

UNSTOPPABLE CHURCH

Then and Now
in 30 Minutes



Episode 48 - Corrected

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THE SETTING



We've moved to **Thyatira** in Turkey, 40 miles (65 km) south-east of Pergamum. Sadly, we don't know much about Thyatira because it is now largely covered by modern Akhisar. But we know it was a prosperous commercial centre, the manufacturing and marketing hub of the province of Asia. So, more trade guilds existed here than in any other Roman city in the region. There were guilds for every trade you could think of - including dyers. And that reminds us of Lydia, "a dealer in purple cloth" ([Acts 16:14](#)), who came from here and was the first person that Paul led to faith in Jesus in Philippi.

We also know about two key spiritual issues. First, Thyatira was a centre for the worship of Apollo (also called Helios), the god of sunlight, who was the city's "divine guardian". He was patron to many of the city's trade guilds; so, Christians who wouldn't honour him by sacrifice or participation in guild functions would quickly find themselves excluded from the city's economy. Second, Thyatira believed that the Roman Emperor was the incarnation of Apollo and both were called "son of Zeus". Domitian named his son "son of God" and portrayed him on coins holding seven stars.



Ruins of a colonnaded street that ran east-west through Thyatira



Ruins of a Byzantine Basilica



BIBLE READING

[Revelation 2:18-29](#)



KEY IDEAS

Although Thyatira is the smallest of the seven cities addressed in Revelation, it receives the longest letter. Once again, the letter begins by focusing on Jesus in light of the city's particular claims. Apollo may have been bright; but Jesus "whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze" (v 18) is far brighter. And the Emperor may have thought he was divine and that his son was therefore the son of a god, but only Jesus is the true "Son of God" (v 18) - the only place in Revelation where he has that name.

The good

Jesus begins with a commendation. Nothing ever gets missed by him, remember; so he tells them he has seen their deeds, love, faith, service and perseverance; and that they are doing more now for him than they even did when first they came to know him (v 19). And yet...

The bad

The church had been tolerating a woman called Jezebel in their midst - an obvious reference to the infamous wife of King Ahab who introduced and promoted the Phoenician form of Baal worship into Israel in the 9th century BC, leading God's people astray. Although she saw herself as a prophetess, Thyatira's Jezebel had been speaking lies, not truth, leading Christians into the sexual immorality and idolatry that were linked to the trade guilds.

The correction

Jesus says he has given Jezebel time to repent; but enough is enough. He now pronounces judgment on her and all her followers - a judgment of suffering and death (v21-23). This is strong stuff; but this was about gross and wilful error that was leading God's people astray, and it needed correcting, not pandering to. It stands as a healthy reminder that God does not ignore our sins for ever and that we should maintain a healthy fear of the Lord, responding

quickly to his corrections.

The call

Jesus then urges the rest of the church to hold on to what they have - the truth revealed in and through him alone (v 25). For if they do this, and keep his will to the end, then he promises (quoting from Psalm 2) that they will one day share in his rule as Messianic King (v 26-27) and will receive “the morning star” (v 28) - an amazing thought in days when most people believed that the stars ruled our lives; so to be given authority to rule over one of the main stars would be amazing to them. And in Revelation 22:16 we discover that this star is Jesus himself. He will be their reward.



1. The letter to Thyatira reminds us that, as Christians, we can neither compromise (accepting our God alongside other so-called gods of the culture) nor compartmentalise (keeping our faith in a box so we can get on with ‘real’ life). Which of these two things do you personally need to beware of?
2. What is the danger of letting one person become, like Jezebel, too influential in a local church?
3. How can the Church today ensure it stays willing to be corrected by God and so become unstoppable?



For a behind-the-scenes glimpse into what was involved to create this podcast series listen to Mike and David recounting their experiences!

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