

## The Church in Thyatira

This week in our prayerful study of how to return to the orthodoxy of the church we come to the Lord's word to the church in Thyatira, which is a sign prefiguring the Roman Catholic Church which was formed as **the apostate church**. Even though we are not here to make an exposition of Revelation 2-3 or to interpret prophecies, we need to take heed to the Lord's word and apply it to ourselves individually and to the church corporately, so that we may **return to the orthodoxy of the church**.

In the beginning of each of the seven epistles, after unveiling what He is and who He is according to the situation in that church, He spoke to the messengers of the churches, and at the end He said, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit speaks to the churches. We need to aspire to be **the messengers** in the churches, those who have the Lord's fresh message and instant speaking, having an ear to hear what He speaks today. Then, as we hear the Lord's speaking, **we need to convey it to the saints** and bring the living word of God to the church of the living God.

*"I know your works and love and faith and service and your endurance and that your last works are more than the first." ~ Revelation 2:19*

We marvel and wonder at this. How is it that the corrupted Roman Catholic Church can have so many good works? We have to realize that this was spoken to a small number of messengers. Although the **majority was defeated**, there were still **a few** who were quite good. This can be proved from church history. (*Excerpt from The Collected Works of Watchman Nee (Set 1) Vol. 16: Study on Revelation, Chapter 3*)

[However], the church in Thyatira is the church in its **lowest** and **worst degradation**; it is a *continuation* of the degradation in Pergamos and it is *its consummation*. The church in Pergamos had the teaching of Balaam (teaching false doctrines for gain) and the teaching of the Nicolaitans (the clergy-laity system); **Thyatira is the consummation of the fall** of the church that began with the apostolic churches. The Roman Catholic Church continues the teachings from Pergamos and has all kinds of **heretical** and idolatrous things, with fornication and hierarchy, consummating the degradation of the church in the worst possible way.

Pergamos was the church united with the world; she was like a wife who **had a husband** – the Lord Himself – and she committed adultery with the world, thus being unfaithful and losing her chastity. Pergamos was the church committing adultery with the world, the things in the world, sin, and religion; she was unfaithful to the Lord and joined herself to another husband. Thyatira is not a case of typical adultery: she is a woman who **no longer had a husband** but rejected Him completely; she is a whore, a prostitute, a harlot, a wholesale **descent** into fornication for gain and profit – this is the Roman Catholic Church. The church in Thyatira is the apostate church, deviating completely from the fundamental truth or belief; though the Roman Catholic Church talks about the Bible, it is **an utter mixture of the divine and pagan things**.

This apostate church is full of sacrifices, as demonstrated in her unceasing mass. As a sign, the church in Thyatira prefigures the Roman Catholic Church, which was fully formed as the apostate church by

the establishing of the universal papal system in the latter part of the sixth century (Rev. 2:18). The word Thyatira in Greek means sacrifice, perfume, even unceasing sacrifice; when you enter into a Catholic church all you see is unceasing sacrifice, perfume of candles, smoke, and you can almost feel the demons lodging in such a place.

The Roman Catholic Church evolved from the previous centuries, as the church was marrying the world and accepting the teaching of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans. In the Roman Catholic Church there's a lot of teaching of wrong doctrines for gains, and there's a system of hierarchy that annuls the organic function of the believers in Christ. Through Ignatius' teaching, **bishops** were established, who were overseeing certain districts of churches, then there were archbishops, and later there's the highest among them all, in Rome, the Pope, who claims to be the successor of Peter – who, in their teaching, was the “first Pope”. In the Roman Catholic Church we can see a **mixture** of the divine and pagan things; yes, they do have the Bible, and **yes**, they speak some of the words in the Bible, **but** there are many pagan, evil, and devilish things and practices in the Roman Catholic church.

His eyes are shining and exposing, and His feet are judging; we need to allow the Lord to judge anything in us that doesn't meet His standard, and we need to let Him shine through His word to reveal to us what the church in Thyatira represents. Because the church in Pergamos didn't repent and return to the Lord – even though, as history shows, there were **some overcomers** in this church – the degradation of the church continued to the point that the church in Thyatira was fully formed as the **apostate** church.

To such a church **the Lord introduced Himself as the One who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like shining bronze** (Rev. 2:18). Nothing can hide from the Lord's eyes: His eyes are like burning fire, and He can see everything – He Himself is light, and He shines on the real situation of the Roman Catholic Church. [We should pray] *“Lord Jesus, we love You and we love Your word, the divine and unadulterated truth in the Bible. Shine on us, Lord, with Your eyes of burning fire, and judge in us anything that doesn't meet Your standard. Bring us up to the standard of the absoluteness of the truth in Your word, and cause us to return to the orthodoxy of the church so that we may be the shining and living church You desire. Amen, Lord, expose the evil and devilish nature of the Roman Catholic Church, which You hate and will judge, so that we may also hate what You hate!”*

*And to him I will give the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ~ Rev 2:28-29*

If we care for the Lord and love His recovery, we need to be enlightened about the apostate church and stay away from her and her practices. Once we know the apostate church according to what the Bible reveals, we will not appreciate anything related to her and we will desert her. Today the Lord is **recovering** the reality of the Body of Christ, the church of God, and in the church life we have nothing to do with Jezebel, the evil woman, the harlot, the great Babylon. Rather, in the church life **we practice eating Christ** as the tree of life and **the hidden manna** so that we may be supplied and enabled to express Christ in a pure, shining, genuine way as the lampstand of God. [Christ will secretly give Himself as **the morning star** to those who love Him and who watch and wait for Him so that they may have the priority to taste the freshness of His presence at His coming back after a long absence. *(Excerpt from the Ministry of the Word, The Church in Thyatira)*