

Going and Growing! (*Part 1*)

Revelation 2:18

Thought for the Day: A spiritually healthy Christian is actively serving the Lord and growing in Christlike character and conduct.

The church in Thyatira was a going and growing church—it was actively serving the Lord and many of the members were growing in Christlike character and conduct. But appearances can be misleading!

18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

- The angel of the church is the pastor, God’s primary messenger of the Word of God to the local church.
- Thyatira was the smallest and least significant of the seven cities, but it received the longest letter. No church escapes the Lord’s notice—He loves and evaluates, commends and condemns, regardless of size.
- Thyatira was a “blue collar” town; a commercial center with many trade guilds.
 - Lydia, in Acts 16, was a seller of purple goods from the city of Thyatira.
 - The city was well-known for its cloth industry and the special dyes it produced. (*Hocking, World Leader, p. 67*)
 - Wherever there were guilds in the first century, there was also idolatry and immorality. Each guild had its own god or goddess that was honored and followed.
 - For the church this meant persecution and temptation.
 - In order to fit in and be accepted, the Christians were pressured to participate in the pagan feasts and immoral practices associated with the guilds.
 - Job security and social acceptance are powerful incentives! (Romans 12:1-2)
- Thyatira was home to a special temple dedicated to Apollo, the “sun god,” which may help to explain why Jesus described Himself as “the Son of God.”

...The words of the Son of God...

- In each of the seven letters the Lord identifies Himself in a particular manner that is especially relevant to the church and situation He is addressing. This identification relates back to the original description given in Revelation 1:12-18.
 - Vs. 13 – “one like a son of man.” This is in contrast to the title “Son of God” in 2:18.
 - Vs. 14 – “His eyes were like a flame of fire.”
 - Vs. 15 – “his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace.”
- Two titles were frequently used to describe Jesus in the Gospels:
 - Son of Man
 - The title that Jesus used most often to refer to Himself.
 - Matthew 16:13 – “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”
 - Matthew 16:16 – “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Jhn 20:30-31)
 - Who is the Son of Man? He is the Son of God!

- Son of Man emphasizes His identification with us in our humanity. Jesus was and is fully human.
- Son of Man in Revelation 1:13 emphasizes that Jesus appeared to John in His resurrected, glorified human body.
- Because Jesus fully identified with us in our humanity, He is able to serve as our Great High Priest before God. (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16)
- Son of God
 - The title Jesus used to describe Himself here in vs. 18.
 - The title Jesus' disciples used most often to describe Jesus.
- Both titles emphasize that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh.
 - Son of God – emphasizes His deity.
 - Son of Man – emphasizes His humanity.
- Jesus had to be fully human in order to die on the cross for our sins and He had to be fully God in order for His death to be sufficient to pay for our sins.
- Jesus was reminding the believers in Thyatira of His authority as God.
- This is the only place in Revelation that this title occurs.

...who has eyes like a flame of fire...

- Cp. Revelation 1:14. This symbolizes the Lord's penetrating gaze and His righteous evaluation of all our deeds.
- Jesus knows everything there is to know about us—all our thoughts, words, and deeds—nothing escapes His attention! (Hebrews 4:13)
- It is the Lord's declared intention that all our words and deeds are going to be evaluated and rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (Matthew 12:36; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10)
- "His eyes were piercing in their fiery holiness. The character of each church [and each Christian] is transparent to His eyes." (*Ryrie, Revelation, p. 24*)
- Revelation 2:23 – "And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve."

...and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

- In light of the message of verses 20-23, the people needed to be reminded of the Lord's holy, righteous, and just character.