

To the Church in Thyatira Pt. 2

June 21, 2018

Revelation 2:18-29 ESV

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

19 "'I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.

20 But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

- **Abstaining from sexual immorality and food sacrificed to idols was not some random or strange pairing of sinful behavior.**

Revelation 2:14-15 ESV

14 *But I have a few things against you [Pergamum]: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.*

15 *So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.*

Acts 15:1-6 ESV

1 *But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."*

2 *And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.*

3 *So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers.*

4 *When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them.*

5 *But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses."*

6 *The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.*

Acts 15:22-23 ESV

22 *Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers,*

23 *with the following letter: "The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings.*

Acts 15:28-29 ESV

28 *For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements:*

29 *that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."*

- **The sexual immorality and food sacrificed to idols were direct references to idol worship conducted in and around the pagan temples. This understanding would have been obvious to those living in this culture.**

- **In practice, sexual immorality was an integral part of idol worship and pagan rituals.**

"Thyatira was specially noted for the trade guilds which were probably more completely organized there than in any other ancient city. Every artisan belonged to a guild, and every guild, which was an incorporated organization, possessed property in its own name, made contracts for great constructions, and wielded a wide influence. Powerful among them was the guild of coppersmiths; another was the guild of the dyers...A member of this guild seems to have been Lydia of Thyatira, who, according to Acts 16:14, sold her dyes in Philippi...The guilds were closely connected with the Asiatic religion of the place. Pagan feasts, with which immoral practices were associated, were held, and therefore the nature of the guilds was such that they were opposed to Christianity...It was taught by many of the early church that no Christian might belong to one of the guilds, and thus the greatest opposition to Christianity was presented."
—International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

"Located in modern Turkey, the name of this city is now Akhisar. Although little can be seen of the ancient ruins, inscriptions have been found relating to various guilds, including bakers, leather workers, garment makers, dyers, potters and slave dealers."
—Bible.org

"It [Thyatira] boasted numerous trade deals, which are like our labor unions today. Each field has its own patron deity, its feasts, its seasonal festivities which included sexual revelry." —Bible.org

"...a woman claiming to be a prophetess had been influencing some in this church to join the local trade guilds without which a tradesman could not work in Thyatira. This meant participation in the guild feasts that included immoral acts and the worship of idols."
—Bible.org

- **In principle, God sees immorality and idolatry as the same sin.**

Isaiah 57:7-8 ESV

7 On a high and lofty mountain you have set your bed, and there you went up to offer sacrifice.

8 Behind the door and the doorpost you have set up your memorial; for, deserting me, you have uncovered your bed, you have gone up to it, you have made it wide; and you have made a covenant for yourself with them, you have loved their bed, you have looked on nakedness.

Hosea 4:12-14 ESV

12 My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore.

13 They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery.

14 I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for the men themselves go aside with prostitutes and sacrifice with cult prostitutes, and a people without understanding shall come to ruin.

Ephesians 5:5 ESV

5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

- **Immorality brings a unique set of judgments and consequences.**

1 Corinthians 6:15-20 ESV

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!

16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."

17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Colossians 3:5-6 ESV

5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality (porneia - illicit sexual intercourse, used interchangeably with the worship of idols), impurity (akatharsia - impurity of lust, uncleanness), passion (pathos - inordinate affection, depraved or vile passions, concupiscence), evil desire (epithymia - craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden), and covetousness, which is idolatry.

6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

- **Eating food offered to idols brings a reproach upon our public testimony.**

1 Thessalonians 5:22 ESV

22 Abstain from every form of evil.

form (eidos - that which strikes the eye, exposed to view, external or outward appearance, form, kind)

1 Corinthians 8:4 ESV

4 Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one."

1 Corinthians 8:8-9 ESV

8 Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.

9 But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

1 Corinthians 10:18-20 ESV

18 Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?

19 What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?

20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.

- **Satan, working through this world system, is continually and systematically tempting us to compromise our holiness (separation) and corrupt our testimony before the world.**

Revelation 2:19-20 ESV

19 "I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.

20 But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

Romans 12:1-2 ESV

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

conformed (sychēmatizō - conform to another pattern, fashion according to, process, incrementally, systematically)

Revelation 2:18-29 ESV

20 But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

21 I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.

22 **Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works,**

23 **and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.**