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PHILADELPHIA



THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

EPHESUS



PERGAMOS



THYATIRA



SARDIS



LAODICEA



**"HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES"**

Rev. 2:7



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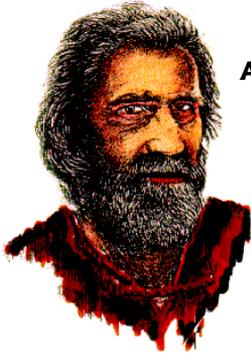
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The majority of scripture references quoted in this book are from the New King James Version by Thomas Nelson Publishers.

For some time I have been persuaded that this is the finest English translation of the Bible. My thanks to Thomas Nelson Publishers for this helpful aid to God's people.

Pastor Randy Shupe



**“FOR THE TIME HAS COME
FOR JUDGMENT TO BEGIN
AT THE HOUSE OF GOD;
AND IF IT BEGINS WITH US FIRST,
WHAT SHALL BE THE END
OF THOSE WHO
DO NOT OBEY
THE GOSPEL OF GOD?
IF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE
IS SCARCELY SAVED,
WHERE WILL
THE UNGODLY
AND
THE SINNER
APPEAR?”**

1 Pet. 4:17-18



**“...THE THINGS
WHICH SHALL
TAKE PLACE
AFTER THIS.”**



**“BLESSED IS HE
WHO READS
AND THOSE WHO HEAR
THE WORDS OF THIS PROPHECY,
AND KEEP THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN IT;
FOR THE TIME IS NEAR”**

Rev. 1:3

**“BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY!
BLESSED IS HE
WHO KEEPS THE WORD
OF THIS PROPHECY...”**

Rev. 22:7





**"HE
WHO HAS
AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT**

THE SPIRIT

**SAYS TO
THE CHURCHES."**



**THE SEVEN LETTERS
TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

INTRODUCTION

THE THEME OF REVELATION



“FOR THE TIME HAS COME FOR JUDGMENT TO BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD; AND IF IT BEGINS WITH US FIRST, WHAT SHALL BE THE END OF THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY THE GOSPEL OF GOD? IF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE IS SCARCELY SAVED, WHERE WILL THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER APPEAR?”

1 Pet. 4:17-18

It is in the book of Revelation that we will find the answers to the questions Peter poses above. Those who profess to know God, but choose not to obey the gospel of God, along with the ungodly and the sinner, will end up facing the wrath of God during the great and terrible tribulation which is coming. Jesus warns His people:

“BUT TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES, LEST YOUR HEARTS BE WEIGHED DOWN WITH CAROUSING, DRUNKENNESS, AND THE CARES OF THIS LIFE, AND THAT DAY COME ON YOU UNEXPECTEDLY. FOR IT WILL COME AS A SNARE ON ALL WHO DWELL ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH. WATCH THEREFORE, AND PRAY ALWAYS THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS...”

Luke 21:34-36



Where then shall those who remain ungodly and un-repentant sinners appear? At the Great White throne Judgment:

“THEN I SAW A GREAT WHITE THRONE... AND I SAW THE DEAD, SMALL AND GREAT, STANDING BEFORE GOD...AND THE DEAD WERE JUDGED ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS BY THE THINGS WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE BOOKS... AND ANYONE NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE...WHICH BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH.”

Rev. 21:11-15, 22:8



It takes twenty-one chapters in the book of Revelation to answer the two questions presented by the apostle Peter as to the eternal destiny of (1) professing Christians who do not obey the gospel of God, and (2) the destiny of the ungodly and the un-repentant sinner. God's intention in giving such a detailed blow-by-blow account in those twenty-one chapters is to cause men to weigh the cost of making the wrong choice. Prophecy's purpose is to cause men to be able to know the outcome in advance before it comes to pass in order that they might be persuaded to believe before it is too late:

**"NOW I TELL YOU
BEFORE IT COMES,
THAT WHEN IT DOES COME TO PASS,
YOU MAY BELIEVE..."**

John 13:19

**"BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE
THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD,
AND THAT BELIEVING,
YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME."**

John 20:31



Considering those thoughts, you can begin to see why the book of Revelation emphasizes this thought in its opening verses:



**"BLESSED IS HE WHO READS AND
THOSE WHO HEAR THE WORDS OF THIS
PROPHECY, AND KEEP THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN IT;
FOR THE TIME IS NEAR."**

Revelation 1:3

We might also inject the severe warning Jesus states in the end of this book pertaining to adding to or taking away from the prophecy contained in this book:

**"FOR I TESTIFY TO EVERYONE WHO
HEARS THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK:
IF ANYONE ADDS TO THESE THINGS,
GOD WILL ADD TO HIM THE PLAGUES THAT ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK;
AND IF ANYONE TAKES AWAY
FROM THE WORDS OF THE BOOK OF THIS PROPHECY,
GOD SHALL TAKE AWAY HIS PART FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE,
FROM THE HOLY CITY,
AND FROM THE THINGS WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK."**

Revelation 22:18-19

I believe we can see that God is deadly serious about anyone adding to or taking away from what is contained in this end-time prophetic book written to persuade men to repent.

And so it is with a somber attitude that this author and teacher approaches any aspect of teaching the contents of the book of Revelation. Highly valuing my own part in the Book of Life, and the promise of my part in the holy city, I am firmly committed to speak the truth in love as the scripture instructs me to always seek to do.

We live in difficult times because the Word of God is being handled so deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:4), and also is being peddled for monetary gain (2 Cor.2:17). The apostle Peter gave a prophetic warning about this very thing:

**“BUT THERE WERE ALSO
FALSE PROPHETS AMONG THE PEOPLE,
EVEN AS THERE WILL BE
FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU,
WHO WILL SECRETLY BRING IN
DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES...
AND MANY WILL FOLLOW
THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS,
BECAUSE OF WHOM
THE WAY OF TRUTH
WILL BE BLASPHEMED.
BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL
EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS...”**

2 Peter 2:1-3



The contents of Revelation states some very hard sayings such as we find Jesus speaking to one of His wayward churches, “I will spew you out of my mouth unless you repent” (Rev. 3:15-19). Therefore, you will find that I will make no attempt to make the scripture say anything it does not say, nor will I take away from what it also plainly states. I firmly believe Jesus said what He meant, and He meant what He said. We are not to add to or take away from its content.

Let me give you several more thoughts for your consideration in this brief word of introduction. The major theme which constitutes what is expressed in the book of Revelation can be summed up in one single word: “judgment”:

**JUDGMENT:
“A CALAMITY INFLICTED BY GOD
FOR THE PUNISHMENT OF SINNERS;
THE FINAL TRIAL FOR THE HUMAN RACE”**

Webster

JUDGMENT

**“...YOU ARE TREASURING UP
FOR YOURSELF WRATH IN
THE DAY OF WRATH AND REVELATION
OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD.”**

Rom. 2:5

JUDGMENT:
**"A CALAMITY INFLICTED BY GOD FOR
THE PUNISHMENT OF SINNERS;
THE FINAL TRIAL FOR THE HUMAN RACE"**

Webster

REVELATION

**"...YOU ARE TREASURING UP
FOR YOURSELF WRATH IN
THE DAY OF WRATH AND REVELATION
OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD."**

Rom. 2:5

What Webster defines as judgment above can easily be applied as a description of the contents of the entire book of Revelation. Likewise the verse above from Romans so vividly describes God's pending judgments. The theme of the book of Revelation is the systematic outpouring of the wrath of God. This prophetic book begins with the judgment of the house of God (Chapters 1-3) and ends with the great white throne judgment of the wicked dead (Chapter 20). The word "judgment" is an accurate synopsis of the theme of the major content of the book of Revelation. Think about this: of the twenty-two chapters in Revelation, we find that the subject of judgment dominates eighteen of them:

1. **JUDGMENT** of the house of God (Chapters 1-3)
2. **JUDGMENT** of the Jew.... (Chapters 7,14)
3. **JUDGMENT** of the Gentile (Chapters 6-16)
4. **JUDGMENT** of the Great Harlot (Chapter 7)
5. **JUDGMENT** of the great city (Mystery Babylon-Chapter 18)
6. **JUDGMENT** of the satanic trinity (Chapter 19)
7. **JUDGMENT** of the wicked dead-great white throne (Chapter 20)

Seven is God's number of perfection in scripture. Here is perfection in judgment as God deals with everything presently on the face of the earth in preparation of bringing into being a new heavens and a new earth:

**"AND I SAW A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH,
FOR THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH HAD PASSED AWAY."**

Revelation 21:1

The theme of judgment is an important concept to lay hold of in examining the book of Revelation. To see God as the Righteous Judge is vitally important to being able to understand all of God's Word.

The second thought I want to impart to you deals with the underlying principle of this prophetic declaration Paul makes concerning the all-important aspect of the authority of the name of Jesus:

**"...THAT AT
THE NAME OF JESUS
EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW,
OF THOSE IN HEAVEN, AND OF THOSE ON EARTH,
AND OF THOSE UNDER THE EARTH..."**

Phil 2:10

The contents of the book of Revelation is shown to us from these same three authoritative perspectives:



The book of Revelation contains the prophetic unfolding of the bowing of every knee as the judgment of God is completed during the seven years of tribulation on earth. That is why you will find segments of Revelation describe what is happening from these three different perspectives:

**AT
THE NAME
OF
JESUS**

**EVERY
KNEE
SHALL
BOW**

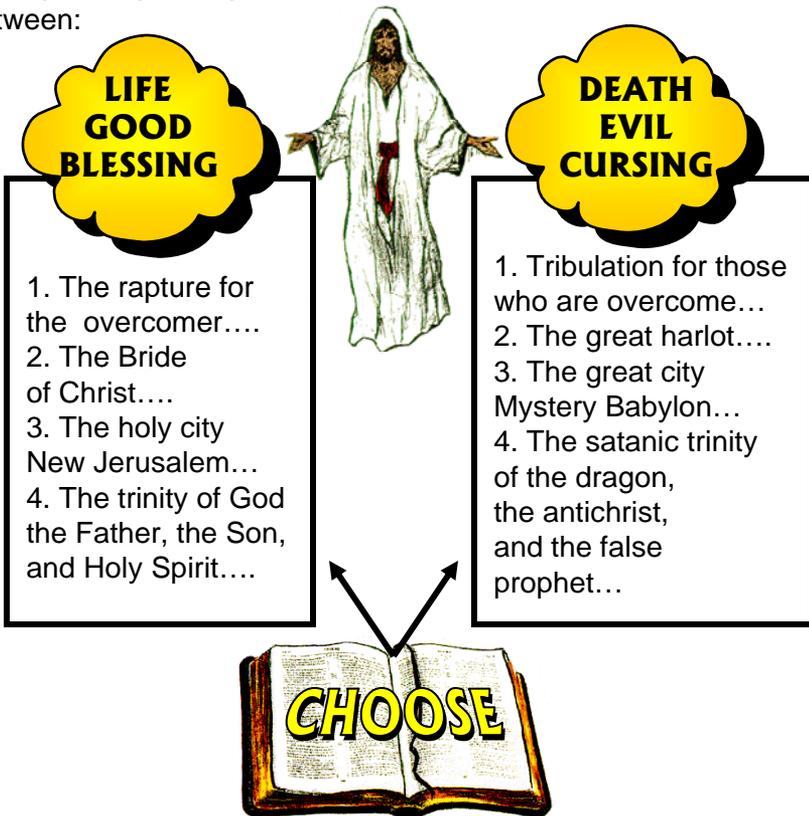
1. those in **HEAVEN**...
2. those on **EARTH**...
3. those **UNDER** the earth...

Another thought we might consider is the concept that the contents of Revelation constitutes a book of vivid contrasts. The purpose of those varied contrasts deal with the fact that God continually requires mankind to make choices:

**“SEE,
I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU TODAY
LIFE AND DEATH, GOOD AND EVIL...
I CALL HEAVEN AND EARTH AS WITNESSES AGAINST YOU,
THAT I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH,
BLESSING AND CURSING;
THEREFORE CHOOSE....”**

Deuteronomy 30:15-19

In progressing through Revelation we find there are contrasts made between:



To make a choice from among the category of “death, evil and cursing” certainly would not seem to indicate a soundness of mind. The Living Bible renders Isa. 41:23 in very graphic terminology:

**“ANYONE WHO CHOOSES YOU (THE FALSE GODS) FOR HIS GOD
NEEDS TO HAVE HIS HEAD EXAMINED.”**

Isa. 41:23 Living Bible

The final preliminary thought I want to give to you is that in the book of Revelation God is dealing with three distinct classes of people. Paul tells us who these categories are in God's sight:

**"GIVE NO OFFENSE,
EITHER TO THE JEWS
OR TO THE GENTILES
OR TO THE CHURCH OF GOD."**
1 Corinthians 10:32



There exists somewhat of a mystery in God's dealings with the Jew and with the Gentile when it comes to administering judgment:

1. **WHEN GOD JUDGES THE GENTILE**, He does it directly... (The Flood, Sodom/Gomorrah, the Tower of Babel)
2. **WHEN GOD JUDGES THE JEW**, He uses the Gentile nations to execute His judgment... (The Assyrian captivity, the Babylonian captivity, the Roman occupation, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus of Rome)

The significance of this principle in the book of Revelation is that the antichrist is raised up primarily to execute God's judgment on the Jew during the tribulation although he will also trouble the whole world (as did Hitler). At the same time, we can also see cataclysmic judgment falling directly upon the Gentiles from heaven itself in the form of great earthquakes, severe plagues, huge hail (100lb!), and even tormenting demonic beasts from the bottomless pit roaming the earth.

Let me highlight what I have shared with you so far:

The book of Revelation is a book of:

1. **PROPHECY** – the future revealed before it happens so that when it happens, we might believe.
2. **JUDGMENT** – a calamity inflicted by God-the punishment of sinners; the final trial of the human race.
3. **CONTRAST OF CHOICES** –made between good and evil, life and death, blessing and cursing.

The Holy Spirit has much to say about many subjects in the book of Revelation. However, the contents of this teaching will not be a complete exegesis on the contents of Revelation. Our focus will be specifically centered upon the seven letters that Jesus gave to John to present to His churches. They are prophetic letters and are pertinent for the churches in our day as they were for John's day. Do not miss this important point!

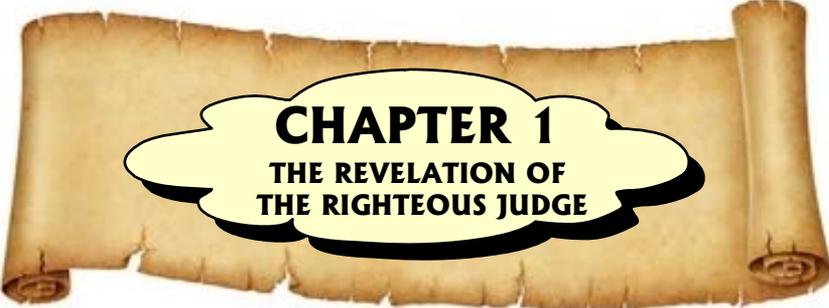
In my years of teaching this heavy-laden prophetic book, I have often said that if God's people would just get hold of the message of Jesus contained in these brief seven letters, they would not need to understand the rest of the contents of Revelation! Remember, judgment **BEGINS** at the house of God! Get that message, and you will be among those that Jesus will consider worthy to escape all that is coming upon the world (Luke 21:34-36).

Having given you these brief preliminary thoughts that will govern the nature of our study, may we now begin to open up the revelation of Jesus Christ:

**THE REVELATION
OF JESUS CHRIST,
WHICH GOD GAVE HIM TO SHOW TO
HIS SERVANTS-THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY TAKE
PLACE...BLESSED IS HE WHO READS AND THOSE WHO
HEAR, AND KEEP THOSE THINGS WRITTEN IN IT;
FOR THE TIME IS NEAR."**

Rev. 1:1-3





CHAPTER 1

THE REVELATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants -- things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

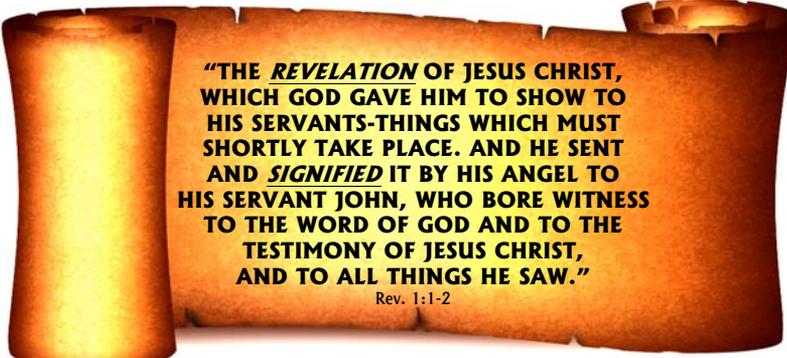
John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,’ says the Lord, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’ I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,’

And, ‘What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.’

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands one like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.

But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.’”
Rev. 1:1-20



"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, WHICH GOD GAVE HIM TO SHOW TO HIS SERVANTS-THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY TAKE PLACE. AND HE SENT AND SIGNIFIED IT BY HIS ANGEL TO HIS SERVANT JOHN, WHO BORE WITNESS TO THE WORD OF GOD AND TO THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST, AND TO ALL THINGS HE SAW."

Rev. 1:1-2

There are two important words I want to emphasize from verses one and two. The first is the word "revelation". This is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Far too many saints have approached the book of Revelation as if it was a mystery instead of a revelation. Consider the definition of these two words:

A REVELATION

"A STARTLING DISCLOSURE OF THINGS NOT YET REALIZED"

Webster

A MYSTERY

"A HIDDEN TRUTH... KEPT IN SECRET, UNKNOWN, NOT REVEALED"

Webster

There are many mysteries listed within the Word of God, but the book of Revelation is not considered among them. Note that God the Father gave the revelation to Jesus to be revealed to John, the servant of Jesus, who was then to reveal it to the churches by means of the writing of these seven letters to the Churches. God clearly states that His purpose for this book is to be a blessing to everyone who reads and hears:

"BLESSED IS HE WHO READS AND THOSE WHO HEAR THE WORDS OF THIS PROPHECY, AND KEEP THOSE THINGS THAT ARE WRITTEN IN IT..."

Revelation 1:3

The reason many consider the book of Revelation a mystery centers upon a failure to understand the second word I want to emphasize from verse two, which is the word "signified":

"..AND HE (JESUS) SENT AND SIGNIFIED IT."

Revelation 1:1

TO SIGNIFY

“ TO MAKE KNOWN BY SIGNS,
TO USE SIGNS AS REPRESENTATIVE FIGURES,
IMAGES, INDICATIONS OF...”

Webster

The contents of the book of Revelation is highly symbolic (“signified”). Since it is also a book stated to be prophecy, we must allow Peter’s warning to govern our interpretation of those prophetic signs:

**“WE ALSO HAVE THE PROPHETIC WORD
MADE MORE SURE,
WHICH YOU DO WELL TO HEED
AS A LIGHT THAT SHINES
IN A DARK PLACE...
KNOWING THIS FIRST,
THAT NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE
IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION...”**

2 Peter 1:19-20



The symbology found in Revelation, being of prophetic nature, is not open to any private interpretation. We cannot simply conjure up what we think it means, but rather we must follow Paul’s instruction given us to compare spiritual things to spiritual:



**“THESE THINGS WE ALSO SPEAK,
NOT IN WORDS
WHICH MAN’S WISDOM TEACHES
BUT WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES,
COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS
WITH SPIRITUAL (THINGS).”**

1 Corinthians 2:13

The book of Revelation is the conclusion of all things, and therefore if we are to find its contents to be truly revelational instead of remaining a mystery to us, we must seek our definition of the symbolism of Revelation in the bulk of the Bible. Perhaps for the point of illustration, we should look at an example of this truth. Let us read verse four of chapter one and then look to the Old Testament to define the symbology given to John’s reference of the seven Spirits of the Lord:

**“GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE
FROM HIM...
AND FROM
THE SEVEN SPIRITS
WHO ARE BEFORE HIS THRONE...”**

Revelation 1:4



Do we interpret this to mean there is more than one Holy Spirit or can we find the symbolism and the significance of this statement by simply comparing spiritual to spiritual?

Isaiah clears up any mystery as to what are these seven spirits. They picture the character and ministry of the Holy Spirit in seven different manifestations:

**“THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD
SHALL REST UPON HIM,
THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM
AND (THE SPIRIT OF) UNDERSTANDING,
THE SPIRIT OF COUNSEL
AND (THE SPIRIT OF) MIGHT,
THE SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE
AND (THE SPIRIT OF) THE FEAR OF THE LORD.”**

Isaiah 11:2



Rev. 4:5

ONE SPIRIT-SEVEN MANIFESTATIONS

So then, when we face the need to identify the symbology given in Revelation, I remind you that we are soberly charged neither to add to or take away from what is written in this book of prophecy. If we are unable to find the proper interpretation by comparing spiritual to spiritual, then we should not merely speculate as to its possible meaning. Let us now proceed on to John's glorious vision of Jesus as the Righteous Judge which begins in verse nine:



**“I, JOHN,
BOTH YOUR BROTHER AND COMPANION
IN TRIBULATION...WAS ON THE ISLAND
THAT IS CALLED PATMOS....I WAS IN THE
SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY AND I HEARD
BEHIND ME A LOUD VOICE,
AS OF A TRUMPET, SAYING,
“I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA,
THE FIRST AND THE LAST...
THEN I TURNED TO SEE THE VOICE THAT
SPOKE WITH ME. AND HAVING TURNED I
SAW...IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN
LAMPSTANDS ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN,
CLOTHED WITH A GARMENT DOWN TO
THE FEET AND GIRDED ABOUT THE CHEST
WITH A GOLDEN BAND.
HIS HEAD AND HIS HAIR WERE WHITE LIKE
WOOL, AS WHITE AS SNOW, AND HIS EYES
WERE LIKE FLAMES OF FIRE: HIS FEET
WERE LIKE FINE BRASS, AS IF REFINED IN
A FURNACE, AND HIS VOICE AS THE
SOUND OF MANY WATER: HE HAD IN HIS
RIGHT HAND SEVEN STARS, OUT OF HIS
MOUTH WENT A TWO-EDGED SWORD,
AND HIS COUNTENANCE WAS LIKE THE
SUN SHINING IN ITS STRENGTH.
AND WHEN I SAW HIM,
I FELL AT HIS FEET AS DEAD...”**

Revelation 1:9-17

JOHN HAS SEEN THE GLORIFIED CHRIST



**“AND
WHEN
I SAW HIM,
I FELL
AT HIS FEET
AS DEAD.”**
Rev. 1:17

Have you seen the glorified Christ? This is certainly among the blessings promised in verse three. There are two pictures of Christ which every Christian must see if we are going to hold a balanced perspective of the person of Jesus Christ:



(1)
**CHRIST
CRUCIFIED**
(Read Philippians 2:5-8)

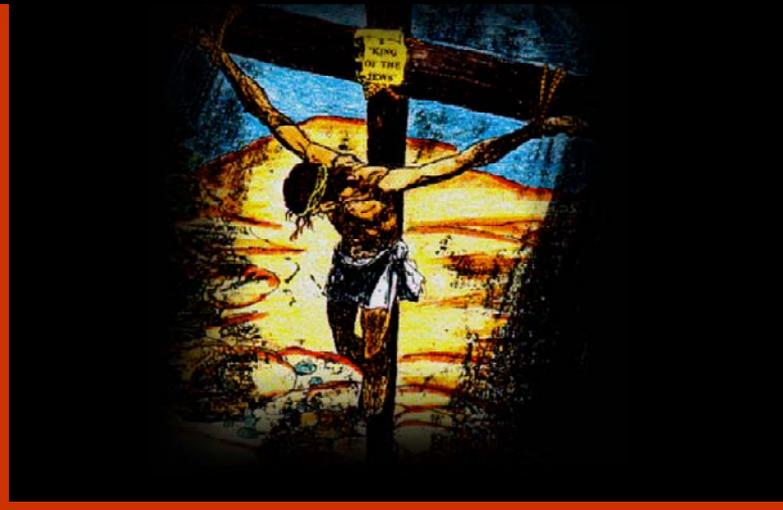
and

(2)
**CHRIST
GLORIFIED**
(Read Philippians 2:9-11)

**“CHRIST JESUS...WHO,
BEING IN THE FORM OF GOD,
DID NOT CONSIDER IT ROBBERY TO BE
EQUAL WITH GOD...COMING IN THE LIKENESS
OF MEN...HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF AND
BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH,
EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS...”**

Phil.2:5-8

THE VISION OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED



**“...A REPROACH OF MEN,
AND DESPISED OF THE PEOPLE.
ALL THOSE WHO SEE ME
LAUGH ME TO SCORN;
THEY SHOOT OUT THE LIP,
THEY SHAKE THE HEAD , SAYING,
'HE TRUSTED IN THE LORD,
LET HIM RESCUE HIM;
LET HIM DELIVER HIM,
SINCE HE DELIGHTS IN HIM.'”**

Psalm 22:6-8

**“AND THEY PUT UP OVER HIS HEAD
THE ACCUSATION
'THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS'...
'IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD,
COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS'...
THE CHIEF PRIESTS ALSO MOCKING WITH
THE SCRIBES AND THE ELDERS, SAID,
'HE SAVED OTHERS, HIMSELF HE CANNOT
SAVE...COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS
AND WE WILL BELIEVE HIM...' ”**

Matthew 27:36-44

In the physical realm, John was present when Jesus was crucified. In the spirit realm, John was taken up to see Jesus glorified. It is only as we see Him in His glory that we begin to grasp the tremendous sacrifice of God the Father in allowing the King of Glory to be mocked, spit upon, shamed, and humiliated in order that He might provide the means of salvation for sinful man.

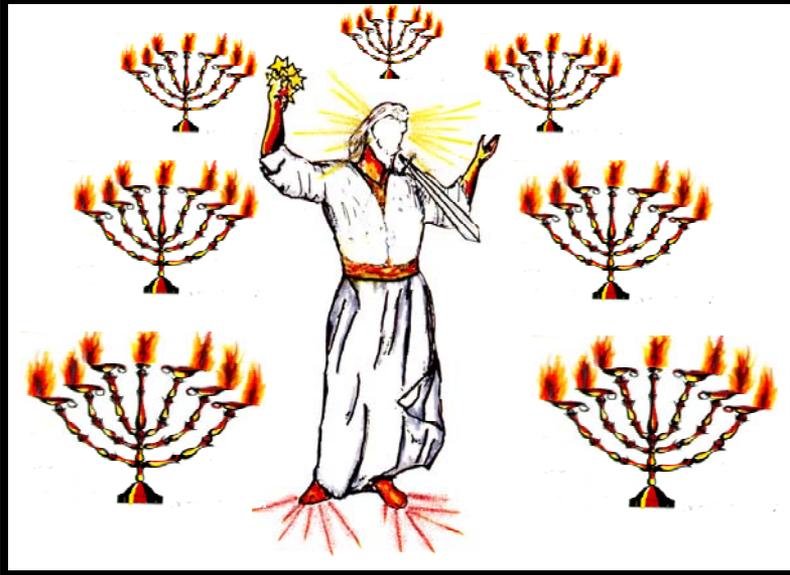
**“FOR HE (THE FATHER) MADE HIM (JESUS) WHO KNEW NO SIN
TO BE SIN FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME
THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM (IN JESUS). ”**

2 Corinthians 5:21

**"THEREFORE,
GOD HAS HIGHLY EXALTED HIM
AND GIVEN HIM THE NAME
WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME,
THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD
BOW...IN HEAVEN..ON EARTH...AND UNDER THE EARTH...
EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT
JESUS CHRIST IS LORD."**

Phil. 2:9-11

THE VISION OF CHRIST GLORIFIED



**"...AND IN THE MIDST
OF THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS...
THE SON OF MAN,
CLOTHED WITH A GARMENT DOWN
TO THE FEET AND GIRDED ABOUT
THE CHEST WITH A GOLDEN BAND.
HIS HEAD AND HIS HAIR WERE WHITE
LIKE WOOL, AS WHITE AS SNOW,
AND HIS EYES WERE LIKE
A FLAME OF FIRE,
HIS FEET WERE LIKE FINE BRASS,
AS IF REFINED IN A FURNACE...**

**...AND HIS VOICE AS THE
SOUND OF MANY WATERS;
HE HAD IN HIS RIGHT HAND
SEVEN STARS, OUT OF HIS
MOUTH WENT A SHARP TWO-
EDGED SWORD, AND HIS
COUNTEenance WAS LIKE THE
SUN SHINING IN ITS
STRENGTH... AND WHEN I SAW
HIM, I FELL AT HIS FEET
AS DEAD..."**

Rev. 1:13-17

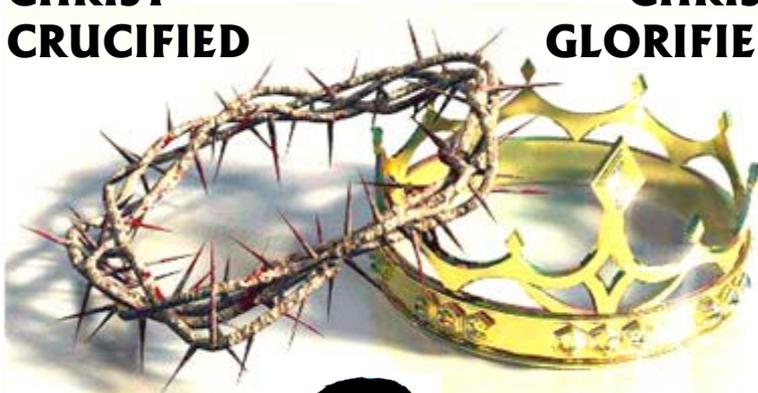
Where men mock the image of Christ crucified, we see that men fall as dead upon seeing the glorified Christ. When Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up he declared:

**"WOE IS ME, FOR I AM UNDONE. BECAUSE I AM A MAN UNCLEAN LIPS,
AND I DWELL IN THE MIDST OF A PEOPLE OF UNCLEAN LIPS;
FOR MY EYES HAVE SEEN THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS."**

Isaiah 6:1-6

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

CHRIST GLORIFIED



THAT I MAY SEE
HIM AS
MY SAVIOR...

THAT I MAY SEE
HIM AS
MY LORD...

BALANCED



PERSPECTIVE

Remember, it was Peter who said “Judgment must begin at the house of God...” (1 Peter 4:17). The vision John is given in chapter one is in preparation for what follows in chapters two and three, the judgment of the house of God. Paul, the apostle, was one who maintained and preached this balanced perspective of Christ:

**“FOR I AM DETERMINED NOT TO
KNOW ANYTHING AMONG YOU EXCEPT
JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.”**

1 Corinthians 2:2

**“FOR WE MUST ALL
APPEAR BEFORE
THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST..
KNOWING THEREFORE
THE TERROR OF THE LORD,
WE PERSUADE MEN...”**

2 Corinthians 5:9-11



Paul is referring to a day of judgment in which every born-again Christian will give account of himself unto God for deeds done in the body whether they are good or bad. (in addition to 2 Cor.5:9-11, see also Romans 14:10 and Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Paul's use of the phrase “knowing the terror of the Lord” is addressed to God's people. The doctrine of a healthy fear of the Lord has been exchanged with an over-emphasis of “Smile, God loves you”. Friend, it is because of God's great love that He tells John to write these corrective letters to His churches! (Rev. 3:19)



“...AND ANOINT YOUR EYES WITH EYE SALVE, THAT YOU MAY SEE. AS MANY AS I LOVE, I REBUKE AND CHASTEN. THEREFORE BE ZEALOUS AND REPENT.”

Revelation 3:18-19

And so it is that Jesus appears to John as the Righteous Judge. May we have spiritual eyes to see this perspective of Jesus as well as the image of He who was crucified for our sins. His love is proven to us in that He desires us to judge ourselves so that at the Judgment Seat of Christ we may not have to be judged:

“FOR IF WE WOULD JUDGE OURSELVES, WE WOULD NOT BE JUDGED. BUT WHEN WE ARE JUDGED, WE ARE CHASTENED BY THE LORD, THAT WE MAY NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD.”

1 Corinthians 11:31-32

I believe God wants us to anoint our spiritual eyes of understanding that we may see Him in His role as:

THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

“GOD IS A JUST JUDGE”

Ps. 7:11



JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER.”

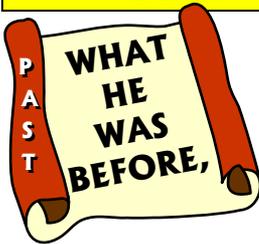
Heb. 13:8

“I AM THE LORD, I DO NOT CHANGE.”

Mal. 3:6

“RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF HIS THRONE”

Ps. 89:14

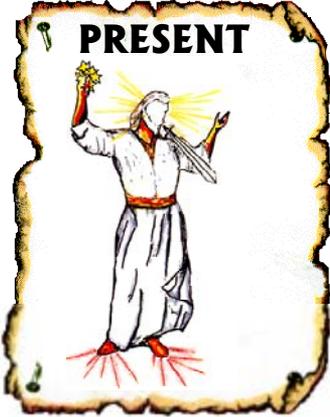


WHAT HE WAS BEFORE...



**"I WATCHED TILL
 THRONES WERE PUT IN PLACE
 AND THE ANCIENT OF DAYS
 WAS SEATED. HIS GARMENT WAS
 WHITE AS SNOW, AND THE HAIR
 OF HIS HEAD LIKE PURE WOOL.
 HIS THRONE WAS A FIERY
 FLAME...THEN THOUSANDS TIMES
 TEN THOUSANDS STOOD BEFORE
 HIM...THE COURT WAS SEATED AND
 THE BOOKS WERE OPENED..."**
 Daniel 7:9-10

HE IS NOW...



**"...IN THE MIDST
 OF THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS...
 THE SON OF MAN...
 HIS HAIR WAS WHITE LIKE WOOL-
 WHITE AS SNOW,
 AND HIS EYES WERE LIKE
 A FLAME OF FIRE,
 HIS FEET LIKE BRASS...
 OUT OF HIS MOUTH WENT A
 SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD.
 HIS COUNTENANCE WAS LIKE THE
 SUN SHINING IN ITS STRENGTH..."**
 Revelation 1:12-17

HE WILL ALWAYS BE!



**"THEN I SAW
 HEAVEN OPEN AND
 ...A WHITE HORSE.
 HE WHO SAT ON HIM WAS CALLED
 FAITHFUL AND TRUE.
 AND IN RIGHTEOUSNESS
 HE JUDGES AND MAKES WAR.
 HIS EYES WERE...FLAMES OF FIRE...
 OUT OF HIS MOUTH GOES A SHARP
 TWO-EDGED SWORD THAT WITH
 IT HE SHOULD STRIKE THE NATIONS."**
 Revelation 19:11-16

One only needs to take a peek at what is ahead in Revelation to see that it is a very graphic picture of the Righteous Judge at work:

"GOD IS A JUST JUDGE"

Psm. 7:11

The book of

REVELATION



CHAPTERS
1-3

"..HAIR WHITE AS
WOOL...EYES LIKE FLAMES
OF FIRE...FEET LIKE BRASS
...I KNOW YOUR WORKS"



CHAPTERS
4-5

"..GLORY
AND POWER
BE TO HIM
WHO
SITS ON
THE THRONE"



CHAPTERS
6-19

"..IN
RIGHTHOUSNESS
HE
JUDGES
AND
MAKES WAR"



CHAPTER
20

"..AND
THE DEAD
WERE
JUDGED
ACCORDING
TO
THEIR WORKS"



CHAPTERS
20-22

"MY
REWARD IS...
TO GIVE EVERY ONE
ACCORDING TO HIS WORK...
BLESSED ARE THEY WHO
DO HIS
COMMANDMENTS..."

THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

“THEN I TURNED TO SEE THE VOICE THAT SPOKE WITH ME. AND HAVING TURNED, I SAW SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTAND. AND IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN...”

Rev. 1:12-13



JOHN'S SEVENFOLD VISION OF JESUS CHRIST AS THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE



1. **GIRDED WITH A GOLDEN BAND (GIRDLE)** – Compared to Isaiah 11:5 this girdle is a girdle of faithfulness and righteousness depicting how He shall judge. Gold represents divinity and when it is coupled with the girdle we have a picture of divine righteous judgment.

2. **HIS HEAD WAS WHITE LIKE WOOL-WHITE AS SNOW** – We find this same characteristic in the description of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9 depicting a judgment about to take place. Who does not know of the white wigs of the English courts of law? Where do you suppose this tradition has its foundations?

3. **HIS EYES LIKE A FLAME OF FIRE** – Paul portrayed the Judgment Seat of Christ as a place where our works will be tested by fire (see 1 Cor. 3:13). In the description of the Ancient of Days, we find mention that at this day of judgment, His throne is a fiery flame, and fiery stream goes from Him. This depiction in Revelation 19 is of the one who comes to “judge and make war” (Revelation 19:11-12). We find that His eyes are symbolically pictured here also as flames of fire.

Only when we consider these scripture-based truths concerning the eyes of the Lord, do we begin to grasp the meaning of His eyes being depicted as flames of fire. They are flames of fire because of His position as the Righteous Judge.

**“THE EYES
OF THE LORD
ARE IN EVERY PLACE,
KEEPING WATCH
ON THE EVIL AND THE GOOD.”**

Proverbs 15:3

**“THERE IS NO CREATURE
HIDDEN FROM HIS SIGHT,
BUT ALL THINGS ARE NAKED
AND OPEN TO THE EYES OF HIM
TO WHOM WE MUST GIVE
AN ACCOUNT.”**

Hebrews 4:13

4. **HIS FEET WERE LIKE FINE BRASS** – As gold is a picture of divinity, brass depicts judgment. The Tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness contained a brass altar upon which the sacrifices were offered. The priests also washed in a brass laver made from the mirrors of the women. It was a brass serpent that Moses raised to stay the hand of God’s judgment upon the people in the wilderness. Here then is Jesus, His feet as fine brass, standing in righteous judgment.

5. **IN HIS MOUTH – A TWO-EDGED SWORD** – Who does not know the Word of God is pictured as a two-edged sword? (Hebrews 4:12). And who does not know that Jesus is called “The Word of God”? (John 1:1, Rev. 19:13).

In the book of John, Jesus speaks of the role that the Word of God will play in judgment:



**“HE WHO REJECTS ME,
AND DOES NOT RECEIVE MY WORDS,
HAS THAT WHICH JUDGES HIM –
THE WORD
THAT I HAVE SPOKEN
WILL JUDGE HIM
IN THE LAST DAY. “**

John 12:48



6. **HIS VOICE AS THE SOUND OF MANY WATERS** – In the book of Ezekiel we find the prophet was shown what is a manifestation of the glory of the Lord:

**“THE GLORY OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL
CAME FROM THE WAY OF THE EAST.
HIS VOICE WAS LIKE THE SOUND OF MANY WATERS;
AND THE EARTH SHONE WITH HIS GLORY.”**

Ezekiel 43:2

Part of that glorious vision was that the Lord’s voice sounded like many waters. Ever been near a big waterfall? The sound is near deafening! Such is the voice of the Righteous Judge!

7. HIS FACE SHINING AS THE SUN IN ALL ITS STRENGTH –

On the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus was transfigured into the likeness of the brightness of the sun:

**“JESUS...WAS TRANSFIGURED BEFORE THEM.
HIS FACE SHONE LIKE THE SUN,
AND HIS CLOTHES BECAME WHITE AS THE LIGHT.”**

Matthew 17:1-2

We have all attempted in the days of our youth to sneak a peek directly at the sun. On the day of judgment Jesus’ face will be as bright as the sun in its strength. No wonder John fell as dead. It will behoove us greatly to take time to meditate upon this vision of Jesus for some day we will see Him as He is. The apostle John gives us some great counsel in preparation for that day:

**“BELOVED, NOW WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD;
AND IT HAS NOT YET BEEN REVEALED WHAT WE SHALL BE,
BUT WE KNOW THAT WHEN HE IS REVEALED,
WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.
AND EVERYONE WHO HAS THIS HOPE IN HIM
PURIFIES HIMSELF, JUST AS HE IS PURE.”**

1 John 3:1-3

There are other things in chapter one which we could examine, but there is only one that I believe is of great importance. Jesus gives three divisions into which the total book of Revelation is dispensationally divided:



THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PAST

THE THINGS WHICH YOU
HAVE
SEEN...”

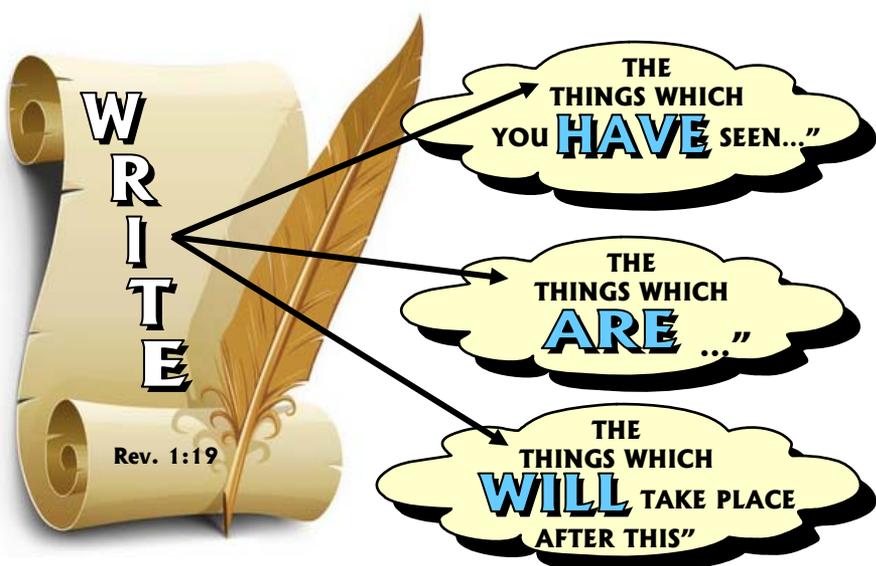
PRESENT

THE THINGS WHICH
ARE...”

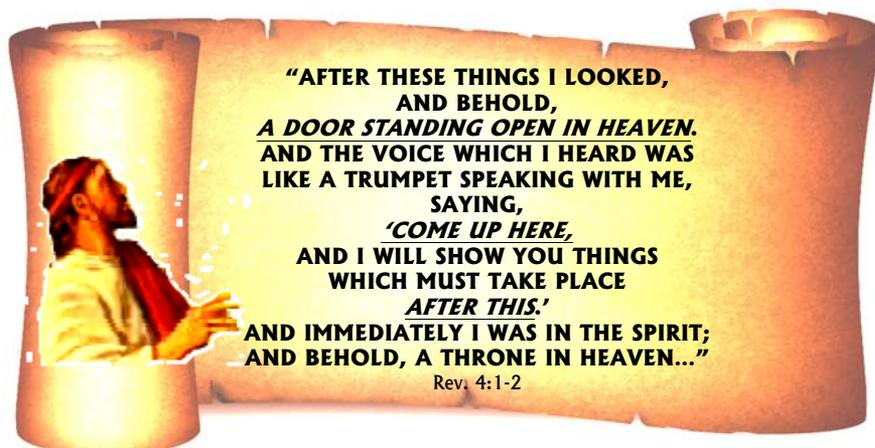
FUTURE

THE THINGS WHICH
WILL
TAKE PLACE AFTER THIS...”

Rev. 1:19



The things John “has seen” (past) is the vision of Jesus as the Righteous Judge in the midst of His church. Those things “which are” (present) , John is told to write in seven letters to be sent to the churches depicting Jesus’ estimation of their spiritual condition. Being letters of a prophetic nature, they reveal the status of the church right up to the return of Christ as we shall see in the next chapter. John is also told to write the things which “will take place” (future) after this. The “after this” speaks prophetically of those things which will happen at the close of the church age as it currently exists. Let us again take a peek ahead in Revelation to the exact point where this third division will occur:



The remainder of John’s vision is seen from his position in heaven rather than from his previous position on earth. This becomes extremely significant as the symbolism of these opening verses portray the prophetic event known as the Rapture of the faithful church from the tribulation. **25**



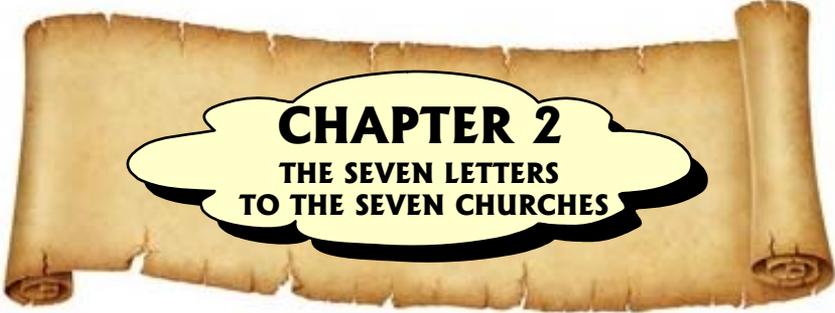
**"HE
WHO HAS
AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT**

THE SPIRIT

**SAYS TO
THE CHURCHES."**



**THE SEVEN LETTERS
TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**



CHAPTER 2

THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

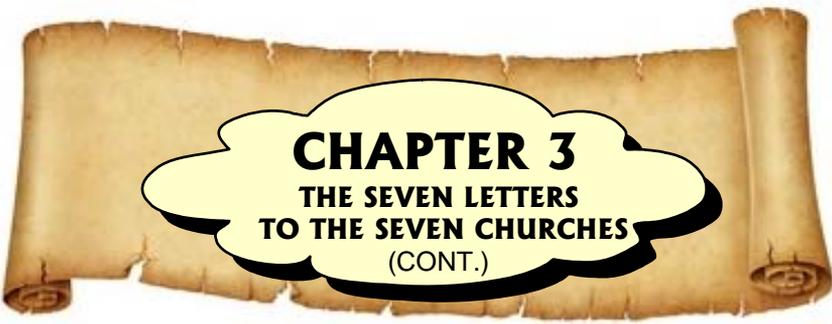
"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 'I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place -- unless you repent. But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.'

'And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 'I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.' He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."

'And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 'I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells

But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.'

'And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: 'I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. 'Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations -- 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' -- as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'" Rev. 2:1-29



CHAPTER 3

THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES (CONT.)

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: 'I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

'And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,'

These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":

'I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie -- indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more.

I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 'I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot.

I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked -- I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Rev. 3:1-22

Let us now begin to consider

SMYRNA



PHILADELPHIA



THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

EPHESUS



PERGAMOS



THYATIRA



SARDIS



LAODICEA



"THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN STARS YOU SAW IN MY RIGHT HAND... THE SEVEN STARS ARE THE ANGELS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES..."



...THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS WHICH YOU SEE ARE THE SEVEN CHURCHES"

Revelation 1:20



"I KNOW YOUR WORKS"

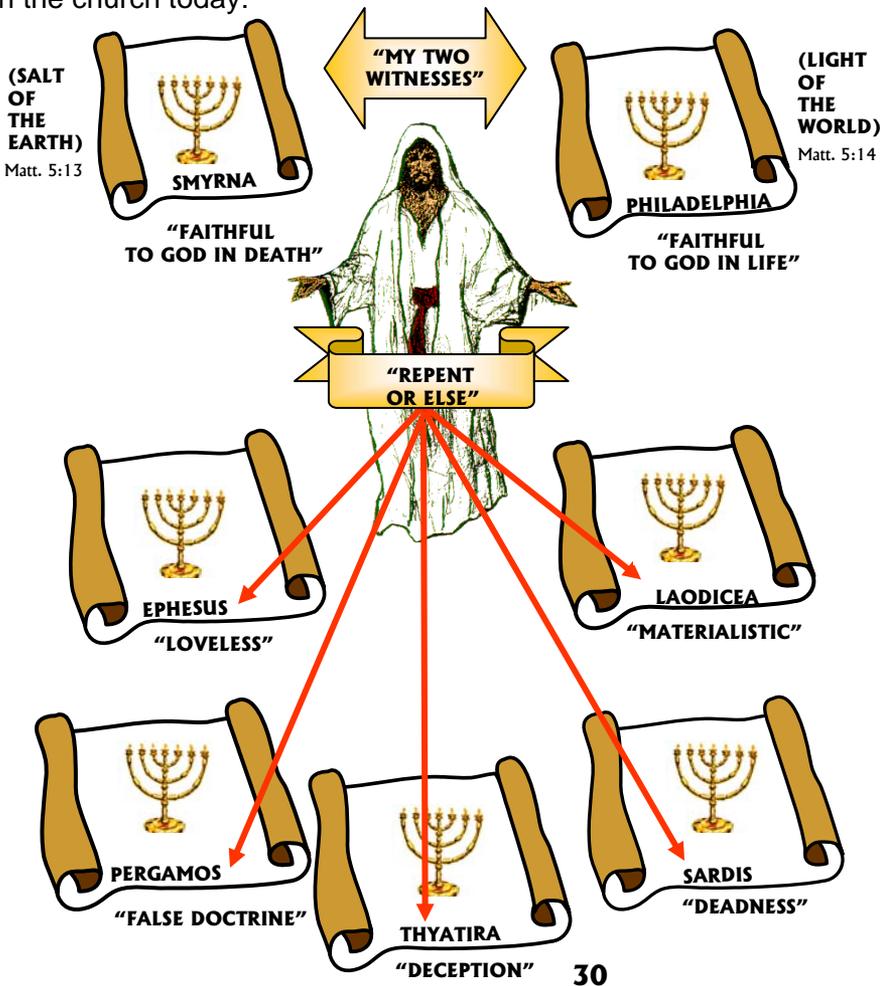
"REPENT! OR ELSE I WILL..."



These prophetic letters contain the last words of Jesus spoken to His churches. They are not letters written to unbelievers nor are they speaking to those in false cults. Neither are they archaic messages written strictly to the churches way back then, but are rather pertinent to every born-again follower of Christ in our day containing prophetic truths about the spiritual condition of the church prior to the Rapture. This is clearly evident when you consider Jesus' words to three of His churches:

**"HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE TILL I COME... (Rev. 2:25) ...
 I WILL COME UPON YOU AS A THIEF, AND YOU WILL NOT KNOW
 WHAT HOUR I WILL COME UPON YOU... (Rev. 3:3)
 ...BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY. HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE,
 THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN (Rev. 3:11) "**

As Jesus has not yet come, we must assume the messages are still for His church today. Let me give you a vivid picture of the overall condition that Jesus depicts in these seven letters, and then you judge whether they are prophetic truths which need to be proclaimed in the church today:



Let me explain the diagram on the opposite page to help you grasp the magnitude of it. The churches are signified by lampstands. Jesus tells us the purpose of a lamp:



**“YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD...
THEY DO NOT LIGHT A LAMP
AND PUT IT UNDER A BASKET,
BUT ON A LAMPSTAND,
AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO ALL...
LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN,
THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS
AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.”**

Matthew 5:14-16

Of the seven lampstands designed to give light to the world, Jesus tells five of them to repent because they are giving forth false light. Only two of His lampstands, the churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna, are letting their light properly shine before men, namely, with good works that glorify God. We must recognize that corporately (overall) the light of Philadelphia and Smyrna are being diminished by the majority of false light coming forth from the other five lampstands (churches) that are not glorifying God.

Let me ask you, is not the bulk of Christianity in America today shining forth with an air of self-righteousness, false doctrines, deception, deadness, and especially materialistic greed? Do they not cast a brown cloud of polluting smog over little Philadelphia and her sister, Smyrna? The bad testimony of the majority swallows up that of the good minority.

You will note in the diagram on the opposite page, that I have pictured Philadelphia and Smyrna as representing the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13-14). This is God’s corporate mandate for all of His church, not just a little segment.



The lampstands (churches) are to shine in such a way that the unsaved world would see the good works that they produce by God’s power at work in them. That is why Jesus begins every letter with these words to impart either comfort to the obedient or stern warning to the disobedient:



**“I KNOW
YOUR WORKS.”**



Obviously, something has gone wrong with the message. The spiritual condition of the church today is identical to what is pictured in the seven letters as we shall see when we look into each letter in detail.

Where is the proclamation of the true message of holiness and purity Jesus gave to His churches? I put the responsibility on the “angels”. You will remember that Jesus said the letters were to be written to the “angels” of the churches. This word translated as angel simply means “messenger”. Literal angels are not in charge of God’s churches. God has placed spiritual leaders (pastors) over the churches to lead and feed the flock of God. Paul gave a very prophetic warning to the overseers of the church prior to his departure:



**“...I AM INNOCENT OF THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN.
FOR I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE TO YOU
THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.**

**THEREFORE, TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES
AND TO ALL THE FLOCK, AMONG WHICH
THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS MADE YOU
OVERSEERS, TO SHEPHERD THE CHURCH
OF GOD...FOR I KNOW THIS, THAT AFTER
MY DEPARTURE SAVAGE WOLVES WILL
COME IN AMONG YOU,
NOT SPARING THE FLOCK.**

**ALSO FROM AMONG YOURSELVES
MEN WILL RISE UP, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS
TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEMSELVES.
THEREFORE WATCH....”**

Acts 20:25-31

We are living in the perilous times in which we find overseers that have diluted the message Jesus gave for the churches creating the spiritual condition described in five of the seven letters. God gives this sober charge to all under-shepherds:

**“BE DILIGENT
TO KNOW
THE STATE
OF YOUR FLOCKS,
AND ATTEND TO YOUR HERDS.”**

Proverbs 27:23

**“MY BRETHREN,
LET NOT MANY OF YOU
BECOME TEACHERS,
KNOWING THAT WE SHALL RECEIVE
A STRICTER JUDGMENT.”**

James 3:1

**“THEREFORE, YOU SHEPHERDS, HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD:
'AS I LIVE', SAYS THE LORD GOD, 'SURELY BECAUSE MY FLOCK BECAME A PREY,
AND MY FLOCK BECAME FOOD FOR EVERY BEAST OF THE FIELD, BECAUSE
THERE WAS NO SHEPHERD, NOR DID MY SHEPHERDS SEARCH FOR MY FLOCK,
BUT THE SHEPHERDS FED THEMSELVES AND DID NOT FEED MY FLOCK'
THEREFORE, O SHEPHERDS, HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD! THUS SAYS THE
LORD GOD: 'BEHOLD, I AM AGAINST THE SHEPHERDS, AND I WILL REQUIRE MY
FLOCK AT THEIR HAND; I WILL CAUSE THEM TO CEASE FEEDING THE SHEEP,
AND THE SHEPHERDS SHALL FEED THEMSELVES NO MORE;
FOR I WILL DELIVER MY FLOCK FROM THEIR MOUTHS,
THAT THEY MAY NO LONGER BE FOOD FOR THEM.”**

Ezekiel 34:7-10

Paul the apostle also stated that there were those in places of authority in the churches who were using the Word of God for promoting personal gain:



**“FOR WE ARE NOT AS SO MANY,
PEDDLING
(ADULTERATING FOR GAIN)
THE WORD OF GOD....”**
2 Corinthians 2:17 NKJ

**“WE HAVE RENOUNCED
THE HIDDEN THINGS OF SHAME,
NOT WALKING IN CRAFTINESS NOR
HANDLING THE WORD OF GOD
DECEITFULLY.”**
(ADULTERATING THE WORD OF GOD)
2 Corinthians 4:2

Likewise, the apostle Peter gives us a now word for the times in which we live:

**“BUT THERE WERE FALSE PROPHETS
AMONG THE PEOPLE,
EVEN AS THERE WILL BE
FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU...
AND MANY WILL
FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS,
BECAUSE OF WHOM
THE WAY OF TRUTH
WILL BE BLASPHEMED.
BY COVETOUSNESS
THEY WILL EXPLOIT YOU
WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS....”**
2 Peter 2:1-3



I have said all this simply because I am going to follow Paul's example not to shun to give you the whole counsel of God. The content of the seven letters contain very hard sayings. That is why every letter contains the admonition, "Let him who has an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the churches." These hard sayings of Jesus will rip right across the smooth messages of "once saved, always saved" and "everybody goes in the Rapture" regardless of life-style. May we once again remind ourselves of the stern warning given concerning the prophetic contents of the book of Revelation:

**“FOR I TESTIFY TO EVERYONE WHO HEARS
THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK:
IF ANYONE ADDS TO THESE THINGS,
GOD WILL ADD TO HIM THE PLAGUES THAT ARE
WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK.
IF ANYONE TAKES AWAY FROM THE WORDS
OF THE BOOK OF THIS PROPHECY, GOD SHALL TAKE AWAY HIS PART
FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE, FROM THE HOLY CITY, AND FROM THE
THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK.”**
Revelation 22:18-19



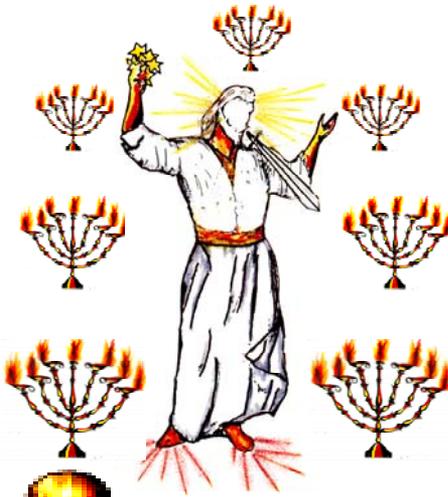
**"HE
WHO HAS
AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT**

THE SPIRIT

**SAYS TO
THE CHURCHES."**

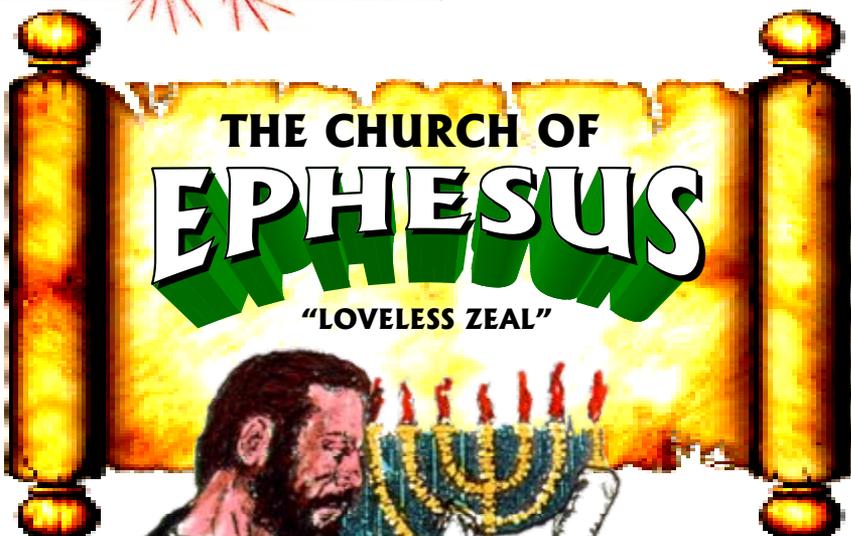


**THE SEVEN LETTERS
TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**



**"HE WHO
HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT
THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES."**

Rev. 2:7



**THE CHURCH OF
EPHESUS**
"LOVELESS ZEAL"





**'TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH OF EPHEBUS
WRITE, THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO HOLDS
THE SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND,
WHO WALKS IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN
GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS: 'I KNOW YOUR WORKS,
YOUR LABOR, YOUR PATIENCE,
AND THAT YOU CANNOT BEAR THOSE WHO ARE
EVIL. AND YOU HAVE TESTED THOSE WHO SAY
THEY ARE APOSTLES AND ARE NOT,
AND HAVE FOUND THEM LIARS;
AND YOU HAVE PERSEVERED
AND HAVE PATIENCE,
AND HAVE LABORED FOR MY NAME'S SAKE
AND HAVE NOT BECOME WEARY.
NEVERTHELESS I HAVE THIS AGAINST YOU,
THAT YOU HAVE LEFT YOUR FIRST LOVE.
REMEMBER THEREFORE
FROM WHERE YOU HAVE FALLEN;
REPENT AND DO THE FIRST WORKS,
OR ELSE I WILL COME TO YOU QUICKLY
AND REMOVE YOUR LAMPSTAND FROM ITS PLACE --
UNLESS YOU REPENT.
BUT THIS YOU HAVE,
THAT YOU HATE THE DEEDS OF THE NICOLAITANS,
WHICH I ALSO HATE.
'HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.
TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES
I WILL GIVE TO EAT FROM THE TREE OF LIFE,
WHICH IS IN THE MIDST
OF THE PARADISE OF GOD.'"**

Rev. 2:1-7

THE LETTER TO EPHEBUS

Ephesus has often been referred to as a backslidden church. If you consider carefully what Jesus says of this church we cannot accuse her of being backslidden. We all should be so backslidden in works before God. This church has a lot of raw zeal for God as evidenced by considering the things Jesus likes about this church:

1. Your labor....
2. Your patience...
3. Your perseverance....
4. Your labor for My Name's sake....
5. You have not become weary....
6. You cannot bear those that are evil...
7. You have exposed false apostles....
8. You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate...

It is not backsliding that Jesus speaks of as being the serious sin of this church, look again at verse five:



**“REMEMBER THEREFORE FROM
WHERE YOU HAVE FALLEN;
REPENT
AND DO THE FIRST WORKS...”**
Revelation 2:5



We must ask, what were the “first works” of the Church of Ephesus? Notice Jesus said “Remember from where you have fallen...” Only by considering what Paul said of this church can we identify what were their first works thirty years earlier:



**“IN HIM YOU ALSO TRUSTED,
AFTER YOU HEARD THE WORD OF TRUTH...
I HEARD OF
YOUR FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS
AND
YOUR LOVE FOR ALL THE SAINTS....”**
Ephesians 1:13-15

Look again at what Jesus commends them for, then compare it to what Paul commended them for thirty years previously, and you will see from where they have fallen:

**WHAT WORKS
THEY ARE PRESENTLY DOING:**

1. Your labor....
2. Your patience....
3. Your perseverance....
4. Your labor for My Name’s sake.
5. You have not become weary.
6. You cannot bear those that are evil.
7. You have exposed false apostles..
8. You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate..

**WHAT WORKS
THEY ONCE WERE DOING:**

In Him you also trusted...
I heard of your faith
and
Your love for all the saints...
“Remember...
from where
you have fallen;
repent and
do the first works.”

Jesus is not against the works they are **presently** doing,
He is against what they have **ceased** doing.
They have become faithless and loveless.
The apostle John lists these two very areas as the
essence of keeping His commandments:

**“AND THIS IS HIS COMMANDMENT;
THAT WE SHOULD BELIEVE
ON THE NAME OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST
AND
LOVE ONE ANOTHER,
AS HE GAVE US COMMANDMENT.”**
1 John 3:23-24



It is the foundations of faith and love from which Ephesus has fallen. Paul plainly gave Ephesus the proper order of faith and works:

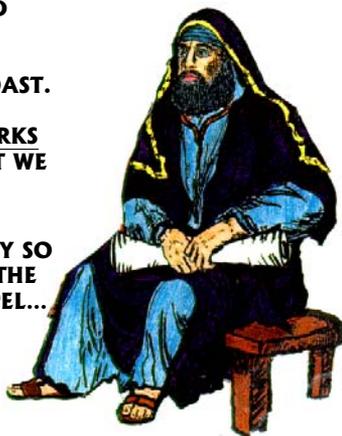
“FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES; IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD. NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST. FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS WHICH GOD PREPARED BEFOREHAND THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM.

Ephesians 2:8-10

“I MARVEL THAT YOU ARE TURNING AWAY SO SOON FROM HIM WHO CALLED YOU IN THE GRACE OF CHRIST, TO A DIFFERENT GOSPEL...

ARE YOU SO FOOLISH? HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT, ARE YOU NOW BEING MADE PERFECT IN THE FLESH?”

Galatians 1:6-9



Ephesus has allowed their zealous works to replace their first works. They are now a faithless and loveless people. Paul gave a delicate balance between faith and works. It is not one at the exclusion of the other, but both working together as Ephesians 2:8-10 reveal. Ephesus has allowed their works to replace their faith. They had indeed seen that they were to do good works, but failed to maintain a proper foundation. Consider Paul's words to the church at Corinth:

“ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD... AS A WISE MASTER BUILDER I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND ANOTHER BUILDS ON IT. FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN ANYONE LAY THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID, WHICH IS CHRIST JESUS...



BUT LET EACH ONE TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDS ON IT...YOU ARE GOD'S BUILDING... EACH ONE'S WORK WILL BECOME MANIFEST... IF ANYONE'S WORK WHICH HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES, HE WILL RECEIVE A REWARD. IF ANYONE'S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS, BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE.”

1 Cor. 3:9-15 excerpts

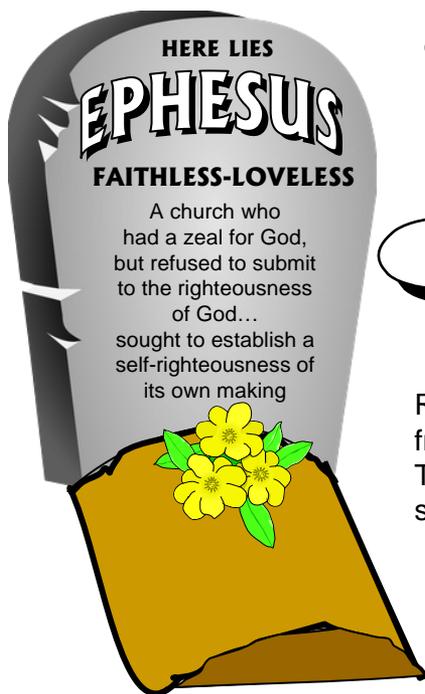
Ephesus lost sight of this balanced perspective and shifted to a false foundation of work-righteousness much like the zealous Jews of whom Paul said:



“FOR I BEAR THEN WITNESS THAT THEY HAVE A ZEAL FOR GOD, BUT NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE. FOR THEY BEING IGNORANT OF GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SEEKING TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, HAVE NOT SUBMITTED TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES.”

Romans 10:2-4

Unless Ephesus repents and returns to their first love (faith and love), these words of Paul above could easily be written as an epitaph over this church:



In order to see that Ephesus had a deadly disease, we need only to consider what Jesus gave as an ultimatum to this un-repentant church:



Remember, we are not to take away from what Jesus has written. The lampstands are stated to signify the churches (Rev. 1:20).

Is not Jesus saying to Ephesus, You will no longer be a church (lampstand) among the rest of the lampstands (churches) if you do not repent?



As further evidence that we are looking at a life and death situation, let us consider what Jesus promises to those that overcome this situation through repentance:

“TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES, I WILL GIVE TO EAT OF THE TREE OF LIFE, WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD.”

Revelation 2:7

In a commentary on the book of Revelation, a statement was made in reference to this very verse where Jesus speaks of eating from the Tree of Life if they overcome. Astoundingly, the comment stated:

“IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT JESUS IS NOT MAKING ANY REFERENCE TO THE LOSS OF ETERNAL LIFE IN THESE WORDS TO EPHESUS.”

Does it really go without saying? Is this not indeed the essence of taking away from what Jesus has said? Here is a vivid contrast of the choice Jesus set before Ephesus:

**“HE WHO HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT
SAYS TO THE CHURCHES”**

Rev. 2:7

**REPENT
OR ELSE
I WILL REMOVE
YOUR LAMPSTAND
FROM ITS PLACE...**

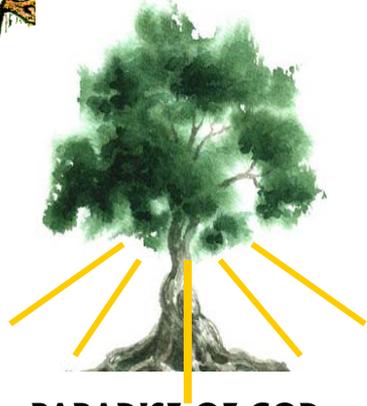


**OVERCOME
THAT THEY MAY HAVE
THE RIGHT TO
THE TREE OF LIFE...**

EPHESUS



CHURCH OF GOD



PARADISE OF GOD

Does it indeed “go without saying” that this is not a matter of life and death, that this message of Jesus does not speak of the loss of eternal life? Isn’t that saying that even though Jesus removes the lampstand (church) of Ephesus from among the other lampstands (churches), we are to believe that they are still unconditionally guaranteed that they will still be able to eat of the Tree of Life in the midst of the Paradise of God without obeying Jesus’ conditional command to repent and overcome? We can still have the end result without obeying what Jesus has said? Is this not a blatant example of “taking away from the words of the prophecy of this book”?

Remember that the symbology of the book of Revelation finds its proper definition only by comparing spiritual to spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13). What does the scripture present as the significance of the Tree of Life? Does the Tree of Life have anything to do with eternal life? In answering that question you need only to consider what is recorded in the beginning of the bible (Genesis) as well as the end (Revelation):

GENESIS:

“THEN THE LORD GOD SAID, ‘BEHOLD, THE MAN HAS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US, TO KNOW GOOD AND EVIL. AND NOW, LEST HE PUT OUT HIS HAND AND TAKE ALSO OF THE TREE OF LIFE, AND EAT, AND LIVE FOREVER’. THEREFORE THE LORD SENT HIM OUT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN... AND HE PLACED CHERUBIM AT THE EAST OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN, AND A FLAMING SWORD WHICH TURNED EVERY WAY, TO GUARD THE WAY TO THE TREE OF LIFE.”

Genesis 3:22-24

**THE
TREE
OF LIFE**



**THE
PARADISE
OF GOD**

REVELATION:

“THERE SHALL BY NO MEANS ENTER IT (THE ETERNAL CITY) ANYTHING THAT DEFILES... BUT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAMB’S BOOK OF LIFE... IN THE MIDDLE OF ITS STREET... WAS THE TREE OF LIFE... BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER THROUGH THE GATES OF THE CITY.”

Revelation 21:27,
22:1-2,14

When the Paradise of God was on earth in the Genesis account, the Tree of Life had everything to do with eternal life. It appears that in the Paradise of God in Revelation it will again have everything to do with eternal life. Since every doctrine is to be considered a fact when proven in the mouth of two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:6, Matt. 18:16 & 2 Cor. 13:5), why allow the violation of this principle when Jesus speaks of the Tree of Life to the church of Ephesus? Is that not an irrational position designed to protect the smooth message of “Once saved, always saved,” that fills pews and coffers in this life, but will fill hell in the after-life?

We are quick to recognize that we are saved by grace, but we are slow, reluctant and even refuse, to recognize the multitude of warnings about the ability of a Christian to fall from God's grace. With shouts of impossible! – impossible! – we ignore the example of the church of Ephesus and Galatia also:

**“YOU HAVE BECOME
ESTRANGED FROM CHRIST,
YOU WHO ATTEMPT TO BE
JUSTIFIED BY LAW;
YOU HAVE FALLEN FROM GRACE...
YOU RAN WELL.
WHO HINDERED YOU FROM
OBEYING THE TRUTH?”**

Galatians 5:4-7

**“I MARVEL THAT YOU ARE TURNING
AWAY SO SOON FROM HIM WHO
CALLED YOU
IN THE GRACE OF CHRIST.”**

Galatians 1:6



It is folly to explain away Paul's words by saying he was speaking to unsaved Jews. This is a message written to the church at Galatia. They fell from, turned away from, and set aside the grace of God, and so did the church of Ephesus.

The lesson we must learn from Ephesus is that we must take heed how we build on the foundation (1 Cor. 3:10-15). Jesus rejected the Jews that were zealous for God, but were not pursuing the proper righteousness of God, but rather, were seeking to establish a righteousness of their own making based on observance of the Law of Moses. Jesus must also reject the zealous works of Ephesus who had left their first faith-based love.

How are your foundations? Peter sought to continually re-establish the foundations in those to whom he ministered:

**“THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO
REMINDE YOU OF THESE THINGS,
THOUGH YOU KNOW THEM,
AND ARE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.
YES, I THINK IT IS RIGHT,
AS LONG AS I AM IN THIS TENT,
TO STIR YOU UP BY REMINDING YOU...”**

2 Peter 1:12-13



The on-going practice of partaking in faith-based communion is one way in which we can be brought to remembrance and reminded of the present truth we all know so very well. May God help us to work at maintaining a right foundation and learn from the bad example of Ephesus.

The second area in which Ephesus has left her first love centers upon their love for all the saints. Where Paul commended them for this trait thirty years earlier, we do not find it listed among the works Jesus attributes to them later. Perhaps we could look at the words of Paul in considering the importance of our works being motivated by love:



**“THOUGH I SPEAK WITH TONGUES...
BUT HAVE NOT LOVE,
I HAVE BECOME A SOUNDING BRASS OR A CLANGING
CYMBAL. AND THOUGH I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY,
AND UNDERSTAND ALL MYSTERIES AND ALL
KNOWLEDGE, AND THOUGH I HAVE FAITH TO MOVE
MOUNTAINS, BUT HAVE NOT LOVE. I AM NOTHING.
AND THOUGH I BESTOW ALL MY GOODS TO FEED THE
POOR, AND THOUGH I GIVE MY BODY TO BE BURNED,
BUT HAVE NOT LOVE, IT PROFITS ME NOTHING.”**

1 Corinthians 13:1-2

No gift realm or work performed, no sacrifice made, offsets the requirement of love being the underlying motivation for one's actions. Ephesus was performing well in labor, patience, perseverance, exposing evil and false apostles, they hated what God hated, but they did not continue to love what God loved. Lovelessness goes hand-in-hand with self-righteousness. When we think too highly of ourselves, we will think too lowly of others. Paul had much to say in this area:

**“FOR I SAY...
TO EVERYONE...
NOT TO THINK OF HIMSELF
MORE HIGHLY THAN
HE OUGHT TO THINK...”**

Romans 12:3

**“LET NOTHING BE DONE THROUGH
SELFISH AMBITION OR CONCEIT,
BUT IN LOWLINESS OF MIND
LET EACH ESTEEM OTHERS
BETTER THAN HIMSELF.”**

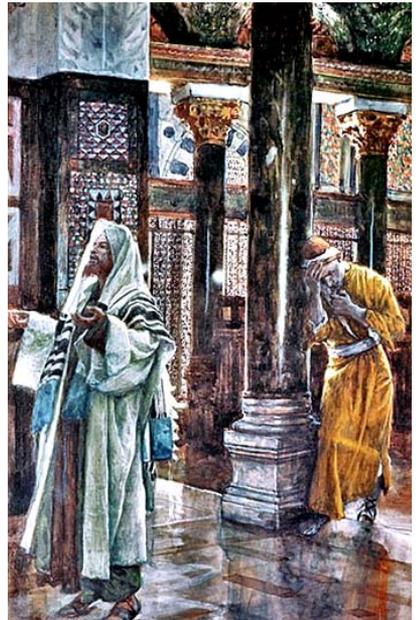
Philippians 2:3

We can see self-righteousness and lovelessness portrayed by the Pharisee who said:

**“...GOD, I THANK YOU THAT
I AM NOT LIKE OTHER MEN-
EXTORTIONERS, UNJUST, ADULTERERS,
OR EVEN AS THIS TAX COLLECTOR.
I FAST TWICE A WEEK.
I GIVE TITHES OF ALL I POSSESS....”**

Luke 18:11-12

Notice the critical judgment by the Pharisee of the tax collector, “I'm better than him”. And what was the basis upon which he measured his greatness? His works of fasting and tithing. It is so possible to obey outwardly the letter of the law as was this Pharisee, and probably so with Ephesus as well.



“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is He who loves Me...”
 Jn. 14:21



“If anyone loves Me, He will keep My Word... he who does not love Me does not keep My Word...”
 Jn. 14:23-24

“FOR THE COMMANDMENTS, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MURDER’, ‘YOU SHALL NOT STEAL’, ‘YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS’, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COVET’, AND IF THERE IS ANY OTHER COMMANDMENT, ALL ARE SUMMED UP IN THIS SAYING, NAMELY, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF’. LOVE DOES NO HARM TO A NEIGHBOR; THEREFORE LOVE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW.”

Romans 13:8-10

Finally, we might consider what Jesus gave as the outward visible mark that the world could see as proof that they were His disciples:

“A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE UNTO YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, THAT YOU ALSO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. BY THIS ALL WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.”

John 13:34-35

If we are convinced that we are to love, let the apostle Paul give us a vivid definition of “what is this thing called love?”

“LOVE SUFFERS LONG AND IS KIND: LOVE DOES NOT ENVY; LOVE DOES NOT PARADE ITSELF, IS NOT PUFFED UP, DOES NOT BEHAVE RUDELY, DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN (WAY) IS NOT PROVOKED, THINKS NO EVIL; DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH; BEARS ALL THINGS, BELIEVES ALL THINGS, HOPES ALL THINGS, ENDURES ALL THINGS. LOVE NEVER FAILS.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

We can divide the above definition into two distinct groups; (1) seven things that love is not, and (2) seven things that love is:

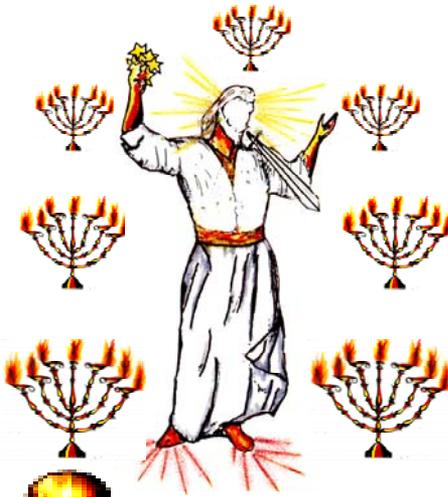
WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE?

LOVE IS NOT

1. Does not envy
2. Does not parade itself
3. Is not puffed up
4. Does not behave rudely
5. Does not seek its own (way)
6. Is not provoked
7. Does not rejoice in iniquity

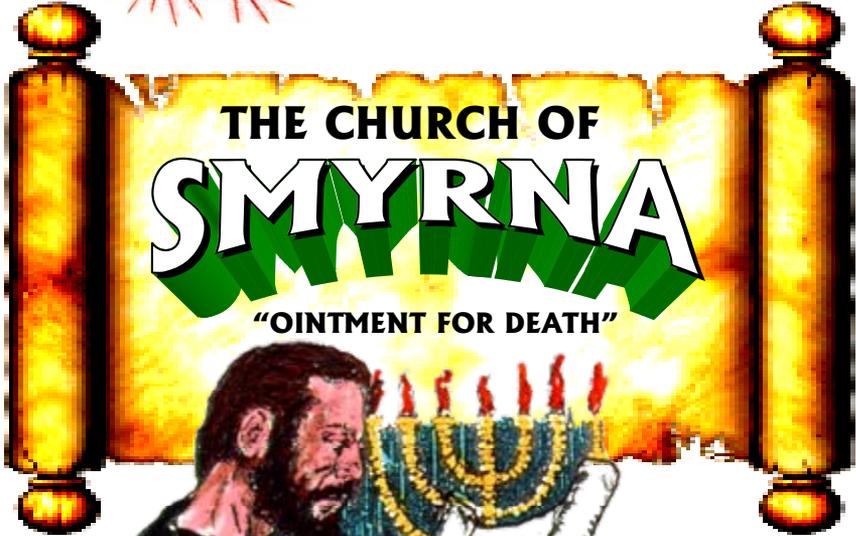
LOVE IS

1. Is longsuffering
2. Is Kind
3. Rejoices in the truth
4. Bears all things
5. Believes all things
6. Endures all things
7. Never fails



**"HE WHO
HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT
THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES."**

Rev. 2:11



**THE CHURCH OF
SMYRNA**
"OINTMENT FOR DEATH"





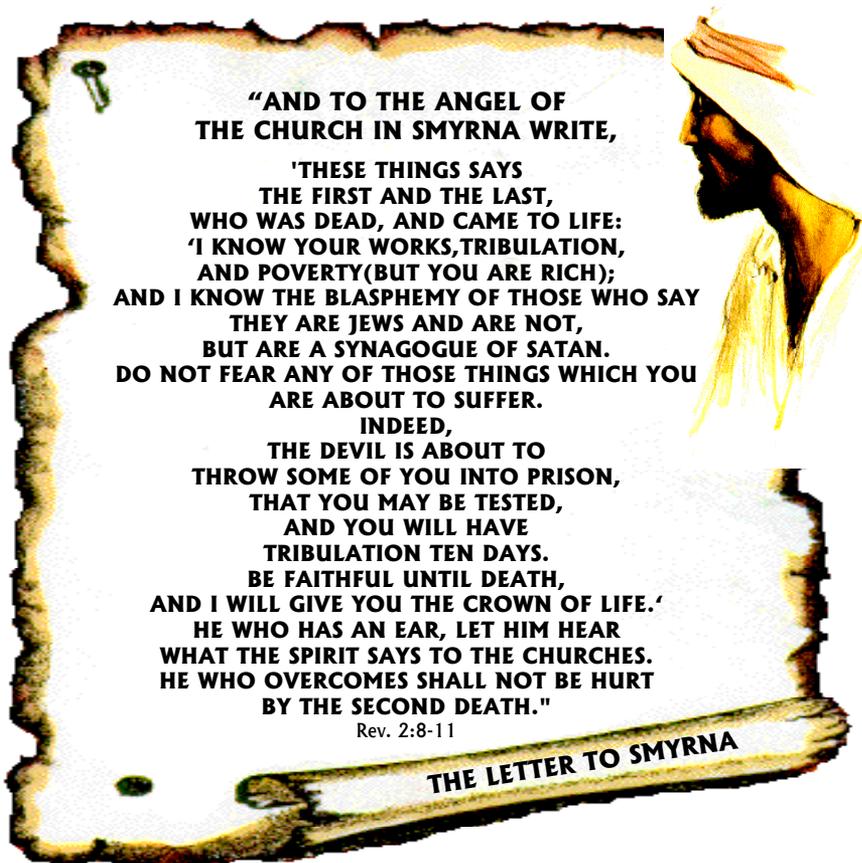
**"HE
WHO HAS
AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT**

THE SPIRIT

**SAYS TO
THE CHURCHES."**



**THE SEVEN LETTERS
TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**



**“AND TO THE ANGEL OF
THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA WRITE,**

**'THESE THINGS SAYS
THE FIRST AND THE LAST,
WHO WAS DEAD, AND CAME TO LIFE:
'I KNOW YOUR WORKS, TRIBULATION,
AND POVERTY (BUT YOU ARE RICH);
AND I KNOW THE BLASPHEMY OF THOSE WHO SAY
THEY ARE JEWS AND ARE NOT,
BUT ARE A SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN.
DO NOT FEAR ANY OF THOSE THINGS WHICH YOU
ARE ABOUT TO SUFFER.**

**INDEED,
THE DEVIL IS ABOUT TO
THROW SOME OF YOU INTO PRISON,
THAT YOU MAY BE TESTED,
AND YOU WILL HAVE
TRIBULATION TEN DAYS.
BE FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH,
AND I WILL GIVE YOU THE CROWN OF LIFE.'
HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.
HE WHO OVERCOMES SHALL NOT BE HURT
BY THE SECOND DEATH.”**

Rev. 2:8-11

THE LETTER TO SMYRNA

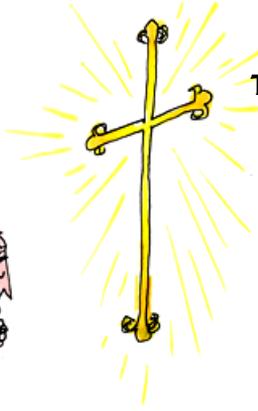
Jesus appeared to the church of Ephesus as “He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands” (Rev. 2:1) Why so? Because as His church, He threatened to remove their lampstand unless they repent.

Now here we find Jesus appearing to Smyrna as “He who was dead and came to life” (Rev. 2:8). Why so? Because He calls this church to be faithful until death just as He was also. Notice how Jesus is identifying Himself with certain aspects of each church. This is one martyr speaking unto those who have been called to martyrdom. I am reminded of Paul’s words about the significance of the present ministry of Jesus as our High Priest:

**“THEREFORE, IN ALL THINGS HE HAD TO BE MADE LIKE HIS
BRETHREN, THAT HE MIGHT BE A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL
HIGH PRIEST IN ALL THINGS PERTAINING TO GOD,
TO MAKE PROPITIATION FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE.
FOR IN THAT HE HIMSELF HAS SUFFERED, BEING TEMPTED,
HE IS ABLE TO AID THOSE WHO ARE TEMPTED.”**

Hebrews 2:18 NKJ

The normal Christian life for those in the church of Smyrna is depicted by seven descriptive words used in this letter written to the suffering saints:



TRIBULATION

FEAR

TRIAL

PRISON

POVERTY

SUFFER

DEATH

Contrast the above to a host of “faith for prosperity” teachers with their clever appealing clichés:



Be HEALTHY!

Be WEALTHY!

Be WISE!

NAME IT-CLAIM IT!

CONFESS IT-POSSESS IT!

SEED FAITH!

HUNDREDFOLD RETURN!

The Gospel given to believers to be proclaimed is to be a universal message. That means it is one that can be preached anywhere to anybody in the whole world. Can you see preaching the American “faith for prosperity” gospel to the suffering church of Smyrna? Try and visualize it – it is ludicrous.

Smyrna is the persecuted church, and it is found throughout the whole world. Here, in America, we are the exception to the rule, not the norm. At best, America represents only about sixteen percent of the entire Body of Christ in the world. The other eighty-four percent of God’s church is well acquainted with such persecution.

**“FOR TO THIS WERE YOU CALLED,
BECAUSE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE,
THAT YOU SHOULD FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS....”**

1 Peter 2:21

**“FOR TO YOU IT HAS BEEN GRANTED ON BEHALF OF CHIRST,
NOT ONLY TO BELIEVE IN HIM, BUT ALSO TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE.”**

Philippians 1:29

**“THOUGH HE WAS A SON, YET HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE
BY THE THINGS HE SUFFERED.”**

Hebrews 5:8

**“FOR IT WAS FITTING...TO MAKE THE AUTHOR OF
THEIR SALVATION PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING.”**

Hebrews 2:10

What is your position on suffering? Some teach that if Paul had enough faith he would not have suffered the things that he did. If Paul had not suffered as he did he would not have been the great apostle that he was. Consider what he taught his disciples about suffering:



**“...YOUR FAITH GROWS EXCEEDINGLY IN ALL
YOUR PERSECUTIONS AND TRIBULATIONS
THAT YOU SUFFER,
WHICH IS MANIFEST EVIDENCE OF
THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD,
THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY
OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD,
FOR WHICH YOU SUFFER....”**

2 Thessalonians 1:3-5

**“...STRENGTHENING THE SOULS OF THE DISCIPLES,
EXHORTING THEM TO
CONTINUE IN THE FAITH,
AND SAYING,
‘WE MUST THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS
ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.’”**

Acts 14:22-23

Are these foreign teachings to your ears? If they are, then you have embraced a different gospel than the one Paul preached as the normal Christian life. Perhaps it is the gospel message being presented in America that is at fault. Rather than confronting the world, the modern-day soft message makes it quite acceptable to be conformed to the world.

The great historical inquisition occurred for opposition to such compromise. History will show you that those who suffered in the inquisition, the Waldensians, the Huguenots, the Albigensians, were all from the line of the church of Smyrna.

Revivalist Leonard Ravenhill once said, “I looked for the church and it was in the world. I looked for the world and it was in the church. Sadly, they are becoming one and the same.”

“Have you ever met persecution?”

“Percy who?”



Funny perhaps, but sad as well, for if we know nothing of persecution we may also know nothing of godliness that produces persecution:

“YES, AND ALL WHO DESIRE TO LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION.”

2 Timothy 3:12

It could well be that our lack of persecution stems from a lack of presenting the true grace of God that Paul preached:



“FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY IN THIS PRESENT AGE...”

Titus 2:11-12

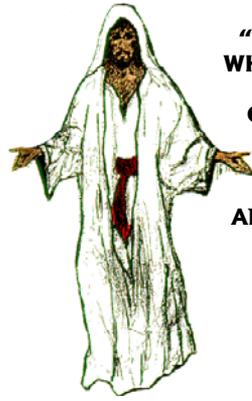
What has happened to this message of the grace of God? We have majored in saving grace for forgiveness of sin and minored in the enabling grace which brings dominion over sin. The church of Smyrna is birthed wherever and whenever God's people begin to obey the call to live soberly, righteously and godly and choose to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Is it worth it? Consider that Jesus gives no correction, no rebuke and no call to repent to this church. She is pure light and salt with savor in the eyes of Jesus her Lord. Jesus promises her she will only face death once and will not face the second death spoken of in Revelation 21:8:

“BUT THE COWARDLY, UNBELIEVING, ABOMINABLE, MURDERERS, SEXUALLY IMMORAL, SORCERERS, IDOLATER, AND ALL LIARS SHALL HAVE THEIR PART IN THE LAKE WHICH BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH.”

Revelation 21:8

**“BUT THE COWARDLY,
UNBELIEVING,
ABOMINABLE, MURDERERS,
SEXUALLY IMMORAL,
SORCERERS, IDOLATERS,
AND ALL LIARS SHALL HAVE
THEIR PART
IN THE LAKE WHICH BURNS
WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE,
WHICH IS THE SECOND
DEATH.”**

Revelation 21:8



**“BLESSED AND HOLY IS HE
WHO HAS PART IN THE FIRST
RESURRECTION.
OVER SUCH THE SECOND
DEATH HAS NO POWER,
BUT THEY SHALL BE
PRIESTS OF GOD
AND OF CHRIST AND SHALL
REIGN WITH HIM
A THOUSAND YEARS.”**

Revelation 20:6

Remember, Jesus identified Himself to Smyrna as the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life (Rev.1:18). The message is a clear call to be faithful unto death, and He who is the Resurrection and the Life will raise them back to life:

**“I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.
HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME, THOUGH HE MAY DIE,
HE SHALL LIVE.
AND WHOEVER LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE.
DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?”**

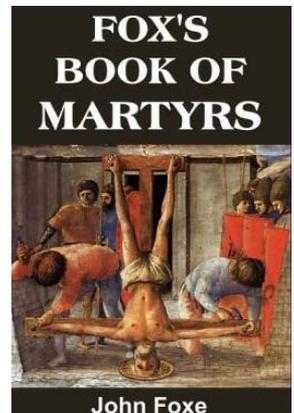
John 11:25-26

Do you believe this? If America ever comes under wicked leadership such as permeates most of the world, you will have to decide if you indeed believe in the hereafter. We find this testimony of some saints who did believe:

**“AND THEY OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB
AND BY THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY,
AND THEY DID NOT LOVE THEIR LIVES TO THE DEATH.”**

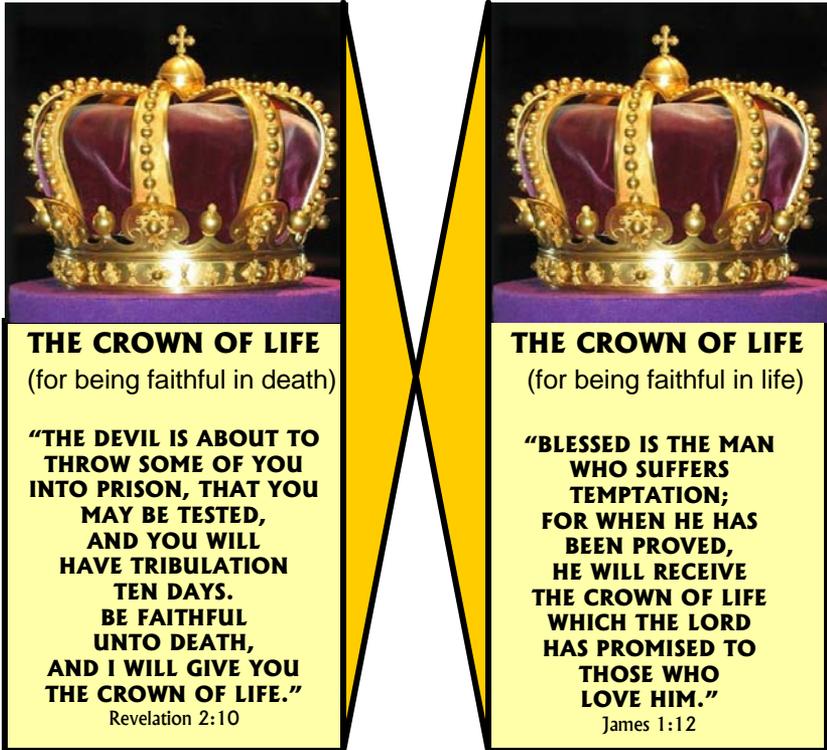
Revelation 12:11

I would highly recommend for your reading the classic book entitled “Foxes Book of Martyrs”, and you will discover God’s purpose for asking some of His saints to be faithful until death. To die for what one professes to believe has a tremendous impact upon the unbelieving. The apostle Paul, previously a zealous Pharisee, watched how Stephen the evangelist died for what he believed, and it must have had a tremendous impact upon Paul.



I do believe that when God bids a man to be faithful unto death, He gives him martyr’s faith as so documented in Foxes Book of Martyrs.

When Jesus said to Smyrna, “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life”, He was not referring to receiving eternal life, but to the offer of an eternal reward. A crown in scripture is always earned, while eternal life is a free gift. There are six crowns mentioned in scripture which you can identify using a good concordance. The crown of life is mentioned twice in scripture. Both times it is promised to those that pass the test. However, the test is not identical:



Notice, same crown-different tests. One is for dying for Christ and the other for living for Christ. One is for a limited period-ten days (temporary) but the other is for as long as you live.

The point is a simple one yet quite profound. We can either be a dead martyr, or we can be a living martyr. The source of the trial is the devil in both cases, but God is also in both.

Certainly, we can see that the one who dies for Christ proves his love for Christ, but note that to live for Christ is also proving that we love Him. So then, there is no need to be frustrated that you may not be called to die for Him, because you can receive the same reward by simply living for Him. Which do you suppose is hardest?

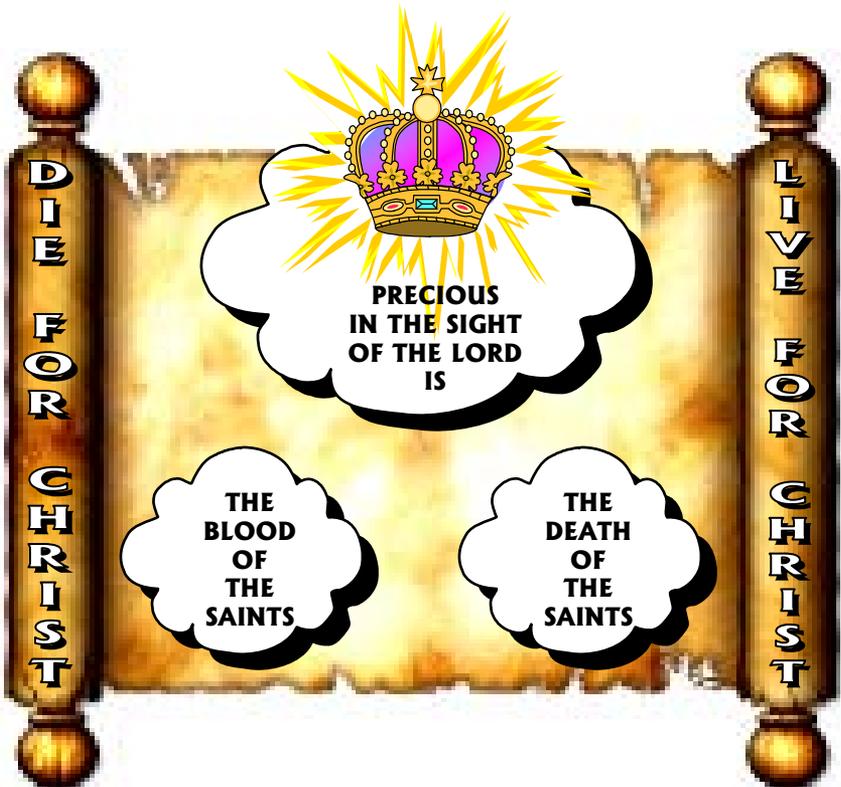
Perhaps we could inject Paul's view on the subject of living for, or dying for, the cause of Christ:



**“FOR NONE OF US
LIVES TO HIMSELF,
AND NO ONE DIES TO HIMSELF.
FOR IF WE LIVE,
WE LIVE TO THE LORD;
AND IF WE DIE,
WE DIE TO THE LORD.
THEREFORE,
WHETHER WE LIVE OR DIE,
WE ARE THE LORD’S.”**

Romans 14:7-8

Does that kind of philosophy bring peace to you as it has to me? If God does not call us to die for Him in this life, then, we must choose to live for Him in this life, and He will reward us all the same.





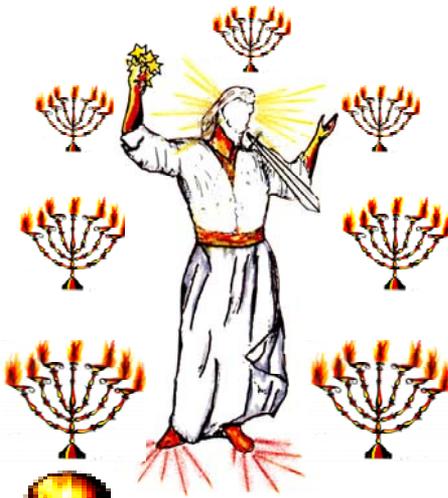
**"HE
WHO HAS
AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT**

THE SPIRIT

**SAYS TO
THE CHURCHES."**



**THE SEVEN LETTERS
TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**



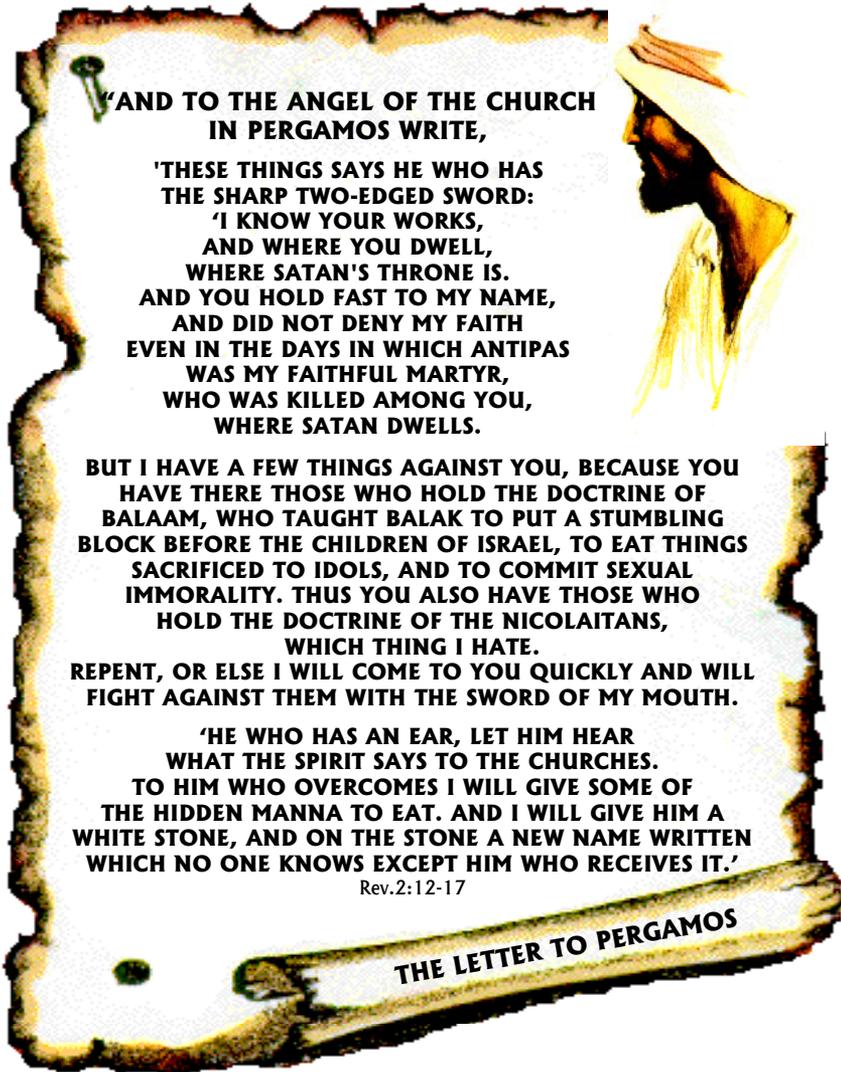
**"HE WHO
HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT
THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES."**

Rev. 2:17

**THE CHURCH OF
PERGAMOS**

"MIXED MARRIAGE"





**AND TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH
IN PERGAMOS WRITE,**

**'THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO HAS
THE SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD:
'I KNOW YOUR WORKS,
AND WHERE YOU DWELL,
WHERE SATAN'S THRONE IS.
AND YOU HOLD FAST TO MY NAME,
AND DID NOT DENY MY FAITH
EVEN IN THE DAYS IN WHICH ANTIPAS
WAS MY FAITHFUL MARTYR,
WHO WAS KILLED AMONG YOU,
WHERE SATAN DWELLS.**

**BUT I HAVE A FEW THINGS AGAINST YOU, BECAUSE YOU
HAVE THERE THOSE WHO HOLD THE DOCTRINE OF
BALAAM, WHO TAUGHT BALAK TO PUT A STUMBLING
BLOCK BEFORE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, TO EAT THINGS
SACRIFICED TO IDOLS, AND TO COMMIT SEXUAL
IMMORALITY. THUS YOU ALSO HAVE THOSE WHO
HOLD THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANS,
WHICH THING I HATE.
REPENT, OR ELSE I WILL COME TO YOU QUICKLY AND WILL
FIGHT AGAINST THEM WITH THE SWORD OF MY MOUTH.**

**'HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.
TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES I WILL GIVE SOME OF
THE HIDDEN MANNA TO EAT. AND I WILL GIVE HIM A
WHITE STONE, AND ON THE STONE A NEW NAME WRITTEN
WHICH NO ONE KNOWS EXCEPT HIM WHO RECEIVES IT.'**

Rev.2:12-17

THE LETTER TO PERGAMOS

Once again we see Jesus identifying Himself with an aspect of who He is and with the problem He addresses in the church. Pergamos is a church filled with false doctrine. Jesus says He is "He who has the sharp two-edged sword" and will "fight against them with the sword of My mouth" unless they repent. The sword is the Word of God (Heb. 4:12, Eph. 6:17) , and Jesus is called the Word of God (Jn.1:1, Rev. 19:13).

Revelation solemnly presents a use of that sword to slay His enemies:

**"NOW OUT OF HIS MOUTH GOES A SHARP SWORD,
THAT WITH IT HE SHOULD STRIKE THE NATIONS...
AND THE REST WERE KILLED WITH THE SWORD WHICH
PROCEEDED FROM THE MOUTH OF HIM
WHO SAT ON THE HORSE."**

Revelation 19:15,21

Jesus has some good things to say about Pergamos:

- 1. They hold fast to His name....**
- 2. They have not denied His faith even in times of great persecution....**

Jesus also recognizes that Pergamos is where Satan's throne is, where Satan dwells. It might be good to inject that hell is not the place where Satan dwells and neither is his throne located in hell. The scripture teaches that God is the master of hell, not Satan, and Jesus has the keys to death and Hades (Rev.3:18). So many of our doctrines are not founded upon God's Word but rather on the traditions of men. The ultimate destiny of Satan is the Lake of Fire and it will not be a place from which he shall rule and reign:



**“AND THE DEVIL WHO
DECEIVED THEM,
WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE
OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE
WHERE THE BEAST AND THE
FALSE PROPHET ARE.
AND THEY WILL BE
TORMENTED
DAY AND NIGHT FOREVER
AND EVER. “**

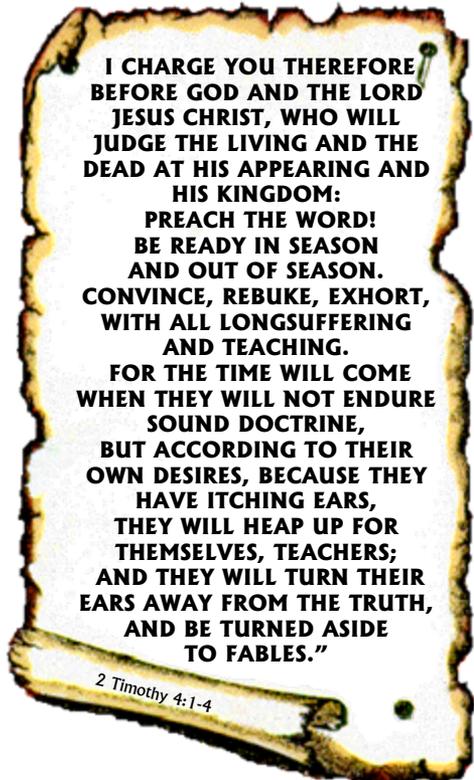
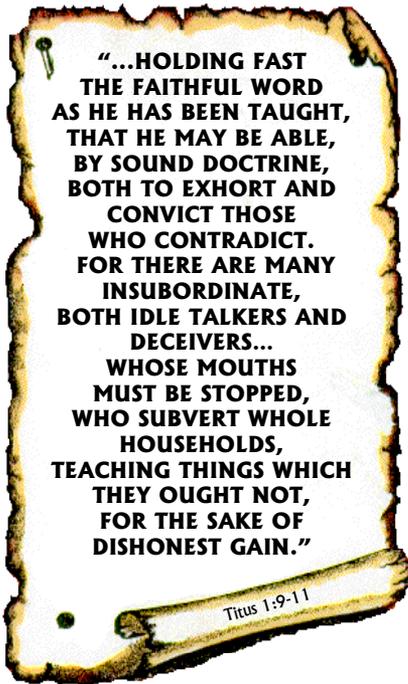
Revelation 20:10

Satan's kingdom is as “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4), “the prince and power of the air” (Eph. 2:2), “your adversary who goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:9). The point is simply that we are living in the midst of his kingdom as was Pergamos in her day. Satan will rule and reign wherever he can establish false doctrine. To establish himself in the church of Pergamos he had to first eliminate Antipas- a faithful pastor of Jesus. This is the only reference in scripture to this martyr for Jesus. However, Frank M. Boyd records in his book on Revelation this historical fact about Antipas:

“...in the period of persecution when Antipas was martyred. The name Antipas means “one against all”. The name of a faithful pastor, we are told, who was put to death during a tumult led by the priests of Aesculapius. He was burned in a brazen bull.”
(Studies in Revelation- Frank M. Boyd)

When a flock loses a faithful pastor, and especially one who was “one against all”, the enemy will seek to quickly move in to establish his throne through false doctrines.

Remember that this letter is sent to “the angel”, (lit. “the messenger”), which in reality is the spiritual overseer (pastor) of the church of Pergamos. It is to him that Jesus says “you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam...” and “you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans...” God holds His spiritual leaders responsible for what doctrines circulate among the people. This prophetic letter is a strong warning to all those who believe we should have unity at the expense of sound doctrine. Paul always warned the saints that “a little leaven will leaven the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6), He was constantly instructing the leaders of the churches to purge out the leaven of those teaching false doctrines:

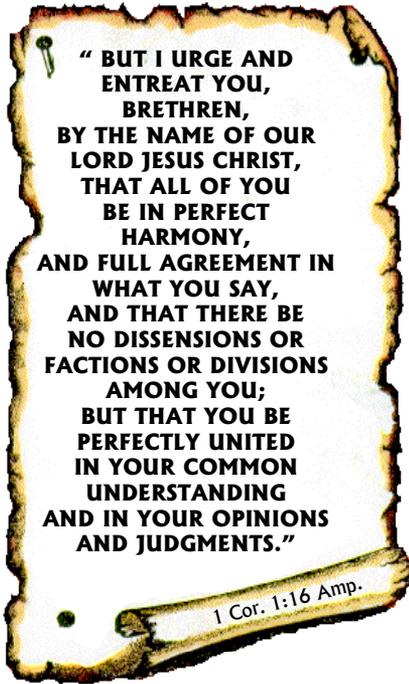


Doctrinal purity is the responsibility of the five-fold ministry gifts of Christ given to the church at His ascension:

**“WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH...HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN...
AND HE HIMSELF GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES, SOME PROPHETS,
SOME EVANGELISTS, AND SOME PASTORS AND (SOME)
TEACHERS...THAT (IN ORDER THAT) WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE
CHILDREN TOSSED TO AND FRO AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY
WIND OF DOCTRINE, BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN,
IN THE CUNNING CRAFTINESS BY WHICH
THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE..”**

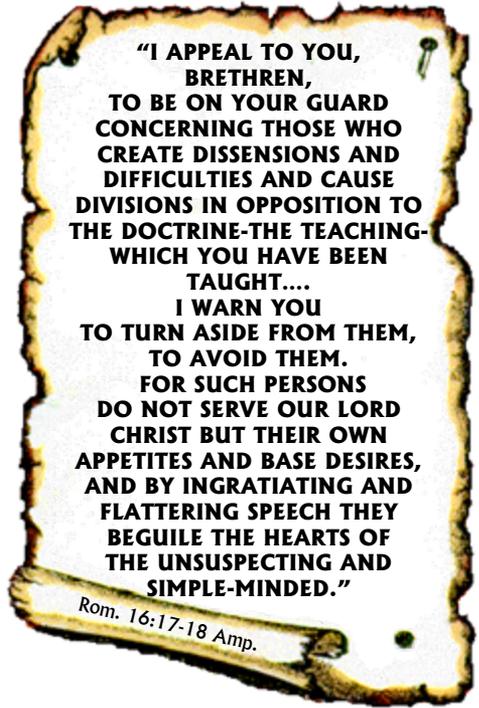
Ephesians 4:8-14

One cannot help but to see that the letters of Paul to the churches dealt heavily with the call to maintain doctrinal purity. For example, consider Paul's words to the church at Corinth and Rome:



**“ BUT I URGE AND
ENTREAT YOU,
BRETHREN,
BY THE NAME OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST,
THAT ALL OF YOU
BE IN PERFECT
HARMONY,
AND FULL AGREEMENT IN
WHAT YOU SAY,
AND THAT THERE BE
NO DISSENSIONS OR
FACTIONS OR DIVISIONS
AMONG YOU;
BUT THAT YOU BE
PERFECTLY UNITED
IN YOUR COMMON
UNDERSTANDING
AND IN YOUR OPINIONS
AND JUDGMENTS.”**

1 Cor. 1:16 Amp.



**“I APPEAL TO YOU,
BRETHREN,
TO BE ON YOUR GUARD
CONCERNING THOSE WHO
CREATE DISSENSIONS AND
DIFFICULTIES AND CAUSE
DIVISIONS IN OPPOSITION TO
THE DOCTRINE-THE TEACHING-
WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN
TAUGHT....
I WARN YOU
TO TURN ASIDE FROM THEM,
TO AVOID THEM.
FOR SUCH PERSONS
DO NOT SERVE OUR LORD
CHRIST BUT THEIR OWN
APPETITES AND BASE DESIRES,
AND BY INGRATIATING AND
FLATTERING SPEECH THEY
BEGUILE THE HEARTS OF
THE UNSUSPECTING AND
SIMPLE-MINDED.”**

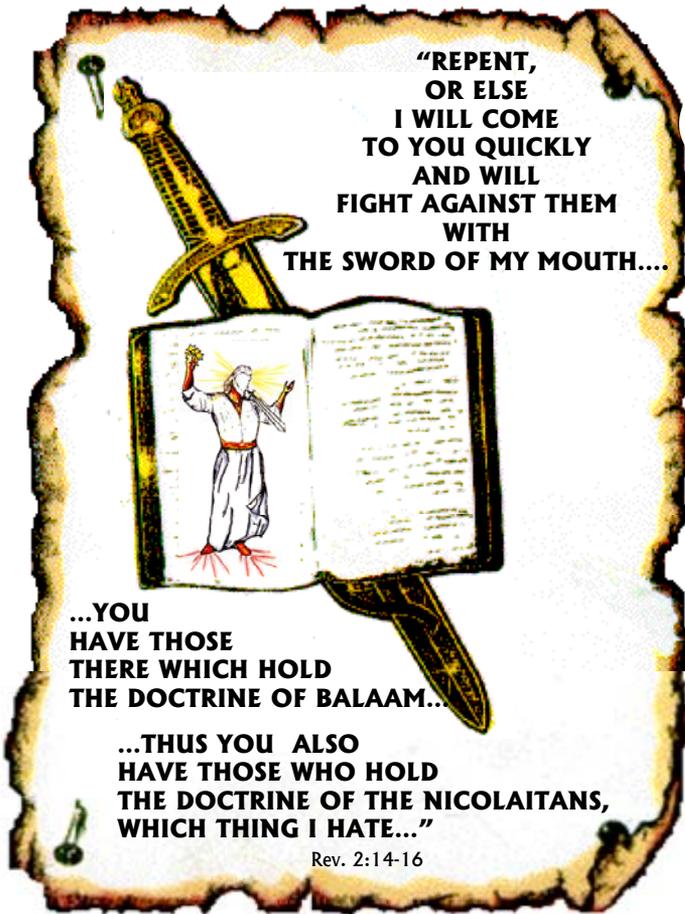
Rom. 16:17-18 Amp.

With the loss of Antipas as the pastor of Pergamos (“one against all”), the spiritual overseer who replaced him was of a different spirit. Perhaps his philosophy was “live and let live”; as we hear today proclaimed among those espousing a position of doctrinal compromise for the sake of unity. Paul’s words in Ephesians Four reveal that the five-fold ministry was to bring God’s people into the unity of the faith (Eph. 4:13), and he also stated there was only one faith (Eph. 4:4).

We have now come to the charge that our Lord brings against the overseer (pastor) of the church of Pergamos. Although they held fast to the basic elements of the faith and to the name of Christ, they allowed co-existence with those holding doctrines that were contrary to the faith, one of which, Jesus says, “this thing I hate”. If Jesus hates something doctrinal, I believe we had better find out what it is, so that we may hate it also. Let us now examine these two false doctrines which are prophetic and apply to the church of today as well as the one in Pergamos in Antipas’ day.

THE LETTER TO PERGAMOS

("MIXED MARRIAGE")



**"REPENT,
OR ELSE
I WILL COME
TO YOU QUICKLY
AND WILL
FIGHT AGAINST THEM
WITH
THE SWORD OF MY MOUTH...."**

**...YOU
HAVE THOSE
THERE WHICH HOLD
THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM...**

**...THUS YOU ALSO
HAVE THOSE WHO HOLD
THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANS,
WHICH THING I HATE..."**

Rev. 2:14-16

Often in scripture the literal meaning of names or titles shed light on the subject which might otherwise remain hidden. Such is the case with the names of these two doctrines. Balaam means "destroyer of the people", and Nicolas means "conqueror of the people". We can easily see that these are two objectives of Satan toward God's people. His throne will be wherever these doctrines are allowed to co-exist with the truth. Satan certainly knows that a little leaven will eventually leaven (corrupt) the whole lump (church).

BALAAM:

**"DESTROYER
OF THE PEOPLE"**

NICOLAS:

**"CONQUEROR
OF THE PEOPLE"**

BALAM

“DESTROYER OF THE PEOPLE”

Balaam is referred to three times in the New Testament as a warning of what will prevail among God's people in the last days. Each reference depicts a different aspect:

THE WAY OF BALAM...

2 Pet. 2:15

**“HAVING EYES FULL OF ADULTERY
AND THAT CANNOT CEASE FROM SIN,
BEGUILING UNSTABLE SOULS.
THEY HAVE A HEART
TRAINED IN COVETOUS PRACTICES,
AND ARE ACCURSED CHILDREN.
THEY HAVE FORSAKEN THE RIGHT WAY
AND HAVE GONE ASTRAY,
FOLLOWING THE WAY OF BALAM...
WHO LOVED THE WAGES OF
UNRIGHTEOUSNESS...”**

THE ERROR OF BALAM...

Jude 11

**“WOE
UNTO THEM!
FOR THEY HAVE
RUN GREEDILY IN
THE ERROR
OF BALAM
FOR PROFIT...”**

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAM...

Rev. 2:14

**“BUT I HAVE AGAINST YOU...
YOU HAVE THOSE THERE
WHO HOLD
THE DOCTRINE OF BALAM,
WHO TAUGHT BALAK TO PUT A
STUMBLING BLOCK BEFORE
THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL,
TO EAT THINGS
SACRIFICED TO IDOLS,
AND TO COMMIT
SEXUAL IMMORALITY.”**

Who does not know that Christianity, in America, is being heavily scandalized with the likes of adultery...covetous practices...unrighteousness...greediness for profit...stumbling blocks as leaders...and even sexual immorality. Sadly, it is even more prevalent in the pulpit than in the pew. If we cannot get purity in the pulpits, we will never get purity in the pews. Both Peter and Jude are speaking of leaders corrupting followers. If Satan can get God's leaders, he will also get many of God's followers as well.

Let me state for you what the doctrine of Balaam consists of, and then we will substantiate it from the scriptures:

THE DOCTRINE OF **BALAAM**

“DESTROYER OF THE PEOPLE”

THE TEACHING OF WRONG PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES WHICH WILL CAUSE GOD TO BE FORCED TO MOVE HIS HAND AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE IN JUDGMENT.

TO TEACH COMPROMISING PRINCIPLES OR DOCTRINES WHICH WILL ENSNARE GOD’S PEOPLE WITH THE IDOLS OF THIS WORLD.

Psalm 106 portrays this truth so clearly:



“THEY MINGLED WITH THE GENTILES AND LEARNED THEIR WORKS; THEY SERVED THEIR IDOLS WHICH BECAME A SHARE UNTO THEM... THUS THEY WERE DEFILED BY THEIR OWN WORKS AND PLAYED THE HARLOT BY THEIR OWN DEEDS.

THEREFORE THE WRATH OF THE LORD WAS KINDLED AGAINST HIS PEOPLE, SO THAT HE ABHORRED HIS OWN INHERITANCE.”

THE DOCTRINE OF **BALAAAM**

“DESTROYER OF THE PEOPLE”

Let us now consider the story of Balaam to see how this principle of Psalm 106 functions here. You need to take time to read Numbers, chapters 22-25. Let me highlight it for you. When the children of Israel reached the land of Moab, Balak the King of Moab, sent for Balaam to curse God’s people. This is important: Balaam was not a prophet of God. Here is a list of his pagan credentials:

1. He was the son of a pagan king. (Numbers 22:5)
2. He was a fortune teller, a seer, and a wizard. (Joshua 13:22)
3. He was a worker of magic enchantments. (Num. 24:1)
4. He was covetous, greedy and loved the wages received for righteousness. (Jude 11, 2 Peter 2:15)
5. He died by God’s hand as a false prophet. (Deut. 18:10, Num. 31:8)
6. He had a reputation to bless or curse by means of magic arts. (Num. 22:6)

It is a long story, but the essence of it is that God prevented Balaam from being able to curse the people of God:

“THEN BALAK...KING OF MOAB, AROSE AND WARRED AGAINST ISRAEL, AND SENT BALAAAM...TO CURSE YOU: BUT I (SAYS GOD) WOULD NOT HARKEN UNTO BALAAAM; THEREFORE HE BLESSED YOU AND I DELIVERED YOU OUT OF HIS HAND.”

Joshua 24:9-10

“...BUT HE HIRED BALAAAM AGAINST THEM, THAT HE SHOULD CURSE THEM; HOW BE IT OUR GOD TURNED THE CURSE INTO A BLESSING.”

Nehemiah 13:2

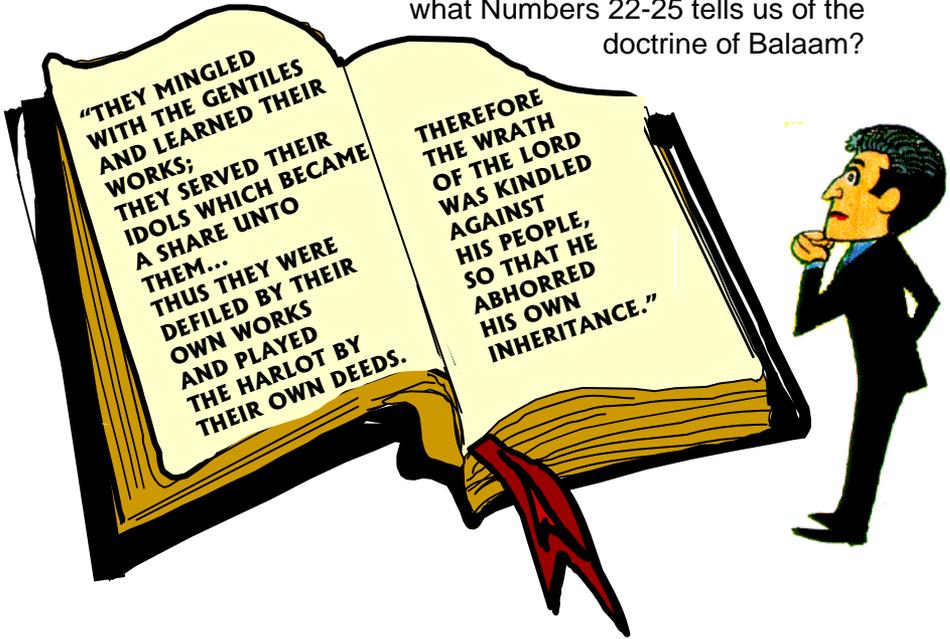
Unable to curse them with black magic, Balaam counseled Balak as to how he could get God Himself to strike His own people. This story is depicted for us in Numbers 25:

“...AND THE PEOPLE BEGAN TO COMMIT HARLOTRY WITH THE WOMEN OF MOAB. THEY (BALAK’S PEOPLE) INVITED THE PEOPLE TO THE SACRIFICES OF THEIR GODS, AND THE PEOPLE (ISRAEL) ATE AND BOWED DOWN TO THEIR (MOAB’S) GODS. SO ISRAEL WAS JOINED TO BAAL OF PEOR, AND THE ANGER OF THE LORD WAS AROUSED AGAINST ISRAEL.

...THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 'TAKE ALL THE LEADERS OF THE PEOPLE AND HANG THE OFFENDERS BEFORE THE LORD, OUT IN THE SUN, THAT THE FIERCE ANGER OF THE LORD MAY TURN AWAY FROM ISRAEL.'
(HIS ANGER CAME IN THE FORM OF A PLAGUE)...
AND THOSE WHO DIED IN THE PLAGUE WERE TWENTY-FOUR THOUSAND."
Numbers 25:1-9

"LOOK, THESE WOMEN (DAUGHTERS OF MOAB) CAUSED THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THROUGH THE COUNSEL OF BALAAM TO TRESPASS AGAINST THE LORD...AND THERE WAS A PLAGUE AMONG THE CONGREGATION OF THE LORD."
Numbers 31:16

Does not Psalm 106 depict graphically what Numbers 22-25 tells us of the doctrine of Balaam?



What Balaam did to the children of Israel is being done in Pergamos- a New Testament church. The messenger of Pergamos, is allowing those who hold this doctrine to cause God's people to eat things sacrificed to idols (as did Israel), and to commit sexual immorality (Rev. 2:14). Either heed the message of Jesus to "repent or else" or He will come and fight against them (just like He did to Israel's leaders and the people) with the sword of His mouth.

The doctrine of Balaam is a doctrine of compromise with this world. As it was alive and well in Pergamos, it is alive and well in the church today, and Jesus is still saying, "repent or else" less He send a plague among them today as He did to Israel. We better believe that He is still the Lord that does not change. (Mal. 3:6)

Paul spent a whole chapter in First Corinthians telling God's people to learn from the errors of the children of Israel:

OUR EXAMPLES

"NOW THESE THINGS BECAME OUR EXAMPLES, TO THE INTENT THAT WE SHOULD NOT LUST AFTER EVIL THINGS AS THEY ALSO LUSTED. AND DO NOT BECOME IDOLATERS AS WERE SOME OF THEM. AS IT IS WRITTEN, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND ROSE UP TO PLAY." NOR LET US COMMIT SEXUAL IMMORALITY, AS SOME OF THEM DID, AND IN ONE DAY TWENTY-THREE THOUSAND FELL; NOR LET US TEMPT CHRIST, AS SOME OF THEM ALSO TEMPTED, AND WERE DESTROYED BY SERPENTS; NOR COMPLAIN, AS SOME OF THEM ALSO COMPLAINED, AND WERE DESTROYED BY THE DESTROYER. NOW ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO THEM AS EXAMPLES, AND THEY WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE AGES HAVE COME. THEREFORE LET HIM WHO THINKS HE STANDS TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL... THEREFORE, MY BELOVED, FLEE FROM IDOLATRY.

1 Cor. 10:6-14 excerpts

What God required of His people Israel was to embrace a call of separation. It is His same desire for the church today:

OUR EXAMPLES:

"They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices made to the dead. Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds, and the plague broke out among them... They angered Him also at the waters of strife... because they rebelled against His Spirit...but they mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works; they served their idols, which became a snare to them...thus they were defiled by their own works...and played the harlot by their own deeds. Therefore the wrath of the Lord was kindled against His people, so that He abhorred His own inheritance."

Ps 106:28-39

OUR TESTIMONY:

"...what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God... Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate', says the Lord. 'Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty'...

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

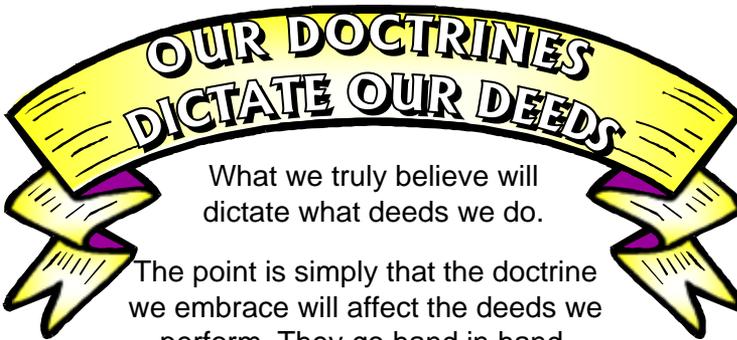
2 Cor. 6:16-18, 7:1

NICOLAUS

“CONQUEROR OF THE PEOPLE”

The second doctrine that Jesus reproves Pergamos for allowing in their midst is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. You may remember from the letter Jesus wrote to Ephesus that He commended them for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans because Jesus stated, “which I also hate” (Rev. 2:6).

Now, in His letter to Pergamos, He also states about the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, “which thing I hate” (Rev. 2:15). Let us get the point: Jesus hates the deeds and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Here is why:



What we truly believe will dictate what deeds we do.

The point is simply that the doctrine we embrace will affect the deeds we perform. They go hand in hand.

If the people of God believe little, they will do little.

If the people of God hold to bad doctrines, they will do bad deeds.

If the people of God hold fast to sound doctrine then their deeds will also be sound.

Let us apply this principle of faith in a negative vain. We want to look at the deeds of the Nicolaitans. They were terribly wicked. So were their doctrines. Their doctrines dictated their deeds.

**THE DEEDS AND DOCTRINE OF THE
NICOLAITANS**

We must turn to the historical evidence to learn about the deeds and doctrines of the Nicolaitans for there is no further reference to them in the Bible.

Read carefully this documented account from the Zondervan → Encyclopedia of what constituted their deeds and doctrines.

Perhaps you will be struck with the great similarities between what was going on back in the infant beginnings of Christianity and what is wide-spread in today's brand as well.

It is of special interest to this writer the perversion of the grace message held by Nicolaus and his followers, for it is parallel to the perversion of grace in our day. They were deceived into believing that grace and forgiveness were theirs no matter how they lived. Today, this doctrine flies under the banner of "Unconditional Eternal Security" and "Once Saved, Always Saved."

This doctrine held by the Nicolaitans of yesterday, and by many Christians today, is the only doctrine that Jesus singled out as "Which thing I hate!"

NICOLAITANS A term appearing in the Revelation (2:6,15) describing members of Christian congregations who held a doctrine that the Lord hated. Irenaeus said that they were followers of Nicolaus of Antioch, a proselyte who was among the seven men chosen to serve the Jerusalem congregation (Acts 6:5), who had forsaken true Christian doctrine; he said they lived in unrestrained indulgence (*Against Heresies 1:26:3*). Hippolytus confirmed this by noting that Nicolaus left correct doctrine and had the habit of indifference as to what a man ate and as to how he lived (*Refutation of Heresies 7:24*)

The Apostolic Constitutions (6:8) described them as "shameless in uncleanness" ...the Nicolaitans abandoned themselves to pleasures like goats in a life of shameless self-indulgence (*the Micellianes 2:20*).

They were a people who used Christian liberty as an occasion for the flesh...the Nicolaitans attempted to establish a compromise with the pagan society of the Gracco-Roman world that surrounded them...

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans was dualistic. They reasoned that the human body was evil and only the spirit was good. A Christian, therefore, could do whatever he desired with his body because it was of no importance. The spirit on the other hand, was the recipient of grace which meant that grace and forgiveness were his no matter what he did... They were judged by the author of Revelation to be most dangerous because the result of their teaching would have conformed Christianity to the world rather than having Christianity change the world."

The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible- Volume Four, page 435

It is quite noteworthy to consider the origin of this doctrine which Jesus hates. It began with a follower of Christ who bore a good reputation at one time:

“...SEEK OUT FROM AMONG YOU SEVEN MEN OF GOOD REPUTATION, FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WISDOM... AND THEY CHOSE STEPHEN, A MAN OF FAITH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND PHILIP, PROCHORUS, NICANOR, TIMON, PARMENAS AND NICOLAS, A PROSELYTE FROM ANTIOCH, WHOM THEY SET BEFORE THE APOSTLES; AND WHEN THEY HAD PRAYED, THEY LAID HANDS ON THEM.”

Acts 6:3-6

You could not have had a better beginning, right? Perhaps you have heard it said, “It is not how a man begins that counts, but how he finishes.” Nicolaus began good, but finished bad, and the only thing that changed were his doctrines:

“NICOLAUS LEFT SOUND DOCTRINE AND HAD THE HABIT OF INDIFFERENCE AS TO WHAT A MAN ATE AND AS TO HOW HE LIVED.”

(Refutation of heresies 7:24)

There is a tremendous reluctance today to accept that a man who had a genuine conversion experience and has borne evidence such as we find recorded of Nicolaus in Acts Chapter Six, was ever truly born again. The bible refutes such a position through this account of Nicolaus. You could also consider men such as King Saul, King Solomon, and the apostle Judas as those who began good, but finished bad. All had callings and gifts from God, but still went astray.

The point I am seeking to inject at this time is that, as Christians, we must be very careful who and what we are following after. It is not what a man has been that makes him trustworthy, but rather what he is presently. Listen to Paul’s defense of himself:



“BUT YOU HAVE CAREFULLY FOLLOWED MY DOCTRINE, MANNER OF LIFE, PURPOSE, FAITH, LONGSUFFERING, LOVE, PERSEVERANCE, PERSECUTIONS, AFFLICTIONS...”

2 Tim. 3:10

I like what the Phillips translations states of the apostle Paul:

“OUR SOLE DEFENSE, OUR ONLY WEAPON, IS A LIFE OF INTEGRITY...”

2 Cor. 6:8 Phillips

Today, we have functioning in the Body of Christ, men who are trying to use their God-given gifts and anointing as a basis of approval for what they preach. However, Paul taught us to measure fruit-not gifts. So did Jesus:



**“BEWARE OF
FALSE PROPHETS
WHO COME TO YOU
IN
SHEEP’S CLOTHING
BUT INWARDLY
THEY ARE
RAVENOUS WOLVES!
YOU WILL
KNOW THEM
BY
THEIR FRUITS.**



**...MANY WILL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY,
‘LORD, LORD, HAVE WE NOT PROPHESED IN YOUR NAME,
CAST OUT DEMONS IN YOUR NAME, AND DONE MANY WONDERS
IN YOUR NAME’, BUT I WILL DECLARE TO THEM, ‘I NEVER KNEW
YOU, DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’**

Matt. 7:15-23

Fruit is the basis for measurement, not gifts. It is quite clear that some of those with such gifts, as claimed above, will be cast out for their lifestyle of lawlessness. It is not their gifts that are considered to be acts of lawlessness, but rather their lawless lifestyle. The gifts and callings of God are irrevocable (Rom.11:29). That means you can have good gifts, but bad fruit! God holds His people accountable for how they live!

The point is simply that men can function from the position of Nicolaus, who at one time, was noted for being of “good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3), but then became like ravenous wolves in sheep’s clothing due to their lawless behavior.



**“THEREFORE, TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES
AND TO ALL THE FLOCK, AMONG WHICH THE
HOLY SPIRIT HAS MADE YOU OVERSEERS,
TO SHEPHERD THE CHURCH OF GOD...
FOR I KNOW THIS, THAT AFTER MY
DEPARTURE SAVAGE WOLVES WILL COME IN
AMONG YOU, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK.
ALSO FROM AMONG YOURSELVES MEN WILL
RISE UP, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS TO
DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEMSELVES.
THEREFORE WATCH....”**

Acts 20:25-31



Nicolaus certainly fits the mold of those who “rise up, speak perverse things, and draw disciples after themselves.” This was a good man gone bad after having received the laying on of hands by the apostles, a man who initially was full of the Holy Spirit, and bore a good reputation among men!



“PREACH THE WORD!...FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE, BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN DESIRES, BECAUSE THEY HAVE ITCHING EARS, THEY WILL HEAP UP FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS AND THEY WILL TURN THEIR EARS AWAY FROM THE TRUTH, AND BE TURNED ASIDE UNTO FABLES.”

2 Tim. 4:1-4

“THERE WILL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU... MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS, BECAUSE OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE BLASPHEMED. BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS...”

2 Pet. 2:1-3



Even the world sees through the deceitful manipulative preaching being presented today as the gospel message.

One news special I saw recently was cynically entitled, “Profit Preachers.” How is it that the un-regenerated so easily recognize this falsehood and Christians do not? Let Jesus tell us why:



“FOR THE SONS OF THIS WORLD ARE MORE SHREWD IN THEIR GENERATION THAN THE SONS OF LIGHT.”

Luke 16:8

While the sons of this world see it for the sham and shame it really is, the sons of light keep sending in their bucks to keep it going strong, and the real way of truth becomes all the more blasphemed.

And so Pergamos becomes a prophetic example of the result of allowing false doctrines to thrive within the church:

THE DOCTRINE AND DEEDS OF THE NICOLAITANS

“Grace and forgiveness are yours regardless of how you live in the body”

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM

“All these things God will add to you... faith for prosperity... be the best, have the best...”

THE DOCTRINE OF **BALAAAM**

“DESTROYER OF THE PEOPLE”

Balaam taught Balak how to destroy the people of God: present before their eyes things sacrificed to idols and they will be sufficiently tempted to partake! However, Paul warns that such covetous practice is idolatry (Col. 3:5). The apostle Peter warns of false teachers in Christianity who are following the way of Balaam:



“THEY HAVE A HEART TRAINED IN COVETOUS PRACTICES...THEY ARE ACCURSED CHILDREN. THEY HAVE FORSAKEN THE RIGHT WAY AND HAVE GONE ASTRAY FOLLOWING THE WAY OF BALAAM... WHO LOVED THE WAGES OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS...”

2 Pet. 2:15

Jude also gives warning of the error of Balaam:

**“WOE UNTO THEM!
FOR THEY RUN GREEDILY
IN THE ERROR OF BALAAM
FOR PROFIT...”**

Jude 11



The apostle Paul tells us what should be our attitude toward this concept:



“...MEN OF CORRUPT MINDS AND DESTITUTE OF THE TRUTH, WHO SUPPOSE THAT GODLINESS IS A MEANS OF GAIN. FROM SUCH WITHDRAW YOURSELF...THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BE RICH FALL INTO TEMPTATION AND A SNARE, AND INTO MANY FOOLISH AND HARMFUL LUSTS WHICH DROWN MEN IN DESTRUCTION AND PERDITION... THEY PIERCE THEMSELVES THROUGH WITH MANY SORROWS. BUT YOU, O MAN OF GOD, FLEE THESE THINGS.”

1 Tim. 6:5-11

NICOLAUS

“CONQUEROR OF THE PEOPLE”

Nicolaus presented a doctrine of easy believe-ism which did away with the need for a cross life of denial of fleshly lusts. It did not matter what you did in the body because the physical body was evil. Grace and forgiveness were guaranteed even if sin dominated you through and through. How contrary this is to Paul's words:

“SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND? CERTAINLY NOT!”

Rom. 6:1-2

Pergamos had both of these doctrines in their midst that taught God's people to be conformed to the world. Study them carefully. They may vary from the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eyes, or even be motivated by the pride of life, but the underlying result will be compromise and conformity to this present evil world.

THE DEEDS AND DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANS

THE DOCTRINE:

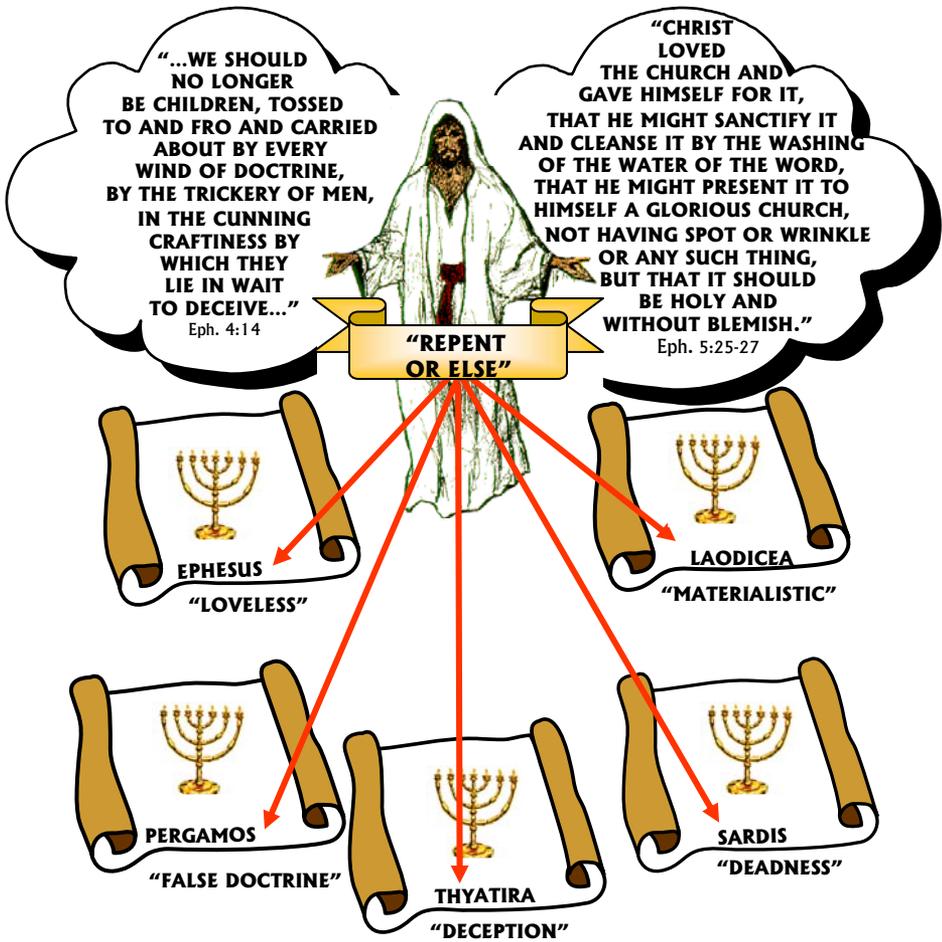
1. They believed the body was evil and only the spirit was good...
2. A Christian could do as he pleases with his body because it had no importance...
3. The spirit of man received God's grace, therefore grace and forgiveness was theirs regardless of what was done in the physical body...

THE DEEDS:

1. They lived their lives in unrestrained indulgence...
2. They practiced shameless self-indulgence...
3. They used Christian liberty as an occasion for the works of the flesh...
4. They established a compromise with the pagan world in sexual freedom...

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM

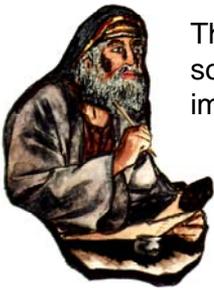
**THE TEACHING OF WRONG PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES WHICH WILL CAUSE GOD TO BE FORCED TO MOVE HIS HAND AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE IN JUDGMENT.
TO TEACH COMPROMISING PRINCIPLES OR DOCTRINES WHICH WILL ENSNARE GOD'S PEOPLE WITH THE IDOLS OF THIS WORLD.**



In light of the clearly stated objectives Jesus has for His church, we begin to recognize the importance of Jesus’ last words to His churches. Only Philadelphia and Smyrna are found to be a “glorious church, without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing, holy and without blemish.” The other five churches are called to repent, and we have seen so far that the problem centers around the doctrines they embrace. Today we hear proclaimed that it does not matter what you believe, but the message Jesus is bringing forth dispels such a loose philosophy. The reality is:

OUR DOCTRINES DICTATE OUR DEEDS

The doctrines of the Nicolaitans produced the deeds of the Nicolaitans. What we believe to be sound doctrine will dictate what we do, or do not do, as a follower of Christ. Doctrine is important.



The apostle Paul gave sound advice to his son in the faith Timothy concerning the importance of doctrine:

**“GIVE ATTENTION TO...DOCTRINE...
TAKE HEED TO YOURSELF AND TO THE DOCTRINE.
CONTINUE IN THEM, FOR IN DOING THIS YOU WILL
SAVE YOURSELF AND THOSE WHO HEAR YOU.”**

1 Tim. 4:13-16

Paul gave two specific prophetic warnings concerning two types of doctrinal error which would be coming forth. One centered upon the demands of the people, and the other stemming from the demands of the pulpit.

THE DEMAND OF THE PEOPLE

**“PREACH THE WORD!...
FOR THE TIME WILL COME
WHEN THEY WILL NOT
ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE,
BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR
OWN DESIRES, BECAUSE
THEY HAVE ITCHING EARS,
THEY WILL HEAP UP FOR
THEMSELVES TEACHERS AND
THEY WILL TURN THEIR
EARS AWAY FROM THE
TRUTH, AND BE TURNED
ASIDE UNTO FABLES.”**

2 Tim. 4:1-4

PROTESTANTISM

Although not all-inclusive, but certainly widespread, we find that in modern-day Protestantism, the Word of God has been replaced by philosophy, ideology, psychology, sociology, and humanism. Even where the Word is used we find the condoning of idolatry and covetousness under the banner of faith being presented as an expression of doing the will of God.

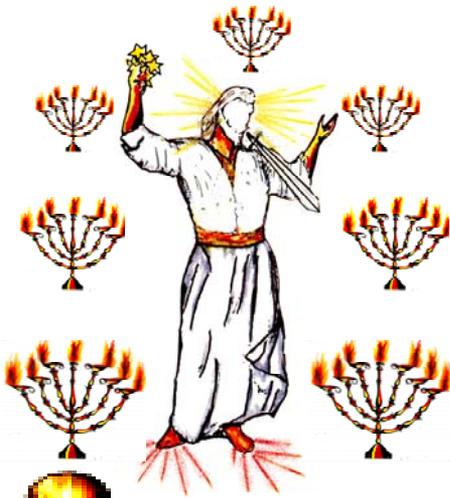
THE DEMAND OF THE PULPIT

**“NOW THE SPIRIT
EXPRESSLY SAYS THAT IN
THE LATER TIMES SOME
WILL DEPART FROM THE
FAITH, GIVING HEED TO
DECEIVING SPIRITS AND
DOCTRINES OF DEMONS,
SPEAKING LIES IN
HYPOCRISY, HAVING THEIR
CONSCIENCE SEARED...
FORBIDDING TO MARRY,
AND COMMANDING TO
ABSTAIN FROM FOODS...”**

1 Tim. 4:1-3

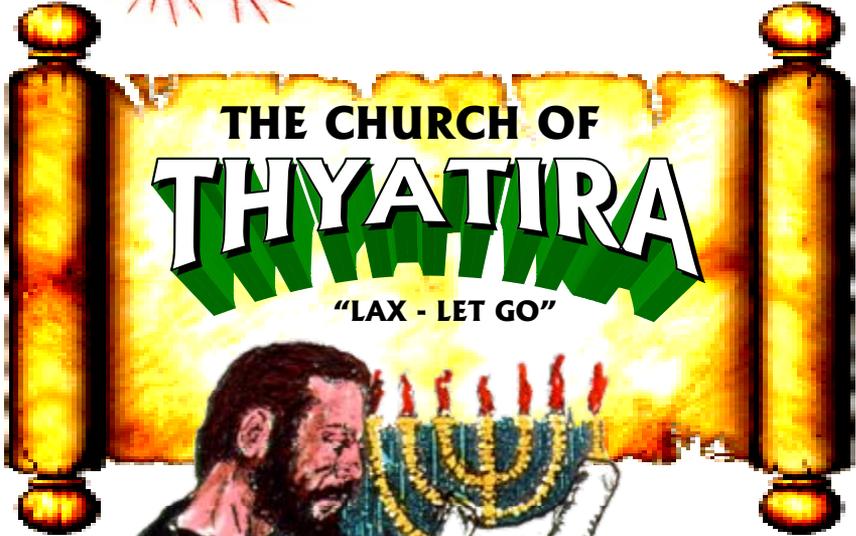
CATHOLICISM

Like the Pharisees in Jesus' day, the modern-day Roman Catholic hierarchy has chosen to replace the written Word of God with their own handed-down traditions of men, and thereby have made the written Word of God of no effect by the exalting of the commandments of men above the clear statements of God's Word. They preferred what they said over what God has said.



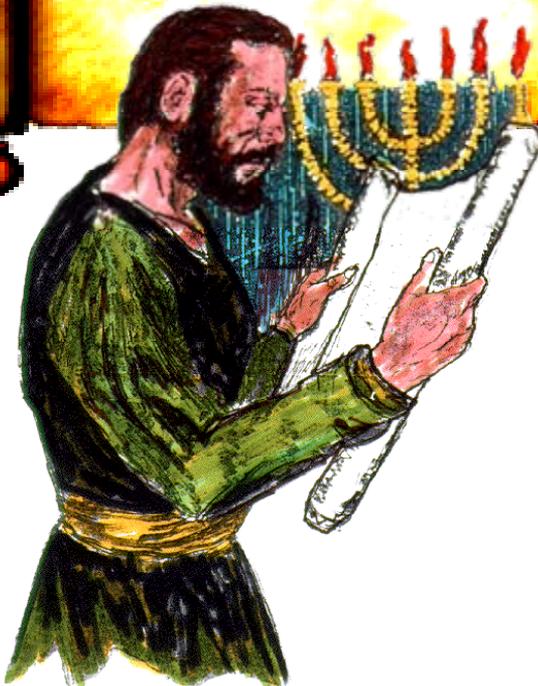
**"HE WHO
HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT
THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES."**

Rev. 2:29



**THE CHURCH OF
THYATIRA**

"LAX - LET GO"





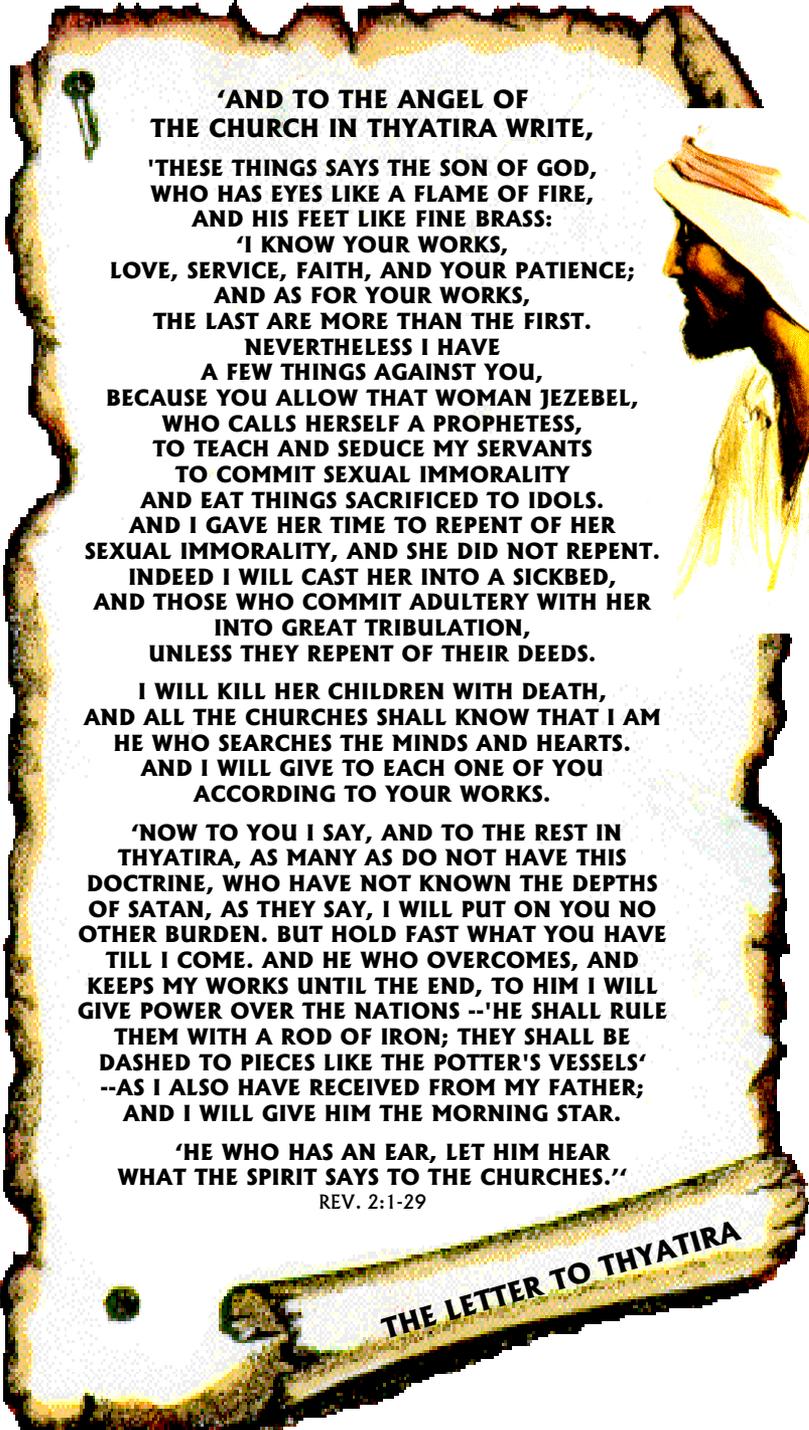
**"HE
WHO HAS
AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT**

THE SPIRIT

**SAYS TO
THE CHURCHES."**



**THE SEVEN LETTERS
TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**



**'AND TO THE ANGEL OF
THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA WRITE,
'THESE THINGS SAYS THE SON OF GOD,
WHO HAS EYES LIKE A FLAME OF FIRE,
AND HIS FEET LIKE FINE BRASS:**

**'I KNOW YOUR WORKS,
LOVE, SERVICE, FAITH, AND YOUR PATIENCE;
AND AS FOR YOUR WORKS,
THE LAST ARE MORE THAN THE FIRST.
NEVERTHELESS I HAVE
A FEW THINGS AGAINST YOU,
BECAUSE YOU ALLOW THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL,
WHO CALLS HERSELF A PROPHETESS,
TO TEACH AND SEDUCE MY SERVANTS
TO COMMIT SEXUAL IMMORALITY
AND EAT THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS.
AND I GAVE HER TIME TO REPENT OF HER
SEXUAL IMMORALITY, AND SHE DID NOT REPENT.
INDEED I WILL CAST HER INTO A SICKBED,
AND THOSE WHO COMMIT ADULTERY WITH HER
INTO GREAT TRIBULATION,
UNLESS THEY REPENT OF THEIR DEEDS.**

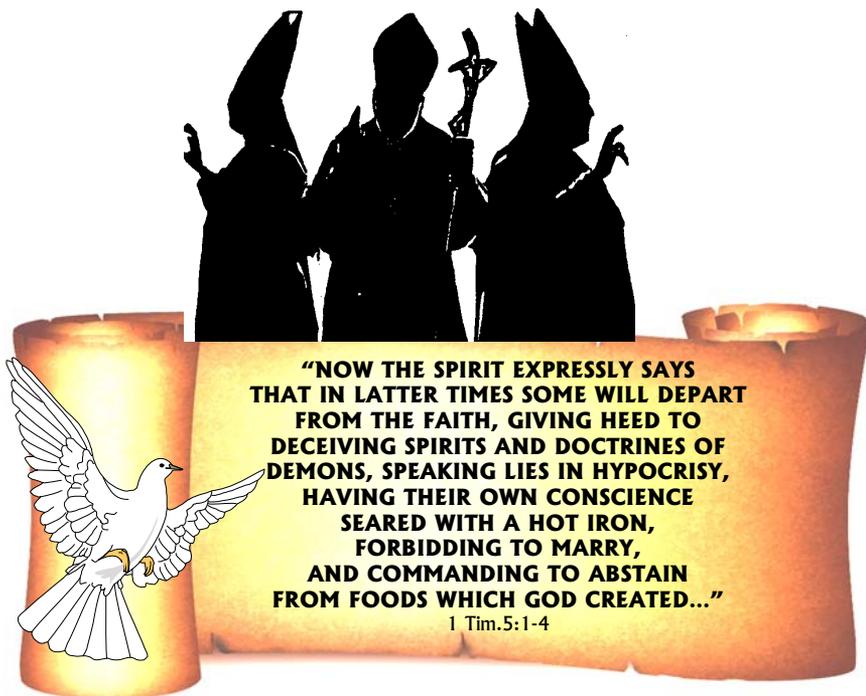
**I WILL KILL HER CHILDREN WITH DEATH,
AND ALL THE CHURCHES SHALL KNOW THAT I AM
HE WHO SEARCHES THE MINDS AND HEARTS.
AND I WILL GIVE TO EACH ONE OF YOU
ACCORDING TO YOUR WORKS.**

**'NOW TO YOU I SAY, AND TO THE REST IN
THYATIRA, AS MANY AS DO NOT HAVE THIS
DOCTRINE, WHO HAVE NOT KNOWN THE DEPTHS
OF SATAN, AS THEY SAY, I WILL PUT ON YOU NO
OTHER BURDEN. BUT HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE
TILL I COME. AND HE WHO OVERCOMES, AND
KEEPS MY WORKS UNTIL THE END, TO HIM I WILL
GIVE POWER OVER THE NATIONS --'HE SHALL RULE
THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON; THEY SHALL BE
DASHED TO PIECES LIKE THE POTTER'S VESSELS'
--AS I ALSO HAVE RECEIVED FROM MY FATHER;
AND I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR.**

**'HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.'**

REV. 2:1-29

THE LETTER TO THYATIRA



**“NOW THE SPIRIT EXPRESSLY SAYS
THAT IN LATTER TIMES SOME WILL DEPART
FROM THE FAITH, GIVING HEED TO
DECEIVING SPIRITS AND DOCTRINES OF
DEMONS, SPEAKING LIES IN HYPOCRISY,
HAVING THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE
SEARED WITH A HOT IRON,
FORBIDDING TO MARRY,
AND COMMANDING TO ABSTAIN
FROM FOODS WHICH GOD CREATED...”**

1 Tim.5:1-4

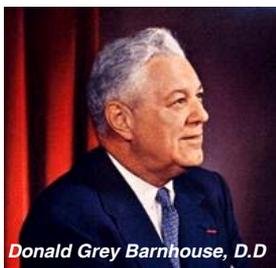
Both John and Paul give a prophetic and painful picture of this professing segment of the Body of Christ. The Roman Catholic Church was not in existence at the time Paul penned the words above from First Timothy, nor was it in existence when John was given the letter to write to the church at Thyatira. I must stress to you that we are dealing with prophetic depictions of the church beyond John’s day. All seven churches were in existence at the time of John’s exile on Patmos, and the contents were directed at the churches in existence in John’s day. However, being prophetic letters that span all the way up to the return of Christ at the Rapture, there is a greater fulfillment of these truths to come after John’s day. We know this to be true because in several of these letters Jesus instructs those churches to “Hold fast what you have till I come” (Rev. 2:25, Rev. 3:11).

In addition to depicting the status of the church in John’s day, and in depicting the condition of the church in the last days prior to Jesus’ coming, these letters also depict a progressive history of the church as well. This is important to establish as it validates the association of the message to Thyatira unto its modern-day counterpart, the Roman Catholic Church.

History refutes the claim that the Roman Catholic Church began with its first pope being the Apostle Peter. Peter was never in Rome. He was the apostle sent to the Jews in Jerusalem as the scripture plainly states (Gal. 1:18, Gal.2:1-6)

Catholicism was not in existence until after 300 A.D when Constantine declared Christianity to be the official state religion. Instantly, the ancient Babylonian priesthood with all its rites and rituals of pagan idolatry were merged into Christianity. Thus the Queen of Heaven, the supreme object of Babylonian worship was injected into mainstream Christianity and began to challenge the place of Jesus Christ as the only one to worship. Mary was also to be highly worshiped.

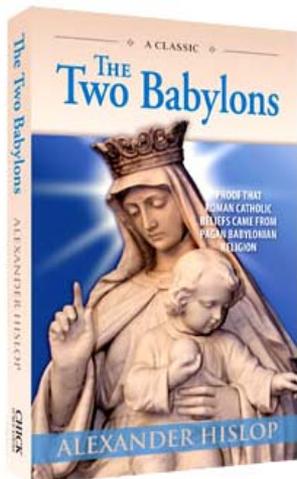
There is a book that I highly recommend that will firmly establish that Catholicism does not has its origins in apostolic Christianity. I believe this is must reading for every true follower of Christ. That book is "The Two Babylons" first written in 1885 by Rev. Alexander Hislop.



Donald Grey Barnhouse, D.D

"*The Two Babylons* is one of the great books in the Christian literature of apologetics. It is written in the classical style, with a wealth of material in the footnotes buttressing the facts brought forth in the argument. Some people may wish to throw aside a book because it has been written more than half a century, but in this case they would be foolish. The pretensions of the Roman Catholic Church are old pretensions, and frequently they are based on old arguments.

The author of *The Two Babylons* demonstrates that almost all the practices of the Roman cult have been brought over from paganism. When we come to see that the worship (or veneration-it is the same thing) of the Virgin Mary is really the worship of Venus, Astarte, and that it comes from Babylon, the center of the system is revealed to be Satanic..."



"Where did the practices and beliefs of Roman Catholicism come from? In this scholarly classic, first published over eighty years ago, Alexander Hislop reveals that many Roman Catholic teachings did not originate with Christ or the Bible, but were adopted from ancient pagan Babylonian religion, and given Christian names. This book accurately provides a fascinating historical in-depth examination of the shocking similarities between the practices of ancient Babylonian religion and those of today's Roman Catholic church."

The word "mystery" means a "hidden truth." The Roman Catholic Hierarchy has sought to hide the truth about its Babylonian origin. Consider what Clarence Larkin wrote in 1917:

"All this was a "Mystery" in John's day, because the "Papal Church" had not as yet developed; though the "Mystery of Iniquity" was already at work (2. Thess. 2:7), but it is no longer a "Mystery" for it is now easy to identify the "Woman"--"Mystery, Babylon the Great," which John described, as the "Papal Church." In Rev. 17:4 we read that the "Woman" "was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a 'Golden Cup' in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications."

Now who does not know that scarlet and purple are the colors of the Papacy? Of the different articles of attire specified for the Pope to wear when he is installed into office five are scarlet. A vest covered with pearls, and a mitre, adorned with gold and precious stones was also to be worn. How completely this answers the description of the Woman's dress as she sits upon the Scarlet Colored Beast. We are also told that the Woman was "drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus." While this refers more particularly to the martyrs of the time of Antichrist, yet who does not know, who has studied the history of the Christian Church for the past nineteen centuries, that this is true of the Papal Church during those centuries? One has only to read the history of the persecutions of the early Christians and more particularly the story of the "Inquisition" in Papal lands, to see that the Papal Church has been "drunk" with the blood of the Saints.

Soon after Damascus was made "supreme Pontiff" the "rites" of Babylon began to come to the front. The worship of the Virgin Mary was set up in A. D. 381. All the outstanding festivals of the Roman Catholic Church are of Babylonian origin. Easter is not a Christian name. It means "Ishtar," one of the titles of the Babylonian Queen of Heaven, whose worship by the Children of Israel was such an abomination in the sight of God. The decree for the observance of Easter and Lent was given in A. D. 519. The "Rosary" is of Pagan origin. There is no warrant in the Word of God for the use of the "Sign of the Cross." It had its origin in the mystic "Tau" of the Chaldeans and Egyptians. It came from the letter "T," the initial name of "Tammuz," and was used in the "Babylonian Mysteries" for the same magic purposes as the Romish church now employs it. Celibacy, the Tonsure, and the Order of Monks and Nuns, have no warrant or authority from Scripture. The Nuns are nothing more than an imitation of the "Vestal Virgins" of Pagan Rome." *The Book of Revelation Clarence Larkin 1917*

Am I attacking Catholics? No, but I am warning Catholics as well as Protestants that Jesus Christ, the Righteous Judge, is judging His church. If the Roman Catholic Church is indeed part of the true church of Jesus Christ, then it must appear somewhere among these seven prophetic letters of warning to the church. Since history depicts a progressive picture of the church until the return of Jesus Christ, then the letter to Thyatira must be the message written prophetically for the Roman Catholic Church. This letter contains some of the most severe warnings to be found in all the letters Jesus wrote to His churches.

The old adage, “to be forewarned is to be forearmed” is applicable of the intention of our Lord Jesus Christ in speaking as He does to the churches. His great cry is, “Repent!” to all those He dearly loves, both Catholic and Protestant followers of Jesus Christ. God loves the Catholic as well as the Protestant, and He is forewarning both Catholic and Protestant followers as He also forewarned the Jews before He brought pending judgment against them. Let us jump ahead in the book of Revelation to Chapters 17 and 18 to see the prophetic judgment which shall come upon the Great Harlot Church, which, as kindly as I can say it, is the Roman Catholic hierarchy with all its counter-Christian rituals and man-made traditions:



“COME, I WILL SHOW YOU THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT HARLOT WHO SITS ON MANY WATERS...THE WATERS WHICH YOU SAW, WHERE THE HARLOT SITS, ARE PEOPLES, MULTITUDES, NATIONS AND TONGUES Rev. 17:1,15

“COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE, LEST YOU SHARE IN HER SINS, AND LEST YOU RECEIVE OF HER PLAGUES.” (Rev. 18:4)

If you take the time to read carefully those two prophetic chapters of judgment, you will see the distinct markings that belong only to the Roman Catholic system:

1. She rules over nations, tongues and peoples...
2. She sits of seven hills (only Rome sits on seven hills)
3. She is clothed in purple, scarlet, gold, precious stones, pearls...
4. She lives in luxury and abundance (the Vatican)
5. She trades in the souls of men (doctrine of Purgatory)
6. She has a history of spilling the blood of the saints

(see Foxe's Book of Martyrs)



7. She bears the crown of "Mystery" found in the Great Harlot of Revelation 17:

"Even Roman Catholic divines admit that this description fits Rome... French prelate Bodduet in his exposition of the Revelation states: "The features are so marked that it is easy to decipher Rome under the figure of Babylon. The papal crown bore the word "Mystery" on its front for some time, and was removed by pope Julius III, having his attention drawn to the 17 th chapter of the Revelation."

Book of Revelation, Clarence Larkin 1919

If you are a Roman Catholic, then I implore you to disprove by the contents of the Word of God that this vivid picture in Revelation 17-18 is none other than the Roman Catholic Church. Its detailed description fits no other religious system on the face of the earth. Jesus gives stern warning to His people that are within this system:



"AND I HEARD ANOTHER VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING, 'COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, LEST YOU SHARE IN HER SINS, AND LEST YOU RECEIVE OF HER PLAGUES."

Rev. 18:4

Let us consider now the 13th chapter of Revelation which reveals the appearance of the false prophet who will make an alliance with the antichrist and cause all to worship the beast. This false prophet will perform great signs, even bringing down fire from heaven and thereby deceive all who dwell on the face of the earth:

"THEN I SAW ANOTHER BEAST COMING UP OUT OF THE EARTH, AND HE HAD TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB AND SPOKE LIKE A DRAGON. AND HE EXERCISES ALL THE AUTHORITY OF THE FIRST BEAST IN HIS PRESENCE, AND CAUSES THE EARTH AND THOSE WHO DWELL IN IT TO WORSHIP THE FIRST BEAST, WHOSE DEADLY WOUND WAS HEALED. HE PERFORMS GREAT SIGNS, SO THAT HE EVEN MAKES FIRE COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN ON THE EARTH IN THE SIGHT OF MEN. AND HE DECEIVES THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH BY THOSE SIGNS WHICH HE WAS GRANTED TO DO IN THE SIGHT OF THE BEAST, TELLING THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH TO MAKE AN IMAGE TO THE BEAST WHO WAS WOUNDED BY THE SWORD AND LIVED. HE WAS GRANTED POWER TO GIVE BREATH TO THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST, THAT THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST SHOULD BOTH SPEAK AND CAUSE AS MANY AS WOULD NOT WORSHIP THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST TO BE KILLED. HE CAUSES ALL, BOTH SMALL AND GREAT, RICH AND POOR, FREE AND SLAVE, TO RECEIVE A MARK ON THEIR RIGHT HAND OR ON THEIR FOREHEADS, AND THAT NO ONE MAY BUY OR SELL EXCEPT ONE WHO HAS THE MARK OR THE NAME OF THE BEAST, OR THE NUMBER OF HIS NAME. HERE IS WISDOM. LET HIM WHO HAS UNDERSTANDING CALCULATE THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST, FOR IT IS THE NUMBER OF A MAN: HIS NUMBER IS 666"

Rev. 13:11-18

In describing this false prophet, Revelation Chapter 13 said he will bear the numeric value 666 that can be calculated by those who have wisdom and understanding:

**“HERE IS WISDOM. LET HIM WHO HAS UNDERSTANDING
CALCULATE THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST,
FOR IT IS THE NUMBER OF A MAN: HIS NUMBER IS 666.”**

Rev 13:18

Below are six Latin titles that the papacy uses to describe itself (see website <http://www.remnantofgod.org/666.htm> for further details). They are self-imposed titles of choice. These titles are calculated using the standard numerical values of Latin:

ROMAN (Latin) NUMERIC SYSTEM:
D= 500, C= 100, L= 50, X= 10, V (or U)+ 5, I= 1
 These are the only Latin letters that have numerical values.
 Notice that they in themselves total 666.

1. “VICAR OF THE SON OF GOD”

V I C A R I U S F I L I I D E I
 5 1 100 0 0 15 0 0 1 50 1 1 500 0 1 = **666**

2. “VICAR OF THE COURT”

L V D O V I C V S
 50 5 500 0 5 1 100 5 0 = **666**

3. “CAPTAIN OF THE CLERGY”

D V X C L E R I
 500 5 10 100 50 0 0 1 = **666**

4. “HOLY LIGHT OF GOD”

S A N C T A L V X D E I
 0 0 0 100 0 0 50 5 10 500 0 1 = **666**

5. “KING OF THE ROMAN PRIESTS”

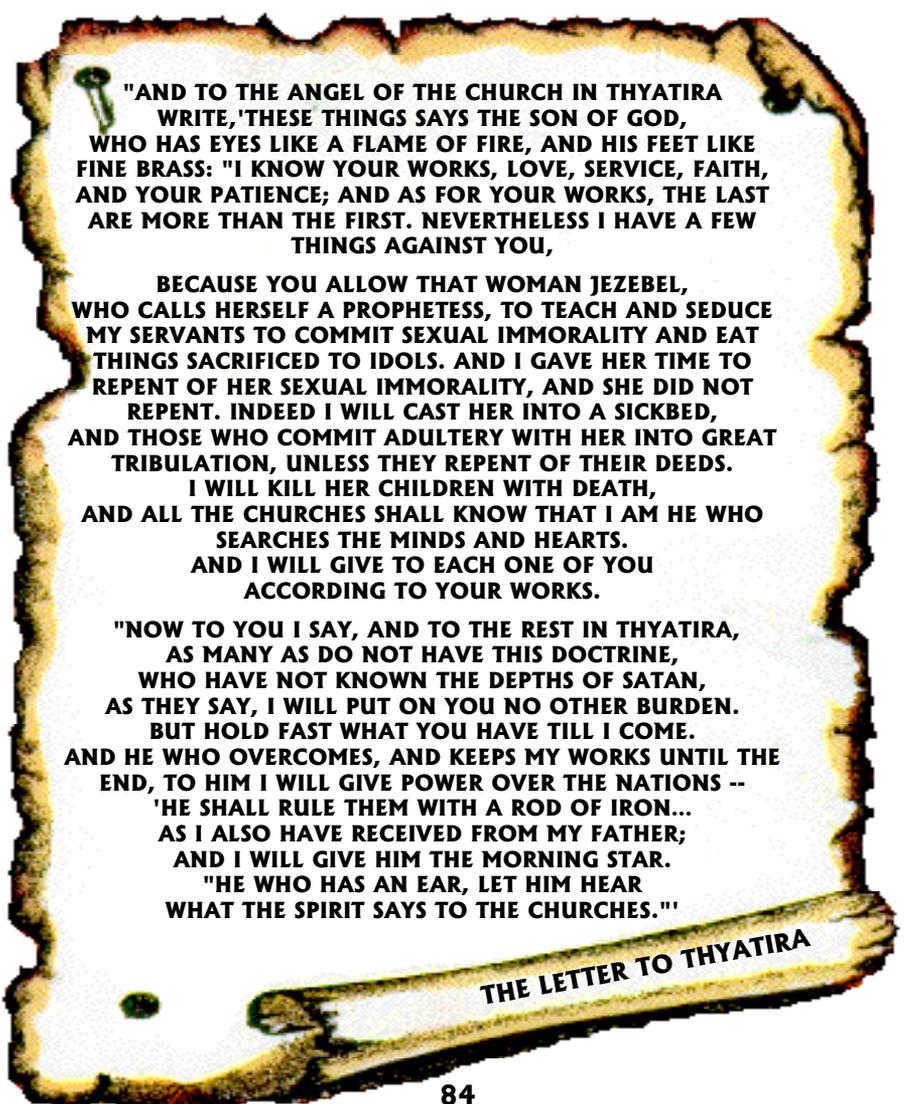
R E X L A T I N V S S A C E R D O S
 0 0 10 50 0 0 1 0 5 0 0 0 100 0 0 500 0 0 = **666**

6. “JOHN PAUL II”

I O A N E S P A V L V S S E C U N D O
 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 5 50 5 0 0 0 100 5 0 500 0 = **666**

The power of the position of the papacy is exactly what the antichrist will need to gain domination over the world. No other single religious figure has the authority over multitudes of peoples and tongues other than the papacy. Considered to be infallible, as the God-appointed Vicar (voice) of Christ on the earth, the pope carries more weight than the written Word of God itself. Followed by such blind obedience, this indeed is the vehicle Satan has prepared for his final hour of deception. The addition of lying wonders and great signs described in Revelation Chapter 13, pave the pathway for universal deception.

Having laid all this preliminary background, I would like us to now examine the message to Thyatira as it pertains to this modern-day manifestation of the Roman Catholic Church.



**"AND TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA
WRITE, 'THESE THINGS SAYS THE SON OF GOD,
WHO HAS EYES LIKE A FLAME OF FIRE, AND HIS FEET LIKE
FINE BRASS: "I KNOW YOUR WORKS, LOVE, SERVICE, FAITH,
AND YOUR PATIENCE; AND AS FOR YOUR WORKS, THE LAST
ARE MORE THAN THE FIRST. NEVERTHELESS I HAVE A FEW
THINGS AGAINST YOU,**

**BECAUSE YOU ALLOW THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL,
WHO CALLS HERSELF A PROPHETESS, TO TEACH AND SEDUCE
MY SERVANTS TO COMMIT SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND EAT
THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS. AND I GAVE HER TIME TO
REPENT OF HER SEXUAL IMMORALITY, AND SHE DID NOT
REPENT. INDEED I WILL CAST HER INTO A SICKBED,
AND THOSE WHO COMMIT ADULTERY WITH HER INTO GREAT
TRIBULATION, UNLESS THEY REPENT OF THEIR DEEDS.**

**I WILL KILL HER CHILDREN WITH DEATH,
AND ALL THE CHURCHES SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE WHO
SEARCHES THE MINDS AND HEARTS.**

**AND I WILL GIVE TO EACH ONE OF YOU
ACCORDING TO YOUR WORKS.**

**"NOW TO YOU I SAY, AND TO THE REST IN THYATIRA,
AS MANY AS DO NOT HAVE THIS DOCTRINE,
WHO HAVE NOT KNOWN THE DEPTHS OF SATAN,
AS THEY SAY, I WILL PUT ON YOU NO OTHER BURDEN.
BUT HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE TILL I COME.
AND HE WHO OVERCOMES, AND KEEPS MY WORKS UNTIL THE
END, TO HIM I WILL GIVE POWER OVER THE NATIONS --
'HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON...
AS I ALSO HAVE RECEIVED FROM MY FATHER;
AND I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR.**

**"HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES."**

THE LETTER TO THYATIRA



**"I KNOW YOUR WORKS,
LOVE, SERVICE, FAITH,
AND YOUR PATIENCE;
AND AS FOR YOUR WORKS,
THE LAST ARE MORE
THAN THE FIRST."**

Rev. 2:19

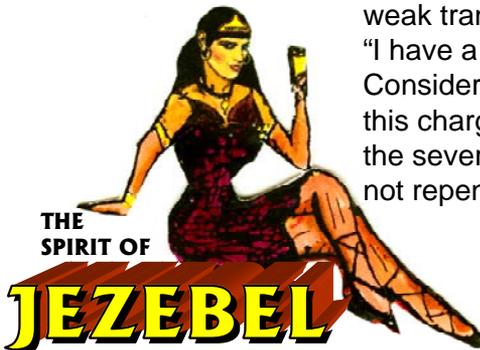
As it was in Thyatira in John's day, so likewise is the Roman Catholic Church known for reverent works of the people in love, service, faith and patience.



Many of the Protestant churches should look at their lack of fruit in these areas which highlight the efforts of the Catholic lay people to serve God as they know Him. However, their knowledge of God is warped by the institution of Catholicism's idolatrous worship of the pope and of the Virgin Mary.

Yet in spite of the positive areas spoken of by Jesus to those in Thyatira, He brings a strong rebuke for what is being allowed to transpire in their midst.

I say strong rebuke, because of the weak translation of Jesus words as "I have a few things against you." Consider the Amplified rendering of this charge as being more in line with the severity of the consequences of not repenting:



**"BUT I HAVE THIS AGAINST YOU,
THAT YOU TOLERATE THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL
WHO CALLS HERSELF A PROPHETESS
(CLAIMING TO BE INSPIRED)
AND WHO IS TEACHING AND LEADING ASTRAY
MY SERVANTS AND BEGUILING (DECEIVING) THEM
INTO PRACTICING SEXUAL VICE AND EATING FOOD
SACRIFICED UNTO IDOLS.
I GAVE HER TIME TO REPENT,
BUT SHE HAD NO DESIRE TO REPENT OF HER
IMMORALITY (SYMBOLIC OF IDOLATRY)
AND REFUSES TO DO SO."**

Rev. 2:20-21 Amplified

Be sure to read the letter carefully that Jesus wrote to this church. Part of the letter is written to the people in this church, but the bulk of it is written to those who run this church. All the stern words of consequences are directed to those who are doing the teaching. Jesus warns them about teaching and seducing Jesus' servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. Then Jesus switches toward the people under this deception and tells them:

**"NOW TO YOU I SAY, AND TO THE REST IN THYATIRA,
AS MANY AS DO NOT HAVE THIS DOCTRINE,
WHO HAVE NOT KNOWN THE DEPTHS OF SATAN,
AS THEY SAY, I WILL PUT ON YOU NO OTHER BURDEN.
BUT HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE TILL I COME."**

Rev. 2:24-25

Obviously, things that are being taught to the people of this church as doctrinal-based, spiritual experiences pleasing to God are in reality, doctrines springing forth from the very depths of Satan promoting the eating of things sacrificed to idols! Jesus lays this charge on "Jezebel-a woman who calls herself a prophetess" who is seducing His servants to commit things that are abominations to God. Let us look at one example:



Roman Catholic Church's Eucharist wafer, where there are the letters "**IHS**".

The Catholic Church of Rome says these letters in Latin represent "Iesus Hominum Salvatore", which mean Jesus Saviour of the people.

However, in reality, the communion wafer of the Roman Catholic mass is based on the ancient Egyptian ritual of transubstantiation, in which the temple priests would magically transform the sun-shaped wafers into the body of Horus, and the worshippers would then eat their sun god (derived from Baal from Babylon). Today's Catholic wafers are imprinted with the letters **IHS**, which in reality stands for the Egyptian trinity god of **Isis, Horus, and Seb**. The Roman Catholic Church's roots in the Eucharist are in heathen religions, not in teachings of the Bible.

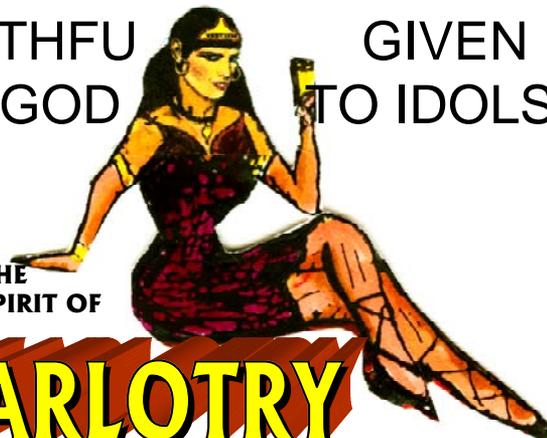
We can see now how it is quite easy to deceive God's people into eating things that are sacrificed unto idols. They are told "IHS" represent Jesus, the savior of the people, when in reality, they are fed wafers that are sacrificed to the pagan Egyptian gods, "IHS" (Isis, Horus and Seb). God places no charge on those who "do not know the depths of Satan" contained in this false doctrine, but those who teach it as deception are a different story. They are accountable as this letter purposefully warns!

UNFAITHFUL
TO GOD

GIVEN
TO IDOLS?

THE
SPIRIT OF

HARLOTRY



"BECAUSE YOU ALLOW THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL, WHO CALLS HERSELF A PROPHETESS, TO TEACH AND SEDUCE MY SERVANTS TO COMMIT SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND EAT THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS. AND I GAVE HER TIME TO REPENT OF HER SEXUAL IMMORALITY, AND SHE DID NOT REPENT. INDEED I WILL CAST HER INTO A SICKBED, AND THOSE WHO COMMIT ADULTERY WITH HER INTO GREAT TRIBULATION, UNLESS THEY REPENT OF THEIR DEEDS.

I WILL KILL HER CHILDREN WITH DEATH, AND ALL THE CHURCHES SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE WHO SEARCHES THE MINDS AND HEARTS. "NOW TO YOU I SAY, AND TO THE REST IN THYATIRA, AS MANY AS DO NOT HAVE THIS DOCTRINE, WHO HAVE NOT KNOWN THE DEPTHS OF SATAN, AS THEY SAY, I WILL PUT ON YOU NO OTHER BURDEN. BUT HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE TILL I COME." Rev. 2:20-25

Note again this is a doctrinal problem. However, some in Thyatira are in the know and others don't know what is really going on. Some know the depths of Satan in these doctrinal issues, and others are being beguiled to do the works of a harlot in God's sight all the while thinking they are doing the will of God.

Hear this: God is going to severely punish those that are in the know, and yet spare the sincerely ignorant that follow their deceptive commands. That is what this letter conveys. However, it is not totally without cost to follow such deceptive teaching such as the hierarchy at Thyatira are practicing on the gullible. Consider how Paul places responsibility direct upon the people being taught to rightly divide the word of truth:



"BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKER WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH."

2 Tim. 2:15

**“ FOR WE ARE GOD'S FELLOW WORKERS;
YOU ARE GOD'S FIELD, YOU ARE GOD'S BUILDING.**

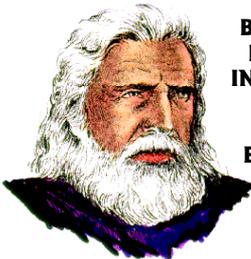
ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME, AS A WISE MASTER BUILDER I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND ANOTHER BUILDS ON IT. BUT LET EACH ONE TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDS ON IT. FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN ANYONE LAY THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST.

NOW IF ANYONE BUILDS ON THIS FOUNDATION WITH GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES, WOOD, HAY, STRAW, EACH ONE'S WORK WILL BECOME CLEAR; FOR THE DAY WILL DECLARE IT, BECAUSE IT WILL BE REVEALED BY FIRE; AND THE FIRE WILL TEST EACH ONE'S WORK, OF WHAT SORT IT IS.

IF ANYONE'S WORK WHICH HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES, HE WILL RECEIVE A REWARD. IF ANYONE'S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS; BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE.” 1 Cor. 3:9-15



From the above we can see how important it is to lay a good solid foundation in Jesus Christ and then built on it. If the work you build upon Jesus Christ is founded on the man-made traditions of men rather than the Word of God, you are going to suffer loss of reward in eternity. The apostle John warns the followers of Christ as well:



“BELOVED, DO NOT BELIEVE EVERY SPIRIT, BUT TEST THE SPIRITS, WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD; BECAUSE MANY FALSE PROPHETS HAVE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD. BY THIS YOU KNOW THE SPIRIT OF GOD: EVERY SPIRIT THAT CONFESSES THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS COME IN THE FLESH IS OF GOD, AND EVERY SPIRIT THAT DOES NOT CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS COME IN THE FLESH IS NOT OF GOD. AND THIS IS THE SPIRIT OF THE ANTICHRIST, WHICH YOU HAVE HEARD WAS COMING, AND IS NOW ALREADY IN THE WORLD.”

1 John 4:1-3

“FOR MANY DECEIVERS HAVE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD WHO DO NOT CONFESS JESUS CHRIST AS COMING IN THE FLESH. THIS IS A DECEIVER AND AN ANTICHRIST. LOOK TO YOURSELVES, THAT WE DO NOT LOSE THOSE THINGS WE WORKED FOR, BUT THAT WE MAY RECEIVE A FULL REWARD.”

2 John 7-8

**UNFAITHFUL TO GOD
GIVEN TO IDOLS?**



Jesus doesn't like this Jezebel spirit that is at work among His servants. His servants are secretly eating things sacrificed to idols. Because of this, Jezebel, the self-proclaimed prophetess, is going to be severely judged according to this letter to Thyatira.

**“... TEACH AND SEDUCE MY SERVANTS TO...
EAT THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS.”**

Rev. 2:20

Can such a charge as seductive idolatry
be laid upon the papacy?
Are they willfully and purposely seducing
the people under their authority to
“eat things sacrificed to idols?”



Let us consider what they have purposely done to the contents of the Ten Commandments and then we will pursue why they have been altered in the Catholic Catechism. Here are the Commandments as they appear in the Bible:

1. "YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.

2. YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF A CARVED IMAGE -- ANY LIKENESS OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH; YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM NOR SERVE THEM.

3. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN, FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTY WHO TAKES HIS NAME IN VAIN.

4. REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY... BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH OF THE LORD YOUR GOD... THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND HALLOWED IT.

5. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER, THAT YOUR DAYS MAY BE LONG UPON THE LAND WHICH THE LORD YOUR GOD IS GIVING YOU.

6. YOU SHALL NOT MURDER.

7. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

8. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.

9. YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.

10. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE; YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE, NOR HIS MALE SERVANT, NOR HIS FEMALE SERVANT, NOR HIS OX, NOR HIS DONKEY, NOR ANYTHING THAT IS YOUR NEIGHBOR'S." Ex 20:3-17

**“... TEACH AND SEDUCE MY SERVANTS TO...
EAT THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS.”** Rev. 2:20



The papacy invented the Catholic Catechism to “help” their people to properly understand their responsibility to God as stated in the sacred Scriptures and in their “sacred traditions.”

Here are the Ten Commandments as they appear in the officially-approved Baltimore Catechism. Take the time to carefully compare each of Catholicism’s list of Commandments to those stated in the Bible on the opposite page for there are two great alterations:

Q. 1140. What is the first Commandment?

A. The first Commandment is: I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt not have strange gods before me.

Q. 1217. What is the second Commandment?

A. The second Commandment is: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Q. 1242. What is the third Commandment?

A. The third Commandment is:... keep holy the Sabbath day.

Q. 1257. What is the fourth Commandment?

A. The fourth Commandment is: Honor thy father and thy mother.

Q. 1270. What is the fifth Commandment?

A. The fifth Commandment is: Thou shalt not kill.

Q. 1281. What is the sixth Commandment?

A. The sixth Commandment is: Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. 1290. What is the seventh Commandment?

A. The seventh Commandment is: Thou shalt not steal.

Q. 1305. What is the eighth Commandment?

A. The eighth Commandment is: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Q. 1315. What is the ninth Commandment?

A. The ninth Commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

Q. 1319. What is the tenth Commandment?

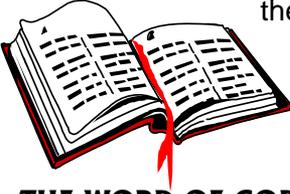
A. The tenth Commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

**"... TEACH AND SEDUCE MY SERVANTS TO...
EAT THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS."**

Rev. 2:20

Is there purposeful and willful seduction taking place with this manipulation of the Ten Commandments?

The Second Commandment of the Bible has been eliminated altogether and replaced with what should be the Third Commandment:



**THE WORD OF GOD
SAYS:**

**The Second
Commandment:**
**YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR
YOURSELF A CARVED IMAGE --
ANY LIKENESS OF ANYTHING
THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR
THAT IS IN THE EARTH
BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE
WATER UNDER THE EARTH;5
YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO
THEM NOR SERVE THEM.**
Ex. 20:4

**The Tenth
Commandment:**
**YOU SHALL NOT
COVET YOUR
NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE;
YOU SHALL NOT
COVET YOUR
NEIGHBOR'S WIFE,
NOR HIS MALE
SERVANT, NOR HIS
FEMALE SERVANT,
NOR HIS OX, NOR
HIS DONKEY, NOR
ANYTHING THAT IS
YOUR NEIGHBOR'S."**
Ex. 20:17



**CATHOLIC CATECHISM
SAYS:**

**What is
the second
Commandment?**
A. The second
Commandment is:
Thou shalt not take
the name
of the Lord
thy God in vain.

**What is the ninth
Commandment?**
A. The ninth
Commandment is:
Thou shalt not covet
thy neighbor's wife.
**What is the tenth
Commandment?**
A. The tenth
Commandment is:
Thou shalt not covet
thy neighbor's goods.

How then does the Catholic Catechism come up with a total of ten commandments having eliminated the second one altogether? They split the Bible's Tenth Commandment into two separate ones making them to be the Ninth and Tenth Commandment. Clever seduction!

**“YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF A CARVED IMAGE --
ANY LIKENESS OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ..
YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM..”**

Ex. 20:4

This omission in the Catechism of the Second Commandment is willful seduction to keep people away from what God forbids them to do. The purpose behind the papacy’s removal of the Second Commandment is obvious when you consider the immense profitability there is in the making and selling of a whole host of statues of Jesus, Mary and the “saints.” The papacy has of course, authorized by papal infallibility, the veneration (worship, homage, bowing before) of a host of approved “sanctified” images:

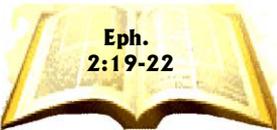


Let us now consider a terse comparison of Christian doctrines according to the Word of God vs. man-made Catholic doctrines and ask, **“IS THERE ANYTHING CHRISTIAN ABOUT CATHOLICISM?”**

FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY:

“...THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD, HAVING BEEN BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE...”
Eph. 2:19-20

JESUS CHRIST, THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE



Eph. 2:19-22

THE APOSTLES AND THE PROPHETS

THE WORD TEACHES THAT JESUS IS THE ROCK UPON WHICH THE CHURCH IS BUILT.

(Mat. 16:13-18, 1Pet. 2:4-8, Eph. 2:20-21, Col. 1:15-18, Heb. 8:1)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE PRESENT VOICE OF GOD ON THE EARTH.

(Rev. 3:13, 14:13, 5:6, 4:5, Jn. 16:8, 13, Jn. 14:26, Gal. 5:16, Eph. 4:30, Acts 5:3)

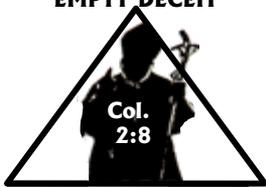
THE BIBLE EXALTS THE WORD OF GOD ABOVE ALL THINGS AND WARNS AGAINST TRADITIONS THAT MAKE IT OF NO EFFECT.

(Mark 7:6-13, Col. 2:8, Psm. 138:2, 1Pet. 1:18-25, 2Tim. 3:15-17, Jn. 1:1, 14, Rev. 19:13, Psm. 12:6, Psm. 119:160)

FOUNDATION OF CATHOLICISM:

“BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH... EMPTY DECEIT, ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF MEN... AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST.”
Col. 2:8

EMPTY DECEIT



Col. 2:8

THE TRADITION OF MEN

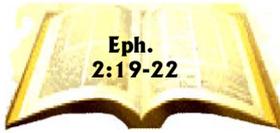
CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY) TEACHES THAT PETER IS THE ROCK UPON WHICH THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS BUILT.

THE PAPACY ITSELF IS THE PRESENT (“INFALLIBLE”) VOICE (“VICAR”) OF GOD ON THE EARTH.

CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY) EXALTS THEIR OWN “SACRED TRADITIONS” ABOVE THE WORD OF GOD, EVEN WHEN THOSE TRADITIONS ARE IN OPPOSITION TO THE WORD OF GOD, DUE TO “PAPAL INFALLIBILITY.”

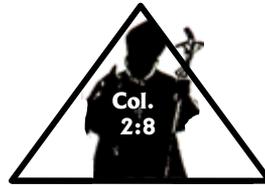
“IS THERE ANYTHING CHRISTIAN ABOUT CATHOLICISM?”

**JESUS CHRIST,
THE CHIEF
CORNERSTONE**



THE APOSTLES AND THE PROPHETS

EMPTY DECEIT



**THE TRADITION
OF MEN**

**SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE
BY FAITH IN THE GRACE OF GOD
RECEIVED AS A FREE GIFT OF GOD
APART FROM WORKS.**

(Eph. 2:8-10, Rom. 3:28, 5:1-2, 5:21,
6:23, 10:9-13, 1Cor.15:1-4, 2Cor.
5:21, 1Jn. 5:9-13, Jn. 3:15-18, 3:36,
14:6, 5:39)

**SALVATION
IS ONLY AVAILABLE THROUGH
BAPTISMAL REGENERATION,
THROUGH
THE EUCHARIST, THE MASS,
THE CONFESSIONAL,
AND MAINTAINING A
RIGHT-STANDING IN
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.**

**WATER BAPTISM IS ONLY FOR THOSE
WHO FIRST REPENT AND BELIEVE THE
GOSPEL, AND IT IS ONLY BY
TOTAL IMMERSION.**

(Acts 2:38,41, Acts 8:34-38, Rom.
6:3-6, Col. 2:11-13, 1Pet. 3:21)

**WATER BAPTISM BRINGS
SALVATION (BAPTISMAL
REGENERATION) BY MEANS OF
SPRINKLING, PERFORMED EVEN
ON INFANTS WHO CANNOT
REPENT.**

**THE WORD TEACHES ETERNAL,
EVER-LASTING DAMNATION FOR ALL
WHO DO NOT RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST.**

(Mark 9:42-48, Rev.14:10-11,20:10,
14,15 Rev. 21:8, Luke 16:19-31,)

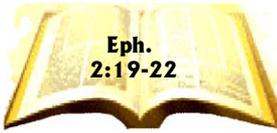
**CATHOLICISM TEACHES A
TEMPORARY “PURGATORY”
(EVEN FOR BELIEVERS)
AND “ULTIMATE
RECONCILIATION”
FOR UNBELIEVERS DUE TO
“GOD NOT WILLING THAT
ANY PERISH – SO THEY
WON’T!”**

**THE WORD TEACHES
THE DIVINE TRINITY REIGNING
IN HEAVEN:
“THERE ARE THREE WHO BEAR
WITNESS IN HEAVEN –
THE FATHER,
THE WORD (JESUS),
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.
AND THESE THREE
ARE ONE.”
(1Jn. 5:7)**

**CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY)
TEACHES THERE ARE
FOUR REIGNING IN HEAVEN –
THE FATHER, THE SON,
THE HOLY SPIRIT,
AND
“MARY,
THE MOTHER OF GOD,
THE MOTHER OF
THE CHURCH,
THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.”**

“IS THERE ANYTHING CHRISTIAN ABOUT CATHOLICISM?”

**JESUS CHRIST,
THE CHIEF
CORNERSTONE**



THE APOSTLES AND THE PROPHETS

EMPTY DECEIT



**THE TRADITION
OF MEN**

**THE WORD TEACHES
“THERE IS ONE MEDIATOR
BETWEEN GOD AND MAN,
THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.”**

(1Tim. 2:5, Heb 8:6, Jn. 14:6,
Eph. 2:18, Jn. 16:23)

**CATHOLICISM HAS TWO
MEDIATORS: MARY IS THE
MEDIATOR IN HEAVEN BETWEEN
GOD (JESUS) AND MAN.
THE CATHOLIC PRIEST IS THE
MEDIATOR ON EARTH BETWEEN
MAN AND GOD.**

**THE WORD TEACHES
A FIVEFOLD MINISTRY GIVEN TO
MEN BY CHRIST TO GUIDE THE
CHURCH – (ELDERS) “APOSTLES,
PROPHETS, EVANGELISTS AND
PASTORS AND TEACHERS”**

(Eph. 4:7-14, 1Cor. 12:28-29)

**CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY)
TEACHES A MAN-MADE
HIERARCHY TO RULE THE
CHURCH CONSISTING OF
THE PAPACY, CARDINALS,
ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS,
AND A CLERGY OF PRIESTS.**

**THE WORD TEACHES
ALL BELIEVERS ARE SAINTS
IN THIS PRESENT LIFE.**

(Rom. 1:7, 16:15, 1Cor. 1:2,
2 Cor. 13:13)

**CATHOLICISM TEACHES
BELIEVERS ONLY BECOME
SAINTS AFTER DEATH, AND
ONLY IF CANONIZED BY
THE POPE FOR GOOD WORKS,
MIRACLES ETC.**

**THE WORD TEACHES
ALL BELIEVERS ARE A HOLY,
ROYAL PRIESTHOOD CHOSEN BY
GOD TO OFFER ACCEPTABLE
SACRIFICES TO GOD THROUGH
JESUS CHRIST.**

(1Pet. 2:4-9)

**CATHOLICISM TEACHES
A SELECT, CELIBATE,
MALE ONLY, PRIESTHOOD
CHOSEN BY CATHOLIC
HIERARCHY TO OFFER
SACRIFICES TO GOD ON BEHALF
OF THE PEOPLE.**

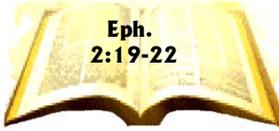
**THE WORD TEACHES CONFESSION
OF SIN TO GOD AND
FORGIVENESS FROM GOD
THROUGH REPENTANCE BIRTHED
BY A CONTRITE HEART BROKEN
OVER SIN.**

(Prov. 28:13, Psm. 51, Psm. 38:18,
Psm.32:1-5, 1Jn. 1:9, 2:1-2)

**CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY)
TEACHES CONFESSION OF SIN
TO A CATHOLIC PRIEST AND
FORGIVENESS OF SIN BY THAT
PRIEST THROUGH ASSIGNED
ACTS OF PENITENCE TO BE
PERFORMED BY THE SINNER.**

“IS THERE ANYTHING CHRISTIAN ABOUT CATHOLICISM?”

**JESUS CHRIST,
THE CHIEF
CORNERSTONE**



THE APOSTLES AND THE PROPHETS

EMPTY DECEIT



**THE TRADITION
OF MEN**

THE WORD TEACHES THE BELIEVER NOT TO PRAY VAIN, REPETITIOUS PRAYERS AS THE HEATHEN DO, FOR THEY THINK THEY WILL BE HEARD FOR THEIR MANY WORDS.

(Matt. 6:7)

CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY) TEACHES PRAYING REPETITIOUSLY THE ROSARY WHICH CONTAINS A TEN-TO-ONE RATIO OF PRAYERS TO MARY VS. PRAYING TO GOD.

THE WORD TEACHES THE BELIEVER TO PRAY DIRECTLY TO GOD THE FATHER THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AS OUR ONLY MEDIATOR.

(Jn. 15:16, 16:23-24, Luke 11:2, Eph.2:18, Heb. 7:22-27, 1Tim. 2:5)

CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY) TEACHES PRAYING DIRECTLY TO DECEASED SAINTS IN HEAVEN WHO ARE ABLE TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM, AND ESPECIALLY PRAY TO MARY AS THE MEDIATOR TO GOD.

THE WORD TEACHES THE BELIEVER NOT TO CALL ANY MAN ON EARTH “FATHER” BECAUSE THE BELIEVER HAS ONE FATHER, HE WHO IS IN HEAVEN.

(Matt. 23:9)

CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY) TEACHES THAT EVERY CATHOLIC PRIEST IS TO BE CALLED “FATHER,” AND THAT THE POPE IS TO BE CALLED “THE HOLY FATHER.”

THE WORD EMPHASIZES A GLORIOUS, RISEN CHRIST WHO NOW REIGNS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER

(Heb. 8:1-2, 1Cor. 15:25, 1Tim. 6:15-16, Rev. 1:11-18, Rev. 6:16-17)

CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY) EMPHASIZES A CRUCIFIED CHRIST OR AS “BABY JESUS” IN HEAVEN, STILL IN THE ARMS OF HIS MOTHER MARY WHO REIGNS AS THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.

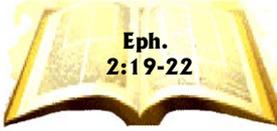
THE WORD INSTRUCTS CHURCH ELDERS (“APOSTLES, PROPHETS, EVANGELISTS, PASTORS AND TEACHERS” – Eph. 4:11) TO BE EXAMPLES TO THE FLOCK AND NOT LORDS OVER THEM.

(1Pet. 5:1-4, Phil. 3:17, Matt. 20:25-28)

CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY) BY MEANS OF “PAPAL INFALLIBILITY,” LORDS OVER ITS PEOPLE WITH THREATS:
“HENCE IF ANYONE, WHICH GOD FORBID, SHOULD DARE WILLFULLY TO DENY OR TO CALL INTO DOUBT THAT WHICH WE HAVE DEFINED, LET HIM KNOW THAT HE HAS FALLEN AWAY COMPLETELY FROM THE DIVINE AND CATHOLIC FAITH.”

“IS THERE ANYTHING CHRISTIAN ABOUT CATHOLICISM?”

**JESUS CHRIST,
THE CHIEF
CORNERSTONE**



THE APOSTLES AND THE PROPHETS

EMPTY DECEIT



THE TRADITION OF MEN

THE WORD TEACHES THAT THE CHURCH SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION (THE BREAD AND THE WINE) ARE TO BE TAKEN BY EVERY BELIEVER AS A SYMBOL OF THE ONCE FOR ALL SACRIFICE OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS. COMMUNION IS TO BE TAKEN “IN REMEMBRANCE” OF THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST ON BEHALF OF THE SINS OF THE BELIEVER.

(1Cor.10:16-17, 11:23-32, Jn. 6:53-63, Matt. 26:26-29, Luke 22:19-20)

CATHOLICISM (THE PAPACY) TEACHES THE PRIEST PERFORMING MASS AND ADMINISTERING THE EUCHARIST, HAS THE SUPERNATURAL POWER TO BRING DOWN CHRIST AT WILL TO BE SACRIFICED ONCE AGAIN AND BECOMES A LITERAL TRANSUBSTANTIATION OF CHRIST INTO THE BREAD WAFER. THE CUP IS USUALLY WITHHELD FROM CATHOLICS.

There are more comparisons that could be made, but I believe we have examined a sufficient number to prove this point:

CATHOLICISM DOES NOT PRACTICE ANY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES THAT WERE GIVEN BY GOD IN HIS WORD. RATHER THEIR DOCTRINES ARE TRADITION-BASED WHICH HOLD AN OPPOSING POSITION TO REVEALED SCRIPTURE. THERE IS NOTHING CHRISTIAN ABOUT CATHOLICISM.

The charge Jesus laid upon the hierarchy of the Jews will also be laid upon the hierarchy of Catholicism:



“...IN VAIN YOU WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN. FOR LAYING ASIDE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, YOU HOLD THE TRADITIONS OF MEN... ALL TO WELL YOU REJECT THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY KEEP YOUR TRADITION... MAKING THE WORD OF GOD OF NO EFFECT THROUGH YOUR TRADITIONS WHICH YOU HAVE HANDED DOWN. AND MANY SUCH THINGS YOU DO.”



Mark 7:7-13

**“AND TO WHAT SHALL
I LIKEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD?
IT IS LIKE LEAVEN, WHICH A WOMAN TOOK
AND HID IT IN THREE MEASURES OF MEAL
UNTIL IT WAS ALL LEAVENED.”**

Luke 13:20-21`

THE
SPIRIT OF

JEZEBEL

**“DO YOU KNOT KNOW
THAT A LITTLE LEAVEN
LEAVENS THE WHOLE LUMP?”**

1 Cor. 5:6

JUDAISM

CATHOLICISM

PROTESTANTISM

**“ISRAEL IS
DEFILED,
FOR THE SPIRIT
OF HARLOTRY
IS IN THEIR
MIDST...
THE SPIRIT OF
HARLOTRY
HAS CAUSED
THEM TO GO
ASTRAY...
THEY COMMIT
HARLOTRY
CONTINUALLY...”**

Hosea 4:12-19,
5:3-4

**“YOU ALLOW
THAT WOMAN
JEZEBEL,
WHO CALLS
HERSELF A
PROPHETESS,
TO TEACH AND
BEGUILE MY
SERVANTS TO
COMMIT SEXUAL
IMMORALITY
AND TO EAT
THINGS
SACRIFICED
TO IDOLS.”**

Rev. 2:20

**“THERE WILL BE FALSE
TEACHERS AMONG
YOU, WHO WILL
SECRETLY BRING IN
DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES,
AND MANY WILL
FOLLOW THEIR
DESTRUCTIVE WAYS...
BECAUSE OF WHOM
THE WAY OF TRUTH
WILL BE BLASPHEMED.
BY COVETOUSNESS
THEY WILL EXPLOIT
YOU WITH DECEPTIVE
WORDS.”**

2 Pet.2:1-3

The amplification of the above parable of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning what is going to happen prophetically to the Kingdom of God on earth, should help you to see that the things I have been sharing with you are not an isolated attack upon the Roman Catholic Church. This spiritual “Jezebel”, which I believe is the satanic spirit of harlotry, is methodically sowing her leavening doctrines not only in Catholicism, but also in Judaism, and in Protestantism as well. My purpose is not to single out the Roman Catholic Church as the source of all that plagues the Kingdom of God on earth, but rather, using this prophetic letter to Thyatira, I want to reveal how this satanic-inspired “woman” (Jezebel) is seeking to leaven all that represents the Kingdom of God on earth. She first leavened Judaism with her traditions of men replacing the Word of God. It worked so well that she did the same to Catholicism, and she fully intends to do the same in Protestantism. Tradition makes the Word of God of no effect (Mark 7:9-13).

It is one thing to observe rites and rituals that are merely the traditions of men. The Jews were guilty of always adding to what God gave them at Mt. Sinai. They took the original ten commandments God gave them and turned them into 613 commandments of men! God gave them seven Feasts to observe, but they added two more to the original seven.

However, it is quite another thing when those rites and rituals are founded upon an ancient religion that was an abomination to God. Such is the case with anything that finds its origins in Babylon. God considers such to be an abomination to Him. Therefore it is crucial for the Roman catholic to determine where the rites, rituals and doctrines of their church originated. History refutes the Roman Catholic catechism, and so does the bible!

The reality is that the book of Revelation singles out a coming religious harlot that is clothed in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold and precious stones, and reigns over many peoples, tongues and nations of the earth. Its location on earth is marked that it sits on seven hills. It has a history of shedding the blood of the saints on earth. This religious harlot bears the name "Mystery" on her crown. Who else but the Roman catholic church fits such a description? Is it the Mormons? Is it the Muslims? No, it is the Roman Catholic hierarchy that the bible describes. As a teacher, I am trying to get you, the Catholic reader, to face the reality that you are in a deceptive system and are being beguiled into idolatrous worship of Mystery Babylon.

I realize that there is pain in what I am saying to you. Perhaps you are even angry at me for saying it at all. Paul the apostle once stated his own responsibility in this area, and it is my confession as well:

**"THEREFORE I TESTIFY TO YOU THIS DAY
THAT I AM INNOCENT OF THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN.
FOR I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE TO YOU
THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD."**

Acts 20:27-28

Perhaps it is also helpful for you to remember that the book of Revelation is Jesus' words to His churches. I didn't write them. I am only called to teach what He has said in a manner in which His words can be clearly understood. Perhaps I have not been able to convince you, but you must let your convictions be founded in God's Word and not in the cherished, handed-down traditions of men. Judaism fell to tradition. Catholicism will fall by its traditions, and so shall Protestantism if it is not careful with the Word of God.

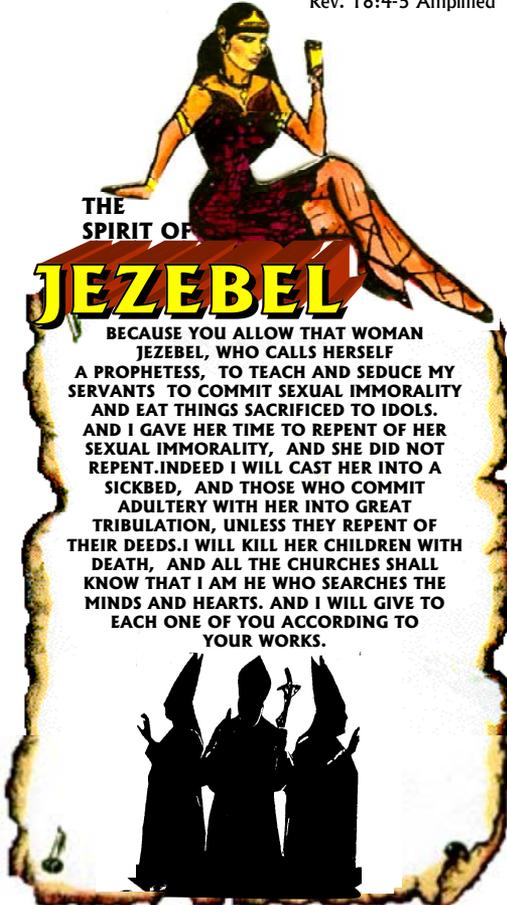
If you are a Catholic reader, God has a pertinent prophetic message for you:

**“MY PEOPLE, GO OUT OF THE MIDST OF HER!
AND LET EVERYONE DELIVER HIMSELF
FROM THE FIERCE ANGER OF THE LORD...
I WILL BRING JUDGMENT ON THE CARVED
IMAGES OF BABYLON...”**

Jer. 50:45-47

**“AND I HEARD ANOTHER VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING, ‘COME OUT OF
HER, MY PEOPLE, SO THAT YOU MAY NOT SHARE IN HER SINS, NEITHER
PARTICIPATE IN HER PLAGUES. FOR HER INIQUITIES-HER CRIMES AND
TRANSGRESSIONS-ARE PILED UP AS HIGH AS HEAVEN, AND GOD HAS
REMEMBERED HER WICKEDNESS AND HER CRIMES-
AND CALLS THEM FOR SETTLEMENT.”**

Rev. 18:4-5 Amplified



**THE
SPIRIT OF**

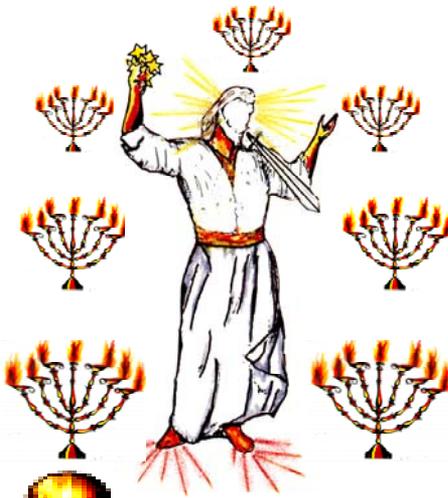
JEZEBEL

**BECAUSE YOU ALLOW THAT WOMAN
JEZEBEL, WHO CALLS HERSELF
A PROPHETESS, TO TEACH AND SEDUCE MY
SERVANTS TO COMMIT SEXUAL IMMORALITY
AND EAT THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS.
AND I GAVE HER TIME TO REPENT OF HER
SEXUAL IMMORALITY, AND SHE DID NOT
REPENT. INDEED I WILL CAST HER INTO A
SICKBED, AND THOSE WHO COMMIT
ADULTERY WITH HER INTO GREAT
TRIBULATION, UNLESS THEY REPENT OF
THEIR DEEDS. I WILL KILL HER CHILDREN WITH
DEATH, AND ALL THE CHURCHES SHALL
KNOW THAT I AM HE WHO SEARCHES THE
MINDS AND HEARTS. AND I WILL GIVE TO
EACH ONE OF YOU ACCORDING TO
YOUR WORKS.**

THE LETTER TO THYATIRA

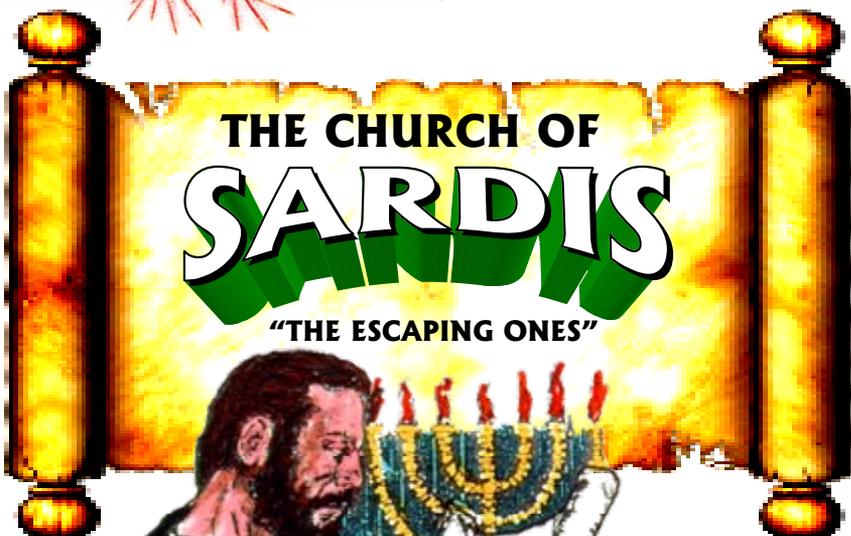
**“NOW THE SPIRIT EXPRESSLY SAYS THAT IN
THE LATTER TIMES SOME WILL DEPART FROM
THE FAITH, GIVING HEED TO DECEIVING
SPIRITS AND DOCTRINES OF DEMONS.”**

1 Tim. 4:1`



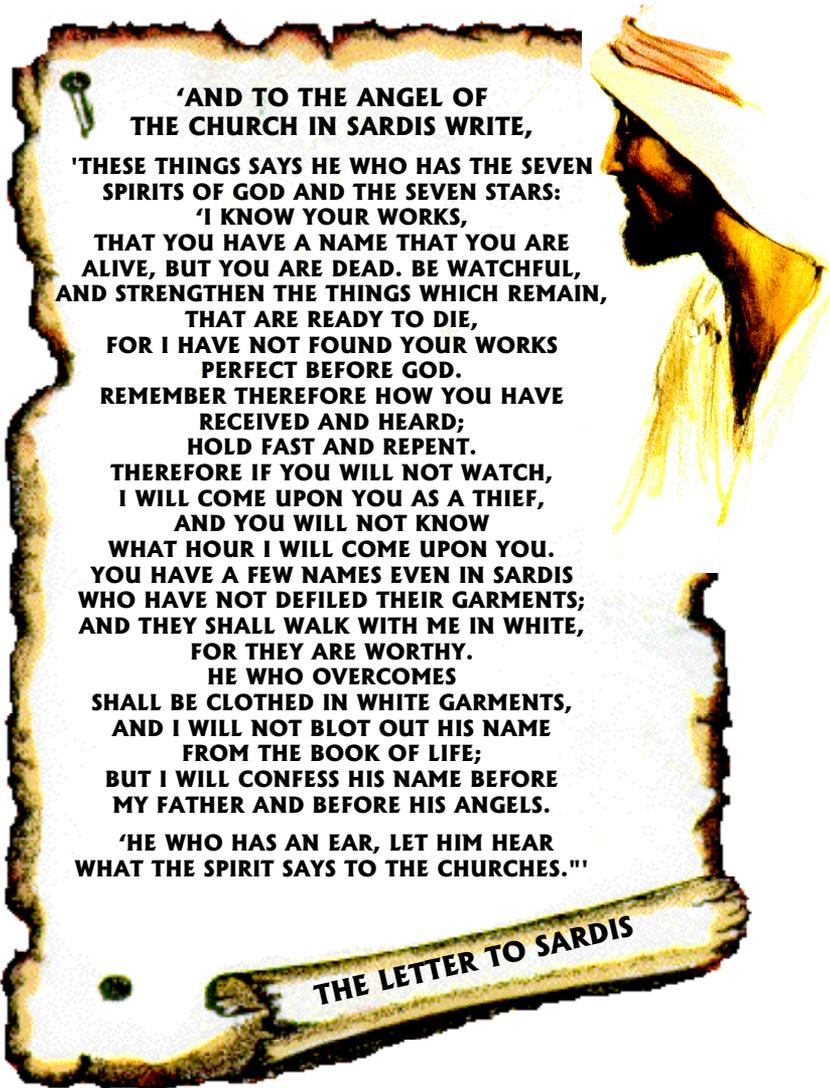
**"HE WHO
HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT
THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES."**

Rev. 3:6



**THE CHURCH OF
SARDIS**
"THE ESCAPING ONES"





**'AND TO THE ANGEL OF
THE CHURCH IN SARDIS WRITE,**

**'THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO HAS THE SEVEN
SPIRITS OF GOD AND THE SEVEN STARS:**

**'I KNOW YOUR WORKS,
THAT YOU HAVE A NAME THAT YOU ARE
ALIVE, BUT YOU ARE DEAD. BE WATCHFUL,
AND STRENGTHEN THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN,
THAT ARE READY TO DIE,
FOR I HAVE NOT FOUND YOUR WORKS
PERFECT BEFORE GOD.**

**REMEMBER THEREFORE HOW YOU HAVE
RECEIVED AND HEARD;
HOLD FAST AND REPENT.**

**THEREFORE IF YOU WILL NOT WATCH,
I WILL COME UPON YOU AS A THIEF,
AND YOU WILL NOT KNOW**

**WHAT HOUR I WILL COME UPON YOU.
YOU HAVE A FEW NAMES EVEN IN SARDIS
WHO HAVE NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS;
AND THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE,
FOR THEY ARE WORTHY.**

**HE WHO OVERCOMES
SHALL BE CLOTHED IN WHITE GARMENTS,
AND I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME
FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE;
BUT I WILL CONFESS HIS NAME BEFORE
MY FATHER AND BEFORE HIS ANGELS.**

**'HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.'"**

THE LETTER TO SARDIS

In history, Sardis represents the Reformation Period which began by Martin Luther's rebellion against the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. It birthed the restoration of the doctrine of justification by faith and restored the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures as being God's Word for God's people.

Even the name "Sardis" depicted this coming reformation. "Sardis" means "those who have come out" or "the escaping ones." However, Jesus quickly points out that "you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead" (Rev. 3:1). We begin to see the prophetic significance of this when we examine some of the names used today in the Protestant churches formed during the Reformation Period:



"YOU HAVE A NAME THAT YOU ARE ALIVE, BUT YOU ARE DEAD." Rev. 3:1

METHODIST

METHOD- "Marked by systematic behavior, painstaking methodical order and discipline."

METHODIST- "So called for their strict observance of religious duties. Founded by John Wesley, a fiery preacher of holiness and upright living."

LUTHERAN

LUTHER- "Martin Luther, or Lutheran- One who adheres to the doctrines of Luther- Justification by faith and a strict life of separation from the world."

This is not meant to offend either the Methodists or the Lutherans, but rather to use what has happened to them as a point of illustration. One only needs to read the history of these two movements to see that the fire and fervency we read about in their early beginnings is plainly evident that it does not exist today. This pattern is true in many of the Protestant denominations, including most of the Pentecostals as well. I, for one, cannot attest to ever observing anything which resembles the Pentecost movement recorded in the Book of Acts. We may well testify to believing it all, but we must say that we do not see it all. Therefore, Sardis is a message to all of God's churches which bear evidence of backsliding rather than going forward.

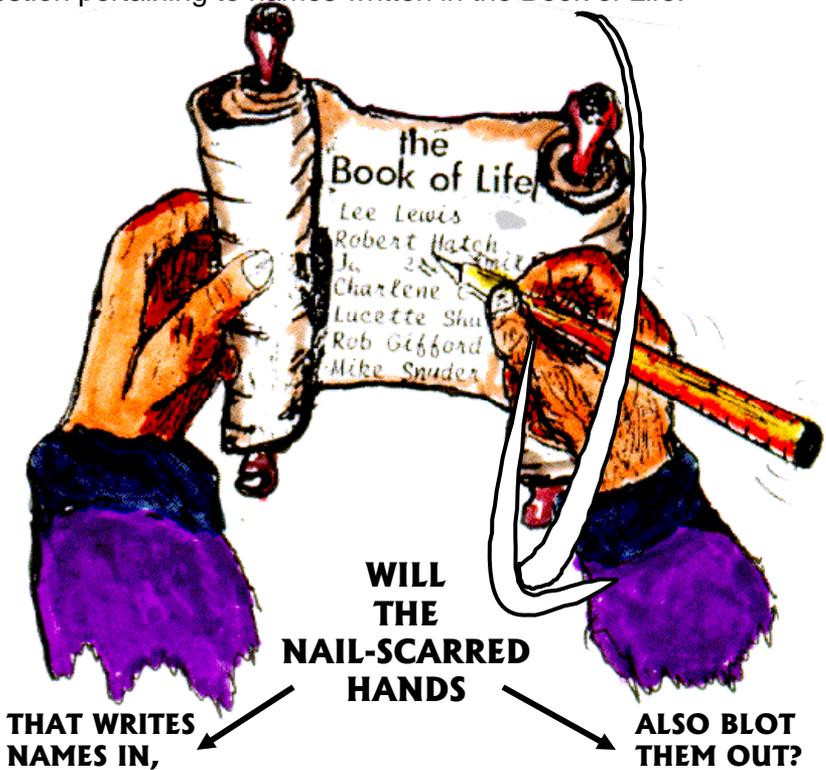
HOW SARDIS APPEARS OUTWARDLY

"YOU HAVE A NAME THAT YOU ARE ALIVE, BUT YOU ARE DEAD."

Rev.3:1



This prophetic message of Jesus is written to those “who have come out-the escaping ones” (Sardis), but have now become backsliders. Webster defines a backslider as “to slide back, to fall off or turn away from religion or morality, to apostatize.” The good news (“gospel”) has become the good news of “once saved, always saved” or “unconditional eternal security.” However, the contents of the message to Sardis answers this very important question pertaining to names written in the Book of Life:



The Bible clearly states that only those whose names are written in the Book of Life will qualify to enter into the eternal city:

**“BUT THERE SHALL BY NO MEANS
ENTER INTO IT ANYTHING THAT DEFILES
OR CAUSES AN ABOMINATION OR A LIE,
BUT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WRITTEN IN
THE LAMB’S BOOK OF LIFE.”**

Revelation 21:27

The needful question to be answered is whether once a name has been written in the Book of Life, can it then be blotted out? Like Paul, we must ask, “What does the scripture say?” (Rom. 4:3)

To answer this question properly we need only to apply the same exegesis of scripture that we apply to the establishment of all other doctrinal issues:

1. It is to be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses. (Deut. 17:6, Matt. 18:16, 2 Cor. 13:1)
2. The interpretation of those supporting witnesses used to establish a truth cannot conflict with existing or other established truths.

Does the Bible give in the mouth of two or three witnesses the concept that God will blot out names from the Book of Life?

**FIRST WITNESS: “AND IT CAME TO PASS
ON THE NEXT DAY**

**THAT MOSES SAID TO THE PEOPLE,
‘YOU HAVE SINNED A GREAT SIN.
SO NOW I WILL GO UP TO THE LORD;
PERHAPS I CAN MAKE ATONEMENT FOR YOUR SIN.’
THEN MOSES RETURNED TO THE LORD AND SAID,
‘OH, THESE PEOPLE HAVE SINNED A GREAT SIN, AND HAVE
MADE FOR THEMSELVES A GOD OF GOLD!
YET NOW, IF YOU WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN—BUT IF NOT,
I PRAY, BLOT ME OUT OF YOUR BOOK WHICH
YOU HAVE WRITTEN.’
AND THE LORD SAID TO MOSES,
‘WHOEVER HAS SINNED AGAINST ME,
I WILL BLOT HIM OUT OF MY BOOK.’”**

Exodus 32:30-33

Notice that the Lord did not say to Moses that once a name is written in, it can never be blotted out. Obviously, the Lord does not believe in the popular doctrine of “unconditional eternal security!”

**SECOND WITNESS: “AND IF ANYONE TAKES AWAY
FROM THE WORDS OF THE BOOK OF THIS PROPHECY,
GOD SHALL TAKE AWAY HIS PART FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE,
FROM THE HOLY CITY, AND FROM THE THINGS
THAT ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK.”**

Revelation 22:18-20

These are very specific statements here in the Word of God for being blotted out of the Book of Life! How then can anyone teach unconditional eternal security when Jesus Himself, the Word of God, testifies of just the opposite?

Although two witnesses are sufficient to establish this fact, we even have a third confirming word which is an indisputable witness in the fact that it is found in the very message given to this blood-washed church of the Lord Jesus Christ – Sardis:

THIRD WITNESS: “YOU HAVE A FEW NAMES EVEN IN SARDIS WHO HAVE NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS; AND THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE, FOR THEY ARE WORTHY.

HE WHO OVERCOMES SHALL BE CLOTHED IN WHITE GARMENTS AND I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE; BUT I WILL CONFESS HIS NAME BEFORE MY FATHER AND BEFORE HIS ANGELS.

HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.”

Revelation 3:4-6

Here are the indisputable facts stated in these three passages:

1. This message is written to those in the church, not to the unsaved.
2. It is possible to defile the garments of righteousness received as a gift as a born-again believer. Most had obviously so done in Sardis, for Jesus said only “a few even in Sardis” had not defiled their garments.
3. Jesus says the one who does not defile his garments will not be blotted out of the Book of Life, which clearly indicates that contrarily, it is possible to be blotted out by the act/actions of defiling the garments of righteousness received from Christ!
4. This is the testimony of the Spirit of God written specifically to the churches!

God has warned of the severe cost which can result from backsliding. This is the major emphasis of the Spirit in the letter to Sardis. This is a prophetic warning to those who presumptuously practice sin with the concept that it is automatically forgiven because it is already “under the blood.” God does forgive sin. He does not pre-forgive sin.

Let me give you several pertinent scriptures which speak of a born-again believer drawing back unto perdition:

“FOR IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RESTORE AND BRING AGAIN TO REPENTANCE THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN ONCE FOR ALL ENLIGHTENED, WHO HAVE CONSCIOUSLY TASTED THE HEAVENLY GIFT AND HAVE BECOME SHARERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND HAVE FELT HOW GOOD THE WORD OF GOD IS AND THE MIGHTY POWERS OF THE AGE AND WORLD TO COME, IF THEY THEN DEVIATE FROM THE FAITH AND TURN AWAY FROM THEIR ALLEGIANCE; IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BRING THEM BACK TO REPENTANCE BUT IF THAT SOIL PERSISTENTLY BEARS THORNS AND THISTLES, IT IS CONSIDERED WORTHLESS AND NEAR BEING CURSED, WHOSE END IS TO BE BURNED.”

Hebrews 6:4-8 Amplified

“FOR IF WE GO ON DELIBERATELY AND WILLINGLY SINNING AFTER ONCE ACQUIRING THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH THERE IS NO LONGER ANY SACRIFICE LEFT TO ATONE FOR OUR SINS.... THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR US THEN BUT A KIND OF AWFUL AND FEARFUL PROSPECT AND EXPECTATION OF DIVINE JUDGMENT AND THE FURY OF BURNING WRATH AND INDIGNATION WHICH WILL CONSUME THOSE WHO PUT THEMSELVES IN OPPOSITION TO GOD ANY PERSON WHO HAS VIOLATED AND THUS REJECTED AND SET AT NAUGHT THE LAW OF MOSES IS PUT TO DEATH WITHOUT PITY OR MERCY ON THE EVIDENCE OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES HOW MUCH WORSE (STERNER AND HEAVIER) PUNISHMENT DO YOU SUPPOSE HE WILL BE JUDGED TO DESERVE WHO HAS CONSIDERED THE COVENANT BLOOD BY WHICH HE WAS CONSECRATED COMMON AND UNHALLOWED, THUS PROFANING AND INSULTING AND OUTRAGING THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IMPARTS GRACE, THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD...”

Hebrews 10:26-29 Amplified

“...AND IF HE DRAWS BACK... MY SOUL HAS NO DELIGHT OR PLEASURE IN HIM. BUT OUR WAY IS NOT OF THOSE WHO DRAW BACK TO ETERNAL MISERY (PERDITION) AND ARE UTTERLY DESTROYED...”

Heb.10:38-39

**“BEWARE BRETHREN,
LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU
AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF
IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD:
BUT EXHORT ONE ANOTHER DAILY...
LEST ANY OF YOU BE HARDENED
THROUGH THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.
FOR WE ARE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST
IF WE HOLD THE BEGINNING
OF OUR CONFIDENCE
STEADFAST UNTO THE END.”**

Hebrews 3:12-14

The point I seek to make with you is that it is possible to follow the path of backsliding all the way unto eternal perdition. God will blot out anyone's name from the Book of Life because of a life of persistent, willful, presumptuous sin which defiles their garment of righteousness obtained by the new birth. Paul challenged the church with this thought about sin in the life of the redeemed:

**“WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN?
SHALL WE CONTINUE TO SIN THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND?
CERTAINLY NOT!....
WHAT THEN? SHALL WE SIN BECAUSE WE ARE
NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE?
CERTAINLY NOT!”**

Romans 6:1, 15

And so we see one central message in the letter to Sardis: the eternal cost of backsliding can be eternal misery—perdition, to be blotted out of God's Book of Life! It also contains a message of warning to those who are in the sin-laden process of drawing back:

**“BE WATCHFUL,
AND STRENGTHEN THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN,
THAT ARE READY TO DIE, FOR I HAVE NOT FOUND
YOUR WORKS PERFECT BEFORE GOD. REMEMBER
THEREFORE HOW YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND HEARD;
HOLD FAST AND REPENT.
THEREFORE IF YOU WILL NOT WATCH,
I WILL COME UPON YOU AS A THIEF,
AND YOU WILL NOT KNOW WHAT HOUR
I WILL COME UPON YOU.”**

Revelation 2:2-3

Not only is there a presumption upon the grace of God that it guarantees unconditional eternal security, but also there is the notion that the rapture is all-inclusive and guaranteed to all by means of the new birth. Jesus is refuting that with His warning:

**BEHOLD, I AM COMING AS A THIEF.
BLESSED IS HE WHO WATCHES AND KEEPS HIS GARMENTS..."**

Revelation 16:15

I hope you are struck by what this verse says about the dire need of keeping (guarding) your garments. Remember, Jesus is commending the minority of those in Sardis who did not defile their garments as the majority had so done. This is the believer's responsibility: to keep one's garments undefiled even while living among so many that continue to defile their garments.

The coming of Jesus as a thief in the night depicts what is commonly called the rapture. This event is a reward, not a gift. Jesus plainly taught that the believer must constantly avoid the pitfalls of defilement and to be found worthy to escape:

"BUT TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES, LEST YOUR HEARTS BE WEIGHED DOWN WITH CAROUSING, DRUNKENNESS, AND THE CARES OF THIS LIFE, AND THAT DAY COME ON YOU UNEXPECTEDLY. FOR IT WILL COME AS A SNARE UPON ALL THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH. WATCH THEREFORE, AND PRAY ALWAYS THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS THAT WILL COME TO PASS, AND TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN."

Luke 21:34-35

"FOR THE LORD HIMSELF WILL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT, WITH THE VOICE OF AN ARCHANGEL, AND WITH THE TRUMPET OF GOD. AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE FIRST. THEN WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR. AND THUS WE SHALL ALWAYS BE WITH THE LORD. THEREFORE COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS.

...YOU YOURSELVES KNOW PERFECTLY THAT THE DAY OF THE LORD SO COMES AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT... BUT YOU BRETHREN, ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, SO THAT THIS DAY SHOULD OVERTAKE YOU AS A THIEF. YOU ARE ALL SONS OF LIGHT... THEREFORE LET US NOT SLEEP, AS OTHERS DO, BUT LET US WATCH AND BE SOBER..."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, 5:1-9 excerpts

Contrary to the common teaching that at the time of the rapture “everybody goes” who names the name of Christ is not so. We have seen from Sardis that they must not “defile their garments” and must “repent, strengthen what is remaining, and watch!” Jesus said, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief. Paul told us we must watch, and even Jesus Himself also told us that “Blessed is he that keeps his garments and watches!”

The uniqueness of Jesus coming as a thief in the night is that, contrary to the normal habit of a thief stealing what is not his, Jesus is going to steal what is His but, like a thief, He will only take what is valuable! What thief in the natural would steal “soiled garments?” That is exactly what Jesus is saying about being blessed for keeping your garments undefiled.

Far too many of God’s people are not hearing what the Spirit is saying to the churches, but rather are listening to ear-tickling doctrines from men bent on compromising and watering down the Word of God that it might be pleasing rather than confronting. Jesus isn’t promising to rapture all those in Sardis, but rather He warns most of them that, unless they repent, He will come upon them suddenly as a thief, and in an hour in which they will be unaware.

The rapture is based on the Jewish wedding custom in which the bridegroom would come in the night at an hour unknown to steal away his bride. The bride and her bridal company were required to be ready at all times. This is the picture Jesus paints in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins:



**THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
IS LIKE
TEN VIRGINS...
FIVE WERE WISE
AND FIVE WERE FOOLISH...
AT MIDNIGHT
A CRY WAS HEARD:
'BEHOLD,
THE BRIDEGROOM IS
COMING...
THE BRIDEGROOM CAME,
AND THEY THAT WERE READY
WENT IN WITH HIM
TO THE WEDDING
AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT...
WATCH THEREFORE
FOR YOU KNOW NEITHER
THE DAY NOR THE HOUR
IN WHICH THE SON OF MAN
IS COMING.
Matthew 25:1-13**

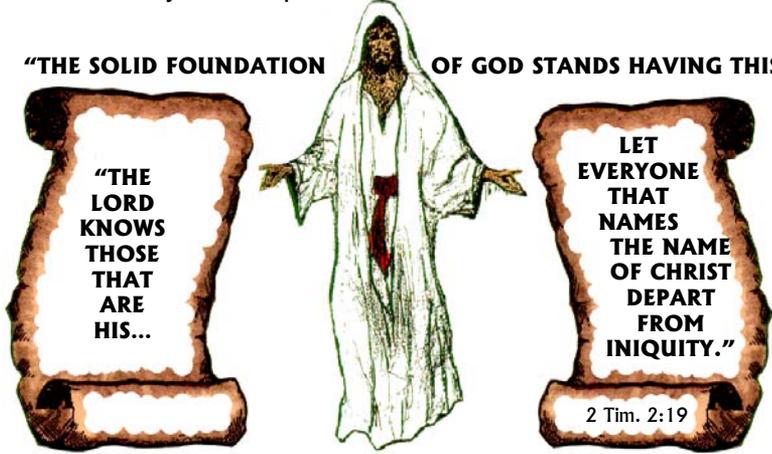


It is important to note that the foolish virgins expected to be taken and were shocked and surprised that the door was shut to them by their Lord. How pertinent is this message for today! This very condition exists due mainly to the ignoring and twisting of the message of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins as being the “saved vs. unsaved.” All ten are virgins!

Also ignored is that the letter to Sardis is written to born-again believers. There are many foolish born-again Christians, both those in the pulpit and in the pew, who expect to be taken by Jesus in spite of their foolish and sinful conduct which even those in the world condemn.

Jesus is coming as a thief in the night to steal away what is deemed valuable. There are two main criteria given in the Bible which depict the necessary foundation which must be laid if you are going to be considered worthy to escape:

“THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDS HAVING THIS SEAL:



After stating this foundation, Paul goes on with this natural illustration which beautifully depicts for us what Jesus will take with Him when He comes as a thief in the night:

“BUT IN A GREAT HOUSE THERE ARE NOT ONLY VESSELS OF GOLD AND SILVER, BUT ALSO WOOD AND CLAY, SOME FOR HONOR AND SOME FOR DISHONOR... IF ANYONE CLEANSSES HIMSELF FROM THE LATTER (VESSEL OF DISHONOR), HE WILL BE A VESSEL FOR HONOR AND USEFUL TO THE MASTER, PREPARED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK...”

2 Timothy 2:20-21

Jesus will steal away the vessels of honor that are useful to Him and will reject the vessels of dishonor as every thief in the natural would also do. The vessels of honor are those who, after having named the name of Christ, have gone on to depart from all iniquity! Such is the case in Sardis when Jesus said:



**YOU HAVE A FEW NAMES
EVEN IN SARDIS
WHO HAVE NOT DEFILED
THEIR GARMENTS;
AND THEY SHALL
WALK WITH ME IN WHITE,
FOR THEY ARE WORTHY.**

Revelation 3:4



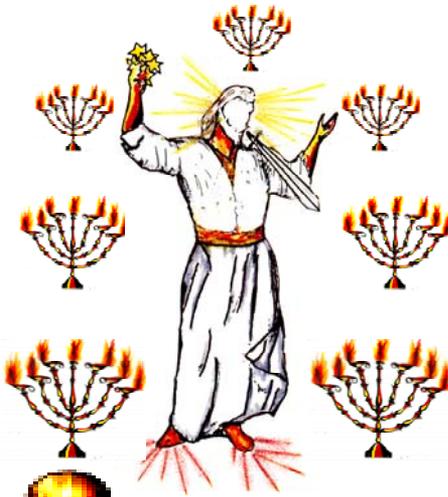
Don't let anyone tell you that there is no cost to being found as a backslider. In this life, it might cause you to be found among the foolish who are going to be left to be purified by fire in the great and terrible tribulation of which Revelation speaks in the latter chapters. The Body of Christ is hung up and divided over whether the rapture is going to be a pre, mid, or post tribulation event, when the real issue is rather who is going to be taken and who will be left behind. The rapture will begin the prophetic unfolding in which Jesus will "take out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness" (Matt. 13:41). This period begins initially with the leaving behind of the foolish virgins. Remember that Jesus warns Sardis that they will not know what hour that He will come upon them. Consider another parable which sheds immense light upon this statement:

**"BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS WHOM THE MASTER,
WHEN HE COMES WILL FIND WATCHING.
ASSUREDLY, I SAY UNTO YOU THAT HE WILL GIRD HIMSELF
AND HAVE THEM SIT DOWN EAT,
AND WILL COME AND SERVE THEM....
BUT KNOW THIS, THAT IF THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE HAD
KNOWN WHAT HOUR THE THIEF WOULD COME, HE WOULD
HAVE WATCHED AND NOT ALLOWED HIS HOUSE TO BE BROKEN
INTO. THEREFORE YOU ALSO BE READY, FOR THE SON OF MAN
IS COMING AT AN HOUR YOU DO NOT EXPECT....
BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT WHOM HIS MASTER WILL FIND SO
DOING WHEN HE COMES. TRULY, I SAY TO YOU THAT HE WILL
MAKE HIM RULER OVER ALL THAT HE HAS.
BUT IF THAT SERVANT SAYS IN HIS HEART,
'MY MASTER IS DELAYING HIS COMING,' AND BEGINS TO BEAT
THE MENSERVANTS AND MAIDSERVANTS AND TO EAT AND
DRINK AND BE DRUNK, THE MASTER OF THAT SERVANT WILL
COME ON A DAY WHEN HE IS NOT LOOKING FOR HIM,
AND AT AN HOUR WHEN HE IS NOT AWARE,
AND WILL CUT HIM IN TWO AND
APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE UNBELIEVERS."**

In this second parable Jesus is once again depicting a contrast of wise and foolish believers. Note they both are stated to be His servants as were both the wise and the foolish virgins. It is folly to make these people anything other than what Jesus says they are. In this second parable, it is easy to see that the destiny of the two servants of Jesus are not the same. In fact, the latter gets his portion with the unbelievers, which coincides with the parable of the wise and foolish virgins where the foolish are left behind with the unbelieving world, and so shall it be at the rapture! Get the point: one who was first a believer in Jesus is now appointed his portion with the unbelievers.

We have seen that not only is backsliding costly in this life, but if continued, it can lead to apostasy and perdition which will result in eternal misery rather than eternal life! At the risk of being redundant, consider the moral to the story once again:





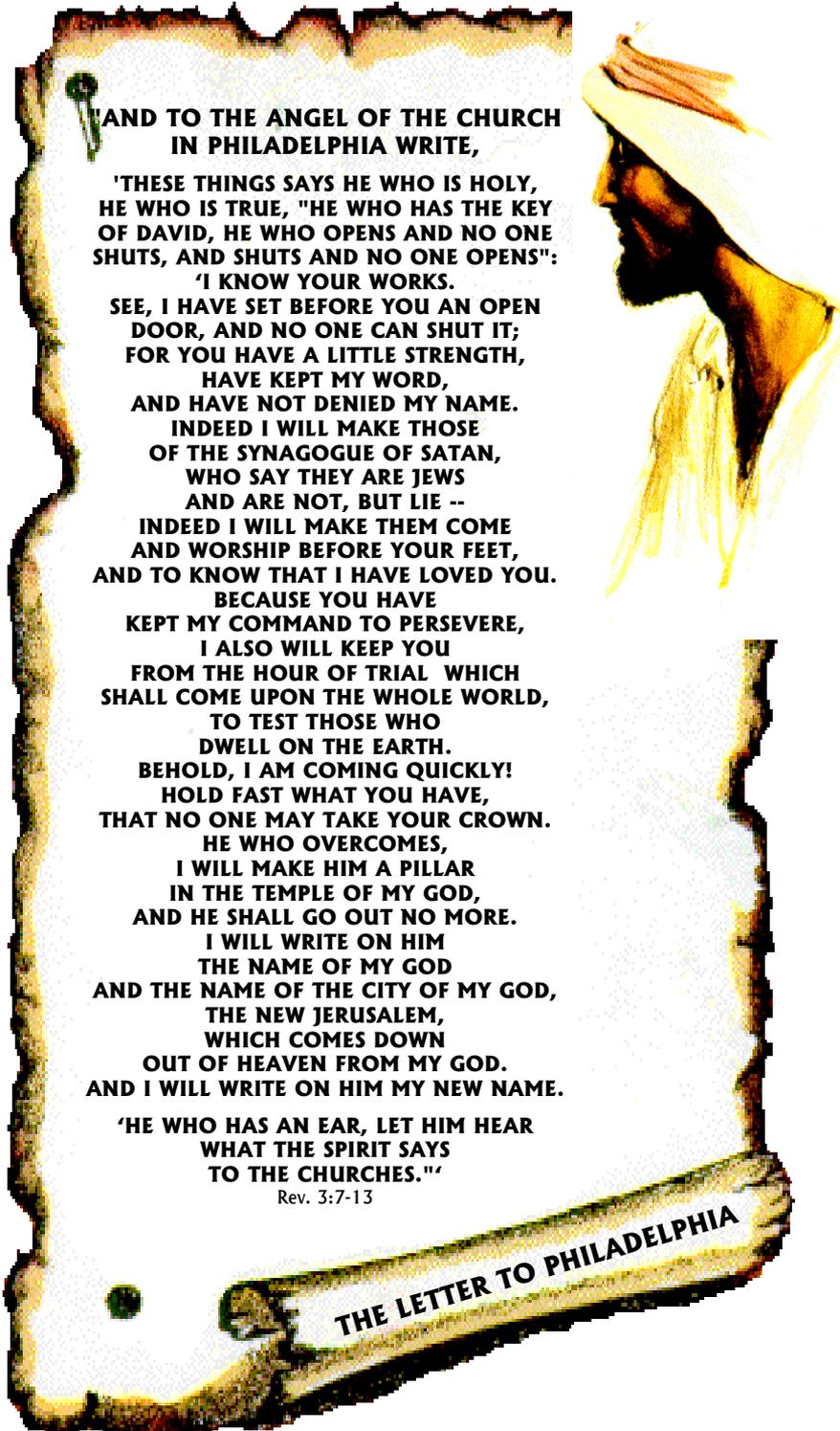
**"HE WHO
HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT
THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES."**

Rev. 3:13



**THE CHURCH OF
PHILADELPHIA**
"BROTHERLY LOVE"





**AND TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH
IN PHILADELPHIA WRITE,**

**'THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO IS HOLY,
HE WHO IS TRUE, "HE WHO HAS THE KEY
OF DAVID, HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE
SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS":**

'I KNOW YOUR WORKS.

**SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN
DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT;
FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH,
HAVE KEPT MY WORD,
AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME.**

**INDEED I WILL MAKE THOSE
OF THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN,
WHO SAY THEY ARE JEWS
AND ARE NOT, BUT LIE --**

**INDEED I WILL MAKE THEM COME
AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOUR FEET,
AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED YOU.**

**BECAUSE YOU HAVE
KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE,**

**I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU
FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH
SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD,
TO TEST THOSE WHO
DWELL ON THE EARTH.**

BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY!

**HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE,
THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN.**

**HE WHO OVERCOMES,
I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR
IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD,
AND HE SHALL GO OUT NO MORE.**

**I WILL WRITE ON HIM
THE NAME OF MY GOD
AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD,
THE NEW JERUSALEM,
WHICH COMES DOWN**

**OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD.
AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM MY NEW NAME.**

**'HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES.'"**

Rev. 3:7-13

THE LETTER TO PHILADELPHIA

Of the seven letters that Jesus gave to John, this is but the second one in which there is no rebuke, or call to repent. The first was Smyrna, the persecuted church, and now this letter to Philadelphia, the church whose name means "brotherly love". Philadelphia and Smyrna have something else in common other than receiving commendation without any reproof. In the letter to Smyrna we find written:



**"I KNOW YOUR WORKS,
TRIBULATION AND POVERTY
(BUT YOU ARE RICH);
AND I KNOW THE BLASPHEMY OF THOSE WHO
SAY THEY ARE JEWS AND ARE NOT,
BUT ARE OF
A SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN."**

Revelation 2:9

Now in this letter to Philadelphia we find written:

**"INDEED I WILL MAKE THOSE OF
THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN,
WHO SAY THEY ARE JEWS AND ARE NOT,
BUT LIE,
INDEED I WILL MAKE THEM COME
AND WORSHIP AT YOUR FEET,
AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED YOU."**

Revelation 3:9

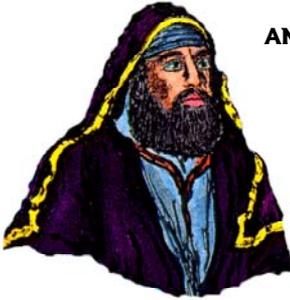
The only two churches which Jesus brings no correction are also alike in the fact that they both are prime targets for attack from what Jesus calls the "synagogue of Satan". Perhaps Paul's definition of what a true Jew is will help us understand the mystery behind these two statements:

**FOR HE IS NOT A JEW WHO IS ONE OUTWARDLY ...
BUT HE IS A JEW WHO IS ONE INWARDLY
AND CIRCUMCISION IS THAT OF THE HEART,
IN THE SPIRIT, AND NOT IN THE LETTER,
WHOSE PRAISE IS NOT FROM MEN BUT FROM GOD."**

Romans 2:28-29

In essence, both Smyrna and Philadelphia are paying a price for their loyalty to Christ. Smyrna is dying for Christ while Philadelphia is living for Christ--both are martyrs! Those who want a costless, cross-less and effortless brand of Christianity will hate, persecute and falsely accuse those of the likes of Smyrna and Philadelphia of being legalistic and cultic for putting responsibility upon the Christian. It is much easier to let Jesus do all the dying and all the cross bearing while the abuse of grace becomes an ointment for justifying carnality. The reality is that the foolish will persecute the wise in the name of the Lord. Jesus says there is a day coming when He will make the synagogue of Satan worship at the feet of Philadelphia, and they will come to know that God did indeed love those so-called "legalists".

Paul, the apostle, made a statement about the benefits of godliness which much of the church today needs to hear:



**“REJECT PROFANE AND OLD WIVES FABLES,
AND EXERCISE YOURSELF RATHER TO GODLINESS...
GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE FOR ALL THINGS,
HAVING PROMISE OF THE LIFE WHICH NOW IS
AND OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME.
THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING
AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTANCE.
FOR TO THIS END WE BOTH LABOR
AND SUFFER REPROACH...”**

1 Timothy 4:7-9

Had the apostle Paul lived to read the letter Jesus gave to Philadelphia, he might have used it as an illustration of the truth that godliness is profitable in this life and in the next life also. Why do I say that? Just consider the two promises that are given to Philadelphia:

**A PROMISE
GIVEN
FOR
THIS LIFE:**



**A PROMISE
FOR
THE LIFE
TO COME:**

**RAPTURED
BY CHRIST**

**“THESE THINGS SAYS
HE WHO IS HOLY, HE WHO IS TRUE,
'HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID,
HE WHO OPENS
AND NO ONE SHUTS,
AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS:
'I KNOW YOUR WORKS.
SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU
AN OPEN DOOR,
AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT;
FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE
STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT MY WORD,
AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY
NAME... BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT
MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE,
I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU
FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH
SHALL COME UPON
THE WHOLE WORLD,
TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL
ON THE EARTH.”**

Rev 3:7-11

**MARRIED
TO CHRIST**

**“BEHOLD,
I AM COMING QUICKLY!
HOLD FAST
WHAT YOU HAVE,
THAT NO ONE MAY
TAKE YOUR CROWN.
HE WHO OVERCOMES,
I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR
IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD,
AND HE SHALL
GO OUT NO MORE.
I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE
NAME OF MY GOD AND THE
NAME OF THE CITY OF MY
GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM,
WHICH COMES DOWN OUT
OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD.
AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM
MY NEW NAME.”**

Rev 3:11-13

It is commonly taught that both the promise to be raptured by Christ, and in eternity to be married to Christ, are inherited simply by the single act of becoming born again. However, this letter to the church of Philadelphia refutes such teaching. Jesus is writing to born again believers and holds forth these two promises with these qualifying factors attached, neither of which is due to the new birth:

**RAPTURED
BY CHRIST**

BECAUSE YOU HAVE:

1. KEPT (GUARDED) MY WORD...
2. NOT DENIED MY NAME...
3. KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE...

**"I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM
THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME
UPON THE WHOLE EARTH TO TEST THOSE
WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH."**

Rev. 3:10

What is stated above is theologically referred to as propositional revelation, which simply says, "You do this and I will do that." Jesus is saying "Because you have...I also will..." Notice they are not given the promise because of their fundamental relationship to Jesus, but rather because of their ongoing faithfulness to Him. It is their works Jesus is measuring.

Consider as well the second promise and note the conditions attached to inheriting it:

**MARRIED
TO CHRIST**

TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES

1. I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR
IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD...
2. I WILL WRITE ON HIM
THE NAME OF MY GOD...
3. I WILL WRITE ON HIM
THE NAME OF THE CITY
OF MY GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM...
4. I WILL WRITE ON HIM
MY NEW NAME...

Proof that Jesus is speaking of the Bride of Christ is found by comparing the above reference of New Jerusalem to Rev.21:2,9-11:

**"THEN I JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM,
COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD,
AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND....
COME, I WILL SHOW THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE...
AND HE SHOWED ME THE GREAT CITY, NEW JERUSALEM,
DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD..."**

RAPTURED BY CHRIST

**“BEHOLD,
THE BRIDEGROOM
IS COMING;
GO OUT TO MEET HIM!
...THE BRIDEGROOM CAME,
AND
THOSE WHO WERE READY
WENT IN WITH HIM
TO THE WEDDING;
AND
THE DOOR
WAS SHUT...”**

Matt.. 25:1-13 excerpts

MARRIED TO CHRIST

**AND I HEARD...THE VOICE OF A
GREAT MULTITUDE...
LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE
AND GIVE HIM GLORY,
FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB
HAS COME,
AND HIS WIFE
HAS MADE HERSELF READY.
AND TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO
BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN,
CLEAN AND BRIGHT,
FOR THE FINE LINEN IS
THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS
OF THE SAINTS.”**

Rev 19:6-10

According to the scriptures, who is going to be raptured by Christ, the Bridegroom? Is it not “they that were ready?” Who is going to be married to Christ, is it not she who has “made herself ready?”

Perhaps we should inject Paul's own testimony of his goals as a born again Christian since he clearly sets himself as a pattern to be followed:



**“BRETHREN, JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE,
AND NOTE THOSE WHO SO WALK,
AS YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN.”**

Philippians 3:17

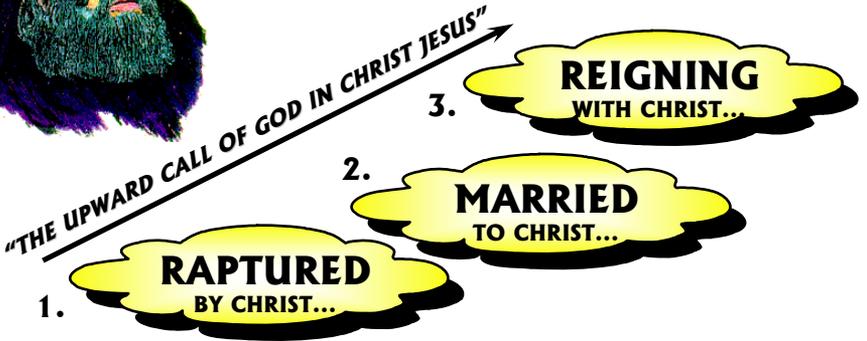
What was that pattern we are to follow?

**“BUT I PRESS ON
THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH
CHRIST JESUS HAS LAID HOLD OF ME.
BUT ONE THING I DO,
FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND
AND REACHING FORWARD TO THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE AHEAD,
I PRESS TOWARD THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL
OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.**

Philippians 3:12-14

Paul does not seem to be saying what we hear today, “I got it all when I got saved”. Even though he was born again, had eternal life, and even received the highest calling God gave to man, the apostleship, Paul was motivated above all these things to run a race for a prize not yet won!

Eternal life is a gift of God's grace,
 but eternal rewards are earned prizes.
 Now it is my firm conviction that the prize Paul
 sought to lay hold of, which he called the
 "upward call of God in Christ Jesus,"
 has three stages:



I also believe that if you will meditate carefully in what Jesus promises to Philadelphia, you will find all three of these promised events are included:

RAPTURED BY CHRIST...	MARRIED TO CHRIST...	REIGNING WITH CHRIST...
<p>"BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT... I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH." Rev. 3:10</p> <p>SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT." Rev. 3:8</p>	<p>"HE WHO OVERCOMES... I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM, WHICH COMES DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD" (See Rev.21:2-3,9) "...AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM MY NEW NAME." Rev. 3:12</p>	<p>"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY! HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN!" Rev. 3:11</p>

Note the qualifying conditions, dear reader! They are not automatically obtained by means of the new birth! These are conditions to be fulfilled by our lifestyle as born-again Christians!

**“I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU,
AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS,
SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY.”**

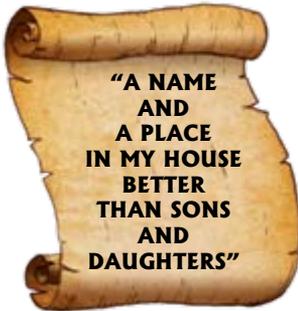
2 Cor. 6:18

We can all readily agree that becoming “sons and daughters” of the Almighty God is a gift of God’s grace by means of receiving the new birth. We become “children of God” through the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba (daddy) Father!” (Rom.8:15-16)

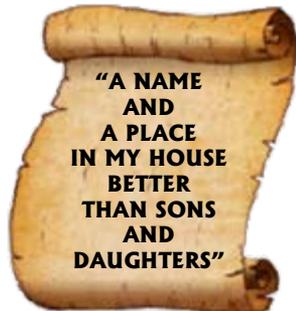
However, are you aware that becoming sons and daughters is not God’s highest place for His people? We are taught that it is, but it is not. The new birth is so exalted in today’s theology that it has birthed the popular saying, “I got it all when I got saved.” This is not sound doctrine, but rather doctrine that just sounds good. God promised something higher than the position of sons and daughters even to the Old Covenant saints:

**“FOR THUS SAYS THE LORD:
TO THE EUNUCHS WHO KEEP MY SABBATHS,
AND CHOOSE WHAT PLEASES ME, AND HOLD FAST MY COVENANT,
EVEN TO THEM I WILL GIVE IN MY HOUSE AND WITHIN MY WALLS
A PLACE AND A NAME BETTER THAN THAT OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS;
I WILL GIVE THEM AN EVERLASTING NAME THAT SHALL NOT BE CUT OFF.”**

Isa. 56:5



**PROMISED TO
THE FAITHFUL SAINTS
IN THE OLD COVENANT...**



**PROMISED TO
THE FAITHFUL SAINTS
IN THE NEW COVENANT**

Remember the premise that we are following:

The symbology found in Revelation has its origin in the Old Testament.

What God promised the faithful followers in His Old Covenant He has carried over into the New Covenant. Now we have clarification as to “the name” and “the place” in God’s house that will be better than sons and daughters!

PHILADELPHIA:

A NAME:

“The name of My God...
the name of the City of
My God, New Jerusalem...
My new name...”

A PLACE:

“He who overcomes,
I will make him a pillar
in the temple of My God,
and he shall go out
no more...”

Instead of using Gods grace as an excuse to remain unchanged, we need to see what Paul presented as the full purpose of grace:



**“FOR THE GRACE OF GOD
THAT BRINGS SALVATION
HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,
TEACHING US THAT,
DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS,
WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY
IN THIS PRESENT AGE,
LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE
AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD
AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,
WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US,
THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US
FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED
AND
PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE,
ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS.”**

Titus 2:11-14 NKJ

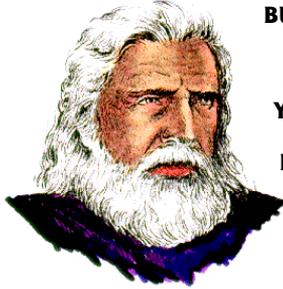
If you study the above carefully, you will note that it is one continuous sentence in which Paul expresses what is in essence the full gospel message of Jesus Christ. Notice these passages begin with the grace of God and end with being zealous for good works. The doctrine of grace was never intended to be separated from what grace came to teach us! The present mentality of cafeteria-style Christianity has pulled out grace and redemption and left behind the unwanted thoughts of living soberly, righteously, godly in this present age. Likewise the concept that Jesus not only gave Himself to redeem us, but also to purify us to be a people zealous for good works is also missing in theological circles today! Remember, Jesus is measuring the quality of our works in the letters to the churches in Revelation! He told Sardis that He did not find their works perfect before God. If you believe a believer's works are as “filthy rags” once having been saved, you have missed Paul's emphasis in this area. Just one more chapter over in Paul's epistle to Titus we read his specific instruction to believers pertaining to good works:

**“THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND THESE THINGS I WANT YOU TO
AFFIRM CONSTANTLY, THAT THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD
SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS.
THESE THINGS ARE GOOD AND PROFITABLE TO MEN....
LET OUR PEOPLE ALSO LEARN TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS,
TO MEET URGENT NEEDS, THAT THEY MAY NOT BE UNFRUITFUL.”**

Titus 3:8,14

Jesus urges Philadelphia to hold fast what they have and to let no one take their crown (Rev.3:11). This exhortative statement by Jesus establishes the fact that the possibility exists of having one's crown taken, or Jesus would not have presented the possibility of it happening. Everything God offers to us is not automatically guaranteed!

Consider what the apostle John says along these same lines of protecting our hard-earned spiritual possessions:



“LOOK TO YOURSELVES, THAT WE DO NOT LOSE THOSE THINGS WE WORKED FOR, BUT THAT WE MAY RECEIVE A FULL REWARD.”

2 John 8

“TAKE CARE: LOOK TO YOURSELVES THAT YOU MAY NOT LOSE ALL THAT WE AND YOU HAVE LABORED FOR, BUT THAT YOU MAY PERSEVERE UNTIL YOU WIN AND RECEIVE A PERFECT REWARD IN FULL.”

2 John 8 Amplified

Let me reiterate the point that I want you to fully grasp: we are talking about crowns being rewards from God that are earned and not as gifts of His grace. The church of Philadelphia does not receive all these wonderful promises because she belongs to Christ, for all seven churches belong to Him. Rather she receives the promises because she has remained faithful to Christ and has obeyed His Word. It is her works that Jesus is commending and not her position of grace.

Jesus tells Philadelphia to “hold fast what she has.” It becomes important to see what it is that she has that qualifies her for such great promises. For in doing so, we establish for ourselves the specific criteria by which we can measure ourselves as followers of Christ, as Paul instructs us to do:

“EXAMINE AND TEST AND EVALUATE YOUR OWN SELVES, TO SEE WHETHER YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH AND SHOWING THE PROPER FRUITS OF IT. TEST AND PROVE YOURSELVES-- NOT CHRIST!”

2 Corinthians 13:5 Amplified



There are seven important things indicated in Jesus’ message to Philadelphia. Some are very direct and some are indirect. Some are revealed symbolically, even as a hidden mystery. I want to present them to you at this time for your consideration. Study them well for they have the potential to impact you for all eternity!

WHAT SHE HAS:



Philadelphia:

“BROTHERLY LOVE”

**“LOVE
WITHOUT HYPOCRISY...”**

Rom. 12:9

**“SINCERE LOVE
OF THE BRETHREN
WITH A PURE HEART...”**

1 Pet. 1:22

**“ADD TO YOUR FAITH...
BROTHERLY KINDNESS
(THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN)
AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE
INTO THE EVERLASTING
KINGDOM...”**

2 Pet. 1:7

What is in a name? This church is called “Philadelphia” which means brotherly love. The apostle John plainly states that the level of our love for God is measured by the level of our love for the brethren:



**“BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER...
EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD
AND KNOWS GOD.
HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE
DOES NOT KNOW GOD,
FOR GOD IS LOVE.”**

1 John 4:7-8

**“HE WHO LOVES HIS BROTHER ABIDES IN THE LIGHT...
BUT HE WHO HATES HIS BROTHER IS IN DARKNESS...”**

1 John 2:9-11

The Bride of Christ will follow Peter’s admonition to “add ... brotherly kindness to your faith” (see 2 Peter 1:7). Such brotherly love is among the seven things that we are to have worked in us that will provide for us the ability to obtain an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. Contrast this abundant entrance to that of the carnal Christian who remains a babe in Christ as found in First Corinthians Chapter Three. This one’s entrance into heaven is described as suffering loss of reward, but saved, yet so as through fire:

**“IF ANYONE’S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS,
BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE.”**

The fact that scripture contrasts two different entrances into Heaven for two kinds of believers, confirms the importance of seeing the value of “adding to your faith” such virtues as brotherly love.

WHAT SHE HAS:

“HOLY AND TRUE”

**“AS HE WHO HAS CALLED YOU
IS HOLY,
YOU ALSO BE HOLY
IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT.”**

1 Pet. 1:15

**“BEHOLD,
YOU DESIRE TRUTH
IN THE INWARD PARTS”**

1 Pet. 1:15

**“HE CHOSE US IN HIM BEFORE
THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD,
THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY
AND WITHOUT BLAME
BEFORE HIM IN LOVE...”**

Eph 1:4-5



Jesus appears to this church as one who is “holy and true.” To Smyrna He appeared as “He who was dead and came to life.” This is a martyr speaking to those whom He calls to martyrdom. Jesus appears to each church with some aspect of His own character which they have or that they desperately need. Since Philadelphia receives no correction from Jesus, we can assume that He is identifying with their character and testimony of being holy and true.

David, a man after God's own heart, realized that what God wanted most in His people was truth in the inward parts (Psalm 51:6). Peter tells us that God requires that His people be holy in all their conduct (1 Pet. 1:14-16). Such personal holiness will be an identifying mark of the Bride of Christ. Her vision, goal and purpose will be to fulfill what Paul expressed pertaining to the espoused Bride of Christ:

**“THEREFORE, HAVING THESE PROMISES, BELOVED,
LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES
FROM ALL FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT,
PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD.”**

2 Cor. 7:1

**“...CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER,
THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WASHING OF
WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF
A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE
OR ANY SUCH THING,
BUT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH.”**

Eph. 5:25-28

WHAT SHE HAS:



“THE KEY OF DAVID”

**“I HAVE FOUND DAVID A MAN
AFTER MY OWN HEART,
WHO WILL DO ALL MY WILL.”**

Acts 13:22

**“HE WHO HAS
THE KEY OF DAVID,
HE WHO OPENS,
AND NO ONE SHUTS,
AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS.
I KNOW YOUR WORKS.
SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU
AN OPEN DOOR
AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT...”**

Rev. 3:7-8

Jesus mentions three distinct sets of keys which He has in His possession:

1. The keys to the kingdom (Matt. 16:19)
2. The keys to death and Hades (Rev. 1:18)
3. The key of David (Rev. 3:7)

As important as the other keys are, the key of David is stated to be that which opens and shuts the door in heaven. This is the “key” to the promised rapture, the great escape for God’s faithful and true believers from the great trial that is coming to test all those who dwell on the earth. This most conditional promise is specifically given to Philadelphia as a reward for her works-not as the result of having received an unmerited gift of God’s grace. Remember, when it comes to the rapture, Jesus taught the need to be found “worthy to escape” (Luke 21:36).

Here is what Jesus states as Philadelphia’s worthiness to escape:



**“I KNOW YOUR WORKS.
SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR...
...YOU HAVE KEPT MY WORD,
...HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME...
...BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE,
I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL
WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD,
TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH.”**

Rev. 3:8-10

Since we are dealing with a book steeped in symbology, we must look to see what God records of David to gain insight into the spiritual meaning of this key:

**"DAVID...
TO WHOM HE GAVE
TESTIMONY AND SAID,
'I HAVE FOUND DAVID...
A MAN AFTER
MY OWN HEART,
WHO WILL DO
ALL MY WILL.'"
Acts 13:22**



David did not walk in sinless perfection, as we all know. However, we also know that when God reproved David, he was quick to repent and returned to obeying His God. The key to being found "without spot or wrinkle" as the Bride of Christ does not lie in a life of sinless perfection, but rather in maintaining a "broken and contrite heart" before God as did David. Meditating in Psalm 51 would be a good starting point to see the heart attitude of this servant of God.

It is beyond the scope of this book to study all the aspects of the life of David, but this little synopsis of some of the areas that made David a man after God's own heart are worth your effort to consider.

DAVID

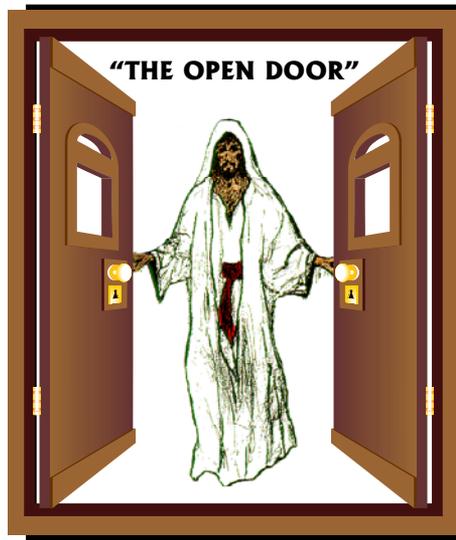
**HAVE FOUND DAVID, A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART,
WHO WILL DO ALL MY WILL"**

HE SHALL BUILD A HOUSE FOR MY NAME"

PRAYER Psalm. 5:1-3	FAITH Psalm. 18:1-3
PRaise Psalm. 9:1-2	REMORe Psalm. 32:5, 38:18
PURPOSe Psalm. 27:4-5	TESTIMONY Psalm. 40:8-10
DECISION Psalm. 101:1-4	HUMILITY Psalm. 131:1-2
	THANKSGIVING Psalm. 101:1-4

**“...THE KEY
OF
THE HOUSE
OF DAVID
I WILL LAY ON
HIS SHOULDER;
SO HE WILL
OPEN AND NO
ONE SHUT;
AND HE SHALL
SHUT AND NO
ONE SHALL
OPEN...
HE WILL
BECOME
A GLORIOUS
THRONE
TO
HIS FATHER’S
HOUSE.”**

Isa. 22:22-23



**“THESE THINGS
SAYS HE WHO
IS HOLY,
HE WHO
IS TRUE,
“HE WHO HAS
THE KEY OF
DAVID.
HE WHO OPENS
AND NO ONE
SHUTS,
AND SHUTS
AND NO ONE
OPENS...SEE,
I HAVE SET
BEFORE YOU
AN OPEN DOOR
AND NO ONE
CAN SHUT IT”**

Rev. 3:7

**“...I WILL ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM.
HE SHALL BUILD A HOUSE FOR MY NAME,
AND I WILL ESTABLISH THE THRONE OF HIS KINGDOM FOREVER.”**

2 Sam. 7:12-13

As I stated in the opening of this book, the symbology found in Revelation comes from other illustrations in the Bible. Such is the case with the symbology of “an open door” controlled by the key of David. As David was to build “a glorious throne to His Father’s house” so likewise is the church called to build such a spiritual house to the Lord. Clearly stated is the fact:

“BUT CHRIST A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE, WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE...”

Heb. 3:6

Paul the apostle states this mission of the church as well:

**“NOW THEREFORE YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND
FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS
OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD, HAVING BEEN BUILT ON THE
FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS HIMSELF BEING
THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE, IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING,
BEING JOINED TOGETHER, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD,
IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER
FOR A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT.”**

Eph. 2:19-22

Read the above carefully. It is yet another of one of Paul’s long flowing single sentences in which he expresses the fullness of God’s plan for His people. Be busy in this building project and you too will find an open door in heaven that functions by the key of David—a man after God’s own heart!

WHAT SHE HAS:

“KEPT MY WORD”

**“I HAVE NOT SHUNNED
TO DECLARE
THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.”**

Acts 20:27

**“WE ARE NOT
AS SO MANY PEDDLING
 (“ADULTERATING FOR GAIN”)
THE WORD OF GOD,
BUT AS OF SINCERITY,
BUT AS FROM GOD,
WE SPEAK
IN THE SIGHT OF GOD IN CHRIST.”**

2 Cor. 2:17

**“NOR (ARE WE) HANDLING
THE WORD OF GOD DECEITFULLY,
BUT BY
MANIFESTATION
OF THE TRUTH...
IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.”**

2 Cor. 4:2



It is plain to see that what Paul speaks on in the scriptures above continues to plague the church today. The Word of God is being peddled, handled deceitfully, and purposely diluted through the current wave of money-motivated prosperity teaching of which Peter prophetically warned:

**“...THERE WILL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU...
MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS,
BECAUSE OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE
BLASPHEMED. BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL
EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS...”**

2 Peter 2:1-2



As Paul did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, so likewise will the Bride of Christ keep (guard) the words of her Master in purity and in truth. Here is our mandate:

**“BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD,
A WORKER WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED,
RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.”**

2 Tim. 2:15

**“PREACH THE WORD! BE READY IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON.
CONVINCE, REBUKE, EXHORT, WITH ALL LONGSUFFERING AND TEACHING.
FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND
DOCTRINE, BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN DESIRES, BECAUSE THEY HAVE
ITCHING EARS, THEY WILL HEAP UP FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS; AND THEY
WILL TURN THEIR EARS AWAY FROM THE TRUTH, AND BE TURNED ASIDE
UNTO FABLES. BUT YOU BE WATCHFUL IN ALL THINGS...”**

2 Tim. 4:1-5

WHAT SHE HAS:



“NOT DENIED HIS NAME”

**“THEY PROFESS TO KNOW GOD,
BUT DENY AND RENOUNCE HIM
BY WHAT THEY DO.”**

Titus 1:16 Amplified

**“IF ANYONE DOES NOT PROVIDE
FOR HIS OWN
(ESPECIALLY THOSE
OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD)
HE HAS
DENIED THE FAITH
AND IS WORSE
THAN AN UNBELIEVER.”**

1 Tim.5:8

The denial of God’s name does not have to be done by the words of our mouth, it can be done by the deeds we either perform or fail to perform. Paul speaks of these to Titus:

**“THEY PROFESS TO KNOW GOD--
TO RECOGNIZE, PERCEIVE AND BE ACQUAINTED WITH HIM--
BUT DENY AND DISOWN AND RENOUNCE HIM
BY WHAT THEY DO;
THEY ARE DETESTABLE AND LOATHSOME,... DISOBEDIENT...
DISLOYAL AND REBELLIOUS...
UNFIT AND WORTHLESS FOR GOOD WORK.”**

Titus 1:16 Amplified

Remember that the foolish virgins are calling Jesus “Lord, Lord!” (Matt. 25:11), but Jesus Himself has warned of such before:



**NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, ‘LORD, LORD,’
SHALL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN,
BUT HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN.”**

Matt. 7:21

The Third commandment speaks of “taking the Name of the Lord in vain.” However, this is not speaking of profanity as commonly interpreted:

**TO TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD IN VAIN
IS TO DENY IN REALITY THE ONLY TRUE GOD;
IT IS THE EMPTY PROFESSION OF HIM WHEN OUR LIVES AND
ACTIONS, AND OFTEN EVERY THOUGHT, POSSESSION,
AND EVERY LAW-SPHERE IS ALIENATED FROM GOD...”**
(The Institutes of Biblical Law- R.J. Rushdoony, pg.117)

His name is Christ and we profess to be Christians. We can take His Name to ourselves in vain by choosing not to be followers of Christ.

WHAT SHE HAS:

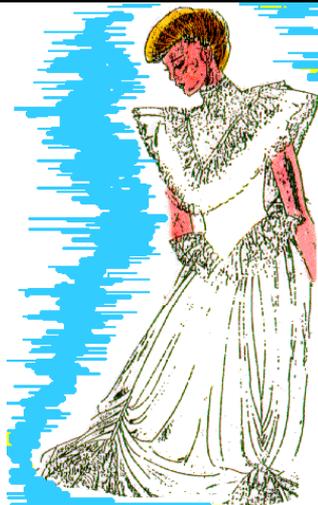
“A TRUE JEW”

**“THEY SAY THEY ARE JEWS
AND ARE NOT-BUT LIE...”**

Rev. 3:9

**“HE WHO IS A JEW
IS ONE INWARDLY...
(CIRCUMCISED)
IN THE HEART...
IN THE SPIRIT,
AND NOT IN THE LETTER;
WHOSE PRAISE IS NOT FROM MEN,
BUT FROM GOD.”**

Rom. 2:28-29



**“INDEED I WILL MAKE THOSE OF THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN,
WHO SAY THEY ARE JEWS AND ARE NOT, BUT LIE--
INDEED I WILL MAKE THEM COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE
YOUR FEET AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED YOU.”**

Rev. 3:9

Those in what Jesus labels “the synagogue of Satan” claimed they were Jews (the only people of God). However, they persecuted those who believe Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah. In reality, by rejecting Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, they renounced their claim as true Jews, and that is why Jesus labels them as liars.

This distinction between ethnic Jews and faithful true spiritual Jews is also seen in Romans 9:6 in which Paul states:

**“...THEY ARE NOT ALL ISRAEL WHO ARE OF ISRAEL, NOR ARE THEY ALL
CHILDREN BECAUSE THEY ARE THE SEED OF ABRAHAM...
THAT IS, THOSE WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE FLESH,
THESE ARE NOT THE CHILDREN OF GOD...”**

History abounds with the persecution of the early church birthed out of Judaism-the sect called “The Way”. Paul testified:

**“BUT THIS I CONFESS TO YOU, THAT ACCORDING TO THE WAY WHICH
THEY CALL A SECT, SO I WORSHIP THE GOD OF MY FATHERS,
BELIEVING ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW
AND IN THE PROPHETS.”**

Acts 24:14-15

I believe we are yet to see a resurrection of this “synagogue of Satan” down the road in the church’s future because this is a prophetic letter, not merely a history lesson.

WHAT SHE HAS:



“PERSEVERANCE”

**“FOR YOU HAVE NEED OF
ENDURANCE...”**

Heb. 10:36

**“RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE
SET BEFORE YOU...”**

Heb. 12:1

**“(WE ARE CHRIST’S HOUSE)
IF WE HOLD FAST...
FIRM TO THE END.”**

Heb. 12:1

**“WE HAVE BECOME PARTAKERS
OF CHRIST IF WE HOLD...
STEADFAST TO THE END.”**

Heb. 3:12

**“...PRESSURE, AFFLICTION,
HARDSHIP PRODUCE
UNSWERVING ENDURANCE.”**

Rom. 5:1 Amp.

The call to endurance is a major theme presented by the apostle Paul:



**“AND LET US NOT GROW WEARY
WHILE DOING GOOD,
FOR IN DUE SEASON
WE SHALL REAP,
IF WE DO NOT LOSE HEART.”**

Gal. 6:9

The Psalmist relates how he almost gave up because his eyes were on the easy present life of the wicked rather than preparing for eternity to come:

**“BUT AS FOR ME, MY FEET HAD ALMOST STUMBLED...
FOR I WAS ENVIOUS OF THE BOASTFUL,
WHEN I SAW THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED...
THEY ARE NOT IN TROUBLE...THEIR EYES BULGE WITH ABUNDANCE...
THEY ARE ALWAYS AT EASE...THEY INCREASE IN RICHES...
SURELY I HAVE CLEANSED MY HEART IN VAIN...FOR ALL DAY LONG I HAVE
BEEN PLAGUED AND CHASTENED EVERY MORNING...IT WAS TOO PAINFUL
FOR ME--UNTIL I...UNDERSTOOD THEIR END.”**

Psalm 73 (excerpts)

The perseverance of the saints. The Calvinist cherished doctrinal five-point tulip says that the “perseverance of the saints” is totally God’s responsibility. God says throughout His Word it is our responsibility to persevere. We are not to “give up”, nor are we to “blow up”, but rather we are to “grow up”. Jesus says of Philadelphia, “You have kept My command to persevere”(Rev. 3:10). God did not keep it for them.

WHAT SHE HAS:

"BEHOLD,
I COME
QUICKLY!
HOLD
FAST
WHAT
YOU
HAVE,



THAT
NO ONE
MAY
TAKE
YOUR
CROWN."
Rev.3:11

BROTHERLY LOVE

SINCERE LOVE OF BRETHREN-NO HYPOCRISY

HOLY AND TRUE

HOLY IN CONDUCT-TRUTH IN INWARD PARTS

KEY OF DAVID

HAS A HEART TO DO GOD'S WILL ALWAYS

KEPT GOD'S WORD

EMBRACED THE FULL COUNSEL OF GOD

NOT DENIED HIS NAME

DEEDS MATCH PROFESSION OF MOUTH

A TRUE JEW

A HEART CIRCUMCISED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

PERSEVERANCE

DOES NOT QUIT UNDER PRESSURE

Consider well the seven things for which Jesus commends the church of Philadelphia. These things are considered sufficient enough to qualify them to be kept from the hour of trial which would come upon the rest of the world. Paul instructed the saints to test their faith for the proper evidence:

"EXAMINE AND TEST AND EVALUATE YOUR OWN SELVES, TO SEE WHETHER YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH AND SHOWING THE PROPER FRUITS OF IT. TEST AND PROVE YOURSELVES...."

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



Will you be raptured by Christ? Will you be married to Christ? Will you reign with Christ? You may say, "I hope so" or even "I think so," but I believe we should be analytical to the point that we can say "I know so!"

To "know so" will require that we be very careful to give heed to Paul's admonition to be among those saints who test themselves. You will need to train your ears to hear the direction of the Holy Spirit:



JESUS' LAST WORDS TO HIS LAST CHURCH...

Often in scripture we find Jesus would save the best unto last. This is not the case here in the seven letters to the churches. We just finished considering the best in the church of Philadelphia, we are about to consider the worst in the church of Laodicea.

There is a reason why this time Jesus does not leave the best until last. Philadelphia, as we have just seen, is the church given the promise of the Rapture, the great escape from the trial coming to test all those remaining on the earth. Philadelphia is the sixth church, Laodicea is the seventh and last church which Jesus addresses. Laodicea is not given a promise of rapture but rather of severe warning:



**“BECAUSE YOU
ARE LUKEWARM...
I WILL
SPEW YOU
(VOMIT YOU)
OUT
OF MY MOUTH.”**

Rev. 3:16



The above are certainly not words of endearment from Jesus, and neither do they convey today's cherished position of the "unconditional eternal security" of the believer!

Philadelphia, as the sixth church, represents the wise virgins that are taken, while Laodicea, as the seventh and last church, represents the foolish virgins which are left behind at the coming of Christ as the Bridegroom (see Matt. 25:1-13).

Likewise, in the other parable we considered of the faithful and unfaithful servants, Philadelphia represents the faithful servant who is promised to inherit all that the Master has, while Laodicea represents the unfaithful servant who ends up being "cut in two" by His Master, and receiving his portion with the unbelievers (see Luke 12:35-48).

With that sober introduction, let us now examine Jesus' last words to His last church.



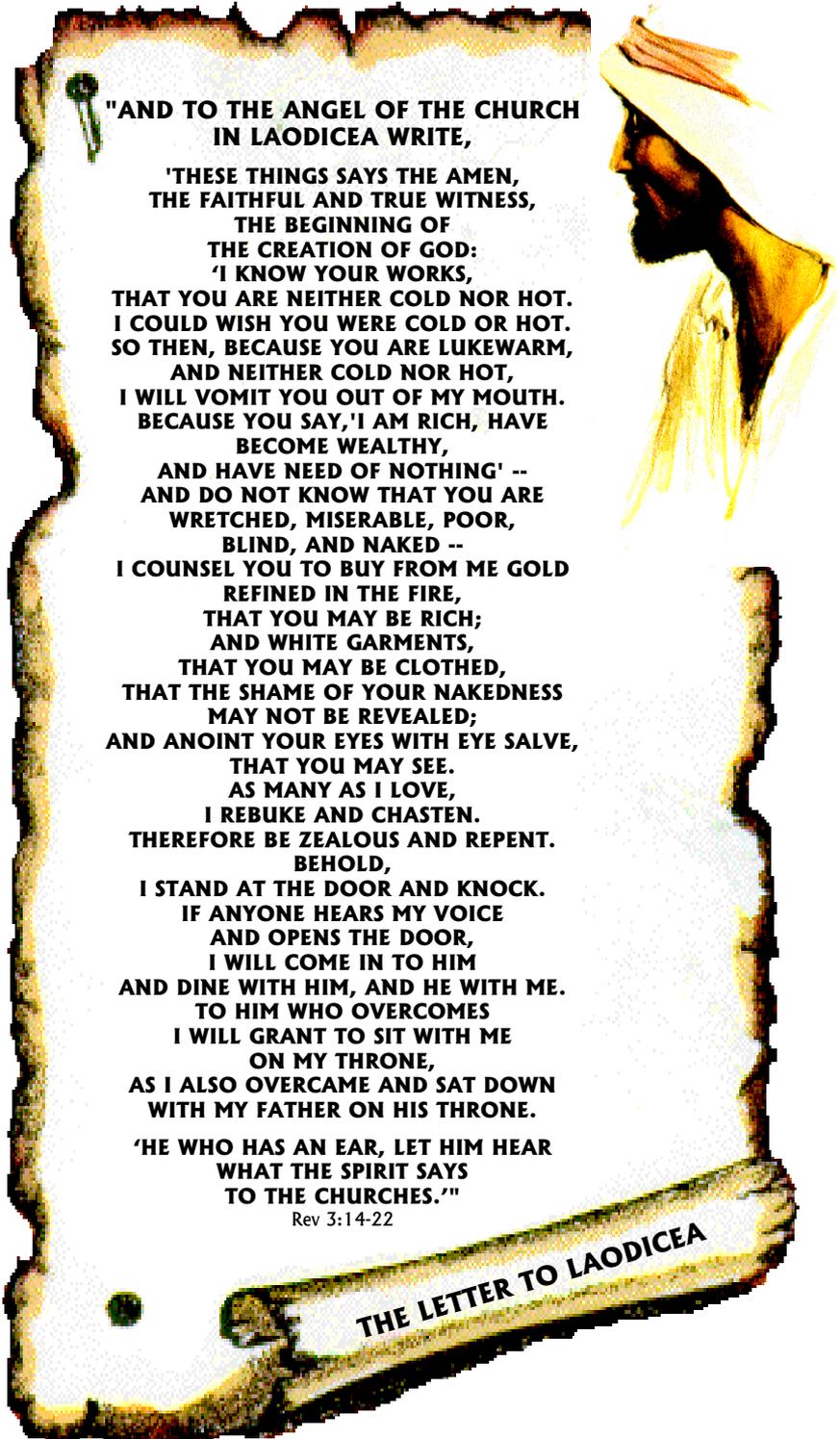
**"HE WHO
HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT
THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES."**

Rev. 3:22

A decorative background featuring a central scroll with a golden glow, flanked by two vertical golden pillars. The scroll is decorated with a blue and gold garland. The text is centered on the scroll.

**THE CHURCH OF
LAODICEA**
"PEOPLE'S RIGHTS"





**"AND TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH
IN LAODICEA WRITE,**

**'THESE THINGS SAYS THE AMEN,
THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS,
THE BEGINNING OF
THE CREATION OF GOD:
'I KNOW YOUR WORKS,
THAT YOU ARE NEITHER COLD NOR HOT.
I COULD WISH YOU WERE COLD OR HOT.
SO THEN, BECAUSE YOU ARE LUKEWARM,
AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT,
I WILL VOMIT YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH.
BECAUSE YOU SAY, 'I AM RICH, HAVE
BECOME WEALTHY,
AND HAVE NEED OF NOTHING' --
AND DO NOT KNOW THAT YOU ARE
WRETCHED, MISERABLE, POOR,
BLIND, AND NAKED --
I COUNSEL YOU TO BUY FROM ME GOLD
REFINED IN THE FIRE,
THAT YOU MAY BE RICH;
AND WHITE GARMENTS,
THAT YOU MAY BE CLOTHED,
THAT THE SHAME OF YOUR NAKEDNESS
MAY NOT BE REVEALED;
AND ANOINT YOUR EYES WITH EYE SALVE,
THAT YOU MAY SEE.
AS MANY AS I LOVE,
I REBUKE AND CHASTEN.
THEREFORE BE ZEALOUS AND REPENT.
BEHOLD,
I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK.
IF ANYONE HEARS MY VOICE
AND OPENS THE DOOR,
I WILL COME IN TO HIM
AND DINE WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME.
TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES
I WILL GRANT TO SIT WITH ME
ON MY THRONE,
AS I ALSO OVERCAME AND SAT DOWN
WITH MY FATHER ON HIS THRONE.
'HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES.'"**

Rev 3:14-22

THE LETTER TO LAODICEA



“THESE THINGS SAYS,

**THE AMEN,
THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE
WITNESS,
THE BEGINNING
OF
THE CREATION OF GOD.”**

Rev.3:14

As it was with the other six letters, Jesus opens this letter to Laodicea with a statement of His own character and testimony. To Philadelphia He appeared as “He who is holy, He who is true.” We saw that Philadelphia was also “holy and true.”

However, Laodiceans are anything but faithful and true witnesses as was their Master. In the Book of Acts we find the mandate Jesus gave to all His followers:

**“...AND YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES TO ME IN JERUSALEM,
AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO THE END OF THE EARTH.”**

Acts 1:8

Considering the charges Jesus brings against this church we can see they do not qualify as being faithful and true witnesses.

Jesus says that in His sight:

**•THEY ARE
LUKEWARM...
THEY ARE WRETCHED...
THEY ARE MISERABLE...
THEY ARE POOR...
THEY ARE BLIND...
THEY ARE NAKED...**

How this church sees themselves:

**• I AM RICH...
I HAVE BECOME WEALTHY...
I HAVE NEED OF NOTHING...**

Among the many things that Jesus tells this church is that they need the key to their malady: to have their “eyes anointed with eye salve that they may see.” It is a frightening thing to realize that we can see ourselves so differently than God sees us, but Proverbs warns us of this very thing:

**“EVERY WAY OF MAN
IS RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES...”**

Proverbs 21:2

Interestingly, Proverbs also gives us the cure for this malady of vision:

**“MY SON, GIVE ME YOUR HEART,
AND LET YOUR EYES OBSERVE MY WAYS.”**

Proverbs 23:26

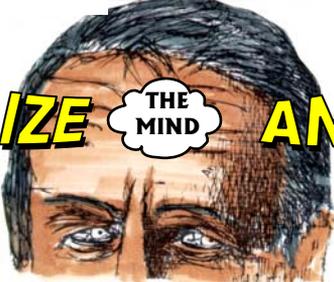
Let me contrast these two scriptures for you that we may understand what problem Laodicea suffers from:

**"EVERY WAY OF MAN
IS RIGHT IN
HIS OWN EYES..."**

Proverbs 21:2

**"MY SON, GIVE ME YOUR HEART,
LET YOUR EYES
OBSERVE MY WAYS."**

Proverbs 23:26

RATIONALIZE  **ANALYZE**

"To find motives for conduct which are plausible, but are false!"

Webster

"To study critically, scrutinize, examine, to judge, to compare to known values or standards."

Webster

Laodicea is rationalizing their ways rather than analyzing them. The standard of measurement for every Christian is Christ! Jesus not only appeared to Laodicea as the "faithful and true witness," but also as "the beginning of the creation of God." The significance of this latter title is revealed to us by Paul and James:



**"...HE ALSO PREDESTINED (us)
TO BE CONFORMED
TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON
"THAT" (in order that) HE (Jesus)
MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN
AMONG MANY BRETHREN."**

Romans 8:29



**"OF HIS OWN WILL HE BROUGHT US FORTH
BY THE WORD OF TRUTH, THAT WE MIGHT BE
A KIND OF FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS CREATION."**

James 1:18

Jesus, the "beginning of the creation of God," is the standard God the Father has set before those whom He has brought into salvation. It is the image of His Son which God the Father is looking for in Laodicea. Sadly however, He finds them bearing the image of being lukewarm, wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked. They are in dire need of obtaining gold that has been refined in the fire of trials. They are in need of white garments designed to cover the shame of their nakedness. They also have need for their eyes to be anointed with eye salve that they may be able to clearly see what they are lacking. Without keeping ever before our eyes the standard God wants us to become, we will fall into the same error of Laodicea who were being conformed into the image of the world rather than into the image of Jesus as revealed in the Word of God.

Use the right image and you will get the right results.

**“BUT WE ALL...
BEHOLDING AS IN A MIRROR
THE GLORY OF THE LORD,
ARE BEING TRANSFORMED
INTO THE SAME IMAGE
FROM GLORY TO GLORY,
JUST AS BY
THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD.”**

2 Cor. 3:18

**“FOR IF ANYONE IS A HEARER OF THE WORD,
AND NOT A DOER,
HE IS LIKE A MAN OBSERVING
HIS NATURAL FACE IN A MIRROR;
FOR HE OBSERVES HIMSELF, GOES AWAY,
AND IMMEDIATELY FORGETS
WHAT KIND OF A MAN HE WAS...”**

James 1:23-24



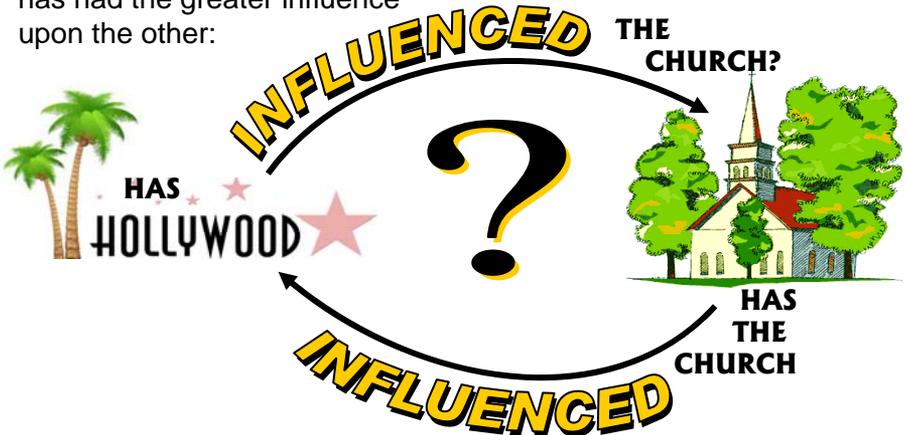
THE WORLD

The simple truth is that we will have our priorities set by one of two sources:



THE WORD

Notice how easy it is to change “word” to “world”. You only need to add the letter “L” to change one to the other. The intent of God is that the Word would prevent the church from being like the world. Ask yourself, in America, which institution, Hollywood or the church, has had the greater influence upon the other:



I believe it is quite evident that Hollywood has been more of an influence upon the church than the church has been on Hollywood. Laodicea is a church which has allowed her priorities to be set by the world around her, and she is measuring herself by worldly standards.

**“BEHOLD,
I STAND AT THE DOOR
AND KNOCK.
IF ANYONE HEARS MY VOICE
AND OPENS THE DOOR,
I WILL COME IN TO HIM
AND DINE WITH HIM,
AND HE WITH ME.”**

Rev. 3:20

This is one of several verses which the Christian church takes “door to door” as an invitation to the unsaved. However, this verse was not written for the unsaved, but for the “satisfied saints” holed up inside!



This is a picture Jesus depicts of Himself outside the door of His own church-Laodicea! He is knocking as an appeal to be let into His own blood-washed church for which He died. He is seeking fellowship with His own people who have locked Him out.

Contrast the above picture of Laodicea with the previous one we saw in which Jesus has set before the church of Philadelphia an “open door” in heaven as an invitation to this faithful church. This is a door which Jesus states no one can shut.

**“THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO
IS HOLY, HE WHO IS TRUE,
HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID.
HE WHO OPENS
AND NO ONE SHUTS,
AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS...
SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU
AN OPEN DOOR
AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT”**

Rev. 3:7



It is most ironic, but perhaps fitting, that the foolish virgins such as Laodicea, will eventually find themselves in a role reversal in which after the rapture of the likes of faithful Philadelphia, Jesus will shut the door and unfaithful Laodicea will become those that are outside knocking on a shut door and saying to the Master inside, “Lord, Lord, open to us!” (Matt. 25:11)

HOW JESUS DEFINES WHAT AILS LAODICEA:



**“I KNOW YOUR WORKS,
THAT YOU ARE NEITHER COLD NOR HOT.
I COULD WISH YOU WERE COLD OR HOT.
SO THEN, BECAUSE YOU ARE LUKEWARM,
AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT,
I WILL VOMIT YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH.”**

Rev. 3:15-16

These words of Jesus are contradictory until you see the illustration He is using to be that of the value of a stimulating hot drink or of a refreshing cold drink. No one likes lukewarm coffee or a lukewarm Coca Cola. You can barely bring yourself to swallow much of either, but quickly look for someplace to spit it out. This is the way Jesus sees His church in Laodicea.

COLD



SOMETHING COLD IS

**“REVIVING...
RENEWING...
INVIGORATING...”**

“YOU ARE NEITHER



HOT



SOMETHING HOT IS

**“AROUSING...
INCITING...
ENERGIZING...”**

YOU ARE

LUKEWARM

**“MEDIocre, BARELY ADEQUATE,
NEARLY INFERIOR, RUN-OF-THE-MILL”**



**"THOSE WHO
HAVE TURNED
THE WORLD
UPSIDE DOWN
HAVE COME
HERE TOO!"**
Acts 17:6

**REVIVING...
RENEWING...
INVIGORATING...
AROUSING...
INCITING...
ENERGIZING...**

The church we find in the Book of Acts bore the testimony of having "turned the world upside down." Applying the definition of cold (refreshing) and hot (stimulating), we describe the church in Acts quite perfectly.



**"I AM RICH,
HAVE BECOME
WEALTHY,
AND HAVE
NEED OF
NOTHING"**
Rev. 3:17

**BARELY
ADEQUATE...
BORDERLINE...
ORDINARY...
AVERAGE...
NEARLY
INFERIOR...**

Although Laodicea considers herself to be rich, wealthy and lacking nothing, Jesus calls her lukewarm (mediocre). In examining the church at Laodicea, I want to present two modern-day perspectives, both of which contribute to the concept of seeing themselves as being "rich, wealthy, and in need of nothing":

A POSITION OF FINANCIAL PROSPERITY

**"ALL
THESE THINGS
SHALL BE
ADDED TO YOU...
BE IT UNTO YOU
ACCORDING
TO
YOUR FAITH."**



A POSITION OF SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

**"I GOT IT ALL WHEN
I GOT SAVED...
GUARANTEED
TO BE RAPTURED BY,
MARRIED TO,
AND REIGN WITH
CHRIST—
ALL
BY GRACE."**

DOCTRINES WILL DICTATE OUR DEEDS

FINANCIAL PROSPERITY

ALL THESE THINGS
SHALL BE ADDED
TO YOU...
BE IT UNTO YOU
ACCORDING TO
YOUR FAITH...

**“THERE SHALL BE
FALSE TEACHERS
AMONG YOU...
WHO WILL BRING IN
DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES...
MANY WILL FOLLOW
THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS,
BECAUSE OF WHOM
THE WAY OF TRUTH
WILL BE BLASPHEMED.
BY COVETOUSNESS THEY
WILL EXPLOIT YOU
WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS...”**

2 Peter 2:1-3

SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

I GOT IT ALL WHEN I GOT
SAVED...GUARANTEED TO BE
RAPTURED BY, MARRIED TO,
AND REIGN WITH CHRIST
BY GRACE

**“I HAVE BETROTHED
YOU TO ONE HUSBAND,
THAT I MAY PRESENT
YOU AS A CHASTE
VIRGIN TO CHRIST.
BUT I FEAR...
YOUR MINDS MAY
BE CORRUPTED (by)
ANOTHER JESUS,
A DIFFERENT SPIRIT,
A DIFFERENT GOSPEL.
(I FEAR) YOU MAY WELL
PUT UP WITH IT.”**

2 Cor. 11:2-4

If doctrines did not dictate deeds, then the devil would not assign demons to teach false doctrines! (See 1 Tim. 4:1). In Ephesians Four Paul gives this strong admonition to the saints:



**“THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE CHILDREN,
TOSSED TO AND FRO
AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE,
BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN,
IN THE CUNNING CRAFTINESS
BY WHICH THEY
LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE.”**

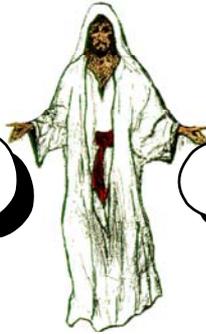
Ephesians 4:14

What a sad testimony! Paul is speaking of those who teach and preach God's Word! Those verses read more like a testimony of Satan himself in speaking of “trickery...cunning craftiness...lying in wait” (like a lion) and so doing for the sole purpose to “deceive” the saints.

Let us now examine two places where Paul personally instructs the church to “imitate me.” In them we will find the refutation of the false doctrines of:

FINANCIAL PROSPERITY

ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED TO YOU...
BE IT UNTO YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH...



SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

I GOT IT ALL WHEN I GOT SAVED...GUARANTEED TO BE RAPTURED BY, MARRIED TO, AND REIGN WITH CHRIST BY GRACE

PAUL REPROVES THE SAINTS AT CORINTH:

“You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us -- and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the off scouring of all things until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.”

1 Cor 4:14-17

IMITATE PAUL:

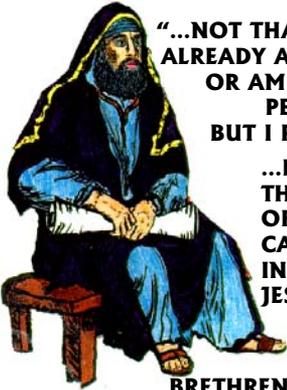
We are fools for Christ's sake...
We are weak...
We are dishonored...
We both hunger and thirst...
We are poorly clothed,
beaten and homeless...
We are reviled, persecuted, defamed...
We are made as the filth of the world,
the off-scouring of all things...

IMITATE CORINTH:

You are wise in Christ!
You are strong!
You are distinguished!
You are already full!
You are already rich!
You reign as kings without us!

(sounds like the
Laodicean confession,
does it not?)

PAUL'S GOSPEL:



**"...NOT THAT I HAVE
ALREADY ATTAINED,
OR AM ALREADY
PERFECTED;
BUT I PRESS ON,
...FOR
THE PRIZE
OF THE UPWARD
CALL OF GOD
IN CHRIST
JESUS...."**

**BRETHREN,
JOIN IN FOLLOWING
MY EXAMPLE,
AND NOTE THOSE WHO SO
WALK, AS YOU HAVE US
FOR A PATTERN..."**

Phil. 3:12-17

1. "If I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."
2. "I have not already attained, nor am I already perfected."
3. "I press on..."
4. "I want to lay hold of what Jesus has laid hold of me for which I have not yet apprehended..."
5. "I forget what is behind..."
6. "I reach forward to those things which are ahead..."
7. "My goal is to obtain the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

HIGH MOTIVATION

LAODICEA'S GOSPEL:



**"I AM RICH,
I HAVE
BECOME
WEALTHY,
I HAVE NEED
OF NOTHING..."**
Rev. 3:17

**I GOT IT ALL
WHEN I GOT SAVED...
GUARANTEED
TO BE RAPTURED BY,
MARRIED TO,
AND REIGN WITH CHRIST
BY HIS GRACE**

1. When it comes, I am guaranteed to be included..."
2. I have already attained perfection because of justification..."
3. "I wait for the rapture."
4. "I got it all when I got saved - I will be raptured by... married to... reign with Christ - guaranteed."
5. "I revel in the past..."
6. "There is nothing I must do..."
7. "The upward call of God is a gift because of my position in Christ Jesus."

NO MOTIVATION

FINANCIAL PROSPERITY

ALL THESE THINGS
SHALL BE ADDED TO YOU...
BE IT UNTO YOU ACCORDING
TO YOUR FAITH...

SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

I GOT IT ALL WHEN I GOT
SAVED...GUARANTEED TO BE
RAPTURED, MARRIED TO,
REIGN WITH CHRIST
BY GRACE

DOCTRINES WILL DICTATE OUR DEEDS

**"FOR THE TIME WILL COME
WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE
SOUND DOCTRINE,**

**BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN DESIRES,
BECAUSE THEY HAVE ITCHING EARS, THEY
WILL HEAR UP FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS;
AND WILL TURN THEIR EARS AWAY FROM THE
TRUTH, AND BE TURNED ASIDE UNTO FABLES.
BUT YOU BE WATCHFUL IN ALL THINGS...."**

2 Tim. 4:3-5

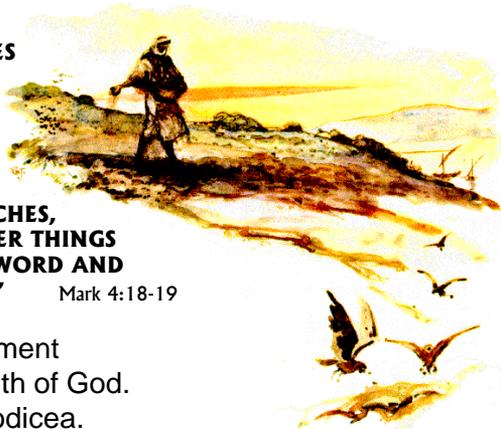


I believe it is important to realize that Laodicea is self-deceived. Their perception of their spiritual condition is different than how God sees them. That is great deception.

Only God can see them as they are-lukewarm. It is quite dangerous to hear truth and then refuse to respond to it because of divided interests. The parable of the sower describes this situation for us quite well:

**"NOW THESE ARE THE ONES
SOWN AMONG THORNS;
THEY ARE THE ONES WHO
HEAR THE WORD,
AND THE CARES
OF THIS WORLD,
THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES,
AND THE DESIRE FOR OTHER THINGS
ENTERING IN CHOKE THE WORD AND
IT BECOMES UNFRUITFUL."**

Mark 4:18-19



The result of such involvement is lukewarmness to the truth of God. This is what we find in Laodicea.

They are rich, have become wealthy, and are in need of nothing that God can offer them. The world around them has all they care for. Obviously, they are measuring themselves by the wrong standards.

Have you ever thought what today's "faith for prosperity" people would say if suddenly God began to give them manna from heaven, prevent their clothes and shoes from wearing out, and there would cease to be a sick one among them? Would they not say they have arrived in the promise land of great faith when, in reality, they still could be in the forty-year wilderness journey as were the children of Israel? Did God do all those miraculous things for His people because they had great faith or was it just because of His great mercy, longsuffering and compassion?

Jesus clearly refutes the idea that the "abundant life" (Jn.10:10) He came to give has anything to do with the concept of increasing material gain:



"AND HE SAID TO THEM, TAKE HEED AND BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS, FOR ONE'S LIFE DOES NOT CONSIST IN THE ABUNDANCE OF THE THINGS HE POSSESSES."

Luke 12:15



Obviously Laodicea does not believe what Jesus has said about the abundant life not consisting of things we possess, for they proclaim to be "rich, increased in goods and in need of nothing." We live in the times Paul predicted would come in which men would no longer endure sound doctrine but would rather pursue their own desires and heap up teachers that would say what they want to hear! The scripture is no longer considered profitable for "doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness," as 2 Timothy 3:16 reveals. The profitability of doctrine has been reduced to a concept of deceptive covetousness under the guise of doing God's will:



"TRUST ME! GOD'S WILL FOR YOU IS TO BE RICH!"



"ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED TO YOU"

"BUT AS THERE WERE FALSE PROPHETS AMONG THE PEOPLE, EVEN SO THERE WILL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU... AND MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS, BECAUSE OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE BLASPHEMED. BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS..."

Let us not forget the importance of doctrine:

OUR DOCTRINES WILL DICTATE OUR DEEDS



FINANCIAL PROSPERITY

ALL THESE THINGS
SHALL BE ADDED TO
YOU...
BE IT UNTO YOU
ACCORDING TO YOUR
FAITH...

BY
COVETOUSNESS
THEY WILL
EXPLOIT YOU
WITH
DECEPTIVE
WORDS!

SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

I GOT IT ALL WHEN I GOT
SAVED...GUARANTEED TO BE
RAPTURED, MARRIED TO,
REIGN WITH CHRIST
BY GRACE

I would rather be like Jesus or Paul and “call a spade a spade.” These are destructive heresies which cause the way of truth to be blasphemed. We are currently seeing the blaspheming of truth because of the covetous behavior of various religious leaders. Even the world recognizes what motives lie behind this popular brand of the gospel. Jesus once said of those in the world:

**“FOR THE SONS OF THIS WORLD ARE MORE SHREWD
IN THEIR GENERATION THAN THE SONS OF LIGHT.”**

Luke 16:8

The apostle Paul gives clear warning about the self-destructive habit of believers fostering a desire to be rich:

**“BUT THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BE RICH FALL
INTO TEMPTATION AND A SNARE,
AND INTO MANY FOOLISH AND HARMFUL
LUSTS WHICH DROWN MEN IN DESTRUCTION
AND PERDITION.**

**FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY
IS A ROOT OF ALL KINDS OF EVIL,
FOR WHICH SOME HAVE
STRAYED FROM THE FAITH
IN THEIR GREEDINESS,
AND PIERCED THEMSELVES THROUGH
WITH MANY SORROWS.**

**BUT YOU,
O MAN OF GOD,
FLEE THESE THINGS...”**



1 Tim. 6:9-11

Equally destructive and harmful is the vain imagination of possessing instant spiritual prosperity in which one believes that he “got it all when he got saved.” Paul said to follow his example in Philippians 3:17. When you consider the example he gives, we certainly can see that this was not a man who believed he got it all when he got saved. These words of Paul were penned thirty-four years after his conversion experience on the road to Damascus. Read them carefully. You will not see a man, even after thirty-four years of apostleship, signs and wonders, expressing that he has arrived spiritually. Rather, he continues to express great goals of desired achievement that still lie in front of him:



“...BUT I PRESS ON, THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST JESUS HAS ALSO LAID HOLD OF ME. BRETHREN, I DO NOT COUNT MYSELF TO HAVE APPREHENDED; BUT ONE THING I DO, FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND AND REACHING FORWARD TO THOSE THINGS THAT ARE AHEAD,

I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS. THEREFORE LET US, AS MANY AS ARE MATURE, HAVE THIS MIND... BRETHREN, JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE, AND NOTE THOSE WHO SO WALK, AS YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN.”

Philippians 3:12-17

I see Paul saying thirty-four years after becoming a Christian, that he wants to lay hold of something that Jesus had laid hold of him for. Ask yourself, what is he pursuing this late in life as a follower of Christ? Note carefully that Paul calls this thing a prize which is to be won, not a gift he already possesses. Today men boast of possessing “unconditional eternal security,” being guaranteed of being raptured by Christ, married to Christ and to reign with Christ, all because they have received God’s gift of grace. Dear reader, the greatest revelation of scripture you can obtain is to make a distinction between passages that speak of “eternal life” and those that speak of “eternal rewards.” Eternal life is by God’s grace-period. Eternal rewards are earned by our works-period. Jesus is measuring the works of His people, not His own gifts of grace to them.

THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD WILL GET YOU TO HEAVEN SOMEDAY...

“FOR BY GRACE HAVE YOU BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES; IT IS A GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST,

THE MERITED FAVOR OF GOD WILL REWARD YOU IN HEAVEN...

FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PREPARED BEFOREHAND THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM.”



Laodicea is lop-sided in their beliefs. It is all grace and no works. Therefore they think they are “rich, have become wealthy, and in need of nothing” because Jesus has done all the work for them.

Paul the apostle did not teach “grace OR works”, but rather a balance of “grace AND works”:

GRACE and WORKS

“BUT WHEN THE KINDNESS AND THE LOVE OF GOD OUR SAVIOR TOWARD MAN APPEARED, NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US, THROUGH THE WASHING OF REGENERATION AND RENEWING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHOM HE Poured OUT ON US ABUNDANTLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR, THAT HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE WE SHOULD BECOME HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.”

THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND THESE THINGS I WANT YOU TO AFFIRM CONSTANTLY, THAT THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. THESE THINGS ARE GOOD AND PROFITABLE TO MEN... AND LET OUR PEOPLE LEARN TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS, TO MEET URGENT NEEDS, THAT THEY MAY NOT BE UNFRUITFUL.”
Titus 3:41-14

In nearly every epistle Paul would present this delicate balance between God’s grace and the believers needful works in response to having received that grace:

GRACE and WORKS

“FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES; IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST.

FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS WHICH GOD PREPARED BEFOREHAND THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM.”
Eph. 2:8-10

Laodicea’s lukewarmness is a result of lacking the proper emphasis being placed upon the fact that works are to follow grace. If it is all grace and no works theology, motivation will be absent as it is in the life of the Laodiceans.

GRACE and WORKS

"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE, LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS."

Titus 2:11-13

Not always can we separate Paul's words into two distinct columns as we did with the two previous verses. The above finds God's grace and the believers works so intertwined with each other that they can not be overlooked or excluded from one another. Notice the above verse opens with God's grace and concludes with a zealous believer pursuing good works. Grace leads to works.

GRACE and WORKS

"...YOU HAVE KNOWN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES WHICH ARE ABLE TO MAKE YOU WISE FOR SALVATION THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS. ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD,

AND IS PROFITABLE FOR DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE COMPLETE, THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK."

1 Tim. 4:15-17

Considering Paul's continual balance between grace and works, we can see this great man of God is certainly "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). The reality is that if you lack the balanced perspective of Paul between grace and works, you will lack ongoing motivation in your daily life and will become just like Laodicea--lukewarm!

What is Jesus measuring in each of the seven letters to the seven churches, their position in grace or their works? If works are not the basis of eternal rewards, why then is Jesus saying:

"...LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN..."

Matt. 6:20

"BEHOLD, I AM COMING SOON, AND I SHALL BRING MY WAGES AND REWARDS WITH ME, TO REPAY AND RENDER TO EACH ONE JUST WHAT HIS OWN ACTIONS AND HIS OWN WORK MERIT."

Revelation 22:12 Amplified

We are to be restful and relaxing when it comes to eternal life. It is not earned, but is by grace, as a gift from God, and not of works. This is the doctrine of justification (the means by which we are made innocent/righteous in God's sight).

However, we are not to be restful and relaxing when it comes to the doctrine of eternal rewards. This speaks of our means of sanctification (to be set apart/holy in conduct). Herein lies the race and the prize of which Paul speaks. The race to be run is to be conformed into the image of Jesus (Rom. 8:29, 2 Cor. 3:18). The prize to be won is to become a joint-heir with Christ as the Bride of Christ (Rom. 8:17, Rev. 19:7-8, Rev. 3:21).

"RESTFUL AND RELAXING"

**"FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN
SAVED THROUGH FAITH,
...NOT OF WORKS..."**

Eph. 2:8-9

**"THERE REMAINS A REST FOR THE
PEOPLE OF GOD. FOR HE WHO HAS
ENTERED HIS REST HAS HIMSELF ALSO
CEASED FROM HIS WORKS AS
GOD DID FROM HIS."**

Heb. 4:9-10

**"NOW TO HIM WHO WORKS,
THE WAGES ARE NOT COUNTED
AS GRACE BUT AS DEBT."**

Rom. 4:4



"READ AND RUN"

**"WRITE THE VISION AND MAKE IT
PLAIN ON TABLETS, THAT HE MAY
RUN WHO READS IT."**

Hab. 2:2

**"DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THOSE
WHO RUN IN A RACE ALL RUN,
BUT ONE RECEIVES THE PRIZE?
RUN IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU
MAY OBTAIN IT."**

1 Cor. 9:24

**"...LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY
WEIGHT, AND THE SIN WHICH SO
EASILY ENSNARES US, AND LET US
RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE
THAT IS SET BEFORE US."**

Heb. 12:1



The apostle Peter gave great warning of the danger of twisting the scriptures concerning the things Paul taught:



**“...AS ALSO OUR BELOVED BROTHER PAUL,
ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM GIVEN TO HIM HAS
WRITTEN TO YOU,
AS ALSO IN ALL HIS EPISTLES,
SPEAKING IN THEM OF THESE THINGS,
IN WHICH ARE SOME THINGS
HARD TO UNDERSTAND,
WHICH THOSE WHO ARE UNTAUGHT AND
UNSTABLE TWIST TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION,
AS THEY DO ALSO THE REST OF THE SCRIPTURES.**

2 Peter 3:15-16

Paul taught the proper position of grace and he also taught the proper position of works. He makes a great distinction between eternal life and eternal rewards, between the doctrine of justification and the doctrine of sanctification.

The Laodiceans were guilty of twisting together the position of eternal life and eternal rewards as both being founded upon grace. The result is lukewarmness. Why so? Because there is no motivation among those who are convinced that they “got it all when they got saved.” This is a lack of vision of which the scripture warns:

“WHERE THERE IS NO VISION, THE PEOPLE PERISH.”

Prov. 29:18

**“WHERE THERE IS NO REVELATION [prophetic vision],
THE PEOPLE CAST OFF RESTRAINT.”**

Prov. 29:18 Amplified

Among the various things that Jesus tells those in Laodicea that they have need of is “eye salve to anoint their eyes” in order that they may see. The apostle Peter as well, in his epistle, depicts a Christian who lacked vision:



**“FOR HE WHO
LACKS THESE THINGS
IS SHORTSIGHTED,
EVEN TO BLINDNESS,**

**AND HAS FORGOTTEN
THAT HE WAS PURGED
FROM HIS OLD SINS.”**

2 Peter 1:9

Take time to read the entire chapter in which Peter makes this statement. Note that it is written to Christians- to those who “have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and savior Jesus Christ.” (vs. 1).

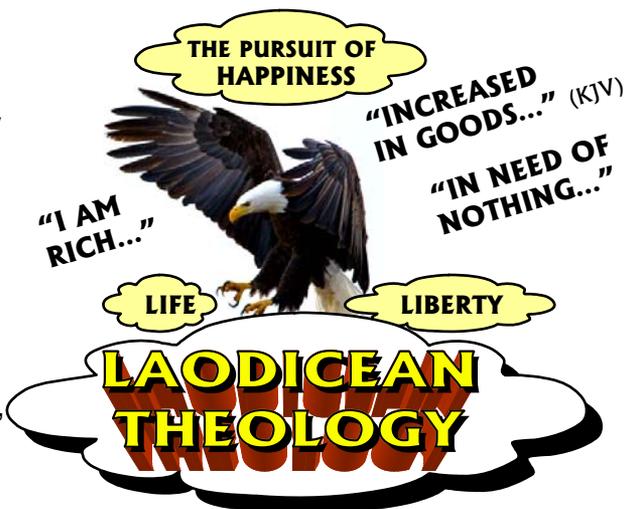
There is one more area I would like to consider in this letter to Laodicea. It is contained within the very name “Laodicea”:

“The etymology of the word “Laodicea”, as well as the Spirit’s picture thereof, reveals its true character. The word comes from the root *laos* meaning people, and *dike*, meaning manner, custom, right, requirement. It represents, then, the custom of the people, popular right, popular judgment. We are now living in the time when the will of the masses prevails. Everything must be subservient to the popular will. It is even so in ecclesiastical circles-popular pastors, popular sermons, political activity in the church.”

(Studies in Revelation-Frank M. Boyd, 1967-page 73)

It is Laodicea (“people’s rights”) which having pursued after life, liberty and happiness, proclaim that they are now rich, increased with goods, and have need of nothing (Rev. 3:17). However, Jesus sees them as being a people that are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked (Rev. 3:17).

THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE



Much of American Christianity measures the success of itself more by the Constitution of the United States than they do by the standards of the Bible. This is a nation steeped in the rights of the people. It is scary to this pastor that Laodicea literally means “rights of the people.” For a Christian, the Bill of Rights should be a bill of goods, not an earthly standard by which to measure one’s Christianity.

This nation functions by the three guaranteed rights: “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” The goals however are contrary to what Paul states are the three principles that govern the Kingdom of God:

**“FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT MEAT OR DRINK,
BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.
HE WHO SERVES CHRIST IN THESE THINGS IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD”**

Rom. 14:17-18

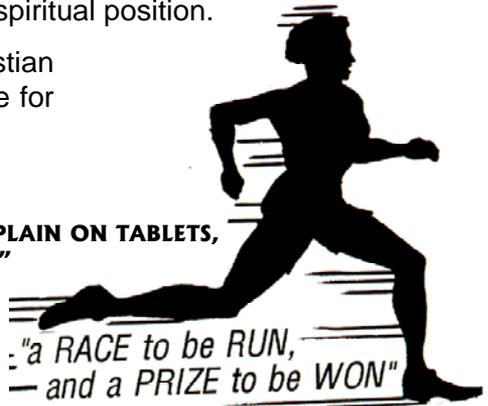


**YOU ARE WISE IN CHRIST!
 YOU ARE STRONG! YOU ARE DISTINGUISHED!
 YOU ARE ALREADY FULL! YOU ARE ALREADY RICH!
 YOU REIGN AS KINGS!**
 1 Cor. 4:8-16

**"I AM RICH...
 HAVE BECOME WEALTHY,
 AND HAVE NEED OF NOTHING"**
 Rev. 3:17

We can be just like those in the church of Corinth above whom Paul rebuked for their spiritual vain imaginations. We can also be like those in Laodicea whom Jesus Himself likewise rebuked for their vain imaginations of their spiritual position.

What is needful for every Christian is prophetic vision to run a race for a prize that has not yet won.



**"WRITE THE VISION AND MAKE IT PLAIN ON TABLETS,
 THAT HE MAY RUN WHO READS IT."**

Hab. 2:2

**"TO HIM
 WHO OVERCOMES,
 I WILL GRANT TO SIT WITH ME ON MY THRONE,
 AS I ALSO OVERCAME AND SAT DOWN WITH MY
 FATHER ON HIS THRONE.
 HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
 WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES."**

Rev. 3:21-22

Reserved for
 Jesus Christ



Reserved for the
 Bride of Christ

"HE THAT OVERCOMES SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS"

Rev. 21:7

THE BEST

JESUS HAS:

PHILADELPHIA

**"BROTHERLY
LOVE"**

**JESUS FINDS
NOTHING BAD...**

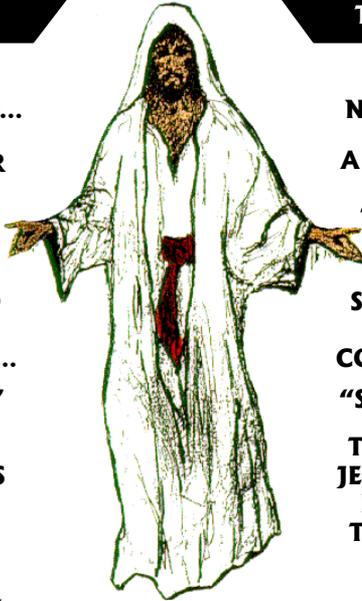
**AN OPEN DOOR
PLACED
BY JESUS TO
THIS CHURCH...**

**GOD-CENTERED
WORKS OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS...**

"TAKEN OUT..."

**THE CHURCH
JESUS RAPTURES
FROM OFF
THE EARTH...**

**WILL BE
RAPTURED BY,
MARRIED TO,
REIGN WITH JESUS
FOR ETERNITY
TO COME...**



THE WORST

JESUS HAS:

LAODICEA

**"RIGHTS OF
THE PEOPLE"**

**JESUS FINDS
NOTHING GOOD...**

**A CLOSED DOOR
PLACED BY
THIS CHURCH
TO JESUS...**

**SELF-CENTERED
WORKS OF
COVETOUSNESS...**

"SPEWED OUT..."

**THE CHURCH
JESUS REJECTS-
LEAVES ON
THE EARTH...**

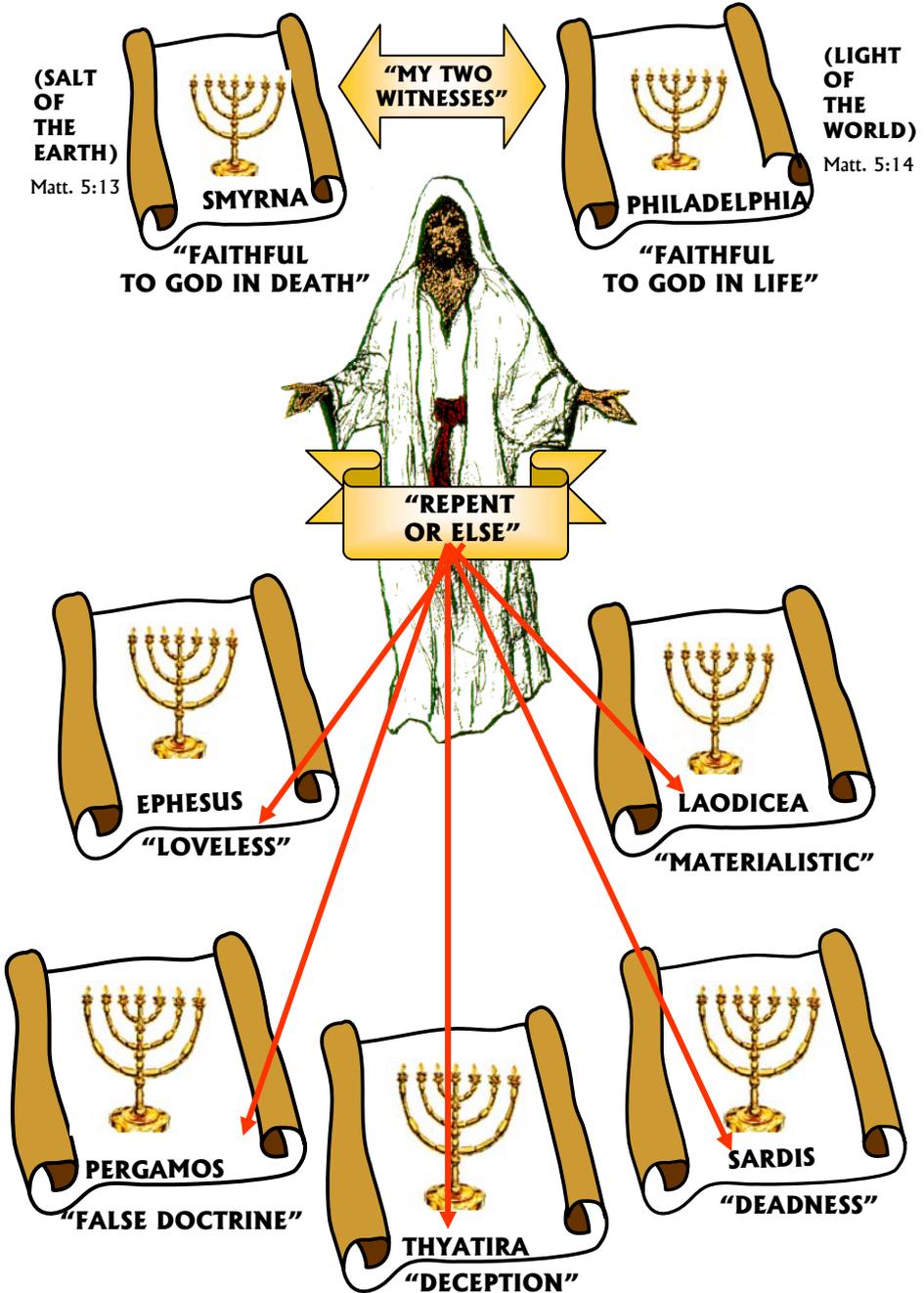
**WILL BE
LEFT BEHIND
FOR ANTICHRIST,
FOR TRIBULATION,
FOR JUDGMENT
TO COME...**

Take the time to meditate in the above contrast of these two churches of Jesus Christ. One is His best, the other His worst. Keep in mind that these churches Jesus describes are not denominations. They consist of individuals that are all born-again, blood-washed believers in Jesus Christ. All have received God's saving grace through faith in Jesus Christ. You the reader, as well as myself the writer, can become part of either of these two churches. What makes them different from each other (Philadelphia vs. Laodicea) is the level of the quality of their works. To each church Jesus begins His letter with the words, "I know your works." Jesus is measuring the kind of life they are living as professing Christians.

Ask yourself, which testimony do you want to have Jesus record of you? The answer depends on the life you choose to live. These letters are prophetic warnings to every believer that your works are an important aspect of your relationship to Jesus Christ.

Below is a terse synopsis of all seven of Jesus' letters to His churches. If you name the name of Christ, you belong to one of these churches. If you are not happy with where you find yourself, then set your heart on making a change!

Pastor Randy Shupe





**"HE
WHO HAS
AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT**

THE SPIRIT

**SAYS TO
THE CHURCHES."**



**THE SEVEN LETTERS
TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



“THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE TABERNACLE”
was founded in Pastor Shupe’s home in 1980 after serving as a
lay teacher in the Assemblies of God for several years.
The church now resides in this building at
5690 Yukon Street,
in “Olde Town Arvada”, Colorado, 80002.

Deeply impressed by the
illustrated teachings of the
late Clarence Larkin, and
convinced that “a picture is
worth a thousand words”,
Pastor Shupe has combined
his artistic talents with his
God-given gift of revelational
teaching.
The illustrations in his books
and videos represent some
of the visual aids he
prepares for the
feeding of his flock.



Pastor Randy Lucette

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above. His website location is www.PastorRandyShupe.com.

THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES



Pastor Randy

John has seen the sevenfold revelation of Jesus Christ as The Righteous Judge. As such, He is standing in the midst of His churches just prior to the beginning of The Day of the Lord ("the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom.2:5).

As judgment is to begin at the house of God as stated in 1 Pet.4:17, John is commissioned to write what he has seen and send it to the seven churches in Asia (Rev.1:11). This is a prophetic love letter from Jesus to all within His churches—past, present and future.

the **WAY,** ^{the} **TRUTH,** ^{the} **LIFE**
TABERNACLE

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