**The Book of**

 **Revelation**

Lesson Number Seven

 **“Walk Through the Bible” Series**

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**Message to the Pastor at Thyatira**

Thyatira was the next city in the circuitous route in which the letters given to John would be delivered to their pastors.

There is only one other mention of Thyatira in the Bible.

**Acts 16:14 (NLT)**

14 One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying.

Thyatira was 27 miles from Pergamum and was a city with many trade guilds.

“There is evidence of more trade-guilds there than in any other Asian city: wool-workers, linen-workers, makers of outer garments, dryers, leather-workers, tanners, bronze-smiths, etc.”

There was a lot of paganism in Thyatira and in these trade guilds. It was almost impossible to remain in business if you weren’t in one of these trade guilds and it was hard on the Christians because most of the people in the guilds were pagans.

Just outside the city was a “fane” or a temple or shrine where **PAGAN** “prophetic priestesses” called sibyls would go into a frenzy and make prophetic utterances supposedly from their god Apollo. The most famous of these sibyls in Thyatira was Sambatha.

Most of the cities in this time had patron gods. Apollo is one of the most important and complex of the Olympian deities in classical Greek and Roman religion and mythology. Apollo has been variously recognized as god of music, truth and prophecy, healing, the sun and light, plague, poetry, and more. Apollo is the son of Zeus and Leto, and has a twin sister, the chaste huntress Artemis.

**Revelation 2:18-29 (NLT)**

18 “Write this letter to the angel of the church in Thyatira. This is the message from the Son of God, whose eyes are like flames of fire, whose feet are like polished bronze: 19 “I know all the things you do. I have seen your love, your faith, your service, and your patient endurance. And I can see your constant improvement in all these things. 20 “But I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman—that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet—to lead my servants astray. She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols. 21 I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality. 22 “Therefore, I will throw her on a bed of suffering, and those who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent and turn away from her evil deeds. 23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve. 24 “But I also have a message for the rest of you in Thyatira who have not followed this false teaching (‘deeper truths,’ as they call them—depths of Satan, actually). I will ask nothing more of you 25 except that you hold tightly to what you have until I come. 26 To all who are victorious, who obey me to the very end, To them I will give authority over all the nations. 27 They will rule the nations with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots. 28 They will have the same authority I received from my Father, and I will also give them the morning star! 29 “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.

Jesus refers to Himself in a different way to each church. To the pastor of Thyatira He represents Himself as “the Son of God, whose eyes are like

**FLAMES** of fire, whose feet are like polished **BRONZE**.”

The Church at Thyatira is commended for six things:

1. Their works
2. Their love (charity)
3. Their service
4. Their faith
5. Their patience
6. Their **INCREASED** works

Jesus said He could see their **IMPROVEMENT** in all of these areas.

In Christianity, we are either moving **FORWARD** or we are falling **BACKWARD**. There is no in between!

Their works had increased until they were more than the first works.

On the other hand, there were four things the Lord had against Thyatira:

1. Permitting the false prophetesses to teach
	1. Jesus did not say the priestess’s name was Jezebel but rather that she was a “Jezebel.”
	2. We believe that this “Jezebel” was the sibyl named **SAMBATHA.**

**Revelation 2:20-21 (NLT)**

20 “But I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman—that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet—to lead my servants astray. She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols.21 I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality.

1. Permitting her to seduce Christ’s servants (Christians) to commit fornication.
2. Permitting her to seduce Christians to eat things sacrificed to idols.
3. Tolerating her in spite of her impenitence.

This is not the Jezebel of 1 Kings 18 -19, but a woman in the local church at Thyatira. We have no more authority to make the two women the same than we have to make the Joseph of Genesis and the one in Matthew 1:18 the same.

Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible

Supposedly, the prophetic utterances by these women called sibyls were written in a book called the Sibylline Books. The original Sibylline Books were closely-guarded oracular scrolls written by prophetic priestesses (the Sibylls) in the Etruscan and early Roman Era as far back as the 6th Century B.C.E. These books were destroyed, partially in a fire in 83 B.C.E., and finally burned by order of the Roman General Flavius Stillicho (365-408 C.E.).

The books now are called Psuedo-Sibylline Books because these were mostly written long after the originals were destroyed. Psuedo means “not genuine.”

There are other books called “psuedepigrapha.” These are Jewish writings ascribed to various Biblical patriarchs and prophets but composed within approximately 200 years of the birth of Jesus Christ. They are writings that look like they may be scriptural but are not considered to be canonical.

What Can We Learn from the Church in Thyatira?

Works are important and we need to **GROW** in our **WORKS**, in our **LOVE** and in our **PATIENCE**.

1. PATIENCE

How does Patience grow? Unfortunately, it grows as we go through **TRIALS**. As we go through those trials, hopefully we are growing in the Lord and remaining in His Word before the trials hit and while we are going through them.

It is very easy to discern if a person is “in the Word” or not. You ca tell by their **ACTIONS**. You can almost guarantee that a person who continually worries and frets is not in the Word.

As we get into the Word, we realize, through these trials, that God is there and that He will always remain **FAITHFUL**. You can actually get to the point that you almost welcome trials because you KNOW that God is going to come through for you because you TRUST in His Word!

1. **Works and Increased Works**

One of the first things we learn as Christians is that WORKS do not get us into heaven!

**Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)**

8 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

BUT listen to verse 10:

**Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)**

10 For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

God ordained (intended for) us before we were even Christians that once we believed in Christ, we should walk in **GOOD WORKS**.

**James 2:14-26 (NLT)**

14 What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? 15 Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, 16 and you say, “Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well”—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? 17 So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. 18 Now someone may argue, “Some people have faith; others have good deeds.” But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.” 19 You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. 20 How foolish! Can’t you see that faith without good deeds is useless? 21 Don’t you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. 23 And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” He was even called the friend of God. 24 So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. 25 Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. 26 Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.

1. **Love**

We should love one another!

**1 John 4:7-8 (NLT)**

7 Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8 But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

It is very possible for a Christian to live many years as a Christian but to **NEVER** grow in his/her faith. There is nothing sadder than seeing a spiritually immature Christian, especially when they have been a Christian or years!

**Galatians 5:22-23 (BBE)**

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, a quiet mind, kind acts, well-doing, faith, 23 Gentle behaviour, control over desires: against such there is no law.

Fruit **GROWS** on trees. It is a process. Fruit does not appear the moment the tree is planted. As the tree is watered and it receives sunshine, it grows and it bears fruit.

It is the same with us. We do **NOT** have to change BEFORE becoming a Christian. God accepts us just as we are. Then, He begins to change us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit!

**Romans 5:8 (BBE)**

8 But God has made clear his love to us, in that, when we were still sinners, Christ gave his life for us.

Fruit begins to grow and will **INCREASE** as we continue watering our spirits and as we continue to shine the light of God’s Word into our Spirit!

**Do you love people?**

**Do you have joy even when things are crashing down around you?**

Joy and happiness are two completely different things. You can have joy when you aren’t happy! Joy comes when we KNOW that God’s Word is true and that He is in control of our lives.

Peace and a quiet mind – is your mind racing, worrying about what may happen tomorrow? Or is your mind at peace? When you know God’s Word, regardless of your situation you CAN have peace.

We will have those fruits in our lives if we continue to abide in the Word and when we let the Word abide in us!

Judge yourself to see if you are exhibiting these fruits!

You don’t have to love people exactly like Pastor David does. Don’t ever judge yourself according to others. Judge yourself according to the **WORD of GOD**!

I had a friend who has gone to be with the Lord now but he was a Harvard graduate. He had been a multi-millionaire at least three times and God finally got hold of him. He would feed the homeless on Wednesday nights. He would hug crack addicts and prostitutes and alcoholics and love on them. I never had that passion for them but that was not my call.

**1 Corinthians 11:31 (NLT)**

31 But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way.

**John 15:1-8 (NLT)**

1 “I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. 3 You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. 5 “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

Homework: Read John chapter 15

Answer these questions. This is just for you, not the class.

1. What does it mean when the Bible says God is the husbandman or gardner?
2. Am I bearing fruit in my life?
3. What kinds of fruit are apparent in my life to other people?
4. What kinds of fruit in my life is apparent to me?
5. Are you “abiding” in the Word of God?
6. Do you read God’s Word Daily?
7. According to John 15:8, what brings God much pleasure?
8. According to John 15:14 what must we do to be Christ’s friend?
9. In John 15:26 who does Jesus say He would send from the Father to testify of Him?
10. Do you sense the power of the Holy Spirit in your life daily?