

Living Word Fellowship Church

Revelation

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An Overview of the Seven Stars and The Seven Churches of

The Church of Thyatira

1. Introduction and Background:

- a) The city - Thyatira, 40 miles southeast of Pergamum, was a much smaller city. Thyatira was situated in an area noted for its abundant crops and the manufacture of purple dye. The church was small, but it was singled out for this penetrating letter of rebuke.¹
- b) In Thyatira, the smallest of these seven cities, the church had allowed a false prophetess to instruct her, leading members into practices of immorality and idolatry. For this reason the Christ who addresses her is described as one coming to execute judgment. To the overcomers of this city Christ promises privileges similar to those he Himself exercises (see 12:5; 19:15; 22:16).²

2. How does the Lord define Himself to this Church (Ephesus - holds the 7 stars and walks among the seven lampstands; Smyrna - He was dead and has come to life; Pergamum - He has a sharp two-edged sword)?

- a) "*Eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze..*" - The Lord redefines Himself when speaking to this church. It is interesting because this church, Thyatira, receives the greatest punishment. The Lord does not define Himself like this anywhere else. How He reacts to this church is specifically designed for this church. Let's address how He defines Himself:
 - First Church Ephesus - Christ defines Himself in Ephesus as "*The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands..*" He is in control of all the churches in a place of honor especially it is through the church He plans to be within the attacks of Satan (Matthew 16:17-19) and it is through the church He plans on impacting the world (Ephesians 1:22-23). He is all the churches Himself.
 - Second church - Smyrna - He describes Himself, as they face serious punishment, as dead and is now alive.
 - Third church - Pergamum - He describes Himself as the One who comes to exercise judgment.
 - *Fourth church - Thyatira - 'Son of God'* - "Here the added designation "Son of God" confirms that Daniel 3 is in mind, since the three friends are delivered by "one like a son of God(s)." Just as that "son of God" protected them, even in the midst of persecution (Dan. 3:25), so will Christ do the same spiritually for those who are faithful in Thyatira."³

Son of God is the most important Christological title in the New Testament because it describes Jesus' relationship to God in terms of divine sonship. Although each of the Gospel writers uses

¹ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 937). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

² Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F. (Eds.). (1962). [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament](#) (Re 2:18). Chicago: Moody Press.

³ Beale, G. K. (1999). [The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text](#) (p. 259). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

the title, John gives it a distinctive emphasis in his Gospel and first letter (cf. John 20:31; 1 John 5:20).⁴

This description of Christ is similar to that in 1:13–15, but here He is called the Son of God rather than the Son of Man. The situation required reaffirmation of His deity and His righteous indignation at their sins.⁵

Jesus as the “Son of man” of Daniel 7 and 10 is the true “Son of God” (see above on the interchangeability of the titles) who will exercise the authority of the Ancient of Days in judging the ungodly nations (Dan. 7:9–13; 4 Ezra 13:1–13, 32, 37, 52) and those who identify with them through compromise (Dan. 11:30–38, 45).⁶

b) *"His feet are like burnished bronze"*:

- HISTORY of the phrase - Jesus follows what is the custom in their time to help them to understand His disposition towards them. The familiarity easily would cause them to engage their experience with His thoughts.

This portrayal of Jesus is apparently a polemic against the local deity Heliuss Pythius Tyrinnaeus Apollo, who was primarily a sun god syncretized from Lydian, Macedonian, and Greek deities.⁷ Jesus is portrayed here as barefoot. Roman statuary occasionally depicted emperors and their families barefoot, an indication that the individual had entered the realm of the divine. Only here and in Revelation 1:15 is the Greek word *chalkolibanos* found in Greek literature. The term was certainly understood in Thyatira, perhaps as the product of a local metal trade guild. Although the KJV translates it as “brass” (an alloy of copper with zinc), it is better understood as “bronze” (an alloy of copper with tin).⁸

- The words “burnished bronze,” which describe His feet, translate a rare Greek word *chalkolibanō*, also used in 1:15. It seems to have been an alloy of a number of metals characterized by brilliance when polished. The reference to His eyes being “like blazing fire” and the brilliant reflections of His feet emphasize the indignation and righteous judgment of Christ.⁹

3. Strengths:

a) They were known for the following:

- Love - This is the agape love that the church of Ephesus did not have. It is a divine love (it only comes from God; 1 John 2:3-6; 4:7-11) and it is empowered through the Holy Spirit. It defines the believer as someone who is truly committed to consistently direct their will to submit to the will of God (Matthew 22:36-40). This love will not be displayed by a person who is self-willed. This is why the scriptures say not to make a person a leader who is 'self-willed.' (Titus 1:7)

⁴ Arnold, C. E. (2002). *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation*. (Vol. 4, p. 268). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁵ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). *Revelation*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 937). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁶ Beale, G. K. (1999). *The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 260). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

⁷ Arnold, C. E. (2002). *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation*. (Vol. 4, p. 269). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁸ Arnold, C. E. (2002). *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation*. (Vol. 4, p. 269). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁹ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). *Revelation*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 937). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Translated "charity" meaning benevolent love. Its benevolence, however, is not shown by doing what the person loved desires but what the one who loves deems as needed by the one loved - This love is agape, that divine love produced in the heart of the yielded saint by the Holy Spirit, which love impels us to obey Him - It is God's willful direction toward man Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son - Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, John 14:15,21,23; 15:10; 1 John 2:5; 5:3; 2 John 6. Self-will, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love of God.

Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom. 15:2, and works no ill to any, 13:8-10; love seeks opportunity to do good to all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,' Gal. 6:10.

- Faith - Their commitment to the Lord was sincere. They had an intense commitment to surrender to the Word of God because they were deeply convicted that it was true. They were sincerely willing to trust it as they lived out their lives.
- Service - Their intense conviction to the Word of God led them to be energized in their service to the Lord.

The whole Christian life works, as it is ruled and energized by faith. It is not accomplished by a single act but by accumulated labor and continued work - The terms also denote work in the social or ethical sense either as a burden laid on man or as a necessary means of life and support. They are applied no less to the domestic tasks of women than to the public work of men - - So that these believers in the whole of their Christian life work is ruled and energized by their faith as an accumulation of all their labor.

A person cannot grow spiritually without this; *"for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."* (Ephesians 4:12) *"From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."* (Ephesians 4:16).

- Perseverance - Their sincere faith and commitment to intensely serve the Lord strengthen them to remain steadfast, not succumbing to difficult circumstances, patiently enduring while trusting the Lord for deliverance.

These spiritual attributes is evidence of a maturing group of individuals who are consistently demonstrating traits of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24).

This is very similar to the church of Thessalonians; Paul writes, *"constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father."* (1 Thessalonians 1:3). This church was a model church to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

- Their deeds were greater than at first - This means that despite all that they encountered they remained faithful.
- Even though the so-called prophetess taught false doctrine there were those who did not follow her. God distinguished who they were and complemented them for remaining committed to sound doctrine.

4. Weaknesses:

a) *"The woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray*":

- Jezebel was a queen in the Old Testament that was evil. She was a worshipper of BAAL and eventually convinced her husband to build a temple to worship her god. Because numerous prophets disagreed she massacred them (1 Kings 18:4, 13). When Elijah defeated her prophets she went after him and because it did not seem to Elijah that God was protecting His prophets Elijah ran off. After her husband died in battle she took over the throne and reigned for 10 years through her sons Ahaziah and Johoram. Jehu killed her two sons and had Jezebel thrown from her widow where she was eaten by dogs so that all that was left of her to bury was her Skelton. This was predicted by Elijah in 1 Kings 21:19; 2 Kings 9:30-37. God had His justice and this became a story within the history of Israel.
- She encouraged members of the church to be immoral and eat forbidden foods because they were sacrificed to idols. The church tolerated her teachings just like the nation of Israel joined up with Jezebel and worshipped the god of BAAL.

5. Consequence:

- a) The consequence for the so-called prophetess is that all her children will be killed with diseases.
- b) God would so punish this so-called prophetess that it would become a witness to the world.

6. Overcomers are Blessed:

- a) The believers who 'hold fast to the end' will be established to run nations with an iron fist based on the authority of God.
- b) Overcomes will receive the 'morning star':
 - Who am "the morning star" (Rev 22:16); so that reflecting My perfect brightness, he shall shine like Me, the morning star, and share My *kingly glory* (of which a *star* is the symbol, Nu 24:17; Mt 2:2).¹⁰
 - Revelation 3:21 - *"He who overcomes I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."*
 - One of John's characteristic constructions. See on 1 John 4:9. The reference is, most probably, to Christ himself. See ch. 22:16. He will give Himself. This interpretation falls in with the promise of power over the nations in ver. 26. The star was the ancient emblem of sovereignty. See Num. 24:17; Matt. 2:2. "It was the symbol of sovereignty on its brighter and benignant side, and was therefore the fitting and necessary complement of the dread attributes that had gone before. The king came not only to judge and punish, but also to illumine and cheer" (Plumptre). Compare 2 Pet. 1:19.¹¹

¹⁰ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 559). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

¹¹ Vincent, M. R. (1887). [*Word studies in the New Testament*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 460). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.