

## *Recognizing His Hidden Strategies in the Church*

Among the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation, the church in Thyatira stands out in a unique and surprising way. Unlike many of the others, this church received praise from the Lord Jesus for its continual spiritual progress. It was growing in love, faith, service, and patient endurance. Christ Himself said, *“I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first”* (Revelation 2:19, ESV).

This is a powerful commendation. While other churches were faltering, Thyatira was advancing. However, that very progress attracted the attention of the enemy. Satan did not attack this church through open persecution or moral failure alone. Instead, he used a much more dangerous method: deception through spiritual mystery.

Satan employed hidden traps — subtle and spiritual-looking — to infiltrate the church. He masked his tactics so well that some believers thought they were still serving God, when in fact they were aligning themselves with the enemy. This is what Jesus referred to as *“the deep things of Satan”* (Revelation 2:24).

Let us, therefore, uncover some of Satan’s spiritual mysteries — deceptive tactics he continues to use today — so that we may stand firm and not fall prey to them.

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#### 1. Satan Wants Us to Believe He Cannot Tell the Truth

We often assume that everything Satan says must be a lie. While he is indeed “*the father of lies*” (John 8:44), he often uses truth deceptively — not to enlighten but to ensnare.

In Acts 16:16–18, when the apostle Paul was ministering in Philippi, a slave girl possessed by a spirit of divination followed him around, crying out, “*These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.*” This statement was true. However, the spirit’s goal was not to support the gospel but to subtly attach itself to Paul’s ministry and disarm his discernment.

Eventually, Paul, “*having become greatly annoyed,*” discerned the deception and commanded the spirit to leave her in Jesus’ name (Acts 16:18, ESV). The girl was freed, but Paul and Silas were thrown into prison as a result.

Application: Just because something sounds true doesn't mean it is from God. Not all revelations, visions, or even prophecies that correctly describe your life are of the Holy Spirit. Truth without the right source and fruit can be a trap. *"You will recognize them by their fruits"* (Matthew 7:16, ESV). Always test the spirits (1 John 4:1).

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## 2. Satan Wants Us to Believe He Cannot Be Present in Church

Many believers falsely assume that Satan only operates outside the church. But Revelation 2:20 exposes this lie. Jesus rebukes the church in Thyatira, saying:

*"But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols."* (Revelation 2:20, ESV)

This "Jezebel" was not an outsider — she was inside the church, likely a respected figure. Yet she was introducing false teaching and leading believers astray under the guise of spirituality.

Application: Even sincere, growing believers can be misled if they blindly trust every spiritual leader. Just because someone stands

behind a pulpit or has a title doesn't mean their message aligns with Scripture. Always weigh teaching against the Bible. The Bereans were commended for testing even Paul's message by the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).

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### 3. Satan Wants Us to Picture Him Only as Frightening or Evil-Looking

In many people's minds, Satan is imagined as a terrifying figure with horns, red skin, and a pitchfork. But this stereotype is far from reality.

The Bible tells us that Satan "*disguises himself as an angel of light*" (2 Corinthians 11:14, ESV). Before his fall, he was a beautiful and powerful angel (Ezekiel 28:12-17). He still uses beauty, comfort, and even wealth to deceive.

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he didn't come in terrifying form — he came offering the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:8-9).

Application: Not every open door or success is from God. Not every peaceful moment is divine peace. Satan can offer worldly

blessings to lure you into spiritual compromise. Discernment is key. Ask not just *“Is this good?”* but *“Is this from God?”*

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#### 4. Satan Wants Us to Think He Cannot Support God’s Work

Satan will sometimes appear to defend or support God’s agenda — but only as a tactic to infiltrate or derail it.

When Jesus told His disciples about His coming suffering and death, Peter reacted emotionally:

*“Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”*  
(Matthew 16:22, ESV)

Peter’s words sounded protective, but Jesus recognized the real source:

*“Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”* (Matthew 16:23, ESV)

Satan had momentarily hijacked Peter’s compassion to try and stop Jesus from fulfilling His mission.

Application: Sometimes Satan will “support” your calling, your ministry, your purpose — just enough to steer you off course. That’s why spiritual flattery and even “well-meaning” counsel must be weighed carefully.

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5. Satan Wants Us to Believe He Cannot Pretend to Be Weak

Sometimes the enemy gains ground not by opposition, but by pretending to be defeated or submissive.

In Joshua 9, the Gibeonites deceived Israel by pretending to be foreigners seeking peace. Joshua made a covenant with them without seeking God’s counsel, only to discover later that they were local enemies (Joshua 9:14-15).

Application: Satan can flatter you, shrink back in apparent defeat, or act as though he’s not a threat — just to lower your guard. Discernment requires constant reliance on the Holy Spirit and not just your own understanding.

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6. Satan Wants Us to Think He Is Ignorant or Unaware

In Genesis 3, Satan approached Eve with a question that sounded innocent:

*“Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”* (Genesis 3:1, ESV)

He deliberately twisted God’s command, pretending ignorance to provoke Eve into engaging with him. That conversation led to humanity’s fall.

Application: The enemy still uses this tactic today. He may pretend to be naïve, harmless, or in need of explanation — drawing you into a trap. Don’t explain or negotiate with temptation. Cut it off at the root.

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A Final Word: Are You Spiritually Awake?

These are the last days. The enemy knows his time is short, and he is working overtime to deceive, distract, and destroy. That is why Paul urges us to *“not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs”* (2 Corinthians 2:11, ESV).

So the question is: Are you saved? If Christ were to return today,

would you be taken with Him, or left behind?

Jesus is the only way, truth, and life (John 14:6). No amount of spiritual appearance, religious activity, or church attendance can replace a genuine relationship with Him. If you haven't repented of your sins and given your life to Christ, today is the day.

Repent. Believe. Follow.

And walk in the light, with eyes wide open to the enemy's devices.

May the Lord bless you and keep you steadfast in truth.

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