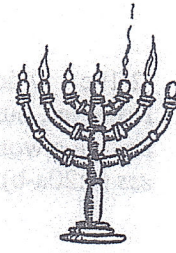


# Journey Through Revelation

## LESSON 6 . . . When To Be Intolerant of Tolerance (Revelation 2:18-29)



### NOTES

If there is a word that describes our “politically correct” culture today, it is the word “tolerance.” In this lesson, we will learn **when to be intolerant of tolerance**. We are continuing our study of the seven churches in *Revelation* who represent the various spiritual conditions of all churches until Jesus returns. They also represent seven kinds of Christians, one of which is much like you. Therefore, you need to find yourself in the seven churches. We first visited the church at *Ephesus* who had left her first love. Then, we visited *Smyrna*, the suffering church for whom our Lord had only words of comfort and commendation. In our last lesson, we visited the church at *Pergamus* who allowed worldliness into the church.

We now come to Christ’s letter to *the church in Thyatira* (2:18a). It is significant that the longest of the letters is written to a church located in the smallest city, Thyatira. This city is located about thirty-five miles southeast of Pergamum (see map on page 10). Lydia was from Thyatira. What was her occupation (Acts 16:14)?

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Thyatira was famous for its expensive purple dye made from the madder root that grew around the city. Today, Thyatira is the modern city of Akhisar (ak-hee'-sahr), Turkey, which has a population of about 100,000.

Jesus describes Himself as *the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire* (2:18b-c). This refers to the penetrating power of His sight, from which nothing can hide, and His ability to see the secret places in our hearts. His feet being *like fine brass* (2:18d) refers to strength for executing judgment. This description reminds us of what words of Jesus about judgment in Luke 8:17?

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This letter helps us know **when to be intolerant of tolerance**. First. . .

### Review biblical precepts (2:19-20).

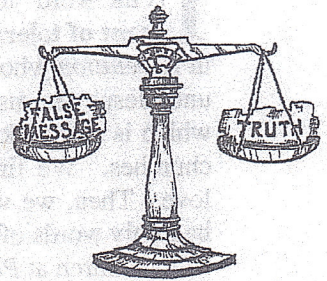
This is the only church the Lord commends for her *charity*, or love. Next, He commends her for her *service, and faith, and . . . patience* (2:19a-b). He then praises the church’s *works* that *the last was more than the first*.



(2:19c), which means there is constant improvement in all these things. However, our Lord also has a complaint against this church. They are tolerating a woman Jesus refers to as *Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess* (2:20a-b). What is she teaching Christ's servants to do (2:20d)?

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The church at Thyatira has the opposite problem as that of the church at Ephesus. The church at Ephesus had left her first love but was intolerant of a false teacher. The church at Thyatira has continued to grow in love but is tolerating a false teacher named *Jezebel*. The church at Thyatira, like many churches today, thinks if they are loving, anything goes.



Jezebel in the Old Testament is considered the most wicked woman in the Bible. She was the pagan wife of Ahab, king of the northern kingdom of Israel. Although Ahab was the king, Jezebel dominated him and ran the kingdom. Through her husband, Jezebel single-handedly led the nation of Israel into worshipping the pagan god Balaam, which involved sexual immorality. As a result, what does 1 Kings 16:30 record?

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Like her counterpart in the Old Testament, this woman at Thyatira was leading an entire church astray with the sins of sexual immorality and idolatry. In His Holy Word, God has given us all we need to know about when to be intolerant of those who tolerate sin. For example, what does 1 Thesalonians 4:3 declare is God's will?

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To recognize when to be intolerant of tolerance: **review biblical precepts** and . . .

### **Remember the divine penalty (2:21-23).**

What is the penalty for tolerating sin? About this woman, our Lord says, *And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not* (2:21). Because of her refusal to *repent*, our Lord says, *Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds* (2:22).

This could refer to sexually-transmitted diseases, such as gonorrhea and



sypilis, which were common in the ancient world. When sin is so hellish it can cause serious harm to the Gospel, God's judgment can be severe, even in this life. The church at Corinth was making a drunken party of the Lord's Supper. Therefore, what does Paul write in 1 Corinthians 11:30?

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When sin begins to do serious harm to the Lord's church, He judges accordingly. Therefore, Jesus says to the church at Thyatira, *And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works* (2:23). Her children refers to her spiritual children—those who follow her teachings.

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Our Lord makes it clear when a church tolerates teachings that pervert the clear teaching of Scripture, especially in the area of sexual morality, the divine penalty is severe. For example, what warning does 1 Corinthians 10:8 give?

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This refers to Numbers 25:1-9 when Israelite men engaged in sexual immorality with Moabite women, resulting in the deaths of over twenty thousand Israelites. When His people are being corrupted, especially by sexual immorality, God takes drastic action. For example, the only sin for which God destroyed cities with fire and brimstone were those guilty of sexual immorality (Gen. 19).

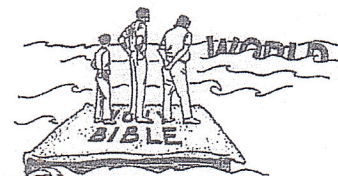
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To know when to be intolerant of tolerance: **review biblical precepts, remember the divine penalty, and . . .**

**Reflect on the promise (2:24-29).**

Not everyone in the church at Thyatira is following the teachings of Jezebel. Therefore, our Lord says: *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, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden* (2:24). The *depths* may refer to claims of deeper insights into the spiritual life. However, Christ calls them teachings of *Satan*.

To the faithful believers, Christ says: *But that which ye have already hold fast till I come* (2:25). The faithful members in Thyatira would probably be tempted to leave the church, but Christ tells them to *hold*





*fast* till He comes. He could be referring to His coming in the person of a true teacher or preacher, rather His Second Coming.

To encourage believers to *hold fast*, our Lord says: *And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:* <sup>27</sup> *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* (2:26-27). This promise refers to a messianic psalm describing Christ's rule during the millennium (Psa. 2:8-9). Christ's rule will be shared with those who remain faithful *unto the end*. This refers to those who have part in the *first resurrection* and over whom the second death will have no power (Rev. 20:6a-b). What does the rest of this verse reveal (20:6c)?

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To His faithful, Christ will give *the morning star*, which is Himself (2:28, 22:16). As with all the letters to the churches, this letter ends: *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches* (2:29). This means to pay very close attention to what Jesus says to this church through *the Spirit*.

The church at Thyatira represents the church or Christian who thinks as long as you love, false doctrine and sexual immorality can be tolerated. There are many modern-day "Jezebels" who are trying to persuade believers to be tolerant of sexual immorality. They accuse those who are intolerant of tolerance of being too narrow-minded. However, what does our Lord declare in Matthew 7:14?

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True followers of Jesus Christ will always be in the minority. The majority will be tolerant of at least some forms of sexual immorality. However, the minority—those who know **when to be intolerant of tolerance**—are the only ones who will find the gate that leads to eternal life.

To know when to be intolerant of tolerance: **review biblical precepts, remember the divine penalty, and reflect on the promise.**