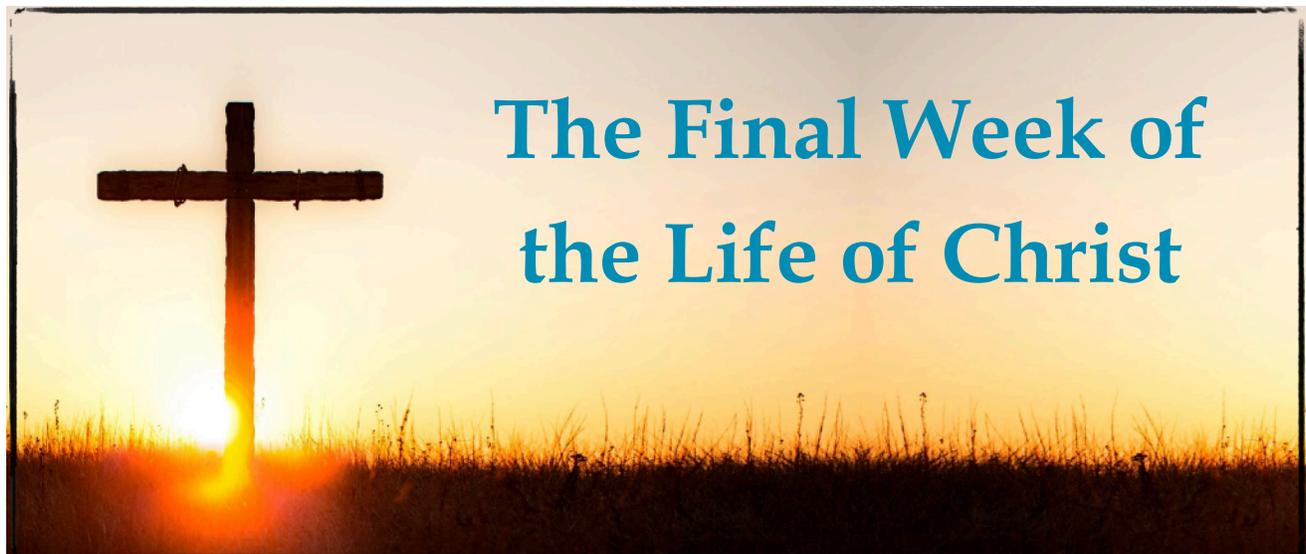

LANDMARK MESSENGER

The Final Week: Words from the Cross, cont.

In our [last issue](#) we introduced the seven sayings of Jesus from the cross. As the Lord of Glory endured the most horrific of torturous deaths the ancient world had to offer His gracious spirit continued to shine. It began from the moment the mocking Romans soldiers started hammering the nails into His hands and feet when Jesus prayed: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34, NASB). As Jesus repeated these merciful words of forgiveness His cruel executioners were gambling for His clothing which they had just torn from His already savaged body.

Jesus would spend six hours hanging between heaven and earth. During His crucifixion many came to jeer and mock including the two criminals crucified on His right and left sides. However, something unexpected transpired – Luke's gospel records a dramatic act of repentance from one of the suspended offenders. In response to the criminal's confession of faith, Jesus famously spoke these words: "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

What do we make of the thief on the cross? How should we understand his interaction with the Lord Jesus, and perhaps most importantly, what applications can be made regarding his conversion to our modern times? We hope this month's main article, "To Paradise," will help to answer these important questions.



To Paradise

By Shahe Gergian



In the second chapter of the book of Acts, Peter and the other apostles stood before a massive audience gathered in Jerusalem to preach the gospel. Peter summarizes his sermon with this theme statement: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

By pointing to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, the miraculous work of God through Christ (especially the resurrection), and the eyewitness account of the apostles, Peter was able to argue his main assertion that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. These startling words stunned the crowd and caused them to ask a probing question: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

The Jewish audience gathered in Jerusalem from across the empire wanted to know how to respond to the good news they learned about Jesus. They wanted to know how to remedy their crime of crucifying the Messiah. They wanted to know how to avail themselves of the blessings of Christ’s exalted reign. They wanted to know how to be right with God in this new age. Like the Philippian jailor, they wanted to know: “what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30).

This question has been asked countless times in response to the preaching of Jesus all over the world. The tragedy which presents itself today is how many divergent answers are given. In spite of the fact that many preachers and devoted religions claim to follow the same book giving lip-service to the Bible, they rarely give the same response when asked, what must I do to be saved?

There is no good reason for this disparity and confusion in modern religion. The problem is that over the last two thousand years, men have developed their own doctrinal systems which have led people further and further away from the Bible. If men and women would once again rally to the word of God to answer such serious questions, the world would be the better for it. Regarding the question of salvation, a number of important New Testament verses should be considered:

- For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God... (Ephesians 2:8).

- Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent... (Acts 17:30).
- For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:10).¹

Few people would deny the necessity of having faith in order to be saved. Faith is the cornerstone of God's religion. Equally so, most modern preachers will emphasize the importance of repentance as that transformational decision to abandon one's former way of life to be remade in the image of Christ. To be saved, many are told, people must have faith in God, repent of their sins, make an ambiguous confession or prayer that somehow acknowledges Jesus.

Up until this point, few religious people of Christian-professing faiths would disagree. Some might argue over the order, saying repentance precedes faith. Some might argue about how a person is prompted to have faith, especially in regard to the role of the Holy Spirit. But generally speaking, most people teach that faith, repentance, and some kind of verbal acknowledgment of one's faith saves.

A problem often arises when dealing with the issue of baptism. What role does baptism play in salvation? A common answer given is that baptism is something people do after they are saved, and it really has nothing to do with salvation itself. However, it seems to be that this is an impossible position to advocate in light of many verses in the New Testament. When the apostles were asked: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter's reply included baptism as a necessary component: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38).

Peter's response included baptism as a necessary component for one to obtain the remission (forgiveness) of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps it would be best now, to start a list of blessings and promises that are tied to baptism in the New Testament:

Baptism's Blessing	Scripture Reference
Forgiveness of sins	Acts 2:38
Gift of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:38

Staying in the book of Acts for a moment, consider the conversation of Saul in Acts 22. Saul was blinded by Jesus on the road to Damascus and told he would be used by the Lord to fulfill a great purpose – to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Jesus then told Saul, "Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do" (Acts 22:10).

¹ This sampling of verses is in no way to be considered exhaustive.

Saul, still blind, fasted for three days while awaiting the Lord's instructions (Acts 9:9). Finally a preacher named Ananias came to him, healed his blindness, and asked Saul the only question that mattered in that moment: "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Ananias affixed a blessing to baptism similar to Peter's by associating it with washing away sins.

Baptism's Blessing	Scripture Reference
Forgiveness of sins	Acts 2:38
Gift of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:38
Washing away sins	Acts 22:16

Saul was baptized and became the apostle Paul, a great preacher and writer. Among his writings are some of the most incredible verses about baptism. For example, he wrote about those who had come to Christ by saying they were "buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12). Paul similarly wrote:

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4).

How amazing it is that one can be buried and raised with Christ through the waters of baptism! In baptism, believers follow the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord by dying to sin, burying the old sinful self, and rising up a new creature in Christ.

Baptism's Blessing	Scripture Reference
Forgiveness of sins	Acts 2:38
Gift of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:38
Washing away sins	Acts 22:16
Buried and raised with Christ	Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-4

The apostle Paul also discussed baptism's role in joining the body of Christ:

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

The context of 1 Corinthians 12 focuses on the diversity which exists in Christ's body by focusing on the local congregation at Corinth. Congregations have many members with a

range of abilities, but the church is still one in Christ, after all, every Christian who is in the body of Christ got there the same way – through baptism.

Baptism's Blessing	Scripture Reference
Forgiveness of sins	Acts 2:38
Gift of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:38
Washing away sins	Acts 22:16
Buried and raised with Christ	Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-4
Added to the body	1 Corinthians 12:12-13

It should not be surprising that baptism puts one into Christ's body, because this is taught in several places, like when Paul focuses on God fulfilling His ancient promises through Christ. Faith in Jesus and baptism will add a person to Abraham's family and unify him with Christ in every way imaginable: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Baptism is therefore into Christ, and it also makes one clothed with Christ.

Baptism's Blessing	Scripture Reference
Forgiveness of sins	Acts 2:38
Gift of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:38
Washing away sins	Acts 22:16
Buried and raised with Christ	Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-4
Added to the body	1 Corinthians 12:12-13
Into Christ	Galatians 3:27
Put on Christ	Galatians 3:27

This brings the baptismal survey back to Acts 2 for a moment. Peter told that crowd to repent and be baptized: "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41). Notice particularly the word "added" in this verse. Three thousand people who were baptized were added to *them*, but who or what is *them*? A few verses later the answer is revealed: "...praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Just as 1 Corinthians said baptism adds one to the body, Acts 2 teaches baptism adds one to the church, which is Christ's body (Colossians 1:18).

Baptism's Blessing	Scripture Reference
Forgiveness of sins	Acts 2:38
Gift of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:38
Washing away sins	Acts 22:16
Buried and raised with Christ	Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-4
Added to the body	1 Corinthians 12:12-13
Into Christ	Galatians 3:27
Put on Christ	Galatians 3:27
Added to the church	Acts 2:41; 47

Some may examine this list and acknowledge its truthfulness that baptism is associated with the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, washing away sins, being buried and raised with Christ, being added to the body, getting into Christ, putting on Christ, and being added to the church; but, they might object, that does not mean being baptized is required for getting saved. What is the appropriate Biblical response to such a statement?

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16).

Here are the words of Jesus Himself. Belief and baptism end in salvation. However, even to this someone might argue Jesus did not say, "but he who does not believe *and is not baptized* will be condemned," so can one be certain that baptism is required? Might it be possible to be saved without it? Peter does not believe baptism is optional.

...in the days of Noah... eight souls were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ... (1 Peter 3:20-21).

Notice especially the mention of water. In the days of Noah, water washed away the sins of the world. In the days of Messiah's reign, water washes away the sins of the believer, not because water is special or possesses magical properties, but because God has ordained it. Water often symbolized a transformation in the lives of those who passed through it like the generation which was brought through the Red Sea by Moses or their children who passed through the Jordan River under Joshua. Water represents the passage from an old way into something new which helps explain the Lord's words to Nicodemus: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Both salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of God are associated with water baptism.

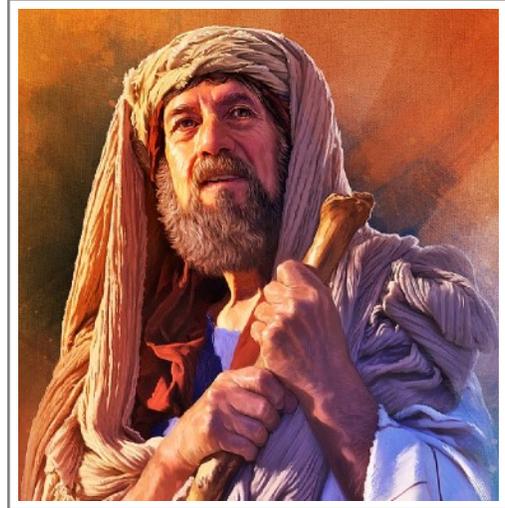
Baptism's Blessing	Scripture Reference
Forgiveness of sins	Acts 2:38
Gift of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:38
Washing away sins	Acts 22:16
Buried and raised with Christ	Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-4
Added to the body	1 Corinthians 12:12-13
Into Christ	Galatians 3:27
Put on Christ	Galatians 3:27
Added to the church	Acts 2:41; 47
Salvation	Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21
Kingdom of God	John 3:5

With the weight of this Biblical evidence in mind, how is it that people continue to reject the necessity of baptism for salvation? Often the answer lies in a conversation Jesus had during His final hours on the cross. The question is often simply posed: what about the thief on the cross? He was saved without baptism, the claim states, therefore baptism can not be a requirement for salvation. Thus, Bible students need to consider how it was that this thief was saved, and what his experience alongside Jesus teaches.

Before focusing on the thief, there is a broader question to ask: how were people saved before the Christian age? When the church was established on the day of Pentecost documented in Acts 2, Peter made it clear that baptism was a part of being saved, having sins forgiven, and becoming a member of the Lord's church. Jesus said this would be the case when after His death, burial, and resurrection, He instructed His apostles, saying: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19).

The message of baptism for the forgiveness of sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit was a new message the entire world needed to hear. The Lord's forerunner John the immerser preached and practiced baptism for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4), but not in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, so how were people saved before Acts 2's Pentecost? In reality, there is no essential difference between how people were saved before Acts 2 and how people are saved today. It can rightly be said that all people who have ever been saved, have been saved essentially the same way – by faith. Salvation is and has always been by faith.

Paul makes this argument in Romans 4 when he taught that Abraham was a prime example of someone who was saved before the Law of Moses and even before circumcision because the book of Genesis says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Romans 4:3 which quotes Genesis 15:6). Faith, or belief, is that quality in people which puts them into a right relationship with the Lord. Faith was the hallmark of Abraham’s entire life as Genesis documents it.



If salvation is by faith, it becomes necessary to examine what faith is, because many in the religious world have misappropriated the word faith and cause it to mean something not taught in the Bible. Faith is belief and trust in God and obedience to His word. This is most readily born out in Hebrews 11 where the writer takes time to list a host of Old Testament examples to show what it means to live a life of faith. His point is to prove that because of their trust in God, the ancient saints were willing to do whatever the Lord commanded them, even if it seemed ridiculous at the time:

- By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain... (11:4).
- By faith Noah... prepared an ark for the saving of his household (11:7).
- By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance (11:8).
- By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac... (11:17).
- By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed... (11:11).
- By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter... (11:24).
- By faith he forsook Egypt... (11:27).
- By faith he kept the Passover... (11:28).
- By faith they passed through the Red Sea... (11:29).
- By faith the harlot Rahab... received the spies with peace * (11:8)

The faith that saves is the faith that trusts in God and obeys His word. Everyone who has ever been saved, has been saved by this type of faith. For those living after Acts 2, obeying God’s word includes being baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, but for those living during the days of the Law of Moses, or even before Moses, obeying God did not include Christian baptism, and this was the situation with the thief on the cross.

While Jesus was hanging on the tree, He obviously had not yet died, been buried, risen from the tomb, and given the command to go preach baptism in His name. The thief did not have to be baptized, just like Abraham and Moses never needed immersion in water. The thief needed to do what all others need to do to be saved—he needed to trust in God and obey His word, and that is exactly what he did.

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

Consider some observations from this text:

1. The thief acknowledged his sinfulness and the need for God to punish his wickedness: "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds" (Luke 23:40-41).
2. The thief had faith in King Jesus, the Messiah: He called Jesus "Lord" and made reference to His "Kingdom" (Luke 23:42).
3. The thief repented of his former blasphemy: Matthew 27:44 and Mark 15:32 reveal that both of the robbers had been reviling Jesus, but sometime later one of them changed and even rebuked the other criminal (Luke 23:40). The text does not say why he had the change of heart. Perhaps his repentance was prompted by hearing Jesus continually pray: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34), or he was simply acknowledging what Pilate had already declared, "this Man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:41). Whatever the cause, his faith and repentance were genuine.
4. An acknowledgment of sin and need of a Savior, a declaration of faith, a demonstration of repentance, and finally, the thief literally did what people today can only do metaphorically in baptism—he died with Christ. Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Jesus and the thief died together, and together their spirits entered the abode of the righteous.



Remember what Paul taught about baptism in Romans 6 and Colossians 2. Baptism is a metaphor for the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Baptism is like Christ's death because "our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with" (Romans 6:6). Baptism is like Christ's burial because "we were buried with Him through baptism into death" (Romans 6:4). And baptism is like Christ's resurrection because "we also should walk in newness of life" for "certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection" (Romans 6:4-5).

That which believers do metaphorically in baptism today, the thief did literally by dying with Christ, being buried, and waiting in Paradise to share in the resurrection. He acknowledged his sin and his need of a Savior, he possessed faith in Christ, he demonstrated his repentance, he confessed his faith openly, and he died with Christ. In these actions, the thief becomes a type of what would be required of those who would come to Christ after Acts 2 and the establishment of the church age.

Luke, who is the only man to record the events surrounding the thief's conversion, is also the writer of Acts. The conversation of the penitent thief established the model for how a person is saved, and in Acts, Luke demonstrates how others follow in that salvific pattern:

1. People acknowledged their sin in crucifying Jesus and their need for a savior just like the thief (Acts 2:37).
2. The Ethiopian man wanted to know what he needed to do before being baptized, and the preacher told him, "if you believe with all your heart, you may" (Acts 8:37). He had faith in Christ just like the thief.
3. Peter preached to the crowd at the temple and told them: "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). They had to repent just like the thief.
4. The Ethiopian man was ready to be baptized, so he confessed his faith: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). Believers confess with their mouths the Lord Jesus just like the thief.
5. Those who wanted to become Christians were baptized in Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16). They were buried with Christ, just like the thief.

For Luke, the thief on the cross does not undermine baptism. The man who died alongside the Lord exemplified the splendor of baptism and foreshadowed its significance. All those who want to follow the thief to Paradise must include baptism in their quest to be saved, for it is only in baptism that the fullness of God's blessings pertaining to salvation can be found.



Sacred Topography: Thyatira

By Bart Shaw

In the opening pages of Revelation, the Lord commanded the Apostle John:

“What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea” (Revelation 1:11).

The fourth congregation listed by the Lord is Thyatira. Thyatira was about fifty miles inland from the Aegean Sea and well known for its trade in purple dye and garments. Paul and Silas were forbidden by the Spirit to visit Asia (and thus Thyatira) during their second missionary journey (see map). They did meet a Thyatiran merchant woman named Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16:14).



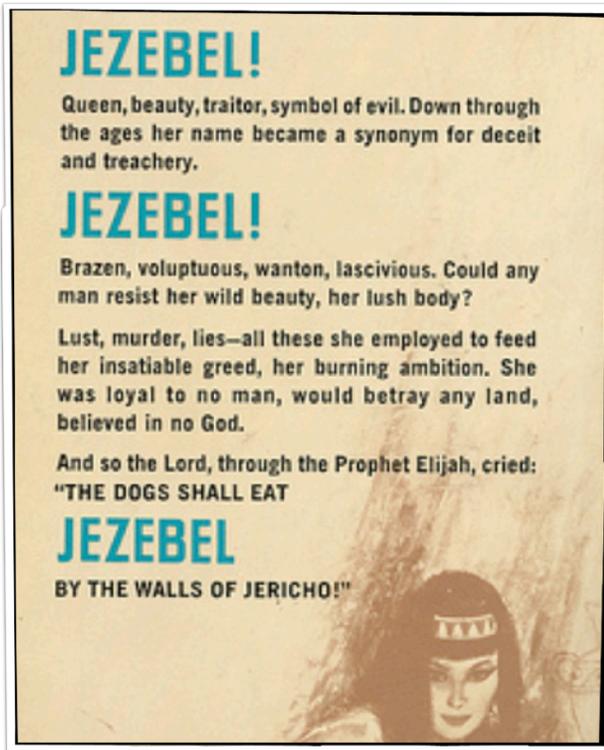
Thyatira's history is not as glorious and significant as Ephesus, Pergamon, or even Smyrna. Its major claim to fame was that it was re-named by the first Seleucid monarch, Seleucus I Nicator, the great-great-great grandfather of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. The historian Stephanus of Byzantium relates that Seleucus I, while on campaign, learned that his wife had a baby girl. In honor of his new dad status he re-named the city 'Thyatira' after the Greek word for 'daughter.'

However, the Lord did not think the Church of Christ in Thyatira was minor or insignificant and gave them a very long message spanning 12 verses. It is a letter of both comfort and rebuke. Christ begins by saying: “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first” (Revelation 2:19-20).

Works are a significant focus in Revelation—the word *works* is found eighteen times in the book. To each one of the seven congregations Jesus states: “I know your works.” However, *only* to Thyatira does He say “...and as for your works, the last are more than the first.” Remarkable! Thyatira had many and plenteous works! How many Christians could be told by God that your last works are more than your first? Thyatira was *not* told (as was Ephesus) to “repent and do the first works” (Revelation 2:5).

What then, was the problem at Thyatira? Interestingly, the church in a city named *daughter* had a problem with a *daughter of men*. Jesus tells the congregation:

“Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols” (Revelation 2:20).



This daughter of men is called Jezebel by the Savior, after the pagan Sidonian wife of Ahab King of Israel. Jezebel 'stirred up' (2 Kings 9:7) her husband to do wickedness by following after pagan gods. Also, Jezebel was responsible for the massacre of God's prophets (1 Kings 18:4) and caused Elijah to flee into the wilderness after the Mt. Carmel showdown. Jezebel's name is synonymous with licentiousness, murder, and brazen idolatry.

The elders of the Church of Christ at Thyatira had somehow allowed a false prophetess to enter in and stir up Christians to commit heinous sin. The past had returned in vivid technicolor in the person of a woman emulating the worst characteristics of Elijah's ancient adversary.

What sins were being committed?

1. The elders were allowing a woman to teach. Scripture explicitly prohibits women from teaching in the congregations of the Lord. "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church" (1 Corinthians 14:34-35).
2. This woman was seducing some in the congregation to commit sexual immorality. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians: "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18-7:2).
3. She was persuading some to eat things sacrificed to idols. In Acts 15, the Holy Spirit instructed: "But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality" (Acts 21:25). There was enormous cultural pressure in the first century to conform to the standard of eating things offered to idols, and this woman capitalized on the identity politics issue of the day to forge her false religion. One of the key founding principles of faith in Christ the Lord was (and is) the complete rejection of devotion to false gods or demons.

What would be the outcome of this terrible and tragic predicament in Thyatira? The unrepentant false prophetess and her children were punished by the Lord, but those who remained steadfast were rewarded. As the Lord concludes the letter He says:

“Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come” (Revelation 2:24–26).

The lesson is clear: the Lord holds each congregation and each individual Christian responsible for their works. As disciples, we must take accountability to the Savior very seriously, obey His teachings, and love Him deeply.

The Millennials’ Harbinger: The Word of Truth

By Matthew Shaffer

We aspire to be the people of God; brought out of the world, and made into something more than we could be by our own power (1 Peter 2:9-10). We know that the only foundation for that nation of people is the Word of God, revealed through His prophets, His Son, and the apostles (Ephesians 2:19-22). This Word, the Bible, is the most important source of information regarding the identity and organization of the church and the Christian life. When we are confronted with a piece of information from the Bible—a fact about the early church and apostolic Christianity—there are two approaches that we can take: 1) we may ask if we *must* change ourselves to reflect the lives of early Christians, or 2) we may ask if there is any good reason why we *should not* change our lives to reflect early Christianity.

Ultimately, the distinction between the two approaches is one of bias. If we adopt the first option, we assume that what we are doing currently, no matter where we are spiritually, is right unless proven otherwise. Whenever something in Scripture challenges us to give something up—like drunkenness (Romans 13:11-14)—or to add something into our lives—like assembling regularly with a local congregation (Hebrews 10:19-25)—our willingness to conform to that standard will be based on our conviction that God will judge us if we do not conform. This is the basis of a mindset that says, “I will do what I want unless you can show me that it will send me to hell.”

The second option has a bias toward the value of the apostolic pattern. If we adopt this view, we assume that the apostles’ choices and actions are a good and trustworthy representation of God’s will for His people and His church. Excepting the times when the apostles needed to experience correction and growth in their own faith, which are well documented in Scripture so that they can be understood (e.g., Acts 10:9-16; Galatians 2:11-21), we know that we will do well if we live our lives by their every example and instruction. The burden of persuasion has shifted, and we no longer ask why we should change our lives to conform to the standard of the Bible. Instead, we are asking ourselves how we can justify any change to what we find in its pages. We have the Word of God, how can we follow anything else?

This is the restoration principle, and this is how we can receive the implanted word with meekness (James 1:21). Our goal is not to justify ourselves as we are now; our goal is to allow the Word of God to have its complete, transformative effect on our lives. We can only do this if we let ourselves be challenged to our core. We have to start with the Bible first.

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