

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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[Unless in brackets, all of the message is by Bertrand L. Comparet.] You'll remember that last month I started on the Book of Revelation, a big subject and a tough one. We are not going to be able to finish it this month or for several months to come, because I want to do it right. We noted that the Book of Revelation starts out with messages to seven "churches", each representing a city in Asia, and that it has been the uniform understanding among Christian scholars that these messages were not directed, in fact, to those "churches" in those cities, because we have no record of the peculiar things mentioned as conditions in each one of them. We have no record mentioned in the Book of Revelation that it was so in that city any more than any other, and the uniform understanding of scholars has been that each of the cities named was representative of a stage in the total history of the Christian "Church" from the time of Yahshua the Christ to His eventual return. The first of these "churches" mentioned was the "Church" at Ephesus, where the message was that they were praised for their loyalty to Yahshua the Messiah's teachings. This is a fact that when false teachers got among them, they saw they were false and expelled them. [See note #2 at end of lesson #1.]

They were criticized, however, because He said, "thou hast left thy first love." Well this represents the early Christian "Church" during the 1st century of the Christian Era from A.D. 30; the death and resurrection of Yahshua the Christ, to the end of that century. Now, as you have noted, all that was said about the second coming of Christ was in such form that – you had to understand that it was not to be an immediate thing, and many of them misunderstood it, – they thought, "well, this means that in a matter of a year or two He'll be coming back." Time passed and He didn't return, and there was the fall of Jerusalem and all that, and things seemed to be going from bad to worse, so a lot of them became, oh, perhaps skeptical is the word. They had lost their first enthusiasm. The second message was to the "Church" at Smyrna. There was no criticism whatsoever of that "church." They were praised and encouraged to stand fast through terrible persecution that they would face. This covers the period of the pagan persecution of the Christian "Church", beginning with 64 A.D. and extending to 313 A.D. when the emperor Constantine issued an edict tolerating the Christian "Church", ending all persecution of it. You'll notice that these dates are not altogether mutually exclusive. There are, in a number of instances, overlaps. One phase was gradually closing out during the same years that the following phase was gradually getting under way.

The third of these "churches" mentioned was the "Church" at Pergamos, and He praised them: "thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith", even though dwelling where Satan's throne is. The things that were said about the city of Pergamos as being the place where Satan's throne is were in the past even as John wrote this. That authority had all been transferred to Rome, because the king of the city of Pergamos, having no heir, by his will, left his kingdom to the people of Rome (which was still a republic at that time), and left with it his title of Pontifex Maximus, the supreme pontiff, the high priest of the pagan Babylonian mystery

religion. So this actually operated in Rome rather than Pergamos. The “church” was criticized, because “thou hast there those that hold the doctrine of Balaam.” Balaam you’ll remember, being asked to curse the people of Israel when they were on the march, said he couldn’t do so because Yahweh had only blessed them; but he did tell the pagan king Balak, “Now if you want to get rid of these people, the only way to do it is to lead them into idolatry, so when they abandon their Mighty One, Yahweh will abandon them.” And it was done, with the result that I think some 30,000 of the Israelites perished in a plague that Yahweh sent upon them as punishment for turning to idolatry. [Again, Compaert overlooks the more important part of that incident, inasmuch as the Israelite men were committing fornication (race-mixing) with Balak’s women.]

This refers to the period of the development of the power of the papacy, from 313 to 606 A.D. In the effort to build up converts more rapidly, the Catholic “Church” turned to adopting pagan holidays, pagan rituals, even adopted some of the pagan gods now under the title of saints, and there is no question but that it was a corrupting of the religion that they started with. On the other hand, they never did drop their recognition that Yahshua the Christ was the Messiah incarnate in the flesh, meaning “Yahshua the Messiah was Yahweh come in the flesh.” Thus, you had this curious combination. You had partial Christianity, but at the same time corrupted by a partial paganism creeping in. Now let’s go in detail from there. The next one of these “churches” (and this is Revelation 2, verses 18 to 29) is the “Church” at Thyatira:

“And unto the angel 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 bronze; 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. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a couch, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. 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 of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 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. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the “churches.”

Thyatira, the name, simply means “town of Thyra.” It was an ancient village that first became important when king Seleucus Nicator (he was one of the kings, you see, who upon the break-up of Alexander the Great’s empire, [divided it among themselves], he seized the Syrian quarter of it) founded there a Macedonian colony between 301 and 281 B.C., and it became and remained through ancient times a rich and busy commercial city. In its religion it was called the holy city of the god Tyrimnos. That was a Libyan sun god, and pretty much identified with the Greek sun god Apollo. They also had a temple of Artemis, and the high priestess or prophetess of Artemis was the wife of the high priest Apollo Tyrimnos. They had developed to a great extent, something which, while common in a good many places, seems to have reached its height here, the matter of the pagan trade guilds. I think you all know how during the middle ages all the different merchants and craftsmen had their guilds. You’d have the gold-smith’s guild, and the carpenter’s guild, and the leather-worker’s guild, and so on. They were mutual aid societies. They corresponded both to our modern Chamber of Commerce and our modern

labor unions. In addition, these ancient trade guilds were a social order, something on the order of our modern clubs like Kiwanis and Rotary club and that sort of thing, which carried out works of charity and did quite a bit of good. [See note #1 at end of lesson.]

On the other hand, they were definitely pagan in their origin and composition. Their members were pagan. At their meetings, it was quite common that they would have a banquet. The people ate reclining on couches Roman fashion [which was also the Greek fashion, and the manner of eating evident in the New Testament Greek]. And Roman fashion, also, by the end of the banquet, they'd had enough wine that it was apt to turn into quite a lively occasion, to the detriment of good morals. We have found in the ruins of Thyatira some rather extensive inscriptions dealing with this. Which give us a pretty good picture of that. At the time John was writing, it would appear that the "church" at Thyatira was divided on the question, whether their members could retain their old memberships in these pagan trade guilds or not. And there was evidently someone there at Thyatira, a prophetess, who was preaching that you could, as long as you remembered you were a Christian, and you went to church on the Sabbath, it didn't matter if you attended these pagan meetings. But the food served there was likely to be meat that had been offered in sacrifice to these idols, and of course it led to much immorality by the time they got fairly well drunk by the end of the event.

Probably Jezebel was not her actual name, but was used as an epithet. You'll remember the very wicked queen Jezebel, wife of king Ahab of Israel, who brought in the 450 priests of Baal and led the kingdom of Israel into idolatry. The idea of there being prophetesses, as well as prophets, is nothing startling – the Old Testament mentions several: Miriam, Deborah, Huldah; and in the New Testament: Luke 2, verses 36 to 38, it speaks of "Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher." There is also mention of prophetesses in Acts 21, verses 8 and 9. Thus, the prophetic office was not limited simply to men. The period represented in "Church" history by this would be from, say, 604 A.D. to the death of Pope Gregory the 1st. By that time he had developed and crystallized the power of the Pope to about as high a degree as it got, and it would carry, from that time up until what we can call the starting date of the Protestant reformation, 1517 A.D. During this period you had many pagan and unscriptural doctrines carried into the "church" doctrine; the adoption of pagan holidays and pagan ceremonies, the worship of the Virgin Mary, in order to bring into the "church" the people who were accustomed to worshipping Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, under the title of goddess Ishtar, queen of heaven. Yahshua the Christ was reduced from the mature Yahshua the Messiah, who was the savior of his people, to just a baby carried in the arms of Mary. You go into any Catholic "church" today and you'll see a statue there of Mary carrying the infant Yahshua in her arms, which naturally is reducing to the minimum any status that you can give to Him. The worship of saints as mediators between God and man, and that sort of thing, was another thing introduced at that time.

You had a period, running up to 313, when the Christian "Church" suffered terrific persecutions from the pagan Roman Empire. Then suddenly all that ceased, because with the issuance of Constantine's "Edict of Toleration", all persecution stopped, and about 30 years later he followed it up with an edict making Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. How come the sudden change? Here you had three centuries in which, in spite of their prayers for help, they were martyred by the hundreds. And now suddenly they escaped all this. Well, some self admittedly bright person came up with the statement: "Here are all these martyrs who were murdered for their faith, and by reason of their loyalty they undoubtedly have higher standings with God, and so they're up there in heaven praying for us, and their prayers have now finally brought about what our prayers couldn't, that God rescued us from persecution." Therefore, if there is anything else you want, if the saints up there are the ones

who have influence which you can't have, why not pray to "saint who's-it" for whatever you want.

Now that was definitely unscriptural, but remember by this time the Catholic "Church" had already reduced the Scriptures to a very low point. They said that tradition was of at least equal weight with the Scripture, and in fact, where there was any contradiction between whatever tradition they had established and Scripture, the Scripture lost out. If they had read the Bible, they could not have stumbled into this error. 1st Timothy 2, verse 5: "For Yahweh is One, and one mediator of Yahweh and men: a man Yahshua Christ" (WFT). Again, John 14, verse 6: "Yahshua saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Not by "saint what's-his-name." And two of the Gospels, Matthew 15, verse 9, and Mark 7, verse 7, quoting Isaiah 29:13 [from the *Septuagint*] (when he was rebuking the "Jews" for their apostasy, the Pharisee religion placed tradition on the same footing as Scripture. In other words, they took the identical position that the Catholic "Church" took later. They said the Talmud, which was called the "traditions of the elders" in Yahshua the Christ's time, is entitled to as much weight as anything the prophets have written.) So, Yahshua quoted to them the terrible words out of Isaiah, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for their doctrines the commandments of men."

From Babylon on into Rome you had a well organized and very popular pagan religion worshipping the Queen of Heaven, which, as I say, was Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, deified as Ishtar. And that was something that had gotten the people of Israel in trouble before. It's inexcusable that a repetition of it should come about, when all they'd need to do would be to read the Book of Jeremiah. You will remember, the deportation of the southern kingdom of Judah was in two stages! They were first captured by Nebuchadnezzar in 606 B.C., and the leading citizens, those who were likely to be leaders in revolt, were all deported to Babylon, but not the bulk of the population. Then, after about 20 years, revolt came again because Egypt promised them help, which Egypt wasn't able to deliver. Egypt had become a mulatto nation by that time. Jeremiah warned them not to revolt, but they did. They were again captured, nearly all the population deported, – some of them were left behind, enough to keep the vineyards and orchards from going back to jungle, and Jeremiah was left among them. [See note #2 at end of lesson.]

Then, when one of the Jews murdered the man whom Nebuchadnezzar had appointed as the governor over them, the rest fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah along with them. And in Jeremiah 7, verse 18, and Jeremiah 44, verses 25 to 27, he is rebuking them for apostasy and paganism – that they had adopted the Babylonian worship of the Queen of Heaven. He says: "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger." Now, that wasn't just Jeremiah's words. He was quoting this as "thus saith Yahweh." Again: "Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the Elohim of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows. Therefore hear ye the word of Yahweh, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith Yahweh, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying ... Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that *are* in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them."

Well, you'll remember in the message to this "church" here at Thyatira, Yahshua said that time had been given to this false prophetess to repent, but she didn't, and therefore the

penalty was coming upon her. Now, the things that I have mentioned here were not limited to the Roman Catholic "Church" in the west. You'll remember that before the papacy became fully established in power in Rome, the popes attempted to extend their authority over the Eastern, or the Greek Orthodox "Church", which was the "church" in Greece and Asia Minor. But they wouldn't accept his authority. Although they maintained a separate "church", they adopted all these same doctrines. The Greek "churches" were like pagan temples filled with the idols of all the different saints to whom the people were encouraged to pray, and that is the thing which brought down upon the Eastern or Greek "Church" the great Mohammedan raids. Mohammed said "This is plain idolatry and I am going to stamp it out." Thus, they underwent a terrific scourge from the Saracen Mohammedans at a later time because of the same thing. Hence, both "churches" had done the same thing; they had not repented of their having altered their doctrines into paganism, and therefore they must eventually meet their judgment. What that judgment would be is prophesied later in the book, and when we get to that we'll also show how it was fulfilled in history. The next of these "churches", Revelation 3, verses 1 to 6, is the "church" at Sardis:

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of Yahweh, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

This town of Sardis was founded beyond the dawn of history. It was already there when the first records of any kind pertaining to it can be found. It was located on fertile plain at a point where it commanded the great east-west trade route. It was also a manufacturing center; very wealthy, and was probably the first city in the world to coin money. You notice that in the Old Testament, when it comes to paying for something, they mention how the money was weighed out in gold or silver ingots. They knew how much an ounce of gold was worth, but they didn't know whether this particular ingot held an ounce, or more, or less, or what. Thus, it was weighed and was valued according to weight. But the city of Sardis produced the earliest coinage of a definite value that we can find. [See note #3 at end of lesson.]

That reference, to being on the watch or they would be taken by surprise, was something that all the people knew about. Close to the city was a fortified hill, their acropolis or fortification to which they could retreat in the case of siege. On three sides of this hill it rose in sheer vertical cliffs, up to a height of about 1500 feet. No possibility of attack. One side only, where there was a gentle approach, had to be guarded. With ordinary care and watchfulness, it was absolutely impregnable; and yet twice it was captured by surprise because they got overconfident and literally went to sleep on the job. Cyrus, in 549 B.C., and Antiochus the Great, 218 B.C., captured the fortress there. Hence, this was a well known thing which was used as an illustration that, "if you do not remain alert, looking for the things I've warned you about, you're going to be taken by surprise at my coming."

The historical period that this refers to is the period during the development of the Protestant Reformation beginning, say, 1517. It's hard to fix the latter end of it. A number of writers have suggested about 1740, perhaps, could be taken as the end of this period. During the middle ages, all institutions, political and religious alike, suffered corruption. Morals, in

general, were at an all-time low, along with general bribery and corruption. This was the state of society, and the “church” did not avoid the common fate of the whole people. There were, for the last couple of hundred years before the Protestant Reformation, people in the Catholic “Church” who saw that things were not right. They were trying to reform the “church”, to keep what was Christian and good, and to rid it of what things that were pagan, and what things that showed plain corruption on the part of the “church” hierarchy. But they were never numerous enough to accomplish anything. You notice the sarcastic reference “thou hast a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments.” Thus, the situation was reaching a pretty bad state.

The first glimmer of the Reformation did not come with Martin Luther; it really began in England with John Wycliffe. He lived from 1320 to 1384. He taught philosophy at the University of Oxford most of the time. The way the Reformation got its start in England was not anything to crow about either, because it was not with a demand for religious reform. It was a political and financial thing, and while it served the purpose of King Henry the 8th, it really accomplished nothing as to anything in their religion that needed touching up. The Pope was demanding all these larger and larger tributes from the “churches” in England. By this time the English “church” owned probably half or more of the land of England. Therefore, they collected the rents from all the people living on that land, in addition to collecting the tithe from all the people who lived on that land and, well, all who lived on the other lands for that matter. And additionally, all the extra money that they brought in through indulgences. It was just bleeding England white financially, and it wasn’t leaving the people enough money to pay the amount of taxes that the king needed to keep himself and his nobles on one long, drunken debauch all year long. Hence, you had a financial rivalry there.

Wycliffe defended the king against the Pope’s demands for excessive tribute in the bitter discussions that went on between the king and parliament, on one hand, and the “church”, on the other, from 1374 to 1378. In 1378 he translated the Bible into English, and he and his scholars saw that the accepted doctrines not only could not find any support in the Bible, but the accepted doctrines were squarely contrary to the Bible. Wycliffe was evidently a man of tremendous personality as well as a very brilliant mind, and he inspired his students with tremendous enthusiasm. So he started sending them out over the country as poor preachers. The “church” was maintaining itself in high financial glory and making excessive demands for money. Wycliffe’s men were content if they just got enough to eat, as they went out carrying the message of the Gospel to people and proving to them with the Bible in English, the people’s own language, that they didn’t need to pay these excessive sums of money to the “church” to buy salvation, because it couldn’t be bought. It had been given to them freely by the sacrifice of Yahshua the Christ upon the cross. Thus, he was really stirring up some opposition. He taught the direct relationship between man and Yahshua, without the need of priests as intermediaries. He taught that the Bible was supreme over any man-made doctrine. He denounced the pilgrimages.

You see, the Catholic “Church” had developed a doctrine that Christ died in vain and He wasn’t able to get you your salvation. You’d committed a sin, so you’d recognize that Yahshua the Christ died to be your Savior. But that didn’t do it. You had to do penances or else spend some considerable time burning in the flames of purgatory, maybe a thousand years or two, to pay the penalty of your sins because Yahshua the Christ hadn’t been able to do it. Now of course, for a fee the “church” could get you out of it. One of the things you could do for a penance – oh – you could wear an itchy, scratchy hair shirt, or you could go on a pilgrimage to Rome, or you could go without eating meat on a Tuesday or something of that sort, or you could buy from the “church” an indulgence. Now your beloved mother; you thought so much of

her, but of course at the time of her death, not enough had been paid to get her out of purgatory. So she was screaming and burning in horrible agony in the flames of purgatory, but you were told, “for a sufficient sum you can buy an indulgence which will get her out of purgatory, not a thousand years from now, but it’ll save a hundred years of torture. Later you can come back and get her out another hundred years earlier”, and so on.

These things were going on during that period, because, remember, you had in the congregations ignorant people who knew nothing else. This is all that had ever been taught to them. The Bible in their own language didn’t exist. Most of them couldn’t have read it anyway. Only the few well-educated scholars could. But there was no available Bible in their language, and therefore, in all good faith, they were taking what their priests were telling them was the religion. It had reached a terrible state. Wycliffe was often accused of heresy – he was condemned for it and expelled from Oxford in 1382. But his teachings and his translation of the Bible into the common language of the country really got the Reformation started. He didn’t yet accomplish it in his own country, but he planted the seed, because his writings soon spread to the continent of Europe and they influenced John Huss in Bohemia, and Martin Luther.

In 1403 A.D., Wycliffe’s work was translated by Huss into Bohemian. In 1408, Huss was suspended as a Catholic priest. In 1410, he was excommunicated as a heretic. In 1414, the “church” summoned him to appear at a general council at the city of Constance, where he must either recant his teachings or show that he hadn’t taught anything that was wrong, otherwise he would be condemned for heresy. He was given a very specific promise of safe conduct, there and to return. What was done was the thing that was done in many, many cases. We have not on record one case where the hierarchy of the Catholic “Church” ever kept their word on a promise of this sort. He attended in good faith, relying on the safe conduct. They immediately seized him, arrested him, imprisoned him, tried him for heresy and burned him at the stake.

Well he had, by this time, a great deal of influence. He had been preaching in Bohemia, and this act of treacherous murder aroused Bohemia to a fury. It led to the Hussite wars. Four hundred and fifty Bohemian noblemen, led by king Wenceslaus of Bohemia, defied the Pope. When the Pope called upon the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to send his troops and massacre the Bohemians, they stood up to them. Pope Martin the 5th, in 1420, proclaimed a holy crusade against Bohemia to massacre the population of Bohemia as heretics. He proclaimed another crusade in 1426, a third in 1427, and a fourth in 1431. They were all defeated by the Bohemians. But these Bohemians, or as we would call them today, Czechs, were truly our people, never able to agree on anything. You know how it is today, we are many groups. We all agree on one point and from there we diverge, because some other group has some other point, and unless we accept “that” they want nothing to do with us. So the Bohemians split into two groups and they fought among themselves till their power was so badly wrecked that they finally got off with a compromise agreement with the Catholic “Church” – that they could keep control of their own “churches” in Bohemia.

In the matter of serving the Communion (the “Lord’s” Supper), they were allowed to depart from the Catholic custom. You remember, Yahshua the Christ himself instituted the sacrament of the Last Supper. He gave them bread which He said represented His body, broken for them, and wine which represented His blood, shed to save them. You know the number of places in the Bible where it says, “it is by the shedding of blood of Yahshua the Christ, by His blood we are saved, not otherwise.” Yet in the Catholic “Church” (and it is true to this day), they won’t let you get the benefit of the blood. When you partake of Communion in a Catholic “Church”, they give you a little wafer of bread, that’s true, but only the priest gets to taste the wine. Only he is going to get the benefit of the blood of Christ, and his congregation are denied it. So that was denounced by the Bohemians. They got the right to let the

congregation have the wine as well as the bread at the Communion. [See note #4 at end of lesson.]

Martin Luther was a Catholic priest. He is the man who actually got the Reformation going as a really effective movement. The others had been sowing the seed, but he was really getting a crop now that could be reaped. He was ordained a Catholic priest in 1507, became a lecturer at the University of Wittenberg. He was a pretty good language scholar and he was not content merely with being told what was official doctrine. He read the Bible of course, in the Latin of the Vulgate, which was the official Bible of the Catholic "Church." And even there he discovered that it said "the just shall live by his faith" – not by indulgences, not by pilgrimages to Rome, not by the worship of "Saint who's-it", but by his faith. Hence, it jolted him to see how far the customs of the "church" and their doctrines strayed from actual Scripture. Thus, he went into the whole thing, and in fact he translated the entire Bible into German. In 1517, things came to a head. The Pope had sent traveling through Germany a Dominican monk named Tetzel whose job it was to sell indulgences to raise a vast sum of money for the repair of the "Church" of Saint Peter in Rome. It was an out and out sale. Tetzel had reduced to verse one of which read: "The money rattles in the box, the soul from purgatory flies. Aren't you willing to give the "church" so much money so that your mother will escape thousands of years she is going to have to burn in purgatory otherwise? You give us something for the 'church', and for that good act you get an indulgence that gets her out a whole hundred years earlier." Well, that was more than Martin Luther could stomach, so on the door of the "church" at Wittenberg he nailed up papers stating 95 theses that he was prepared to debate with any comer. He picked out all these things that were corrupt in "church" doctrine and practice, and stated that they were unscriptural. They were, in fact, contrary to Scripture, and he was prepared to debate that with anybody. That was the point where the Reformation really got underway.

Martin Luther did not intend to start a separate Protestant "church". He was a Catholic priest, and all he wanted was to clean up the things in his own "church" that he found shouldn't be there. He intended to save all that part which was good, and he had no intention of cutting himself off from it. Well, there was all the usual "church" strategy. He was excommunicated. He was summoned to attend a great gathering, a diet at the city of Worms. He was outlawed, with any man encouraged to kill him with no penalty. But he went there. He was given the safe conduct promise: he could go and return to his own home. But there was intention to treacherously capture him and murder him. But by this time his doctrines had spread to some pretty influential places. He came there – he refused to recant – he defended his doctrines, showed where they were sound according to the Bible, and he just planted himself. He said "Here I stand, God helping me, I can do no other." He wouldn't yield one inch. Prince Frederick of Saxony knew of the plot to arrest and murder him, so he had some of his troops kidnap Martin Luther and rush him out to safety, and for a bit over a year he hid Luther in his own castle where Luther continued his writings. Finally, after a bit more than a year, it was safe to let Luther out again. Lutheranism spread very rapidly through Germany and Scandinavia from then on. Now the "church", having refused to clean up any of this thing – the people who saw that these things were contrary to the Bible had no choice left to them but to leave the "church" and organize their own "church" which would not have these doctrinal errors. As I say, that is not what Martin Luther started out trying to do. He wanted the "church" to clean up its own mistakes and to keep all its people, but it was so not to be.

In France – Protestantism filtered into France – oh, by 1520 to 1523 A.D., largely through Wycliffe's writings, although Martin Luther's also became very well known there, which spread rapidly. By 1561, over two thousand "churches" in France sent representatives to a great synod, or gathering of representatives of the Protestant "churches" there. And it was, by

the way, in France that the name Protestant was coined. At one of their bitter controversies with the Catholic "Church" hierarchy they were promised that they might conduct their own worship without any interference, and this was official – the official resolution settling the matter. A matter of just a few weeks later the "church" declared that promise was void – they weren't going to stand by it. And the Huguenots, the French Protestants, protested against that breach of faith, and from that they got their name as "Protestants."

The conditions in France were peculiarly bad. You had two families constantly conducting civil wars for the crown. At that time, the House of Valois included the king on the throne, and since a large part of the population of France, probably 30 to 40 percent, seemed to be Protestant, they wanted the support of the Protestant Huguenots because the rival family, the Guise family, were very strong Catholics and had the support of the Pope. Thus, in the civil war, the Valois family were constantly seeking the support of the Protestants and promising, as a reward, that they would be permitted to worship undisturbed. That is all the Huguenots asked. As fast as the king got past the crisis through the military help of the Huguenots and found things steady again, he would then go back on his promise. Well there were some eight of these different civil wars in which the Huguenots participated under promise of being allowed to worship in peace, each one repudiated.

In 1570, King Charles the 9th signed an official treaty granting toleration to the Huguenots. He was married to a daughter of Catherine de Medici. You remember, there were two Italian Jewish families who furnished Popes. One was the de Medicis and the other the Borgias, and they were both infamous. You remember both families as being assassins, murdering by poison. The de Medicis were also, as is consistent with their race, money lenders, usurers. The pawnbroker's emblem of the three golden balls was the coat of arms of the de Medici family. Well, Catherine de Medici, of course was very much on the side of the Catholics because she wanted more de Medicis to become Popes, in time she was the mother and queen of France. Catherine de Medici and the king plotted a treacherous massacre of the Protestants. On the evening before Saint Bartholomew's Day, August 4, 1572, the word had been sent out – the king sent out to his army, and through the "churches" the priests had sent word to all the members of the Catholic "churches" that that night there was to be a wholesale massacre, an attempt to entirely exterminate all the Protestants of France. My own ancestors [that is the ancestors of Bertrand L. Comparet] were among the survivors of that, or I wouldn't be here.

Suddenly, without warning, around midnight the "church" bells started tolling, and then – the members of the Catholic congregation, as I say, are not personally blameworthy to the extent of the "church" hierarchy, because these people never had been told anything different. They were told that the most praiseworthy thing they could do for their "church" was to go out and murder a heretic – man, woman or child – and they were officially promised indulgences for their sins. If you murdered a heretic child, age four, you could go out and commit a few rapes, or that sort of thing, and you had the pardon of the "church" granted in advance. Hence, you had these people in a frenzy, all stirred up, and there were some of the king's troops participating, they burst into the houses of the Protestants, caught the people in their houses just starting up out of sleep, and they murdered men, women and children indiscriminately. Any house they got into, no person was left alive. It was a frightful slaughter. The Pope issued a medal commemorating the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's eve as a great triumph for the "church."

While these civil wars were still going on, the Valois family failed to produce an heir to the throne, and the Navarre family became the ones contesting the throne with the Guise family, and by Huguenot help in eight of these civil wars, Henry of Navarre gained the throne of France. He issued the edict of Nantes, which gave Huguenots complete religious freedom.

However, he changed his own religion. He had claimed to be Protestant up to that time, and he changed his religion to Catholicism so he wouldn't have friction with the opposing faction. And then, October, 1685, treacherously without warning, he revoked this edict and sent his troops out to murder the Huguenots. This completed the slaughter of considerably over half of all the Huguenots in France, and such as survived fled into other countries. For a long time, you might say up until the French Revolution, Catholicism was supreme in France, and the Reformation had no further foothold.

In England, the Reformation came about, as I said, as a financial and political matter. King Henry the 8th was greatly disturbed at the amount of money that the "church" in England was collecting from its people and sending to the Pope as tribute. Also, he was married to Catherine of Aragon of the Spanish royal family and she had borne him four daughters, but no sons, and he could see where on his death there would be civil war to take over the throne and his family was going to be left out in the cold. He wanted to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry another queen and see if he couldn't get a son to succeed him on the throne. As a matter of fact, he went through that process six times, all told. Well, the Pope would not grant him a divorce, so they were completely at loggerheads. Henry married Anne Boleyn after he had the Archbishop of Canterbury grant him a divorce from Catherine of Aragon – that was 1533. The Pope excommunicated Henry the 8th, and Henry in reply had Parliament pass a law appointing the king the supreme head of the "church" in England. Also, laws cutting off all revenue from England going to the Pope. Now, that was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in England, and you'll note there isn't a bit of religious principal involved at all in it. Henry the 8th had everything he wanted. He got Parliament to pass laws making it heresy, punishable by death, to dispute any of the major doctrines of the Catholic "Church." And, as a matter of fact, Henry the 8th had a number of Lutherans burned at the stake. Now, we Protestants are proud of the fact that our Protestant religion began as matter of principal on religion, but not in England. That was Martin Luther, and not Henry the 8th.

Upon his death he did get a son by one of the other queens, and Edward the 6th, his son, on the death of Henry in 1547, had these laws against Protestantism repealed, and laws favorable to the Protestant worship passed. On his death in 1553, Bloody Mary came to the throne. She was the daughter of Henry the 8th by Catherine of Aragon. Very strong in her Catholic faith herself, she married king Phillip of Spain, which also pushed the thing farther because the Spaniards particularly were all for murdering all heretics. She became Queen of England. She conducted terrific persecutions against the Protestants, burning large numbers of them at the stake, and a great many more of them fled to the continent of Europe for their lives. For that persecution she was called "Bloody Mary." Now over in Ireland – it's kind of hard for us to understand the bitter battles going on between the Irish Protestants and the Irish Catholics, because here in America we haven't had religious persecution like that. But, if you remember that some of your ancestors were burned at the stake for their religious views, and if you remember the succeeding popes since then have also declared officially, "It is the policy of the 'church' to use violence whenever it seems appropriate", then you aren't too keen about seeing the Catholic hierarchy regaining political power again, as perhaps the next step will be going back to burning so-called heretics at the stake.

The Irish have had a bad time of it. No country ever suffered under worse misrule than the Irish under their English conquerors. And the fact that the hated English, with their bad behavior, were also trying to destroy the Catholic "Church" in Ireland and set up a Protestant "church", did nothing to give the Protestant "church" any better standing in the eyes of the Irish. It was just part of the oppression against them, and that is why you note that the Southern Irish are perhaps the most strongly Catholic people in the world today, and the Protestants are

among those in the Northern counties who are actually Scottish settlers there rather than originally Irish. Queen Elizabeth the 1st came to the throne in 1558 and she immediately restored Protestantism. Having a Protestant majority in Parliament, she got through laws which established the present "Church" of England. So basically, that is what was happening during this period.

You had the few people within the Catholic "Church" trying in vain to bring about reform. You had the hierarchy holding the power in the "church", not budging an inch on it until finally all those who wanted to clean up the mess were compelled to leave. Now we are sometimes told that the Catholic "Church" cleaned things up after that with their counter-reformation. It might be interesting to know what this consisted of. With the loss of millions of people going over to Protestantism, the reaction of the Catholic hierarchy was entirely one of fear and rage. They summoned the council at Trent in 1545 to settle all these disputes of doctrine. The council continued meeting, with intermissions, from 1545 until 1563. All these points that had been disputed were brought up and they didn't yield in any of them; they reaffirmed them. So-called "Sacred" tradition was as authoritative as the Bible, and nothing that was traditional with the "church" could be questioned on the grounds that the Bible was contrary to it. All the books in the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible, were canonical, and the Vulgate itself was authoritative. The worship of saints, the doctrine of purgatory, which is contrary to the Bible, the sale of indulgences, all these were affirmed. The Lutheran doctrine, that salvation is obtained not by payment of money to the "church" but by faith in Yahshua the Christ, was condemned as heretical. And finally, the official resolution, "all heretics were to be exterminated." Well, during the period from the solidification of the power in the papacy in 604 A.D. down to the point where the Protestants finally broke away from them, the estimates of the number of people murdered by the Catholic "Church" (about 900 years in there) has varied from as low as 40 million people to as high as 60 million people. There were no official records kept of just how many were killed each time; one must simply have to judge by the writings of the historians of that period, making the best estimate one can. If you assume that these estimates were all too high, and there were never more than 30 million people, that low is at least 20 or 30 times more than all the massacres of Christians by all the other pagans in all history. Not only the pagan Roman Empire, but those who were massacred by the Saracens and the Turks in the Eastern "Church." So the most frightful persecution of Christianity that ever occurred in history was that which went on under the papacy in this period.

As I say, I don't want you to assume that this is a condemnation of the **people** in their congregations who had no authority to do anything, who, if they ventured to ask questions of this, were told "You are on your way to hell for heresy if you don't give this up." And, all they knew was what they had been taught from infancy; that the priests had the authority to send them to hell if they so chose. So they went along ignorant, terrified. But upon the shoulders of the hierarchy, the priests and the bishops and cardinals, and all who knew better, rests the most terrible responsibility that any man will ever face on judgment day. You notice that in this message to the "church" at Sardis, Yahshua the Christ, speaking of Himself at the start: "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of Yahweh, and the seven stars ..." In other words, "I am the One who has the authority to determine what is true; and not any man, priest or Pope though he be." [End of Comparet's Lesson #2.]

CRITICAL NOTES ON LESSON #2

Comments by William Finck initialed *W.R.F.*

Comments by Clifton A. Emahiser in brackets in lesson text as “your transcriber” or initialed *C.A.E.* in critical notes.

Note #1: While Comparet does quite well in many areas, I haven’t the slightest idea of the source where he got the information that the name “Thyatira” (*Thuáteira*) simply means “town of Thyra.” Although *thyra* means “door” it is not related to *thua* in the name here. Surely this connection would be mentioned by commentators and lexicographers, if it were true. In Greek, *thua-* is a prefix form of *thuos*, or “sacrifice.” The word *teira* may be from the noun *teiros* “found only in the plural [*teirea*], the *heavenly constellations, signs.*” (Liddell & Scott), or it may be from the verb *teirô*, which means “*to rub hard, ... to wear away, wear out, distress*” (L&S). So in Greek, *thuáteira* may mean “heavenly sacrifice”, or perhaps “distressed sacrifice” or “sacrifice of distress” or something similar. *Strong’s* simply lists the word as being “of uncertain derivation” (2363), not venturing a meaning, and neither does Thayer. *W.R.F.*

Note #2: To the Greeks, Semiramis was the wife of Ninus, the founder of Nineveh, and founded and ruled Babylon after Ninus’ death. Strabo called them “Syrians”, as the geographer always has the Assyrians confused with the Syrians (2.1.31, 11.13.5). Diodorus Siculus says of Semiramis: “Now there is in Syria a city known as Ascalon, and not far from it a large and deep lake, full of fish. On its shore is a precinct of a famous goddess whom the Syrians call Derceto; and this goddess has the head of a woman but all the rest of her body is that of a fish, the reason being something like this. The story as given by the most learned of the inhabitants of the region is as follows: Aphrodite, being offended with this goddess, inspired in her a violent passion for a certain handsome youth among her votaries; and Derceto gave herself to the Syrian and bore a daughter, but then, filled with shame of her sinful deed, she killed the youth and exposed the child in a rocky desert region, while as for herself, from shame and grief she threw herself into the lake and was changed as to the form of her body into a fish; and it is for this reason that the Syrians to this day abstain from this animal and honour their fish as gods. But about the region where the babe was exposed a great multitude of doves had their nests, and by them the child was nurtured in an astounding and miraculous manner; for some of the doves kept the body of the babe warm on all sides by covering it with their wings, while others, when they observed that the cowherds and the other keepers were absent from the nearby steadings, brought milk therefrom in their beaks and fed the babe by putting it drop by drop between its lips. And when the child was a year old and in need of more solid nourishment, the doves, pecking off bits from the cheeses, supplied it with sufficient nourishment. Now when the keepers returned and saw that the cheeses had been nibbled about the edges, they were astonished at the strange happening; they accordingly kept a look-out, and on discovering the cause found the infant, which was of surprising beauty. At once, then bringing it to their steadings they turned it over to the keeper of the royal herds, whose name was Simmas; and Simmas, being childless gave every care to the rearing of the girl, as his own daughter, and called her Semiramis, a name slightly altered from the word which, in the language of the Syrians, means “doves”, birds which since that time all the inhabitants of Syria have continued to honour as goddesses” (2.4.4).

And while this myth is surely far-fetched, it must have been extant in some form in Assyria, for Jonah – whose name means “dove” in Hebrew – emerged from a fish in Nineveh and was given full credibility there! Yet the point of relating this is to show that, in the Greek

mind, Aphrodite and Semiramis are definitely two distinct people, the one a goddess, and the other a mortal woman who became a queen and went on with her husband to build an empire, as described by Diodorus Siculus and discussed by Strabo. On the other hand, Ishtar, or Astartê, is equated to Aphrodite by the Greeks (compare 1 Sam. 31:10 with Josephus' *Antiquities* 6:14:8 [6:374], and note that Herodotus called the temple Astartê, or Ashtaroth, at Ashkelon, the temple of "celestial Aphrodite"). Ishtar was never the wife of Ninus in Babylonian or Assyrian mythology, but was rather, as queen of heaven, the wife of Bel or Baal. Semiramis could not have been assigned this role, and Ninus, Semiramis and Bel are even mentioned together by Diodorus (i.e. 2.8.8). More can be said concerning this, yet it should be evident that Comparet was incorrect in identifying Semiramis with Ishtar. *W.R.F.*

Note #3: Sardis, the capital of the Lydians in Anatolia, was never mentioned by Homer, who was believed by the ancients to have mentioned practically every place known to man in the period which he wrote about, but especially those so near to Troy as Sardis was. The Lydians are listed in the Iliad with those who came to the defense of the Trojans, in Book 2 after line 1030: those about Lake Gygaiê, Mount Tmolos (which Sardis lied near), Hydê, Hyllos (a stream) and Hermos (a river), but no mention of Sardis, nor of other Lydian cities such as Thyatira and Smyrna. Strabo says of Homer's account: "But there is no Hydê to be found in the country of the Lydians", and goes on further to explain "Some call Sardeis Hydê, while others call its acropolis Hydê." My point is that, while Sardis may have been on the site of some much more ancient city, a city named "Sardis" is not found in the earlier Greek records (though of course it is known to Herodotus), and I cannot imagine by what authority Comparet states: "The town of Sardis was founded beyond the dawn of history", since I find this not to be so. *W.R.F.*

Note #4: Within the paradigm of the Catholic "Church", the statement here concerning the withholding of the wine from the congregation is legitimate; however, the entire paradigm is wrong! Comparet is wrong for calling Communion a "sacrament" because there are no "sacraments" in the New Testament! "Sacraments" were identified and then organized by the Nicolaitans! The *American Heritage College Dictionary*, under "sacramentalism" reads: "The doctrine that observance of the sacraments is necessary for salvation and that such participation can confer grace." And, of course, in the "church" only the professional priesthood can confer this grace, because only they can perform "sacraments", which are rituals! In truth, sacraments are sacrilege, because "grace" comes from Yahweh, and it is given to the children of Israel freely!

Yahshua Christ performed what is called "Communion" in a nondescript house, in a nondescript room, around a nondescript table with His companions, and (not considering Judas Iscariot, the devil who was present, so that a greater purpose might be fulfilled) all of His companions were Israelites and were of His body and of His blood. That is the essence of "Communion", which is from the Greek word meaning "the sharing of things in common" with our brethren – who are the body and blood of Christ – and which we should do in His name each time we partake of such things. It is quite clear, unless one is of His body and is of His blood, one is "unworthy" to partake; and "Communion" should normally only be performed in the presence of one's genetic brethren! (Ephesians 5:30). *W.R.F.*