

# **The Church at Thyatira**

## **Revelation 2:18-29**

### **The Church in Corruption**

#### **Introduction:**

Thyatira was a small thriving town located about forty miles southeast of Pergamos. It had been established as a Macedonian colony by Alexander the Great after the destruction of the Persian Empire. This church was perhaps founded as a result of Paul's first convert in Europe -- Lydia, a seller of purple. No evangelistic effort was ever recorded as being done there, and the only other reference in Scripture regarding it is in relation to Lydia (Acts 16:14-15). The church in Thyatira had the longest letter written to it as recorded in Revelation 2 and 3. The one reason for this is it was a very paganized church. The city of Thyatira was well known for its idolatry, and this pagan nature had apparently found its way into the church. Thyatira was a commercial center honeycombed with pagan religion. Its many trade guilds periodically sponsored idolatrous feasts.

The period this church represents is from 590-1517. The period mentioned is when the Roman Catholic Church became a powerful force in the world. It was "religious" but pagan and idolatrous. It is interesting to note that the name "Thyatira" means "continual sacrifice," a practice the Catholic church still carries on today in the form of "the mass."

The letter to the church at Thyatira is one that speaks of corruption and paganism. If we take a look back to the previous three letters to churches in Revelation 2 we will see a progression downward for the New Testament church. It started out with the letter to the church at Ephesus, the Apostolic church period - the true New Testament church.

Then the letter to the church at Smyrna gave us the Persecuted church period, the period just after the Apostolic period where the first hints of corruption started. Then the letter to the church at Pergamos where we saw compromise take hold. Now, we see in this letter to the church at Thyatira the compromise has led to full corruption and paganism in the church.

The letter to the church at Thyatira is the longest of all the seven letters, and one of the most severe. This church, even though commendable for things the first three could not be commended for, was nonetheless corrupt in a very serious way. The church age period in view here is known as the Dark Ages because of the immense blood shed that took place during this period. The so-called "church" was responsible for this bloodshed in the name of "religion." The true church of this period is seen in this passage of Revelation 2 as still being sound in belief and faith. The corrupted part is seen as having committed the great sin of adultery. There are a great many churches today that call themselves "Christian" churches but are of the "synagogue of Satan," and will be punished for this, as seen in this letter.

One underlying theme in this letter is judgment. God will bring judgment upon this church at Thyatira for its sin. God gave them opportunity to repent and they did not, so they will be judged. The church age period here discussed has not seen that judgment yet. I don't believe it will until the Tribulation period, but you can be sure, it will come. God did judge some of the leaders of the Catholic Church (some of which we will discuss later in this study), but for the most part, this corrupt church is still strong today and will be until the Tribulation.

There are some points about corruption in these verses that will benefit us today, in the New Testament church of the Twentieth-first Century, that need to be pointed out. Even though we live in a day of corrupt churches and corrupt ministers and corrupt government and corrupt business the Bible shows that we can still avoid or overcome those obstacles and be right with God.

There are three main points that are seen here regarding corruption and paganism:

## **I. CORRUPTION WILL BE JUDGED BY THE LORD – VS. 18**

In this verse, we see the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messenger carrying the message to the "angel of the church" – the pastor of the church. In this message, the Messenger is seen in three distinct ways. One shows His authority to Judge what He's about to judge, and the other two illustrate this judgment. If we realize that corruption cannot be hid from God, the Judge of all mankind, then we might not be so apt to be corrupted. If the church in Thyatira had realized that they could hide nothing they wouldn't have been so susceptible to corruption. The same is true of the so-called "church" of the church age period under discussion. If they had recognized the Judge looking on they would not have been corrupted.

***A. He has the authority to Judge – "These things saith the Son of God" – Ps. 96:12-13; Rom. 2:16; Matt. 16:27; Luke 8:17; John 12:48; 1 Cor. 4:5; Heb. 9:27; 2 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 20:11-15***

**Rom 2:16** In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

**Joh 12:48** He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

**1Co 4:5** Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

**B. He has the evidence with which to judge – "who hath eyes like unto a flame of fire" – this is related to verse 23 where it says, "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." This is not only referring to lost people but the saved as well at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Rev. 1:14; 19:11; Dan. 10:5**

1. It says He has "eyes" – eyes speak of being able to see and observe. The Judge of that day will have used His "eyes" to see and observe what we have done, and it will be recorded, just as our mind records everything we see. 2 Chron. 16:9; Job 34:21-22; Ps. 11:4; Prov. 5:21; 15:3; Jer. 16:17; 32:19; Heb. 4:13

**2Ch 16:9** For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart *is* perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt

have wars.

**Job 34:21-22** For his eyes *are* upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. (22) *There is* no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

2. Not only does He have eyes that see all and record all, but they are like a flame of fire. This speaks of righteous judgment. Our Lord has the evidence to judge us by, and He has the righteousness to do so with absolute justice – there will be no unjustifiable sentence passed out at either the Judgment Seat of Christ for Christians, nor at the Great White Throne for the lost. All judgments meted out will be just. Rev. 15:4; 16:7; 19:2

***C. He has the power to carry out the sentence – "and his feet are like fine brass" (reference this phrase with the phrase in verse 27 where it says, "as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers")***

1. The reference to His feet would seem to indicate power, as He will have the power to judge and to carry out the sentence. Is. 63:3, 6
2. The reference to "fine brass" is a bit obscure, but in relation to this passage it would seem to indicate the completeness with which this judgment is done. The "fine brass" is a brilliant, bright metal that shows no imperfections. When Jesus is done as Judge all sin will have been

removed and only the beauty will remain.  
Rev. 21:27; Eph. 5:5; Gal. 5:19-21

## **II. CORRUPTION CAN BE AVOIDED – vs. 19, 24-29**

There were obviously some in the church at Thyatira that were still right with God and wanting to do what God wanted them to do. There were five things listed in verse 19 that this church was known for in doing right. In verses 24-29 the ones doing right in the church at Thyatira were given a prescription for staying right.

The church period under consideration here had some right in it as well. This was seen by the fact that there was so much persecution. If there were not those doing right there would have been no persecution. The good was not in the Catholic Church at this time, but rather in those that were of the true church, the true separated, Bible-believing, Gospel preaching church.

### ***A. The right to do in avoiding corruption – vs. 19***

This verse starts out, as they do to the other churches that have commendations, with the words "I know thy works..." This is not referring to a specific work, but rather to the works that follow that phrase.

1. "Charity" – This word means love that is self-denying and compassionately devoted to its object. It designates love in its fullest conceivable form:
  - a) Exhibited by Christ

**1Jn 3:16** Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

b) Expressive of God's relation to us

**1Jn 4:9** In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

c) Expressive of the relation between the Father and the Son – John 15:10; 17:26; Col. 1:13

**Joh 15:10** If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

d) It is the distinctive character of the Christian life in relation to the brethren and to all

2. "Service" – This word means service rendered as benefiting others, ministry in every form. The only other time in the Bible this word is translated "service" is in Rom. 15:31 where it is referring to a collection that was taken for the church in Rome that Paul had to deliver. The *service* spoken of is one of giving to help the needs of others financially. If we give as we ought to then we will be one step closer in avoiding corruption.

**Rom 15:31** That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

### 3. "Faith"

- a) Firm persuasion, the conviction which is based upon hearing, not upon sight, or knowledge; a firmly relying confidence in what we hear from God in His Word
- b) The church in Thyatira, although wrong in some areas, knew what it was to be "doers of the Word and not hearers only." They were a church known for their faith that brought works ("service"). James 2:14-26
- c) If we love like we should, and we give when we can, then our faith will grow.

### 4. "Patience"

- a) In the New Testament, this is the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings. Luke 8:15; Rom. 2:7; 5:3-5; 8:25
- b) You can't have this type of patience unless you first have faith, and faith doesn't come unless we are sacrificial and that doesn't come unless we love like we should.

### 5. "Thy works; and the last to be more than the first"

- a) This is showing a progression in the works that the Thyatira church was known for.
- b) The works they were doing when this letter was written were "more," or greater, than those they were doing when the church was first established.

- c) This is also true of the church age period under consideration. By the time the Dark Ages ended the church had grown much, much stronger than it was at the beginning, and they were known for many more, and greater, works at the end of the period than at the beginning.
  
- d) This speaks to us today of the fact that we are to grow stronger in the Lord as time goes by, and to do, and be known for, more good works when we die than when we first got saved. Job 17:9; Is. 40:29-31; Ps. 92:12-15

***B. The way to do right in avoiding corruption – vs. 24-25***

Here for the first time in the messages to the seven churches a group is singled out within a local church as being the continuing true testimony of the Lord.

The first part of verse 24 is a little peculiar. It says, "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira." This phrase is somewhat of a play on terms. It is not speaking to, or about, two groups of people but rather is referring to the same group of people. The word "you" in this verse is plural, referring to "the rest" in the next phrase. It is speaking to all those that have not been deceived and corrupted by the false doctrine. It could be read "but to you all I say (this), to those remaining in Thyatira."

Regardless of how it is worded, it is addressing those who have discovered a way in doing right in avoiding corruption. They found the following:

1. Not carried away by false doctrine – "as many as have not this doctrine"
  - a) The doctrine spoken of is that of the false teaching of the "Jezebel" teacher in their midst.
  - b) It's not so much the specific doctrine (in the previous church it was that of the Nicolaitanes), but rather how they got to the place that they were deceived by such false doctrines.
  - c) Speaking to us today, the message is that we're to avoid false doctrines by knowing what we believe, and why.

**Eph 4:14** That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

**Act 20:30-31** Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. (31) Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

**Rom 16:17-18** Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (18) For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

**Gal 3:1** O foolish Galatians, who hath

bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2. Not carried away into the sin Satan brings – "which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak"

a) Not only did they not "know" from experience the doctrine of Satan, but they had no contact with it – they had nothing to do with it. It would be good if we could keep our young people from even coming in contact with the "depths of Satan."

b) The phrase "depths of Satan" is referring to the doctrine or teaching of Satan. There is a very real, definite doctrine that Satan-worshippers have that they believe and teach. The devil, like the Lord, has his systematic doctrinal textbooks. Although this teaching has been around since the New Testament times, it will find its complete fulfillment during the tribulation period with the beast and the false prophet.

**1Ti 4:1** Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

**Dan 8:23-25** And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. (24) And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy

people. (25) And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

- c) The last part of this passage says, "as they speak." This is referring to the word "depths" and is seen as spoken by the heretics themselves of the depths of their teaching. It is, however, with "fake profundities, like clouds and wind without rain, speaking great swelling words, verbal hypocrites, deceivers."

2Pe 2:2-3 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

2Pe 2:10-19 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. (11) Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. (12) But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; (13) And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as* they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting

themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; (14) Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: (15) Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam *the son* of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; (16) But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. (17) These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. (18) For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. (19) While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

- d) The last phrase of verse 24 is a promise to those that have not been involved with false doctrines and teachings, but have kept themselves from the sin mentioned in verses 20-23. It says, "I will put upon you none other burden." The burden spoken of pertains to the specific local church at that time, and is that which was given in Acts 15:28-29 where the Jerusalem council advised the churches to abstain from meats offered to idols and from fornication, both of which were forsaken by the "Jezebel" teacher in this church. Today,

God has put no other burden on us but simple obedience to His Word, and to "hold fast" that which we believe.

**Act 15:28-29** For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; (29) That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

3. Hold fast to the doctrine of the Word of God – "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come"

a) "That which ye have already" – refers back to verse 19 – "works, charity, service, faith, patience" – they need not look for more to add to what they had, they were just to hold to the "faith once delivered." We, today, are not to seek any new revelation, but simply continue in what we already have.

b) "Hold fast" – comes from a word that means to use strength or force to hold on with. We are to hang on to the Word of God, and abide by what it says, so strongly that the devil cannot pry us loose.

**Job 27:6** My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach *me* so long as I live.

**2Ti 1:13** Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

**1Co 15:58** Therefore, my beloved

brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

**1Th 5:21** Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

**Heb 4:14** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

**Heb 10:23** Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)

**Heb 10:36-37** For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. (37) For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

- c) "Till I come" – This is referring to the return of the Lord for His church – the Rapture. We're not to give up as long as we're on this earth.

**1Th 4:13-18** But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the

archangel, and with the trump of God:  
and the dead in Christ shall rise first:  
(17) Then we which are alive *and* remain  
shall be caught up together with them in  
the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:  
and so shall we ever be with the Lord.  
(18) Wherefore comfort one another  
with these words.

Note: Although not much was mentioned concerning the church age period under consideration here (590-1517 AD), the same holds true of that period as does for today. During the great times of persecution, there were many that held fast their beliefs (that's why they died). There were many that didn't get carried away into the false doctrines of the Catholic Church, but there were also those that did. No matter what the age, the Word of God is still the same.

***C. The rewards for following the way in doing right to avoid corruption – vs. 26-29***

There are great rewards on this earth for following the right way, the Lord's way, but the benefits yet to come when this life is over are, in a large degree, beyond our comprehension. Here in these verses are two of the rewards for faithfulness in doing right. They may not seem like rewards as we know them, but if pondered you will understand them more fully.

1. Authority during the Millennium

- a) The only ones to be in the Millennium with authority in this capacity are those that are saved – "And he that overcometh"

1Jn 2:13-14 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. (14) I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

1Jn 5:4-5 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. (5) Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Rev 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

- b) "And keepeth my works unto the end." This is not speaking about keeping your salvation by good works, but is referring to those that have put their trust in the Lord to keep them saved. The word for "keepeth" is one that means to watch or to guard by keeping the eye upon. It does not indicate we can lose it. Instead, it is saying that once we have salvation, we need to keep vigilance in order to keep the devil from having an accusation against us.

1Th 3:5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

1Pe 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

- c) "To him will I give power over the nations" – this is referring to the Millennium. In verse 25 is mentioned the rapture, here the Millennium. The word for "power" is one that means authority as the ruler. One of the privileges we will have, as Christians, in the Millennium is that we will rule over this earth.

Luk 16:16-19 The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. (17) And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. (18) Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery. (19) There was a certain rich man, which

was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

- d) "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron"  
– The word for "rule" means literally to shepherd. Their rule will not be simply that of executing judgment, but also that of administering mercy and direction to those who are the sheep as contrasted to the goats (Matt. 25:31-46). He will rule with a firm hand, impartial, infallible, and unbending justice. The last phrase of the verse shows that the authority that we'll have then comes from the King of Kings, who received His power from the Father.

**Psa 2:8-9** Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession. (9) Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

**Dan 7:22** Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

**Heb 1:8-12** But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. (9) Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. (10) And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: (11) They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all

shall wax old as doth a garment; (12)  
And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up,  
and they shall be changed: but thou art  
the same, and thy years shall not fail.

- e) The phrase "as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers" is referring to the nations (and peoples) that are here on earth during the Millennium. These nations are peoples that came through the Tribulation, or were born during the Millennium. Either way, they will be broken. As a potter does with a vessel that is marred once it is dried (completed), so will be done to those that rebel against the King during the Millennium. The age of grace being over (completed), the rule during the Millennium is one of absolute justice. No rebellion will be tolerated.

[Isa 65:20](#) There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be accursed.

Note: What does all this have to do with church history? Only to show that what was true for the church at Thyatira in 96 AD, for the Dark Age Period (590-1517 AD) is still true today for us, and that is, no matter what the devil throws our way, if we're truly saved we will rule with Christ during the Millennium. The more faithful we are here determines our position of authority during that period ("overcometh," and "keepeth"). Those that died during the Dark Ages will, more than likely, have a special place in the

Kingdom Rule, as will those that remained faithful in Thyatira, and for those that are faithful today.

2. "The Morning Star" – Jesus Christ – The greatest blessing we will receive when we get to heaven will be to be in the very presence, bodily, of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who is the Morning Star.

This could be read "And I will give unto him Myself, who am the morning star." WHAT A GIFT!! Having that gift, we shall shine like Him, the Morning Star, and share His kingly glory (of which a *star* is the symbol).

**Rev 22:16** I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and the bright and morning star.*

**Num 24:17** I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

**Luk 1:78** Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

**2Pe 1:19** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

This whole outline has been to show the rewards of being faithful to the call of Christ for us to be saved, and then the faithfulness to Christ after we're saved. The question is, how faithful are you to what Christ has given you?

### **III. CORRUPTION ALLOWED WILL DESTROY – VS. 20-23**

Any type of sin, be it in a church or in an individual life, will lead to destruction and death if not confessed and forsaken. The text passage on this is found in the book of James. James 1:14-16

#### ***A. Unscriptural practices were allowed in the church – vs. 20***

Any time that an unscriptural practice is allowed in a church it will ultimately end in that church's destruction. That was true for the church in Thyatira during the Apostle John's day, it was true for the church during the church age being studied, and it is still true today. No matter what the unscriptural practice is it will end in destruction if not repented of.

1. A woman in authority - "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach"
  - a) The Lord had "a few" things against the church at Thyatira, but the only one listed was this one

- b) The church obviously had knowledge of the problem, and not only knew about it but apparently condoned it – "sufferest"

1Co 10:21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

- c) The woman is called "Jezebel," although her name was probably not that (it was common to use a name of an infamous character to describe someone else by calling them by that name in the time this was written). God called her that – keep that in mind. At any rate, the person mentioned here was fulfilling the role of the historic Jezebel in the Old Testament (1Ki 16:31; 17:4, 13; 19:1,2; 21:7-15, 23-25; 2 Ki 9:7, 30-37).
- d) "She was one of the most evil characters of the Old Testament (the wife of king Ahab of Israel), who attempted to combine the worship of Israel with the worship of the idol Baal. . . She is the epitome of subtle corruption and a symbol of immorality and idolatry."

Note: In the period during the Dark Ages the church became corrupt as it sought to combine "Christianity with pagan philosophy and heathen religious rites so that much of the ritual of the church of that period is directly traceable to comparable ceremonies in heathen religion. During this period also there began that exaltation of Mary the mother of our Lord which has tended to exalt her to the plane of a female deity through whom intercession to God should be

made, and apart from whose favor there can be no salvation (the Catholic church doctrine)." John Walvoord

- e) Notice the Bible says that she "*calleth herself a prophetess*" – God didn't call her that for that would go against His Word to call a woman to usurp authority over men in any position, especially that of teaching.

1Ti 2:9-15 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; (10) But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. (11) Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. (12) But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. (13) For Adam was first formed, then Eve. (14) And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. (15) Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

1Co 14:34-35 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. (35) And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Gen 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring

forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

**1Co 11:2-16** Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you. (3) But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God. (4) Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head. (5) But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. (6) For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. (7) For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. (8) For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. (9) Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. (10) For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels. (11) Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. (12) For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the woman; but all things of God. (13) Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? (14) Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? (15) But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given

her for a covering. (16) But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Eph 5:22-24 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. (23) For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. (24) Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

Col 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

1Pe 3:1-6 Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; (2) While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. (3) Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; (4) But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. (5) For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: (6) Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

- f) This woman was allowed to teach apparently over all the church (whether she was called the pastor or just taught in the church over the whole thing is not clear), a practice specifically forbidden in the Scripture for women to do.

**1Ti 2:12** But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

## 2. Fornication in the form of adultery

- a) The first unscriptural practice led to the second – fornication in the form of adultery – seen in the word "seduce." These people were led by a leader to commit fornication. Although everyone must answer for his own self, those that lead others astray will have to account for that as well.

**Eph 4:14** That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

**2Co 2:17** For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

**2Pe 2:18** For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

- b) It was Christians that were led astray, not lost people, as evidenced by the word "servants." Although it was Christians in

the church that were deceived, they still would reap what they sowed, or allowed sown in this case.

**Gal 6:7-8** Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (8) For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

**Job 4:8** Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

**Pro 1:31** Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

**Hos 8:7** For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

**Rom 2:6-10** Who will render to every man according to his deeds: (7) To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: (8) But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, (9) Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; (10) But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

3. Complete disobedience of a direct command of God - God said that He would lay none other burden on them than that which they had already, which was given in Acts 15:28-29. This the unrepented in the church completely disregarded.

a) There is a parallel to this phrase in Rev. 2:20 found in the church period under discussion, that being the Dark Ages when the Catholic church became such a strong, evil force in the world's religion.

"The participation in idol worship and eating of things offered to idols also foreshadows the departure from the scriptural doctrine of the finished sacrifice of Christ. In the Middle Ages, the false teaching of the continual sacrifice of Christ was advocated, transforming the observance of the elements of the Lord's Supper into another sacrifice of Christ." That is what the Catholic Church practices every time they have mass - it's called transubstantiation.

b) For us today, as with any believer of Christ of any age, God requires that we be obedient. Not simply because we're afraid of what God will do to us, but because of our love for Him.

**Joh 14:15** If ye love me, keep my commandments.

**1Jn 2:3-5** And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. (4) He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (5) But whoso keepeth his

word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

1Jn 4:19-20 We love him, because he first loved us. (20) If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

1Jn 5:2-3 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. (3) For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

***B. Unscriptural practices unrepented of will not go unpunished – vs. 21-23***

God's Word is very clear on this issue. Israel in the Old Testament is an example of this. They did not repent of their sin and God was bound by His Word to destroy them. Since God does not change, and His Word does not change, then the same is true today, of both saved and lost alike - repentance must be practiced in order for God's blessings to be seen.

1. True repentance can be had by any one, no matter what they've done – vs. 21, 22c

Jer 36:3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

**Eze 18:30-31** Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. (31) Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

**Eze 33:11** Say unto them, *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

**2Co 12:21** *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

**2Ti 2:25-26** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (26) And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

2. Those that are unrepentant, speaking of God's children, will be chastened by God, resulting, at times, in the death of those closest to us – vs. 21a, 23

***C. Unscriptural practices are known to God, for He sees all things – vs. 23b***

1. It's a truth that God wants all of His children to know about, and understand – He knows all things, both good and bad, and no one is going to get away with anything without God knowing about it – “And all the churches shall know”

**Deu 17:13** And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

**Act 5:5** And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

**Act 5:11** And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

**Act 19:17** And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

**1Ti 5:20** Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

2. He sees the inside of man, not just the outside – “That I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts”

**1Sa 16:7** But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

**1Ch 28:9** And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind:

for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

**2Ch 6:30** Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:)

**Psa 44:21** Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

**Jer 17:10** I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

**Joh 21:17** He saith unto him the third time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?** Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**

**Act 1:24** And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

**Heb 4:13** Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

3. He will reward according to works – both good and bad – “And I will give unto every one of you according to your works”

**Jer 17:10** I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

**Psa 62:12** Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

**Isa 3:10-11** Say ye to the righteous, that *it shall be well with him*: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. (11) Woe unto the wicked! *it shall be ill with him*: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

**Mat 16:27** For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

**Rom 2:5-11** But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; (6) Who will render to every man according to his deeds: (7) To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: (8) But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, (9) Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; (10) But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: (11) For there is no

respect of persons with God.

**Rom 14:12** So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

**2Co 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

**1Pe 1:17-21** And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear: **(18)** Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; **(19)** But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: **(20)** Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, **(21)** Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Conclusion: This last outline on this passage in Revelation showed an example of a church that was steeped in corruption. It didn't happen overnight, nor did it come as a surprise. It began with compromise, and ended in destruction.

The church age period had the same result. The period of 590-1517 A.D. was one of corruption. The Catholic Church propagated its heresy around the world, and grew to be a very serious foe of the "true"

church that God intended – the New Testament church. It was a period of supreme sacrifice and great persecution, yet it grew on a manifold scale.

During this period, the persecuted were called by many and varied names. Among them were Donatists, Paterines, Cathari, Paulicians, Ana Baptists, Petro-Brussians, Arnoldists, Henricians, Albigenses, and Waldenses.

Some of the false doctrines of this period that the Catholic Church put into practice was Mariolatry (the worship of Mary), Image worship, Saint Worship, Infant Communion, doctrine of Indulgences and sale of Indulgences (buying good works to store in ones account to help them get to heaven), Purgatory (intermediate state between heaven and hell, at which all must stop to be cleansed from all sins less than damning sins), Transubstantiation (turning the wine and bread to the actual blood and body of Christ), confession to a priest, and others. During this time, there was probably not one solitary unmarred doctrine of the New Testament retained in its original purity.

There was, at the close of this period, the beginnings of reformation. John Wycliffe was the first of the well-known reformers of this time (1320-1384). He is referred to as "the Morning Star of the Reformation." Then came a man by the name of John Huss (1373-1415). Following Huss was Savonarola (1452-1498). Both Huss and Savonarola were devout Catholics, yet they were burned at the stake because they opposed the false doctrines of the church. Out of Switzerland came Zwingli (1484-1531). He, too, was a Catholic, and chose to stay in the Catholic Church to try and reform it. It didn't work.

From the next great man of God to come on the scene, the mood changed. Martin Luther broke from the Catholic church, and in 1530 began what became the Lutheran church. Thus, began the next church age period to be discussed - the Reformation.