

Seven pt4

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Seven / Revelation 2:18–28

What do you do when someone comes into a church and starts to proclaim a truth that doesn't fit with scripture? How do we handle that?

We have a lot of that today. Maybe not in physical churches, although that happens sometimes, but in virtual churches where people attend on a regular basis. In some cases, people will spend longer listening to false teaching online than they will hearing good teaching in their own churches

Stop and think about it. We gather for 75-90 minutes a week. How many hours do we spend online, in front of a TV, reading social media? How easy would it be for something false, that sounded good, to take root? And then spread to our church?

That's Thyatira. Minus the social media bit, mind you.

Let's dive in. [Revelation 2:18-28](#).

So the first thing we need to clarify...who is Jesus to this church? In each letter, He has identified Himself in a different way and that way has set the tone for the letter.

This church gets fiery eyes and heavy feet.

Fiery eyes- eyes that are penetrating and zeroing in on falsehood and looking for truth

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

blazing eyes is to focus on the incisive comprehension of the Christ who knows precisely and exactly what is transpiring among all the churches in general and in Thyatira in particular

Feet like burnished bronze- this was the heaviest known metal in the ancient world. This is a picture of Someone who has set their feet in an immovable position- Jesus is not shifting to accommodate whatever is going on at Thyatira.

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

John has taken something with which every Thyatiran would be familiar to use as an expression denoting the strength and ability of the Savior to deal with whatever situation must be faced in Thyatira

And verse 19- like other letters- starts out positive. This church has some great qualities:

Love

Faith

Service

Perseverance

But beyond that, they have GROWN. There is a maturity in this church that we have not seen indicated before. John writes that their initial deeds in these areas have been surpassed. **This church has grown in their ministries and their maturity!**

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

then the phrase is added that the saints in Thyatira were achieving more now in these areas than they did even at first, which suggests growth in Christian maturity—a reasonably unusual situation since the tendency is for spiritual entropy to assert itself in the churches

And here we should pause- a church should never stop growing. Numerical growth may be cyclical- we have seen that here. But a church should never stop seeing people maturing in their faith, which gives birth to new ministries and ways of impacting their culture. That is vital. **Atrophy is not an option for a healthy church.**

The problem is, despite their growth and maturity, the church at Thyatira has grown lazy in an area that is very destructive.

Look at verse 20-21

They have a false prophet.

Jezebel is not this woman's name, but in keeping with the other letters it is a reference to the type of person she is.

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

while the risqué teacher of the Thyatiran church possibly was actually named Jezebel, more likely John has assigned her this name in order from the outset to characterize her for his readers. If so, he would have dealt a telling blow even before he proceeded to describe her behavior

She is a deceiver and someone who is sexually immoral. And she is misrepresenting God. And she is in a position of authority- because she is teaching. And the church is tolerating it!

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

Specifically, the sin at Thyatira was the sin of tolerance. To contemporary ears, to say such a thing sounds strange since in the present climate, intolerance is about the only universally recognized sin. But the church in Thyatira was tolerating a woman named Jezebel, who spoke of herself as a prophetess, teaching the servants of Christ to eat things sacrificed to idols and to become involved in sexual promiscuity

The idea of tolerance being a sin goes all over our 21st century ears...where the most known verse in the Bible is Judge not... (taken out of context of course but still) The church can be compassionate, welcoming, caring, graceful, merciful...all those things..and yet not be “tolerant” of those who take the Word and twist it for their own ends.

That’s why we cannot allow just anyone to teach in the church. We need people who we are sure have their doctrine sorted out and who handle God’s Word correctly and who are open to correction and teaching. (and that means me as well as anyone)

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

Possibly Jezebel even went a step beyond them in claiming to be a prophetess, which would suggest that her teachings were not merely based on deductions from the material received from the apostles and prophets but that she considered her own utterances on a par with or superior to the writings of the apostles and prophets. In other words, she added to false teaching the authority, as it were, of God himself

Even worse, this woman has been called out and has not only not corrected her false teaching- she has refused to repent at all and has continued teaching. Not a good situation, since she seems to have influence!

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

the Lord indicates that he had given her space to repent. The expression itself probably indicates that she had received a previous warning and had chosen to disregard it. Hence, she is deemed “unwilling” to repent

And the consequences facing her are dire and far reaching- look at verses 22-23

She will suffer- the picture here is of a dining couch and that her encouragement of perversity and gluttony for sin will lead to her being consumed by it as on a funeral bier

Those who follow her will suffer until they repent (they still have hope)- the same fate faces them as Jezebel

Those who refuse to stop following her (her children) will die ([1 Corinthians 11:28-32](#))

That's some serious results. That is how seriously God takes His Word when it is taught to His people. It is nothing to fool around with and when He corrects you, it is a good idea to listen and obey! (James 3:1)

And God is capable of searching and knowing not just the thoughts but inclinations behind them. The truth is not hidden from Him.

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

The Lord presents himself as the One who is continually searching (the present active participle of *eraunaō*), **suggesting a continual action on the part of the Lord to evaluate both the affections and thoughts (common meaning of the Greek *kardia*) and even the emotions (*nephros*) of the Thyatiran church.** Just as one will reap what he sows, the Lord promises to pay each according to his deeds.

But there is a remnant. Check out verse 24-25

God always preserves a remnant. He always seeks to give the church, the nation, the world a chance to keep going and to be renewed. There are people in Thyatira who have not been deceived and have not bought in to this false teaching.

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

There follows an interesting word of promise to some at Thyatira who have clearly abstained from listening to the teachings of Jezebel. The Lord promises that those who “have not learned Satan’s so-called deep secrets” will have no other burden imposed on them. They are simply to hold fast to what they have until the Lord comes

They have heard this mess and said “Nope.” We need to be those people. Who see this garbage for what it is and reject it. We need to run to our Bibles, to prayer, to what we have learned that we know is true and dismiss teaching that contradict it!

And hold fast.

Jesus ends the letter with promises to those who hold fast:

Verses 26-28

- **Authority over the nations**- upon the return of Jesus we will rule with Him (v27)

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

However, to assign this as a promise merely for the ultimate eternal heavenly realm also reduces to insignificance the reference to *tōn ethnōn* or “the nations.” More probable would be a view that would associate this promise with assignments in the millennial kingdom

- **The morning star**- the full presence of Jesus until He returns

Revelation 4. To Thyatira (2:18–29)

The promise is then that the church at Thyatira, faithful to the calling of God, will eventually receive the morning star that is the abiding, close, imminent, and eternal fellowship with the Lord himself

So we have a future promise and a current promise. We lean into both for strength and comfort.