

1. Geography:

- No acropolis. City in the middle of a valley.
- Outpost on the road from *Hermus* river valley (Sardis/Philadelphia) to *Caicus* river valley (Pergamum)
- It was a military outpost to protect the road to Pergamum.
- Weak position/Weak city

2. Culture:

- “blue-collar” working-class city (Cleveland, Youngstown, OH / Pittsburgh, Allentown, PA)
- Guild - association of craftsmen or merchants, often having considerable power.
- Thyatira had the most trade guilds of any city in Asia.

Trade Guilds of Thyatira		
Wool workers	Weavers	Tailors
Linen workers	Leatherworkers	Shoemakers
Bakers	Dye Makers (Purple)	Slave merchants
Blacksmiths	Bronze smiths	

3. Guilds:

- The Roman Senate must officially sanction them.
- Guilds create a social fabric of community/economic lifeline.
- Each guild has its own god (guild god) – you must acknowledge the god.
 - Two guilds have the Jewish God - Purple dyers and stonecutters.

4. Guild Feasts:

- Chance to gather to worship the “guild god.”
- Eat meat: meat was a rarity, and the guilds would provide meat
 - The meat was sacrificed to the “guild god” (idol)
- The Banquet hall had a “Triclinium” – *kline*- to lounge and drink wine
- This is a BIG issue for those who convert to Christianity. Are you allowed to participate in guild feasts? What happens to your livelihood and your family if you do not?
- Council of Jerusalem: **Acts 15: 19-21**

5. Thyatira had a famous *Sibyl* called *Sambatheone*

- A Sibyl – or prophetess – was like a fortuneteller.
- She was associated with the god of the underworld – Apollo. She would learn the “deep secrets” from Apollo.
- This *Sibyl* happened to be Jewish.

6. Dyers of Purple -

- Roman society was very distinctly structured in classes. Your clothing designated your social class. Purple was the color of the highest social classes (Emperor, Senator, Equestrian).
- In the first century, Rome monopolized the production of purple.
- “Turkish Red” was a variant of purple made from the madder Oak.
- Acts 16: 13-15.

7. gods of Thyatira:

Tyrimnos (Apollo-Tyrimnos)	Deified baby of Domitian
Son of Zeus ('son of god')	Son of Domitian ('son of god')

8. Letter to Thyatira:

v.	Old Testament Text	Cultural Context
18	- Son of God – Psalm 2:7	- Son of God – the (2) gods of the city
18	- ‘blazing fire’ and ‘burnished bronze’ – Daniel 10:6	- ‘blazing fire’ and ‘burnished bronze’ – reflects the production of bronze
19		- ‘service and perseverance’ – hard-working town
20	- ‘Jezebel’ - 1 Kings 18:4	- compares ‘Jezebel’ to the local Sibyl
20	- sexual immorality/food sacrificed to idols – Jezebel brought Baal worship	- sexual immorality/food sacrificed to idols Guild feasts
22	- ‘cast her on a bed of suffering’ – Jezebel was ‘cast’ or ‘thrown’ out a window (2 Kings 9:33)	- ‘cast her on a bed (<i>kline</i>) of suffering’ – John uses the word for the guild feast couch
23	- ‘I will strike her children dead’ – 2 Kings 10	
23	“I am he who searches hearts and minds.” Jeremiah 17: 10	- Jeremiah is concerned with justice. ALL people – weak and strong – are judged by God. No one gets a free pass.
24		‘Satan’s so-called deep secrets – the Sibyl derived her information from the underworld - Apollo
24		‘burden’ – a blue-collar town
26	‘authority over nations’ – Psalm 2:8	- weakest of the cities will become ruler IF you hold to my teachings (first will be last and last first)
27	‘iron scepter’ ‘dash them like pottery’ – Psalm 2:9	- Blacksmiths and pottery guilds
27	‘iron scepter’ is the Word of God, just like at Pergamum	- ‘iron scepter’ is <i>not</i> the axe of Tyrimnos or the weapons of the Roman Empire
27	‘received authority from father’ – Psalm 2:8	- gods of Thyatira receive authority from their father. The reigning Caesar receives authority from their heavenly father, who now reigns through his son.
28	‘morning star’ – Numbers 24:17 – a Messianic prophecy	
28	‘morning star’ – brings in Balaam and Balak – Balaam, who taught the Israelites to sin.	- the same Balaam sin is the Guild Feast sin – eating meat sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality