

## BLESSED FOR SUCCESS – Seven Churches of Asia Minor

### Revelation 2 – Thyatira (Part Four)

Jesus addresses His fourth letter to the **Church of Thyatira**. Here He addresses the issue of “sexual immorality.” Some of you may wonder, *Didn't the Lord address this issue in His letter to the Church in Pergamos?* Yes, however, there's a difference; what Pergamos “**tolerated**,” Thyatira “**allowed**,” embraced “fully.” We live in a society today, which has “fully” embraced sexual immorality! According to research;

- Sex is the #1 thing people search for on the Internet
- There are over 420 million Pornographic Internet pages
- 12 to 17-year-olds are the largest consumers of Internet pornography
- Porn is estimated to be a \$97 billion industry, with about \$12 billion of that coming from the U.S. (Larger than the revenues of the top technology companies combined: Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo!, Apple, Netflix and EarthLink).
- 624,000+ child porn traders have been discovered online in the U.S.
- 60% of all Christian men and 30% of all Christian women are addicted to pornography.
- 5 out of 10 pastors struggle with pornography on a weekly basis.

(**Source:** <http://www.thealabamabaptist.org> / **Source:** <http://christiannews.christianet.com> / **Source:** NBC News /Innocent Justice/fightthenewdrug.org / transparentministries.org/porn-status)

**But there is “hope” in Christ! 1 John 3:8 - “Jesus came to destroy the works of satan!”** Thus, this message today is **not** one of “condemnation,” but “liberation!” I've divided the message into **three** parts; the **Cause**, **Cure**, and the **Commendation**.

**CAUSE** – (v.18, 19) First, the Lord establishes His right as the only **true** arbiter, (authority) in His church; by “His eyes” and “His feet.” Regarding His “eyes” one theologian writes: *“There is nothing more piercing than flaming fire. Everything yields and melts before it. It penetrates all things, consumes every opposition, sweeps down all obstructions, and presses its way with invincible power. And of this sort are the eyes of Jesus. They look through everything; they pierce through all mask and coverings; they search the remotest recesses; they behold the most hidden things of the soul; and there is no escape from them. As the Son of God, He is omniscient as well as almighty.”* (Joseph A. Seiss)

His “feet of brass” – represent the fact, Jesus has an “all access,” *back stage pass*, in His church. He knows what’s really going on behind the scenes! No area is without His scrutiny!

**Notice:** “*religious duty*” cannot conceal the truth about us, (v.19). “Sacrifice” is always secondary to a “pure heart.” (Psalm 51:16-17) For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart — These, O God, You will not despise.

(v.20-23) The “cause” originated from “false teaching.” Jesus calls this “false teaching” the “doctrine of Jezebel”; (*doctrine mentioned in v.24*). Who was “Jezebel.” She was the personification of “evil,” the wife of wicked King Ahab who reigned in N. Israel, (1 Kings 16:29). She *actively* promoted the *worship* of “Baal,” the *pagan* Canaanite god; *which included ritual acts of perversion and sensuality*. Within the church at Thyatira a certain “woman,” a self-appointed “prophetess,” was being allowed, by the “leadership,” to *seduce* others into embracing “*idolatry*” and “*sexual immorality.*”

Probably because it was an “acceptable” practice in the city. In this city the Greek god “Apollo” was worshiped. This “pagan deity” represented syncretistic religion (a blend of different religious beliefs and practices). Jesus warned: (Luke 16:15) “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” Biblical historians tell us “trade guilds” (unions) were plentiful in the city. These unions were known to hold banquets in the halls of “pagan” temples. After the *formalities* the dinners would usually end in an evening of “debauchery.” Thus, in order to “get along,” *and not lose their union status*, many believers were inclined to “go along” with this practice; endorsed by a Jezebel spirit within the church! This may be the reason behind the Lord’s “rebuke,” (v.20b).

Today many believers participate in “sexual immorality” on a regular basis, in the name of “grace”; but in reality they have been seduced by a “Jezebel spirit! Remember the words of the apostle Paul; (1 Corinthians 10:21-22) You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? And the words of Jesus, “we cannot serve two masters,” (Matt. 6:24).

(v.21-23) Despite her actions the Lord extends “mercy” to this “false prophetess.” However, she refuses to “repent”; consequently, she opens the door to a “fate” *similar* to that of Jezebel in the O.T.; who was murdered, and her body eaten by dogs. **2 Kings 9:36-37.** (v.23) “Her children” refers to the *destruction* of her “followers.” “All the churches” may also refer to *all the churches throughout the ages.*

“Sexual immorality” is a great “deceiver.” But it is God who searches the “mind” and “heart.” We must yield our hearts and minds to the Lord’s examination; lest we be deceived! David prayed: (Psalm 139:23-24) Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting. (v.23b) Here we see the principal of “sowing” and “reaping.” (Galatians 6:7) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

Now, we come to the **CURE** – (v.24-25) To the “rest,” who **do not** subscribe to this “doctrine of Jezebel”; “hold fast!” Who seek the “knowledge of Christ,” rather than the “depths of satan.” In (v.24) the Greek word for **depths – bathus** (ba-thoos) : **very early; deep in the morning, early dawn. Luke 24:1.** – on the day of Christ resurrection the women went to the tomb “very early in the morning,” (same Greek - bathus). **LESSON:** Are we seeking Jesus FIRST or the “depths of satan,” at the beginning of each day? He will lay “no other burden” on us - than the “conviction” to keep Him “first!” **What does it mean to “hold fast,” seek Christ first in each day?**

**Acrostic “P.U.R.E.” Pursue.** (ttt) **Romans 6:12-18.** What we pursue we will serve. Upsetting. To escape “sexual sin” we must “upset” old carnal patterns, in our lives. (Proverbs 28:13) **He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.** Yes, we should pray and read our Bibles; but we should also follow that with “acts of obedience,” which may include; joining a “Life Group,” giving up certain habits, asking for “help,” etc. (here at CWC we have a counseling ministry; Conqueror series, other “support” life groups). In order to avoid the devil’s “set up,” we must “upset” patterns of sin in our lives! **Repent.** Renews our “vitality” in Christ! (ttt) **Psalm 32:1-7.** Lastly, Enjoyment. God is not after your *begrudging*

submission, He wants us to experience “joy!” *Joy of communing with Him!* “Sexual immorality” alienates us from His presence, and robs us of “His joy!” (Nehemiah 8:10b) “...the joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Psalm 16:11b) **In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.** To be “blessed for success” is to have a “pure” heart before God.

**(v.26-29) COMMENDATION** - Those who “overcome,” rest in His works; (Hebrews 10:35) **Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. How long? To the end!** The “commendation” (award/praise) is two-fold: **(1) Power to rule over nations.** (v.26b, 27). **Revelation 20:6** – “we will rule with Christ for 1000 years.” **(2) Receive the “morning star.”** (v.28); the meaning here is uncertain, it may speak of a “beautiful ornament” a reflection of our Redeemer’s “beauty”; who is the “bright and morning star!” (Rev. 22:16). The “morning star” represents “eternal hope!” Shining at the “darkest hour,” just before the dawn!

**COMMUNION** – reminds us God sent His Son, *at our darkest hour*, as a demonstration of His *great* love for us. That we might experience “divine intimacy,” beyond what our carnal can produce; intimacy which “restores” the soul!