEW**

*Take some time to reflect on this past Sunday's message, considering the pastor's main theme and how you were encouraged to apply this passage to your own faith journey.*

What was the pastor's main theme in this Sunday's message?

How did the pastor help you see Jesus in this passage?

How did the pastor help you see yourself in this passage?

How were you encouraged to apply this passage to your life?

What questions do you have based on this week's sermon?

### **ABOUT Thyatira:**

*Read the selection from Discipleship on the Edge to learn about the history and culture of this city.*

## **Selection:** Chapter 6

Thyatira was the Center for the worship of Apollo, the God of sunlight. Apollo was thought to be the divine guardian of the city. He was the patron God of many of the city's trade guilds and was regularly honored at guild functions. Thyatira was a prosperous commercial center. It was the manufacturing hub of the Roman province of Asia. It was famous for its unusual number of trade guilds. Which meant no one could possibly make it financially in the city unless they were a member of one of those guilds. Not to join a guild meant financial loss.

The people of Thyatira believed that the Roman emperor was the incarnation of Apollo. And the son of Zeus. The emperor Domitian named his son 'son of God' and on coins his son is portrayed holding seven stars.

What insights did you gain and how did it help you understand the culture in which this message was written?

## **STRUCTURE OF THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

### **QUOTE: NT Wright**

The seven letters are sharp and pointed messages to the church in question, and other Christian churches already in the area, and to all churches then and now, who can listen in to what the risen Lord is saying. The letters follow the same pattern. They begin with a reminder of some aspect of the description of Jesus in chapter one. They continue by congratulating the church on what has been going well and then warning them about what has been going badly. The letters end with a warning and promise. The Spirit is speaking to the churches, calling Christians to conquer and promising them some aspect of the future the glorious future which God has in store... They are to conquer, not by fighting back, but by following Jesus, who won the victory through his own patient suffering. God's people must bear patient witness to Jesus, thereby conquering the evil forces that surround and threaten them.

The messages to the seven churches have a repeated pattern.

**Introduction:** Write to the church of...

**Jesus' Description:** Using imagery from Revelation 1, Jesus highlights a section of his character.

**Encouragement:** Jesus acknowledges what they are doing right, "I know..."

**Warning:** Jesus addresses a issue with the church. "But I have this against you..."

**Advice:** Jesus shares how to make things right with God

**Reward:** Jesus shares the reward for remaining faithful (conquering). “To the one who conquers:”

**Conclusion:** “Anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says.”

**REREAD REVELATION 2:12-17**

*Using what you know about Thyatira, the symbolism in this passage, and insights from Darrell Johnson, NT Wright and sermons, answer the following questions.*

What images does Jesus use to introduce himself in and what do they say about Jesus' character?

How are these images meant to encourage or rebuke the church?

What does Jesus say this church is doing right?

How might this church be encouraged by this?

What does Jesus have against this church? What issue does Jesus address and why is this issue important to Jesus?

**QUOTE: NT Wright**

Jezebel was the gentile wife of king Ahab (1 Kings 16 to 22) who seems to have been the cause of her husband's wickedness. Jezebel seduced the Israelite men away from pure worship of Yahweh, and introduced the worship of Baal, a rival God, into Israel. This was the heart of many other evils.

What might this issue look like in our church and our lives today?

**QUOTE: Darrell Johnson**

Tolerating Jezebel meant that they were tolerating a spiritual compromise. Spiritual compromise means to commit spiritual adultery, and spiritual adultery inevitably leads to spiritual sickness and eventually spiritual death. In any compromise arrangement involving Jesus Christ, in any balancing scheme, it is the relationship with Him that is shortchanged.

What does spiritual compromise look like in our lives?

**QUOTE: NT Wright**

What is required at the moment, for those who have not been drawn away by the teaching and practices of 'Jezebel' is that they 'hold on tightly.' That is a word for all Christians today who find themselves in churches and fellowships where teaching and behavior which they know is not the way of the Messiah is being eagerly embraced and hailed as God-given.

What advice does Jesus give this church in order to be right with God?

What might this advice look like for our church and in our lives?

What is the reward for those who conquer and what encouragement would the first readers gain from this reward?

**QUOTE: Darrell Johnson**

The morning star usually appears at the darkest time of the night. It usually emerges at the point when the night is as dark as it's going to get. When it appears there is no sign of the dawn. But once it appears, very faint and small at first, you know that night cannot withstand the dawn. Jesus is saying he will especially encourage those who remain loyal to him. If we keep our eyes on him, the bright morning star, we will remember that the struggle is almost over and we will have the courage to keep following even when it seems costly to do so.

How can this reward encourage us to remain faithful and endure?



**APPLICATION:**

*As you wrap up this week's study, take a moment to reflect on the central message found in this letter to Thyatira, how it is relevant today, and how we can apply this message to our lives and our church.*

What is the central message to the church in Thyatira?

Why was that relevant then and why is it relevant now?

How can we apply this message to the "Church"?

How can we apply this message to our church, and how should it inspire us for the future?

How can we apply this message to our own lives so that we can remain faithful and endure?

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:**

Share with the group and praises or prayer requests.

How can the group pray for each other to remain faithful and endure based on this week's study?

*Heavenly Father, give us eyes to see and ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to us, our church, and all your people. [insert requests and/or insights here] Give us the strength to remain faithful and endure. In Jesus Name, Amen.*

## **SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE:**

### Sermon on Revelation 2: 18-29 – Thyatira

- What were some things that the pastor shares about the city and history or Thyatira and how did that information connect with the message that Jesus was giving to the church?
- What were some of the symbolic images that the pastor talked about and how did that help you understand the message Jesus was relaying to the church in Thyatira?
- What did the pastor say was the central message that God gave Thyatira and how does that message connect/relate with us?
- How did the pastor help you understand this portion of Revelation, who Jesus is and his desire for the church?
- Share with you group any questions you had based on Sunday's message.

## **SERMON NOTES:**