

The Depths of Satan

From Rev 2:18-25

Before the cross section of the whole church could be introduced to the horrors of the first century day of reckoning that came from the **Roman** persecution, they first had to look seriously at their respective conditions in preparation. Because of the discrimination that **Rome** led against all **Christians** living within her borders, each congregation required an introspection, to look within to sort out any and all discrepancies that would separate them from being recognized by the distinctive word of truth. The seven churches of **Asia** represented the whole church in the first century. This message was a "heads up" considering their faithfulness and strength in light of the inevitable tribulation about to be inflicted on them by the **Roman Empire**. But were they ready? Only the ones who overcame (*even to the point of death if necessary*) would be saved. Once again...

Rom 15:4 ...whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for **our learning**, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

- Hopefully this lesson will encourage us to continue to press on and grow in the faith, both spiritually and, as we prosper thus, in number. Hopefully, none among us will ever have to experience the depths to which **Satan** will go in order to weaken, or destroy, our resolve to remain strong in the **Lord**. Some who have left the faith have given in to his deceptions. And it isn't difficult to do. Many of us have experienced the subtilty of this monstrous creature by succumbing to the prideful spirit that dwells, to some extent, within us all. We don't have to experience sin firsthand to understand its destructive nature. If we **think** we do, that's only **Satan** trying to convince us that in order to understand sin we need to be immersed in it. Just as we don't know "the things which **God** hath prepared for them that love **Him**" (*1 Cor 2:9*), we certainly can't comprehend "the depths of Satan".

Rev 2:18 And unto the angel (*Gk.32- to bring tidings; a messenger*) of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass;

- Was **John** to write to angels in **Heaven** to deliver the **Revelation** to brethren below? Weren't they already in the presence of **God** "the number of them" being "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (*Rev 5:11*)? Prisons at that time and in those places were run differently than how we understand them to be run today. People then would be committing crimes left and right in order to be incarcerated if **their** standards were what they are today; "three hots and a cot" and with all the other amenities that come with our more modern prison systems today. But if you were imprisoned then without an outside contact, you were only sustained by whatever that prison system supplied; bread and water if you were lucky. Anything other than that, if you wished to have a more comfortable stay, came from friends and/or family from the outside. Angels here then represent messengers (*perhaps elders*) of the churches who would have seen to **John's** needs. An example of this can be found in **Paul's** writings.

2Ti 4:9 Do thy diligence (*Gk.4704- use speed*) to come shortly (*Gk.5030- briefly*) unto me:
10 For **Demas** hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto **Thessalonica**; **Crescens** to **Galatia**, **Titus** unto **Dalmatia**. **11** Only **Luke** is with me. Take **Mark**, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. **12** And **Tychicus** have I sent to **Ephesus**. **13** **The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee**, and the books, *but* especially the parchments.

Paul requested his messengers to bring the outer mantle, or coat, most likely because of the cold damp conditions he was under in his prison cell. It was evident he was in need of the warmth in his asking them to get it to him as soon as possible. In John's case, those messengers in turn were given communications from Christ which revealed His knowledge of their state of readiness.

- Eyes like unto a flame of fire (v. 18)- Governments have the ability to see into our lives through the recent advancement in satellite technology. But they cannot see into the inner conscience like our Lord can. Even if they are tapping our cell phones. Man only sees the outer, physical being. Christ's eyes can penetrate our very thoughts and intentions and knows our future long before it takes place.

Gen 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

Heb 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest (*Gk.852-non apparent:)* in His sight: but all things *are* naked and opened (*Gk.5136- exposed*) unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.

- Jesus knew how busy the church at Thyatira was when it came to acts of worship and benevolence. And to the naked eye it all seemed okay on the outside. But something wasn't right. They weren't considering something being taught that might have had a negative impact on them, had they not been warned by Christ. This still applies to the church today. Are we not aware of some subtle teaching, not just within the local congregation, but within the brotherhood in general or within our own personal studies? And how is it that we today can be warned by Christ to understand when false teachings arise and in turn will know how to handle them? Easy!

Mat 11:29 Take My yoke (*Gk.2218- a coupling, that is [figuratively] servitude*) upon you, and learn (*Gk.3129- understand*) of Me;...

Being yoked alongside of Christ will help in "rightly dividing the word or truth". (*2 Tim 2:15*) Everything we do, every decision we make should be with the attitude that we are yoked to Him and He is right there beside us. We have to possess the attitude of "none of self and all of Thee" if we are honest concerning keeping false doctrines from covertly making their way into leading us in the opposite direction of truth. His word alone should be our guiding force, even as it was to the church of the first century. They hungered for it, even though it only came to them orally or in letters until it was canonized. Sadly though today, with the Bible more readily available than it ever was (*as Dick said a while back*) "convenience breeds indifference". Why **would** we be so concerned about losing something we have so much of? Has the abundance of this knowledge readily available caused us to take for granted the message and the sacrifice contained therein?

Rev 2:19 I know thy **works**, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy **works**; and the last *to be* more than the first.

- Unlike the church at Ephesus at that time, the zeal of the congregation at Thyatira grew leaps and bounds since the church was first established there, both horizontally and vertically (*i.e., their relationship with God and neighbor*). To compare their works from their beginning, to

where they were when this warning was delivered, they had noticeably grown. On all accounts. But Christ saw something that they themselves, as busy as they were, didn't.

Rev 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest (*Gk.1439-permit*) that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce (*Gk.4105-[cause to] roam [from safety, truth, or virtue]*) My servants to commit fornication (*Gk.4203-practice idolatry*), and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

- In the Old Testament, Jezebel was the idolatrous wife of king Ahab (*1 Kings 16:29-33*). She influenced her husband to introduce idolatry in Israel. Evidently there was a woman at Thyatira who claimed to be a prophetess (*Jesus likens her to Jezebel*) who here is introducing practices similar to Balaam and the Nicolaitans (*2:6,14-15*). Mentioning her as Jezebel wasn't to be understood that she was the original Jezebel that had returned from the dead. The woman the church at Thyatira was being influenced by was only doing such in the same manner, or spirit, of the original Jezebel. Like John the immerser was not Elijah returned from the dead but came in the "spirit and power of Elias".

Luk 1:17 And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Mat 11:13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. **14** And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

"Well I thought meats offered to idols at that time were okay to be eaten by Christians. I thought they knew that 'an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but One' (*1 Cor 8:4*)". But not all were mature enough in the faith at that time either.

1Co 8:11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

This "Jezebel" that Jesus was warning the church about had ulterior motives in her seducing them to eat such meat. If she could just convince them to eat she might be able to convince the weaker members there that idol worship was acceptable. And because we know that "God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God" (*Ex 34:14*) we also know that worshipping an idol (*or putting anything else before Christ*) is akin to committing adultery since we, as the church, are considered Christ's bride (*Eph 5:23*).

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, **even as Christ** is the head of the church: and **He** is the **Saviour** of the body.

So...

1Co 10:27 If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. **28** But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols (*meat sold in support of the temples of the idols and knowingly eating such in the presence of the ignorant was to recognize an idol as a god*), eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: **29** Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience?

Rev 2:21 And I gave her space to repent *of her fornication; and she repented not. **22** Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. *(It's never too late until it's too late!)*

**2Pe 3:15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation;*

- As Jezebel of old did not repent, those of the church at Thyatira, who followed this false prophetess, were given the same opportunity because they may have been sincere in their understanding. People can be sincere about any teaching, but can also be sincerely wrong.

Eze 18:23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: *and* not that he should return from his ways, and live?

- Her influence was so loathsome it was akin to that of a harlot with many patrons in her couch. Those who would participate with her in her idolatrous acts would suffer her fate unless they would deny her and flee from her type of influence. It was that type of seduction toward the lie that brought about the persecution in the first place. Persecution weeds out the spiritually weak and at the same time strengthens the stronger saints.

Heb 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: **6** For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. **7** If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? *This is what forced the church to grow when persecuted by Saul.*

Act 8:3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison. **4** Therefore they that were scattered abroad **went everywhere preaching the word.**

Rev 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Who searcheth the reins (*Gk.3510- the inmost mind*) and hearts (*Gk.2588- thoughts or feelings*): and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

- Repentance and nothing short of it, would save the adherents (*her children*) of the practice. Anything less than full repentance would incur separation from God (**2:6; 20:6**). Judgment on this matter would benefit the whole church. What child will listen to a parent he knows isn't serious about discipline? It is because of God's love for mankind, and especially the bride of His dear Son, that He continually tries to remind us through suffering, in order to convince us to return to Him or just to keep us humble. Especially when doing such reminds the church of our need for His constant, consistent care.

Rev 2:24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the **depths** (*Gk.899- profundity, that is, extent; [figuratively] mystery*) **of Satan**, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

- Those at Thyatira who didn't condone Jezebel's teaching didn't know the extent of Satan's wickedness, his profound mastery of the lie because he is "the father of it" (*Jn 8:44*), he is the original liar (*Gen 3:1*). (*We don't need to experience sin to know it's evil.*) "Jezebel" evidently taught that Christians should experience all aspects of pagan society, either to know what evil was or, to bring Christian teaching to bear on it. Either way, it was playing with fire. Are we to hang out in bars and mingle with the patrons in order to spread the gospel in such places

without fear of being influenced by practices committed there? Or in a brothel for that matter? Or even in denominational assemblies? The church's only responsibility (*burden*) at that time was to "remedy" Jezebel. Such is our duty today when we discover such persons or doctrines that come our way. We need to be aware of the "Jezebels" among us by a consistent comprehension of false doctrine through daily Bible study.

Rev 2:25 But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come.

- Christ was soon to visit judgment on Rome and those who took part in her fornication.

Rev 18:4 And I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her (*don't be influenced by Rome's pagan practices*), My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

- Like O.T. Israel among the heathen nations the steadfastness of the church was necessary in light of that coming tribulation. They were being warned so they wouldn't be caught off guard.

1Pe 4:16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. **17** For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

- The church is first to have her house cleaned. God will deal with the rest of the world afterward. Little do most people know, who haven't obeyed the gospel, that they have been seduced by Satan's tactics in one form or another. And they are all lies.

7 examples of just a few of Satan's subtleties:

- 1.) "Satan isn't a real person." This has to be the most effective tool the devil has. Convincing people that he doesn't exist, the immoral floodgates have opened. If he doesn't exist, in the mindset of most, nothing would be considered sin.

2Co 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent **beguiled Eve through his subtilty**, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

- 2.) "Good deeds will earn you a home in Heaven." Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg was recently interviewed (*Thur., Apr 17, 2014*). The article read: "Citing his work on gun safety, obesity and curbing smoking, he told the paper -with a smile: 'If there is a God, when I get to heaven I'm not stopping to be interviewed. I am heading straight in. I have earned my place in heaven. It's not even close.'"

Isa 64:6 But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and **all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

- 3.) "The devil is red with horns, a pitchfork and a spiked tail." Another lie. He can be the sincere little old lady who lives next door that attends her church every time the doors are open. He can be her preacher who sincerely teaches and preaches love and peace from his Bible but in reality he's speaking "lies in hypocrisy". They may "appear" good on the outside and dress "in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (*Mat 7:15*)

1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly (*Gk.4490- distinctly [clearly]*), that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, **giving heed** to seducing spirits, and **doctrines of devils**; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their **conscience seared** with a hot iron (*Gk.2743-rendered un-sensitive*); 3 **Forbidding to marry**, and *commanding* to **abstain from meats**, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

2Co 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

4.) “God isn’t concerned with your sin as long as you aren’t a murder, drug dealer or child molester.” But there are no differing levels when it comes to sin in God’s sight.

Gal 5:19 Now the **works of the flesh** are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, **hatred**, variance, emulations, **wrath, strife**, seditions, heresies, 21 **Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like**: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God**.

- Notice how murder is on the same level as hate and envy. Sin is sin no matter how we may want to categorize it in terms of one being more punishable than another.

Isa 59:2 But your iniquities (*not some but all*) have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *His* face from you, that He will not hear.

5.) “Attend the church of your choice.” But Jesus died for only one church, a.k.a., His bride. And Jesus **does not** practice polygamy.

Mat 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?** 14 And they said, Some *say that Thou art John the Immerser*: some, *Elias*; and others, *Jeremiah*, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, **But Whom say ye that I am?** 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.** 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Who is in Heaven.** 18 **And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church(not churches); and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (singular).**

The Corinthian church had a problem with denominating into different factions so it was up to Paul to then chastised them for it.

1Co 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak **the same thing**, and *that* there be **no divisions** among you; but *that* ye be **perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment**. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house of Chloe*, that there are **contentions** among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 **Is Christ divided?** was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Even Martin Luther pleaded with his followers to not name their sect of the reformation movement after him. The church that Jesus gave His precious blood for is **the**, one and only, church of Christ, in name, in doctrine, in practice and in truth.

- 6.) “You don’t have to go to church to be a **Christian**.” First, the church is not a building that you “go to”. It is a congregation of the “called out” (*Gk.1577*). In the first century the church met in homes and synagogues but even if there wasn’t a physical structure to meet in she could still meet whenever and wherever the saints came together. Sadly, in the average mindset “it’s every man for himself”. But without guidance, the spiritual along with the moral law to make it complete, there can be no order and without order there’s chaos.

Heb 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: **25** Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, **as ye see the day approaching**. (*We are to look forward to being together for worship*.) **26** For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, (*Nothing but the blood of Jesus, sacrificed willingly by Him, came save us*.) **27** But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

- 7.) “You don’t have to be baptized to be saved. That’s only an outward sign of an inward grace.” By the way, you won’t find that idea in the **Bible**. Some even go so far as to misinterpret passages out of context to make their false claim. But seriously, why would anyone want to risk their eternal soul to **Hell** because of pride in not wanting to understand the truth.

Mar 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

“Oh but **Mk. 16:16** isn’t in all the original manuscripts!” Okay, but do you want to rest your hopes on one passage alone? Do you want to continue taking passages out of context to prove your unsubstantiated point? Please, let go of your pride for once and listen to what the inspired, **God** breathed words of the **Bible** have to say about this subject. Your eternal soul can be lost if it rests on your pride which is influenced by “**the depths of Satan**”!

1Pe 3:18 For **Christ** also hath once suffered for sins, the **Just** for the unjust, that **He** might bring us to **God**, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the **Spirit**: **19** By which also **He** went and preached unto the spirits in prison; **20** Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of **God** waited in the days of **Noah**, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. **21** The like figure whereunto *even* **baptism doth also now save us** (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward **God**;) by the resurrection of **Jesus Christ**: **22** Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of **God**; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto **Him**.

- How can it be stated any more clearer than that? We can’t stand before **God** on judgment day, in all good conscience, without having had our sins washed away through obedience to **Biblical baptism**. **Jesus** died a cruel death, was buried in a borrowed tomb and resurrected three days later to “destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (**Heb 2:14**) Please, for your eternal souls sake, do not give in to “**the depths of Satan**” but render yourself to the love of **God** Who wants you to be saved.

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