

The Revelation 2b:

Reading #428 The rise of the religious antichrist

We now come to a sad time in the public history of the church. The Son of God had called on His people to go forth to all the world (sometimes called the “wilderness”, Revelation 12:6), but not all had responded. He had said, “You shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you [at Pentecost]: and you shall be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth”. Acts 1:8. Those who did go were protected (while they were obedient) and used by Him in various parts of the world, from Britain to the Philippines, including China and Japan, while those who stayed behind became subject to Satan’s antichrist. (I believe there were Sabbath-keepers with Ghengis Khan!) Try this site: <http://4dw.net/nonconformer/Centuries/centuries.html#>.

We read now of the face that the church in Europe showed to the world during the 1260 years that Gabriel had explained to Daniel. “And the ten horns out of this kingdom [Pagan Rome] are ten kings that shall arise [the nations of early Europe]: and another [the first antichrist] shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue [uproot] three kings [leaving only seven from that time on]. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and THEY SHALL BE GIVEN INTO HIS HAND until a time and times and the dividing of time”. Daniel 7:24-25.

What happened was that the “clergy” now took over the running of the church and Papal Rome became the power centre of it. The “Nicolaitanes” were in full control.

*******(Begin Quote)**

Revelation 2:

18 And to the angel of the church in THYATIRA [538-1517AD] write;

[The intro]

These things says the Son of God, who has His eyes like to a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass [He came fired with enthusiasm, and showing His common humanity with them];

[The commendation]

19 I know your works, and charity [Godly love], and service, and faith, and your patience, and your works; and the last to be more than the first.

*******(End Quote)**

He spoke thus because there were great struggles against the antichrist head of the beast (the one in place of Christianity, the fifth head of the beast, Revelation 17:10) during the whole 1,260 years, requiring great faith and belief in what little they had of the word of God, because the Bible was being suppressed. Not until the times of Martin Luther (about 1517) did the everlasting gospel get free rein in Europe through the printing of books.

But the last part of the persecutions (1517 – 1798) brought forth even greater faith amongst the loyal followers of God because they then had to fight on two fronts, against the Roman Catholic church and the churches of the Reformers. (There were many of God's true people persecuted by the Protestant groups, especially in the new world of the Americas where the Protestants had fled to escape the Roman persecutions in England and Europe.)

Lateral thought:

God says of the Reformers that they had a name among men that they were good followers of the LORD, but He says of them that they were practically dead from His point of view in that they kept many of their “mother church's” ideas and doctrines. [See Note 1, Revelation 3:1-2](#). If we don't want to be called by God “the walking dead”, we should look carefully at what we accept as truth.

Christ now speaks of their condition:

***** (Begin Quote)

Revelation 2:

[The condemnation]

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against you, because you suffer that woman Jezebel, which calls herself a prophetess [a speaker for God], to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed [one she won't like], and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searches the reins and hearts [the emotions and purposes of the heart]: and I will give to every one of you according to your works. [“As you sew . . .”]

***** (End Quote)

Who was Jezebel? And why does God use her name to identify the antichrist of the Middle Ages?

It is written:

*******(Begin Quote)**

1 Kings 16:

³⁰ And Ahab the son of [king] Omri [of Israel] did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. ³¹ And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal [the god of force], and worshipped him.

[Jeroboam had turned against his benefactor, Solomon, and was one of the prime movers in the separation of Israel and Judah into the northern and southern kingdoms. 1 Kings 11:26-35.]

³² And he [Ahab] reared up an altar for Baal in the house [temple] of Baal, which he had built in Samaria [his capital]. ³³ And Ahab made a grove [for nature worship]; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him . . .

1 Kings 19:

¹ And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets [of Baal] with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time" [a death decree].

*******(End Quote)**

"There was none like to Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up". 1 Kings 21:25.

Ahab was obviously very weak in moral power to draw such a comment from the Spirit. His union by marriage with an idolatrous woman of decided character and positive temperament resulted disastrously both to himself and to the nation. Unprincipled, and with no high standard of rightdoing, his character was easily moulded by the determined spirit of Jezebel. Under the blighting influence of Ahab's rule, Israel (the ten tribes of the north) wandered even further from the living God and corrupted their ways even more before Him. The dark shadow of apostasy covered the whole land. Images of Baalim (gods of force and corruption) and Ashtoreth (Baal's female companion) were everywhere to be seen. Idolatrous temples and consecrated groves in nature, in which were worshiped the works of men's hands, were multiplied. The air was polluted with the smoke of the sacrifices offered to false gods. Hill and valley resounded with the drunken cries of a

heathen priesthood who sacrificed to the sun, moon, and stars. Yet many still thought they were followers of the living God!

We should note that where God mentions a spiritual “Jezebel” (a Pagan church) there will also be a spiritual “Ahab” (a governmental power) and an “Elijah” (a special worker for God).

How could this be? Let’s look at the European branch of the church during the great tribulation.

The religious antichrist considers itself Christian and proclaimed itself so. “She says in her heart, ‘I sit a queen, and am no widow [God is my husband], and shall see no sorrow [I am protected by Him].’” Revelation 18:7. However, we needn’t have any problem with that because we know differently now since the Reformation times, but to many of the people during her reign it seemed a genuine claim. (Sadly, it still does to many who don’t read their Bible for themselves.) But we should know that the Roman Catholic system (the Spirit calls it “Babylon” meaning “confusion”) is not a part of the Christian church, nor ever has been – it is wholly of the devil. [See note 2.](#)

Therefore the conditions that prevailed in Ahab’s reign were also to be seen in the times of the church in the Thyatiran condition during the (approx) one thousand years from 538 – 1517, which are known to historians as the Dark Ages – and even after that time. From 538AD to 1798 the clergy of professed “Christendom” (God’s “Jezebel”) took over in Europe and instituted terrible persecutions against those who had “protested” long before the reformation of 1517. Persecution to death through a union with the governments of the nations became the norm, just as Jezebel had threatened to Elijah.

The Son of God had to bear long with this state of affairs, over a thousand years and therefore many generations, possibly 30 or more, for many “children” of that system died before they should have, as a result of it’s social conditions, (During the thirteenth century nearly half the population of Europe died of the Black Plague, and for many other times the average length of life was about forty! None of this was caused by the Son of God for it was simply the result of their own actions, even though He takes the blame for it, as usual.)

No amount of prayers could help, for they were all being answered by he who “had the power of death” and who chose to use it, because the majority were “worshipping” him. Hebrews 2:14.

ones around them were actually doing. (As mentioned before, there are still those who do not see this, and who still accept Rome and her daughters as genuine Christian systems. If they wish to partake of the truth for today they will need to change that attitude.)

*******(Begin Quote)**

Revelation 2:

[The promise]

²⁶ And he that overcomes [himself], and keeps My works [of love] to the end, to him will I give power over the nations: ²⁷ and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father.

²⁸ And I will give him the Morning Star [Myself, the Sun of righteousness, Malachi 4:2]. ²⁹ He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. [As things get worse He adds greater gifts.]

*******(End Quote)**

In keeping with His love and mercy, the Son of God promised that those who lived through those times of corrupt power and violence would be able to reign with Him and exercise true power, the “rod of iron”, which is love administered in righteousness. They shall be like Him, of whom it is said, “With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked”. Isaiah 11:4.

How does this work? In the words of a great hymn, “Let it begin with me”.

From my library:

*******(Begin Quote)**

We cannot afford to neglect one ray of light God has given. To be sluggish in our practice of those things which require diligence is to commit sin. The human agent is to cooperate with God, and keep under those passions which should be in subjection. To do this he must be unwearied in his prayers to God, ever obtaining grace to control his spirit, temper, and actions. Through the imparted grace of Christ, he may be enabled to overcome. To be an overcomer means more than many suppose it means.

The Spirit of God will answer the cry of every penitent heart; for repentance is the gift of God, and an evidence that Christ is drawing the soul to Himself. We can no more repent of sin without Christ, than we can be pardoned without Christ, and yet it is a humiliation to man with his human passion and

pride to go to Jesus straightway, believing and trusting Him for everything which he needs. . . .

Let no man present the idea that man has little or nothing to do in the great work of overcoming [called sanctification]; for God does nothing for man without his cooperation.

Neither say that after you have done all you can on your part, Jesus will help you. Christ has said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

From first to last man is to be a laborer together with God. Unless the Holy Spirit works upon the human heart, at every step we shall stumble and fall. Man's efforts alone are nothing but worthlessness; but cooperation with Christ means a victory. Of ourselves we have no power to repent of sin. Unless we accept divine aid we cannot take the first step toward the Saviour. He says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 21:6) in the salvation [and redemption] of every soul.

But though Christ is everything, we are to inspire every man to unwearied diligence. We are to strive, wrestle, agonize, watch, pray, lest we shall be overcome by the wily foe. For the power and grace with which we can do this comes from God, and all the while we are to trust in Him, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.

Never leave the impression on the mind that there is little or nothing to do on the part of man; but rather teach man to cooperate with God, that he may be successful in overcoming.

Let no one say that your works have nothing to do with your rank and position before God. In the judgment the sentence pronounced is according to what has been done or to what has been left undone (Matthew 25:34-40).

***** (End Quote)

Bye for now, Ron

Some of the comments in these readings are adapted from books in my library. No recognition is given because they are not intended as authorities, but are used because they express my understanding clearly. All the ideas expressed in these readings, right or wrong, are my own.

Some of these readings are available at http://www.geocities.com/weprotest.geo/BibleReadings/books_index.html

Note 1:

***** (Begin Quote)

Revelation 3:

¹ And to the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things says He that has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know your works, that you have a name that you live, and are dead. ² Be watchful, and strengthen the

