

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

“The Lax Church”

Revelation 2:18-29

Introduction

1. The church with “left love” is Ephesus (2:1-7). The “suffering” church is Smyrna (2:8-11). Pergamos is the “worldly” church (2:12-17). Now comes the “lax” church at Thyatira (2:18-29).

2. Some believe the name Thyatira means “continual sacrifice.” The city was 40 miles southeast of Pergamos. It was a city of trade guilds and was noted for purple (cf. Acts 16:14f). There was no emperor worship, but Apollo was the chief deity.

3. Christ speaks to the Pastor and congregation of this church. He is identified as “the Son of God,” the only time this Name is found in Revelation (cf. Jn 11:4; Mt. 26:63f). Men say He is “Son of Mary,” but He says “Son of God,” therefore total deity.

4. Jesus is described as having (present tense: _____) 1) Eyes like fire, hence moral intolerance of evil. 2) Feet like brass, hence grinding to bits evil with His feet (cf. 1:16). Now what does such an one say to the church? Here is His message:

1. The Church’s CONDITION KNOWN v. 19

The familiar “I know” (_____) is again in the text (cf. 2:2, 9, 13). What does He know?-

a. Works (_____)

Three times the personal pronoun “your” (singular) is in this verse. As with the other churches, this refers to post salvation works (Eph. 2:10). “Works” are again mentioned at the end of the verse, apparently as particular praise.

b. Love (_____)

This is surely one of the “works” and a primary one (cf. 1 Cor. 13). The KJV follows the Wycliffe translation (A.D. 1380) with “charity,” a term including “alms.”

c. Faith (_____)

There was no flagging in their efforts toward the Lord. Genuine faith is meant here, although faithfulness may be included.

d. Service (_____)

The original is the root for “deacon.” Such “service” was rendered.

e. Patience (_____)

Literally this word means to “stay under” a problem and not to shirk. Faithfulness to the end is the force of the term.

Note: These five nouns are not only coordinate, but expegetical i.e. the last four extrapolate “works.” The Lord knew the church had a lot going for it and commended it.

2. The Church’s CENSURE RECORDED v. 20

“Few” is in the TR (Textus Receptus) only, but the fact remains -- the Lord has (present tense _____) against you (emphatic pronoun). The key issue is that the church suffers or forbids not (_____) a woman, named Jezebel (by the Lord) who may actually be the Pastor’s wife (some MSS have the pronoun “your” with the noun “woman”). The O.T. references to this name are startling (cf. 1 Kings 16:31; 2 Kings 9:22). Note the problem with this woman:

a. What she is called

She calls (says) “herself” a prophetess. This is a claim to undue authority. Two things are important: 1) Does God speak? 2) What does God say? What this woman claims is really irrelevant.

b. What she does

Two present tense verbs explain what Jezebel does: 1) She teaches (_____). 2) She seduces (_____). Deception filled the classrooms of the church. This activity was with “my servants.” Horrors!

c. What she promotes

Two infinitival verbs state the case: 1) To fornicate (_____). 2) To eat things offered to idols (_____). It is puzzling how this shrewd woman could lead astray God’s servants. Loose living and false worship destroy a separated witness to the Lord.

3. The Church’s JUDGMENT DECLARED vv. 21 - 24

a. Against the Non-believers vv. 21-23

1) Repentance v. 21

The Lord allowed time to repent i.e. change the mind (_____). What infinite grace! But, the Book records: she “willed not to repent.” In some incredible way, God makes man responsible to respond to His grace to be saved!

2) Cast into Tribulation v. 22

The bed of whoredoms is now changed to a bed of anguish. This may well point to the horrible anguish of the great tribulation. The same vocabulary words are used. This is reserved for those who commit adultery (not fornication) with “Jezebel.”

3) Killed with children v. 23

It is patent that God will not tolerate sin. Both physical and spiritual death appear here. Note: The purpose for these awesome divine judgments are twofold: 1) That all the churches will come to know (ingressive force) that the Lord searches (present tense) the reins (kidneys --only here in N.T.) and hearts. God’s judgment reaches to the inner man. He spares no one! 2) That He will give to each (singular _____), according to His works. This teaches that one’s life reveals the heart; behaviour indicates belief.

b. Against Believers v. 24

Here is a dramatic change addressed to “you” and “the rest.” Who are these? They: 1) have (present tense) not the doctrine of Jezebel which was taught and deceived. 2) Have not known the depths of Satan. God avails believers of His deep things (1 Cor. 2:10). Satan’s are all speculation and nonsense. The “other burden” is a reference to the Lord’s requirement of simple obedience and not some mystery of Satan.

Note: This verse clearly states there will always be a division in a church between those who get drawn into worldliness and those who believe in separation.

4. The Church’s COUNSEL GIVEN v. 25

Salvation is of God, by grace, through Christ’s finished work at Calvary. It can never be lost because He has us in His grasp (Jn 10:28, 29). Nonetheless, the aorist imperative “hold” (_____ -- cf. vv. 13, 14) calls upon the believer to apply his heart and soul to the things of eternity with a strong grip on the truth and stay there. This is “until which time He comes.” Christianity is a life long affair.

5. The Church’s CAPSTONE OFFERED vv. 26-28

Consider that the overcomer also keeps my works to the end (both verbs are present tenses). Such can expect the following: 1) Authority (right -- _____) over nations. This involves a share in the Son’s glory (cf. Ps 2). 2) Rule over nations. “Rule” (_____) signifies to Shepherd. It will be done with a rod of iron. Just as the Son has received from the Father (perfect tense _____). 3) Given the Morning Star. For Israel Christ is the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2). To the Church He is the Bright and Morning Star (Rev. 22:16). This gift must be a personal interest in Christ Himself. Glory!

Conclusion The final appeal to the Church is in a different position (cf. 2:7, 11, 17). Jezebel and her children go on unrepentant, but “the rest” will hear. So be it for us all. Oh to give an obedient ear to the Lord and the Holy Spirit.