

REVELATION 2:18-29

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Revelation chapter 2 as we continue our study through the book of Revelation and the Word of God.

Keep in mind we are in the second division of this book that deals with the seven letters that Jesus wrote to the seven churches located in the Roman Province of Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey.

We find this book divided up for us by Jesus in Revelation 1:19 where John is told, **“Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.”**

The things which John saw is found in Revelation chapter 1.

The things which are or are happening now speak of the Church Age and they are the letters that Jesus wrote to some of the churches in Asia Minor. This division covers Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

And the last division is that which will take place after this or after the church age and it covers Revelation chapter 4 through 22 or the rest of the book.

Now, as we have done with the previous letters that Jesus wrote, we will look at this letter *historically*; it was a real church that existed during John’s day.

We will also look at this letter *prophetically* or how this church fits into church history.

And we also need to remember that these letters are for us to look at *individually*. In other words, this letter as well as the others can be applied to our own life so that we can grow, so we can be encouraged, so we can change things in our life as needed.

Also, as we have done with the other letters we have studied so far, we will be looking at the seven key principles of this letter: the *destination*, the *title* or *description of Jesus*, the *commendation* except for Laodicea, the *rebuke* except for Smyrna and Philadelphia, the *exhortation*, the *warning* except for Smyrna and Philadelphia, and the *promise* that Jesus gives to all who will listen and obey these words that the Spirit is giving to them!

Now let me deal with these letters being prophetic in nature or how they can be seen in the periods of time within the Church Age.

We have seen the church of Ephesus as the church that left its first love, we call this church – ***THE LOVELESS CHURCH!*** And their light or their witness of Christ was removed because they refused the warning of Jesus to remember, repent and repeat; to fall in love with Jesus. This represented the apostolic church or the church of the first century that lasted to around 63 A. D.

Then came the church of Smyrna or – ***THE PERSECUTED CHURCH!*** They faced intense persecution and yet they remained faithful to their Lord in the midst of this intense persecution and poverty. And as they were crushed by this persecution the fragrance of Jesus was released in their lives touching the lives of others. The persecuted church represented the church from around 63 A. D. to 312 A. D. where some 5 to 6 million Christians were put to death for their faith in Jesus Christ by Rome!

Last time we looked at the church of Pergamos or – ***THE COMPROMISING CHURCH!*** This church wanted to be liked, they did not want to rock the boat, they did not want to face any persecution or trouble and they compromised what they believed in. This church represented the church from around 312 A. D. to the 5th century where the church married the state and in doing so, they compromised what they believed!

In the letter we are going to look at tonight it is the letter that Jesus wrote to the church in Thyatira. And, as we will see, there was Trouble there!

Remember the play *“The Music Man!”* Make no mistake about, as you will see, they had, *“Trouble, oh we got trouble, Right here in River City! With a capital ‘T’ That rhymes with ‘P’ And that stands for Pool, that stands for pool. We’ve surely got trouble!”*

Okay, it may not have been pool halls that were bringing trouble in Thyatira, but there was paganism and that brought plenty of trouble as we will see.

And the problem is that many times these problems are not dealt with, they are ignored, they are promoted and-so-on. We need to take a stand; we need to contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us!

As we go through this letter, understand that this church in Thyatira is known as – ***THE IDOLATROUS CHURCH!***

With that said, let’s begin reading in Revelation chapter 2, starting in verse 18 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we look at this letter that Jesus wrote to the church in Thyatira.

REVELATION 2

VERSE 18

The *destination* of this letter is Thyatira and specifically to the pastor of the church of Thyatira who was to share this message with his people, these words from God.

Let’s take a look at this city for a moment and see what it was all about.

The city of Thyatira was located about 45 miles southeast of Pergamos as we are now starting to circle down in the delivering of these letters.

This city was situated along a valley and because it had no natural defenses, their city could be easily attacked. Their only hope was to hold off the enemy long enough until help from Pergamos could arrive.

But in around 190 B. C. the Romans conquered and annexed this city enabling it to have a time of peace.

By the time this letter was written they enjoyed a time of great prosperity as it became a flourishing commercial center having the main north – south road connecting it to the other cities in the Roman Province of Asia Minor.

Now Thyatira was not that big, and many felt that it was really an unimportant city!

In fact, “The elder Pliny dismissed Thyatira with the almost contemptuous phrase ‘Thyatira and other unimportant cities.’” (Barclay)

As true as that was, Thyatira did have a strong commercial center with many trade guilds.

What were these trade guilds?

These guilds functioned much like our Union’s today with one exception. Each of these trade guilds was associated with a specific god to worship.

Thus, you could imagine how these meetings degenerated from eating meat sacrificed to idols, these gods, into the worship of these gods, which included sexual activity.

Obviously, for the Christian that was a huge problem. They could not become part of these trade guilds or if they were part of them before they were saved, they would have to get out once they were saved.

Why did they have to get out?

Again, it is very obvious. These activities that these trade guilds were involved in went against everything they believed about the true and living God and they were not going to compromise their faith or at least they should not.

We don't think too much about that but keep in mind that if you were not part of these trade guilds, you didn't work!

So you could lose everything by not being part of these trade guilds.

Some of the many industries they had in Thyatira, according to what William Ramsay said, were woolworkers, linen-workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leatherworkers, tanners, potters, baking, slave-dealers, and bronze smiths.

Also, there was not one central religious center, but they obviously had many gods that they worshiped. But their primary god they did worship was Apollo or the sun god! And I will deal with that a little more when we get to the description of Jesus that He gives to us in this letter.

Now, how did the light of the Gospel come to Thyatira?

In Acts 16:14-15 we are told, **“Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ So she persuaded us.”**

One of Paul's converts, Lydia (Acts 16), was a businesswoman from Thyatira who sold purple dyed fabrics. Lydia got saved and her family as well, and she took that good news, the Gospel message with her back to Thyatira and the church got started!

And her trade is one that secular history supports. You see, Thyatira was a city famous for a purple dye that Homer refers to in the Iliad.

And I will throw this out there for you. Thyatira had two different kinds of purple dye. One was for the rich and the other was a cheap imitation for the poor, a Walmart brand you might say.

For the rich, they would extract this expensive purple dye one drop at a time from a little shellfish called a Murex. And then they would use this to dye fabrics that they then would sell to the rich.

For those who were not rich, they got this dye from the madder root, but again, it was much, much cheaper and the quality not as good!

So, *historically* speaking the church of Thyatira existed during John's day. In fact, the city is still in existence today and it is called Akhisar in the territory of Anatolian Turkey.

Prophetically speaking, where does the church of Thyatira fit in during the Church Age?

We have seen Ephesus represent the apostolic church to around 63 A. D. And they left their first love.

Then we came to the persecuted church of Smyrna from around 63 A. D. to 312 A. D. And we saw how during that period of time some 5 to 6 million Christians were put to death by Rome for their faith in Christ.

Then we came to the church of Pergamos who was married to the state and they lasted from around 312 A. D. to around 590 A. D.

Keep in mind that what Satan couldn't do with his persecution of the church in just over 200 years, weaken it, he was able to do as the church compromised their faith and became worldly by uniting itself to the state!

Now we come to the corrupt church or the church of Thyatira that lasted almost 1,000 years, from around 590 A. D. to 1517.

It was a time known as the *Dark Ages*.

I believe the church of Thyatira represents the Roman Catholic Church, prophetically speaking.

Let me show you what I mean. And I am not picking on the Roman Catholic Church, Jesus wrote the letter, and He is going to write one to the Protestant Church as well, and it is not good either, as we will see next time.

First of all, the name “**Thyatira**” speaks of a “*continual sacrifice*.”

That should sound very familiar since many of you were Catholic’s at one time.

You see, that is a perfect picture of the Roman Catholic Church because they believe that the priest turns the bread and wine of communion into the actual body and blood of Jesus, they call it transubstantiation, and this continual sacrifice is what brings grace, or salvation into our lives.

They negate what the Bible tells us, what the Scriptures teach, like, “**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**” Ephesians 2:8-9.

They negate the words of Jesus as He hung on the cross and cried out, “**It is finished!**” John 19:30.

Let me give to you a few examples to show you this is not just something that I came up with; this is their doctrine, a salvation based upon Jesus and good works.

We are told,

The Catholic Council of Trent stated, “If anyone says the sacrifice of the Mass is one only of praise and thanksgiving; or that it is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross but not a propitiatory one; or that it profits him only who receives, and ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be anathema (accursed).” Session xxii, can. 3.

“If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema (cursed).” Council of Trent, Session vi, can. 30.

The Council of Trent dogmatically stated the Catholic position as follows in regard to salvation, “If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of it increase, let him be anathema (cursed).” Session vi, can. 24.

Listen to the following from Father A. Tanquerey in his book, *A Manual of Dogmatic Theology*. He wrote:

Christ’s satisfaction is of infinite value and power. However, de facto punishment is not removed unless the reparations of Christ are applied to us: but this actually happens through the Sacraments and through the Sacrifice of the Mass, and also through faith which works by means of love.

Although the reparation of Christ in itself was perfect and universal, it is necessary for adults to imitate the suffering Christ and to make satisfaction with Him for their sins, if they wish to be saved. This statement is certain; it contradicts the declaration of the Protestants that faith alone is sufficient in order that the reparation and merits of Christ be applied to us.

In Scripture Christ clearly states that no one is saved unless he takes up his cross; St. Paul teaches that we cannot be crowned unless we suffer with Christ. Therefore, although Christ's passion is complete in itself, it must be made complete by us since, as His members we must be fashioned after Him, our Head.

According to reason, an adult must prepare himself for justification by various acts and must preserve in the state of grace. But all this presupposes the cooperation of each individual in expiating [purifying] his own sins and in preserving in good.

- Father A. Tanquerey, A Manual of Dogmatic Theology, vol. ii, p. 80

As you can clearly see, their view of salvation is in contrast to what the Bible has to say. Now, does that mean Catholics are not saved?

Yes, if they hold the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church that places their salvation in Jesus, the Mass, the good works they are doing and-so-on.

Yes, there are Catholics who are saved because they believe their salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, but they did not get this from the Roman Catholic Church, their Doctrine or teachings don't support that kind of salvation.

And folks, please understand that I don't hate Catholics, I do hate their false doctrine that its leaders are putting forth.

I came out of the Roman Catholic Church and I love them and want them to come to know the Lord as I do. And folks, if you think I am picking on the Catholics, like I have said, wait until next time, we are going to look at the Protestant Church because Jesus has some harsh words for them as well.

Now the *description* of Jesus that He takes from Revelation chapter 1 is, “**the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass.**” Revelation 2:18b.

The only difference is that Jesus doesn't describe Himself as the “**Son of Man**” as He does in Revelation chapter 1 but as the “**Son of God.**”

Why is that?

It could be related to the principal deity of the city, Apollo, who was the *sun god* and worshiped under the surname, Tyrimnas.

Thus, Jesus is establishing His deity, His sovereignty, his authority as the *SON OF GOD* as opposed to the sun god!

The idea here is that the title, “**Son of Man**” speaks of His humility, His compassion, His tender-heartedness towards the church.

But here we see Him as the “*Son of God*” in judgment against this corrupt church!

Notice that His eyes are like a flame of fire, which speaks of Jesus examining the ways of this church.

His feet are like fine brass, which again speaks of His judgment upon them.

His feet of fine brass also emphasized His steadfastness.

The reason for that is because brass was the strongest known metal in the ancient world, and feet like fine brass would be strong and immovable.

The Lord is not going to change His ways because they are perfect, they are right, but this church and individuals need to change their ways to conform to His!

You see, the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world is judging this church for adding to the completed work of salvation!

And folks, if you add anything to God's grace you don't improve upon it because it is perfect already, you only cheapen it!

In fact, if you add anything to grace, any good works, then it is no longer grace but it is your merit that now causes God to pay you for the efforts you made, allow you into heaven. That is not what the Scriptures say because all our good works are like filthy rags before Him. So please don't think you can work your way into heaven, you can't!

VERSE 19

Here we see the *commendation* for this church.

The all-seeing God knows all that they do and here we see the Lord give this church six words of commendation.

Let's take a look at what the Lord saw in them.

The first thing that the Lord saw in this church is their "**works.**"

In other words, this church worked hard in their service. And as you look at the Roman Catholic Church you can easily see all the good that they have done over the years, like taking care of the poor, fighting against abortion and-so-on.

Next, Jesus speaks of their "**love.**"

It is interesting that they had love for people, we might call it charity, and we do see this in the Roman Catholic Church.

Next, we see that they were involved in “**service**” or what we might call ministry.

Look at the hospitals, charities, orphanages and-so-on that the Roman Catholic Church established.

Next, we see that they had “**faith.**”

Make no mistake about it, within the Roman Catholic Church there are true believers, they have faith in Jesus for their salvation and not the good works that they have done.

Interestingly enough, men like John Wycliffe and John Huss came out of the Roman Catholic Church. And the Roman Catholic Church does teach some truth, the problem is that the errors that they do teach with it will send a person to Hell and many have gone there because they followed these false teachings, these false doctrines.

Also, we see that they had “**patience.**”

In other words, even during those dark times they were able to hang in there.

And notice the last point that Jesus makes, “**. . . and as for your works, the last are more than the first.**”

Did you see that?

Here we see that their works did not diminish over time, which is what usually happens. But here we see that their works increased!

Now you read this, and you see all that they were doing, and you may be wondering how they could go so far away from God in their actions!

And the reason is simple.

Their good works were not rooted in the Word!

What was all that they were doing rooted in?

It was and is rooted in social causes and not sound doctrine and we see this trend growing today in Protestant Churches, where they have become churches that stand for social causes and not for the Jesus of the Bible!

Now how do I know that the Roman Catholic Church is wrong?

Listen to what Jesus says next.

VERSE 20

Here we see Jesus *rebuke* this church as He looks into the practices of this church.

Jesus spoke of all the good that they were doing and that is all negated by what He said next, “**Nevertheless.**”

Despite all the good that they did, Jesus had some things against them, and they needed to pay attention to what He was saying, they needed to change their ways!

And the problems for this church in Thyatira did not come from without but from within the church itself!

In Smyrna, the persecution was coming against them from the Jews and the Romans but here we see it from within the church, and that is tragic because they did not do anything about it!

False doctrine, idolatrous practices came into the church and we see that with the Roman Catholic Church from its start on up to today!

And we are told that there was this woman in the church, Jezebel, and she called herself a “**prophetess.**”

Nothing wrong with that unless what she was doing went against the Word of God!

Now I seriously doubt that her name was actually Jezebel, no one would call their daughter that, just like you would not call your son Judas!

But what she introduced into the church was similar to what Jezebel brought into the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the Old Testament!

Of queen Jezebel we are told, *“She was one of the most evil characters of the Old Testament, who attempted to combine the worship of Israel with the worship of the idol Baal. . . Jezebel herself had a most unenviable record of evil.”* (Walvoord)

Let me fill in some details of who this woman, Jezebel was, and I think you will get the picture of why Jesus used that name for this prophetess in this church.

In the Old Testament, Jezebel was the Sidonian wife of King Ahab, who was the wicked King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. You might call these two the demonic duo of the Old Testament, that is how bad they were.

And Jezebel killed the true prophets of God and was caring for the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah.

Now the sin that was introduced into the church there in Thyatira was spiritual fornication and immorality, the same that Jezebel introduced to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. This woman was leading them down this path and the people were following.

It is as Jeremiah 5:30-31 tells us, **“An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?”**

And one of the big problems, and we see this a lot today, is that the church in Thyatira wasn't exercising any discernment or judgment in what she was saying or prophesying. She was making up her own doctrine instead of using the Word of God!

And yet, remember what John told us in I John 4:1, “**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**”

Did you see that. Don't believe everything you hear but take what you hear and see if your Spirit tester, the Word of God is in line with what they are saying or they are wrong, God is not wrong!

In I Thessalonians 5:21-22 Paul wrote, “**Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.**”

God has warned us that we are to test all things and hold onto those things that are true and to abstain from those things that are not true, they are evil!

You see, what may seem right to you, if it goes against the truths of God found in the Word of God, it is useless, it is deadly and it will not save you!

How sad it is when people believe the words of man or the words of a woman over the words of God!

What this Jezebel had done was she mixed the worship of God with the paganism of her day and that led the believers in Thyatira into idolatry! We must worship God in Spirit and in truth, not anyway we want!

Let's look at what was going on during this period of time as the Roman Catholic Church was growing and more and more false doctrine was being added to their beliefs.

We see that during this time in the church history, the Bible itself was banned from the common people, taken out of their hands and left for the so-called spiritual leaders.

And it was these so-called prophets who put their stamp of approval on all kinds of abominations and false doctrines, they were leading the church.

And for groups who stood against these abominations, the church slaughtered them.

Let me share with you these words to give you a glimpse of why this period of time was called the dark ages, at least in part for the church.

We are told,

[The Albigenses] preached against the immoralities of the [Catholic] priesthood, pilgrimages, worship of saints and images . . . opposed the claims of the Church of Rome; made great use of the Scriptures. . . . By 1167 they embraced possibly a majority of the population of South France. . . . In 1208 a crusade was ordered by Pope Innocent III; a bloody war of extermination followed, scarcely paralleled in history; town after town was put to the sword and the inhabitants murdered without distinction of age or sex . . . within 100 years the Albigenses were utterly rooted out.

[Two centuries later] between 1540 and 1570 no fewer than 900,000 Protestants were put to death in the Pope's war for the extermination of the Waldenses. Think of monks and priests directing, with heartless cruelty and inhuman brutality, the work of torturing and burning alive innocent men and women, and doing it in the Name of Christ, by the direct order of the "Vicar of Christ"!

. . . on the night of August 24, 1572 70,000 Huguenots, including most of their leaders, were massacred [St. Bartholomew's massacre]. Some 200,000 [more] perished as martyrs . . . [and] 500,000 fled to Protestant countries.

- Henry H. Halley, Pocket Bible Handbook, 1944, pp. 608-613

Keep in mind that Pope Pius III massacred 60,000 people in the "crowning achievement of his papacy."

Not a very pretty picture of church history but when man plays God, when he alters what God has said, then death and destruction seem to follow. A very dark period of church history to say the least!

And what the Roman Catholic Church did to acquire land, to steal land from people, seems to parallel what Jezebel did in I Kings chapter 21.

Her husband, King Ahab, wanted a piece of land for his garden and the property was owned by Naboth.

Because the land was not to be given away, he refused, it was his family inheritance and King Ahab pouted because he did not get what he wanted.

When Jezebel heard why he was so down she rebuked him, he was the King and he could do whatever he wanted, but she took control and fixed the situation.

She sent out some letters, one to Naboth to come to a feast and receive high honor and he did. But also, she sent letters to get men to speak out against Naboth and say that he blasphemed God and the King! They were scoundrels! And the plan worked great. They came against Naboth saying he blasphemed God and the King and thus, the punishment for that, they stoned him to death and the property was given to King Ahab.

That is what the Roman Catholic Church did, they used false accusers who brought charges against innocent landowners, charges of heresy and thus, they would be executed, and the Roman Catholic Church would take their property. You may have heard this before – ***THE INQUISITION!***

Consequently, the Catholic Church is extremely wealthy due to their land and financial holdings.

For nine hundred years (600-1500 A.D.), vast amounts of money, property, and treasures were accumulated by the church using this practice—as well as thru the selling of *indulgences*.

What is an indulgence?

An indulgence amounted to *“forgiveness in advance.”* For example, if you were going to a feast or party of some kind on Saturday evening, you could buy an *indulgence* from a priest, and thus be *“pre-forgiven”* for any ensuing sin like, drunkenness, idolatry, adultery, fornication and the like!

And it was during this time that we see the doctrine of *“Purgatory”* invented. And they profited off of this as well. You see, you could speed up the process of a person’s stay in purgatory by buying an indulgence, the purchasing of candles and lighting them as well of having a Mass Card purchased to get them out of purgatory!

Dave Hunt gives us this insight on how they were making money off of God by the things that they were doing. He said, *“There were tiny vials of ‘true milk from the Virgin Mary’s breasts,’ pickled fingers and toes of this or that ‘saint,’ and enough pieces of wood in Europe venerated as parts of the ‘true cross’ to build a cathedral. Even toenails of ‘saints’ were worshiped by the deluded devout. Peter’s toes were uncommonly prolific. There were enough ‘certified trimmings’ in Europe’s cathedrals to fill a gunnysack. The biggest scam was selling ‘indulgences’ to release deceased relatives from purgatory - and who would refuse to buy Aunt Maria’s release from the flames! From such blood money, St. Peter’s Basilica was repaired and expanded to its present form.”*

Interestingly enough, Jezebel allowed herself to be worshipped as the *“Queen of Heaven”* and that is something that God forbid, and you can read of that in Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:15-30!

But please understand that this title did not come from Jezebel, it was a Babylonian phrase that was given to the Babylonian goddess by the name of Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod. Together they founded the whole Babylonian system of pagan worship that got its start at the Tower of Babel!

Down the road Babel became Babylon and it was the center of all false religious systems of worship and occult practices on the face of the earth!

But the Babylonian Kingdom came to an end, it was defeated by the Medes and the Persians, and this false religious system moved to Pergamos!

And when Rome rose to power the Babylonian High Priest moved the whole system to Rome and that is where it remains today, headquartered in the Vatican and has branched out all over the world!

Interestingly enough, the word “*Vatican*” is Latin, and it literally means, “*Divining Serpent!*”

And I believe it will be the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope, that heads up the false religious system during the Tribulation Period and the lie of the Serpent in the Garden of Eden will unfold through this false religious system – you will be like God, you will not die, has God indeed said! You get the idea!

Look at how gracious God is. Look at the next verse.

VERSE 21

Here the Lord gives them this *exhortation* – they needed to repent and that is obvious.

We have talked about this, but during the mass the bread and wine are supposed to be transformed into the literal, physical body and blood of Christ. The wafer is called the Eucharist!

That is idolatry!

Why?

Because it brings God down to an image or substance for the purpose of worship!

Not only that but after the wafer or bread is changed into the body of Christ during the Catholic mass, it is then placed on display in a little holder with a little round window so that the host can be seen.

This is called a monstrance and it is to be worshiped as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

Again, that is idolatry.

And thus, the Lord is calling for them to repent, to turn from this idolatry and come to Christ!

Tragically, they refused to change their ways and turn back to God.

And folks, many are doing the same thing today. You show them the truths of God found in the Word of God and they refuse to listen to what God is saying but would hold onto church traditions instead, which are leading them to Hell!

I mean look at the church history here and you want to follow that!

Follow the Lord and not man and you won't go wrong.

Please understand that for the Roman Catholic Church, their doctrines, they will never change, they will never repent of their sin and thus, this church is an abomination before God.

That doesn't mean people from within the Catholic Church can't get saved, they can, but the Church itself is doomed and we will see that as we move on.

But keep in mind what the Lord said in Genesis 6:3, "**And the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever . . .'**"

Don't put off today the call of God upon your life!

Jesus is going to let them know that if they don't repent, there are consequences, and they are not good. This is the warning!

VERSES 22-23

Here is the *warning* that Jesus gives to this church – if you continue down this path you will die in your sins!

And Jesus says that He “**will kill her children with death.**”

Now that does seem a little harsh, doesn't it? I mean it really seems unloving. That does not seem like our Lord.

Please understand what Jesus is saying here when he speaks of children. All those who are the spiritual children of this woman Jezebel, who follow her doctrine, who follow her ways, those who were baptized into and brought up under this system from birth, and from generation to generation, will die in their sins and be judged according to their works as they are cast into the Lake of Fire at the Great White Throne Judgment!

In fact, that phrase, “**And I will kill her children with death**” is literally saying in the Greek, “*I will put her children to death with death.*”

What that is referring to is the second death, the Lake of Fire and notice that it says “**All the churches**” which is speaking to the church throughout history!

Also, Jesus says that He will punish them according to their works, which for many, they have a hard time with that because they say it is speaking of a works salvation and they just did not have enough good works to be saved! Not at all and the rest of the Scriptures don't support that!

Let me explain it like this.

You will go to Hell for your rejection of Christ, but the degree of punishment there will be according to the things you have done in this life.

Revelation 20:11-15 tells us this, **“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”**

We also see here that Jesus said if they do not repent that the Roman Catholic Church is going into the Great Tribulation along with those who follow her teachings and are guilty of spiritual idolatry.

We see this warning for the first time, and it will continue on through the rest of the churches, all the way through Laodicea, that if they don't repent, they will enter into the Tribulation Period, except for Philadelphia.

That tells me that the practices of this church, this church system is in existence today and will continue on through the Tribulation Period.

Will the Roman Catholic Church be the leader to unite the religions of the world together into the one-world religion? I believe so and as you watch what is happening in the Catholic Church, their arms are opened to all faiths; Muslim, Hindu, witch doctors, and-so-on.

Not that they have to change what they believe, but they can come under the umbrella of Rome!

And now we see many Protestants who are returning to the mother church – the woman Jezebel – Rome!

How dangerous it is getting.

Also understand that people from within this church can get saved but as an institution, their practices are engrained within them and they refuse to change!

VERSES 24-28

Notice that here we see another group of children, in a sense.

We just saw in the previous verses the children of Jezebel who were doomed for death if they continued in her ways. They will be eternally separated from God because of the doctrines they hold onto.

But here we see another group of children, those who have not let the deep things of Satan affect their lives but instead are children of God because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

It is as Paul said in Colossians 1:12-14, **“giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”**

For those that are His, the faithful, He gives us a *promise*.

Jesus tells them to **“hold fast”** or **“take a firm grip”** on the things of God because there will be those who will try to take it away from you!

If you do Jesus says that you will rule nations – now, don’t let that go to your head.

The word “**rule**” is the Greek word POIMAINO and it speaks of shepherding the nations in the Kingdom Age as Jesus Christ rules and reigns on this earth. It is a beautiful relationship with our Lord and those who have entered into the Kingdom Age from the Great Tribulation.

Not only will we rule and reign with our Lord, but He will give to us the morning star.

Now the morning star was seen in its brightest appearance just before the dawn.

And what an encouragement for these people living in the Dark Ages and for us.

Things are not going to continue like this, Jesus Christ, the light of the world, the Morning Star, is coming back and He will pierce this darkness.

You see, we will not go through the Tribulation Period as her children, Jezebel’s will.

We are His, and as Paul says in I Thessalonians 5:9, “**For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.**”

And in Ephesians 5:6-14 Paul said, “**Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’**”

Great comfort, great hope and the reality of a deliverance coming before the wrath of God is poured out!

There is another issue I want to look at and that is what Jesus said in Revelation 2:24, and that is the “**depths of Satan.**” What is that about?

The word “**depth**” comes from the Greek “bathos”, and it was a word that described the priests of the ancient Babylonian false religious system, and it especially was related to the high priest of this religion who took for himself the title of “*Pontifex Maximus.*”

It is a word that means “*maximum*” or “*highest priest*” and that is the title that is given to the Roman Catholic popes to this day, a Babylonian title!

And like in Babylon, they believed that they alone were given the wisdom to understand these doctrines, to interpret them and the common person could not do it.

The real reason to keep the Bible out of the hands of the common people, for the Roman Catholic Church as well as any church that is teaching false doctrine, is that if people read the Bible, they would see that what the Roman Catholic Church is teaching is not from the Bible!

I think the warning is very clear. Don’t allow the doctrines of men to negate the Word of God.

Don’t add to the finished work of Christ – it is not a continual sacrifice.

Don’t add ceremonies, masses, other works or rituals because they do nothing for your salvation.

In fact, they will lead you away from God.

It is as Jesus said, “**hold fast**” and do not dwell on the things of Satan or those things that are in opposition to God.

You see, Jezebel introduced idolatry and fornication into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and this new Jezebel has introduced idolatry and spiritual fornication into the church and it is just as dangerous – ***THE IDOLATROUS CHURCH!***

Thus, take a firm grip on what you already know, the truths of God found in the Word of God and you will not go into the Tribulation Period, you will not die in your sins, but you will shepherd over the nations with Jesus as He sets up His Kingdom to rule and reign with a rod of iron for 1,000 years!

VERSE 29

If you have spiritual ears to hear, if you are open to what the Spirit is saying, then apply these things to your life. Pay attention to what God is saying, it is that important.

As I begin to close, listen to these words from A. W. Tozer and how they apply to us today, hopefully awaking those who are spiritually sleeping and encourage us who are awake to continue forging ahead.

He wrote,

Our fathers believed in sin and the devil and hell . . . [and in] God and righteousness and heaven . . . Humans, our fathers held, had to choose sides - they could not be neutral.

For them it must be life or death, heaven or hell, and if they chose to come out on God's side, they could expect open war with God's enemies.

The fight would be real and deadly and would last as long as life continued here below . . . How different today . . . People think of the world not as a battleground, but as a playground.

We are not here to fight; we are here to frolic. We are not in a foreign land; we are at home . . . [this idea] has now been accepted in practice by the vast majority of fundamentalist Christians. They might hedge around the question . . . but their conduct gives them away.

- A. W. Tozer

Folks, as I close this evening, please understand that there has always been a vast difference between light and darkness.

Tragically the church has been letting the darkness to come right into the church. Stand firm and don't fall into spiritual fornication or idolatry listening to the words of man instead of the words of God!

Folks, we will be entering into the Kingdom Age with our Morning Star, Jesus Christ.

It is as Peter said in I Peter 1:18-25, **“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the LORD endures forever.’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”**

Thus, as Jesus said, **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”** Revelation 2:29.

May our ears be open, and our hearts be sensitive to what the Spirit of God is saying to us as we follow Him!