

NASB 1977 Thyatira, the church in bed with the world ii

18“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: 19‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. 20‘But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21‘And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 22‘Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. 23‘And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. 24‘But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. 25‘Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. 26‘And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; 28and I will give him the morning star. 29‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

We had an excellent start on this letter last week. So just by way of review; Why are these letters important? What do we care in 2026 about a church with problems in 0096 AD. 1930 years have come and gone. This church for that matter was gone from the scene sometime before the end of the 2nd century. Why do we care.

I was thinking about big picture things this week. All the fuss with Mr. Trump and Iran. Someone reading this 100 years from now will have to

look up what was going on. To us it's all a big deal. \$5.50 cent gas is restrictive.

And I was thinking, things change so fast. Why wouldn't the Iranians just agree to whatever this man wants, because in 5 years he'll be gone. Everything will keep changing. Persia has been a powerhouse since Jesus walked in Galilee. It will be after Mr. Trump has vanished.

Mr Trump is willing to let them keep the oil, keep the power plant infrastructure, keep making money, just lay low for 10 years, make a bunch of money selling oil, and when the strong man is gone and a weak one returns, start up again with all the hatred. In the course of long centuries and eons of time, it's a blip on the radar screen.

And yet some things are constant through the eons. Bluster and fuss come and go but there are constant things that never change.

When Paul was on his missionary journeys, turning the world upside down, actually creating the foundations of western culture rooted in the restraints of judeo christian morality as revealed by Moses from God, that we are still trying to hang on to even today, he met some challenges head on that took him to the first ever church council in Jerusalem.

That can be dated to about 1978 years ago. So almost 50 years before this letter to this church. And the problem was whether gentile believers need to follow jewish cultural and ceremonial laws in order to be christians. Listen to what the apostles and church fathers at Jerusalem said, almost 2000 years ago.

Acts 15:19 "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, 20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. 21 "For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

The apostles and fathers told the gentile church; No meat sacrificed to idols, no fornication. Same exact things Jesus specifically points out that the church in Thyatira needs to not compromise with. Sexual immorality and spiritual friendship and participation with the world.

James 4:4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Sexual purity and distance from worldly things. Two things that draw your heart away from a pure love for Jesus. But the ancient church council adds another abstinence that Jesus didn't repeat.

Abstain from things strangled and from blood?? Those were practices that some gentiles did that were loathesome to jews. Meaningless to us except there is a principle here. The Jerusalem council tells the gentile churches, you've got jews living amongst you. You can give up doing a couple of things that trigger and offend jews. The gentile church needs to be user friendly to the jews.

Just because gentiles are freed from jewish civil and ceremonial law doesn't mean you offend those folks on purpose. The church is a melting pot of true christian believers from many cultures. We christians need to be sensitive to our freedoms to engage in things that aren't necessarily sinful, but that are offensive to other peoples sensitivities.

OK, all that to say; Jesus, in this letter dictated to John the apostle in about 96AD, repeats the same requirement for christians that the Jerusalem council sent back to the gentile believers with Paul. Don't compromise with the world's religions. Eating meat sacrificed to idols was a compromise with the world. An inroad for Satan to get into the church. Coziness with what the world is doing. Comfort with the world. Friendship with the world. All of that is detestable to our jealous God.

And sexual immorality is what the world allows, that we christians cannot allow. It is the constant distinctive of God's morality that is ageless. Same rules now as then. Same problems. Same issues. As Solomon said, there's nothing new under the sun.

Men come and go on the pages of history, but the problem of God's morality in the midst of a world ruled by the usurper, Satan, are timeless.

Why do you think the world has become secular. No sky God. That stuff is fantasy. The world created itself. A DNA "word" or "name" that is 3.4 billion characters long, that makes each person individual just happened.

The impossible complexities of human reproduction just happened. Somehow we have to get rid of the single explanation for all of this. Why? Because He insists on a revealed morality. And He threatens to judge all who sin. And sin is powerful, and fallen humans love it. We'll divorce the Creator to have our sin.

So these letters are timeless. They speak to us now exactly as they spoke to those folks then. Same timeless issues and sins. Same unchanging God. Same unchanging moral authority.

Whoever this woman was, that Jesus called Jezebel, she was gone in a few years. In fact she may have been gone in a few weeks or months, because Jesus declares He's going to eliminate her and her children with illness. Pestilence.

But down through history, we've always had the same recurring problem. Some false teacher will find a way to join the so called church to the world's immorality.

20 'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

That's our review. Sexual sin in the church. Compromise with the world. Friendship and comfort with the world's, actually Satan's religions. Immorality both physical and spiritual. Brought in by a woman who claims to be a preacher. We can bring sex and false religion into Christ's church and make it world friendly.

21 'And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality.

Sin is fun. Sin is powerful. Sin is contagious. Sin multiplies itself.

I'm reminded of the title of an old old sermon that dates clear back to the era of the puritans. The title says it all. *The expulsive power of a new affection*. The expulsive power of a new affection.

Our hearts love things. Either sin, or Jesus. When we meet Jesus intimately and personally, He becomes the affection, the love that expels all other loves and affections.

Like the pearl of great price, or the treasure in the field. Both cases, the person wants the better affection, the greater love, to the point that they will walk away from all the previous loves in order to have that love.

Jesus requires that. If we're going to have Jesus, in a love relationship that is real, sin has to go. Immorality has to go. Love for this world and all of it's met gala nonsense has to go. He IS the pearl worth more than anything else. He is the treasure hidden in the field.

But what happens when that greater love isn't the driver. When you've got a church full of both wheat and tares growing together. What power is present that would cause someone devoid of real relational love for Jesus to quit the world and it's sin.

21 'And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her

immorality.

Sin is powerful. SO powerful that there's really only one love in the universe that can displace it. You can have Jesus, or, you can have sin, but you can't have both.

You either sell everything and buy the field with the treasure, or you look at the balance sheet and say, nope, gonna pass on the field (which is the kingdom of God, the authority to reign of God) and the treasure (which is Jesus, having Jesus, knowing Jesus) and you keep the world and your sin.

This lady looked at the balance sheet and weighed one side against the other and said, I want the sin. I want the immorality. I like the power. I like the authority over these folks I've captured. And if Jesus needs to go so I can keep the sin see ya.

All throughout the centuries there have been Thyatira type Christians. Identify with the church. Talk about Jesus, but keep the world and its sins. Immoral Christians, or so they say, in the church. Christians who won't let go of this world and its sins and its pleasures and its powers in order to have Jesus.

And there have always been Thyatira type churches. Majority thyatira type people making up those churches. Compromised with the world. Maybe a true Christian or two mixed in with the mess. Hanging on as best they can.

Finally, there has been in the 2000 year history of Christendom an era that spans almost a thousand years when the church universal, looks like Thyatira. Married to the world. Unfaithful to Jesus. Immoral.

And beyond the immediate things that happened at the city of Thyatira after they received this letter, these verses reach all the way to the end of the church age.

I believe the parallel in the long ages of the church to this church is the

papacy. The catholic church. Unfaithful to Jesus. Spiritually immoral. In bed with the world. That premise actually makes the rest of what Jesus writes to this church make quite good sense. It works logically.

What Jesus says to this church is layered. It has an immediate fulfillment in the real church that the letter got delivered to, but it also clearly reaches way beyond that local church, all the way to the tribulation era after the church is removed out of the world. And you'll see that as we look briefly at the rest of the text.

21 'And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 22 'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed (of sickness,) and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. 23 'And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

This local church and this historic type in prophetic ages, both, refused to repent. Reformers came with the simple truth of the gospel of Jesus, by grace alone apart from works, through faith alone, in Jesus alone according to the scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone.

The church had become so powerful, so unwieldy, so evil, so much a part of the kingdoms of this world, they would not repent.

Prophetically, if you make these churches types of historic ages of the church, we place the beginning of this era around 605 AD. The reason for that is that the western part of the Roman empire fell and the rule of that empire fell to the Pope. He became the emperor of the so called holy roman empire. The church, in bed with the world.

The scriptures and the language became removed from the people. What was said was in language nobody could understand. And the texts were controlled and prohibited from the people by the church. No private interpretation of God's revealed truth. You get what the church tells you.

And most of it is hocus pocus in a foreign language. Total darkness for a thousand years.

22 'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed (of sickness,)

The words in the text where it says of sickness, are added. That isn't in the original greek text. It simply says I will cast her upon a bed. Almost as if to say, she likes beds so much, this harlot, she's going to get a bed she's not going to like. A bed of judgement.

and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation,

We have no record of how this played out with the local congregation at Thyatira. But looking beyond into the prophetic age, that language indicates that some form of this Thyatira type harlot church will be in place all the way to the rapture.

Indeed we will find this church, post rapture, still on earth, during the tribulation era and she turns up in Revelation chapter 17. The great harlot. The christians, the true ones, will be long gone, but this church will be a player during the great tribulation.

22 'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.

Repentance is graciously available, even to this church. Come out of your whoredoms with the world and repent. But we have 20-20 hindsight. She did not.

23 'And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

Again, no historic record. Tribulation, pestilence, adultery. We know that happened locally to these folks in this place, because Jesus said He would

do it, and what Jesus says He will do is money in the bank. It happens. Always. But we have no written history of the first part of this oracle happening.

After the true church is removed, during the tribulation period, we will see a final fulfillment of this pestilence I'm sure.

Jesus gets personal here. We're thinking in terms of corporate groups. This church at Thyatira. It's prophetic corporate fulfillment in the Roman Catholic church. But Jesus gets in our individual faces here. Corporate enterprise is made up of individuals. One person at a time.

and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

If you are a member of a false doctrine that is leading people to hell, Jesus will hold each individual member guilty in the corporate crime. Jesus searches individual hearts and minds. *and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.*

Good deeds cannot save you. Salvation is by grace through faith in the completed work of Jesus on the cross, dieing for our sins. Merit has no part in salvation. Please understand that. We rely completely on the merit of another in our place. Jesus sinless perfection applied to my account. My sins applied to Him to receive the retribution I was due, on the cross. Substitutionary atonement.

But our deeds have everything to do with judgement if that grace isn't in place in a true salvation.

The language here is almost ironic. You like beds so much, I'll give you a bed. You like merit so much and salvation by works, I'll remember every deed you ever did, and I will judge you by your works.

If all you've got to give to God on judgement day is YOUR works, YOUR

deeds, you are hopelessly bankrupt.

Last week we spoke of the dichotomy present in this letter. Together in the same room we've got some people He's going to war with, and some people that He wants no harm at all for.

Or perhaps to say it better, in the same room are people who hate us and are at war against us, along with some folks who love us and are our beloved friends.

So Jesus is done warning the ones he's going to war with, and now turns His attention to the ones that He loves.

24 'But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you.

There is some interesting and perhaps telling language in this verse that may hold clues to how the lady preacher was getting immorality combined into the church as somehow OK.

Jesus says *who have not known the depths, the deep things* and the root there for the past tense of "to know" is gnosis. To know. It's the past tense version of gnosis. And in history in the 2nd century of the church there was a group called the gnostics, we still have them today in different shape shifting forms, and the gnostics had a deeper knowing.

If you're one of them, you have a depth of knowing that the ordinary run of the mill plain jane christians don't have. Deeper knowledge. And one of the teachings of that deeper knowledge had, was that we humans, we are body and spirit. Physical and spiritual. And the physical is all bad, all evil, can't be anything but evil, no control over the physical being's evil ness, and the spiritual is good.

So the teaching is, just let the evil physical part of you do what it's going to

do. It doesn't matter. It's all forgiven anyways. So let 'er rip, tater chip. Do whatever the physical evil part of you wants to do, because the spiritual you is separate from all that. Spirit is good. Body is evil. Pay no attention to the evil your body is doing. It just doesn't matter.

That would sell! Right? Complete licentiousness unrestricted but spiritually you have a depth that ordinary christians don't have. Sign me up, right. Wrong. Jesus says you know the deep things alright. But it's the deep things of Satan.

24 'But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you.

For the rest of us, who are just ordinary, and we work to control and even crucify our flesh that only wants to sin, so that we can walk in obedience and love with Jesus, He says; *I place no other burden on you.*

That's the dichotomy. Some of you are in deep deep trouble with Jesus, and some of you, He says, the burden of the oracle of judgement is not your burden to be concerned with. Except, hold on for dear life. It's tough being in the same room with people who are going to be judged quickly.

25 'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.

Interesting that He doesn't call for a church split. He just tells them to remain seperated and hang on. *25 'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.*

What is it that they have that they can hold fast to. Jesus. These real and true and obedient ordinary christians have Jesus. Hang on tight. Hold fast. Until I come.

The church has lived under the expectant tension of the imminent return of Jesus for about seven years less than 2 millenium. There might be

something to that. Hang on. Hold fast. No matter what.

He says, I'm coming, and no matter what happens around you, hang on to me. We hear that, but we don't. Nothing challenged my faith yesterday so why would I worry about that today.

In 2004, 228 thousand people perished in a tsunami in the indian ocean. The day before the tsunami was business as usual. Then a 100 - 150 foot wave swept over them seemingly from out of nowhere, and they were carried out to sea, many battered to pieces by the debris of the destruction of hydraulic force.

That's a picture of christendom in 2026. Nothing much challenged me this week as far as being a christian. Therefore, next week will be the same. Jesus says; *25 'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.* And it goes in one ear and out the other. Why did He say that. We've got this.

Noah preached for 120 years. Nobody listened. Lunatic preacher. Then a tsunami came. The windows of heaven opened. That boat floated in 10 feet of water in seconds. But the people who called the preacher a lunatic are five feet tall, in 10 feet of water. Oops. Jesus is the only foundation that is immovable in tsunami's.

Finally, the encouragement to overcome. To hang onto Jesus through every storm.

26 'And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;

He who keeps my deeds until the end. Does that ring with the possibility that we may be challenged at a level we haven't seen so far to compromise Jesus deeds, and OBTW, that's shorthand for this book. God's Word. All of it. Keeping Jesus deeds is bowing to the authority of this book.

We look a few chapters into this book of Revelation, and keeping Jesus deeds, being faithful to the authority of this book, will cost you your head.

We talked about Polycarp 3 weeks ago. A second century martyr. The men carrying out the orders of the powers over them did not want to kill polycarp. They begged him to compromise. Just a tiny compromise. What could it hurt to bend just a small amount to save your life. Think of the good you can do if you're alive.

26 'And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;

Right now, the nations have authority over God's people. We're lucky. Our western civilization grew up from judeo christian roots and for a long time, in our nation particularly, the understanding was one of respect.

Church is church. Government stays out of those lanes. Government is government and church can advise, but the church is not the government. That can change overnight. We hope it doesn't but we witnessed problems of government overstepping it's authority into church business during covid.

In the first century when Rome was running roughshod over the church, persecuting christians, causing them fear and grief, what an encouragement that Jesus says, remember, this isn't the whole game. This may look bad, but it's only the first chapter in a long story. Let me show you the ending that you're holding fast to me for.

25 'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. 26 'And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27 AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father;

Daniel 2:34-35

As you watched, a stone was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. / Then the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold were shattered and became like chaff on the threshing floor in summer. The wind carried them away, and not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that had struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

The nations may beat us up in this age. Christians are being bullied and persecuted all over the world this morning.

But Jesus is the stone cut out without hands who batters the nations into dust and the wind carries them away. Gone. When the challenges come, like a tsunami perhaps, we don't know, remember the end of the story and hang onto Jesus for dear life.

A day is coming when these nations that are bullying the christians will be judged BY the christians. We win, if we hold on.

To the one who overcomes, I will grant the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Revelation 3:21

28 and I will give him the morning star.

Who or what is the morning star, and why would I want it?

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star.” Rev 22:16

From the moment that Jesus came into my heart, in 1970, to this day, my appetite to have more of Him, has not waned. Jesus is the book ~ the book is Jesus. So for now, I get more and more of Jesus, incrementally, as I immerse myself into the depths of this book.

But I want that morning star. I've got the down payment, the Holy Spirit, living in my heart. But I long for more of Him. Some day I'll have Him.

Overcomers get the morning star.

29 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'