

## Revelation 2.18-29

## “The Big Tent Church”

Election Time > Alliances Made > ‘Politics makes strange BED FELLOWS’  
 Political Parties BIG TENTS > Invite Anyone who MAY BE YOUR FRIEND

Modern Phenomenon in Ancient Church of Thyatira > Roman Province of Asia  
 4<sup>th</sup> of 7 Churches addressed by Exalted Lord Jesus Christ  
 65 kms. inland from Pergamum > Half way to Sardis > COMMERCIAL Center  
 If Ephesus > NYC of Roman Asia / Pergamum > Wash DC / Thyatira > Baraholka  
 Trans-shipment point for TRADE between the Mediterranean and the East

1. Sin’s Enticement 2. Searching Examination 3. Sober Evaluation 4. Strong  
 Encouragement

## 1. Sin’s Enticement

a. ‘you gotta eat...’

Insurance Agent in Hawaii > Tommy Jitchaku > Impt Lesson “You Gotta Eat!”  
 Spoken in Supermarket > Tommy’s Trolley filled with BEER and Potato Chips  
 // People of Thyatira had to Eat > Wanted to Satisfy Hunger & Other Appetites too

If WANT SOMETHING > Know RIGHT PEOPLE > Belong to GUILD / Society  
 Similar to BROTHERHOOD > Maybe similar to the MAFIA

Archeologists DISCOVERED Thyatira > Many Guilds.....

“more trade guilds are known in Thyatira than in any other Asian city...  
 woolworkers, linen-workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leather-workers,  
 tanners, potters, bakers, slave-dealers and bronze-smiths” Sir William Ramsay

GUILD > More than a LABOR UNION > Religious Organization  
 Trade guilds > Pagan religious practices required for Membership  
 PAGAN FEASTS often led to SEXUAL PROMISCUITY

“If you wish to get ahead in Thyatira you must belong to a guild; if you belong to a  
 guild, your very membership implies that you worship its god. You will be  
 expected to attend the guild festivals and to eat food that has been offered to the  
 tutelary deity and which you receive on your table as a gift from that god. And  
 then, when the feast ends, and the real – grossly immoral – fun begins, you must  
 not walk out unless you desire to become the object of ridicule and persecution.”

William Hendriksen

Gods of Thyatira must be PLEASED and APPEASED for BUSINESS SUCCESS

Want to BENEFIT from SOCIETY > Must BEND to the WILL of SOCIETY

“Every generation of Christians must face the question, ‘How far should I accept and adopt contemporary standards and practices?’ On the one hand, Christians must not deny the faith. On the other, they must not deny their membership of society. The cause of Christ is not served if Christians appear as a group of old-fashioned people always trying to retreat from the real world.” Leon Morris

b. A ‘God-sent’ Solution?

Conflict for Xtians in Thyatira > GODLESS SOCIETY > Bible banned Behaviors  
How to be God’s NEW JERUSALEM People in FALLEN BABYLON World?

SOLUTION by New Teacher in Thyatira > Woman w/ Welcome Message  
“RELAX!” BEHAVIOR has NOTHING TO DO with your BELIEFS  
You can HANDLE FIRE without BEING BURNT

Biblical Basis? “about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that *an idol is nothing at all* in the world”  
1 Corinthians 8.4

Not Spiritually Defiled by Meat sold in Market Place which was Offered to an Idol  
// Xtian enjoy SHASHLIK cooked by Muslim > Slaughtered > even Prayed Over

BIG DIFFERENCE > btwn EATING & ENVIRONMENT > Embracing System  
NOT JUST TAKE OUT ORDERS of Shashlik > FULL DINING EXPERIENCE  
Pray to Idols / Incense to Idols / Play with Temple Prostitutes

WOMAN TEACHER > No Problem > HAVE IT ALL > Do it All!!  
Don’t be SPINLESS, WEAK CONSCIENCE Christians > Afraid to LIVE!  
The “Deep Secret” > DUAL Citizenship Fallen Babylon and New Jerusalem

“How convenient in a city dominated by trade guilds, for a prophetess to reveal the deep secret that Christians need not suffer loss by refraining from the guilds’ immoral and idolatrous celebrations!...Materialism, no less than persecution, is the serpent’s weapon of war against Christ’s church.”  
Dennis E. Johnson

MATERIALISM > More Damaging than Persecution > Persec drives TO CHRIST  
Materialism > Drives a WEDGE BETWEEN the Believer and His Lord  
Later in Revelation > when the Beast and the Dragon cannot Destroy the Church –  
Satan sends the Harlot of Materialism

## HAD HER IDEOLOGY BEEN EMBRACED BY THE CHURCH

There is no Fundamental Difference between Babylon and the New Jerusalem  
TODAY Xtianity would be Ancient Relic like Zoroastrianism or Eastern Cults

### c. The Source of the 'Solution'

JESUS UNMASKS the Lie > Origin of that Deep Secret...

v. 24 "her teaching... *Satan's* so-called deep secrets"

WONDER WOMAN with this LIBERATING TEACHING --- NEW Jezebel...

Real Jezebel died a HORRIBLE DEATH 1000 years EARLIER

Pagan queen of Israel REPLACED worship of BAAL for Worship of YAHWEH

Her MORAL Lies RESURRECTED > No Conflict between Prayers & Prostitutes  
BEHAVIOR is not connected to BELIEF / Doctrine not related to Duty

v. 20 "that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols"

"Her beastly system had engineered such a complete divorce of morality from religion that it even encouraged gross sexual immorality under the cloak of piety."

John Stott

If you want to DINE with the DEVIL > YOU BETTER HAVE A LONG SPOON

"God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth." 1 John 1.5,6

## 2. Searching Examination

DIRTY DEEDS of Thyatira were DONE IN DARKNESS > Not everyone Saw!

Hiding at OWN Computer Terminals > NO ONE SAW their PEEP SHOWS  
Some members of Thyatiran Church > LIVING A SECRET LIFE

v. 18 "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire"

ANGEL > Protective Reference to the Church Leaders

Only time TITLE > Son of God > Occurs in the Book of Revelation

Jesus TRUE Son of God > to Center for the worship of Apollo, the Sun god

Jesus EYES SEARCH OUT the THOUGHTS and INTENTIONS of Every Person  
Jesus sees thru Outer Facade > Discerns Deep MOTIVATIONS of HEART

v. 23 “I am he who searches hearts and minds”

Paul’s first convert in Europe: “a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. *The Lord opened her heart* to respond to Paul's message” Acts 16.14

“O LORD, you have searched me and you know me...If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.” Psalm 139.1-12

Jesus “did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.” John 2.25

“If this clearsighted scrutiny of the hearts and minds of men was characteristic of the earthly Jesus, how much more must the risen Christ know all the secrets of men?” John Stott

What JESUS SEARCHED for.... v. 19 “I know your deeds”  
Cannot SEPARATE your BELIEF from your BEHAVIOR > Both ESSENTIAL

v. 26 “overcomes and *does my will* to the end”

20.12 “I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged *according to what they had done* as recorded in the books.”

NOT Saved by WORKS > Cannot be Saved WITHOUT WORKS

### 3. Sober Evaluation

Thyatira – Church ‘in the middle’

Ephesus <b>Problem</b>	Smyrna <b>Perfect</b>	Pergamum <b>Problem</b>
Thyatira <b>All Three</b>		
Sardis <b>Perverse</b>	Philadelphia <b>Perfect</b>	Laodicea <b>Perverse</b>
M. Robert Mulholland, Jr.		

a. **Good** > These Receive **COMMENDATION** of the Head of the Church

24 Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching

v. 19 “I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.”

**LOVE** > the Greatest Virtue

**FAITH** > Complete Trust in Christ Alone

**SERVICE** > What the **MASTER EXPECTS** to See in Our Lives

**PERSEVERANCE** > Steady **PROGRESS** in Grace and Godliness

**GREATEST TRIBUTE** > “you are now doing more than you did at first”

“Thyatira had learned the oft-forgotten lesson that the Christian life is a life of growth, of progress, of development. Ephesus was backsliding; Thyatira was moving forward... Which of these two churches do we resemble more?” John Stott

1973 Horse ‘Secretariat’ > won Triple Crown: Kent. Derby – Preakness – Belmont  
In Belmont Stakes **RAN EACH** ¼ mile **FASTER** than the **PREVIOUS** ¼ mile

Finished the Race 31 Lengths **AHEAD** of all other Challengers

How we should **RUN** the **RACE** of Faith in Christ > Get Better and Better

How do you **MEASURE YOUR PACE**? Compared to last month? Year? Decade?

v. 24 I will not impose any other burden on you”

Reference to JERUSALEM COUNCIL > Apostolic Decree to Gentile Churches:  
 “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything  
 beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to  
 idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.  
 You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.” Acts 15.28,29

Human BEHAVIOR > Often SWINGS to EXTREMES like Pendulum of Clock  
 EXTREME > Christian Jezebelites Belief is SEPARATED from BEHAVIOR  
 Many Church Leaders > SWING to OPPOSITE EXTREME > More LAWS

From Extreme of LICENSE or Libertinism to Extreme of LEGALISM  
 Head of Church > Lord Jesus > Commends NEITHER Extreme >> LIBERTY

Uganda > Problem of Sexual Immorality in Society > Crept into the Church  
 Strange Teaching arose in Church > “fruit of knowledge of good & evil” = SEX  
 ANY SEX is Bad > Christian Wives denied Husbands > IMMORALITY Increased  
 LIBERTINISM can NOT be DEFEATED by LEGALISM

WISDOM of JESUS vs. 24,25 “I will not impose any other burden on you: Only  
 hold on to what you have until I come.”

ENTRUSTS His Chosen Ones with HIS WORD and HIS SPIRIT > HOLD ON!

b. Bad v. 20 “you tolerate that woman Jezebel...by her teaching she misleads”  
 Jesus says: “I love you, but I hate your tolerance”

EITHER had POOR CONSCIENCE or a FEEBLE COURAGE

BIG TENT Church > Gather Together Anyone who MAY BE YOUR FRIEND  
 “Does NOT Matter what BELIEVE or how you BEHAVE – as long SINCERE!”

“Sticks and Stones can break my bones > but WORDS can never Hurt Me!!”  
 BIG LIE > WORDS means something > Damage worse than Sticks and Stones

BIG TENT contains a BIG LIE > then NOTHING MATTERS > ALL IS GOOD!

Jezebel’s Lie leads to Jezebel’s End > Ignore TRUTH is to INVITE FALSEHOOD

“Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him...he married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.”

1 Kings 16.30-33

Before long > 850 False Prophets EATING at Omri & Jezebel’s ROYAL TABLE  
THEN > this Snake in the House of God > began KILLING Prophets of God

c. Ugly > SIN is UGLY > and its RESULT is even MORE UGLY

Prophet ELISHA said to Future King JEHU: “I anoint you king over the LORD's people Israel...and I will avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the LORD's servants shed by Jezebel. The whole house of Ahab will perish...As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her...and no one will bury her.”

2 Kings 9.6-10

Jezebel of Thyatira also had BITTER END v. 22 “So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely”  
BED WHERE THEY PLAYED BECAME BED WHERE THEY PAID

TERRIBLE END FOR HER BED PARTNERS: v. 23 “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.”

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

“The more we understand what is represented in these churches, the more we see that John’s vision speaks strongly to the church in every age. In many denominations today there is a three-way division. On the one side are those who, at various levels and in diverse ways, seek to live lives of faithful Christian discipleship. These are often labeled ‘conservatives,’ or ‘fundamentalists,’ or ‘evangelicals.’ On the other side are those who, in equal diversity, adopt various apostate or heretical perspectives and behaviors. These are often labeled ‘liberals,’ or ‘radicals.’ In the middle are those who, for various reasons, ally themselves with neither side but ‘tolerate’ the extremes of both sides for the sake of preserving the myth of structural or denominational ‘loyalty’ or ‘unity.’ The Thyatiran church is alive and as sick as ever in our day.”

M. Robert Mulholland, Jr.

vs. 21-22 *“I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 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.”*

TIME TO REPENT > No one can be sure HOW LONG that Time WILL BE

Do YOU Know Jesus? Have you REPENTED of Your Sins?

‘I came here to learn English, meet foreigners, make friendships’ WELCOME!!

HEARD > God in Heaven sent His Son in Love > Save you from Sin > New Life

HEARD ALSO > God’s Love DEMANDS A RESPONSE > No Indifference

#### 4. Strong Encouragement

v. 18 “the Son of God...whose feet are like burnished bronze”

600 yrs before Prophet Daniel in Babylon saw: “a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude” Daniel 10.4-6

Jesus’ Feet > BETTER THAN BEST BRONZE GUILDS OF THYATIRA!

v. 26,27 “To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations-- ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery’ -- just as I have received authority from my Father.

Jesus = God > Authority over the Nations can be Promised to the Victorious

“Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?” 1 Corinthians 6.2

v.28 “I will also give him the morning star.

22.16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

“If Christ gives to the sinner as his works deserve, He will give to the conqueror far beyond what his works could ever begin to deserve.” John Stott



AMAZING PROMISES > Hope for Despondent Believers in Thyatira

City > Least Significant of the 7 Churches in Roman Asia

OUTCASTS in Society > REJECTED BY GUILDS > No Where to Turn

Christ turns to Them > EMBRACING GRACE > Longest of 7 Letters

SIGNIFICANT and Important to the Son of God > THE MORNING STAR

“To the church which is a faithful gospel-lamp in the dark night of this world Christ also promises himself as the morning star, the assurance of the coming dawn, when lamplight will be swallowed up in eternal day.” Michael Wilcock