

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Chapters 2-3 – Church History – Seven Letters to Seven Churches

THE THYATIRA LETTER – PART TWO – REVELATION 2:18-29

Last week we were introduced to the church in Thyatira through the letter written by the apostle John, dictated by Jesus Christ himself. Our study of the text revealed many things, but in particular the prophetic accuracy of these _____ words. Not only is this letter representative of the Thyatira church in 90 AD, with some characteristics indicative of churches today and throughout history, but it also supernaturally speaks to the time period spanning from 500 AD – 1000 AD. Today we will explain these things in greater detail and continue to witness the awesome power of the Holy Scriptures.

Basic review of part one

1. The name Thyatira means: Continual _____; odor of affliction
2. The church was commended for being:
 - a. Hard-working
 - b. Maturing and growing
 - They were rewarded for their unrelenting service to God in the face of persecution and death
 - The repentant or faithful servants in the church did _____ experience the burdens of those seduced by the doctrine of Jezebel; they will be given power over the nations, and are given the morning star
3. The church was condemned for:
 - a. Adopting the _____ of Jezebel
 - A State-Church religious system that worshiped Baal alongside robed priests called fathers in a house of images, idols, and icons with a revered female as its matriarchal head
 - b. Not repenting after being given the chance to do so
 - The unrepentant, who _____ to come out from her, will be harshly judged by God for their actions

Three basic applications of the Thyatira letter:

1. Historically – 90 AD – 96 AD

a. Thyatira was located on a main commercial trade route in Asia Minor:

- It was the home of a large and lethal Roman military garrison. Because of its strategic location and operation, the Empire considered it worthy of protection. The heavy hand of Rome was felt against anyone interfering with trade and order
- The city was the headquarters for many blue-collar trade unions (I.E. potters, tanners, weavers, robe and uniform makers, and fabric dyers like Lydia (from Thyatira)—a convert of the apostle Paul, who was a seller of purple dye (Turkey red) – Acts 16:14
- Thyatira, once an economically depressed area was emerging as a place of steady employment and wealth. Because of this new prosperity, the residents were relentless about participation in a trade union, and each union had its favored deity that supposedly blessed that trade's activities. If you did not pay proper homage to that deity, judgment with heavy persecution soon followed

b. Thyatira was home of the _____ that worshipped Apollo, son of Zeus. It was the happening scene for all kinds of false cults and demonic religions. Idols and images of false gods were everywhere. Certain influential cults exalted women as diviners and soothsayers; they often referred to their followers as "children."

- The political climate combined with the demonic influence in the area lent itself to spawn *counterfeit* Christian activity. The church was diluted with false teachings from the female goddess cults. Many believers in Thyatira were _____ into mixing pagan practices as part of everyday church worship services
- The city, though naturally beautiful in its spectacular location, was inwardly a religiously _____ demonic place to live

Walk Thru the Bible Series, pages 909-911 – by J. Vernon McGee; IVP Bible Background Commentary – by Craig S. Keener

2. Doctrinally – 500 AD – 1000 AD (Church History)

- a. The Thyatira Period of Church history begins with the time we call the *Dark Ages* and ends around the time of the beginning of the Crusades. The Thyatira period takes us into the very heart of the _____.
- b. This time period introduces us to a man named Mohamed (570 – 632 AD) and a religion called _____.
- c. In the Pergamos period the “church” was married to the world thus producing a counterfeit church. In the Thyatira period the counterfeit church is married to a political system. Here we see this system come to fruition. It is now referred to as the “_____.”
 - In the Thyatira Church Period, Satan used a figurative woman named Jezebel in an attempt to _____ and dilute biblical truth. This religion has black robed priests called “fathers,” who use idols as aids in worship. It is a chameleon and can be easily transferred from one superstitious society to another with little trouble
 - In this religion, Baal is called Jesus, but he is _____ the Jesus of the Bible. It is another Jesus, proclaimed in another gospel, received through another spirit (2 Co. 11:4), and is preached by largely unsuspecting false apostles who are actually Satan’s ministers (2 Co. 11:13-15)
 - Baalism of the OT is Roman Catholicism in the NT; they are the same religious system – see Judges 17-18; 1 Kings 16-18
- d. The consequences of Jezebel are documented during this time of history – 500 AD – 1000 AD
 - The 14th century yielded some of the most horrific records of the “_____.” The disease known as the “Bubonic Plague” began in the Thyatira church period in 541 AD *along the main commercial trade routes of the Roman Empire*. By the end of the Dark Age some 25 million people would lie dead as a result. (Was this God’s judgment? Rev. 2:23 explains that God did _____ do this to them, but rather gave them the wages they earned)
 - During this time period even the “woman Jezebel” is _____ as the East (Constantinople—Greek) and the West (Rome—Roman) branches of the counterfeit church separate. To this very day they remain divided

- This period (500-1000 AD) introduces us to the darkest time of church history. It is dark because the Bible has been _____ from the hands of the common man (Ps. 119:130) and most everyone on the earth believes that the Catholic Church is the one true Christian church.
- This period, however, has its faithful preachers and Bible believers. They are often referred to by their enemies as: Cathari, Montanists, Novatians, Donatists, Euchites, Messalines, Nestorians, Paulicians, Bogomiles, Albigenses, and Picards, to name a few. They would later be called: Waldensees, Anabaptists—Mennonites, Hussites, Brethren, and _____.
- During this period the Roman Catholics used Jerome's Latin Vulgate. They preserved copies on the finest leather. These copies were not used by the populace as they were kept locked up in their monasteries—as a result these copies were not worn out but lasted throughout the test of time. These altered and revised copies of so-called scriptures, traced back to Alexandria, Egypt and Origen's Hexapla, won _____ to saving faith in Jesus Christ.
- The genuine believers of this time period did not have completed Bibles. They preached from whatever copies of scriptures they could get their hands on. They were relentlessly pursued and _____ for their faith in those scriptures. They won multitudes to Christ and disciplined them to carry on their godly heritage. The parts of scriptures they used were what we now call the *Textus Receptus*, the Greek texts from Antioch, Syria. They used the Old Latin Bible which was translated from those God blessed _____ texts. Those manuscripts would ultimately become our beloved AV of 1611. The faithful believers of that time were hard working, charitable servants. They were faithful soul winners and patient _____ makers and church planters.
- During the Thyatira church period, papal Rome (called the Holy Roman Empire—the State-Church), began her _____ conquest of the world. Any nation or individual who would not conform to her religious and governmental rule was punished or murdered. This included anyone: various tribes, immigrants, Islamists, atheists, born again Bible believers, anyone and everyone. Their motto was, "*All the world must be Catholic.*"
- Some beliefs, teachings, and sacred relics of the RCC:
 - The seven sacraments according to the RCC – The dispensing and confirmation of _____ through a ceremony or ritual. They are the outward signs of inward grace, instituted by Christ to help individual catholic adherents in their spiritual life to grow in holiness. Sacraments are a mystery, representing the sacred presence of *our God* in our midst.

- 1- Baptism – Ultimately designed to remove the stain of original sin from Adam and Eve
- 2- The Eucharist or Mass (Holy Communion) – In 800 AD it was recognized as the literal body and blood of Christ received (ingested) by Catholics; called transubstantiation
- 3- Marriage or Holy Matrimony – A spiritual ceremonial rite only recognized and performed by the Catholic Church to supernaturally bless the marriage of a husband and wife. Often must be done in the Catholic church building itself and is typically accompanied by a pledge to raise children Catholic
- 4- Confirmation – A ritualistic ceremony taking place after receiving formal instructions for children around 12 years old, giving the child the awareness of and ability to confirm, what happened to them when they were baptized as a child
- 5- Confession and penance (reconciliation) – Confessing of sins to a priest. It includes remorse or sorrow for sins, oral confession to a priest, and penance or some act of contrition to pay-back God for your sins
- 6- Ordination (Holy orders) – A mystical ceremony to install Catholic priests, bishops, or deacons to the clergy. For priests, this act empowers them to perform the mystical sacraments as representatives of the church
- 7- Extreme unction or last rites – reserved for the death bed where a priest comforts the sick and dying catholic helping them unite their suffering and death to Christ (*even though there is no ultimate guarantee of where they will go after death*)

Other doctrines and superstitious practices of the RCC developed over the centuries. Depending on the location or culture, additional emphasis is either added or subtracted:

The veneration of Mary, the rosary beads and praying the rosary, Priestly garb and cloths, use of Latin in certain ceremonies and services, purgatory, abstaining from meat on Friday, Lenten observances and abstinences, kissing of the Pope's ring or feet, kissing statues, touching a handkerchief to statues of saints for distant or reoccurring healing, receiving comfort from the presence of incenses images icons and idols, canonization of saints, aberrations and appearances of Mary, dead saints or the dead, exorcisms of evil spirits, special feast days, celibacy of priests, Papal infallibility, etc.

Some of the sacred relics in the possession of the RCC are:

The stone that Jacob slept on, the rod of Moses, the head of Stephen the martyr, a thorn from the crown of thorns, the actual crown of thorns, Mary's girdle, the Lord's towel from the foot washing, John the Baptist's arm, the finger of Thomas that he used to touch Jesus' side, the head of James, a tear from Christ while he was on the cross, parts of the sponge used at the crucifixion, the purple robe of Christ at his trial, a vial of Christ's blood,

parts of Jesus swaddling clothes, the spear used to lance Jesus' side, Jesus' baby teeth (over 8,000 have been sold), the skull of John the Baptist (several of his actual skulls are in existence), a vial of Mary's breast milk, actual splintered pieces of the cross, (millions sold), Jesus' burial shroud, etc.

- e. Simplified, the real religion of Rome has always been _____.
- For a Catholic their religion is always connected to "_____, " and without "The Church" including all its doctrines, rituals, and formalities, her followers are deceived into having no hope. The Catholic heritage passed down through generations of beloved good faithful relatives often prevents its followers from escaping her whorish embrace.
 - All this is the *doctrine* of Jezebel – Rev. 17:1-5

3. Devotionally – 2025

- Satan is a murderer, deceiver and master _____ – Rev. 17:6b

NEXT MESSAGE: The Sardis Letter

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

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COMMENTARY ON THE DARK AGES

So, try to guess how rough it was going to get on the European theater with the Bible expelled and the pope killing Christians and Jews alike. Do you suppose the Lord had a sufficient alibi for judgment? As most Bible teachers believe the seven churches of Revelation (chapters 2 and 3) give a panoramic view of the entire Church Age, a number of significant insights to medieval “Christianity” can be gleaned from John’s epistle to the Thyatirans. The predominant theme of the “Dark Ages” is *Death, Death, Death, and more Death.*

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. (Revelation 2:21-23)

By Every indication imaginable, “*the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire*” (Revelation 2:18), was determined to *kill* Jezebel’s children with *death*! Over fifty percent of Europe’s population would die before their thirteenth birthday. Children in the Dark Ages were not even given names until they had reached the age of seven. The life expectancy for females was only twenty-four years; males being slightly higher.

The leading causes of death were starvation and disease, with the former facilitating the latter. The Continent’s “famine formula” called for at least one year in every four. With the disappearance of iron, peasants had to struggle with primitive wooden plows. Weather patterns became increasingly unpredictable. Seasons of drought would be followed by severe flooding: mildly dry winters by bitterly cold and wet ones. The skeletons exhumed from this period would tell their own tale of misery and woe. Abnormally worn teeth gave evidence of a diet that included grass as a major staple for years on end. (Daniel 4:32) Bark, roots and even white clay served as delicacies for others. Bones were often deformed by rickets. The black horse of Revelation 6:5 and 6 was a pervasive foe indeed. “*A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny,*” was beyond the reach of most. In *A World Lit Only by Fire*, author William Manchester relates how hunger drove some impoverished peasants to sell the very clothes off their backs for food, remaining naked year round as a result. The occasional traveler or stranger was at high risk of being killed and cannibalized. Gallows were often dismantled in a frenzy to provide warm, raw meat.

Disease followed hard on the heels of famine. Bodies already weakened by hunger and toil were no match for a myriad of germs and infection. Dysentery, epilepsy, malaria, tuberculosis, influenza, diphtheria, scurvy, typhoid, scabies, scrofula, impetigo, and a host of other maladies were as common then as the common cold is today. Bathing was unheard of. Man and beast lived under the same roof. In a time when neither forks nor handkerchiefs existed, table guests were reminded to blow their noses with the hand that held the knife, rather than the one holding the food. Having outlawed the Bible with its numerous medical facts – “*the life of all flesh is the blood thereof*” (Leviticus 17:14b); *and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean*” (Leviticus 13:45b), etc. – would-be physicians were reduced to primitive witch doctors. Barbara Tuchman writes that ringworm was treated by washing the scalp with a boy’s urine, gout by a plaster of goat dung mixed with rosemary and honey. Believing that latrine attendants were immune, many patients visited the public “outhouse” on the theory that foul odors were efficacious. Manchester graphically illustrates the overall repulsiveness of the age with the popular story of a peasant’s first (and nearly last) visit to one of the few cities in existence. Passing by a row of perfume shops, the poor fellow fainted at the unfamiliar scent and could not be revived until a shovel of excrement was held under his nose!

These dire conditions were only exacerbated by a foreboding isolation. Dark Age peasants could not even avail themselves of the adage: “Misery loves company.” Approximately 75 million of them (80 to 90 percent of Europe’s entire population) subsisted in primitive villages of fewer than a hundred people scattered anywhere from fifteen to twenty-five miles apart.

The limitations of their benighted facilities bordered on the incredulous. Due to the absence of calendars and geography, the average person never knew *where* he was or *when* he was. (He barely knew *if* he was.) Adults could not discern their own age. Few ventured more than twenty-five miles from the place of their birth for fear of getting lost. (Remember Hansel and Gretel’s breadcrumbs?) As to “who’s afraid of the big, bad wolf?” the answer in the Middle Ages was, “Just about *everyone!*” (Ditto: “Lions and tigers and bears! Oh, my!”) Most hamlets were situated in the Black Forest and other heavily wooded areas that stretched from Russia to the Atlantic. Peasants lived in constant terror of bears, boars, bandits, wolves, witches, trolls, hobgoblins and demons. “Tree huggers” were nowhere to be found. Since the devil’s darkness is the only alternative to the light of God’s word, the “Black Forest” of Germany was certainly given an appropriate name. According to Tacitus’s *de Germania*, Julius Caesar interviewed a team of explorers who had trekked through the Black Forest from Poland to Gaul. They testified to having completed their two-month journey without a single glimpse of sunlight! Such a world harbored a criminal element far in excess of Robin’s “Merry Men.” Vlad the Impaler, Prince of Walachin (we know him as Count Dracula, or “son of the devil”), impaled, skinned, strangled, boiled and roasted over 50,000 people during his ten-year Romanian reign of terror from 1466 to 1476!

Without the precious Word of God, life continued to be a cheap commodity. Capital punishment could be meted out for over a hundred different crimes. According to Tuchman, the mainstay of atrocity tales occurred on May 28, 1358, when a band of peasants in revolt captured a French knight and his family. The contemporary account declares that the unfortunate knight was “killed and roasted on a spit before the eyes of his wife and children. Then, after ten or twelve of them violated the lady, the forced her to eat some of her husband’s flesh and then killed her.” Unbridled sin would *have* to be rampant in an age depicted by darkness. (John 3:19) One historian summarized, “Sodomy was frequent, prostitution general and adultery almost universal.” As late as the sixteenth century, Andreas Musculus, a Lutheran minister, despaired, “Nobody cares about heaven or hell; nobody gives a thought to either God or the Devil.

Having merely surveyed the general character of this period, time and space preclude an extended review of the really big killing fields of Thyatira. A short list would include the Islamic and Viking invasions, the “Holy Wars” (including the insane Children’s Crusade), the Hundred Years War, and the Black Death that wiped out one-third of Europe’s population in the fourteenth century alone. Manchester concludes, “...the portrait which emerges is a mélange of incessant warfare, corruption, lawlessness, obsession with strange myths, and an almost impenetrable mindlessness.”

In consequence of Rome’s attempt to arrogate the Jewish Kingdom of Heaven, the curse of Genesis 12:3 fell upon her unsuspecting parishioners. For having seduced “*the kings of the earth*” to join her in perennial pogroms against Abraham’s seed, “*the great whore’s*” own offspring were “*made drunk with the wine of her fornication.*” (Revelation 12:1-2) Preferring a *papal toe* to a *nail-scarred foot*, Europe’s benighted inhabitants got to experience the “joy” of a Satanic Millennium. Messing with that “burning bush” had consigned untold millions to “a world lit only by fire.”

Understanding the Times Volume One – How Satan Turned America Against God, William P. Grady, Ph.D., Grady Publications, Inc.