

Revelation Series: #8

August 21, 2022

The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon

The message today is from Revelation 2:18-29: The Church in Thyatira

The stories making headlines are scandalous!

Here are a few:

–Memorial Presbyterian Church (PCA) increasingly promotes homosexuality and LGBTQ issues, and proudly hosted the first Revoice “gay Christian” Conference in 2018. Not surprising the pastor of this church “came out of the closet” as a practicing homosexual. Meanwhile, the denomination did little to reprimand the pastor and the church elders. As a result of Thyatira-like tolerance, the same pastor “told listeners (in a now-deleted video) that he was open to holding a pedophile conference at his church and has *made it clear* that he and his church are all in on the ‘gay Christianity’ movement.”

–As if Drag Queen Story Hour in public libraries and public schools around the world is not shocking enough, how about Drag Queen prayer and story time for children during Sunday morning worship at church? Here are some highlights proving that Balaam and Jezebel are alive and well:

For many progressive congregations it is becoming fashionable to invite drag queens to speak to the children. Recently one progressive congregation invited a local drag queen to have prayer time with the children while in another “church” employed a drag queen to host a dance party for the children in place of attending the service. One church in Canada recently took their heresy to a new level by hosting an online event with a drag queen posing as God answering the prayers of the participants. And to top it off, a church in Alberta, Canada is hosting a Drag Queen story hour on September 4th, with all attendees, including children, encouraged to bring \$5 bills to be given as tips for the readers. Here is what the poster says in part, “Remember that Queens love tips...”

Here is a screen shot from the churches website at holyspiritluthern.ca



–Another atrocious example of a Jezebel controlling spirit comes by way of Carlton Funderburke, senior pastor at Church at the Well in Kansas City. The pastor reportedly

screamed at the congregation calling them “broke, busted, and disgusted” because they didn’t give him enough money to buy the new watch he wanted to buy. This pastor, like many pastors in the Prosperity Gospel movement, perverts the Gospel of Jesus Christ by teaching that the primary purpose of the death and resurrection of Jesus is to create material gain for those who have enough of their so-called “faith.”

Charles Spurgeon predicted a time when churches would have clowns entertaining the goats rather than pastors feeding sheep. But the Bible paints a picture even more devastating than that. The Bible warns that there is coming a day when people in the church will crave the winsomeness of a leader over leaders who hold to sound doctrine; permissiveness over perseverance; tolerance over truth; and the self over the Sovereign!

Paul, writing to Timothy, encouraged the young pastor this way, “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His Kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage— with great patience and careful instruction.” (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

Then, he adds this ominous warning, “For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

Remember that the church in Pergamum had teachers from among their own congregation rise up promoting greed, sexual immorality and idolatry and the Lord urged those loyal to Him to repent and no longer tolerate their presence in their assembly.

Likewise, as we come to the church in Thyatira, we see a congregation sliding down the slippery slope of devastating compromise. The Lord Jesus strongly reproaches them for the practice and tolerance of sin in their midst. Simultaneously, He warns them in the strongest terms that He will judge with speed and finality those in the church who refuse to repent!

Yet, there are powerful lessons for us to learn from the Lord’s words to the church in Thyatira. One primary lesson is this: Christians are to those who not only claim faith, but follow the pattern of obedience set forth in the Scriptures.

Let’s hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches as the Lord addresses the pastor of the Church in Thyatira

- I. (2:18-29) The Letter to the Church in Thyatira
 - A. (2:18a) Thyatira: The Church that winked at sin. The Tolerant Church
 1. Like the church in Smyrna and Pergamum, the Bible doesn’t tell us who was the founder. However,
 - a) Acts 16:14 mentions that Lydia was a dealer in purple cloth from Thyatira.
 - (1) She heard the gospel from Paul while the two were in Philippi.
 - (2) Acts 16:15 says that she and her whole household believed and was baptized.

(3) It is therefore possible that she and her family helped start the church.

b) Acts 19:10 tells us that Paul taught in Ephesus for “two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.”

(1) It is likely that the church in Thyatira was the product of Paul’s outreach in the area, including the small city of Thyatira.

2. About the city of Thyatira

a) Not much is known. It wasn’t a major city in the region.

b) It was located along the Roman road connecting Pergamum and Sardis. It was located 40 miles from Pergamum.

c) It was known for its numerous trade guilds

(1) Each guild was a tight-knit group who not only shared commonality of their trade, but also shared a common deity.

(2) Each member of the guild was expected to join in regular feasts, which involved sacrifice to the idol representing the deity.

(a) After feasting and sacrificing, the guild members would indulge in sexual immorality.

(3) For Christians, it meant that if they were to have any work they had to be a part of their respective guild.

(a) To hold a job or run a business you had to be an active member and participant in these idolatrous and immoral practices.

(4) Can you imagine the pressure Lydia, her family and other Christians were under?

3. To: The letter is addressed to the angel/ messenger/ pastor

B. (2:18b) From: The Lord Jesus Christ

1. The “Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are burnished bronze.”

a) The title, Son of God, emphasizes the deity of Christ

(1) The title is the only time it is found in Revelation

(2) This title stresses His co-eternality, co-existence, and co-equality with God the Father.

b) In Revelation 1:13 He is revealed as the risen Son of Man, indicating His ability to sympathize with the needs, trials, pressures in temptation of His people.

(1) But, now, as Son of God, His deity and strength as divine judge comes to the forefront!

2. Then, He adds the descriptors of having “eyes like blazing fire” and “feet like burnished bronze.”

a) He walks among them and sees the True condition of the church—nothing is hidden from Him; nothing concealed.

(1) All may look good on the outside, but He knows the heart and the motives, seeing things as they really are.

(2) His feet as burnished bronze reveal His purity and holiness, and that nothing impure or unholy will go unnoticed.

b) The message: He is going to judge ongoing and unrepentant sin in their midst.

C. (2:19) Jesus Commends them

1. I know:

- a) Your deeds, your love, your faith(fulness), your service, and your perseverance.
 - (1) They were the first church recognized for their love
 - (a) Love for God
 - (b) Love for each other
 - (2) The TRUE believers were faithful
 - (a) True Christians are truly dependable and consistent in their growth to maturity.
 - (i) Ephesians 2:10: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
 - (3) Love and faithfulness leads to service and perseverance
 - (a) Service—Those who are faithful will do the "love one another"
 - (b) Perseverance— True Christians develop perseverance over time and endure hardships faithfully
 - (i) Matthew 16:24-25: "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.'"
 - (ii) Matthew 24:13— "...but he who endures to the end will be saved."
- b) They were known for "doing more now than you did at first".
 - (1) The faithful were actually growing and advancing in grace and maturity.
 - (a) In love, faithfulness, service and perseverance
 - (b) 2 Peter 1 indicates that the following qualities are commended: (2 Peter 1:5-7)
 - (i) Goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

D. (2:20-23) His Concern: It is a grave concern. They are growing in grace, **but steeped in great compromise! Jesus says, "I have this against you."**

- 1. "...against **you**." The "you" is singular. Indicating the pastor is "you".
- 2. Problem 1: The pastor was violating the clear teaching of Scripture that prohibits women from teaching and preaching in the assembly.
 - a) 1 Timothy 2:12 says clearly, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 14:34
 - c) The pastor compromised and what worse, tolerated "Jezebel"
- 3. Problem 2: The pastor tolerated her false and damaging teaching
 - a) The pastor wasn't actively teaching or agreeing with her. He still was being confronted by the Lord because he **tolerated** her public teaching.

- b) Jesus says that the result of tolerance is this: “she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.”
- 4. A few words concerning the role of women in the church.
 - a) Women are recognized for their wisdom (Proverbs 31:26)
 - b) They can work alongside men instructing other believers (Acts 18:26)
 - c) They are permitted to teach women and children (Titus 2:3-4; 2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15)
 - d) The role of women “reflects God’s created order (1 Timothy 2:13), and recognizes the difference between men and women (1 Timothy 2:14)”¹
 - e) The church today is under the social and cultural pressures produced by the feminists agenda, which ignores the plain reading of Scripture concerning the role of women in the church. This is very similar to the growing societal inundating the church. As the pressure of the homosexual movement mounts, pressure to conform to culture is causing historical biblical Christian leaders and institutions to give way, thus abandoning the clear reading of Scripture. Scripture is very clear that homosexuality and Christianity are incongruent. We can, therefore, see how cultural pressures are causing many churches and denominations to retreat from the clear teaching of God’s Word.
 - (1) Is He who has eyes of blazing fire and feet of burnished bronze watching?
- 5. (2:20) Who is Jezebel?
 - a) She called herself a prophetess. But she was leading the Lord’s “servants” away.”²
 - (1) Probably not her real name. Whoever she was, she had a following.
 - (2) She was clearly comparable to Jezebel in the OT.
 - (a) She was controlling and manipulative
 - (b) She convinced Ahab, king of Israel, to demand the worship of Baal (1 Kings 16:30-31)
 - (c) She hated spiritual authority (she hated Elijah)
 - (3) Modern day Jezebels can be either male or female. They have a controlling, manipulative spirit. These modern Jezebels despise Scriptural authority and true Biblical leadership within the church. Their source of power is demonic, leading them to cause even the most faithful Christian leaders to compromise and retreat.
 - b) In my thinking, she was demonically driven, using spirituality, sensuality and intelligence to woo these believers in Thyatira into accepting her words as authoritative, and her instruction as sensible.
 - (1) Compromising with the pagan practices of the guilds would mean that they could live comfortably in the world and remain a member of good standing in the church.
- 6. (2:21-23) The Lord’s patience and judgment

¹ Tony Garland, p234

² Garland: “Scripture recognizes women who fulfilled the role of prophetess (women who God called to fulfill His purpose according to His calling and equipping): Miriam (Ex.15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4); Huldah (2 Kings 22:14); Noadiah (Neh. 6:14); Isaiah’s wife (Is. 8:3); Anna (Lk 2:36); Phillip’s daughters (Acts 21:9). But nowhere does it record a true prophetess that is self-proclaimed.”

- a) Time to repent from her immorality
 - (1) But she did not.
 - (2) Consequence: She wanted a bed of immorality; She will get a bed of suffering instead.
 - b) Time for those who have hastened to obey her message to repent.
 - (1) OR ELSE, they will suffer with her.
 - (2) All “her children” will be struck dead.
 - c) (2:23) Judgment
 - (1) With eyes of blazing fire He will search every heart and mind.
 - (a) Our works and words will be shown for what they are at the great judgment.
 - (b) And when the books are opened will your name be found in the Lamb’s Book of Life? (Revelation 13:8; 21:27)
- E. (2:24-29) His Counsel and Promise
1. (2:25-25) The Counsel: Jesus’ strong admonition for all who have remained faithful
 - a) Characterized by these behaviors:
 - (1) They rejected her false teaching (and have suffered)
 - (2) They refused to learn “Satan’s so-called deep secrets”
 - (a) They did not lend themselves to the discovery of evil
 - (i) Jezebel’s deep secrets would promise ultimate good coming from immorality and idolatry
 - (ii) Paul combated this in Romans 3:8 by quoting the ungodly statement, “Let us do evil that good may result.” Then he concludes, “Their condemnation is deserved.”
 - b) “Only hold on to what you have until I come.”
 - (1) Hold on to their deeds, their love and faithfulness, and their service and perseverance.
 - (2) Til he comes!
 - (a) He is going to strongly discipline the Jezebel in their midst and her followers.
 - (b) Apparently as time unfolded the heresy in this church reached climactic proportions. A so-called prophet who claimed that he had ongoing revelation from God apart from Scripture. They never learned.
 - (i) That was the Montanist movement and it is tragically alive and well in our day. Flee from it.
 2. (2:26-28) The promise
 - a) The promise is taken from Psalm 2:7-9
 - (1) It is a promise that the faithful will participate in the millennial Kingdom of Christ
 - (a) They will rule with him.
 - (i) Compare with Luke 19:11-19
 - b) (2:28) Will be given the “morning star”
 - (1) Christ Himself will be their portion and their glory!
 - (a) 1 Corinthians 13:12: We will know Him in His fullness!!
 3. “He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches

- a) App: How are you guarding yourself against the strong push of culture and its appeal to you to compromise fidelity to the Lord Jesus?