

12 Thyatira

Names (also known as)

Akhisar (*white castle*) – the modern city
Greek: Pelopia (pre-BC 290), Semiramis, Euhippa

Etymology

Strong's: uncertain derivation
It was named Thyatira by king Seleucus I Nicator in 290 BC. He was at war with Lysimachus when he learned that his wife had given birth to a daughter.

"thuateira" from Greek "θυγατήρ", "θυγατέρα" (*thugater, thugatera*), meaning "daughter"

Location/Description

Thyatira is located on the river Lycus, 100 kms to the northeast of Smyrna, and approximately 80 kms inland of the Aegean Sea.



Scriptural references

Old Testament

None

New Testament

Acts 16:14; Rev. 1:11; 2:18,24

Famous characters

Lydia

The Ecclesia in Thyatira

The Jezebel Class

Brief history

Thyatira was famous for its dyeing and was a centre of the indigo trade. Even today, Akhisar has a reputation for the manufacturing of scarlet cloth.

Among the ancient ruins of the city, inscriptions have been found relating to the guild of dyers in the city. Indeed, more guilds are known in Thyatira than any other contemporary city in the Roman province of Asia. These inscriptions mention the following guilds: wool-workers, linen-workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leather-workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave-dealers, and bronze-smiths. The excavations of archaeologists suggest that every skilled worker was a member of the guild or union and as such was expected to support his association.



Thyatira was the least notable city of all the seven cities of Asia to whom Christ wrote. Historians record little of it in the 200 years before AD 96.

It was fortified by the Greeks as a military fortress because it stood in the Lycus Valley which ran north and south joining the Hermus and Caicas valleys. Losing its military significance during Roman times it became a large and prosperous commercial centre.

The Truth in Thyatira

The circumstances which led to the formation of the ecclesia in Thyatira are recorded in Acts 16. The Apostle Paul, while preaching at Philippi met Lydia who was from Thyatira. Lydia was open and attentive to the words that Paul spoke. Upon belief of those words Lydia and her household were baptized. It is most likely that Lydia took the Gospel back with her to Thyatira, as we are not told of any missionary visit to Thyatira. Lydia, along with her household, established the core of the ecclesia that grew in that city.

Unfortunately by the time of Revelation this ecclesia would become known, not for the godly Lydia, but for ‘that woman Jezebel’, who was teaching God’s servants to commit spiritual idolatry and fornication. There were those in Thyatira who were persistently working in the truth, their charity, service, faith and patience were commended, and these were increasing, in that their last works were more than their first. However, these good works did not excuse the eldership in Thyatira for tolerating in fellowship a class styled, ‘that woman Jezebel’. The faithful thought that they could contain Jezebel’s wicked influence within the ecclesia.

Christ lays out the progression of Jezebel’s destructive influence, first as a prophetess, teaching wrong doctrine, followed by corruption in practice. The path that Jezebel taught does not simply end with these, as the Lord points out there would be judgment and an eternal loss suffered by the ones who were deceived by Jezebel’s work. By continuing to tolerate Jezebel, more members were deceived and carried away by her destructive reasoning. The eldership in Thyatira were instructed to bear up under the burden placed on them by Christ and remove the errorists who they had tolerated up until that point of time.

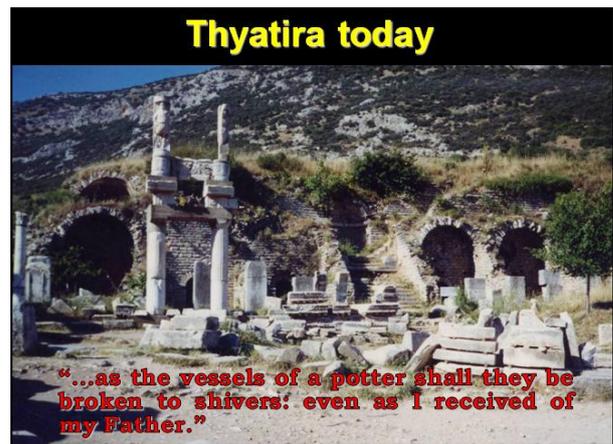
In this emotional and sensational age, we can be fooled into thinking that tolerance is love. The fallacy of this reasoning is shown when we consider the sad fate of those deceived by Jezebel’s teaching. Godly love for our brothers and sisters is shown by teaching sound doctrine and by removing error from our ecclesias.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias.” – Rev. 2:29

Thyatira – The compromising Ecclesia

- ❖ **Commended by Christ for:**
 - works, love and service;
 - faith and endurance;
 - more works (focus on **doing not doctrine**).
- ❖ **But criticised for:**
 - toleration of a seducing Jezebel class.

V.24 - Only one thing is required of them – eject the teachers of error from their midst!



Sources:

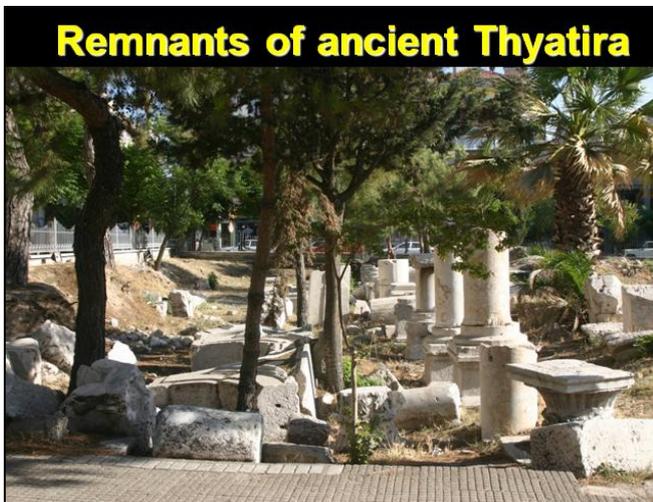
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thyatira>

Smith’s Bible Dictionary

The Apocalypse Epitomised, HP Mansfield

(Compilers – Jeff Cooper/Jim Cowie)

See page 3 for Bible marking notes on Rev. 2:18-29



<p>¹⁸And unto the angel of the church in ¹<u>Thyatira</u> write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his ²<u>eyes like unto a flame of fire</u>, and his ³<u>feet are like fine brass</u>;</p> <p>¹⁹I know thy works, and charity, and ⁴<u>service</u>, and faith, and thy ⁵<u>patience</u>, and thy ¹<u>works</u>; and the last to be more than the first.</p> <p>²⁰Notwithstanding ²<u>I have a few things against thee</u>, because ³<u>thou sufferest that woman Jezebel</u>, ⁴<u>which calleth herself a prophetess</u>, ⁵<u>to teach and to seduce</u> my servants to ⁶<u>commit fornication</u>, and ⁷<u>to eat things sacrificed unto idols</u>.</p> <p>²¹And ⁸<u>I gave her space to repent</u> of her fornication; and she repented not.</p> <p>²²Behold, ⁹<u>I will cast her into a bed</u>, and ¹⁰<u>them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation</u>, except they repent of their deeds.</p> <p>²³ ¹¹<u>And I will kill her children with death</u>; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth ¹²<u>the reins</u> and ¹³<u>hearts</u>; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.</p> <p>²⁴ ¹⁴<u>But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira</u>, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known ¹⁵<u>the depths of Satan</u>, as they speak; ¹⁶<u>I will put upon you none other burden</u>.</p> <p>²⁵But that which ye have already ¹⁷<u>hold fast</u> ¹⁸<u>till I come</u>.</p>	<p>Thyatira – The Compromising Ecclesia</p> <p>¹ Truth started by the work of Lydia (Acts 16:14) and Paul while at Ephesus (Acts 19:8-10). 77 kms east of Pergamos. Noted for its trade guilds (e.g. Dyers). All workers members of unions. Pagan festivals famous. Paganism flourished.</p> <p>² Cp. 1:14-15. Anger of judgement.</p> <p>³ Symbolises immortal judge.</p> <p>⁴ diakonian – the service of an attendant or a deacon.</p> <p>⁵ hupomene – an abiding under, endurance. The ecclesia noted for work and labour under trial.</p> <p>¹ R.V. “And that thy last works are more than the first”. They had increased their labour despite growth of apostasy. Works do not justify tolerance of error.</p> <p>² Texts omit ‘a few things’. Their problems were not trivial.</p> <p>³ eao - to let, permit, not to hinder. Woman symbol of ecclesiastical system. The activities of this group finally developed the great apostasy of Catholicism. The elders had not learnt the lesson of Jehu and the destruction of Ahab’s house - 2 Kings 9:10</p> <p>⁴ Jezebel supervised false prophets of Baal who taught people – error was actively taught here.</p> <p>⁵ Education was accompanied by inducement – planao = to cause to wonder, to lead astray.</p> <p>⁶ Spiritual fornication – unfaithfulness to Christ and his truth.</p> <p>⁷ To defy apostolic teaching - Acts 15:20.</p> <p>⁸ So had elders allowed sufficient time for Jezebel class to repent. Argument was not now enough.</p> <p>⁹ Exposed for what they were – men would have to make a choice.</p> <p>¹⁰ Leaders and followers would be put under extreme pressure. Their works testified to their doctrinal errors. Repentance would require total change.</p> <p>¹¹ Divine judgment would fall on Jezebel class as in 2 Kings 10:1-7.</p> <p>¹² Reins = kidneys. Expel poisons from blood (life). Seat of longing desire, emotions and affection. Cp Lev. 3:4. The essential character.</p> <p>¹³ Seat of intellect and reason. Cp Ps. 7:9; Heb. 4:12-13.</p> <p>¹⁴ You = elders. Rest = members who had not succumbed to Jezebel class.</p> <p>¹⁵ Error is always cloaked in disguise of profundity and religious respectability as was Jezebel’s apostasy.</p> <p>¹⁶ Christ required one thing – ejection of Jezebel class from the ecclesia - v.20.</p> <p>¹⁷ krato – be strong, powerful; to attain and maintain power over.</p> <p>¹⁸ an heko – an den. Supposition and uncertainty, possibility, hence Diag. “till I may have come”. Always to keep Lord’s return in view.</p>
<p>²⁶And he that overcometh, and ¹⁹<u>keepeth</u> my works ²⁰<u>unto the end</u>, to him will I give ²¹<u>power over the nations</u>;</p> <p>²⁷ And he shall ²²<u>rule them</u> with a rod of iron; ²³<u>as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers</u>; even as I received of my Father.</p> <p>²⁸And I will give him the ²⁴<u>morning star</u>.</p> <p>²⁹He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.</p>	<p>¹⁹ tereo – guard from loss or injury.</p> <p>²⁰ telous – to set out for a definite point or goal. Thus the end of our objective – Divine character.</p> <p>²¹ Cp. Rev. 5:9-10; 20:6; Dan. 7:27.</p> <p>²² poimaino – to tend as a shepherd. Rulership in the kingdom will involve education, guidance and discipline. Cp. Ps. 2:9; Heb. 5:2-3.</p> <p>²³ See Eureka volume 1 page 347.</p> <p>²⁴ Symbol of Christ – Rev. 22:16. Will usher in glorious new Millennial day – Saints then one with Christ in body.</p>