

SPECIAL INTERLUDE

Revisiting Church History In Light Of The 500th Anniversary Of The Protestant Reformation IV. Thyatira: The Apostatizing Church - Overcoming Satan By Standing In God's Grace And Word (Revelation 2:18-29)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

2 Timothy 2:24-3:5 predicted enhanced Satanic oppression in our era, and in Luther's era, some of his Church hierarchy was into the "depths of Satan" (Rev. 2:24), so we can learn from his era about ministry victory over Satan!

Need: *So, we ask, "What does God have for us from Luther's era on overcoming Satan in Church ministry?!"*

- I. **In line with past messages on the Seven Churches, the Revelation 2:18-29 message to the Church of Thyatira was to the Roman Catholic Church of A. D. 800-1517 (J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, 1972, p. 153), and Revelation 2:18 reveals its need to handle pressure to apostatize into Satanism:**
 - A. Christ held that the Thyatiran Church needed to *rectify* its *undue exaltation* of *Mary* and *diminishing* of *Him*:
 1. In Rev. 2:18, Jesus called Himself "the Son of God" in *contrast* to His Rev. 1:13 "son of man" title.
 2. Christ is the "son of *man*" through *Mary* (Matt. 1:1-25) and the angel Gabriel told her *God* would *cause her* to *conceive Him* as the "Son of *God*" (Lk. 1:30-35), so *replacing* Christ's Rev. 1:13 "son of *man*" title with His "Son of God" one shows this Church had to *correct* its *undue exaltation* of *Mary* and *demeaning* of *Jesus*, identifying it for us as the *Roman Catholic Church*, Loraine Boettner, Rom. Cath., 1978, p. 146.
 - B. Christ also revealed that believers in this Church needed Him to handle demonic influences in their hierarchy:
 1. Christ's **flaming eyes** and **feet of fine brass** (Rev. 1:14b-15a; 2:18) exist in a being elsewhere in Scripture **only** at Daniel 10:6 in an angel who fought demons who influenced nations and rulers (Dan. 10:20-11:1).
 2. We learned in our last message on Pergamum's "Catholic" hierarchy that it dwelt at Satan's abode, so Roman Catholic believers needed Jesus's help to handle demonic entities that influenced their hierarchy.
- II. **Christ praised the Church's love, faith, "church ministries" (*diakonia*, Abbott-Smith, A Man. Grk. Lex. of the N. T., 1968, p. 107) and patient enduring, noting these works had increased over time, Rev. 2:19.**
- III. **However, He critiqued its toleration of the "woman Jezebel" in Revelation 2:20 NIV as we explain:**
 - A. Where the Pergamum "Catholic" hierarchy taught the "fornication" of *transubstantiation* and "eating of things offered to idols" in *ingesting the "host,"* what the "woman Jezebel" at Thyatira **also** taught (Rev. 2:20-21; 1:14), Christ added that *some* in the *hierarchy* via "Jezebel" had *since* gone *deep* into *Satan*, Rev. 2:21, 24b:
 1. O. T. Jezebel had led Ahab past the "fornication" of Jahweh-gold calf syncretism (1 Kings 12:26-30) to "adultery" -- **exchanging** the *true* God **for pagan** Baal and Ashtaroth, 1 Kings 16:29-33; 21:25; Rev. 2:22.
 2. Ashtaroth was the Canaanite mother-goddess version of the mother-goddess cult begun by Semiramis of Babylon (Z. P. E. B., v. One, p. 358; Harry A. Ironside, "Babylonian Religion," Idolphin.org).
 3. Christ added that the Rev. 2:20 "Jezebel . . . calls herself a prophetess," and *prophetis* in the Greek N. T. is used elsewhere in the N. T. **only** at Luke 2:36 of the godly prophetess Anna, Ibid., Abbott-Smith, p. 39.
 4. Applying the Matthew 7:15-17 test of a prophet, we **contrast true prophetess Anna's** Lk. 2:36-38 "**fruits**" with their **opposites** to discern the "**fruits**" of **ancient Babylon's wicked, Satan-promoting Semiramis**:
 - a. "Anna," from "Hannah" refers to *God's "grace"* (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 210; B. D. B., Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 336) but Semiramis, from "Sammur-amat," "gift of the sea," is a title Semiramis adopted in *self-help merit* to claim she was a "virgin sprung from the sea" eligible to wed emperor Nimrod and so **conceal** her **past** life in a *brothel*, Ibid., Idolphin.org, Bryce Self, "Semiramis, Queen of Babylon."
 - b. Anna wed as a virgin, but Semiramis wed as immoral, Ibid.; *parthenia*, Lk. 2:36; Ibid., U. B. S. G. N. T.
 - c. Anna's husband died naturally (Lk. 2:36-37), but Semiramis murdered her husband Nimrod, Ibid., Self.
 - d. Anna in widowhood humbly served the true God in His temple with fasting and prayer for many years (Lk. 2:37), but Semiramis as a widow started a pagan cult by deifying her illegitimate son and herself as a goddess to keep Nimrod's throne, calling herself "Queen of Heaven" until her infant son Damu, later called Tammuz, could reign on the throne. Semiramis in widowhood thus ruled Babylon for many years, Ibid.
 - e. Anna testified to all Jerusalem believers of God's redemption in Jesus (Lk. 2:38), but Semiramis taught a child would be born to a divine mother and gain deity and turn the rule of the earth over to the Serpent, Satan. This belief was kept secret among the priestly hierarchy, the start of all "mystery" religions that institute many sacraments for salvation, the sign of the cross [for Tammuz] and holy water, Ibid., Ironside.
 - f. Anna openly worshiped the true God; Semiramis secretly worshiped the ultimate false god, Satan.

- g. Anna served in God's chosen Jerusalem temple; Semiramis served in God-judged Babylon, Gen. 11:1-9.
5. So, *some* in the hierarchy went *beyond* the "fornication" of *transubstantiation* and "eating things offered to idols" of *ingesting* the *host* to *SWITCH GODS* in "adultery," *secretly extolling Satan in the Semiramis cult*, the "depths of Satan," the Semiramis-Tammuz motif being used to form a Mary-Jesus one, Rev. 2:24.
- IV. **The Church had not repented, so Christ sent it the bubonic plague in critique of Semiramis who, later called Ishtar, was the "Shining Light of Heaven" who allegedly healed, Rev. 2:21-23. (Renald E. Showers, "The Queen of Heaven," Israel My Glory, July-Aug. 2004, p. 23 cited in a-voice.org/tidbits/queen.htm)**
- V. **This judgment was on INDIVIDUALS based on their failing to heed "Sola Scriptura," Revelation 2:23b:**
- A. Jesus' claim that all the churches would know He "tried the reins and the hearts" refers to Jer. 17:10 (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., fn. to Rev. 2:23) and its *context* reveals Israel relied on pagan nations versus God; Jer. 17:1-8; Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Jer. 17:5-8. So, *each* who relied on pagan satanists like some in the hierarchy of the Church were would be cursed, but *each* who relied on God would be blessed, Jer. 17:5-8, 9.
- B. Luther and the reformers overcame here: in 1511, he "turned to the Bible" and "began to go it alone," and read in Romans 1:16-17 that salvation was by faith alone. (J. Atkinson, The Great Light, 1968, p. 18-20) So, using **Scripture alone** [*Sola Scriptura*], not Semiramis beliefs, led to belief in justification by **faith alone** [*Sola Fide*] versus Semiramis' sacraments, to salvation by **grace alone** [*Sola Gratia*] versus Semiramis' self-help merit, to **Christ as sole Mediator** [*Solus Christus*] versus a Semiramis-led elevation of Mary as mediator and to **glory to God alone** [*Soli Deo Gloria*] versus Semiramis' exaltation of Satan. (theopedia.com, "Five Solas")
- VI. **Christ then gave a call to Thyatira's believers, Rev. 2:24-25: for those who had not known the "depths of Satan," Jesus would not do what the hierarchy did akin to the Matthew 23:4 Pharisees -- put more false, legalistic, Semiramis-type sacrament rituals on them. They had only to hold to the truth to the end, what Luther did in refusing to recant his Biblical faith at the Diet of Worms in 1521, Ibid., Atkinson, p. 63-70.**
- VII. **Christ then offered rewards for victory over Satan and his forces in the angelic conflict, Rev. 2:26-29:**
- A. Overcomers would be granted rule with a rod of iron to shatter the nations much like Jesus will do in setting up His Messianic Kingdom, Rev. 2:26-27. For 100+ years after Luther's stand at Worms, many European nations were broken up with many parts becoming Protestant lands free from the Holy Roman Empire (C. S. Anderson, Augs. Hist. Atlas, p. 44-47), limiting the rule of a demon-influenced hierarchy over all Europe.
- B. Christ also promised to give overcomers "the morning star," Rev. 2:28. Semiramis was goddess/planet Venus (Ibid., *Self*), and Venus is "the Morning Star" (Ibid., Z. P. E. B., v. Two, p. 48), so the *honor* Semiramis gave herself and the Church hierarchy gave Mary, Christ gave the Reformers -- starting a new "day," i. e., a new *era* of religious liberty especially in America that Columbus discovered just 25 years before Luther nailed up his 95 theses 500 years ago this next Tuesday! (Wm. W. Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, 1973, p. 8)
- VIII. **Luther's MINISTRY was greatly blessed in ensuing generations of Church History, so we view Scripture on gaining such blessing over Satanic oppression in MINISTRY like Luther did (as follows):**
- A. 1 John 2:14b claims we [like Luther] overcome Satan by being "strong" and having God's Word abide in us.
- B. Being "strong" in *ministry* occurs by relying on God's grace according to 2 Timothy 2:1, what Paul described in the context at 2 Timothy 1:1-18 to mean as follows: (1) **relying** on God's **calling** of us to minister (2) and on His **spiritual gifting** of us to serve Him (v. 1-6), (3) by **relying** on His **Holy Spirit** (v. 7) and (4) **spiritual power** to minister (v. 8), by (5) **trusting God's eternal purpose for us in ministry** to serve Him (v. 9), (6) by **declaring His truth** in ministry (v. 10-11) (7) while utilizing **His Biblical ways and means** to minister (v. 13) and (8) by **relying on His Holy Spirit to stay doctrinally sound** in ministry (v. 14).
- C. Being thus "strong" in the **grace** that is in **Christ Jesus**, we must then **saturate** our **minds** and **hearts** with **Scripture** and **apply** that Word of God for victory over Satan in serving the Lord.

Lesson: *Christ called believers in the apostatizing Church to told to true beliefs of the Bible's God versus the secret, pagan, Satanic theology held by the Church's demon-influenced hierarchy, and that for God's blessing.*

Application: *(1) May we trust alone in Christ alone to be saved, John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9. (2) To be victorious over Satan in ministry, may we heed Christ's call to heed His Word by being "strong" in the grace of God (VIII, B above) and thoroughly involved with Scripture (VIII, C above) as was Martin Luther 500 years ago!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

That we *today* can *honor* Luther's stand *500 years ago* testifies to *God's blessing* of that *stand* by *still* giving *us religious liberty!* May we like Luther overcome Satan by being "strong" in God's grace and abiding in His Word!