

Revelation 2

Sunday 1/7/2007

As we are turning there, I want to make a few opening remarks about some things that we want to look for this next year. This is our first sermon of 2007. We started a new year last year, and now we are starting again, coming through the Word of God just like we always have. But this year it is going to be just a little different, and I have been telling you about this in one form or the other. We talked about it Thursday night when I gave you a little study thing to do on the seven suicides in the Bible and told you what I wanted you to do with that and how we are going to deal with that here in a little while when we get finished with this seven series.

I really want to focus this year in your life on the aspect of paying attention to detail in the Word of God. We have spent three years now, really three and a half years now, bringing you through and giving you the things that you need. You have got the tools, and now you have to begin to use those tools.

When it comes to dealing with people, and that is where we are going to go here in this next year, I told you that by next year, around December, I want to be ready to go and have a group of people that are ready to work in the area of dealing with people's problems, helping them through the situations in life that they find themselves in. I have been dealing with it for the past three years, basically on my own, using a few people that have the ability to do it. But during that time, I was laying the foundation, watching what men and women did with the Word of God that I gave them and watching those that began to rise to the surface. Now we are going to take that and we are going to work at it.

The one thing about this church that I believe is unique is this: there are a number of things, but I think the most unique thing about this church is that wherever you are at in your spiritual walk with God, you could be a brand new Christian or somebody that has been saved for 150 years, it does not make any difference. Wherever you are at in your spiritual walk with God, you can get into ministry and start at whatever level you are at.

What I want to focus on this year is the exactness of the Word of God. You have heard me talk about this a lot. You are going to find that in dealing with people and dealing with the Bible, it is the same basic concepts. Of course, when you start to deal with the Bible and you start to study the Bible, you have got to be able to focus on not just what you read, but seeing and understanding what you are reading. That is the key to the Bible.

I have shown you that the greatest aspect of God is His consistency. Once you learn that concept of consistency, then you begin to take the things that God has showed you as being consistent. When you read the Bible, you begin to look below what you are reading. You begin to look at what He is trying to show you. Most people, they listen, but they do not hear. Most people, they read the Bible, but they do not see what they are reading or beyond what they are reading. They never get the understanding.

I want to tell you, the key to dealing with people is nothing more than the key of laying out the Bible. Because in both cases, you are dealing with basic principles and the consistency. God will

never violate His own principles. That is rule number one when it comes to understanding the Scriptures. If you can just get that thing in your mind, it will open more doors in the Bible than anything else you are going to ever get into.

The thing that makes the Bible different than any other book on planet earth is the fact that the person who wrote it was divine and was perfect and wrote an absolute concept that never varies. If you can learn those unchanging concepts, the Bible will unlock itself to you and you will learn more about the Bible with that one single concept than anything else.

Now, when it comes to you dealing with people, it is the same thing. The Bible will teach you the Bible by the consistency of its principles. People that you deal with, you will learn how to deal with them because they will always try to get around those principles. It is just that simple. It is not hard.

What is the number one thing you have to do? I told you this last week. If you are ever going to be functional as far as really being used of God in dealing with people's lives, and let us face it, that is what God saved you for. Maybe you will never be someone that can get into someone on a very high level. Maybe you will always be someone that can work in that middle or lower level. It does not matter. It takes all kinds of people to make the ministry work. But no matter what level you are on, I am going to tell you this: this year, you have to start focusing on the exactness of the scriptures. You have to start looking beyond what you are reading and seeing what is really there.

I. Principles of Consistency and Deception

To me, the greatest chapter in the Bible, and I am going to tell you, when you start working with people, some people are going to purposely try to deceive you. Some of you, last year, I put you in situations that I knew were not going to work just because I wanted you to get a taste of how people will try to deceive you. People want to do what is right on a short term, but when the rubber meets the road and they really have to change in their lives, the things that they have to change, that is where you are going to see them violating the principles. Justifying the violation of those principles, and that is where if you are not exact in those principles, you are going to get deceived.

Genesis 27. You do not even have to write this down because it is something that we will get to at a point in time. I want to make a reference to it now because it fits into both aspects here. Genesis 27 is the textbook, the mind behind the deception of people 101. Genesis 27, as all of the stories in the Bible, you can lift them out and put them in context of what God is wanting to show you. If you want to learn how not to be deceived when dealing with people, it is Genesis 27.

In Genesis 27, you have a situation where Jacob and his mother try to deceive Isaac. I do not know if you know this or not, but Isaac is blind. Yet when you look at that, when you start to study the principles involved, everything is in here. It shows you how the deception starts. Deception has a plan to it. It shows you who is in the deception. It shows you the mindset behind the deception by what they are trying to get, in this case, the blessing.

When you come down through it and you really examine it and you lay it out, you will find that Isaac was blind. Yet, when you read the story, you come to the conclusion that eyesight is not necessary to oversee a deception. I think this is where the phrase came from, "a blind man could see it." Because eyesight is not necessary to see a deception. What you see is not always what you get. You have got to learn when it comes to the Bible and it comes to people that it is not what you see that counts, it is what is below the surface that counts. It is understanding the basic principles that show you what you really have.

You know how the story goes, and I am not going to belabor it this morning because that is not my text. But you will find here where it is a situation where Jacob tries to deceive Isaac by putting on a hairy, smelly jacket that smells like Esau. The thing I am trying to say here is when you are reading the Bible or when you are dealing with people, do not get caught up in the storyline. Look beneath the surface and follow the principles. Never violate the principles. God does not do it in His Word. Do not do it when you are dealing with people. This is my classic story where I say it, I title this chapter, "It sounds like Jacob but it smells like Esau."

Some of you that are deer hunters, you can have the greatest camouflage in the world. I have been deer hunting before where I was in a tree, perfectly camouflaged. The deer maybe was from here to that back wall. All I did was click my safety off and he heard the click. There was something about that click that did not match up with the natural sounds of where he is at. He hears birds chirp. He hears coyotes yelp. He hears frogs croak. He hears all the sounds of the woods, but a metallic click is something that he knows is not consistent. See how it works?

You ever take your dog out? The first thing my dogs do, all three of them, the first thing they do is sniff the air. It does not matter what they cannot see over the fence. They do not need to see over the fence because they have such keen sniffers that they can sniff what is over the fence. My point to this is, when it comes to the Bible, you have to learn how to hear what God is saying. When you are dealing with people, you need to learn how to sniff out what they are saying. My favorite expression is, "I always smell what you are trying to sell." I remember these things this way. Do not get caught up in the storyline. Do not get caught up in the circumstances because if you do, you are going to miss what really happened. It is true of the Bible and it is true with the people that you are going to work with.

When I say that, yet at the same time, there are a lot of people that come in that they just want to do what is right, and they are the blessing people of the world. They want to come in, they have problems, they want to fix their problems, and if you told them to stand on their head in the corner for an hour and a half and you would be better four days a week, they will do it. But when you start dealing with human nature, you are dealing with human nature. You have to discipline yourself. You have to begin to look in the Bible and start to ask yourself the question, "Why?" You have got to quit just reading it. You have got to start looking at what you are reading, using the tools that I have already given you.

For instance, in your Bible in the New Testament, every book in the New Testament ends with "Amen" except three. You ought to have caught that if you have been saved five years or more. First five years, I give you a free ride. I am going to have to move that up to 10 years because

people are slower today than they were when I grew up. But if you have been saved five years or less, I am talking to you but I am not talking to you. I am talking about if you have got to take, we have got to take the Bible to the next level. I understand that not everybody will. I know that. When I started this thing a year ago, I had grand delusions that I could get 30. I am not under that delusion anymore. I may only get 10. I may only get five. I may only get whatever I get. But whatever I get and whoever does it, you will not get it because you are my friend. You will not get it because you have been in my life for 175 years. You will get it because you start to look at the Bible in an exact way, understanding and using the tools that I gave you and the principles to find out what is underneath.

I will give you another one. In the New Testament, beyond Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, there are three verses that the Bible says Jesus said. Yet you go back to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you could not find those verses anywhere. They are not in the Bible. You have at least three verses in the Bible that the Bible says Jesus said it, and I will give you a million dollars for every one of those verses you find in the New Testament. They are not there. Now do you see what a great tool that is for somebody that you are dealing with that wants to reject the Word of God? They find that they are going to beat you senseless with that. Little do they know that God put it in there, one, so you would catch it and then ask the question "why" and then find out a tremendous truth. The greatest truth about the King James Bible being the absolute Word of God is the answer in that question. Why do we not catch those things? Why do we not see that? Why do we not read the Bible and study the Bible from an aspect, "I want to find this thing out?"

I prepared this lesson five weeks ago. So you blew one of them for me Thursday night. In Matthew 1, you find a genealogy of Christ. In Luke 3, you find another genealogy of Christ, bringing Him down through Joseph. In Matthew 1, it says Joseph's father is this guy. In Luke 3, it says he is another guy. Now do you know what an unsaved person will do with that that wants to discredit the Bible? That is the question you have dealing with that guy. But the great truth is this about the Bible: if you want to believe a lie and you want to believe this book is not true, God will give you the verses to believe it. In that, God will deceive you because you have deceived yourself. It is just that simple.

I will show you something else. In Jude 14 and Matthew 27, you have a thing there that says Enoch said this. Then you have a place that says Jeremiah said this. You know what? You could not find Enoch saying that and Jeremiah saying that if your life depended on it. See? You have got to start being exact when it comes to the scriptures. You have got to use the tools that I have given you. That is why I gave you that little assignment on Thursday night. Because as we, I told you I am going to start interjecting throughout the year concepts of principles of counseling. We are going to work on it in our leadership. We are going to work on it in the overall sense, bring some of you into leadership this year, and we are going to get that thing up to speed. But the bottom line is I can hold every class in the world. I could do everything in the world. It is you that has to get and make that thing work by taking the tools. I could take you over to Home Depot, buy you every tool in the place. That still does not mean you are going to build a house.

We are not even in the sermon yet. But I have got to say this because from this point on, I am not going to preach to you anymore like I have for the last three years. I am going to work you. I am

going to give you some things to think about, some things to talk about, and we are going to bring them back on Thursday night. If we have another Thursday night like last week, we start off where nobody asked a question, we will just go home and head up to Sonic and have something to eat. You have got to use the tools. Thursday night is a tool.

My methods are unorthodox in teaching. I know that. If you want to put my style of teaching, somebody asked me one time, "How would you define your style of teaching?" My answer was, "Rocky II." Remember Rocky II? The old man was old school. I am old school. The new style of learning how to fight was in a big, modern gym, big, modern churches with all kinds of fancy stuff. No, no. He took him out and he made him chase a chicken. That is the way they trained fighters 100 years ago. That is a true story, that part of it anyhow. A chicken is the most elusive thing in the world. You have got to be fast, quick on your feet and have quick hands and good coordination to catch a chicken. The only other thing that is harder is a pig.

I am telling you, my methods are very, very, you have got to train yourself in every way. You know how I trained myself? Once I saw this, you know what I began to do? When I watch television, I watch underneath of it. You want a good progression to start this? Go out and rent Alfred Hitchcock movies. What has that got to do with it? He makes a cameo appearance in every one of his movies and they are hidden. He did it because for you to stop watching the movie and look for him, you miss the movie line. The key for you and me is to stay with the movie line and find him in the movie. That is what it takes in the Bible. You stay with the storyline, but you are looking for what is really hidden in it.

Once I got it down, my wife and I just last week, we have been on this thing for five years. In The Wizard of Oz, a little munchkin hangs himself. It is caught on film. I know you are looking at me. We did too. We found it, did we not, honey? In fact, my wife found it. I have got to give her. I am down there in the basement with my dogs, studying away, laboring the Word of God. I hear my wife scream, "The munchkin hung himself! The munchkin hung himself!" I was running up the steps. We do not have a munchkin. In the movie, The Wizard of Oz, one of the little munchkins, for whatever reason, unknown to man, decided to hang himself. Maybe being short in life was too much for him to bear. I do not know. Maybe he got a Christian psychologist who said that is how you get taller. I do not know. But the bottom line is this: for years and years and years, I have heard that you can see a munchkin hang himself in The Wizard of Oz. Well, at that end, that is all I had to hear. I watched that thing. I know all the songs. I know all the people. Finally, my wife found it. She called me up, and honest to goodness, they are walking down this thing and they are in the foreground behind the scenes. You see just behind a shadow of a guy jumping off and swinging back and forth. Found it.

I have got to say this to you. It will ruin it for life. I cannot watch a war movie because if the M1 carbines have bayonet bands on it in World War II, I know it is not real. American Grahams have the M14 slings instead of leather slings, throw it out. It ruins it. Nothing worse than a war movie is when the panzer German tanks are coming and they are made up American Sherman or Patton tank. Oh, done with it. Turn it off. I am done. It will ruin you. But it will teach you to read the story, stay with the story, but look underneath and get the truth of what is coming out. Exactness. Attention to detail. That is what it is going to take. Applying the principles and the precepts of

the Word of God. By the way, there are seven life concepts in the book of Psalms. Principles and precepts are interchangeable. I use the word principle because everybody understands it. But there are seven. There is another good little study for you.

With that in mind, and that is what you know now how we are going to approach Sunday morning and Thursday night. I am going to come at it from a totally different angle. I am going to try to teach you, but I am going to try to stretch you. I am going to try to make you do the work. I am going to drop little things here. When you are working with people and a circumstance comes up, I am going to show you by the example, the principle and the precept involved. We have got to get this thing done.

I heard on the news today that the Israelis are going to drop a nuke over on Iran. I hope they do, but if it does, before we get ready, it is over because that will be the last straw. I am all for it. But you cannot tell me if you are a man here and you have got any red blood in your body, and if you are a woman here and you have got any red blood and you are saved on your way to heaven and you have been around here hearing this preaching, you cannot tell me that you just do not want to get in this fight one time before it is all over. You cannot tell me that you do not want to stick somebody with that book and get into a mix one time that you can stand there before the Lord and say, "Boy, I got my nose broke. My ears busted. I am blind in one eye, but man, I nailed him."

II. The Seven Series and Revelation

Today we are back in our study on the seven series in the book of Revelation. You know that we have started this over a year ago about how the Bible is a systematic layout of a system of sevens by which God designed the Bible to be opened up to you. It is as simple as that. We have come through a bunch of them. We are going to go through a bunch more. The next one we come through after we finish the book of Revelation will be the seven suicides in the Bible. I want you to understand the mindset behind suicide, just like I want you to understand the mindset behind deception. You have got to understand the Bible takes human nature and through the stories in the Bible strips it naked and bare because you and I have to see not what it appears to be, but what really is. It is the consistency of the principles and the concept and the precepts that show you what you have got. All you have got to do, it does not matter that you cannot see it. All that matters is you listen to what is being said and you are lined up if it smells right by the principles.

We started this couple of weeks ago, the book of Revelation, because I told you that the book of Revelation is commonly known as the hardest book in the Bible. I am debunking that and showing you that it is the easiest book in the Bible.

I will give you another little test here. I will give you several things to work on. Ray and I back here, we have been studying the Bible together, and Ray got a concept for me that he does now, and I call it my hot list. Every week I have got four or five things on my hot list that I have got to find out in the Bible. Some of it I get from you. Sometimes you come over to my house and you think I am teaching you, but you said something to me that I never saw before, and sometimes I will go home and get it in my Bible right after you leave. Sometimes it takes me a little longer.

But every week I have got four or five things on my hot list as Ray does now, and we have our hot list. In fact, it is a joke between him and I. Every Thursday night when I see him or when he comes over, we always compare hot lists.

Here is something for your hot list: In the Old Testament there are five wisdom books. What makes you think there are not five wisdom books in the New Testament? There are. I will give you one key: Revelation is one of them. You figure out the other four. The answer is so easy based on the tools I have already given you. You have got to start using what I give you. Quit going down to Home Depot and letting me buy you tools that you do not use. You have been around long enough. Your garage is a warehouse of biblical tools, and yet you still do not know how to pick up a screwdriver and screw in a screw.

Today we start our fourth church in the history of the New Testament. It was our first study in the series of sevens, and there are a whole bunch of them by which Revelation breaks down. You remember now, so far we have been coming through the seven periods of church history. The first thing in the book of Revelation God wanted you to know is where you and I have come from so we would understand where we are at so we would have a better appreciation and understanding of where we are going. This is what messes people up. Most of God's people, if not all of them today, have no idea what God wants them to do. So we could go on and on and on and talk about the reasons why, bad marriages, bad relationships, this or that. The truth of the matter is very simple. The reason why, in the lowest common denominator, they do not know where they are at is because they do not know where they came from. They are orphans in this world spiritually. They do not know where they have come from, and they have no clue where they are going, so how in the world would they know where they are at? That is the basic issue. The book of Revelation as one of the wisdom books in the New Testament solves that dilemma.

So far we came through the Ephesus period. It shows you from 60 AD to approximately 200 AD. Then we came through the Smyrna period, about 200 AD to 325 AD. Last time we were together, we had a couple of weeks off because of the holidays, we did some other things, but the last time we took two weeks and we talked about the Pergamos church period. The key point in history that you cannot miss, the key point in history of you and me and the church and understanding where we are at is Pergamos, which means "much marriage." We saw the concept of Constantine turning around and bringing an end to paganism in Rome and then starting what we know today as the Roman Catholic Church or Papal Rome, which goes off from there. We saw during this time the official start of the Roman Catholic Church around 325 AD with the Council of Nicaea.

III. The Thyatira Church Period and the Dark Ages

From 325 to about 400 AD, this time period that we are in right now, which is going to be called Thyatira, we see it brings in the Dark Ages. A thousand-year period in history from basically 500 AD to about 1500 AD, 1,000 years where the world is cast into absolute darkness as far as knowledge is concerned. This is the bleakest point in modern history of mankind. It is the time when there are no great inventions. It is a time where there is no great scientific discovery because every time a man comes up with a scientific discovery, it contradicts the Roman Catholic Church and they kill him. It is basically a time when the Roman Catholic Church runs

the world. You are saying you are being anti-Catholic. No, I am quoting history that you could go into any library in any city and go into the secular history section and find out what I am talking about. You see, you do not listen to what is being said.

Let me explain the Dark Ages to you very quickly. When the Roman Catholic Church came to world power in Thyatira, which starts about 500 and runs up to about 1000, after the 325 to 400 AD, we begin to see the Dark Ages come in. When the Roman Catholic Church comes into power, she basically does two things.

1. She begins to kill God's people again. Some of you, bless your hearts, I talked about the four books that you ought to have, the Christian I have. One of them was Fox's Book of Martyrs. I love this. Many of you got that book and many of you read the book, but you watched what you were reading and you came back to me with a great observation. "Bob, you said Constantine was a really bad guy, but in Fox's Book of Martyrs, what you said was a really good book, the writer says that Constantine did some good things. I am confused." Ah, I love it when you are that confused, that way. That is the right kind of confusion because now you have come up with a contradiction versus the Bible in history. Now we have got to find that answer, and the answer was simple. I told you, oh yes, Constantine passed what was called in history the Edict of Milan, which let the tolerance level down, and while he was letting all the pagans come into the church, he took the persecution off the Christians. Short term, that is what he did. Once the Roman Catholic Church, like a big old choo-choo train, got choo-chooing down the track, then he turned on the real Christians and began to wipe them out. Some estimates I have heard is in 1500 years, almost 200 million people, 200 million Christians, moms and dads, people just like yourselves that were butchered because they would not submit themselves to the Roman Catholic Church. That is the first thing they did.
2. The second thing they did was this: they began to suppress all the literature that was coming out of Antioch of Syria, and they began to flood the world with the manuscripts, and we talked about this a couple of weeks ago. They came out of Alexandria and had made their way into Rome. They had been corrupted.

IV. Revelation 2:18-28 and Historical Parallels

I want to read for you this morning Revelation 2. Let us look at this Thyatira. Now we have got a little introduction, and now that I have got a greater introduction, and you know how I am going to do this, I am going to list some things for you in here that are behind the scenes stuff. I have already given you three or four things that you need to put on your hot list. Maybe we will get a few more out of it. Let us see.

Revelation 2:18-29

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 brass;

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 bed, 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.

Now Father, we thank you for the Lord Jesus, thank you for your word, thank you for its clarity, its truth, its consistency, thank you for the precepts and the principles, Lord. That no matter whether I am reading it or whether I am dealing in somebody's life who has problems, Lord, that no matter, I just can never be deceived. No one can deceive me with the Bible unless I allow them to because of its clear principles that if I follow them the Bible says I will have understanding. And Lord, no one can deceive me when it comes to the issues of life because the same principles and the precepts that dictate the Bible structure also dictates the structure of life on planet earth. And in both cases to any Bible student the variations from those principles are very obvious. Help us today, Lord, help us over this next year. Raise up the men and women in this church that will not be deceived. Raise up the men and women in this church that will get into that Bible and look below. They will find the hidden things in the Word of God using the tools that I have already given them. Stop and help them, Lord, too, before they ask a question to go through the basic things that I have laid out. Put them in an order, following them through and coming up with the answers. And allow me to help them, allow me to show them examples, allow me to use the questions they ask to train them and to focus them and to sharpen them. Lord, allow me to use their mistakes as well as their good things to show them. Lord, let us learn from everything that we have in our church. And we will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for the sake we ask it. Amen.

This church is called Thyatira. The name Thyatira means "odor of affliction." This church, as I said, runs from about 500 AD up to about 1000 AD. In this church we see the rise of the Popes.

We see the establishment of a Roman Catholic Church doctrine. It is during this period of time that, as I said, millions and millions of Christians are butchered for their faith. A student of history from the Bible standpoint will now see two clear lines here. They are fully developed. They are not obscure anymore. Now you will see during this time period, if you are any kind of knowledge in the Bible, any kind of student of the Word of God, you will see two clear lines: God's line and the devil's line. God's church versus the devil's church. It is just that simple. Man makes history complicated like they make Revelation complicated. History is so basic and so simple if you just follow the basic principles that God has given you. I am telling you, they are the same principles you are going to have to use when you sit down with somebody to help solve life's problems. Some of them will take it. Some of them will deceive you. But that is life.

You have heard me talk about in the first and second centuries. Two people asked me this week why I am a Baptist in my dealing with people. They were on this question. They were not trick questions. They were somebody very sincere in both cases. I just cannot remember who it was. I have talked to so many people this week. They basically said, "Why are you a Baptist and why is your church a Baptist church?" My answer when somebody says, "Why are you a Baptist?" my answer is this: "Well, I am a Baptist with an explanation." Because I know as soon as I am standing here that 99.999999999% of Baptists are idiots. You say, "You are a Baptist, Baxio." Yeah, you are absolutely right. I am one so I can bash it. You are right. Yeah, I am because they are idiots. They have lost their way. They are more interested in building great monuments to man than they are building anything for the Lord. That is where we part. You say or they say that, probably so. You love them. But when the book goes this way and you go this way, I will see you later. It is as simple as that. That is the way it has to be.

I told you early on when this thing started, back in the first and second century, when the line began to develop very subtly and these bad teachings were beginning to formulate and swing around. There were pastors like myself. There were churches probably no bigger than this. The teaching was coming in that was heresy. The higher educated crowd out there, the Alexandria crowd and that thing floating around out there, were coming in and bringing all kinds of heresy into the church. The pastor would stand up in a pulpit much like I would. He would say, "You know what, boys, let them hit the road. We are staying with the Word of God." The congregation of that church would do a resounding, "All right!" I feel better. Thought you all were Episcopalian on me here for a second. All right.

That pastor's name was Novatian. The pastor down the street, his name was Nestorius. The guy down the road, his name was Montanus. A guy over here, his name was Manes. When they took a stand in their churches, just little groups like this, the higher education crowd looking down their nose from their big crystal cathedral with the fountains out front, they looked down and they said, "They are heretics. You are a bunch of heretics. You are just following a man." So you people that are following Nestorian, we will call you Nestorians. You people that are following Manes, we will call you Manichaeans. You people that want to hold to Paul's teachings instead of teaching to the church that says Peter was the first pope, we will call you Paulicians. That was in the first and second century.

Time goes on. Now we are in Thyatira. We are 400, 500, 600, 700. Christianity has exploded. There are hundreds of thousands of men and women who are now saved. Street preaching and telling people one on one by their lifestyle is rampant, and they are everywhere in Europe. Now when the Roman Catholic Church comes to power and she wants to wipe them out, they are no longer following just a man. They have overtaken countries. So now the Roman Catholic Church in history cannot call them anymore by the person that they are following. Now they call them by the geographical location by which they are all living. So we find in North Italy they are called the Lombards. We found in Southern Italy and up into France they are called Waldensians. We found they are called Lollards in Holland. We found they are called Henricians. We found they are called Huguenots. They are called Albigensians in South France. They are called Hussites in Bohemia. They are called all the names, not by the men anymore, but now by the geographic part of the country by which they live because there are millions of them. See, in the first couple of centuries they were called by the men they were following, but Christianity grew. Now they are overrunning Europe like ants at a picnic. The Roman Catholic Church cannot call them by one man, so they have got to call them by a geographical location in Europe by which they live.

Now we come to 1400 and 1500, they are everywhere. They are tearing up everything. People are getting saved, and the Roman Catholic Church is going bananas. The single doctrine that they are preaching against, the single doctrine that these men and women, just like you, just like me, who worked every day, who never had the benefit or the disbenefit of a college education from the Bible, simply common men who loved God, common women who loved the Lord Jesus Christ, who understood their mission were telling one on one the story, the wondrous news of the grace of God and the blood of Christ against an organization that was taking away from the blood. Their greatest doctrine was preaching against infant baptism for salvation, which was the Roman Catholic's big stick. So where in the first and second century they are called by the men they are followed, in the 500 to 1000, 1200, they are called by a geographical location, now they get a new name. Now they get a name based on the doctrine that they are standing by. They are called Anabaptists. Against "pedro," "pedro," "pedro," "pedro," Spanish for a little kid, "pedro," Anabaptist. Against child baptism. Now because they are everywhere and the issue is a doctrine now, a main doctrine on the salvation of the world through the blood of Christ. Now they are called Anabaptists. By the time 1500 and 1600 they are called Baptist. That is my explanation of why I am a Baptist. That is why we will never take Baptist off our name, no matter if all the Baptists in the world are nuts. I will, the day I die, declare why I am with an explanation that I just gave you.

Being a Baptist, a biblical Baptist, is the greatest heritage you can have because all of these Bible groups that I just mentioned down through history all come out on the other end as Baptist. There are no Methodists, there are no Presbyterians, there are no Episcopalians, they are all Anabaptists. The first Baptist church in America was in 1627 in Providence, Rhode Island by a man named John Clarke. John Clarke was an English Baptist out of the Waldensians. That line goes right back. People think that Baptist is a denomination. It is the only group in the world that has stood for the truth down through history. Now today it is all screwed up. That is not my fault. I know everything in the world is my fault, but that is not my fault.

You know why I believe the King James Bible and the Word of God? You know why I will use this? Because this Bible, as you will see, came out of this line. This is the only book in the world if you have got a real King James Bible in the front of it you have got a dedicatory. It is the only book in the world that when the guys sat down to translate it, they wanted everybody to know they were doing this against the Roman Catholic Church. So in a dedicatory they took a stand against the Roman Catholic Church. That is why it is hated. The Roman Catholic Church, this book has been on the index. You know what the index is? It is the official list of Roman Catholic books you cannot read. This book has been on the index for 1500 years!

Now let us break this chapter down. Now you know where we are coming from. I do not know if you know who Avro Manhattan is. Avro Manhattan was a British guy, and he is probably the world's most authority. He is dead now. He probably was the world's most authority in the Roman Catholic Church. He wrote probably 30 books on every aspect of the Roman Catholic Church which was absolutely incredible. They just detailed out everything. Unbelievable. This guy, I do not know how he survived to a ripe old age. He was absolutely incredible. Yet there were some great books written on the Roman Catholic Church. But somebody said one time years ago, the greatest book against the Roman Catholic Church was not written by man. The greatest book against the Roman Catholic Church was written by God. That is the Bible.

You are going to have to see in this chapter now because now we are in it. We saw in the Pergamos where it all got started and now it has been forming. Now in 500 AD with Thyatira, "odor of affliction," we see the true nature. This is one of the greatest keys in all of the Bible.

Look at verse 21. Look at verse 21. Pick it up in verse 20.

Revelation 2:20-21

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.

Hey, we are in 500 AD. Jezebel is 1 Kings 16. 1,500 years in history. What in the world in 500 AD with a religious system do we have Jezebel showing up? I will tell you why, because one of the greatest studies you will ever find in your Bible. Remember I showed you a couple weeks ago that Baal worship in the Old Testament is nothing more than Roman Catholicism in the New Testament? Here is the verse that you prove it with. You go back to 1 Kings 16. You know what you have? You have two people, Ahab and Jezebel. Ahab is the king of Israel. Jezebel is his wife. You are going to find where Ahab represents the antichrist. Jezebel represents Baal worship and a religion in the tribulation period. In the Old Testament, she is the prophetess of Baal. Jezebel, see her last name? Jezebel, Baal, Baal worship. It is Jezebel who is the prophetess, a woman preacher in the Old Testament nation of Israel that brings in Baal worship. She is married to Ahab, the wickedest king Israel ever had. He is one of the 18 types of the antichrist in the Old Testament. When it comes over to Babylon, Mystery, Religion, the mother of Harlots, Revelation 17 and 18, they are talking about the harlot of harlots, Jezebel.

How many times you watch television and some woman gets into somebody else's marriage and they say, "She is just a Jezebel." Nobody calls their daughter named Jezebel. I have been going to the hospital kissing new babies for 40 years. I always ask the first thing, "What is your name?" Her usually comes back, "It is a him." I never figured out pink and blue later on in life. Never a woman, never. "Oh, we called her Jezebel." I have never been where, I will tell you another, I have never been in, "Oh, we call him Judas." Those are two names you do not get. I will tell you why because it tells you in the Bible that Judas, it tells you that nobody will ever bear his name again. It tells you that in the Bible, but that is one of those things you put on your hot list. Jezebel, there is a reason what she represents. We find that during this time we find that Ahab and Jezebel are pictures of what Israel is going to be into religion wise or the Antichrist.

So here it is, right smack dab in the beginning of this chapter on Thyatira up in the middle of this church shows up Jezebel, and what is she doing? What is this dear sweet lady doing in this dear sweet godly church? She is teaching and seducing my servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. You know what comes to be a full blown doctrine around 400, 500 AD? The mass, we call it transubstantiation. What is transubstantiation? Brother Muckaluck stands up there, he takes a piece of bread, a wafer, called the host. He has the mystical, magical power from Almighty God to transform that wafer into the literal body of Christ, and when you take that wafer and eat that you have just received Christ in the Roman Catholic context. That is what it is. If he would drop, you notice how they put a golden chalice under your chin? That is so you do not drop Jesus on the floor. If you do drop Jesus on the floor, you can laugh all you want. There is an eight-hour procession in the canon of the Catholic church that he has to go through to get Jesus back up off the floor without desecrating him anymore. Then he takes the wine. He takes the wine which is fermented hooch, Deuteronomy 32, and then he magically changes that to the real blood of Christ, and then when you take the host and you drink the blood you have just received Christ by the Roman Catholic standards. That is what he is talking about when it says, "she taught my servants to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

Look at verse 20 and 21 again. I love this too.

Revelation 2:20-21

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 bed with them that commit adultery and with her in the great tribulation. Now what do you see from that? There is something you want to catch. There is something behind the scenes. We are talking about 500 AD here. We are talking about the beginning of the Dark Age with the Roman Catholic Church. You know what that shows me? It shows me this church starts in 500 AD but it runs all the way to the tribulation period. You see that? It starts in 500 AD but it runs. The end result is the great tribulation going all the way through. No breaks all the way through. You ought to be able to trace that line through history.

Look at the next thing.

Revelation 2:26

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

You know what that, notice that "I will" present tense. You know what verse 26 is a reference to? It is a reference to the great Philadelphian church age which is coming up about 1600. That is what it is a reference to.

Look at verse 23.

Revelation 2:23

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.

Notice the "I will" future tense. You know what that is a reference to? That is a reference to the Black Death, 1437, it swept across Europe. When the Black Death swept across Europe, it wiped out Europe. At the end of that thing there was not enough live people to bury the dead people. You know who did not get the Black Death? The first people who did not get it were the Jews. The second people who did not get it were most of the Waldensians, the Albigensians, and the Huguenots. You know why? You know who got it? Roman Catholic Church. You know why the Jews did not get it and the Waldensians did not get it? Because they were believing the principles and the Word of God, and back in the Old Testament in Leviticus, it was telling them they washed their hands, they washed their hands in running water. The Europeans were washing their hands in bowls and just transferring the germs from one place to another. The Bible principle precept says you want to get the germs off, wash your hands in running water so that you did not get the Black Plague. You know what the Roman Catholic Church did with that? They blamed the fact that the Black Death came as a curse from the Christians and the Jews, and that is why we got it, so they launched an army to kill Christians and Jews again. See how it works? That is history. That is history on the principles of the Word of God.

V. The Morning Star: John Wycliffe and the English Bible

The last thing in verse 28, and this is definitely my favorite, and this is where I am going to go from third gear to fourth gear and tramp on the gas. Look at this thing, verse 28.

Revelation 2:28

And I will give him the morning star.

Note again, "I will, I will, I will give Him the morning star," future tense. Now I want to tell you that doctrinally that morning star is Christ because doctrinally it is a future reference to the second coming of Christ. Now if you have got an NIV and you go back to Isaiah 14 where it talks about Lucifer before he fell, the devil, it calls him the morning star in my Bible. That is a reference to Jesus Christ in Revelation 2, the morning star. So you are going to find a new NIV

which is from corrupt manuscripts where they took back there and he took "Son of the Morning" out and put "the morning star" in and made the devil Jesus Christ in your Bible. That is Arabic for "have at it."

Now doctrinally it is Christ, that reference is Isaiah 14:12 if I remember right. But inspirationally, oh no, inspirationally, historically it is a picture of one man, one man, and that man's name is John Wycliffe. That man lives from 1320 to 1384. Notice he says, "I will give the morning star," future tense. John Wycliffe in any book on history you are going to find is called the "Morning Star of the Reformation." John Wycliffe was a Bible believing Christian. John Wycliffe took a stand for the common man in the midst of the darkness. You know what he does? I tell you what he does. He sets the pattern for you and for me because I want to say something to you folks. If you do not think we are in a dark ages again today of just a different sort, we are. Back then in the Dark Ages there was probably one Bible for every 20,000 people. We do not have that many today because of what the devil has done in taking the Word of God out of people's hand. We are in a Dark Ages.

If there is any man that set the pattern for me years ago of my ministry, if there is any man that has been dead, not alive, if there is any man in history that when I saw his life, studied his life, and there are reams of material on him, if there is any man that forged and formed my mindset for ministry and my pattern of ministry once I understood my time period where I am living, it was Wycliffe. No pastor ever regarded the condition of his people more than Wycliffe did as a pastor. You know what he did? He brought the common man the truth. With great opposition, he was a light that shined in darkness. When asked one time how the Word of God should be preached, he stated the Word of God should be preached appropriately, simply, correctly and directly and from a sincere heart. It does not get any better than that. His purpose was to bring to the common people the truth, that the way of salvation lay through an understanding of the Word of God. That is what he did. He is the first in a long line to get you and me your King James Bible this morning. When you come on Sunday morning, when you come on Thursday night, when you look at your Bible and know you ought to read it and you decide to do something else, you got that Bible because out of the black, bleak darkness, God gave a glimmer of light that was the first man who had the courage to bring to the people the first English translation of the text out of Antioch. With him, God began to turn on the lights.

Not to get ahead of myself, but as part of this story, the hand of God in history and the Bible. With the development of the English language coming out of Saxon and coming out of Germany and out of France and out of England as it began to form. God knew that the English language was going to be the final language of the world universally before the second coming of Christ. God knew that he had to give the common man a Bible in the last common language. Wycliffe was the man that God began to turn the lights on with.

Then along came William Tyndale. Tyndale lives almost 150 years after him. He translates the second Bible to the common man in English. But this time all of England is Roman Catholic, all of Europe is Roman Catholic, and they take Tyndale and they burn him at the stake. I am telling you my friend, I am telling you, the heritage and the courage of the men and women that paid the price for you and I not to read that Bible, not to give your life to Christ, to sit here this morning,

saved, sanctified and on your way to heaven and going to meet your Savior with not one combat under your belt, not one bayonet thrust, not one burst of fire, not one frontal assault, not one attack, just sitting, satisfied, soaking it up. Oh, the jubilee of Christ is going to be a day when you and I stand next to Tyndale and Wycliffe and Novatian and Manichaeans. Oh, the hand of God down through history.

His last words as the fire consumed his body, his last words over the flames was, "Dear God, open the King of England's eyes." You asked me this last week, Mikey, somebody giving you a tough time about King James, was it not? No clue. All kinds of stuff about King James. Guy said one time, "Well, how do you have a King James Bible? King James was a homosexual." I said, "You read the book Psalms?" "Yeah, I love Psalms." "Well, he was an adulterer and a murderer." Yeah, he got that quiet. How you say King James was homosexual when the favorite book in your Bible, Psalms, was written by an adulterer and a murderer, David? You like Moses? He was a murderer. See? Second of all, he was not a homosexual. Everybody likes to make these big things up. They do not see the hand of God in history. When Tyndale was burned at the stake, he said, "God, open the King of England's eyes." 70 years later, God answered that prayer. James I of Scotland on the throne of England said, "Put her out to the world, boys. Put her out to the world." I am telling you, that book is something else. God uses kings, queens. God uses men, unsaved men, saved men, just as he uses Cyrus to get the Jews back in the book of Nehemiah, in the book of Esther, he used King James to get the word. Some of you, you believe King James was saved? I do not really care if he was or he was not. He was no more saved than Cyrus was or Nebuchadnezzar was. The Bible says the hand of the King is in the hand of the Lord. You think James I or Bloody Mary or Queen Elizabeth or Victoria is going to stop a sovereign God from doing his plan?

Wycliffe taught that no pope had the right to tell anybody about anything. He was not infallible. He taught the church is teaching, when the church is teaching, contradicting the Bible, throw the church out. He taught against Rome and all of its teachings. He especially hated the doctrine of Nicolaitans. He said no priest should raise himself to the point where he is a Lord over the common man. He stood up against blindly following the Roman Catholic Church in light of the clear teaching of the scriptures. The Roman Catholic Church hated him. His Bible was only indexed. Still is today. But they did not get him. He survived to live a ripe old age. They never got him. But Rome was never satisfied with that. He died an old man doing his work. Rome hated him so bad, 31 years after he was dead, they dug up his skeleton, put his skeleton on trial, found him guilty of heresy, and then burned his skeleton at the stake. I am telling you, no man, no single man had more of an impact on the Dark Ages and bringing about the light than what he did.

His Bible, my friend, listen to me, was the first of eight Bibles that came from the text out of Antioch. The last one being your King James 1611. The first one was Wycliffe's in 1392. The second was Tyndale's in 1532. Then it was Coverdale's in 1537. Then it was Matthew Henry's in 1537. Then it was Coverdale's Great Bible in 1539. Then it was the Geneva Bible. That is the one the pilgrims came over with at Mayflower in 1560. Then it was the Bishops' Bible in 1568. The

last one was 1611, Authorized Version, and there has never been another one since. In history, he is called the "Morning Star of the Reformation." Why? The first glimmer of light to a dark world.

You know what he does? He takes a group of men and trains them to preach. You know what they are called in history? I already gave you the name once. They are Lollards. The Lollards go up into Bohemia. They get ahold of a man by the name of John Hus. He gets a whole bunch of people together fired up with the word of God, and they call them Hussites. Those are the groups that come into the Anabaptist movement that are your forefathers today as far as the heritage that you got your Bible with. The idea that Baptist churches today would forsake that blood-bought book that was paid for by the men like Tyndale and Wycliffe and the men that paid the price is more than I can comprehend, and they will give an account at the judgment seat of Christ.

VI. The Current Dark Ages and Call to Action

Today history has repeated itself. We again find ourselves in the Dark Ages. When I gave you that verse a couple of weeks ago about the devil at Job 4:13 where it simply said, "Who can discover the face of his garment?" That is an understatement. We are in a time where the devil tries to get everybody to believe that everything is new. The world today is pretty much an illusion, my friend. God's people are walking around believing they are going to live their life forever. They are walking around making all their investments in all the material things in this world. They are walking around with their head up in the air, and they have lost their way. They are blind. They do not understand that God has an agenda, and there is an urgency to that agenda, and the devil has got us to believe, like I said last week, that everything is in no hurry. When he could not get God's people to join his church, the Roman Catholic Church, he just got them to stay in their own churches but just use his Bible. When he did that, the lights went out.

That is why you go to the average church in this city. You pick whatever one you want to go to. I do not care. Try me out. Do not all do it the same week and nobody will be here. But try it sometime. You will hear the most watered-down, mealy-mouthed sermons you have ever heard in your life. No hell, no judgment, no hell-and-fire damnation. Just you are all good and all sweet. We all have to get along. I mean, I will tell you what, it just makes you want to puke. Well, it does in Revelation 4, because it is the only church that makes God sick. He spews the angel out of its mouth. That is where you are at today. No doctrine, no teaching. Everything just floating around out there. If it is good, it is of God. If it is bad, it is of the devil. Do not worry about the book of Job. Do not worry about Romans 8:28. Just everybody, find out where you are at. Your experience is all that you need. No Bible. When you go to most churches, you do not have to take your Bible anymore. There is one in the pew. They do not even do that anymore. They will put it up on the screen. They have taken away all your responsibilities when it comes to the Word of God. No wonder they do not want to read it at home. Talk about mind control. They can put anything they want up there. It is just the way that it is today.

But you know what? We are in the Dark Ages. What God needs today is God needs some men and women that will take a stand. That is what I am talking about. I am talking about some men and women who say, "You know what? I am going to do what God wants me to do. I am going to get every weight off me that does easily beset me in my race, and I am going to get rid of it. I am

going to do whatever I have got to do." But I am going to tell you right now, the only thing—I am telling you right now, unless you approach this thing, as I said when I started my message, unless you start taking the Word of God and using the tools that I have given you, exactness, by the book, looking at the principles, operating by the principles, following the line, staying with it, and watching the consistency of the Scriptures and the Bible and the way it lays itself out. Then when you start to work with people, you are bringing it right over into people's lives. The book is the book, and it is the same as you read it, as the same as you dish it out and give it to somebody. The principles in the Word of God are binding, they are everlasting, they are absolute, and not only were given so you could unlock the Bible, they were given so you could have the victory in your life. So you cannot have one without the other. You will never get to the place when you work with people well, because you will get deceived in five minutes by what they say if you do not forget what they say and smell what they are selling. Line it up to the principles. That is the only way, but you have got to have lined it up with the principles first. You have got to learn the book itself first.

So that is what we are going to do. One of you that come over or are coming over, I am going to start now showing you the principles, some of you already have. On Thursday night, Sunday morning, whenever I teach, whenever question you ask, I am going to ask the crowd, "Okay, what principles are involved?" We are going to start stretching ourselves. It does not matter if you give the wrong answer, I would rather have a wrong answer than no answer. I do not mind when people make mistakes. Everybody makes mistakes. You make them, I make them, and in the ministry you are going to make them. I make them. We are all going to make them. There is no perfect minister. The only thing I require of you is to learn from your mistakes and do not make the same mistake twice. That is what it takes. Learn from the Bible. Go home and put that thing in. Nail it down. Work it through. Start looking for the things in the scriptures that are the exact principles that you have to unlock it with. Then, once you get it down in your mind, go by The Wizard of Oz. It will be a cinch for you. You will sit that thing there. "Oh, there he is, swinging." You are going to the movie theater, get in the first five minutes, say, "Yup, not real, I am leaving." You will want to buy all the things. Instead of buying the trilogy to Rocky 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, or The Lord of the Rings 5, 6, and 7, you will be buying all of Alfred Hitchcock's movies. You will say, "On this one, I saw him here." They are tough. I have gotten every one of them down but one. I think he lied about one. The last one I got him in was a movie named Topaz. He tricks you up. You think that he is going to walk by and say, it is not like that. The last one was so subtle. The scene is this: here again, a man and a guy are talking. That is where you are focusing, because you want to follow the movie. Now you would expect Alfred Hitchcock to walk by or you would expect when the scene cuts away that he would be walking across the street. This one was subtle. A guy walks by, never looks at the camera, is looking in a store window, and he goes by, and the reflection on the mirror of the window is Alfred Hitchcock. He wanted you to get so caught in the story that you would never see him. That is what people want you to do when you deal with them. They want you to get so caught up in the circumstances you miss the real reflection of what is going on. That is the way it is in the Bible. You read the book and you get the material, and God set it up so you just cannot read the story or you are going to miss the reflection.

Did you ever notice how that Bible is likened to a looking glass over in the New Testament in James? He says no man, he says no man that, a man looks into a glass. He says he sees himself in his reflection. He says, "So are they that look into the perfect law of liberty." This Bible is a looking glass. It shows you the true condition of not only yourself, that is where you have to start. You cannot look at somebody else's condition until you deal with your own. You look at yourself first and then it shows you the true reflection of what everything in life is. It starts with going down deep and understanding that it is the exactness of God's consistency. I will help you with it. We are going to work on it this next year. It is going to be our goal, and out of that I am asking God to give me some men and women that will stand up in this thing and really get the tools done. I am tired of taking you to Home Depot, buying you all the tools and you building nothing with it. We are going to start to work with the tools.