

**GROWTH GROUPS**  
**WEEK 5**  
WEEK OF FEBRUARY 10TH

# Dear Church,

## *The Seven Letters of Revelation*



GROWTH GROUP WINTER 2019 – DEAR CHURCH,  
WEEK 5 – FEBRUARY 10, 2019 - REVELATION 2:18-29

### GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

1) We are at the halfway point of the letters of Revelation. In thinking about what you have read about over the past four weeks, what has surprised you the most? What has been most encouraging?

### SETTING THE CONTEXT

This week we turn our attention to the city of Thyatira, perhaps the least known of the seven cities addressed in Revelation 2-3. It was known for its trade guilds and particularly for its copper and bronze works. This is perhaps why Jesus' feet are described like burnished bronze.

These guilds and industries and the gods and idols that surrounded them posed a problem for the church in Thyatira that was similar to the problem faced by the church in Pergamum. The patron deity of the bronze trade was "Apollo Tyrimnaeus" who appeared on local coins along with the Roman Emperor who was known as the "son of god."

Balaam was mentioned in the letter to Pergamum and in this letter Jezebel is mentioned. The story of Jezebel and her husband, King Ahab, can be found in 1 Kings 16-22. As queen, Jezebel introduced the worship of Baal to her husband and to all of Israel. 1 Kings tells us that Ahab did more to arouse God's anger than any of the kings before him and Jezebel was complicit in what Ahab had done.

The church at Thyatira is warned about chasing after other gods and tolerating the teaching of "Jezebel." We are not certain who this Jezebel was that Jesus was referring to, but it is clear that she was leading the people astray just as the Nicolaitians had done, and just as Balaam had done. Jesus uses strong symbolic language to describe how this "prophet" Jezebel will be judged.

Jesus tells those in Thyatira who have not followed Jezebel to "hold on" to the faith they have until Christ returns. Jesus promises that he will give them the morning star. This reference is found in Revelation 22:16 where we find that Jesus himself is the morning star.

The morning star probably literally referred to the planet Venus which is the brightest of the planets/stars when viewed from earth. Only the moon and the sun are brighter. This image of the morning star is used to encourage the believers to be faithful in their witness to Jesus and to help bring about a new dawn or a new day where love, faith, service and perseverance will shine forth.



# EXPLORING THE TEXT

## Read Revelation 2:18-29

<sup>18</sup> “To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. <sup>19</sup> I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. <sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. <sup>22</sup> So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. <sup>23</sup> I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. <sup>24</sup> Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan’s so-called deep secrets, ‘I will not impose any other burden on you, <sup>25</sup> except to hold on to what you have until I come.’ <sup>26</sup> To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— <sup>27</sup> that one ‘will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery’—just as I have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup> I will also give that one the morning star. <sup>29</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- 2) What similarities or differences do you see between the temptations and trials that were happening in Pergamum (Revelation 2:12-17) and those in Thyatira? What sort of trials or temptations does the church of today face?
- 3) The quote that Jesus used in Revelation 2:26-27 is from Psalm 2, where God says his “son” will rule over the nations of the world. What does it mean that Jesus will rule over the nations? How do you make sense of that in the world in which we live today?
- 4) In verse 19, Jesus says, “I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.” Why does he connect these themes? How do you see these themes being worked out in your own life?
- 5) We hear a lot of talk in our society about tolerance. How would you define tolerance? As followers of Jesus are there limits to our tolerance? Should our tolerance of non-believers be different than our tolerance of believers?
- 6) In 1 Peter 1:16, Peter quotes the book of Leviticus where God says, “Be holy, because I am holy”. Many of the letters of Revelation seem to have a call to holiness. How would you define the word “holiness”? What does it look like to live a holy life?
- 7) Jesus tells the church in Thyatira to hold onto what they have until he returns. Hebrews 10:23 says, “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.” What has helped you to “hold on” to the faith? How have you held onto the hope that you have in Jesus?

## BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) End in prayer by sharing where you could use some help holding onto the faith and the hope you have in Jesus.