

Revelation Lesson 39  
Thyatira: The Lascivious Church (Salutation)

Revelation 2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

We now embark upon a new study of another church. Once Christ addressed the Church at Pergamos, He turned His attention some 27 miles away to the Church at Thyatira.

As tempting as it might be to “hurry on through” so we can get to the “prophecy” stuff – we MUST apply the brakes and slow down here. They messages to the 7 churches get glossed over and passed by so much in the haste to get to “Heaven” that the modern-day church has missed some great and timely – I might add – messages that are in dire need!! The late Evangelist Oliver B. Greene said: “The message to the church at Thyatira is the longest of the seven messages to the assemblies. This fourth message is the beginning of the second group. The seven messages are divided into two groups. The first three churches make up the first make up one group, and the last four describe the Church minutely from this present day on until the Rapture takes place.”

When we studied the cities in Lesson 13 where we noted some historical facts and modern details, if any existed. Here we begin our study by some reminders concerning Thyatira.

Oliver B. Greene stated: “...that the road from Thyatira to Pergamos is one of the most beautiful in all the world...” It is interesting to note as well, that this city was also – according to Acts 16:14 – the home of the Apostle Paul's first convert – Lydia, a merchant of purple and fine linen who was at the city of Philippi. Seems fitting that she was a working gal, for the name Thyatira itself means: City of Labour. But there was one thing Lydia ceased working on – she stopped working to gain God's favour and she stopped trying to work her way to Heaven!!

But if you break the word “Thyatira” into its Greek root words you find: “Continual” and “Sacrifice” hence this shows the deeper meaning of this era in Church history (as does city of works) as shall be seen in a moment. But for the moment, understand that “the message to the assembly at Thyatira presents the hopeless, helpless, corrupt condition of the local assembly, a condition out of which the local church cannot and will not emerge, a condition that is absolutely incapable of being improved.” But we also should note that “a remnant is recognized and addressed separately” in Revelation 2:24.

I want to refresh your memory that part of our theological interpretation with each of the 7 Churches sees each church as follows: 1.) as an actual historical place and 2.) each church also is seen as representative of an “era” in Church History.

As a “marker” of Church history, the “Thyatiran Era” is seen to largely encompass the years: 606AD – 1520AD. Again, we cannot be dogmatic about the ages of church history here. Some say it shows the history of the church from 500AD – 1500AD or from 606AD – Tribulation. However you slice it (I think 606AD – 1520AD is more accurate) the picture that forms in that local assembly is rather bleak, for the people have largely given themselves over to lasciviousness which is a Biblical (King James) way of saying: Unrestrained lust, sin (and an emphasis upon sexual sin).

Looking back into history these centuries encompass the Dark Ages (called so due to ignorance). Again I quote Greene who said concerning this age: “During the Dark Ages, Popery was in power. In Popery, every True thought of the New Testament Church is denied and lost.” Thus, “Thyatira represents the age when Rome took over the reigns of religion on earth.” Take a moment and see the “doctrines” that Rome established as “proper and right” during this time:

1. 607AD – Boniface III was made the first “Pope.” So forget Peter being the first one!!
2. 709AD – Kissing the Pope’s foot established as proper protocol.
3. 786AD – The worship (or adoration) of images and relics.
4. 850AD – The use of “Holy Water” started by the Catholic church.
5. 995AD – The Catholic church began “canonizing” dead believers which “made them” into “saints.” The Bible declares in 1 Corinthians 1:2 that all the saved are “saints”
6. 998AD – Fasting on Fridays as well as during Lent. (why Fish Camps are open on Friday)
7. 1079AD – It is declared that all priests ought to be Celibate (unmarried & virgins)
8. 1090AD – The Rosary is established in Catholic tradition. Actually it is a modified version of Pagan prayer beads.
9. 1184AD – The Inquisition (a series of courts & trials whereby “heresy” was condemned – it actually was torture and murder) began. Wikipedia states: “Beginning in the 19th century, historians have gradually compiled statistics drawn from the surviving court records, from which estimates have been calculated by adjusting the recorded number of convictions by the average rate of document loss for each time period. García Cárcel estimates that the total number of people put on trial by inquisitorial courts throughout their history was approximately 150,000, of which about 3,000 were executed - about two percent of the number of people put on trial.”
10. 1190AD – The Sale of Indulgences began. The 1471 Catholic Catechism defines an Indulgence as: “a remission (forgiveness) before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints ” Basically it’s where man forgives your sin – which is impossible anyway!
11. 1215AD – Transubstantiation is declared to be official doctrine. This teaching in essence is where the priest “transforms” the bread (wafer) and cup (wine) at Mass (similar to our Communion or Lord’s Supper) into the Body and Blood of Christ.
12. 1220AD – Adoration of the Wafer (now called the Host). Basically folks what this is – they’re worshipping “bread” which they claim has turned into Christ.
13. 1229AD – The Bible is forbidden to laypeople – if you ain’t a priest you can’t have the Word of God!
14. 1414AD – The Cup (in Communion) was forbidden to people at “Communion.” The reason given by the Priests and Pope was that since Christ was IN the bread, there was no need for “everybody” to receive the Cup too. My Bible tells me that Jesus told us to partake of the bread and the Cup!!
15. 1439AD – The Doctrine of Purgatory decreed.
16. 1508AD – The Ave Maria (or Hail Mary) is adopted. This is a “prayer” addressed to Mary to intercede with Jesus on behalf of the petitioner. It forms the “foundation” upon which the Rosary Prayer(s) start. LaHaye says: “One of the dangerous trends....in the Church of Rome is the elevation of Mary to a status just short of deity. News media reports indicate that millions have petitioned the Pope to declare her a member of the Trinity. Already she is referred to as “the mother of God” or “the queen of Heaven” and in some instances appears to be the dispenser of salvation, which contradicts many Scriptures.” The Bible states in John 14:6 and Acts 4:12 that there is only One though Whom and by Whom we gain entry into Heaven – and that Name is Jesus Christ – not Mary!!

There is no way that these doctrines can be traced to the Bible. Not the Catholic corrupted Bible but the Word of the Living Lord! These are heresies. LaHaye states: “Heresy falls into one of two basic categories: a false concept of the personal deity of Christ or mixing works with faith. The Church of Rome can scarcely be accused of teaching a false concept of the personal deity of Christ;

however their emphasis on the “continual sacrifice” and rejection of our Lord's finished work breeds concept that causes people to try to earn their own salvation by works, penance, indulgences and many other satanically conceived ideas...”

**And unto the angel of the church** – Again we note from our previous studies that the word angel here is transliterated - that means it was taken from one language and placed into another. Thus the Greek word is AGGELOS (the two “gg's” make the “NG” sound and thus is so written that way in English) and means Messenger. Thus the “angels” of these 7 churches are human messengers.

**in Thyatira** – One reason we understand these “angels” to be human is the reference made in each case to the city. The angel is said to be “connected” so to speak to the church in the city named. Angels are seen in the Bible as being assigned to countries, nations and individuals, but never to churches. Furthermore why would Christ, as the Head of His Church need an angelic (supernatural creature) to speak to Himself?? He doesn't He has the Word of God!

Again we note the where here – the city of Thyatira – a city located within a valley, and the church it had within it is found too within the shadows of sin and depravity.

**Write;** - As we have noted previously, I make brief mention here yet again in that this (coupled along with the word “saith” shows how the Book of Revelation was largely transmitted. Jesus spoke and John wrote it down.

**These things** – The wording here of “these things” encompasses: Revelation 2:18-29.

**saith** – Continuing the strain of thought from the word “write” we again see that Jesus Christ spoke and Johnny boy acted as His secretary – jotting down every “jot and tittle” that stemmed forth from the Lord's mouth. He wrote down what he saw and heard and experienced in Heaven.....well most everything except for the 7 thunders (more on that in Revelation 10:3-4).

**the Son of God,** - I personally find this point rather interesting. Most believers do not concern themselves with the various Names of the Lord and most as Greene said: “...do not distinguish between the Names of Jesus. He is called *Jesus*; He is called *Christ*; and as the *Son of God* – and all of these Names have a significance.” Isaiah stated in Isaiah 9:6a “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:...” Note that the child was born, but the Son was given – in other words the Lord did not start from the womb He is as John said in John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Now, we do not have “...time and space to go into all of these names, but they each have a very definite spiritual significance. The humanity of the Lord, His relationship to mankind, is conveyed in the title “Son of Man.” His deity and relationship to Almighty God are conveyed in the title “Son of God.” His glory and His relationship to the churches as witnessed by John, were as “Son of Man” (Revelation 1:13). Why then is the Divine title “Son of God” used by the Holy [Ghost] here in verse 18, and in no other place in the Revelation?”

That's a good question that is asked by Greene, and after discussing the Thyatiran Era he posits his answer: “Poperly completely shuts Christ out as the Head of the New Testament Church. Since the church at Thyatira represents the age when Rome took over the reigns of religion on earth, we have the statement “These things saith the Son of God...” ...no, not Peter, but *the Son of God*, the Foundation of the New Testament Church (Matthew 16:16-18).” So we are reminded that while Popes and councils have so often contradicted each other, Christ hits the nail square on the head, with Him there is no shadow of turning only the Truth. So what is about to be told, comes from the Highest Authority that no man, no, not even the Pope can overrule or deny!!

**who hath his eyes** – Here we are taken back to our studies in Lesson 16 and 17 back in Chapter 1. We are reminded in Revelation 1:14 that John describes Jesus as having “fiery” eyes. I should again note here that in each “Salutation” to each Church Jesus describes Himself using one of the descriptions made in Chapter 1.

So here Jesus describes His eyes. Recall that the first reference to “eyes” in the Bible was used by Satan in Genesis 3:5 when he informed the woman (after the fall she was named Eve) that the reason God forbade them from eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was that when they did, their “eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Thus the first mention rule shows us that “eyes” can refer to knowledge. Here it is the literal meaning, the to ocular devices by which you observe something.

**like unto a flame of fire**, - John described them in Revelation 1:14 but now Jesus Himself describes His eyes “like unto a flame of fire.” Now please don't get this image of Jesus mixed up with Cyclops from the X-men shooting lazer beams or fire shooting out of his eyes! This fire is a piercing fire. It is clearly seen and illuminates all so that all can be seen by the Lord. Nothing sinful can withstand his searching pure eyes. Nothing can withstand the pure sinless brightness of his searching eyes.

**and his feet** – The feet of Christ were also encountered in Chapter 1 (see Revelation 1:15 – Lesson 17) where we noted many poignant scenes in Christ's ministry took place. It is His feet that are bearing Him closer and closer towards the Church. He is coming ever closer towards them and the implication is that when He arrives, it will be a visitation of judgment upon those that have disobeyed.

**are like fine brass**; - Some Bible scholars (and Bible Perversions) say that this is not brass but rather bronze. Bronze is an alloy made from copper and other metals (usually tin), while Brass is an alloy made from copper and zinc. So bronze and brass are NOT interchangeable words. Since it says brass, the word is brass. But this is no mere brass. This is speaking of “fine” or high quality brass. The Greek word used here is used in the *Textus-Receptus* twice and both occur here in Revelation. The first here in our text verse and the other in Revelation 1:15. The Greek word (G5474) used is formed from two other Greek words: CHAKLOS (G5475) which means brass, from whence we get our word Chalk from and LIBANOS (G3030) which refers to Frankincense. The Frankincense reference points to the colour: yellowish-white. Thus this brass is bright.

As stated in Lesson 17, Brass symbolizes judgment (a symbolism which is largely derived from the furniture within the Tabernacle). Seeing this introduction, we thus note the picture that Christ is presenting to this Church, a church laden with numerous sins – both spiritual and physical – it is a picture of coming judgment. Christ is walking in the midst of the Churches and looking with eyes that will uncover all in order to set His foot down in judgment. LaHaye says: “Christ is looking with piercing judgment on the Church because she has permitted false teaching to creep into her midst” which has caused many to err from the faith.