

SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 10

THYATIRA-SACRIFICE OF PENITENCE STUDY GUIDE

THE CORRUPT CHURCH

Revelation 2:18-21

The “Son of God” is described in the opening verse with the very same characteristics as the Son of man in chapter 1, thus confirming the identity of Jesus Christ as both the Son of man and the Son of God (compare Revelation 1:12-18 with Revelation 2:18).

The fourth church is now represented as Thyatira, meaning “sacrifice of penitence”. It represents the period from AD 538 to AD 1517 during which millions sacrificed their lives for their faith.

This period of time is more commonly known as the “Dark Ages, or Middle Ages.” It was a time of spiritual darkness. This is largely because the Word of God, the Bible, was shut away from the general population. Only the church clergy of that time was allowed to have access to it. Scripture was translated into Latin, a language that common people could not understand, and copies were chained to the walls of monasteries and churches to prevent unauthorized reading. Severe penalties befell anyone attempting to access its pages. As a result, the priesthood devised unbiblical doctrines, which were filling the church, and no one could challenge them.

In Revelation 2:19, this church is described as having, “works, love, service,” and patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.” This identifies the church of the Dark Ages that taught the people to rely heavily on their works for salvation.

In verse 20, we have a reference to the Old Testament personality of Jezebel, who was a false prophet to a false god. She led many in Israel away from the true Creator God of their fathers. She also led her husband, the king, into idolatry. She killed the true prophets of God, and set up a false priesthood whom she ruled over and directed as their leader. Here is a picture of what happens when the church and state are mingled.

Jezebel is a type of what was happening in the Christian church during this time period from 538 to 1517. False ideas contrary to the teachings of the Bible were making headway.

The church was falling into apostasy which began in the previous church age of compromise. During this time period, only a few remained faithful to God, while many were swept away by false doctrines. The Lord promises a severe punishment unless they repent!

God pleads with His professed believers to “hold fast” to the truth. To those who do hold fast, He makes a precious promise: “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations” Revelation 2:26. Here Christ points to a time when the true believers will find power from God, and rise above the power of evil that had taken the church. That time was soon to come, as they were promised the “morning star,” a phrase that

points to Christ and was attributed to John Wycliffe who was to lift up Christ and His word and become the morning star of the reformation.



Only the church clergy of that time was allowed to have access...

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 2:18-29, 17:1-6 CORRUPT CHURCH

Revelation 12:1 PURE CHURCH

SYMBOLS

WOMAN - Church

TIME TO REPENT - 1260 year time prophecy

Symbols identified

Woman = Church

Often the literal realities in the Old Testament foreshadowed spiritual realities in the New Testament. For example the literal lambs that were sacrificed represented the spiritual reality of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God (John 1:29). The literal candlesticks in the Sanctuary represented the spiritual light that is to shine in the lives of believers (Matthew 5:14-16). In this same way the literal woman Jezebel represents the spiritual organized church identified as Thyatira. So a woman represents a church, a corrupt woman an apostate church (Revelation 17:1-6) and a pure woman, God's true church (Jeremiah 6:2; Ephesians 5:25-32; Revelation 12:1).

Time to Repent = 1260-year time prophecy

The time period of this church from AD 538-1517 takes up most of a 1260-year time prophecy that began in 538 and extended to 1798. Just like Ahab and Jezebel were given opportunity to repent, so God's apostate church was given opportunity to repent (1 Kings 21). This 1260 time prophecy is outlined in Revelation 11, 12 and 13 and will be discussed in more detail in a later study when we cover this same ground under the seven trumpets and the seven vials. ★

Personal Application

Is it your desire to "hold fast" until Jesus returns? _____

