

Judging Jezebel

Special Delivery – Part VII

Revelation 2:18-29

Introduction

When I graduated from high school in 1976, and walked across the platform of my Christian school's gymnasium, along with fifty other graduates, to receive my diploma, my diploma booklet was empty. They had allowed me to participate in the graduation ceremony, even though I was not quite yet a graduate.

Looking back on this, they probably allowed me to participate only because I was the pianist for the senior class song and they could not do it without me. I was also the class chaplain and was supposed to deliver a five minute challenge.

However, I had flunked Algebra that year. I would like to blame it on my Algebra teacher – we could not dare ask her a question without being chewed out. She was the grouchiest person on the planet. I figured it was because she had to teach math.

So, I went to summer school and took the class over again, knowing full well that this time, if I did not pass, I would not be going to college. I barely made it through, getting a "D" in the course, from what I can remember. I was accepted into college on probation, being required to take their introductory Algebra course. I barely squeaked by with a "D" in that class, but I passed – and went on to live a happy life.

The trouble is that math is just so unforgiving. It is so narrow. There is only one right answer and no percentage points are given for being close. In math, $3 + 3$ is only 6 and $6 + 2$ is only 8 and $8 + 5$ is only

13. Seriously, to this day, I have to use my fingers on 7's and 8's.

I do not know about you, but my math professors never gave me credit for good penmanship. They never said, "Hey, the answer isn't 14, but you wrote it so neatly, I'll give you half a point."

No, it was one answer and only one that mattered. Truth can be so narrow.

We have been reading other people's mail in our past few sessions. Included in this mail are personal evaluations, which we could call, report cards.

Jesus Christ is in the process of evaluating His church – grading their assignments and watching how they do on their tests, judging their attitude and noting their spirit. He is in the process of sending His report card to the leadership of the church for the entire church to read.

I find it fascinating that His longest review was sent to the smallest church, located at a relatively insignificant dot on the map of the Roman Empire.

Pliny the Elder, who lived in the first century, made reference to, "Thyatira and other unimportant communities."¹

Yet, in this letter to the church in Thyatira, in Revelation chapter 2, some of the most significant truth is revealed.

Narrow? Yes.

Dogmatic? Without a doubt!

Percentage points given for neatly handwritten error? Not a chance.

Yet, the truth will not only potentially rescue this wandering church, but it will liberate every church

today that is bowing to the politically correct notions of our culture. The dogma of Christ's words will also rescue the church from the religious status quo that is squeezing the vitality out of the church today.

Jesus Christ dictates in Revelation 2:18,

And to the angel [messenger] of the church in Thyatira write: "The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze."

Again, the Lord selects something from the opening descriptions of Himself, found in Revelation chapter 1, and specifically reintroduces one or more of them that will fit the specific church He is addressing. He says,

. . . "The . . . [One] who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze."

In other words, His feet are red with the heat of the furnace.

These descriptions can be comforting and terrifying.

The church in Ephesus was walking away from their love relationship with Christ, and Christ introduced Himself by saying, effectively, in Revelation 2:1, "I am still walking in your midst."

The church in Smyrna was facing terrible persecution and death, and Jesus Christ said at the outset of their letter, in Revelation 2:8, "I also died, but I have the power over death and I came back to life."

To the church in Pergamum that was unable to discern between good and evil – combining it all together as good flexitarians do – Jesus Christ effectively introduced Himself, in Revelation 2:12, as the One whose word is a double-edged sword; in other words, "capable of cutting through the façade, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart."ⁱⁱⁱ

Now, to the church at Thyatira, which was unwilling to discipline the unrepentant sinners in their midst and send the prodigals out of the church, Jesus Christ says, "I'm coming with piercing eyes aflame with fury and the red hot feet of terrible judgment."

Commendation by Christ of the Church at Thyatira

First, however, as always, the gracious Chief Shepherd begins with commendation as He praises this church at Thyatira for the part which was praiseworthy. More than likely, as He implies near

the end of the letter, these compliments referred only to those in the church who were still hanging on to the truth.

In Revelation 2:19, Jesus Christ praises the faithful for six characteristics. He commends them for their:

1. works or labor;
2. love or "agape";
3. faith;
4. service, from the Greek word "diakonian (διακονιαν)," which gives us our English word "deacon" – evidently the flock did not leave serving the body up to a body of servants, but also served the flock;
5. bearing up under the strain or patient endurance – we are given hints at what they were enduring, but Christ knew exactly what they were enduring and commended them for it;
6. not slowing down in their efforts to do all of the above – unlike Ephesus before them, they were actually, as Revelation 2:19 says, exceeding in their latter works; literally, outpacing what they did in their earlier days.

This church was busy, loving, committed, faithful, patient in suffering, and it was attempting even greater things for God than ever before.

I have read that the average church in America has twelve good years before it declines; before it begins to drop off in effective outreach, conversions to Christ, baptisms, discipleship, growth, new members, new ideas, new projects, and a spirit of anticipation. The average church in America has twelve good years and then slides into spiritual apathy and oblivion.

Not this church in Thyatira, however. This church was at least sixty years old and it was still climbing! However, it was in great danger, whether the assembly knew it or not.

Criticism by Christ of the Church in Thyatira

Now we read the criticism; the negative evaluation from the Lord to this church in Thyatira. In Revelation 2:20, He says,

But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing My servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

Perhaps more than any other church mentioned so far, this temptation would have been particularly difficult for the believers in Thyatira to battle.

We know from history that this city was a trade center, filled with trade guilds. There were trade guilds for wool workers, linen workers, garment and textile workers, leather workers, tanners, potters, and even a guild for those who dyed fabric.

Lydia, mentioned in Acts 16:14, was a seller of purple fabric from Thyatira.

Purple dye was extremely expensive and it came from two sources: the madder root, which grew around the region of Thyatira, and the little shellfish called the murex. From this little shellfish, one drop of purple dye could be extracted.ⁱⁱⁱ

The process was expensive and the product was unbelievably costly. This is one of the reasons purple was usually associated with the robes of an emperor.

In fact, you may remember that when the Roman soldiers made fun of Christ, as they beat Him and mocked Him before His crucifixion, they put on Him a what? A purple robe, as they mocked Him for claiming to be a king (Mark 15:17-18).

Thyatira was known for producing purple cloth. This town was one busy beehive of activity and trade.

In fact, from inscriptions which have been excavated in ancient Thyatira, archaeologists have come to the conclusion that Thyatira had more trade guilds than any other town its size in all of Asia.^{iv}

This created the problem for the church. The underlying challenge in all of this was the fact that each guild had a guardian god or goddess. If their business prospered, it was their god who was given the credit. If their business languished, it was to this god they prayed.^v

The guilds regularly feasted together, offering libations to their god before and after the meal. A libation was like saying “grace” before eating, offering a prayer of thanksgiving to their patron god.^{vi}

If they wanted to get ahead in the world, they had to belong to a guild. As a believer they had to compromise, right? They had to loosen up. And compromise could lead to carnal corruption.

We also know that at the end of these guild feasts, which they were expected to attend as a statement of identity and loyalty to their profession, the pagan practices of the temple were indulged in. Most often this included sexual acts with temple priestesses, again, under the guise of honoring the blessing of their god.

We can imagine then, the question, “What’s the Christian to do? How can we survive in our profession if we don’t attend the guild feasts? We’re doomed to poverty and loss.”

By the way, this is a good time to remind ourselves that what our work demands is not our soul, but our skill. It is one thing to offer our profession our hard work, but we do not offer it our worship. We can be as idolatrous in our business plans as Thyatiran believers.^{vii}

However, for these believers, the question remained, “Can a Christian participate in the idol feasts and even the immorality of the temple and really be a Christian?”

Evidently there was an influential, perhaps prosperous woman in the assembly who offered a solution to the problem. She apparently argued that the answer was, “Yes, you can do all the above and still be a good Christian.”

In Revelation 2:20, the Lord calls this woman “Jezebel”. The implication is that she was a Jewish woman.

Jezebel could be her real name, but it is unlikely since Jezebel was about as popular to the Jews as Judas would be to Christians. More than likely, the Lord is speaking figuratively in calling her Jezebel since she was effectively doing the same thing in this church that Jezebel of old did in Israel.

In fact, one translator (Moffat) translates this phrase in verse 20, “that Jezebel of a woman”.^{viii}

Travel all the way back to I Kings 16 to read the account of Jezebel, the wife of the King of Israel named Ahab. Jezebel was an idolater that Ahab should never have married. She brought her gods with her into the palace. The chief god among them was named Baal. Baal was the fertility god, and the worship of this god involved imitating his sexual practices with goddesses. This supposedly, they believed, gave spring back to the earth, along with every other good thing.

So the worship of Baal included his followers copying his sexual behavior by carrying on in their temples with hundreds of temple priestesses as part of their so-called worship. This sounds like a man-made religion, does it not?

Eventually God judged Jezebel’s prophets when Elijah summoned them to a contest of fire. You may remember this account in I Kings 18, when all the prophets of Baal built an altar and prayed all day for fire to fall from heaven. It never came. Elijah suggested that perhaps Baal was on vacation and was

not checking his messages. They cried louder. Finally, it was Elijah's turn and fire from God fell from heaven and consumed his offering. The prophets of Baal were put to death and later, Jezebel was executed under the direction of the prophet Jehu, in II Kings 9.

Jezebel had successfully combined worship with immorality; business with idolatry and compromise. She had invited sin into the assembly under the guise of "tolerance".

Jesus Christ said to this church,

. . . I have this against you, that you tolerate [her!] . . . (Revelation 2:20a)

What was the body of this church in Thyatira to do?

They were to repent of their tolerance and judge the sin and the unrepentant sinner in the assembly. They were to get busy judging Jezebel.

In fact, the implication of God moving through Elijah by fire is hinted at in Christ coming with fiery eyes and feet. Christ is acting through the believers, who, like Elijah, condemn sin and exclude the unrepentant sinner from the assembly.

Six Dangers in Refusing to Deal with Sin

Let me turn this text around and show the danger lurking in this assembly, and every assembly to this day who refuses to act with the authority of Christ in removing immorality and idolatry and unrepentant sin from the church. Let us look at six dangers.

1. Without disciplinary action, the church will encourage the deception of sin in the sinner's mind.

In other words, without calling out the warning and judgment of sin, the sinner thinks they are actually doing the will of God.

Notice in Revelation 2:20 again,

. . . [she] calls herself a prophetess . . .

In other words, she claims, and perhaps even believes, she is speaking on behalf of God, when she is actually speaking the lie of Satan. She is not representing the word of God! And every convert she makes; every person who comes to her in church and says, "You're so insightful. You're so right about this. I'm having the time of my life now that I've loosened up!" only further deceives her into believing she is right, while in reality she is being driven further away from the truth.

I have had individuals tell me, "Stephen, ever since I left my wife and shackled up with this other woman, I have enjoyed my relationship with God more than ever. She's the best thing that ever happened to me." Or, "Now that I've walked away from the church and God, I am happier than I've ever been."

The truth is, they are literally wrapped around and ensnared with sin. (Galatians 6:1 paraphrased)

The most loving thing to do with this person is not to ignore their sin, but to warn them.

Without quarreling with them, Paul wrote,

[Correct them]. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,

and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

(II Timothy 2:25-26)

The fire of God's judgment is coming – Christ warns this church in Thyatira, just as He warned the prophets of Baal through Elijah. The One is coming with eyes of fire and feet with red hot heat.

At 2 o'clock in the morning, if you heard a noise, got up, looked out your window, and saw the woods around you on fire and could tell by the direction of the wind that the fire was going to sweep over your neighbor's house, where they were sleeping, what would you do?

Would you stand there and debate, "Wouldn't they rather be left alone? They're probably sound asleep. Besides, if I get them up, they are going to have to run out in their pajamas and that might be embarrassing; they might be really uncomfortable with fire trucks and news vans and cameras everywhere. I tell you what – I won't disturb them!"?

Would that be the right and loving thing to do? No! The loving thing would be to run over, break their door down, yell "Fire!", run upstairs, turn on the lights, and wake them so they can get out.

Confronting the sinner for this church, and for any church, is the action of a loving body that attempts to awaken the sinning believer who is being deceived by the spiritually deadening pleasure of sin. It is the loving, firm, caring, passionate attempt to rescue someone before the fire of judgment reaches them.

Without doing this, the ongoing, deepening deception taking place in the sinning person's mind and heart is only encouraged.

2. The second danger that came from their refusal to judge Jezebel was that the church actually provided an audience for false teaching.

Revelation 2:20a indicates that Jezebel is teaching the assembly.

John MacArthur makes the interesting point that the church was already compromising by allowing a woman to take the position of authority and teach in the assembly of men and women. This is a violation of I Timothy 2:12, where Paul clearly commanded women not to exercise authority in the assembly by teaching men.^{ix}

By the way, this is not some bigoted rule; some relic of the past when men dragged women around by the hair. This is God's design and order in the church. It has nothing to do with the value of men over women or men being superior to women, for the gospel has made us equal heirs to the inheritance of Christ.

This has to do with the order and function of the home and the church. In the same way men are held accountable as the leader of the household (Ephesians 5:23), they are to be the teaching leaders and authority in the church (I Timothy 3:4-5).

Let me insert a comment at this point, ladies and gentlemen. From everything I am reading and hearing regarding this issue of the roles of men and women in the church, I fully believe that in the next five to ten years, evangelical churches in America will be divided, or at least identified, by this one issue.

There will be churches that will allow women to preach and teach men or mixed audiences of men and women and churches that will not. However, understand that in reality, the bigger issue at stake will be churches that accept the clear teaching of scripture regarding the lines and function of authority in the church and churches that skirt the issue, if not completely deny it.

Perhaps the believers in Thyatira were more open to this woman's teaching, claiming to speak the words of God, simply because in their town, there was a famous oracle – a famous fortune-telling shrine presided over by a powerful and influential priestess.^x

We can imagine these people were saved out of this environment and came into the church, and guess

what? There was an influential, evidently gifted woman teaching in the assembly.

More than likely this woman was teaching a dualism popular in the ancient world that has been revived and repackaged over and over ever since. It simply taught that God has saved our spirit and the body does not matter. In other words, the spirit is eternal and the body is temporary, so we can do whatever we want with our body, but our spirit will remain untainted.

There are seeds of truth in this, certainly, for we sin daily with our bodies, yet our spirits are secure in Christ.

However, do we sin with abandon? Do we revel in sin? Do we say it does not matter what we do with our bodies because our spirits have been saved by grace through faith in Christ?

Paul answered this question when he wrote,

. . . Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

(Romans 6:1b-2)

John also wrote,

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil . . . (I John 3:8a)

Note that this verse does not say, "Whoever sins," but whoever believes they can practice sin and live in sin and not repent and feel no remorse or guilt. This person, John writes, is not a believer.

He writes further, in the next verse,

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning... (I John 3:9a)

Jezebel was saying, "Sin away! Practice all you like! Revel in immorality! Live it up at your guild feasts! Join in the orgies at the temple! Your spirit is safe, so don't worry about your body."

This sounded like deep truth. Wow, what a solution to their problem and pressure. But Revelation 2:24 informs us that it was nothing less than the deep lies of Satan, emanating from the depths of hell itself.

Because the body of this church refused to judge Jezebel, they allowed her, first of all, to continue in her deception, and secondly, they gave her a captive audience to teach in the assembly. Let us look at a third resulting danger.

3. This church allowed an unrepentant sinner to influence and promote sin in the lives of others.

Our Lord says, in Revelation 2:20b, that Jezebel was,

... seducing My servants ...

Can you imagine a sin any greater than this? Can you imagine that the fires of judgment would be any hotter than for a man or a woman who gets up in the assembly or in some ministry and actually leads the flock astray and into some practice of sin?

Jesus Christ warned,

If you cause one of My little ones to sin, you might as well hang a millstone around your neck and jump into the middle of the sea. (Matthew 18:6 paraphrased).

I do not know what a millstone is, but it sounds heavy. I get the idea that we would not surface with one tied around our neck.

Jezebel was seducing the servants of God.

John writes, in Revelation 2:20b,

... Jezebel ... is teaching and seducing My servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

Jezebel was leading them to practice immorality and to eat in the temple of idols. These were the very activities that the early church counsel, according to Acts chapter 15, required that the early church avoid. The church was commanded by the apostles that they refuse immorality of any kind, along with any association with idols through temple feasts – or food first offered to idols.

It is no wonder that Jezebel was in grave danger of God's judgment. Notice, in Revelation 2:21, that God,

... gave her time to repent, but she refuses...

By this church body ignoring its role of judging sin and excluding the unrepentant from the assembly, they not only allowed this woman to continue self-destructing in her deception, but they gave her a captive audience to teach in the assembly and allowed her unrestricted influence of others to sin. There was also a fourth danger from this.

4. This church body actually helped delude the sinner into believing that she had avoided a harvest of consequences.

This was only a delusion, however.

Notice Revelation 2:22.

... I will throw her onto a sickbed ...

The word "sick" added to "bed" is contributed by the translators and I think, misses the point. The word in this verse for bed is "kline (κλινη)" and can be translated "banqueting couch".^{xi}

I believe the Lord is telling us that she will be struck down while in the midst of a forbidden feast. This is the irony of her end.

This woman cannot avoid the judgment of God. Even though the church has remained silent and tolerant of her sin and she is saying, "Everyone c'mon in, the water's fine," in the end, she will face the fire of God while in the act of her immorality and idolatry.

Like Jezebel of the Old Testament, this Jezebel is an unbeliever whose delight is in tempting the believer and causing the believer to err in his ways.

She has hardened her heart and refuses to repent and she will be struck down.

If this was all the harvest of consequences brought in, it might not be anything more than a good stiff warning to the rest of the church. However, there is a fifth consequence for the apathy and tolerance of this assembly.

5. The lives of weaker believers were not only devastated, but were in grave danger of an early death.

John writes in Revelation 2:22b,

... and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation ...

This is not the great tribulation that will occur in the following chapters, but great distress and trouble.^{xii}

In fact, Christ goes on in Revelation 2:22b-23a to warn,

... unless they repent of her works, ... I will strike [them] dead. ...

So there is still hope that these children; that is, these followers of her false teaching, can in the future, repent. Perhaps seeing Jezebel die will cause them to come to their senses.

However, if they do not, they also will be taken early in death.

Among other forbidden acts, these followers will have sinned against the Lord's Table by participating in the ordinance of communion while at the same time, practicing immorality. Paul writes to the Corinthians,

Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body [that is, being in fellowship with the claims of Christ] eats and drinks judgment on himself.

That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have already died.

(I Corinthians 11:28-30)

Imagine this. Paul says, “Some of your church members in Corinth have died – a final act of discipline – and it is not because they were unbelievers like Jezebel, but because they were unrepentant, sinning believers who brought continual shame to the name of Christ and His church.”

John writes also, about Christians who sin unto death, in I John 5:16, that they refuse to repent and Christ takes them home early, rather than allow them to bring greater disrepute on the Lord’s name and the assembly of believers.

These sinners will be among those who stand before the Lord at the Bema seat, saved by the skin of their teeth, as Paul writes, in I Corinthians 3:13-15; they will stand before Christ empty-handed. John writes in II John 1:8 that they will have lost, not their salvation, but their full reward.

So, when the church body fails to deal with sin and unrepentant sinners the cost is high, is it not? They:

- encourage the deception of sin in the sinner’s mind;
- provide a captive audience for false teaching;
- allow an unrepentant sinner to influence and promote sin in the lives of others;
- actually delude the sinner into believing that he has skirted a harvest of consequences;
- put the lives of weaker believers at great risk of danger and possible death.

6. Finally, this church became an example of God’s displeasure.

This alone should be bad enough to keep us from tolerating sin.

Jesus Christ says to these believers, in Revelation 2:23,

. . . And all the churches will know that I am He who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.

Can you imagine a church wanting to be known by this kind of reputation? All the other churches will know by what happens to you – by all the funerals you begin to hold outside the city of Thyatira

– that I have eyes blazing with holy fire and feet that will move to judge sin.

No church would want this.

I can tell you, dear flock of God, the average church in America has the reputation of refusing to deal with sin.

I can remember after disciplining two men from our assembly who had chosen a lifestyle of open immorality, receiving calls and emails from literally all over this county. Pastors and church leaders came to our reception area asking questions. Questions came from different parts of this country and even from different countries asking, “We’ve heard what you did – how did you do it? How do you deal with sin in the church? How do you discipline and why did you discipline?”

The appeal for material was so great that the elders gave me a month off to do nothing more than write a booklet on what the Bible says about what we are doing. We have since given several thousand of these booklets away. The material was also published in a national church associational magazine.

What did all this reveal? The church today is not judging Jezebel.

The reputation of the average church in America is that we tolerate sin.

This is not a new problem. This church tolerated it nearly two thousand years ago. The pressure was on; their livelihood was at stake – a woman of wealth and influence and teaching ability and unusual insight seemed to have the answer.

Challenge by Christ to the Church in Thyatira

Now, as was His letter-writing custom, the Lord ends by challenging this body of believers in Thyatira. To those who will repent of their sin of following this woman’s teaching or who never followed her, Christ says wonderful things.

Revelation 2:26-27 speaks of their future rule in the millennial kingdom.

The one who conquers and who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations,

and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I Myself have received authority from My Father.

This is clearly talking about the Messianic kingdom – the thousand year reign on earth – not the future new earth and new heaven.

There will be no need for a rod of iron in heaven. Neither will there be rebellious nations to break apart like pottery after the new heaven and earth are created. So this is a reference to the people who survive the tribulation and come under the reign of Christ when He returns with His bride to set up the literal kingdom from Jerusalem. There, He will sit upon David's throne in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies yet to be fulfilled. We will reign with Him.

It is not a coincidence that Jesus Christ encourages this church to judge Jezebel in their midst by reminding them that one day, they will judge the nations of the world.

Revelation 2:28 provides a final, wonderful promise.

And I will give him the morning star.

This can be nothing less than the promise of the presence of Jesus Christ Himself.

Later in this prophecy, in Revelation 22:16, Jesus Christ calls Himself,

. . . the bright morning star.

For a year while I traveled for my Christian college, representing them in high schools and churches, my girlfriend, who would later become my wife, would write letters to me. I loved those letters! She would put a dab of her perfume on the back of the envelope. It helped my preaching, I am sure.

However, when I returned to campus every so often, letters were unnecessary. In fact, I would never imagine asking her to skip seeing me that evening at dinner and just write me a letter – it was far better to be with her. I would rather smell that perfume on her than on the back of an envelope, right? Not that I got close enough to smell it . . .

It is a wonderful thing to get a letter from our beloved Lord. However, one day, these letters can all be set aside for we will have this One with us who is the bright morning star.

We have no idea of the glory and responsibility of reigning with Christ on earth for a thousand years. I cannot imagine it.

However, it is going to happen. His word will come true. Paul wrote,

We know that the believers will one day judge the world. (I Corinthians 6:2 paraphrased)

Conclusion

Let me give two final lessons in closing.

1. **Big sins can happen in little churches.**

This church in Thyatira made headlines because of its tolerance of great sin.

2. **The effects of one person's sin can destroy the effectiveness of an entire church.**

We – this local church – are one body.

I can cut my finger on a nail or a piece of wood and by not treating it properly and dealing with it, it could cost me my life.

No one in this church body is insignificant to the ministry and reputation of this church. In fact, wherever you work and live, the reputation of this body is whatever your reputation is. We, as a church body, are:

- a bunch of hypocrites, if you are;
- liars and covetous and backbiters, if you are;
- dishonest and unloving, if you are;
- honest people of integrity, if you are;
- pure and wholesome, if you are;
- known for putting Christ and the kingdom of heaven first, if you are known for the same.

So this letter closes again with the personal question, “Are you listening?”

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Revelation 2:29)

Pray:

Father, for us, as believers, living in a sin drenched culture, to say “No” to immorality or refuse to party with the crowd or to go along with the politically correct posture of our day might mean the loss of a job, being passed over for a promotion, to experience ridicule and slander.

We would rather face their displeasure than Yours. We would rather be ridiculed by the world than be rejected by You. We would rather lose friends than not have Your friendship.

Help us to, as those in Thyatira were told, “hang on” – to hold on to our testimony for You, knowing that there is a coming day when judgment will come and we shall, with You, judge the nations of the earth.

Help us, Spirit of God, to stand for Your truth – Your narrow, dogmatic, unwavering, liberating, redeeming truth. And help us to speak that truth in

love – even this day, offering fellowship to those who will repent.

My friend, has this been a warning for you from the word of God?

Christian, are you risking an early death? Are you living a life Christ will not reward? Are you following the influence of someone who is encouraging you to sin – and you know it is not right?

Let me encourage you to respond with repentance. Take a look at where you are headed. Turn around. Christ has given you time to repent, just as He did these believers. Pray now for Christ to forgive that sin you are cherishing; that lifestyle you are leading; that reputation you are building. Say, “Lord, I have ears to hear. Forgive me for wandering and straying into sin. I repent of that sin and ask You to cleanse me now.”

Perhaps you are terrified at the thought of Christ’s coming judgment because you have never been saved; never been born again. That is not an improper motive for yielding to this conquering King. Paul preached to the unbelievers in Athens and at the end of his sermon, he said,

. . . God . . . commands all people everywhere to repent,

because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world . . .

(Acts 17:30-31)

Make sure your path is straightened out before you take another step.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 3/2/2008 by Stephen Davey.

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ⁱ William Barclay, Letters to Seven Churches (Abington, 1957), p. 55.

ⁱⁱ Ray Stedman, God’s Final Word (Discovery House, 1991), p. 55.

ⁱⁱⁱ Barclay, Letters, p. 56.

^{iv} Ibid., p.57.

^v William Hendriksen, More Than Conquerors (Baker, 1940), p. 71.

^{vi} Barclay, Letters, p. 59.

^{vii} Stedman, p. 58.

^{viii} William Barclay, The Revelation of John: Volume 1 (Westminster, 1976 ed.), p. 104.

^{ix} John MacArthur, Revelation: Volume One (Moody, 1999), p. 100.

^x Barclay, Revelation, p. 101.

^{xi} Barclay, Letters, p. 64.

^{xii} MacArthur, p. 102.