

Understanding Revelation Part 5

The Permissive Church

Revelation 2:18-29

As we continue this study, let us look back at what we have seen.

We have seen the church that needed a second honeymoon, Ephesus.

They did what they did out of duty instead of love for the Lord.

We saw the church that needed courage, Smyrna.

This was a persecuted church.

We have also studied the church of tolerance, Pergamus.

This church was a compromising church.

Now let's look at the **fourth church** to whom Jesus dictated a letter through the Apostle John.

Thyatira, modern Akhisar, is located 42 miles inland from the Aegean Sea.

It was known for abundant crops, trade and the manufacture of purple dye that was very costly.

You may remember that Paul's convert, Lydia, was a native of this city.

She was saved at Philippi, seen in **Acts 16:14**.

It says, *"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."*

Some skeptics say there was no church in this city, though they were never there.

Is it so hard to believe that Lydia and her family could have taken the Gospel back to their families?

Actually there are historical evidences of a church in this city.

One writer that doubted its existence turned around and stated that it was over run with false doctrine in the second century.

John Gill noted that a bishop from Thyatira attended the Council of Nice in the fourth century.

He mentions it had a "presbyter" in the eighth century named "Esaia."

So a church was sent a letter from Christ, what did He say?

We see in verse 18 the communication, the Judge is speaking.

He reiterates His deity by His title of the "Son of God.." and the attributes of "eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass."

In Revelation 1:14-15, these two attributes are seen as Jesus is revealed to John, now they are used again.

This description goes back to Daniel 10:6: *"His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude."*

The eyes of God are a fire, piercing through the garbage of our lives searching out the hearts.

In this is seen the omniscience of Christ.

His sight reaches to all persons, and things, and is very searching and penetrating, and discovers and brings to light things the most dark and obscure.

We read in 1 Corinthians 4:5, *"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."*

His eyes will reveal all.

1 Cor 3, the judgment seat of Christ. It says that *"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."*

This is speaking to believers, and our works will be made manifest, that is it will be revealed.

That day, the judgment seat of Christ will reveal it. Why? It will be revealed by fire.

Our works will be tried through the eyes of Jesus, and be revealed for what they really are.

Jesus will help us to be real.

The fire also represents light.

That shows us the love of Christ.

Jesus is the Light of the World. **John 1:9** says that Jesus is *"that was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."*

***What grace, that Jesus gives light to every man that comes into the world.**

Every one that has ever been born will be without excuse when they stand before God.

Romans 1:19-21 *"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them;*

for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart

was darkened."

When any soul in this world will accept the light that they have been given, it is my belief that God will send them more light.

Not only are they feet of light and feet that bring the Gospel, but they are feet of judgment.

His judgment will stand and there are none that have ever existed that can compete, challenge or question.

Brass in the Bible tends to denote judgment. Think of the brazen altar.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were killed and offered on that altar of brass.

The judgment of God was held back, his wrath appeased as a sacrifice was offered on the altar of brass.

Next we see the commendation of the congregation.

In verse 19, we see their tender love for Christ. It is called their charity.

This is the Greek word, agape, that wonderful word associated with the love of God.

Jesus used that word to describe their love.

They were fulfilling His commandment of **John 15:12**, that they, "love one another," as Jesus had loved them.

In addition to commending them for their love, He commended them for their involvement in the ministry (service).

***True love will be followed by action.**

He commended their trust in God, they exhibited faith.

Jesus acknowledged that He noticed their endurance, their suffering, as He noted their patience and continuing in the face of the trouble.

They were not guilty as Ephesus, they had a love akin to their first love.

Their last works were more, or greater than their first works.

The saved were going forward, but there was a problem.

Jesus condemns them because of corruption in verses 20 through 23.

They were allowing an **unscriptural leader** in their midst.

Much controversy exist among religious people over the role of women.

Biblically it is clear that a woman is not to be a pastor or in any position that she would have authority over the men of the church.

1 Timothy 2:12 gives the clear commandment, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

In order for us to say that it is acceptable for a woman to pastor, be an evangelist, serve as a church planter, or any area where she would be leading men, we would have to omit this verse from the Scriptures.

What many do is attempt to make excuses for the verse, but Paul was clear.

We must not be mistaken, there are great women leaders in the Scriptures.

Women like Miriam were leaders of the women of their times.

In the New Testament we find Paul commending women that were fellow workers in the ministry, but no where do we find the ordination or acceptance of women into areas of pastoral leadership.

Realistically, a woman cannot be the husband of one wife

*****God's plans of authority, His chains of command, are not issues of value, but office.**

Women are just as valuable as men, but different offices and responsibilities are held.

This woman called "herself a prophetess."

She was claiming a position to which she had no right.

This unscriptural leader's problem was not merely that she was a woman, she is called Jezebel.

To understand this, let us consider the Old Testament version of Jezebel.

We must be careful what we call someone, because we are associating them with whom we call them.

The Jezebel of the Old Testament killed God's prophets.

Is it possible that to keep her position, she was allowing persecution of certain Christians?

Many have compromised to keep their own power.

Jezebel also openly went against God's man.

This one usurped and probably undermined the true leadership of the church, sowing discord.

Jezebel also set up idols.

This could represent, not only physical idols, but idols of false doctrine.

This woman would be a forerunner of modern Charismatic "prophetesses" that usurp what the Bible teaches and stand in open opposition of the Scriptures.

They come and set up prosperity and positive thinking type ministries, ignoring Biblical principles.

To do right goes against their view of success, therefore they cast aside what the Bible says, go against God's men and in a sense allow the god of self satisfaction to permeate their teachings and those that follow them.

Jezebel was also a murderer.

She went to great lengths to acquire the vineyard that Ahab coveted.

She had Naboth murdered to advance her cause. She corrupted a nation.

This woman that this church allowed to continue in their midst was doing the same things.

Her sins included fornication, so this woman was dwelling in great wickedness, and was not disciplined by the church.

In verses 21 through 23, Jesus declared mercy, as He had given opportunity to this wicked woman, and to those that followed her, to repent.

They had their chance, but refused, now they will go through the great tribulation, a clear sign that they were unregenerated.

God's dealing with the lost, after a time of opportunity, will be judgment, and no less.

As we come to verses 24-29, we find a charge to those that are converted; the genuine Christians in their midst.

The question could be raised, why were they not charged to leave?

Realistically, where would they go?

But upon those that were not a part of this counterfeit religion, those that were saved would face no judgment.

They were to walk in the same faith that they already possessed.

They were to "hold fast" in that which they already had received.

Colossians 3 speaks of this principle.

It is not a keeping of salvation, but a living in salvation.

Verses 6-7, says, "*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*"

They were to remain faithful in the face of a perverted society.

This greatly speaks to us today as we are in a wicked society, but we are to hold fast to the teachings and ways of Christ.

The church, in many ways, is giving in to the ways of the world. **God despises this.**

We are to stay faithful, and remember what is coming. God's people will reign with Him.

We will have a part in the Kingdom!

Verse 26 gives the revelation of those that were faithful will have power over nations bestowed upon them.

A privilege of not only sharing the joys of eternal life, sharing possessions of Christ, we will share His authority over creation.

We will also share the possession of the Morning Star.

Some may ask, what or who is this?

Let Jesus tell us Himself. In Revelation 22:16, He said, "*I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*"

The Morning Star is the brightest star, and Jesus is the brightest light to mankind.

His prophecies are sure, His way is perfect, His plan is established, and His pathway is lightened by His grace.

Notice 2 Peter 1:19, as Peter declared, "*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.*"

This passage is talking about the word of God, and when our faith is made sight, we will understand it all.

It will be at that time that we will be in complete unity with the Morning Star!

He is mine and I am his now, but when this old body is redeemed, I shall know Him like never before!

In thinking of this church, it must challenge us today to come to the decision that we must never tolerate sin, but live faithfully for Christ until we see him face to face.

It is then, in our glorified state that we will stand before the Lord in the brightness of His glory.

Imagine as God's children stand before Him.

In our finite minds it is impossible to get a true grasp, but it is going to happen.

We will be in the presence of the Almighty, the King of Kings.

The origination of the military salute is a simple story, but for me gives a glimpse of how we may react.

After the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, a naval tournament was arranged for the victorious British seamen and, at the request of Admiral Drake, Queen Elizabeth consented to come from London to award prizes. The officer in charge of arrangements issued orders that "on account of the dazzling loveliness of her majesty, all men, upon receiving their prizes, should shield their eyes with their right hand." As the Queen passed, each man lifted his hand as if to reduce the glare of her glory, thus was born the naval and military salute.

Imagine as we face our Lord, and He approaches us with a crown that we may receive of His hand.

As unworthy people we will be in the presence of the "dazzling loveliness" of the Majest from on High.

It will not be a mere earthly queen or ruler, but the King of Heaven, the Lord of all the ages.

Possibly, we will have to salute as we face the splendor and brightness of the King.