

Hurstbourne Baptist Church; October 11, 2020
Sermon Notes: Revelation 2:12-29
“To the Churches in Pergamum and Thyatira”

1. Addressed to the Angel of the Churches in **Pergamum** and **Thyatira** (2:12; 2:18).
2. Addressed from **Jesus**
 - a. **Pergamum**: “The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword” (2:10; cf. 1:12).
 - b. **Thyatira**: “The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, whose feet are like burnished bronze (2:18; cf. 1:15-16).
3. Words of Commendation
 - a. **Pergamum**: “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you **hold fast** to my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells” (2:13).
 - b. **Thyatira**: “I know your works, your **love** and **faith** and **service** and **patient endurance**, and that your latter works exceed the first” (2:19). Jesus acknowledges the many virtues of the church in Thyatira, and He even salutes their good works. They have real love for God and love for others.
4. Words of Criticism
 - a. **Pergamum**: “You have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam” (2:14) and “some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans” (2:15). “Balaam” in Hebrew and “Nicolaitans” in Greek both mean “conquer the people.”
 - b. **Thyatira**: “You tolerate that woman Jezebel” (2:20).
 - i. “The teaching of Balaam” (2:14)
 - ii. “The teaching of the Nicolaitans” (2:15)
 - iii. Jezebel was “teaching and seducing” (2:20)

- c. **Bottom line:** These two churches were **tolerating** false teachers who were leading people into **idolatry** and **sexual immorality**. This is no surprise because idolatry is spiritual adultery, and this metaphor is found in many places in the OT and the NT (Jeremiah 3:8-9, Ezekiel 16:1-63, 23:1-49, Hosea 1:1-3:5, Revelation 14:8; 17:1, 2, 4, 5, 15, 16; 18:3, 9; 19:2).

5. A Call for Correction

- a. **Pergamum:** “Therefore **repent**. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth” (2:16).
- b. **Thyatira:** “I gave her time to **repent**, but she **refuses** to repent of her sexual immorality” (2:21).

6. A Call to Hear

- a. **Pergamum:** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:17).
- b. **Thyatira:** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:29).

7. A Promise of Blessing to those who Conquer

- a. **Pergamum:** “To the one who conquers I will give some of the **hidden manna**, and I will give him a **white stone**, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it” (2:17).
 - i. The Hidden Manna and the White Stone: “The white stone is probably connected to the manna, as Num. 11:7 describes manna as looking like *bdellium*, a white stone. The white stone thus reinforces the idea of the manna as a heavenly reward” (Beale, *Revelation*, 68).
 - ii. “The ‘white stone’ is another way of describing the same reward [as manna]. Those who triumphed in games were given white stones for entry into celebratory banquets....Those who overcome will enjoy the messianic banquet and stand clean before God forever” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expository Commentary*, 579).

- b. **Thyatira:** “The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations,²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.²⁸ And I will give him the **morning star**” (2:26-28).
- i. “The morning star points to Jesus himself, as Revelation 22:16 explicitly says. He is the star prophesied by Balaam in Numbers 24:17 – the star who will crush all his enemies and rule forever. The greatest reward believers receive is Jesus himself and they will reign with him” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expository Commentary*, 584).

Additional Quotes and Commentary

- “We have frustratingly little information about the Nicolaitans. Some have drawn a connection to the proselyte Nicolaus, appointed to help the Hellenistic widows of the early church (Acts 6:5). If this connection is accurate, Nicolaus must have later departed from the faith he confessed. Perhaps the teaching was the same as the teaching of Balaam. If this is the case, then verse 15 simply restates verse 14. Interestingly, ‘Balaam’ in Hebrews and ‘Nicolaitans’ in Greek both mean ‘conquer the people’” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expositor’s Commentary*, 578).
- “Despite the many strengths of the church in Thyatira, Jesus as the son of God has something against them as well, and it is no small complaint. This is a church known for its love, but love can lose its strength and moral center and morph into a toleration of evil, which is what was happening in Thyatira. Their love had turned to permissiveness” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expositor’s Commentary*, 581).
- We learn from the letter to Thyatira that “love can easily turn into a compromising tolerance, which is ultimately unloving. Rather than taking a stand for the truth, the church at Thyatira was permitting a false prophetess and her disciples to live in a way clearly contrary to the will of God. How easy it is for us to trim back what the Lord says about sexual morality and to think we are loving, generous, and kind in doing so. Genuine love always abides in the truth – there is both tenderness and toughness, grace and truth. Tolerance that contravenes biblical morality must not be confused with love” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expositor’s Commentary*, 581).
- What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition. Modesty has settled upon the organ of conviction where it was never meant to be. A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. Nowadays the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert — himself. The part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt — the Divine Reason. . . We are on the road to producing a race of men too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table” (G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 31).