

5 – WHAT IS NOW – PART 3 (REVELATION 2:18-3:6)

Review:

A. The key verse (1:19)

- The key to understanding the book is found in Revelation 1:19

B. A basic outline

1. What You Have Seen (Chapter 1)
2. What is Now (Chapters 2-3)
3. What will take place later (Chapters 4-22)

I. The Letter to the Church of Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29)



A. The Recipient (2:18a)

- Christ addressed the pastor of the church in Thyatira.

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Historical Note: Thyatira

Thyatira was an ancient Greek city in the Roman province of Asia in Asia Minor. As a city, it had very little history and is scarcely mentioned by ancient writers. The coins from the city showed that it lay on a main road linking two river valleys. The city was the center of commerce for the area. During the Roman era, it was famous for its dyeing facilities and was a center of the purple cloth trade.

See: Acts 16:14; Revelation 1:11; 2:24

B. The Author (2:18b)

1. Son of God

- Christ reaffirms His deity.

The Son of God

The title "Son of God" is one of the primary names for Jesus in the New Testament. Jesus' claim to this title was the main charge that the Jewish leaders made against him as they sought to kill him. The title is to be understood as a Messianic title as well as a declaration of deity through a unique relationship with God the Father.

See: Daniel 3:25; Matthew 4:3,6; 8:29; 26:63; 27:40,43,54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; 15:39; Luke 1:35; 4:3,9,41; 22:70; John 1:34,49; 3:18; 5:25; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4,27; 19:7; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:20; Romans 1:4; 2 Corinthians 1:19; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:13,14; Hebrews 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29; 1 John 3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10, 12, 13, 20; Revelation 2:18

2. Eyes like flame of Fire

- His eyes see everything and nothing is hidden from Him.

3. Feet like fine brass

- In His purity and holiness, He will trample out impurity.

C. Commendation (2:19)

1. Christ's Knowledge of the church

- Christ has an intimate knowledge of the church.

2. Love

- Christ is aware of their love for God and for each other.

3. Service

- Christ is aware of their meeting the needs of others.

4. Faith

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- Christ is aware of their faithfulness.

5. Patience

- Christ is aware of their perseverance in the faith.

6. More works than at first

- Christ is aware that their works were increasing with time.

D. Rebuke (2:20-23)

1. Toleration of Jezebel (2:20a)

- They were rebuked for tolerating sin in their midst.

Scripture 1 Corinthians 5:2

And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

2. The Teaching of Jezebel (2:20b)

- They had a female teacher who led them into immorality and idolatry.
- Jezebel was not the false prophet's real name.

Historical Note: Jezebel

Jezebel was a princess of the Zidonians who became the wife of Ahab, king of Israel. She was a zealous worshipper of Baal. She tried to impose worship of the deities Baal and Asherah on the Northern Kingdom. To please Jezebel, Ahab built a temple and an altar to Baal in Samaria. Jezebel persecuted the prophets of Lord and has them killed. She fabricated evidence of blasphemy against Naboth when he refused to sell his property to King Ahab, causing Naboth to be put to death. For these transgressions against the God and people of Israel, Jezebel met a gruesome death as she was thrown out of a window and the flesh of her corpse eaten by stray dogs. In the Letter to Thyatira, Jesus rebukes the church for tolerating a female false teacher who was like Jezebel.

See: 1 Kings 16:31; 18:4,13; 19:1-2; 21:5,7,11,14-15,23,25; 2 Kings 9:7,10,22,30,36-37;
Revelation 2:20

3. Time for Repentance (2:21)

- Graciously the Lord gave her time to repent.

4. The Judgment of Jezebel (2:22-23a)

- Christ will judge her and those who follow her.

5. The testimony of the judgment (2:23b)

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- The purpose of the judgment is to warn all churches against tolerating evil.

E. Exhortation (2:24-25)

1. Who do not hold and have not learned (2:24)

- Those who have endured false teaching will have no other burden.

Biblical Note: Depths of Satan

The depths of can be translated "the deep things of Satan." The deeper things probably involved so-called secret insights that were guaranteed to promote a deeper spiritual life in those who pursue them.

2. Only hold on to what you have (2:25)

- Christ tells them to hold fast until He returns.

F. Promise (2:26-29)

1. Power over nations (2:26-27)

- Christ will give us authority to rule with Him.

2. Morning Star (2:28)

- Christ will give us Himself, the Morning Star.

Biblical Note: Morning Star

The Morning Star is a title for Jesus Christ. A morning star appears before the dawn when the night is the coldest and the darkest. When the world is at the very darkest moment, Jesus Christ will return in all of his glory.

See: 2 Peter 1:19; Revelation 2:28; 22:16

3. The exhortation (2:29)

- We are called to acknowledge what the Holy Spirit reveals to us.

II. The Letter to the Church of Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)

A. The Recipient (3:1a)

- Christ addressed the pastor of the church in Sardis.

Historical Note: Sardis

Sardis was an ancient Greek city located in the Roman province of Asia in Asia Minor. Sardis was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia. The city was the seat of a proconsul under the Roman Empire. The city was located about 48 kilometers southeast of Thyatira, on an important trade

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route that ran east and west through the kingdom of Lydia. Sardis discovered the secret of separating gold from silver, thereby producing both metals of a purity never known before. This was an economic revolution which made Sardis rich and synonymous with wealth itself. For this reason, Sardis is famed in history as the place where modern currency was invented. Important industries in Sardis included jewelry, dye, and textiles. From a religious standpoint it was a center of pagan worship and site of a temple of Artemis. Archeologists have located the ruins of a Christian church building next to the temple.

B. The Author (3:1b)

1. Seven Spirits

- Christ gives direction to the Holy Spirit.

Scripture John 16:13

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

2. Seven Stars

- Christ has authority over the pastors of the churches.

C. Commendation

- It is noteworthy that Christ did not commend them for anything.

D. Rebuke (3:1c)

1. Christ's Knowledge of the church

- Christ has an intimate knowledge of the church.

2. Their testimony

a. Their appearance

- The church had a reputation for being alive.

b. Their actual condition

- Christ exposed the church as being dead.

E. Exhortation (3:2-3)

1. Be watchful (3:2a)

- Christ tells them to be alert.

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2. Strengthen (3:2b)

- Christ calls them to strengthen the few evidences of their Christian life.

3. Remember (3:3a)

- Christ calls them to remember the gospel.

4. Hold Fast (3:3b)

- Christ calls them to holdfast in obedience.

5. Repent (3:3c)

- Christ calls them to acknowledge and turn from their sin.

6. The Warning (3:3d)

- Christ tells that His judgment will come unexpectedly.
- This coming does not refer to the second Coming but rather Christ's coming judgment.

F. Promise (3:4-6)

1. Clothed in white (3:4-5a)

- Christ promises that those who endure will be clothed in righteousness.

Biblical Notes: White Garments

The phrase "clothed in white" means to be set apart for God. It also pictures that a believer has been cleansed from sin. It also signifies that the believer is morally and spiritually pure. Being clothed in white is symbolic of the believer being clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

See: Revelation 3:5; 3:18

2. The Book of Life (3:5b)

- Christ promises that those who endure are assured salvation.

Biblical Notes: The Book of Life

The Book of Life refers to the heavenly registry of those who have experienced salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

See: Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 69:28; Daniel 12:1; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:17,19.

3. Confession before the Father (3:5c)

- Christ promises that those who endure will be acknowledged.

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4. The exhortation (3:6)

- We are called to acknowledge what the Holy Spirit reveals to us.