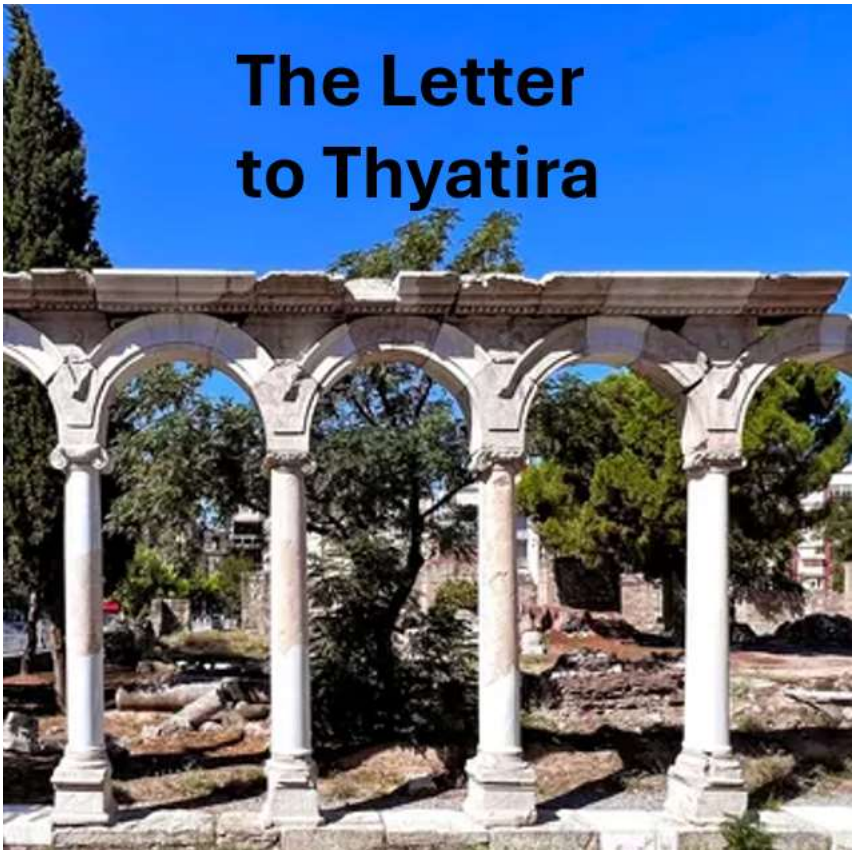
Thursday Bible Class 26th June 2024

Letter to Thyatira **Revelation 2:18-23**



This, the fourth letter to another Ecclesia. The letter follows the same structure as the previous letters, firstly introduction, praise, condemnation, advice and instruction.

Introduction

18 And unto the angel of the Ecclesia in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

Reference is again made like all the previous letters to the earlier vision shown to John, and includes the title of the sender – the Son of God, the authority of the sender is clear, the eyes and feet being described being like fire and fine brass also relate to the one standing in the midst of the seven lampstands (1:14,15)– depicting Jesus Christ being the Head of the Body, and being among his brothers and sisters, but one who as part of his character being a Judge, in righteous judgement which the fire and fine brass refer (see Numbers 16:35-39).

Praise

19 *I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.*

I know thy works. Jesus repeated this twice. Jesus is not one who repeats himself unnecessarily, for every word he speaks it is inspired, God breathed through the Holy Spirit he is given from the Father. The

sentence explains why– *the last to be more than the first* Not only is this ecclesia diligent, they were continually looking to ways to expand their good deeds and develop the good beginnings they had began with: Acts 16: 14 *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

She was of upstanding character with great diligence, and she was baptised and all her household, who presumably lived in Thyatira forming the basis of that new Ecclesia. She attended unto the things which Paul spoke of. That close attention to doctrine, is key to the integrity of any Ecclesia of Christ. Yes, it seems the Ecclesia was continuing how they began some twenty to thirty years before. Can we look back at our Ecclesia to twenty years ago? Can we say that we are all continuing in the same works? It is a difficult and challenging thought process.

Condemnation

followed. 20 *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because you suffer that woman Jezebel, which calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.*

It seems that in their enthusiasm to carry out works of self-sacrifice and service to their own members and beyond, diligently and patiently continuing in well-doing, they had got things out of balance, and neglected to pay attention to internal matters which were unsavoury, and awkward to deal with. A certain section of the fellowship had embraced corruption, and were actively promoting their ideas. The Lord Jesus described them as a female, named Jezebel. That he was referring to one individual is unlikely, as the Lord wrote in symbolic language. Jezebel according to Strongs Concordance, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary (#348) pronounced ee-zeh'-bel means chaste, and was the name of one woman in the Bible, the wife of the wicked king Ahab. However, she was far from chaste, but the opposite her life and character are described in detail from 1 Kings 16 to 2 Kings 9. She was a

larger-than-life individual who was the true power behind the throne, manipulating Ahab to allow the introduction, and complete takeover of the foreign Phoenician pagan religion of Baal worship, which involved widespread ritual prostitution (see Hosea 2).

There was then an element in the Thyatiran Ecclesia who were following the same mode of operation, introducing 'modern' cultic ideas via the back door, to be trendy, and fit in with the contemporary Romish ideas of the worship of the emperor as a god, possibly to avoid persecution.

But more than this 'she' called herself a prophetess. This faction took on 'official' status within the ecclesia as 'proclaimers' of the doctrine. How they managed that was only because of the neglect of the rest of the Ecclesia, and their preoccupation of looking after everyone else. The Lord Jesus being merciful brought about events which would cause this faction to repent but they refused to take notice, so he wrote:

22,23 *Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searches the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

Like Jezebel of old who became the power behind the throne, this corrupt faction within Thyatira Ecclesia was now pulling the strings behind the scenes and taking control. Indeed this element would expand like a cancer, and take over all the Ecclesias in time, and would form the basis of the Roman Catholic Church from these beginnings. This is why the Lord Jesus foreseeing such events warned those who were sincere to reject fellowship with such people, and not be corrupted. Fellowshipping such compromisers is described by Jesus here in these verses as spiritual adultery. Christadelphians today must get embarrassed reading this today, and the Apostolic Ecclesia in all its ecclesias must beware. Keeping company and fellowshipping corruption, is adultery. Thyatira were condemned for it. We notice how Jesus says ALL the ecclesias shall know that I am he which searches the reins and hearts. That is all ecclesias not just then, but all ecclesias

going forward including today. Maintaining fellowship with people who teach and practice corrupt doctrine means spiritual death.

Jesus said he searches the reins and hearts. The Greek word for rein is *nephros*, which is the kidney! The Greeks believed that the kidneys were where the inmost emotions were kept. In fact, they were not far wrong. Recent research has shown that the lower spinal cord contains part of the nervous system which provides a short cut path for instinctive nervous reactions, without having to necessarily reach the brain. Be that as it may, the Greeks in using this word meant the innermost thoughts, and relate to our learned behaviour, and personality. The Lord Jesus knows us all, and our intentions, we cannot deceive him, even if we try to deceive ourselves.

Advice

24,25: *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan,* [the enemy] *as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which you have already hold fast till I come.*

Clearly by this comment, the good news was that not all in Thyatira had been taken in by these smooth talking snakes. *But unto you I say*… said Jesus, who was 'you'? Jesus was writing to the eldership – as the letter begins …*unto <u>the angel</u> of the ecclesia …* the angel of the ecclesia was its messenger, it's representative, those who had been appointed to serve the ecclesia. It seems then, that they had not been corrupted yet, but had simply not taken action as they should have done. Jesus would not hold them accountable or place any further burden of responsibility upon them, as the guilt did not belong to them… all they had to do was get rid of the offenders out of the ecclesia.

Further advice and encouragement followed: *he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:*

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

He that overcomes – not just the obvious corruption which appears from time to time in the ecclesia, but also within the innermost

thoughts of each individual, killing the Jezebel thoughts which can arise, that is giving time and credibility to wrong teaching and practice, being tolerant of lazy thinking. Keeping works unto the end, is obviously not just doing good, as Thyatira were doing that, and it wasn't enough. The works cannot just be helping those without, but also within, and works which are sincere, and not grudgingly. How easy it is to leap into action for those without, but those more familiar can get neglected for some strange reason of the human mind.

In the Proverbs 16:32 we read how *he that rules his spirit [is better] than he that takes a city.* Those who control their thoughts and speech, will have the depth of character to control a city, and thus exactly the type of people Jesus will appoint to rule with him – with a *rod of iron,* as described in Psalm 2:9 – why such severity, because that method will be used to smash the Babylonian – Jezebel influence which was represented with the iron teeth, and the iron legs of the visions in the book of Daniel – false corrupt Christendom.

The reward of the morning star will be given to these who do overcome

28 *And I will give him the morning star*. Job 38:7 describes the Elohim – the angels at the time of Creation as the Morning Stars. But Jesus in Revelation 22:16 says he is The Morning Star! The morning star is a phrase which describes the last and brightest star to remain shining as the dawn gradually appears. It is the signal then of a new day. A new era. Jesus Christ the Light of the World. But such a title will be shared to those who keep free from corruption, and do not give in, but endure to the end, as they too will become Mighty Ones, - Elohim, and be Lights of the World, and will also signal a new world order.

Instruction

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Ecclesias.

We have two ears.

Brother Terry