

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 11/14/04
California Bible Conference 2004
The Church at Thyatira**

During our conferences we have been studying the seven different types of churches or different types of believers mentioned in Rev 2 and 3.

The Book of Revelation is the textbook of world history from the time of AD 96 to the end of time and the Bible says more about this period of time than it does about any other period of time in all of human history, including the time our Lord walked upon the face of this earth.

In Rev 1 we have the principle of Who and What Jesus Christ is and the Doctrine of Historical Trends and how Jesus Christ controls history.

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, we have the dispensation of the Church-age which is located between the two greatest prophecies in history. It is what we call the First and Second Advent of Christ. Both advents terminate with a resurrection, the first advent with the resurrection of Christ, (now a matter of history) the second advent with the resurrection of the church, which we call the rapture.

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, there are seven different churches mentioned and there are two different interpretations of the seven churches mentioned. As we have seen, some teach that the seven churches portray seven historical stages the church would go through. The other view is that the seven churches portray seven different types of churches or individual believers that live in every generation.

In Rev 2:2-4, as a church or individual believers those at Ephesus had good deeds, produced divine good works and persevered and had not grown weary, but they had left their first love.

Then the church of Smyrna in Rev 2:9-10 went through tremendous tribulation and poverty and were told about suffering for blessing and that they were going to be tested ten days, the number of completion. They were challenged to be faithful even if it meant death so that they would receive the crown of life.

The church or individual believers in Pergamum in Rev 2:14 were warned about the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel and committed acts of immorality. In Rev 2:16, they were told *'Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.*

In Rev 2:18-20, as a church or individual believers, Thyatira tolerated false doctrine and false teaching, even though in Rev 2:19, they had deeds, and love and faith and service and perseverance. They had grown because verse 19 tells us that their deeds of late are greater than at first. But they tolerated false teaching and false doctrine, especially coming from a female called Jezebel.

Therefore, in Rev 2:25, they were told hold fast until the Lord comes.

The church or individual believers at Sardis are told in Rev 3:1-2, to wake up and strengthen the things that remain.

Then in Rev 3:8, the church or individual believers at Philadelphia are described as having divine good deeds and a little power, and they have kept with doctrine and have not denied the Lord's name.

Finally in Rev 3:14, we have the Lukewarm believers of Laodicea as a church or individual believers. These are the type of believers who in Rev 3:17, have the attitude *"I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,"* and they do not know that they are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

So we could say that there are seven categories of believers.

The Ephesus type believer who has some divine good production but has left their first love.

The Smyrna type believer who is willing to accept suffering for blessing.

The Pergamum believer warned about compromising and becoming a stumbling block to others.

The Thyatira types who tolerate false doctrine and false teaching even though in they have love and faith and service and perseverance.

The Sardis types who need to Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain.

The Philadelphia type believer who has stayed faithful to the word of God.

The lukewarm Laodicean believer.

This conference we continued with Rev 2:18, *"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira*

The Thyatira type of believers are those who tolerate false doctrine and false teaching even though in they have love and faith and service and perseverance, Rev 2:18-25.

This is one of the longest dissertations of the letters to the seven churches and yet one of the most rewarding by the time we get to the end of it.

The corrected translation of Rev 2:18 is *"And to the messenger [or the future pastor-teachers of the church in Thyatira or to the future pastor-teachers of the Thyatira type believers in the Church-age] write [or communicate] The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:*

Thyatira was the world's center for the worship of the sun-god Apollo and was also famous for its labor unions. It was the most completely unionized city in the Roman world and the union also sponsored the phallic cult. The Phallic cult based upon the promotion of all kinds of sexual activity and is referred to in many passages of scripture such as 2Co 12:21; Eph 4:19, 5:5, 3:5; Rev 2:14, 20-23. This type of reversionism is also related to demonism, therefore, it was forbidden by God to Israel in Exo 20:3,23, 23:24; Deu 4:28, 5:7, 6:14, 7:16, 8:19. And this is because no nation ever survives the spread of the phallic cult and being under the influence of excessive sexual emphasis.

In Thyatira, there were many believers coming under the influence of the cults and the idol worship that was being practiced. In Thyatira, the unions (representing your business, job or occupation), or the cults (representing, idol worship or putting something before God), destroyed the spiritual life of the believers who were there.

The corrected translation of Rev 2:19, *'I know your deeds [your accomplishments, Christian production, your works] namely the virtue-love [and that's the functional virtue of impersonal love], and the faith, [the operation of the three stages of the faith-rest drill] and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.*

In other words, even though these believers were growing spiritually and have made positive decisions consistently, TLJC still gives them a warning concerning falling away from God through idol worship or through an inordinate attachment or extreme devotion to something.

Rev 2:20, *'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.*

In the preceding verse we saw the good, now we see the bad, we see what the Lord has against them. There was a lot of demonic activity and a very attractive and charming women that many were impressed with. She was

known by the name of Jezebel although it was not really her name, it was her title. She is the first great instigator of persecution against the saints of God and in Thyatira the woman called Jezebel was like the one on the Old Testament. She represents all of the distractions that the opposite sex and false religion can make upon those believers who desire to execute the PPOG and live in their personal sense of destiny. Her idolatry was of the most depraved and sensual kind, her conduct was disastrous to the believers in Thyatira and she was known for making men a real puppet in her hands.

She represents any person or goal or thing that is designed to take the believer away from the PPOG. She chased many of God's people away from the plan of God just as Jezebel of the Old Testament did, in 1Ki 19. She was an arrogant, ambitious woman, dangerous because she had beauty and brains. There's nothing wrong with being beautiful and smart but it is the word prophetis, where we begin to find something very much amiss, she calls herself a prophetess or an inspired woman. The real question is not whether or not she is inspired but by who and what.

Rev 2:20, 'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality or fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols.'

To eat food sacrificed to idols has to do with the function of the phallic cult and this reminds us that as believers we must be very weary with whom we party or have a social life with. The people with whom you socialize with often have the greatest influence in your life. The first priority in our life must be our relationship with God, which can only be fulfilled through the daily perception and application of doctrine.

Rev 2:21, 'And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality.'

Jezebel of Thyatira was a believer, we know this because she is given time to repent of her fornication, and she does not want to.

Rev 2:22, 'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.'

Here is the principle of divine discipline upon the believers in Thyatira. This reminds us that God is a God of love and therefore He will not stand by while members of His Royal Family sink into degeneracy. God takes stern measures to alert them to their critical situation and to encourage them to rebound and reenter the PPOG. In His perfect wisdom, God knows when and how to warn each believer but remember, all divine discipline is administered in grace.

The Christian under discipline may doubt that God is treating him in grace, but he could not imagine how much more he would hurt if God were not acting in grace. God severely corrects believers through discipline and wake up calls because He loves us. He is perfect and just, we are His children, the royal family of God, and He punishes us for our benefit. This is why the writer of Psa 119 said in verse 65, *Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word.*

Under horrible disastrous conditions, God can and does manufacture good out of that suffering. Deu 32:4, *"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.*

God is perfect, His plan is perfect and so on when a believer enters into His plan everything will work together for good. Sooner or later we will all run into some disastrous situation and the only way to be ready for it is to be inside the PPOG for your life. Job 5:17 says, *"Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproveth, So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.*

Job 7:17, "What is man that Thou dost magnify him, And that Thou art concerned about him,

It is something that He deals at all with such insignificant and undeserving beings as we are. He hasn't just dealt with us, He has dealt well and manufactured good for us.

Psa 119:66-67, *Teach me good discernment and knowledge, For I believe in Thy commandments. Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Thy word.*

God in wisdom deals with us as perfectly as He can. He allows the things and the people of the world to afflict and plague us to bring us back to Him. Many times our trials and afflictions act like thorns and a hedge to keep us on the right path.

Many people will only learn when they are under intense situations.

As the potter, God knows just how to mold us and chisel in order to do what is best and put us in top form.

There are actually three stages of discipline:

1. Warning discipline, Rev 3:20; Jam 5:9. This is a general type of discipline that can only be removed by rebound and recovery.

2. Intensive discipline, Psa 38:1-14, in which a person may lose his health or end up in strong delusion as did David. It's very interesting in this stage of discipline, some of the effects are as follows:

Psa 38:3 - loss of health, restlessness, not being able to sleep;

Psa 38:4 - depression

Psa 38:6 - crying for no reason

Psa 38:7 - breakdown in the nervous system

Psa 38:8 - screaming hollering.

Psa 38:10 - trouble with the cardiovascular system.

Psa 38:11 - Aside from lack of fellowship with God, no fellowship with other people.

Psa 38:11 - your own family stays away.

Psa 38:12 - God gives enemies the freedom to come forth.

Psa 38:13 - give-up-it is.

3. Dying discipline, 1Jo 5:16, this is when God takes home the believer early.

So again the corrected translation of Rev 2:18-22, *"And to the messenger [or the future pastor-teachers of the church in Thyatira [or to the future pastor-teachers of the Thyatira type believers in the Church-age] write or communicate: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:*

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Jezebel had time and time is what all have in common as believers, we are always given time before God steps in to discipline us. Long before we are hit with divine punishment or discipline, we make our own bed of misery. We make our own disaster, we are the products of our own decisions, individually as well as collectively. We only intensify the results of our wrong decisions by whimpering and crying and carrying on, and blaming others.

God has assigned to you a number of days to live on this earth according to Psa 90:12, *Teach us to number our days, That we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom."*

We are not given years to live or months to live but according to the Bible, days to live. God has given us an assignment, namely to fulfill our personal sense of destiny, and God has also give us a certain amount of time to fulfill this destiny. This is why it is important to learn Bible doctrine every day. Everyday is a day when we should be learning doctrine and preparing ourselves to fulfill our personal sense of destiny and bring glory to

God. If we do not purchase time by taken in doctrine consistently, we lose days, this is why we are told that days of life are lost through divine discipline.

The rejection of Bible doctrine on any given day, the resistance of it, preoccupation with yourself, with your problems, especially when you are involved in hedonistic activities, is another way of saying no doctrine. This results in double-mindedness which means; reaction to doctrinal teaching, indifference toward doctrinal teaching, the frantic search for happiness and operation boomerang.

Logistical grace is for all living believers, winners or losers, failures or successes, the difference is how the believer uses and exploits logistical grace. Positive believers parlay logistical grace provisions into great blessings both in time and in eternity. Negative believers use logistical grace to make themselves miserable, and to experience divine discipline in time, as well as loss of reward in eternity. They use logistical grace blessings and forget the source of their prosperity.

Rev 2:21, *'And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality.*

Repent is the Greek word *metanoeo*, *meta*, means change, *noeo* means thinking.

Jezebel had a great deal to confess to the Lord, first her arrogance, her jealousy, her vindictiveness, her implacability, her gossip, her maligning, her lying. She told hundreds of lies everyday, in the inculcation of her false doctrine, yes, and she could throw in her fornication in the phallic cult, but she could also throw in the fact that she was the high priestess of the phallic cult in Thyatira. It was not her desire to rebound. She enjoyed being the head of a great phallic system and having the place of authority. She enjoyed all the fun she was having. She enjoyed all of the witnessing for that she was doing for Satan and the kingdom of darkness even though she didn't probably realize what she was doing. Therefore, God is going to give her something that would finally get her attention. However, in the meantime, she did not desire to repent or to rebound. She was the product of her own decisions and then He dealt with her with warning discipline, she still refused.

In verse 22 we note, divine discipline, the alternative to rebound, *'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness,* This woman represents emotional leadership in Thyatira and the people who are doing the most complaining, maligning, judging of others, are those who are the unhappiest and so they're going to punish someone else. All of this is a terrible, terrible system of self-induced misery, and people who decide to go this way have made bad decisions. The bad decisions add up until they find themselves dying the sin unto death.

The word of God has made it very clear that we're dealing with the phallic cult, we're dealing with this leader, Jezebel of Thyatira, who by the way is a believer. We're also dealing with a lot believers who have gone astray into this terrible faction or group.

To make sure that we understand this, we begin with a demonstrative particle in the Greek, *idou*, which is best translated, consider in fact we could use a naval term, "now here this."

So, Jezebel and the cult are going to get taken care of and the point is that the Supreme Court of Heaven handles this not us.

Rev 2:22, *'Behold, [now here this], I will throw or cast her upon a bed_of sickness,*

Jezebel of Thyatira was accustomed to getting into bed for fun, however, this is not fun anymore. When you do things that are wrong for fun, eventually the fun turns to the most intense type of misery, none of us can get away with sin for pleasure.

1. Since the bed is associated with fornication, and also associated with illness or disease, it is used to describe the nature of Jezebel's discipline from our Lord Jesus Christ. She is reaping what she sows.

2. The Jezebel of Thyatira, from her own freewill chose a bed of fornication (so-called fun and pleasure), therefore, our Lord chose for her punishment, a bed of illness and decay.

3. Promiscuity or an undisciplined life results in total frustration and unhappiness as well as added divine discipline. People fornicate because they think it's going to make them happy but when you seek pleasure apart from the word of God, you find misery. Those who seek pleasure, outside of the boundaries provided by our gracious Lord find misery, unhappiness, frustration. This is because you see, the believer, more than anyone else in the world ought to be happy, but he comes by it naturally in the function of the Christian life.

Capacity for happiness must precede the function of happiness.

Capacity for life, capacity for blessing must precede the enjoyment of blessing.

Capacity is the great issue.

No one has ever derived the happiness they sought by fornicating because the road to happiness goes through the word of God, the PPOG, not through the bedroom of the Jezebel's of life.

4. We, as believers, are the products of our own decisions. Likewise, Jezebel of Thyatira as a believer was the product of her own decisions.

5. She chose fornication, and thereby chose for herself a life of misery, frustration, unhappiness.

6. She was seeking pleasure, but she found self-induced misery and unhappiness, to which God will eventually add divine punishment, the bed of illness and disease. People who are ill, are not, of course, suffering some divine punishment. There are two categories of suffering in general, suffering for blessing, and suffering for misery. We're dealing with suffering for misery here, discipline.

7. Since God designed sex, please remember God invented a lot of wonderful things, including sex. Since God designed sex as an expression of category two love, between one man and one woman, God will not permit the distortion of sex into sin and evil, so she's going to get maximum discipline.

8. Illicit relationships offer a moment of pleasure and a lifetime of misery and unhappiness.

9. Promiscuity then is a distraction to the road of happiness, a dead end, for what could otherwise be a very wonderful and happy life.

10. God, who invented sex for happiness also invented happiness, which can only exist inside the PPOG and under God's rules. Remember, God has a monopoly on happiness, because God invented happiness and God also invented sex, and the two are not necessarily the same, and sometimes never the same. God invented sex, and God invented happiness.

Now, who's going to call the shots?

So again, in Rev 2:20-22, we have an indictment to the Thyatira type believers, *'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts*

of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.

So the first principle here in verse 22 is that divine discipline is the alternative to rebound. A second principle in this verse is the discipline of her cosmic followers. A lot of believers followed her into this phallic cult. They thought it would be fun if they all got together and had a little phallic cult activity. We have studied the phallic cult in enough detail for you to understand and the tapes are in the back.

Rev 2:22, *'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.*

This isn't just one act of adultery, this is a continuing thing, and it's parlayed into evil because it's related to religion. When a large part of the population of any nation are practicing and condoning and undisciplined lifestyle such as fornication, it leads to and is the beginning of social degeneration.

Suffering may be related to many, many, many things, but there are really two general categories, suffering for blessing and suffering for cursing or discipline.

First of all, there's always an issue in suffering, it is not accidental. There is no such thing as accidental suffering, and there is no such thing as being innocently involved. All suffering is either for divine discipline or for divine blessing, that is for the believer.

In verse 23, we see divine punishment and historical trends. For believers who live their lives in the PPOG, there is nothing but blessing, spiritual growth both in time and eternity. For the believer who lives in the cosmic system, there is self-induced misery from wrong decisions, followed by warning discipline, followed by the intensification of divine punishment, and eventuating under maximum divine punishment for the believer, which is the sin unto death. Rev 2:23, *Furthermore, I will execute her students or followers by means of death; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the emotions and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.*

Here we have an accusative plural direct object from the noun *teknon*, and here means students, because of the authority principle, so we're going to translate it *her students or her followers*. That is believers who have become involved in the cosmic system and with her. The phrase with pestilence is the preposition *en* plus the instrumental of *thanatos* and it is translated *by means of death*. Dying horribly and miserably is the means of removing from this life those believers who are perpetual losers and failures through involvement in the cosmic system. Our Lord never makes a mistake in executing any Christian under the sin unto death. He doesn't make any mistakes in administering punishment of any kind. Our Lord is constantly evaluating every believer on the face of the earth. He tests the right lobe where we think, He tests the emotions, which either respond or control the soul. If the emotions control, it's a sign of being a cosmic believer. The right lobe must control the emotional pattern for spiritual advance.

So, Rev 2:23, *Furthermore, I will execute her students or followers by means of death; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the emotions and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.*

This refers to either loss of rewards or the reception of rewards, one or the other.

Notice the context, Rev 2:24-29, *'But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them-- I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'*

Now, TLJC is speaking to the rest of the believers who are at Thyatira who are positive toward doctrine and is doing so through the apostle John who is not there face to face. Those in Thyatira had no pastor teaching doctrine, and therefore they received doctrinal teaching through the apostle John. They didn't have the advantage of modern technology, which we enjoy today, and therefore John would have to send letters, every week he sent a letter, a doctrinal message to the local church in Thyatira.

So, Rev 2:23 refers to either loss of rewards or the reception of rewards, one or the other. The winner believers are now the ones in view in Rev 2:24, *'But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching,* that is the false teaching promoted by the woman Jezebel and the emotional revolt of the soul.