**The Church in Thyatira: Part 2**

***The Stumblingblock Church***

Sunday School Lesson 4

*Lessons from the Seven Churches*

*Revelation 2:18-29*

3/15/2020

**Introduction:** As we continue our look at the church in Thyatira, we are going to observe the consequences of being a stumblingblock church. The Lord will not sit idly by and allow His little ones to be led astray. He is the Shepherd of the church. He will absolutely reprove and rebuke any teachers or leaders in the church who cast a stumblingblock before other believers. The church in Thyatira was guilty of endorsing and encouraging sin. Not every teacher in the church promoted sinfulness, but their silence regarding the teachings of the false prophetess was essentially an endorsement of what she taught. This woman, whom the Lord called Jezebel, was advocating for sensuality and the eating of foods offered to idols. She taught that it only mattered what you believed on the inside; it did not matter what you did outwardly with the body. Her reasoning was that the body was sinful, and one could not be expected to have dominion over the body. Of course, this teaching is from Satan himself. This is evident in the parable of the sower and the seed. We know that there are those who hear the Word but are immediately influenced by Satan. He wants to take the sown Word out of the hearts of every hearer. Knowing all of this, we must be vigilante in our nurturing of new believers. Let’s see what the Lord’s response is to those who harm the progression of the little ones in Christ.

1. THE LORD REPROVED THE STUMBLINGBLOCK TEACHER AND GAVE HER TIME TO REPENT OF HER FOLLY. (REVELATION 2:21)
2. **Notice that the teacher was made aware that she was leading people astray (Revelation 2:21).** The Lord tells us that He gave this woman space to repent of her wrongdoing. This means that He had given her some type of warning that what she was doing was wrong. The Bible does not tell us how this warning was carried out. Most likely, the Lord sent one of His faithful preachers to the city to rebuke the teachings in the church. The Lord is gracious and merciful to His church. He does not desire for any believer to fail, even those who are responsible for hindering the growth of new Christians. Occasionally, there may even be a Christian who inadvertently teaches something that would cause others to stumble. Consequently, the Lord first issues a rebuke to ensure that His position is plain. This rebuke may come through the conviction of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with His Word. This rebuke may come through another believer in the church. This rebuke may come through hardship that the Lord uses to get their attention. Whatever the case, we can be sure that the Lord will rebuke us if we are causing others to stumble. It is our responsibility to pay attention to His rebuke and respond appropriately.
3. **Notice that the Lord was patient with the false teacher, but she was unresponsive (Revelation 2:21).** As mentioned, the Lord gave her space to repent. He gave her time, even though she was not deserving of it. Undoubtedly, the Lord knew that she would not repent, but His longsuffering nature still inclined Him to give her ample opportunity. This is similar to what happened with Jezebel in the Old Testament. She was given time to repent of her wickedness. Repeated warnings were given to her husband. It was clear that she was doing wrong, and the Lord was going to punish her for it. Ahab’s repentance granted him more time before final judgment came. Jezebel benefited from his repentance by extension. The Lord will give believers and unbelievers sufficient time to repent, but it’s important to understand that the time eventually runs out. As the Lord wrote these words in Revelation, Jezebel’s time was already gone. Any hope for repentance had passed. It was now time for repercussions. We must never delay repentance, as we aren’t promised a specific amount of space for it. Perhaps, this Jezebel thought she would be okay for a little while longer. The Lord had seen enough. Judgment was coming!
4. THE LORD PUNISHED THE STUMBLINGBLOCK TEACHER AND GAVE HER PARTICIPANTS TIME TO REPENT OF THEIR FOLLY. (REVELATION 2:22)
5. **Notice that the Lord metes out punishment consistent with the offense (Revelation 2:22).** Her sin was the promotion of fornication; consequently, her punishment was to be cast upon a bed great tribulation. This is a reference back to Jezebel in the Old Testament. Her son continued in her sins of idolatry, and the Lord smote him to his bed. It’s not abundantly clear exactly what type of punishment was going to be issued, but the insinuation is that her health would be taken from her. Paul spoke about many Christians being sick as a result of taking the Lord’s Supper unworthily. The Bible also tells us that sensuality is a sin against your own body. The Lord is just in executing punishment within the church. The punishment makes it clear that what she had been doing was wrong. The sinner who loses health as a result of sin certainly knows the reason for their condition.
6. **Notice that the Lord punishes the teacher in order to cause the students to repent before they are faced with similar rebuke (Revelation 2:22).** First, we see that the teacher was cast into a bed of great tribulation. Following that, the Lord warns that He will also cast the other participants in the bed with her if they did not quickly repent. The teacher had her opportunity to repent. Now, she was going to have to learn through judgment. The students are now equally given an opportunity to make things right with the Lord. To provoke them to repentance, he allows them to see the punishment of the teacher. Proverbs tells us that when you smite the scorner, the simple will beware. Those who followed this woman were simple. They lacked true Biblical understanding. They had been seduced by teaching that itched their fleshly ears. For those who are mature in Christ and placed in positions of authority, you must take your position seriously. The Lord may use you as an ensample to others. To those who are new in the faith, pay attention to what the Lord is doing. When He smites, it ought to get your attention and a quick response to the altar!
7. THE LORD CUT OFF THE INFLUENCE OF THE STUMBLINGBLOCK TEACHER AND GAVE A REMINDER TO HIS CHURCHES OF HIS OVERSIGHT. (REVELATION 2:23)
8. **Notice that the Lord was going to purge His churches of this false teacher’s influence (Revelation 2:23).** The Lord told this woman that He was going to kill her children. The prior verse was referring to those who had been deceived into practicing what she was teaching. This verse is referring to those who had practiced and taught her teachings. She was raising up her own generation of false teachers to continue leading the churches into wickedness. Just as God’s disciple produces Godly disciples, the false teacher produces false teachers. It was not sufficient to just deal with this woman and those who had been caught up in this scandal. He needed to purge the church altogether of her influence. Christians ought to be aware that the Lord will purge His church of Satanic influences. If He’s not purging it, it’s because the church isn’t a true church. It has been wholly given over to Satan. The Lord is not pleased with a contaminated church and a contaminated faith. He will take swift action to cut off the problem.
9. **Notice that the Lord’s purging would remind the other churches that He sees all that takes place in the private lives of His followers (Revelation 2:23).** The punishment of the teacher was a reminder for those within that particular church. The purging of the children of this teacher was a reminder to all of the churches. It was a reminder that God watches over His church. It was a reminder that God sees everything that takes place. We are an independent Baptist church. We do not report to other churches. We do not have some person in a headquarters watching over what we do and giving us instruction on how to conduct ourselves. Instead, we have the Lord Himself watching over us. This ought to be a somber thought for us in the church. We want to be a beacon of light to other churches. We do not want to be an example of the Lord’s punishment and purging.
10. THE LORD CHALLENGED HIS CHURCH TO REMOVE THIS STUMBLINGBLOCK TEACHER AND GAVE THEM NO OTHER BURDEN BUT TO KEEP BEING FAITHFUL. (REVELATION 2:24-29)
11. **Notice that the Lord’s desire was for the church to deal with this issue (Revelation 2:24).** This letter was written to the pastor of the church and to those who had stayed faithful in following the true teachings of Christ. At the beginning of the letter, the Lord voiced His disapproval of their acceptance of this false teacher. His challenge to them was to deal with her. Undoubtedly, if they did not deal with her, He was going to have to remove her on His own. This was the warning that He gave to the church in Pergamos, concerning those who were practicing paganism. While we know that God will rebuke, purge, and punish in the church, we ought not to sit idly by and wait for Him to deal with it. If there is a stumblingblock in the way, we should go and remove it. God has trusted us with His infant believers. Would a babysitter wait for the parent to come home in order to remove a danger from the child? Certainly not!
12. **Notice that the Lord’s desire was for the remnant in the church to keep being faithful (Revelation 2:25-29).** Once the stumblingblock teacher has been confronted, there is but one thing for the remnant in the church to do. They must simply press forward. Confrontation is uncomfortable. It leads to churches splitting. We look at a church split as a bad thing, but there are times where it is necessary. The Lord encouraged a church split in Thyatira. Dealing with a stumblingblock teacher has a tendency to wear out the church. The Lord understands this. He told them that the only thing He expected was for them to be faithful. Just get up every day and do what is right. As a church, we should remember that the Lord highly regards faithfulness. Stand for truth, resist and rebuke error, and love the Lord!