

Church History: “Doctrinal Compromise” 590-1215

Revelation 2:18-29

“Thyatira, a small thriving town, located about 40 miles southeast of Pergamum. . .was famous for the manufacture of purple dye. . .All was not well in Thyatira, and to this little church is addressed one of the most severe of the seven epistles. “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” John F. Wolvaard p.72

How does Jesus reveal Himself to the church at Thyatira? v.18

What does He know? v.19

What do they tolerate? vv.20,21

“Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, the king of Israel, and she was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. She was one of the most evil characters of the Old Testament, who attempted to combine the worship of Israel with the worship of the idol Baal. She did what she could to stamp out all true worship of the Lord. . .had killed practically all the prophets of the Lord and did what she could to kill the Prophet Elijah. She is the epitome of subtle corruption and a symbol of immorality and idolatry. The Jezebel in Thyatira had a similar influence upon the church and broke down all boundaries of moral separation from the wicked world.” (1 Kings 16-22) “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” John F. Wolvaard pp.73,74

“Jezebel was not satisfied with coexistence: she insisted that Baal worship replace any worship of Jehovah; she also imported hundreds of prophets of Baal to establish worship centers for this pagan deity. . .went about imposing the entire system on Israel, aggressively seeking to blot out the worship of Jehovah.” “The Teacher’s Commentary” Lawrence O Richards p. 260

What will He do? Why? pp.22,23

What are the faithful in Thyatira to do? vv.24,25

What are the overcomers promised? vv.26-28

“The message to Thyatira seems to foreshadow that period of church history known as the Middle Ages. . .in that period 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

Like the church in Thyatira, however, many noble qualities can be found in the church in the Middle Ages. Individuals, in spite of the ecclesiastical system of which they were a part, were often characterized by a true love for God and selfless service and faith. Of such God is the rewarder, and due recognition is made of their faithfulness without glossing over the evil that is inherent in the system as a whole.”

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ” John F. Wolvaard p.75

“For Western Europe, the first part of the Middle Ages, until about 1000, can aptly be called the Dark Ages. In 476 the last Western Emperor was deposed by a barbarian Gothic king and the Western Empire had effectively ceased to exist. This was a time of turmoil and anarchy, with the near collapse of civilization. The church provided what little learning there was, especially through the monasteries, which were often oases of stability. Theology during this period was largely confined to the monasteries and is therefore called monastic theology. The goal was not the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, but edification and worship.

“Christian Thought” Tony Lane p.74

“In the west of Europe, monasticism originated in the work of a monk named Benedict who, having lived for a time in a cave as a hermit, established a monastery near Naples in the year 529. Its members were called Benedictines. The three essential requirements or vows for these monks, as prescribed by Abbot Benedict, were poverty, chastity, and obedience. By obedience was meant strict adherence to the laws of the Church and the rules of the monastic Order. The Benedictine Order became immensely popular and widespread.” “Sketches of Church History” S.M. Houghton p.28

“While the individual monk took the vow of poverty, the monasteries often grew immensely rich through gifts, especially land. Their discipline frequently became lax. Their original rigor often declined. The history of the Middle Ages shows constant efforts toward their reform and the foundation of new houses designed to eliminate the corruption of the older ones. The Benedictine conception of the Christian life was essentially unnatural. To enter a monastery was to separate from the world, to abandon the ordinary relationships of social life, to shun marriage. Supporting the whole endeavor was an erroneous view of man: it created a fundamental flaw in monasticism.”

“Church History” Bruce L. Shelley pp131,132