

08. Thyatira: Rebuke of a Harlot

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Letters from Jesus

By Robert Rohlin

Bible Text: Revelation 2:18-29

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In case you don't know, no other church has that and I daresay that you can't fit that much pretty into that small a space in any other choir in Texas so that's pretty awesome. I appreciate the songs that my son picked out but I do have two comments about number 592 that we sang, "That Soldiers of Christ, Arise." Mr. Pell, where are you? I saw him back here a minute ago. Well, we have to apologize to Mr. Pell because Marines, if you don't know this, Marines are not soldiers, they are Marines and Marines make a big point of the fact that they are not soldiers. They are Marines and they are very proud of that so, Richard, find a song for next week that is addressed to Marines instead of soldiers. We might have to sing the Marine hymn, who knows. I don't know how, "The Shores of Tripoli" will go over here at First Baptist, but we'll look at it. The other thing is: how many of you have sung another song this week that had the word "panoply" in it? To be honest with you, as soon as service is over, I'm looking up that word and I need that.

Well, we're going to look at the letter to the church of Thyatira so if you'd have your Bibles open to Revelation 2 and I have called this message, "Jesus versus Jezebel" and every now and then I have a flash of inspiration, lightning strikes my brain. I come up with these wonderful ideas and I thought I had one of those ideas. Now, a lot of times when I have that great idea, somebody tells me later, "Ah, we heard that idea six months ago from somebody else," but anyway, I had one of these flashes of inspiration and I thought, "Do you know what? Just as an attendance promotional tool, we should have a theme service," so I almost sent out an email to all the ladies in our church since I was talking about Jezebel today to double your makeup. I thought if everybody just came with twice the makeup as normal, but my wife seemed to think that probably wasn't the best idea I'd ever had. I don't know why she doesn't get on board with these things.

But we want to look at the letter to the church at Thyatira and like the church at Pergamos, it is a compromised church and it is really a rebuke of the church for putting up with Jezebel. So we want to begin reading. Would you stand just in honor of God's word and this is from the Lexham English Bible so if you've got an ESV, it's probably similar to that but it's one of the best translations today. It says,

18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: "This is what the Son of God says, the one who has his eyes like a fiery flame and his feet like fine bronze: 19 'I know your works, and your love, and faith, and service, and patient endurance--and your last works are greater than the first. 20 But I have against you that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, the one who calls herself a prophetess, and teaches and deceives my slaves to commit sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. 21 And I have given her time in order to repent, and she did not want to repent from her sexual immorality. 22 Behold, I am throwing her into a sickbed and those who committed adultery with her into great affliction, unless they repent from her deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with deadly disease, and all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. 24 But I say to you, to the rest who are in Thyatira, all those who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they say, I do not put upon you any other burden. 25 Nevertheless, hold fast to what you have until I come. 26 And the one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him authority over the nations, 27 and "he will shepherd them with an iron rod; he will break them in pieces like jars made of clay," 28 as I also have received from my Father, and I will give him the morning star. 29 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Let's pray.

Father, it is impossible in the strength of human flesh to explain the symbolism and the words that are here. Father, my own week has just been so confounding that I need you to put at rest my own soul and fill me with your Spirit so that we together can look into your word and see what applies to our hearts. Father, bring us into a state of revival where we're not just merely coming to church but where we're excited, where we bring people with us, where we share the good news of Christ with others and most of all, where we know we have met in your presence and we have sensed you here with us. May we feel that today and may you put your own power on display today? God, it is beyond my ability to move on the hearts of men but I pray that your Spirit does just exactly that. For we prayed in Christ's name. Amen.

Thank you. You may be seated.

All of these letters follow a fairly similar pattern. You first of all have an identification of the church to whom Christ speaks, then you have an identification of Christ and then in five of the seven letters, you have a word of commendation to all but one church and then you have a word of criticism to all but two churches. So let's look at the church to whom Christ speaks in the book of Thyatira. Thyatira is actually the most insignificant of the seven cities that you're going to find here and the fact is, Thyatira was considered expendable by the Romans. It was in a valley between two other valleys and the Romans put a garrison of soldiers there not to defend the city because it was important but if

anyone ever attacked Pergamos. Remember Pergamos was the first city to declare Emperor worship and so the emperors had a very particular interest in Pergamos and so they had Roman soldiers here to slow down any advancing hordes from getting to Pergamos. That was the only reason that they were there but Thyatira itself is the smallest and least significant of those seven churches in Asia. There is still quite a bit of the ruins of Thyatira left and we can see the inscriptions and know about the culture that's in the land. We have access to the rooms and the things that are there and the inscriptions that are on the stones and so it's really a rich archaeological find in a lot of ways.

It did have a lot of commercial industry. One of the things that they did is they produced a purple dye from the murex shells and, of course, you remember the story of Lydia who was saved in Philippi in the book of Acts and she was from Thyatira. Now, they had trade guilds here and the problem is that it was like our trade unions today so any of you that have ever worked for a union, you know what basically a trade guild is, the only thing is that today unions collect membership fees whether you want to pay them or not, but the trade guilds had another aspect to it and that is that each guild, each skill, had its own god. Now, that shouldn't surprise us because there is a pantheon of gods out there today. When I was in Taiwan the first time back in 1982, I actually went by a shop that made gods and you could walk in there and you could buy a statue and maybe you wanted to be successful in business so you got Gwangon who is the god of business or you'd go and get another god if you were a farmer because maybe you needed fertility for your crops or you may get another god if it was to help you through personal relationships. They had a god for everything. You could go in the god shop and buy a god. By the way, Isaiah 40 is a wonderful chapter and someday I need to rewrite it in the Robert Rohlin version if I ever translate the Bible because basically Isaiah says, "You go and get a tree, you chop it down and then you make a god out of it to worship and you overlay it with gold and you overlay it with silver and you bow down in worship but all the wood chips that are left, you burn those and you cook your hot dogs over it." That's what Isaiah says. He says, "It's stupid. It's silly that we will bow down and worship something and then take what's left of the wood and we'll cook it and burn it and basically produce heat to cook our food. Why would you bow down before something like that? They have eyes, but they see not. They have ears, but they hear not. They have hands, but they cannot reach out to help," Isaiah says. "Why not worship a real God?" I remember I was in a city in Taiwan and I was looking at some of the temples there and, of course, they had these gates that separated you from the gods but you could look upon the gods. I saw a guy on the other side of the gate standing on a ladder painting the idols and I thought, "Oh, I'm so glad my God doesn't need painting." Then I realized they had these gates here and I thought, "I'm so glad my God doesn't need protection." And as a Baptist preacher, if I had found that third "p" I'd have preached a sermon right there so I was ready. I kept looking for the third "p" and never quite came up with it.

But there was a lot of commercial industry and the thing is, if you were in a guild, they would have a festival once or twice a year and you would have to go to the meeting, kind of going to a union meeting except you had to bow down and worship the God of your guild because if you didn't worship, let's say that you were a metal worker and you didn't worship the metal working God, they would kick you out of the guild and then you

couldn't get a contract. You couldn't get business. You couldn't get a job. You couldn't make a living. So if you wanted to make a living and you were a tradesman, you had to bow down to the gods of this trade if you were in Thyatira.

Now, as I mentioned earlier, Lydia was one of these people from Thyatira. She was engaged in making purple cloth. She was in Philippi which was a Macedonian city. Thyatira, by the way, was a Macedonian colony so there was a lot of concourse between Thyatira and Philippi and, of course, she heard the Gospel there and was saved and returned to Thyatira and as far as we know, she is the one that brought the Gospel to Thyatira. It's why Christians were there in the first place which is interesting because in this passage, we have a city where maybe it was a woman who brought the Gospel to them and now there's another woman trying to pervert it. That's rather, at least, ironic. By the way, this is what Lydia made her purple cloth from. Thyatira was an inland city. It wasn't real close to the ocean but they had discovered this process for crushing these murex shells and making a purple dye out of it and dying the fabric and then, of course, purple was like the color of royalty and so it was a big deal to be able to get purple fabric. So the question became: is it easier for us to take the sheep to the ocean or go to the ocean and bring back the shells? They finally decided that shells were easier to haul than sheep and so they would go down periodically, find all these shells, bring it up and they would process the purple fabric out of that.

So that's Thyatira. Now, let's look at the identification of Christ in this case and I want you to notice one thing. If you look in your Bible, the very first thing it says about Christ in this letter is that he says "the Son of" what? What does it say in your Bible? Son of God. Now, that's significant for two reasons because up to this point, Jesus has been one like the Son of man and it refers to him as the Son of man, in fact, this is the only time in the book of Revelation that Jesus is called the Son of God. This is significant. It's a big deal because he is about to say some pretty harsh words. The fact is, you're going to hear in a moment that Jesus is ticked off at this church. That's not a good thing, by the way, to have Jesus ticked off at you. He wants them to know that he's not just the Son of man, he's not just one that lived like they lived and experienced all the challenges and came through life sinless, he is the Son of God. He is powerful. He can judge. He has all authority and they had better listen to him.

So he identifies himself as the Son of God, the only time that phrase occurs in Revelation and then there are two characteristics given about him. One, he says, "he has eyes like flames of fire." Now, you will probably see if you look in your Bible, it says "flame" singular, so take out your pen and let's make a correction to your translation because in the Greek, in the original language, "flames" is plural. Now, why is that such a big deal? Because earlier in chapter 1 and, I think, it's verse 14, it talks about Jesus. It says, "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow and his eyes were as a flame," singular, "of fire." Now it says here, "The Son of God who has eyes like flames," not flame but "flames of fire." How many of you know that you can take one small flame but if you add enough fuel to it, breathe enough oxygen into it, suddenly you've got flames, plural, not just a flame but flames. The idea here is that this isn't just Jesus with the penetrating, pure gaze whose eyes are like a flame of fire, this is Jesus who now is wroth

and has righteous anger against a church that is tolerating something wicked in their midst and it's not just a fire anymore, it's a wildfire. So it's significant that in the Greek it is "flames of fire."

Then he says, "His feet are like fine brass." Of course, we've had this same term one other time in Revelation, chaikolibanon, in chapter 1, verse 15. It means that it's an alloy of metals. It wasn't so much brass which is soft, it was bronze which is much harder so the correct translation would be bronze. But it was bright, it was polished and at that time, at the time that this letter is written, bronze was the hardest metal known to mankind so it's the idea of a bright, polished, very hard metal and basically the idea is that Jesus is about to tromp or step on or stomp on those that he is about to rebuke if they do not repent. It is his righteous judgment that is in view here.

Now, the eyes of Christ, by the way, are penetrating. They see everything. In Jeremiah 16:17, God says, "For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is there iniquity hidden from My eyes." By the way, I would encourage you parents to jot down that Scripture reference and have your children memorize that verse of Scripture. Why is this such an important verse of Scripture? You need it in your children's head that even when they're away from home, even when they're on a trip somewhere, even while they're at grandma's house and grandma went to bed at 8 o'clock and grandma's got Pay-Per-View and HBO on her TV and there's nobody there to supervise, your children need to know that God sees everything they do. He hears every thought they have. He knows every word before they utter it. There is no place you can go on this planet that he doesn't see. I was in a hotel room in Warsaw, Indiana all week long for six days and I know that God saw everything that I did and I'm conscious of that fact. That's one of the things that keeps me from going astray is to realize and remember what this verse is telling me. Hebrews 4:13, the writer of Hebrews said it eloquently as well, "There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." God sees everything. Those are good verses, by the way, for you to get into the hearts of your children.

Now those feet, of course, as I said are bright, brilliant metal. He is ready to tromp on it. I want you to notice also that for the eyes and for the feet, there are corresponding things in the same passage. When he says he has "eyes like flames of fire," that corresponds to verse 23 where he says, "I am He which searcheth the reins and heart." Now, "reins" is a King James word for "kidneys." Of course, the kidneys are back here, but they are deep. Kidneys are hard to get to. They consider that some of the most innermost parts of a person in ancient medicine so when he says "reins" what he's saying is that that's the part of you that nobody else can see. That's the part of you that nobody else will ever know about but, "I know it, I search the reins, I search the hidden parts of your personality. I search your hidden thoughts. I search your hidden motives." He knows those. And then feet like bronze can go to verse 27 where it says "as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers." You see, they sold a lot of pottery in Thyatira and he's saying, "Just like you have some pots that you make on the pottery wheel and it doesn't come out quite right and it breaks and you kind of chunk it over to the side and later you'll remake that piece of clay, make it into something else." He says, "Just like pottery breaks, I'm going

to take my brass feet and I'm going to stomp on the ones who do not repent because this evil in the church is so terrible."

Now, before he gets to this harsh word of judgment, once again in good parental fashion, he gives his people first a word of commendation and just remember that, parents, before you criticize your children for what they're doing wrong, you first learn to praise them for what they are doing right and if you do that, you won't have to do so much of the other. But I want you to notice what he says to the Thyatiran faithful. He says, "I know your works," that's the first thing he mentions, "your love, your faith, your service and your patient endurance," and then he says, "I know your last works are greater than your first." So let's look at these words real carefully. First, he says "your works," they are fruitful. They aren't sitting idly by just warming a pew. They're actually doing something for Jesus. Their love, they were fervent. They really, really loved Jesus. Now, this is in stark contrast, by the way, to the church at Ephesus who was doctrinally correct but they had lost their first love. Here we have a church that is messing up on doctrine, we'll get to that in a minute, but they really do love Jesus so we need the two in balance, don't we? They had faith, they were faithful. They had service. Now, the word here for "service" is the word "diakonia" and we get the word "deacon" from it. It means "ministry to others," mainly and particularly "ministry to others in the faith." Think about this: if you were Christian and you refused to bow down to the trade guild gods, you probably had a hard time getting a job. You probably had a hard time getting an assignment. You probably couldn't go exercise your craft or trade. But Christians began to do business with other Christians. They began to band together. They began to serve one another and if this person wasn't getting work maybe and this guy had some food in his pantry, maybe he shared.

I'm going to tell you something I believe and I don't mean to be an alarmist or anything but I think the day is coming when we as Christians are going to have to band together even more tightly and help meet the needs of one another because there are going to be persecutions of the Christian faith here in this country and it's starting already. I don't know if any of you ever take US News and World Report and I don't read newspapers but when I'm in a hotel and you open the door, first thing every morning you look out and you've always got a copy of US News and World Report and there on the front page, bottom left-hand side of the front page I think it was Thursday morning, it talked about "Christian cult members commit murder," was the headline. It was talking about something that had gone on in mainland China but I thought, "Wait a minute, you can't have Christians and cult members in the same sentence." By definition, a cult means that you're either adding something to the Gospel or you're subtracting from the deity of Christ, your multiplying salvation requirements or you are dividing the body of Christ. One of those for mathematical operations. I'll say that one more time in case you want to know what a cult is: you add to salvation requirements; you subtract from the deity of Christ; you multiply salvation requirements; or you try to divide the body of Christ. That is the definition of a cult. You can't be in one of those and be a Christian too. You can't have Christian cult members commit murder. But don't they like to start slamming Christianity in the news? You'll see it more and more and more all the time now and so we're going to have to bond together.

Then he says they had patient endurance. He uses the Greek word "hypomone" which is used in James 1:3 when it says, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh hypomone, patience." What it means is "unswerving constancy." It means that you don't turn to the right, you don't turn to the left, you keep doing what Christ wants you to do no matter what. This kind of unswerving constancy is tried in the fires of persecution. The word "hypomone" is actually a word used by metallurgists to describe how sterling silver coinage is made. You heat up silver and then all the dross comes to the top of the molten metal and you scoop it off and you keep doing that until there is no more dross on top of the metal and what you have left is that hypomone. When you go and buy American silver eagle dollars which you should have some of in your safe, if you go and buy them it says on the bottom .9999 fine silver. What they've done is they've created hypomone; they've created sterling coinage but to do that they had to heat it over and over and over again until all the dross was removed.

Now, one thing that we've got to really give Thyatira credit for is that it is the first church that Christ commends for their love. We've looked at Smyrna, we've looked at Ephesus, we've looked at Pergamos and none of those letters did Christ say, "I know your love," but he says it about these folks. Their heart was in the right place. There is a problem though, their head is not. I don't know if you know this but there are two components that need to be in our Christian life. Write these two things down, I'm about to give you two words, they need to be in your life: word one: mercy. The Hebrew word "chesed" which we translate "lovingkindness." If you want to look at it another way, it's love. The second word is truth, the Greek word "aletheia" means "truth." Mercy and truth. In fact, as you notice though, every time those two are mentioned in Scripture, it always mentions mercy first so when you're being a parent and you're trying to raise your kids, I want you to know something that even more important than giving your kids the truth and teaching them facts and teaching them academics and teaching them science and teaching them Scripture, even more important than that is giving them those hugs and letting them know that you love them because they won't care to hear what you say until they know that you care. That's what let mercy and truth be around your neck. "Let them not forsake you," the Scripture says. But you can't just give mercy. You can love your kids but without them understanding God's wisdom and God's principles, when they leave home, they might know mom and daddy loves them but not have a clue to know how to live and we have to find a balance between these two things. We need to have both in our lives.

This church, by the way, is also headed in the right direction. He says something about them is rather remarkable. He says, "Your last works," in other words the things that you have been doing recently, "are better than your first works." By first works he means what they did when they first came to Christ. So they had been growing as Christians and they are doing even more for the Lord now than when they were first saved. By the way, I don't think that's a normal experience. I think a lot of us get saved, we get excited, we start telling people all about our relationship and then as time goes on, we get in a rut which is a grave with the ends knocked out but we get in a rut and we start doing things the same way all the time and we start just being comfortable with going to church and

going through the routine, going through the motions and having the same schedule week after week but we're not really walking with Christ. I think that's the normal experience.

But not so for the Thyatirans. Their latter works, in fact, Matthew 12:45, Jesus was talking about what happens when a person gets demons cast out of them. If he doesn't fill his life with the light of God's word, he says, "Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." Jesus said the norm is that the latter end will be worse than the first. 2 Peter 2:20, it talks about people who are false teachers and they try to tell people that they can make compromises. He says, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." He says, "It's possible for Christians to backslide so much that their latter life looks worse than before they were saved." That's sad. But Paul prayed this for the Thessalonians, he said, "Furthermore, we beseech you brethren and exhort you by the Lord Jesus that as you have received of us, how you ought to walk and to please God so you will abound more and more."

This is what the Thyatirans were doing so we've got some good stuff. They are loving and they are serving the Lord more now than they did when they first got saved. That's great but there is some criticism on the way and his first criticism is, "You guys need to open the window and chuck out that woman Jezebel. You need to get rid of her. Open the window and toss this lady out." It says, "You are tolerating that woman Jezebel." The three oldest Greek manuscripts say here "you let her alone." In other words, what Jesus is upset about is that there is someone in their church that is teaching a horrific error and they're trying just to be nice, calm, sweet, get along with everybody, loving Christians and they are not dealing with the kind of error that will destroy their church. You see, it is one thing to be tolerant of people when they have minor differences of opinion or maybe they don't quite see a passage of Scripture the same way you do and there's another difference entirely when someone is perverting the Gospel of Christ. Paul said in Galatians 1, "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel of a different kind which is not another Gospel of the same kind but there would be some that would trouble you and pervert the Gospel of Christ. But I say unto you that if any man preach any other Gospel to you than that that you have received, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other Gospel to you than that which we have given to you, let him be accursed, let him be anathema," devoid of the blessings of God.

You see, maybe doctrinal purity isn't your biggest deal but it's a pretty big deal with God. We can't compromise on the truth. We're going to find out more about Jezebel here. By the way, can I share with you parents one of my mistakes as a dad? Make sure if you have little kids, dads, that you explain to them when you're teasing because this Bible story right here, I had my kids messed up on for years and it was not intentional. You see, every now and then I would use as a sermon illustration the following. Now, for those of you in Rio Linda as Rush Limbaugh says, I'm about to tell a joke. I hope you get this. But

once upon a time there was a young preacher who went to a church in view of a call. That means they were interviewing him to be their pastor. During the interview process, they asked him, "How well do you know the Bible?" So he said, "Well, let me tell you a Bible story," and this is what he told them: Once upon a time, there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus. He went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked the man. He met the Queen of Sheba and she gave that man 1,000 talents of silver and 100 change of raiment and he got in his chariot and drove furiously and as he was driving along, under a big tree, his hair got caught in a limb and left him hanging there and he hung there for 40 days and 40 nights. But the ravens brought him food to eat and water to drink. One night while he was hanging there asleep, his wife Delilah came along and cut off his hair and he fell on stony ground and it began to rain for 1,260 days and he hid himself in a cave. Later he went on and met a man who said, "Come in and take supper with me," but he said, "I can't come in for I have married a wife." The man went out into the highways and hedges and compelled him to come in. He then came to Jerusalem and saw Queen Jezebel sitting high and lifted up in the window of a wall. When she saw him, she laughed. He said to the men near her, "Throw her down out of there," and they said, "Well, how many times shall we throw her down? Until seven times?" "Nay, but I say unto you, throw her down until 70×7." So they threw her down 490 times and they picked up 12 baskets of the fragments thereof. Moreover, the dogs came and licked her sores. Now, whose wife will she be in the day of judgment The church hired him because of his incredible Bible knowledge which illustrates the point and actually, my girls grew up thinking, "Oh, that's terrible. They threw her down 490 times." It wasn't until later they thought, "Oh, that was a joke." Make sure they know when you're telling a joke.

But you know, we sometimes hear error and we tolerate it until we believe it and that was the danger that was present in this church. Now, what was Jezebel doing according to Jesus? He said that "she teaches and seduces." That's the literal translation of the Greek words there. She was teaching them and seducing them to do two things: to commit immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. In other words, she was telling people in church, "Oh, don't worry about those trade guilds. A couple times a year, go ahead and bow down before their gods. Go ahead and be part of their pagan feast and then you can get a job. It's not that big a deal to add another god." When I was in Taiwan, I happened to see some altars in people's homes where they had a statue of Jesus and a statue of Mary, the Catholics had come to these families but then they would have other statues of other gods up there as well because basically the Catholic church had told them, "Well, all you really have to do to be a Christian is add the worship of Jesus and Mary to your other gods." But there's a problem with that, isn't there? What was one of those 10 Commandments? "Thou shalt have," what? "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." No other gods. The fact is he says in Isaiah 40, "I am God and there is none like me." There is nobody else who is God. There isn't but one. You can't have a bunch of gods. When you become a Christian, it means that you can only have one God and his name is Jesus. That is the thing that we have to do.

Then this woman taught that they could go ahead, compromise was necessary. You see, the thing here is that what was acceptable to society was not acceptable to Jesus Christ.

Now, let me challenge you with this: how much of what's in your life right now is acceptable to society but is not acceptable to Jesus? By the way, you probably can't see this but let me read you this list because I think it's interesting. What is a Jezebel spirit? I want you to see if any of these are coming out in our society today.

1. You seek out other individuals that you feel are weaker to control influence and dominate.
2. They have an unnatural sense of self-importance.
3. They require excessive admiration and attention.
4. They show arrogance and haughty behaviors and attitudes.
5. They lack self-control; they are unable to control emotional outbursts; they are unconcerned with their effect on others.
6. They are exploitive, abusive, taking advantage of others to achieve his or her own goals; they are manipulative; they lie.
7. They are totally void of empathy; they will falsely mimic empathy to seduce and control their victims.
8. They are jealous and envious of others yet delusional in believing others are jealous and envious of them.
9. They are defensive and combative whenever confronted about anything.
10. They fantasize about themselves having unlimited admiration, beauty, power, success, brilliance or perfect worship and love.
11. They believe that he or she is superior and unique and can only be understood by other superior people.
12. They have a sense of entitlement; they demand automatic compliance with his or her expectations; unreasonable expectations of others; critical when disappointed.

Have you ever known anybody like that? Have you ever worked with anybody like that? Have you ever been like that? I'm not even going to ask the question if this reminds you of anyone in political life. I'm just not going to go there this morning.

But I want you to notice something that's happened to us in Revelation. We've got two false prophets and we need to compare them for just a minute. When we were looking a few weeks ago, we heard about two churches that had problems with the doctrine of Balaam. Balaam, if you remember, led Israel astray by teaching a pagan king. He said, "All you've got to do is intermarry. Get them compromised with their relationships. Get them to compromise in this one area and then they'll start worshiping other gods and by compromising their lifestyle, you'll destroy Israel." That's what happened. But Jezebel brought the moral downfall of Judah but she actively taught and actively campaigned and actively hired prophets that would serve her: 850 prophets, 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Ashtoreth or maybe I've got the numbers turned around but she hired them. I think there's something we need to note: if we start allowing moral compromise in our lives, we will soon come to a point where we no longer distinguish between what is true and what is not true. It starts with lifestyle compromises and then one day you wake up and you can't tell what the truth is anymore. I think there is a valuable lesson between the starting with Balaam and now we wind up with Jezebel.

I also see two unbalanced churches here. In Ephesus and Thyatira, you have the opposite. In Ephesus, Jesus commends them for their zeal of truth and orthodoxy and how they were intolerant of false teachers but he says, "but you've lost your first love." Then he goes to Thyatira and he commends them for their love and their faith and their activity but he says, "You don't have enough zeal to protect your doctrine. You're tolerant of error. You won't kick these out that are teaching the falsehoods." You see, we need both: we need mercy and truth.

This prophetess claimed to know God's will but she doesn't see that judgment is coming her own way. Thankfully, not everybody in Thyatira followed her. We have a very patient Savior, don't we? How many of you know that God has been patient with you? I do. Look what Jesus says, "I have given her time in order to repent and she did not want to repent from her immorality." God gives his church time to repent but do you know that there is a limit even to the patience of God? Now, that sounds like heresy just for me to say it, doesn't it? But there is a limit to the patience of God because there is a point that you get to that he will not suffer you to keep going any further. Paul talked about this in 1 Corinthians. He talked about those whose faith had been made shipwrecked. He talked about how he disciplined his own body lest he should some day be put on the shelf for Christ. He talked about those in Corinth who had made the Lord's supper basically a feast celebration and a time of immorality and had not treated it seriously and he said, "For this cause, some of you are weak and sick and some of you now are even dead, you're asleep." You see, there comes a point at which God rather than letting you continue to damage the cause of Christ, will take you out of the game.

Now, I don't want to offend any of you but sometimes the word can be a little offensive so I want you to listen thoughtfully and prayerfully and know that I'm not attacking anyone here but I think that you need to hear the truth about this period of church history that fits in. You see, there are two Thyatiras and the fact is, for each of the seven churches, there are two representations. There is a church that was on earth at the time that Jesus is dictating these letters to the Apostle John to write down but also each one of those churches, I believe, represents a period of church history and we have to look at both in that perspective. If we look at a little time line here, Ephesus represents the church during the first century. They had gotten a good start. They were doctrinally true. They held onto it but as they began to get more organized and started loving the organization rather than loving Christ. Then there's the church at Smyrna which represents things during the second and third centuries and this is where you start seeing that doctrine of Balaam creep in. Then by the time you get to the time period between 313 and 538 A.D., you enter into the period that is represented by the church at Pergamos that now has become seriously compromised. Then at about 538 A.D. all the way for about almost the next 1,200 years of human history, we have the period represented by the church at Thyatira and this is the period during which the Roman Catholic Church was growing beyond its bounds.

Now, during the time of Pergamos, Emperor Justinian representing the period during the time of Pergamos, the Roman church got stronger and stronger while the Empire itself got weaker and weaker. The Roman empire broke down from moral decay from within

but the religious structure became stronger and in 538, Justinian the Emperor turned over a lot of his powers to the Pope of the Catholic Church and for the next 1,260 years, papal Rome really ruled the world. In Revelation 2:20, we're warned about this propheticess, Jezebel, who is sitting basically kind of on the throne of the church and during the Dark Ages that are represented by this period, the Catholic church did some things that are mind-boggling. One thing is they said, "You could not read the Scriptures." Imagine you coming to church one day and somebody stood up here and said, "You no longer can read the Bible. It's illegal. You don't have theological training. We have to do that for you. We will tell you what you want to know." Here is a lectionary and you can read that. You can say the chants and stuff that we're going to give you but you can't read the Bible because you don't have the skills. We're the priests, you're just the people." That's what they got. Now, what is the biblical view? The biblical view is that we're all priests unto our God. We're all part of a royal priesthood, all part of a peculiar nation. We're all supposed to be serving the Lord and reading his word and hearing from him directly.

So they said, "You can't read the Bible anymore," and those who tried were killed. People started going to priests for their forgiveness instead of to Jesus. They started saying that the Bible was okay but what was really important was the teachings of the church and they came up with a term for this in Latin called *ex cathedra* which meant that when the Pope speaks in his official capacity as Pope, he is inerrant and infallible and he is to be trusted even above written Scripture. That's kind of a problem because they had one Pope that said that Mary when she died was just buried and that was the end of Mary and then they had another Pope come along later and say, "No, Mary died and she was buried but her body was assumed up into heaven." You know, what happens when two infallible Popes save the opposite things? I don't have much leg to scratch there. So what do you do there?

Then the church united with the state and whoever resisted the apostasy and the corruption that affected the church, well, they usually bit the bullet. Let me take you back a little bit in history and we don't have time to go all the way back but what you see there on the left of your screen is the Tower of Babel. In the book of Genesis, the building of this tower was started by a fellow by the name of Nimrod. Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord, the Bible says. His wife said name was Semiramis. Semiramis started a religion. She had a son. Nimrod by the way, his name means "burnt one." He walks around because he's out hunting all the time and he's just burnt from one end to the other. He was burnt by the sun. So she came up with this idea that she had a child named Tammuz and they told everybody that Tammuz was basically divinely conceived; that a ray of sun entered into her and out popped this baby. Nimrod had nothing to do with it and so this was the first pagan birth, pagan version of the virgin birth which was later to come. It became part of what was called a mother and child cult and it was adopted into a lot of other religions across the world into this whole mother and child cult. Then you begin seeing versions of it, statues popping up and then later, Christianity under the guise of the Roman church, they began adopting a lot of these same things. It wasn't enough to worship Jesus, we have to put halos around Mary and worship her too because it's from part of that cult of Semiramis. I have so much more that I could...I've got a whole article here I could tell you about that but we don't have the time.

What do you remember in the Bible about Jezebel? She's the wife of wicked King Ahab, the King of Judah and Jezebel actively recruited priests to lead the nation of Judah into worshipping gods, Baal and Ashtoreth and other gods, and rejecting the worship of the true God. So Thyatira really is a representation of the church during the Dark Ages or the Middle Ages and it was during this time that the worship of Mary began. By the way, open your Bible and go to the index in the back and look up every passage about Mary and please tell me where the Bible tells us that we should worship her. I missed that part. The fact is, the one extended passage in the Gospel of Luke about Mary where Mary is singing a song called the Magnificat, she is praising and extolling the Lord, not herself. Mary was young, she was virtuous but she was still a sinner.

It was during this age also that they developed this idea of Pontifex Maximus which basically meant that the head of the church should also be the head of the state and it was this idea that the Pope had authority even over the Roman emperors. So you start seeing ecclesiastical garb come out and they get longer and longer robes and bigger and bigger hats and they are dressed fancy and then people have to come up and kiss their ring or kiss their feet. The fact is, let me just show you, there are a whole bunch of things, by the way, that is a coin in the upper left-hand corner of your screen from April 2005, basically a \$10 coin with a picture of a Pope on it that is legal tender. But let me give you just a few of the errors. I know you probably can't see all of those but in 607 A.D., the Bishop of Rome takes the title of "Pope" which means "father." But what does Scripture say: Matthew 23:9, "Call no man your father on the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven." We're not supposed to call men "father" who are in the ministry. In the year 709: the church says that you must kiss the feet of the Pope. But in Acts 10, it says, "Cornelius fell down at his feet and worshiped him but Peter took him up saying, standup, I myself also am a man." You don't worship man. In the year 787: the Catholic Church institutes the worship of images and statues. How in the world do you go to a Catholic Church and get around the commandment that "Thou shalt not make unto yourself any graven image"? I'm sorry, that one escapes me. The year 993: the church adopts the process of canonized saints. But the Bible says, "You shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy." We're all supposed to be holy. By the way, a saint is just somebody that's been saved by grace. We're all saints, just some of us may be a little more effective than the others.

Now, during this whole period, remember what Christ said? He said, "I gave them time to repent but they didn't." But do you know that during the dark period there were people heralding the truth. There were the Waldenses, Albigenses, Vaudois, Leonists, Lollards. The Lollards went around handing out translations of Scripture that they made because it was illegal to read the Scripture and they're trying to give everybody the word of God because they believe everybody ought to read the word of God for themselves. These people denounced a lot of the falsehoods which were sweeping away the truths of the Bible and they were labeled heretics and many of these were killed. In fact, there is a little graphic there that you can't see but it's basically some Christians being thrown off of a cliff by the Roman Catholic Church. In the history of the Waldensians it says this, listen, "They held that the Pope's pardons were a cheat; that purgatory was a fable; that

relics were simply rotten bones which had belonged to one you knew not whom; that holy water was not a whit more efficacious than rainwater; and that prayer in a barn was just as effectual as if offered in a church. They were accused, moreover, of having scoffed at the doctrine of transubstantiation." If you don't know what that is, they believe that when you take the wine and the bread, it actually turns into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ in your stomach and you crucify Christ all over again but my Bible says that he only got crucified one time. He's never coming back to be crucified again. He's coming back as a King. These are symbols but not something that changes substance. "And they spoke blasphemously of Rome as the harlot of the apocalypse."

By the way, if you get all the way over to Revelation 17, it talks about the harlot called Babylon and you will know if you go back and read, by the way, Babylon was started by what person in the Bible? Nimrod. Nimrod started Babylon. That was where the mother and child cult started. In Revelation 17, the Bible makes very clear that Babylon is a worldwide religious institution that's closely affiliated with the state. Let me ask you a question: where do you go on the planet to find diplomats of foreign nations visiting the Baptist? Ah, no answer. Where would you go on the planet where we actually send ambassadors from this nation to the head of some other religious organization? How about Vatican Square? Okay? I have a burden about this. My sister is Catholic because her husband is Catholic. It doesn't do me any great satisfaction to talk about the heresies of the Catholic Church. It breaks my heart. But the church at Thyatira is a good representation of this and if you were a Christian during these periods, you may have had to build a small place up in the mountains where you hid for your faith like the people did at this particular place.

Well, God for more than 100 years raised up people prior to the Protestant Reformation that preached the truth and yet they were often killed. Then the voices grew louder during the Reformation. By the way, just so you understand my view on church history, Baptists are not Protestants but thank God for Protestants. Thank God for the Protestant Reformation. Thank God for Martin Luther nailing those 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg Germany that you see there on the left. Thank God for that. So these voices became louder and yet the Catholic Church still didn't repent and the fact is, Jeremiah 51:9, interestingly enough refers Babylon, which is the picture that God uses of the Catholic Church in Revelation 17 and he says this, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: Forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: For her judgment reaches unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies."

Now, so whether you take the view that it's just a local church in Thyatira or that it represents an age of history, what is Christ's command to the remnant of faithful Christians here? What does Christ tell us? He says this, "The rest of you in Thyatira, the ones who aren't holding to Jezebel's teaching, you haven't learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, I'm not going to add any burdens to you." By the way, I think this is amazing. How many of you ever add burdens to yourself thinking, "I need to do these other things to be a better Christian" You know, "Well, I need to read the Bible not five minutes a day but I need to read it a half hour a day and then I'd be a better Christian." Or, "Well, I need to give this percentage instead of this percentage in order to be a better Christian." Or, "I

need to tell this many people about Jesus this week to be a better Christian." We start building up standards for ourselves and after a while, our Christianity is no more about grace, it's about rules and regulations and rituals and we forget that were supposed to do all these things, not because we're trying to impress God because the fact is, God is not impressed with any of us. We're supposed to do it because we love him. Because we're crazy about the one who is crazy enough for us that he sent his Son to die on the cross. That's what we're supposed to do.

So, he says, "I've got one thing for you, just hold fast to what you've got." Sometimes as a dad I forget and I just want to keep piling on more requirements for my kids but do you know what, I'll be real happy if they hold fast to the training they've already had and if they grow up and don't let go of Jesus and if they still live for him when their my age, then my life would have been worth it all. He just simply says, "Hold fast until I come." By the way, when Jesus says he's coming back, he really is coming back. But when he comes back, he's coming with two roles. He's coming as a King but he's also coming as a Judge. The Judge is going to break the pottery just like those bits of pottery that were on the ground and they are already fractured and you step on them and they just turn to dust. He says, "If you don't repent, I'm going to shatter you." If you read what the book of Revelation says is going to happen to organized religion during the tribulation period, you'll find out that by the end of the tribulation period that worldwide organized political motivated church won't amount to a hill of beans because the false prophet that runs the church will no longer be needed by the antichrist and there won't be any religion of any kind except worshipping the antichrist by the end of the whole thing.

He says, "I'm going to break those. I'm going to shatter them at my coming." Then he says, "I will cast her into great tribulation unless they repent of her deeds." Not only her but it says "her children." In other words, it's all those that have been affected by her and believed in the same thing, they're going to be judged. But here's what he says to the faithful, "I'm going to give you the bright, morning star." Do you know what the morning star is? I had to look this one up. It's the brightest star in the skies which is the first one that appears at night but it's also the last one that goes away. It's so bright that it's the first one that shows up but it's the last one to go away and it happens to be just enough over the, I don't know, I'd have to go look and see what part of the earth it was over but you can always see it. The first and the last. The alpha and the what? The omega. He says, "I'm going to give you the first and the last. I'm going to give you the alpha and omega. I'm going to give you the beginning and the end. I'm going to give you Jesus."

Let me tell you something: for a long time I've been making a list of questions that I'm going to ask God when I see him in Hallelujah Square and this week it finally dawned on me that when I see him, I won't even remember the questions. I'm just going to be so fascinated to be there with him that all my focus will be on my Savior and all the questions will be gone. I think we need to get to that place now where we quit asking all the questions and quit trying to figure out everything on our own and we start just looking at the King of kings and the Lord of lords. By the way, this is the first place in Revelation that it mentions the millennial reign of Christ because it talks about, "He will come to earth and he will judge them with a rod of iron," and he's going to be given power over

the nations. He's really coming. And like every letter closes, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

I tried to think, because obviously I'm not Catholic, I tried to think of what God was saying to me so let me share with you some questions that I asked myself as we close and as Richard gets ready to come. Do you compromise your talk or walk for Christ in order to fit into the world? Do you ever do that? You're with somebody and you're trying to fit in and suddenly your water cooler vocabulary changes and kind of sounds more like their's? You start using words that you wouldn't use at home because your wife would gasp if she heard you say that? Do you start to tell off-color jokes because that's what's expected of you and you're a little weird if you don't get excited about the same ungodly things that they are getting excited about? Are you willing to compromise on biblical principle to be more successful in the eyes of the world? Are you willing to maybe tell a little fib if it gets the deal closed and somebody else will figure it out later? Or are you so concerned with being honest and having integrity that you'd never lie to a customer? Do you believe that the end justifies the means? Whether that's in church ministry or whether it's in work or whether it's how you pay your bills? What about as a church, do we focus on being biblical or entertaining? When it gets tough to make a living someday because we're being persecuted as Christians, what are we going to do? Are we going to compromise? Are we going to not tell anybody that we're Christians? Are we going to back down? Are we going to be ashamed? And what are you going to teach your kids to do? I've been trying to tell my kids for years that the day may come when they may have to die for Jesus Christ and I hope they're willing to do that. I hope they never have to but I hope that if it comes to that, that they would be faithful rather than save their own lives. And when we say that we believe something, is it because it's tradition or because it's in the word of God?

Finally, maybe we need to pray that God will protect us from falling into rituals and religions and rules and regulations and that he'll let us keep a walk with Jesus. I've got to tell you, there are weeks like the one I had this week, I had a lousy week. It was the worst week I've had professionally in the last 13 years. I kept calling people telling them to pray and when God didn't answer their prayers, I called them back and told them they needed to repent and pray. Then I called them back and said that they needed to fast and repent and pray. Then I told them to put on sackcloth and ashes and pray. It was just a lousy week. You know, sometimes in those weeks where you're working your heart out and things aren't working, it's easy to lose sight of the eternal because of the urgency of the temporary and if you're like I am, maybe you need to repent of that this morning.

Would you stand as we sing? If you would just like now to ask God to help you maintain a vigilance over what you allow in your homes and in your hearts and in your minds and that he would keep you to the truth which is what the Thyatirans needed or maybe you're still convicted about the fact that you don't love Jesus quite like you ought to like the Ephesian Christians were guilty of, maybe you'd join me at the altar. I'm still praying for God to revive me. But I do want to share one insight with you from 1 Chronicles 28 and from other passages in Scripture: not one single time in the Bible that revival comes to the people did it ever start with the priests or the preachers. It always started with the

people, usually because the priest were too proud to admit they had a problem. If revival comes to this church, it will start with you.

Let's sing. Hymn 391.

1 2 3

Thyatira

Rebuke of a harlot

4 **Revelation 2:18-20**

And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: "This is what the Son of God says, the one who has his eyes like a fiery flame and his feet like fine bronze: 'I know your works, and your love, and faith, and service, and patient endurance—and your last works are greater than the first. But I have against you that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, the one who calls herself a prophetess, and teaches and deceives my slaves to commit sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

5 **Revelation 2:21-22**

And I have given her time in order to repent, and she did not want to repent from her sexual immorality. Behold, I am throwing her into a sickbed and those who committed adultery with her into great affliction, unless they repent from her deeds. And I will kill her children with deadly disease, and all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

6 **Revelation 2:23-25**

But I say to you, to the rest who are in Thyatira, all those who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they say, I do not put upon you any other burden. Nevertheless, hold fast to what you have until I come.

7 **Revelation 2:26-29**

And the one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him authority over the nations, and "he will shepherd them with an iron rod; he will break them in pieces like jars made of clay," as I also have received from my Father, and I will give him the morning star. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

8 **The church to whom Christ speaks**9 10 11 12 13 **Thyatira**

- Thyatira was an "expendable" city.
 - In a valley between 2 other valleys
 - A Roman garrison was here – only to slow down any advancing attacks on Pergamos.
- Did have commercial industry. Lydia, the seller of purple, was from Thyatira
- Trade guilds strong here. Guilds required members to participate in pagan festivals to the

guild's gods. Others were ostracized.

14 **Letter to Thyatira**

- Thyatira sought business with many nations. For being faithful, the nations were theirs to serve with the Gospel. With their many open lines of trade, the Gospel could have easily spread through Christians associated with Thyatira.

15

16

17 **The Christ who speaks**

18

19 **The eyes of Christ**

- Jer 16:17 - *"For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes.*
- Heb 4:13 - *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

20 **The feet of Christ**

- Bronze was the hardest metal known at this time.
- It was bright and brilliant
- Christ is about to trample under His judgment those who refuse to repent

21 **His attributes**

- 1 • Eyes like flames of fire
 -
 - "Feet like fine bronze"
- 2 • Rev 2:23--*I am He which searcheth the reins and heart*
 - Rev 2:27--*"as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers,"*
 - He is treading them to pieces with His strong feet.
 -

22 **Commendation to the faithful**

23 **The Thyatiran faithful**

- *'I know your works, and your love, and faith, and service, and patient endurance—and your last works are greater than the first.*
 - Works – they were FRUITFUL
 - Love – they were FERVENT
 - Faith – they were FAITHFUL
 - Service – they were FORTIFYING
 - Patient endurance – they were FIREPROOFED

24

25 **Headed in the right direction**

- Their latter works are more than the first works

- The opposite of Ephesus (Rev. 2:4-5)
- The opposite of those under satanic opposition (Mathew 12:45)
- The opposite of (2 Peter 2:20)
- This is what Paul wanted for the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 4:1)

26 **Criticism of the compromising**

27 **You haven't opened the window!**

- 2:20 – You are tolerating that woman Jezebel
 - 3 oldest manuscripts read "you let her alone"
- They need to throw this woman out of the church like Queen Jezebel was thrown out the window
-

28 **What was Jezebel doing?**

- "She teaches and seduces"
 - To commit immorality
 - To eat food sacrificed to idols
- This woman actively taught that it was alright for Christians in the church to also worship other gods as a part of trade guild membership.
 - Each trade guild had a god for their particular skill.
 - This woman taught "compromise is necessary"

29 **A Jezebel spirit**

Do you see this spirit in evidence today?

30 **2 false prophets**

- 1 Pergamos -- Balaam
- 2 • Balaam brought moral downfall of Israel through subtle and slow compromise
- 3 Thyatira -- Jezebel
- 4 • Jezebel brought moral downfall to Judah through recruitment, teaching, and proliferation of false teachers

31 **2 unbalanced churches**

- 1 Ephesus
 - 2 • Zeal for truth and orthodoxy
 - Intolerant of false teachers
 - Lost their first love for Christ
- 3 Thyatira
 - 4 • Commended for their love of God and faith and activity
 - Insufficient zeal for godly discipline and doctrine
 - Tolerant of error

32 **Letter to Thyatira**

- As this "prophetess" claimed to know God's will, she will not see God's judgment coming upon her. She will undergo severe suffering, unless she repents.

- Evidently, her teaching was not followed by many in the Thyatira church (2:24).

33 **A patient Savior**

- *And I have given her time in order to repent, and she did not want to repent from her sexual immorality.*
- God gives his church time to repent.
- But there is a limit to even God's patience. There comes a point at which God judges or chastises His people so that they do not continue to damage the cause of Christ.

34 **Thyatira and church history**

35 **A tale of 2 Thyatiras**

- Each of the letters to the 7 churches corresponds to a real church with real people in a real city to whom Christ is dictating these words.
- But each also corresponds to a time in church history and the unique characteristics of that period.

36 **Timeline**

37 **Emperor Justinian**

- During the Pergamos Period, the Roman church grew stronger and stronger while the Roman Empire grew weaker and weaker.
- In A.D. 538, Emperor Justinian shared much of his power with the Pope. For the next 1,260 years, Papal Rome ruled the world.

38 **The Dark Ages**

- Rev. 2:20
- Catholic church forbade the reading of the Bible and taught its own tradition. Works became a means of earning salvation.
- People sought priests for forgiveness. They bowed to idols.
- Church united with the State

39

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42

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44 **Roman church errors**

- Just a few doctrinal errors of the Roman Catholic church

45 **Lights in the wilderness**

- The Waldenses, Albegenses, Vaudois, Leonists, and Lollards.
- These denounced the falsehoods which were sweeping away the truths of the Bible. 17. Because they spoke against the Church of Rome the Waldensians were labeled as "heretics."
- The Catholic church had many of these followers of Christ executed.

46 **The Waldenses**

- *"They held that... the Pope's pardons were a cheat; that purgatory was a fable; that relics were simply rotten bones which had belonged to one knew not whom, ... that holy water was not a whit more efficacious than rain water; and that prayer in a barn was just as effectual as if offered in a church. They were accused, moreover, of having scoffed at the doctrine of transubstantiation, and of having spoken blasphemously of Rome as the harlot of the Apocalypse."* History of the Waldenses

47 48 **Reformation Voices**

- Revelation 2:21 – "gave her space to repent"
- More than 100 years before the Reformation, God raised up men who called the church to repentance.
- Even during the Reformation the Catholic church refused to repent of their error.

49 **Jeremiah 51:9**

- *We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: Forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: For her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies.*
-

50 **Christ's command to the Christians**51 **Hold fast until I come**

- A faithful remnant -- *"the rest of you in Thyatira ... you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets."*
- One simple instruction: only hold on to what you have until I come.
 - Don't leave the church; remain as a faithful testimony.
 - Judgment on Jezebel and her followers would come soon and would purge the church.

52 53 **The Return of Christ: King and Judge**54 **The Judge breaks the pottery**

- Thyatira also made pottery.
- Like the discarded broken pots that abounded around them, Christ would discard the kingdoms of the earth that shatter at His coming (2:27).
- He will break those who have perverted the worship of Christ.

55 56 **The King is the reward**

- Jesus referred to himself as the Bright Morning star.
- He offers Himself to the congregation.
- The Morning star was the first to appear and the last to disappear in the sky (First and Last).

57

58

59 **Search your soul...**

- Do you compromise your talk or walk for Christ in order to FIT IN to the world
- Are you willing to compromise on biblical principle in order to be more successful in the eyes of the world?
- Do you believe the end justifies the means?
- Do we focus on being biblical or entertaining as a church?

60 **Search your soul**

- When it gets tough to make a living or keep a job because you are a Christian, what will you do?
 - What will you teach your children to do?
- Do you know if our beliefs are based on Scripture or tradition?
- Will you pray now for God to protect us from falling into rituals and religion, and to keep us in loving relationship with Christ?
-