



when CHRIST  
returns

— REVELATION 1-5 —

Review: The Revelation of Jesus describes Christ as He is now!

- not Christ emptied of His heavenly attributes and humbled in His humanity.
- Rather: Jesus fully clothed in His heavenly glory ... as He was, as He is, and as He will always be!

**1. What is the Revelation?** (chapter 1, verses 1-2)

- “*a revelation of Jesus Christ*”
  - *apocalypsis* (Gk) - unveiling, disclosure.
- the curtain has been pulled back, and we are looking into what is happening in the spiritual world ... what is really happening:
  - the King is on the move ... **so pay attention!**
  - the King holds the keys of death & Hades ... **so do not be afraid!**
  - Jesus is the King of Kings ... **so worship Him!**

**The First Vision:** 1:19 – 3:22.

**Jesus, the Risen Lord, speaks to the Seven Churches of Asia.**

*<sup>19</sup> “Write down what you have seen—both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen.*

*<sup>20</sup> This is the meaning of the mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and the seven gold lampstands:*

- *the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and*
- *the seven lampstands are the seven churches.*

## Jesus' message to the congregation of Ephesus.

### The Lord praises them:

- because they are a Doing Church ... working hard and serving Him patiently.
- because they are a Determined Church ... refusing to deny Him in dangerous and perilous times.
- because they are an Orthodox Church ... testing what is preached to them, and holding fast to the truth they have received.

### The Lord rebukes them:

- because although they are doing all the right things, their love for Jesus has grown cold, their passion for Him has faded, their intimacy is missing.

### The Lord warns them:

- *“Remember your first love, turn back to me, and renew again what you first had ... “or I will remove your place from among the churches.”*

## Jesus' message to the congregation of Smyrna. (Rev. 2:8-11)

### The Lord praises them:

- amidst a people rebelling *against* God, they are following Him faithfully.
  - they are enduring crushing persecution (*thlipsis*), to the point of death.
  - they are experiencing supernatural violence directed at Jesus, who holds the keys of death & Hades.

### The Lord assures them:

- that He understands what they are going through ... He has gone through it, too.
- that their faithfulness will safely keep them from the second death.
  - *Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death.* (v. 11)

**Lesson:** Jesus does not promise them immunity from the first death, but He does from the second death ... and since we're all going to die the first one, the real issue is the second.

## **Last Week: Jesus' message to the congregation of Pergamum.**

### **The Lord praises them:**

- though they live “*where Satan has his throne*”, they are holding fast, and standing firm against the forces arrayed violently towards them.
- though their pastor has been brutally killed, they refuse to deny the Lord.

### **The Lord rebukes them:**

- because they are tolerating sinful behavior in their midst – standing firm to outside pressure, but carelessly indifferent to false teaching within.
- Issue: Accommodation – God’s truth no longer guides His church ... His ideas no longer rule their minds.
- Truth: *Tolerance is not a biblical virtue*. Patience is. Understanding is. Civility is. Graciousness is. Mercy is. Humility is .... but not tolerance. (Stott)

**Principle:** We welcome everyone, but we don't affirm everything!

- We welcome everyone in the grace of Jesus Christ ...
- We affirm only what God clearly teaches in His Word...
  - we affirm with our mouths.
  - we affirm with our lives.

**The Lord warns them:**

*<sup>16</sup> Repent of your sin, or I will come to you suddenly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*

*<sup>17</sup> “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.” ... **(pay attention!)***

**This Week: Jesus' message to the congregation of Thyatira. (Rev. 2:18-29)**

- **Ephesus**: the heart.      *“Remember your first love.”*
- **Smyrna**: the body.      *“Continue to stand firm. I am with you.”*
- **Pergamum**: the mind.      *“You tolerate false teaching.”*
- **Thyatira**: the wallet.      *“You permit false teaching.”*

*<sup>18</sup> “Write this letter to the angel of the church in Thyatira. This is the message from the Son of God, whose eyes are like flames of fire, whose feet are like polished bronze ...*

*<sup>20</sup> ..... “I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman—that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet—to lead my servants astray.*



**Thyatira**: as far from Pergamum as a place could be.

- not a university town; not a place of learning; not where the “old money” lived.
- not “the greatest city in Asia.” ... the least important of the 7 cities.
- not a religious centre.
- Thyatira was where you went to work hard, to prosper and to get ahead.
  - a young vibrant city – originally a military outpost ... and now the manufacturing hub for Asia.
  - a commercial centre located on all the major trading routes.
  - a place where money ruled ... not Caesar; not education; not the arts; not the banks; not religion.
  - a place for the pragmatic – where production & a paycheque were what really mattered.

Thyatira was the ‘wild west’ ... a cowboy town, who didn’t take Caesar too seriously.

- in Thyatira, Rome seemed a long ways away.

**Key fact:** Thyatira was run by the trade guilds, who employed pretty much everybody.

According to Sir William Ramsay, there were “guilds for wool workers, linen workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leather workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave dealers, bronzesmiths and shoemakers.” ... and no one could possibly ‘make it’ financially in the city unless they were a member of one of those guilds. To not join a trade-guild meant risking financial loss and ruin.

Johnson

**Dilemma:** Guild membership required participation in the pagan activities associated with them – activities linked directly to the worship of pagan deities, sexual immorality, drunkenness and eating food sacrificed to idols ... all clearly contrary to following Jesus.

**Issue:** To follow Christ in Thyatira was not to struggle with intellectual liberalism, but financial security.

- it was not about the mind ... it was about the wallet!  
... to not join a trade was to risk financial hardship.
- it meant asking, *“How do I reconcile my faith in Jesus with my financial security?”*

## Jesus' message to the congregation of Thyratira.

### The Lord praises them:

<sup>19</sup> *"I know all the things you do.*

- *"I have seen your love, your faith, your service, and your patient endurance."*
  - they are an active congregation who are serving the Lord well.
- *"And I can see your constant improvement in all these things!"*
  - they are paying attention to the practices of Jesus, and becoming more mature in their life with the King.

## Jesus' message to the congregation of Thyratira.

### The Lord rebukes them:

<sup>20</sup> *"But I have this complaint against you.*

- *You are permitting that woman—that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet—to lead my servants astray.*
- *She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols."*

- *"you are permitting..."*
  - ***aphiémi*** (Gk) - to consciously lay aside; leave alone; not bother with.
- Note: the same word Jesus uses to describe the church of Ephesus forsaking their first love for Him.

*"You have laid aside your initial love for me."* (Rev 2:4)

**Reminder:** Accommodation does not go over well with Jesus, the Risen King ... He simply will not tolerate it.

- because accommodation is sin ... God's instruction no longer guides His Church.
  - **He is no longer in charge.**
- The Congregation of Thyatira was consciously permitting false teaching.
  - they were practicing *spiritual adultery* .... money had replaced God as more important to them.
  - Jesus was not about to let it go, and leave them enslaved to their idol.

*24 “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.*

Matthew 6

We cannot have it both ways. Try as we might it simply does not work. It cannot work. It is “*either/or*” not “*both/and*”. In any compromising arrangement involving Jesus Christ, in any balancing scheme, it is the relationship with him that is short-changed.

Johnson

**Dilemma**: How do I guard against financial accommodation?

**I embrace three fundamental values:**

1. God's in charge.

- He's in charge of me.
- He's in charge of everything He's created ... it all belongs to Him.

**Key Question:** Does this financial decision confirm that God is in charge of my life?



**Dilemma**: How do I guard against financial accommodation?

**I embrace three fundamental values:**

1. God's in charge.
  - He's in charge of me.
  - He owns everything He's created ... it all belongs to Him.
  
2. I am a Servant.
  - I am loved and cared for by my Master.
  - All I have belongs to Him.
  - My Master will provide what I need ... always.

**Key Question:** Will this financial decision challenge me to follow Jesus?

**Dilemma**: How do I guard against financial accommodation?

**I embrace three fundamental values:**

1. God's in charge.
  - He's in charge of me.
  - He's in charge of everything He's created ... it all belongs to Him.
2. I am a Servant.
  - I am loved and cared for by my Master.
  - I am provided all I need ... always.
3. My generosity distributes my Master's resources.
  - He will always replenish what I generously distribute to others.
  - He expects me to look for opportunities to redistribute His wealth.

**Key Question:** Will this financial decision free me to practice generosity?  
Will it wisely direct God's resources to where they're needed?

## Jesus' message to the congregation of Thyratira.

### The Lord warns them:

*<sup>21</sup> I gave Jezebel time to repent, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality.*

*<sup>22</sup> Therefore,*

- I will throw her on a bed of suffering, and those who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent and turn away from her evil deeds.*
- <sup>23</sup> I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person.*
- And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve.*

Jesus: *"I, the Master, am about to fix the problem!"*

## Jesus' message to the congregation of Thyatira.

### The Lord promises them:

<sup>24</sup> *“But I also have a message for the rest of you in Thyatira who have not followed this false teaching (‘deeper truths,’ as they call them—depths of Satan, actually) ... (so pay attention!)*

- *I will ask nothing more of you <sup>25</sup> except that you hold tightly to what you have until I come.*

<sup>26</sup> *To all who are victorious, who obey me to the very end, to them*

- *I will give authority over all the nations. <sup>27</sup> They will rule the nations with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots. <sup>28</sup> They will have the same authority I received from my Father.*
- *And I will also give them the morning star!*