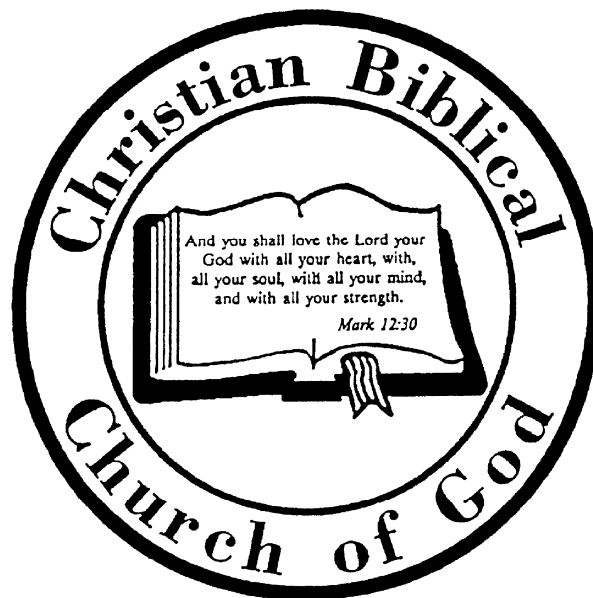


Seven Church Harvest



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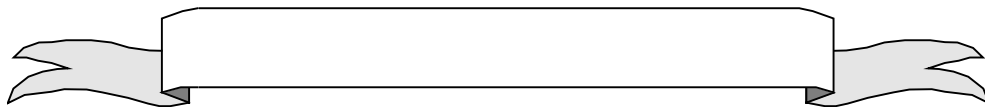
By Fred R. Coulter

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Fred R. Coulter
Christian Biblical Church of God
P. O. Box 1442
Hollister, California 95024-1442

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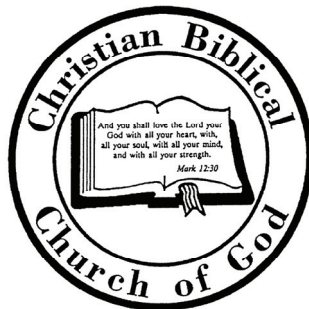
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Seven Church Harvest

Series of 7 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



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| <input type="checkbox"/> Seven Church Harvest VII—Churches at Philadelphia & Laodicea | Date completed _____ |

Contents

Booklet

	PAGE
The Seven Church Harvest I—Church at Ephesus -----	1 – 12
The Seven Church Harvest II—Churches at Ephesus & Smyrna-----	13 – 24
The Seven Church Harvest III—Church at Pergamos-----	25 – 38
The Seven Church Harvest IV—Pergamos—Nicolaitans & Gnosticism-----	39 – 50
The Seven Church Harvest V—Church of Thyatira— What is the Depths of Satan? -----	51 – 63
The Seven Church Harvest VI—Churches of Sardis & Philadelphia -----	64– 75
The Seven Church Harvest VII—Churches at Philadelphia & Laodicea-----	76 - 86

Compact Disc

[When included]

Tracks 1 & 2 The Seven Church Harvest I—Church at Ephesus
Tracks 3 & 4 The Seven Church Harvest II—Churches at Ephesus & Smyrna
Tracks 5 & 6 The Seven Church Harvest III—Church at Pergamos
Tracks 7 & 8 The Seven Church Harvest IV—Pergamos—Nicolaitans & Gnosticism
Tracks 9 & 10 The Seven Church Harvest V—Church of Thyatira— What is the Depths of Satan?
Tracks 11 & 12 The Seven Church Harvest VI—Churches of Sardis & Philadelphia
Tracks 13 & 14 The Seven Church Harvest VII—Churches at Philadelphia & Laodicea

Seven Church Harvest

Foreword

Mr. Fred R. Coulter has been in the service of Jesus Christ since 1965. With serving as a pastor to many people during many years he has had to answer or find the answer too many questions about the Bible. As a result he has spent years studying the Book of Revelation. He has researched out the Seven Churches of Revelation as to who were these seven churches, why did God mention only those Churches of God composed of Gentiles and not Jews, and exactly what did God the Father give the Son of God to give to the Apostle John to write down and give to these Seven Churches of Revelation. These and other questions have been answered by him in this sermon transcript book, "The Seven Church Harvest." As you read through the book you will be informing yourself about these churches and how the spiritual forces affecting them can affect you.

The Church of God at Ephesus was commended by God for their labor in serving God, of living and preaching the Law of God in their lives, and thereby being an example to the world of God's Way of life. They did not accept lying teachings from lying prophets and they did not accept the self-proclaimed authority of false apostles. This church received praise from Christ for hating the works of the Nicolaitanes which Christ also hated. But the Church of God at Ephesus had started to lessen in their appreciation of what Christ had done for them, of His sacrifice, and they had left their first love of Christ. They were warned to again return to being zealous in doing the things of God and not be slack. They were warned that they would be moved away from Christ if they did not seek earnestly the personal relationship with Christ and if they did keep the love of God in their lives that they would receive eternal life.

The Church of God at Smyrna was approved of by God. They lived in the pagan city of Smyrna and they were killed and martyred for Christ. This Church of God was deprived of their property, of their lands, of their wealth and were faithful unto death. In this city there was an organized movement of those who serve Satan that went after this Church of God. This organized movement was comprised of every Gnostic religion in Smyrna—whether pagan or whether Jewish or whether Christian—they all came together to persecute those of God's church in Smyrna. Christ told them if they would remain faithful that He would give them a crown of life.

The Church of God at Pergamos was rebuked by God for having within it those who held the teaching of Balaam along with others who practiced the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. The city of Pergamos was home to the pagan Chaldean priesthood of Babylon. When this priesthood was expelled from Babylon they went to Pergamos. The birth of the beginning of the Catholic Church was in Pergamos. Because of the pressure of society and not drawing nearer to Christ the Church of God at Pergamos began to compromise with God's Law. God's message to them was to repent or Christ would judge them.

The Church of God at Thyatira received a stern rebuke from God for they had corrupted themselves. They committed spiritual fornication in that they were practicing worldly customs of the pagans and by this they became corrupt. Time to repent was given by Christ for them to decide who they would serve: Would they serve God and keep His Law or would they serve Satan and not keep God's Law? For those who would choose to serve Satan through breaking the Commandments given by God Christ said that He would judge their children and that He would cast them into great tribulation. But for those who chose to serve God by keeping the Law of God that Christ would lay no burden upon them.

The Church of God at the city of Sardis was rebuked by God for becoming so sloppy in their keeping of God's Commandments that it was all they could do to keep the remembrance of God in their lives. God approved of a few that were diligent in keeping God's Law. Of all the Seven Churches of Revelation the Sardis Church was in the worst condition, nearly dead, and of having defiled the little bit of righteousness that they had before God.

The Church of God at the city of Philadelphia was, along with the Church of God in the city of Smyrna, the only two of the Seven Churches of Revelation that were not rebuked by God and told to repent. The Church of God at Philadelphia, of all the Seven Churches of God, is the church that had the most favor in God's sight. It was found to be looking to Christ always. As a result it had understanding of the Scriptures and they lived God's Law in their lives and they continually sought to please God. This church simply did not get involved in false teachings which is in the Bible called going whoring, the drinking of the cup of the fornication of Babylon the Great.

The Church of God at the city of Laodicea is the last of the Seven Churches of The Book of Revelation. Christ loves the Laodiceans but the Laodiceans have some very difficult problems to work on and overcome. This church is the only church of the seven churches that has the gall and audacity to talk back to God. The Church of Laodicea puts getting along with people on a social basis before their relationship with God. How the pagans felt and what the pagans around them thought of them was very important to them. Christ commands the Church of God at Laodicea to put the understanding of God's Law and the keeping of God's Law first in their lives: To repent and become zealous for the spiritual fruits that come from being with God.

This book of sermon transcripts will educate one about the spiritual attitudes prevalent during the different ages of the Church of God in history and will show how, at the end of the age prior to Christ's coming, that all these attitudes will make up the Church of God on earth. You will be able to understand what does please God and you will be warned of those things that God will not overlook but will judge. It is a treasure trove of truth regarding the Church of God that was originally founded on the first Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus Christ to the throne of God in heaven.

A special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Laila Patterson and Nancy Spaller for producing the transcripts.

The Seven Church Harvest I Church at Ephesus

Fred R. Coulter

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread we have the first connection between the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost, and that is the Wave Sheaf Offering Day. I've already done the sermon on the Wave-Sheaf Offering Day, and let's look at something which I think there's a parallel with. You know that when you count to Pentecost that you are to count seven complete weeks and come to the 50th day. There's a parallel of this concerning *the harvest*.

Let's begin by going to Matt. 13 because the harvest could not begin in Jerusalem, or around Jerusalem, until first the Wave Sheaf Offering was cut. Alfred Eddersheim wrote a book about the times and practices in Jerusalem in the time of Christ. It showed that they had a special ceremony that they would do on the regular Sabbath during Unleavened Bread. They would have a team of officials—priests and Levites and so forth—and they would walk out to a special place on the Mount of Olives where they had a special patch of barley. This barley was to be used for the Wave Sheaf Offering, the very first one. What they would do is have a man ready with a sickle, and he was to cut. but first there was someone who would ask, 'Has the sun gone down?' He would ask it three times, and they would time it in such a way that after the third time they would cut that first sheaf.

This first sheaf, as we know from Lev. 23 is the primary sheaf, or the one that pictures Christ, meaning that He was the first one resurrected from the dead. The timing of it was exactly when He ended His three days and three nights in the tomb. He was the First of the firstfruits, and He is the 'Firstborn among many brethren.' We are the *Church of the Firstborn*.

We won't go through all the parables, but it shows in Matthew 13:23 the good seed: "But the one who was sown on good ground, this is the one who hears the Word and understands, who indeed brings forth fruit and produces—one a hundredfold, another sixtyfold *and* another thirtyfold."

Then the other parable is the one of the tares, v 36: "And after dismissing the multitude, Jesus went into the house. Then His disciples came to Him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.' And He answered *and* said to them, 'The One Who sows the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*'" (vs 36-38).

As we will see all the way through all the Churches of God, when we come to Rev. 2 and 3, there is this confrontation continuously between those who are of the children of the kingdom, have the Spirit of God, *and* those who are of the children of Satan the devil, the children of the wicked one.

Verse 39: "Now, the enemy who sowed them is the devil; and the harvest is *the* end of the age..." This shows that it is going to be a harvest, and the *harvest feast* that we have that relates to this is the Feast of the Firstfruits, the harvest that is at the end of the 50 days—7 weeks plus 1 day.

"...and the reapers are the angels.... [Jesus said that we would be brought up, resurrected, and the angels would take us up] ...Therefore, as the tares are gathered and consumed in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this age. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all the offenders and those who are practicing lawlessness; and they shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (vs. 39-42).

Let's see a parallel. Why are there only seven churches in Rev. 2 & 3? Now it's interesting, Paul wrote to seven churches. You have the epistles to the seven churches that he wrote. And there's one that's overlapping: *Ephesus*. There is a mention in Colossians of Laodicea but we don't have the letter from Laodicea. Another thing that is interesting, too, is that all of these churches are Gentile churches; nothing whatsoever to do with any of the Jewish churches, this is nothing of Jerusalem. Furthermore, it says nothing of Rome, says nothing of Corinth, or the other churches over in Greece. All of these churches are connected by a mail route, as we know by different commentaries in history concerning it.

But what I want to show you is that we have the seven churches in Rev. 2 & 3, and I believe this represents the *harvest of God* down through time right to the end. *The seven churches represent the Church harvest*.

When we come to Rev. 7 we have another harvest, the 144,000 and the great innumerable multitude! This harvest is God's *special* harvest that He sends the angels to seal with the Holy Spirit. This is quite different than what the Church does through baptism. This harvest in Rev. 7, I believe, represents the 50th day harvest and that is *God's harvest* alone. So, you have the seven churches plus the harvest of Rev. 7, which then you could liken unto the eighth church if you want to put it that way. Eight is the

number of new beginning and this is a new beginning for all these people that are called, beginning with the children of Israel and the great innumerable multitude.

That's the overview with how it connects with Pentecost. We know that the Church began on Pentecost with the giving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). Revelation means *the revealing*.

Revelation 1:1: "*The* revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show to His servants the things that *are* ordained to come to pass shortly; and He made *it* known, having sent *it* by His angel to His servant John; who gave witness *to* the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and all the things he saw. Blessed *is* the one who reads, and those who hear... [to understand] ...the words of this prophecy and who keep the things *that are* written therein; for the time *is* at hand" (vs 1-3).

We can get an awful lot out of here. First of all, we have the Word of God again, "...written therein..."—bearing the record. This ties in with:

John 1:1: "In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." There's the connection with that.

Revelation 1:2: "...and of the testimony of Christ..." is everything that He taught us of the Father.

- there is a blessing that comes from hearing it
- there's a blessing that comes from reading it
- there's a blessing for keeping those things that are written therein.

I think, as we go through here, we will see not only do the people of God keep the commandments of God, but also, especially in the seven churches, they always fought the children of the 'wicked one.'

So, this harvest in Mat. 13 with the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one, that battle is constantly going on and then manifests itself toward the end of the book of Revelation with the man of sin, the son of perdition, and the whole world going after *the beast* and the *false prophet*.

Verse 4: "John to the seven churches that *are* in Asia: Grace and peace *be* to you from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come..." There are a lot of people who think that has to do with the trinity, but it doesn't because the One Who *is* is Christ. He was the One Who was dead, rose again, and is to come.

"...and from the seven spirits that are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead..." (v 5).

Whenever it talks about *begotten* (KJV) concerning Christ, it is He is the *only begotten* of the Father 'monogenes.' And *the firstborn* is 'prototokos'—a birth. That's what all of this is about: *how to receive eternal life* through Jesus Christ.

Now let's understand something about the Church. Let's look at some basic things. Christ is the Head of the Church. We've gone through that so many times, but we're going to do it again because His message to all of the churches is His message as the Head of the Church. After He asked the disciples who men say He was, and they said some of them say He's John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

Matthew 16:15: "He said to them, 'But you, whom do you declare Me to be?' Then Simon Peter answered *and* said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered *and* said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona... [son of Jona] ...for flesh and blood did not reveal *it* to you, but My Father, Who *is* in heaven (vs 15-17). Who does the calling?

John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him..." The Father is the One Who draws. The Father is the One Who reveals.

How is it that one day in your life you wanted to know about God and where the Church of God was? How did that happen? *Something happened in your mind; something changed!* And that something that changed was the Father dealing with you with His Spirit, otherwise, you'd still be out in the world doing what the world is doing.

Today there are so many things out there in the world that it's really quite a profound thing to understand how God intervenes and deals in people's lives. There was a young man who he said that from a child he went to a Sunday-keeping church. When he began to understand when he was a little older he would sit there in the Sunday-keeping church and say, 'I wonder why we're not keeping the Sabbath.' Even in that Sunday-keeping church God was beginning to deal with him.

One of the brethren in Dayton, Ohio, gave him the first four sermons on *The Holy Sabbath*, and he knew precisely that was it. God had been dealing with him all this time and finally the knowledge of the Sabbath was revealed not because the person gave him the sermons—that was only the vehicle to make it happen—it was God the Father Who did it; just like with Peter, 'I say also unto you that you are Peter...'—which means 'petros'—a little stone. This is the great lie that the pope repeats over and over again every time he gives a Mass. '...you are Peter...' meaning himself, the pope, and he sits in

Peter's throne and chair. *Not so!* 'Petros' means a *little stone*. The Aramaic word for Peter is Cephas.

John 1:42: "First, he found his own brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is, being interpreted, "the Christ"). And he led him to Jesus. And when He saw him, Jesus said, 'You are Simon, the son of Jona. You shall be called Cephas' (which is, *being* interpreted, "a stone")" (vs 42-43). It really means a *small stone*.

If you've ever done any building you are not going to build on a small stone. When they built their mammoth buildings, and we'll see it talks about Christ as the chief cornerstone in just a bit, that was a cornerstone not a capstone. A cornerstone because it's a foundational stone, and that stone has to be perfect; perfectly square, perfectly flat, because every other stone in building that building will come from this cornerstone.

Matthew 16:18: "And I say also to you, that you are Peter... [small stone] ...but upon this Rock ['petra']..." The Greek changes there from 'petros' to 'petra'—a *large massive cliff*, or that cornerstone that the builders rejected.

"...I will build My Church... [He's building the Church on Himself—He will build it.] ...and the gates of the grave shall not prevail against it" (v 18).

Now let's see where this follows through, Christ being the Chief Cornerstone. There's a parable that Jesus brought out to the Scribes and Pharisees showing about the stone and the builders. Christ referring to Himself, and He knew all of these prophecies. He knew that He was going to be the 'stone.'

Matthew 21:42: "Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures...' Isn't that interesting? Almost all the religious leaders during Jesus' time didn't read the Scriptures. Most of them today don't read the Scriptures. They have traditions, they have their own things.

"...*"The Stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes"*? Because of this, I say to you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you... [who should have been the builders] ...and it shall be given to a nation *that* produces the fruits of it.... [all those who are called; they are a Holy nation] ...And the one who falls on this Stone shall be broken... [through repentance] ...but on whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (vs 42-44).

That's something we need to understand. Though God is a God of love and mercy and peace, if we reject Christ—the shortest summary of the book of Hebrews is, you either accept Christ or it's

the Lake of Fire—that's it. Here we have another comparison of it: "...it will grind him to powder." Did that not happen with Jerusalem? *Yes!*

Verse 45: "Now, after hearing His parables, the chief priests and the Pharisees knew that He was speaking about them.... [since they were political] ...And they sought to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the multitudes, because they held Him as a prophet" (vs 45-46).

1-Peter 2:6 is quoted over and over again. It shows the same thing: "For this reason it says in the Scripture, 'Behold, I place in Zion *the* Cornerstone, chosen *and* precious; and the one who believes in Him shall never be put to shame.' The preciousness *is* to you, therefore, who believe; but to those who disobey, *the* Stone that the builders rejected has become *the* Head of *the* corner, and a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense; *especially* to those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient, unto which *unbelief* they also were appointed. But you *are* a chosen stock, a royal priesthood, a Holy nation..." (vs 6-9). That's why Jesus said it will be taken and given to a nation which will bring forth the fruits.

"...a people for a possession *of God*, that you might proclaim His *excellent* virtues, Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (v 9).

All right let's look at some more Scriptures showing that Christ is the Rock. This will help bring it altogether concerning the harvest, concerning Christ being the Head, what He's doing, concerning the seven churches.

Here it says that Christ is that Rock, 1-Corinthians 10:1: "Now, I do not wish you to be ignorant *of this*, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And *they* all ate the same spiritual meat. And *they* all drank *of* the same spiritual drink..." (vs 1-4). Because it was miraculous food, which was sent—being the manna—and it was miraculous water, which they drank because it came out of the stone.

"...for they drank from *the* spiritual Rock that followed *them*. And that Rock was Christ" (v 4).

Let's see about the foundation. Then we will see that the Church, which Jesus said He would build, would be built upon Himself Who's the Chief Cornerstone, and then also on the apostles.

1-Corinthians 3:11: "For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation..." (vs 11-12).

What I want you to understand is that we

will see that the problems within the seven churches can relate directly to the quality of their spiritual life as defined here by, “gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay, *or* stubble” (v 12)—because of the problems and doctrines which will come against them, and their behavior and reaction to it.

Verse 13: “The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day *of trial* will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one’s is. If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet, as through fire. Don’t you understand that you are God’s temple...” (vs 13-16)—because God desires

- to live *in* us
- to dwell *in* us
- to build the very character of Christ *in* us

“...and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him because the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are” (vs 16-17).

We will see that is the individual temple, but collectively we are being made into the temple of God overall.

Ephesians 2:18: “For through Him we both have *direct* access by one Spirit to the Father. So then, you are no longer aliens and foreigners; but *you are* fellow citizens with the saints, and *are* of the household of God. You are being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone in Whom **all the building**, being conjointly fitted together, is increasing into a Holy temple in *the* Lord; in Whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in *the* Spirit” (vs 18-22).

This gives us some background concerning the Church that Christ would build. He is the Head of it; no man is the head of it. He is the One Who is going to deal with His Church, deal with His people. Everything we are going through now—that we see happening in the Churches of God—is all part of it.

Let’s see it all put together where there are the individuals and then the whole body of Christ of individuals together:

Ephesians 4:15: “But holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ from Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies, according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love” (vs 15-16). That gives you a good statement of what it is that the Church is to do!

Let’s see what we are to do. Not only does this tell us to go to the world and preach to the world, but this tells us something else that we need to do also.

Matthew 28:19: “Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” When you teach them *all things* then you have what we have right now, that when you begin to teach them there’s more to learn, and we have *all* the Bible now.

”...And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age.’ Amen” (v 20).

Let’s see how this teaching started. First of all, the teaching started with Christ teaching the disciples. He taught them as much as He could, and He brought them up to a certain point, as He said before His crucifixion, and then He gave them a promise that they would be able to understand through the power of the Holy Spirit.

He also promised that the Holy Spirit would bring all things into remembrance that He taught them. Let’s see how He does it once He ascends into heaven. First of all you have Christ’s direct teaching. Next you have the teachings through the Holy Spirit and those things are written down for us.

John 16:7: “But I am telling you the truth. It is profitable for you that I go away because if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you. However, if I go, I will send it to you. And when that one has come, it will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment: Concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me” (vs 7-8). This is quite a profound statement. If you don’t believe on Christ *it is sin!* Another way of looking at it is:

- if you don’t believe on *Christ* you remain *in your sin*
- you believe in Christ and *you have your sins forgiven*

So, either way *the Holy Spirit is going to convict!*

Verse 9: “Concerning righteousness... [the true righteousness that comes from God; the imputed righteousness that we receive] ...because I am going to the Father and you no longer will see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. I have yet many things to tell you, but you are not able to bear them now” (vs 9-12).

So then, there would be a revelation of Truth, because the book of Revelation is called a revelation, that’s the final revelation. Here are th

Stages of revelation that God gave to His apostles:

1. The Calling
2. Direct Teaching through the Holy Spirit

Verse 13: “However, when that one has come, *even* the Spirit of the Truth, it will lead you into all truth because it shall not speak from itself, but whatever it shall hear, it shall speak. And it shall disclose to you the things to come.” The Holy Spirit is going to be doing:

3. Christ Opening Their Understanding

He told them, ‘I have many things to say to you, which you cannot now bear.’ But after He was resurrected, and of course, John 16 was just prior to the crucifixion there, but in Luke 24 now we find Jesus teaching them things, some things that they could not bear.

Luke 24:44: “And He said to them, ‘These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.’ **Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures**” (vs 44-45).

It was the Holy Spirit that gave all the inspiration for the New Testament, that God used to show what He was going to do. Now, the next major revelation that comes:

4. Calling of Cornelius—the Gentiles (Acts 10)

God gave this through a vision, the calling of Cornelius and his household. This was a major revelation. I’ll just give a short interpretation:

Acts 10:28: “And he [Peter] said to them, ‘You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race....’” With this revelation, God was showing how He was going to break down the barrier between the Jews and the Gentiles. This statement, “...it is unlawful...” has to do with the law of Judaism. It does not have to do with the commandment of God.

“...But God has shown me *that* no man should be called common or unclean” (v 28).

After Peter spoke the Gospel to them, v 44: “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening to the message. And the believers from the circumcision were astonished, as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out” (vs 44-45).

The Jews, and especially those of the

circumcision party, figured that they were the chosen ones of God and the Gentiles were forever going to be second-class citizens even though they were converted.

Verse 46: “For they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God.” Meaning these who went probably knew Greek, and they probably knew Aramaic and Hebrew. Maybe there were some that were there traveling with them that knew other languages. When you come to these bands of Italian soldiers and how they’re speaking in Hebrew or Greek, what are you going to believe, especially if they are magnifying God when they did not have God before. And now they are uncircumcised.

Then Peter answered, v 47: “‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to remain *for* a number of days” (vs 47-48). So, this was the fourth major revelation: That God was going to deal with the Gentiles, grant them repentance, and purify their hearts.

5. Initial Revelation from Paul

Now then the fifth major revelation that takes place has to do with Paul. Paul was the one who was going to carry on then the preaching to the Gentiles. Let’s read about Paul here in his own writing

Galatians 1:13. “For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism...” Judaism was not the Law of Moses, by the way. It’s much like ‘religions’ today. they claim the Bible but they don’t follow it.

“...how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it; and I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many of my contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, Who selected me from my mother’s womb, and called *me* by His grace, to reveal His own Son in me, in order that I might preach Him as the Gospel among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus” (vs 13-17).

He was there approximately three or three and a half years because he says, v 18: “Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Peter, and I remained with him fifteen days. But I did not see *any* of the other apostles, except James the brother of the Lord. (Now the things that I am writing to you, behold, before

God, I am not lying.)” (vs 18-20). So that was the fifth revelation.

Let’s see how that was given. God taught him; taught him everything he needed to do. Then he increased that revelation.

6. Revealed the Whole Purpose of Life to His apostles and prophets by *the Spirit*

We will see that there was this revelation given having to do with our destiny to becoming the very sons of God

Ephesians 3:1: “For this cause I, Paul, *am* the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the ministry of the grace of God that was given to me for you; how He made known to me by revelation the mystery (even as I wrote briefly before, so that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of Christ), which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now **been revealed to His Holy apostles and prophets by *the Spirit***; that the Gentiles might be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel, of which I became a servant according to the gift of the grace of God, *which was* given to me through the inner working of His power” (vs 1-7).

So, this shows the added revelation. He goes on showing where it is there that we are going to have the fullness of God, which is all in all. His initial revelation he spoke of right here in Eph. 3. Paul talks of it twice. Then when he’s writing this letter to the rest of the apostles the whole purpose of life.

All of this is through Christ, either directly personally in teaching them, or teaching them through the Holy Spirit, or—in the case of revealing to Peter—through a dream. And then the **revelation of how that of the full fellowship of the mystery of God** (Eph. 3).

7. The Book of Revelation

It is *being* revealed. What is so important in this is that this again establishes when this was written approximately 95_{A.D.}, that Christ is the Head of the Church. That He is going to be dealing in His Church and in the world, from then until His return. Then it goes on and reveals in Rev. 20 and 21 the Millennium, New Jerusalem, and on into eternity after that. This is quite a profound thing. It’s what the Father gave to Christ to give to His servants and He gave it to John.

Let’s read a little bit here, and then we’ll put a little history with this as we go along. I’m not going to bring in too much history because I could

get so bogged down in history that we would never get through this.

Revelation 1:5: “And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth...”—whether they are righteous or wicked.

Remember the account of Nebuchadnezzar. God gave the lesson that He puts upon the governments of men the basest of men, and that’s important. We will see that there is still the struggle between those who are Christ’s and those who are Satan’s. This battle is something we are always in. You can’t avoid it. It’d be nice to go someplace and not have to fight it. But Satan’s the ‘prince of the power of the air.’

“...To Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us **kings and priests to God and His Father; to Him *be* the glory and the sovereignty into the ages of eternity. Amen**” (vs 5-6).

Right here we have defined the whole Gospel through Christ, through His blood, through His resurrection; the whole purpose in life: to be “...**kings and priests to God and His Father; to Him *be* the glory and the sovereignty into the ages of eternity. Amen**” (v 6).

(go to the next track)

Verse 7: “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him...” This tells us that there’s no such thing as a secret rapture. “...every eye shall see Him...” Of course, this is what people have wanted. They have wanted Christ to return in many different ways, and many different forms but He’s not going to. He’s going to come the way that He said. This is a prophecy.

“...and those who pierced Him...” (v 7).

- Who pierced Him? *The Roman soldier did!*
- Is that Roman soldier dead? *Yes!*
- When will he see Christ? *The second resurrection!*

This is even projection clear forward into that.

- Who also killed Him? *The Jews did!*
- Who also? *Everybody!*

So, in a sense *everyone* pierced Him, because of their sins, and shall see Him.

“...and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him.... [they won’t want Him] ...Even so, Amen. ‘I am **Alpha** and **Omega**...’” (vs 7-8)—which is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and the last letter of the Greek alphabet.

“‘...*the Beginning and the Ending,*’ says the

Lord, 'Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come—the Almighty.'" (v 8). This is how we know that it applies not to a trinity, but this applies to Christ the Lord, Who *is now* existing in heaven, Who *was in flesh* on the earth, Who *is to come* in the power and glory of God the Father the Almighty. This sets the stage. This is the most profound revelation of the seven that we've covered here.

Verse 9: "I, John, who *am* also your brother and joint partaker in the tribulation and in the kingdom and endurance of Jesus Christ, was on the island that *is* called Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in *the* Spirit on the Day of the Lord... [the day of His return; it doesn't mean Sunday] ...and I heard a loud voice like a trumpet behind me, saying, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last'..." (vs 9-11)—the Beginning and the Ending; He's the One totally in charge of God's plan.

"...and, 'What you see, write in a book...' (v 11). That's profound because all the apostles wrote. They knew what they were doing when they were writing. They knew that it was going to become Scripture.

"...and send *it* to the churches that *are* in Asia..." (v 11). Why not send it to all the churches? He did, but specifically, because if you send it to all the churches and list off how many churches there were then you'd have a long listing of it plus then you would be describing each one. We will see that God chose these seven churches—that fits into the whole pattern and plan that God has—which ties into the time and leading up to Pentecost. Then He lists all of them.

Verse 12: "And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands." What you think of when you think of this is candelabras that were to be in the tabernacle. But these are lampstands.

Verse 13: "And in *the* midst of the seven lampstands..." In the middle; kind of like that they are in a circle, and in the middle is Christ, meaning He is always in His Church. We will also see that He always knows what is going on.

"...One like *the* Son of man, clothed in a *garment* reaching to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden breastplate. And His head and hair *were* like white wool, white as snow; and His eyes *were* like a flame of fire; and His feet *were* like fine brass, as if *they* glowed in a furnace; and His voice *was* like *the* sound of many waters. And in His right hand He had seven stars..." (vs 13-16). It's interesting, the seven stars are the seven churches. Right hand is the sign of work—isn't it? So, Christ uses the seven churches to do His work.

"...and a sharp two-edged sword went out of His mouth, and His countenance *was* as the sun shining in its *full* power" (v 16).

Let's look at John concerning this because John would know that this is Christ. John saw Christ in a glorified form already before Christ had ascended into heaven, and that is on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17). Let's notice how similar the description is with what we just read (Rev. 1).

Matthew 17:1: "And after six days, Jesus took with *Him* Peter and James and his brother John, and brought them up into a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and **His face shined as the sun**, and His garments became white as the light" (vs 1-2). That's the only description that we have here, but notice how similar it is to what John in Rev. 1. So, he knew that this was the Christ.

Now we're going to see one other thing concerning this, and that is what was going to happen to John:

John 21:20: "But when Peter turned, he saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had sat at the supper and *leaned* on His chest, and had said, 'Lord, who is it that is betraying You?' Seeing him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, what *shall* happen to this one?'" (vs 20-21). What about this man? You told me about me, what about him? Still political till the end.

Verse 22: "Jesus said to him, 'If I desire that he remain alive until I come, what *is it* to you? You follow Me.' Then this saying went out among the brethren, that that disciple would not die. However, Jesus did not say to him that he would not die; but, 'If I desire that he remain alive until I come, what *is it* to you?' (vs 20-23). He did remain to see the return of Christ in vision.

As they went along the various apostles were killed and martyred, but John was still alive. You can just imagine since this saying went abroad, 'Well it's going to be true. John is still alive.' And you know we heard that to, only it wasn't John it was HWA. We heard that he won't die till Christ returns. Well, it's been years since he died and Christ hasn't returned. But in John's case he wrote about the return of Christ, so when John is there on the isle of Patmos and he sees this vision, he knows exactly Who it is, without a doubt.

Let's see there's a lot in Rev. 1 that sets the stage for everything else that is to happen. John understood that it was Christ.

Revelation 1:17: "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead; but He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the

First and the Last, even the One Who is living; for I was dead, and behold, I am alive into the ages of eternity. Amen. And **I** have the keys of *the* grave and of death.... [not the pope] ...¹**Write the things that you saw...**” (vs 17-19)—up to this point. So there are three things that he’s going to do:

“...and ²**the things that are...** [which has to do with the seven churches that existed then] ...and ³**the things that shall take place hereafter**” (v 19. So, you have all three things there.

Verse 20: “The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, *is this*: the seven stars are *the* angels of the seven churches; and the seven lampstands that you saw are *the* seven churches.”

Angel in the Greek is ‘angelos,’ which can also mean *messenger*. This is where some people will interpret it and say ‘to the messenger of the seven churches.’ I think it is more probable to the ones who are the leaders of the seven churches, being men, because how can you have an angel doing the things like Thyatira? In other words, if it meant just angels who are righteous angels of God:

- Do they become Laodicean?
- Do they become nearly dead?
- Do they get in and know the depths of Satan?
- *No!*
- Do they set up a hierarchy against the brethren?
- *No!*

So, this has to do with the human leader, the messenger, and it would be whomever that particular person is. But one note of caution: *No one should go into the Bible to try and find themselves except one place.* ‘All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.’ Too many people make mistakes: ‘I’m going to go and see if I’m Elijah, or Elisha, or you know, I’m one of the angels, the messenger to the seven churches.’ *No!* We don’t do that! Whatever is, *is*. But all that is just a bunch of self-exaltation, and we won’t do that.

Let’s understand something about these churches here; let’s understand what it’s telling us:

Verse 19: “Write...” That’s something all the apostles knew they were to do. They were to write. Paul knew it! Peter knew it! John knew it! Christ commanded them, because Christ does not want His Church to be without His Word. Since He is no longer on the earth then He sent His Word to be on the earth.

It’s very, very important to understand, as I will mention again about the *NIV* Bible—as brought out by these books: *If the Foundations Be Destroyed* by Chick Salliby, and *The New Age Bible Versions* by Gail Riplinger—how much the Bible has been subverted and corrupted. So, it’s very important that we have the right text.

Verse 19: “Write the things that you saw, and the things that are... [this tells us this is a layout for the whole book of Rev.] ...and the things that shall take place hereafter.” This helps us understand how we can answer: Were the seven churches there literal churches existing side-by-side at the same time? *Yes!* And they were on a direct mail route, one following the other.

This is the mail route beginning at Ephesus where the Apostle John ended his ministry. He was exiled for a time on the Isle of Patmos, as we saw earlier in the first chapter. Ephesus was the great center for the Church of God, and that was where the main text of the Greek New Testament that we have was preserved right at that area of Asia. “...and the things that shall take place hereafter.”

This is a continuous prophetic revelation of events to take place until, or unto, the setting up of New Jerusalem, all the way to the end. This is very important for us to understand. Yes, there were seven churches then. Does this picture a prophecy of the phases or eras of God’s Church through history? *Yes!* We will see that, although I won’t go to it in great detail because I just want to do an overview.

Could this be seven churches existing at the end-time just like there were seven churches at the beginning, because Christ says, ‘I am the Beginning and the Ending’? *It’s very possible!* And it’s very possible that that could be because we have the example throughout Revelation.

Note sermon series: Daniel/Revelation, which shows that you have seven, and then out of the seventh one, like with the trumpets, comes the seven seals then the seventh seal is opened and there are seven trumpet plagues. Then the seventh trumpet sounds and then after that, out of that comes the seven last plagues.

So, you have seven out of which comes seven, out of which comes seven. It’s entirely possible that that could be with the churches at the end-time, that you could have as God looks at the Church on the earth, which is entirely different than how we view it. There may be seven categories of those Christians who fit the seven churches. But nevertheless, what we are dealing with here is all the problems that the Church will confront. I’ll bring in a little history, but I’m going to bring out mainly their problems so that we can see today, since we are

at the end-time, how we need to learn the lessons of the seven churches.

It's also very interesting that Paul wrote epistles to seven churches, one of which was Ephesus. So, we have a connection with Paul and John beginning with Ephesus. The other connection with Paul and John was Laodicea. We don't have the letter that Paul wrote to Laodicea, but we have a reference of it in Col. 4 where Paul said, 'When this epistle is read in Colossi, you send it to Laodicea and have them read it over there and you get their epistle and you read it over here.' It's interesting how all of these then tie together.

Revelation 2:1: "To the angel..." Greek 'angelos,' and can also mean *messenger*. John the Baptist was a messenger, an 'angelos.' He was not an angel as an angel is an angel. But when you stop and think about it, when it talks about the angels here, how can an angel lose its first love and then have it's candlestick removed? This has to mean to whoever the physical leaders are, as in whoever the messenger is.

"...of the Ephesian church, write: 'These things says He Who holds the seven stars in His right hand...'" (v 1). The seven stars are the seven churches.

The right hand is symbolic of work, so Christ is showing that He is working through the seven churches. That's important to understand because Christ is always the Head. We are going to see all the problems and difficulties related to the seven churches:

- the seven right there at that time
- the seven down through history
- if there be seven at the end

—all relate to Christ doing *His* work through *His* Church. We need to understand that. Therefore, no man is to take upon himself to do a work for God. God will do the work through whom He chooses.

"...Who walks in *the* midst of the seven golden lampstands" (v 1).

- the 7 golden candlesticks are the 7 churches
 - the 7 stars are the angels or the messengers
- So, whoever is doing the teaching and preaching, God is:
- doing a work through them
 - doing a work through the Church

Verse 2: "I know your works..." First thing we need to learn, *there are works*. There has to be.

"I know your works, and your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear those who are evil; and *that* you did test those who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles, but are not, and did find

them liars; and *that* you have borne *much* and have endured, and for My name's sake have labored and have not grown weary; nevertheless, I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love" (vs 2-4).

It shows they were really working. Talks about all the work that they were doing. "Nevertheless have *this* against you, that you have left your first love."

- What is it to leave your first love?
- What constitutes that?

Verse 5 is a warning, and of the seven churches five of them are given *warnings to repent*. Two of them are not. The two that are not are Smyrna and Philadelphia. But all the rest are commanded to repent.

Verse 5: "Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; for if *you do* not, I will come to you quickly; and I will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent. But this you have: that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the tree of life that is in *the* midst of the paradise of God" (vs 5-7).

I. Church at Ephesus

Now let's begin right here with the messages to the churches. what we need to do with every one of these messages is this, there's an old saying in English: 'If the shoe fits, wear it.' If this describes your condition as a Christian then you better accept the admonition from Christ and repent. Not only can He remove the candlestick from the whole church if He needs to, but He can remove an individual who has the same attitude that way just as well. Let's focus in on two things:

^[#1]Verse 2: "I know your works, and your labor, and your endurance, and ^[#2]that you cannot bear those who are evil..." We don't have to put up with evil within our midst; we do not. We don't have to cow-tow to it. If we have the right structure, and if we have the right preaching, perhaps we can keep the infiltration of tares down to a very few, because Satan is going to always trying, he's always against the Church. "...you cannot bear those who are evil..." Evil has to do with going against the commandments of God, giving license to sin and all that sort of thing.

"... and *that* you did test those who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles, but are not, and did find them liars" (v 2).

- How do you test?
- How do you know concerning false prophets?

That's one of the first things that Jesus said. Remember Jesus says to *beware of false prophets* (Matt. 7). One of the first things He preached: 'Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves.' He also told the disciples many times, 'Beware—one of the signs of the end—that no one deceive you for many will come in My name saying I am the Christ and shall deceive many' (Matt. 24). So, they were on guard; beware means to be *on guard*.

Let's look at several of the things here and see where the first encounter of a false prophet takes place, and this is a key that helps us unlock all of the other false doctrines that come along, every one of them. We're going to talk about a certain man called Simon Magus. He's quite a guy. He was a 'religious' leader in Samaria. If you remember the history of the Samaritan temple, which we wrote about in *The Christian Passover* book, it's very significant that he was there, and what kind of religion that was being foisted off on the people.

Acts 8:9: "But *there was* a certain man named Simon... [which is the same as Peter] ...who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city..." Notice what he did. He used sorcery, which is witchcraft. These were the powers of Satan the devil.

"...and astounding the nation of Samaria... [deceived them, had control over them] ...proclaiming himself to be some great one. To him they had all given heed..." (vs 9-10). Just like the pope—right?

As a matter of fact, the 'religion' that Simon had was part of what was Gnosticism—satanism, witchcraft—all of that put together under the guise of 'good.'

"...from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.'.... [that is quite a title] ...Now, they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries" (vs. 10-11).

- What happens when something comes along that looks a little bit better? *You want to join yourself to it!*
- What if you have the lust for power?

Simon saw there was another power—of healing and casting out demons that Philip was doing—that he wanted.

- *Well, you go after it! And that's what Simon did!*

Now if you want a very interesting study, get out *McClintock & Strong's Cyclopedia* [of religion], and look up Simon Magus. In there you will see there is no question whatsoever that he was *the Simon* that went to Rome. ***The Apostle Peter never went to Rome!*** We have no record of it. As a matter of fact, he was undoubtedly martyred in Babylon because that's where he was sent to preach to the circumcision. He was never an apostle to the Gentiles. He did, however, write one letter, the Epistle of 1-Peter from Babylon to those who were in Asia, and that was apparently after the Apostle Paul was martyred. Here's the beginning foundation of the false religion, the false apostle who came to develop into the Catholic Church, and this is the whole system that the Churches of God have had to fight down through history.

Verse 12: "But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the Gospel—the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself also believed..." (vs 12-13).

It's easy to believe, but notice the difference here. It is not 'believe with all your heart' It is easy to believe from the point of view to accept: I accept the fact. Yes, that will be a great idea.

"...and after being baptized..." (v 13). Think of the misplaced zeal of the near fatal mistake of what Philip did. If you would like a comparison of this, it would be like going to Rome and the pope comes out of the Vatican. He sees you doing miracles and says, 'I believe; baptized me.'

That's how serious the problem was. That's why this is recorded here in Acts 8. This is the first encounter with a *false prophet* who wanted to take the name of Christ and attach it to everything that was pagan.

"...he steadfastly continued with Philip; and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed"(vs 13). This was greater than he could do with his sorceries. This was greater than he could do with his demons.

Verse 14: "Now, when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them." Why send Peter and John? *They had to go down there and make sure that everything was all right!*

Verse 15: "After coming down to Samaria, prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them,

but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit” (vs. 15-17).

Apparently, at this particular juncture God inspired Philip somehow to not lay hands on for the receipt of the Holy Spirit, because Simon Magus was baptized. That’s the only explanation that I can have for it because this is the only occurrence where you find that hands were not laid on, and the Apostle Peter and John—both of them—came down there and did it. They must have recognized the seriousness of this problem.

Verse 18: “Now, when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give this authority to me also, so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit’” (vs 18-19).

You see now that there’s no repentance, there’s no understanding of the Truth of God. It’s just a *lust* after the power, which then he would use if he could receive it, to control people. *God’s Spirit doesn’t work that way!* God’s Spirit does not control you; *it leads you!*

Verse 20: “But Peter said to him, ‘May your money be destroyed with you... [The equivalent today in English, ‘You go to hell.’] ...because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money.’”

Let’s understand something very important. All the gifts of God *cannot* be purchased:

- the Holy Spirit
- the gift of righteousness
- the gift of faith, the gift of love

You cannot purchase spiritual things by physical means. So, we learn a lesson here:

- do not merchandise the people of God
- do not think that money is going to bring you power
- do not think that power is going to bring you money

If we all don’t serve Christ, and serve Him from the heart, then we’ve just missed the whole thing—period!

Verse 21: “You have neither part nor lot in this matter...” This is talking about an apostleship. Simon Magus^[transcriber’s correction] wanted to be an apostle, hence then in his ‘religious office’ was the first major false prophet that they encountered and tested and resisted and rejected. This is all a part of the beginning church in the era of Ephesus.

Acts 1:20 is talking about the field of blood

that was purchased with the 30 pieces of silver that Judas had: “For it is written in *the* book of Psalms, ‘Let his habitation become desolate, and let there not be *anyone* dwelling in it’; and, ‘Let another take his overseership.’ Therefore, it is obligatory *that* from those men who have accompanied us during all *the* time in which the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day in which He was taken up from us, one of these shall become a witness with us of His resurrection.’ Then they put forth two: Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus; and Matthias” (vs 20-23).

Now this was a special thing. Why? *Because Christ was the One Who ordained the 12 apostles!* This had to come directly from Christ. It couldn’t be something that a man would choose or they sit down and they voted about it.

Verse 24. “And they prayed, saying, ‘You, Lord, *the* Knower of the hearts of all, show which one of these two You have personally chosen to receive the part of this ministry...” (vs 24-25).

Acts 8:21: “You have neither part... [talking of the ministry] ...nor lot in this matter.” He was showing here clearly, because in order to select an apostle to replace Judas they cast lots. That’s the only instant in which it was done.

Acts 1:24: “And they prayed, saying, ‘You, Lord, *the* Knower of the hearts of all, show which one of these two You have personally chosen to receive the part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas *in* transgressing fell, to go to his own place.’ Then they cast their lots; and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles” (vs. 24-26). There we have it, *part or lot*, that’s what it means.

Acts 8:22: “Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you; for I perceive *that* you are in *the gall of bitterness* and *the bondage* of unrighteousness” (vs 22-23). “...gall of bitterness...” has to do with idolatry and an attitude coming from Satan the devil as well as ‘*the* bond of iniquity.’ Doesn’t that sound very similar to the mystery of iniquity, which we’ll talk about later when we come to the synagogue of Satan.

Verse 24: “But Simon answered *and* said, ‘You beseech the Lord on my behalf ...’ Isn’t that the same philosophy that Catholicism has to this day? *The priest will pray for you!* In other words, he had the attitude that no one could pray directly to God on his own behalf. He would do so in relationship to others. He would do the atonement for them in his false religion. That was really something.

Simon says, "...‘You beseech the Lord on my behalf, so that none of *those* things which you have spoken may come upon me.’" (v 24). There may have been some other things that were said, which were not included in this summary. And I imagine it was a fierce denunciation.

Let’s see where there is another encounter with a false prophet. We are going to see when we get done with this, a lot of these false prophets and apostles were Jews. That’s hard to comprehend, because most people have the idea in mind that Jews all believed in God. *Not so!*

I’m going to make a very startling statement: ***Judaism is Gnostic paganism using the days of God and the Bible as cover for their religion!*** But it is not of God. Where did Jesus say that their father was from whence they got their religion? *From Satan the devil (Acts 8)!* Same thing as Simon Magus on the pagan side, the Gnostic side and the Gentile side.

We’re going to see in Acts 13 that we have a Jew who is also a Gnostic and have the pagan Judaism. So, you’ve got pagan heathenism on one side, pagan Judaism on the other side, and there are two encounters of the synagogue of Satan for the churches. We need to understand what we’re dealing with here.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 13:23, 36-42
- 2) Revelation 1:1-3
- 3) John 1:1
- 4) Revelation 1:2, 4-5
- 5) Matthew 16:15-17
- 6) John 6:44
- 7) John 1:42-43
- 8) Matthew 16:18
- 9) Matthew 21:42-46
- 10) 1 Peter 2:6-9
- 11) 1 Corinthians 10:1-4
- 12) 1 Corinthians 3:11-17
- 13) Ephesians 2:18-22
- 14) Ephesians 4:15-16
- 15) Matthew 28:19-20
- 16) John 16:7-13
- 17) Luke 24:44-45
- 18) Acts 10:28, 44-48
- 19) Galatians 1:13-20
- 20) Ephesians 3:1-7
- 21) Revelation 1:5-16
- 22) Matthew 17:1-2
- 23) John 21:20-23
- 24) Revelation 1:17-20, 19

- 25) Revelation 2:1-7, 2
- 26) Acts 8:9-21
- 27) Acts 1:20-25
- 28) Acts 8:21
- 29) Acts 1:24-26
- 30) Acts 8:22-24

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Leviticus 23
- Revelation 3; 7
- Acts 2
- John 16
- Revelation 20; 21
- Colossians 4
- Matthew 7; 24

Also referenced:

Sermons Series: *The Holy Sabbath*

Books:

- *If the Foundations Be Destroyed* by Chick Salliby
- *The New Age Bible Versions* by Gail Riplinger
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *McClintock & Strong’s Cyclopedia*
(biblesoft.com)

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The Seven Church Harvest II Churches at Ephesus & Smyrna

Fred R. Coulter

We are going to look at another false prophet. Let's also understand that false prophets have false writings. Counterfeiters like to get it as close as they can to the real thing, then you find out that it's totally opposite. One of the things that we've encountered, one of the things that we have been doing through the years is that we've kept our noses in the Bible and every time there has been a false doctrine by a false prophet who, supposedly, is in the Church of God, we bring it out and we examine it by the Word of God. That's how you test it:

- by the Word of God
- by their fruits
- by what they preach

Part of what we've done in getting *The Christian Passover* book done is all a result of that very thing, by following the admonition here that you have tested those who say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars. Consequently then, their writings will be lies.

Let's see another example of this. You need to understand that in part of our Church experience in the past, we thought that whoever was a Jew was just like us except they needed Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth! Most of Jewish belief is like we find here:

Acts 13:4: "So then... [Barnabas and Saul]: ...after being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed away to Cyprus. And when they came to Salamis, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they also had John as an assistant... [one who is helping] ...And when they had gone through the island as far as Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus" (vs 4-6). What does Bar mean? *Son, the son of Jesus!* Now, was he literally saying he was the son of Jesus? You know what we have in the mythology today about Christ, that Christ supposedly had relations with Mary Magdalene and had children? It just makes you wonder! There's nothing new under the sun.

Verse 7: "He was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus... [they always get in close proximity of high political power] ...an intelligent man, who called Barnabas and Saul to *him*, desiring to hear the Word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so was his name interpreted) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who

was also *called* Paul, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him, *and* said, 'O full of all guile and all craftiness, *you* son of the devil *and* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the straight ways of *the* Lord?'" (vs 7-10).

What were they perverting? *They were using the Scriptures in perverting it!* That's how they were doing it all along. They really had a tremendous battle going on right from the start. What we're going to see is what confronted the churches there is virtually no different than what's confronting us today. That's what they do, "...pervert the straight [right] ways of *the* Lord..." and as Paul says, 'the Gospel.'

Verse 11: "And now behold, *the* hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.' And immediately a mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking someone to lead *him* by the hand. And after seeing what had happened, the proconsul believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord" (vs 11-12).

Let's understand something: Doctrine is important. Doctrine does divide because it divides Truth from error. That's very profound and very important to understand, and we will see that's how you test false prophets, false doctrines. He was "...astonished at the teaching [doctrine of the Lord]."

There are many, many different things we could put in here. Obviously, I'm not going to cover all of the Scriptures, but we'll also see something that's a little ironic a little bit later.

Let's come to 2-Cor. 11 because here is a real summary of how these problems grew and grew to such a point that they were misleading those in the Church of Corinth. We have never heard what happened to the different elders that were there in Ephesus. We never heard what happened in the case where Paul brings up Apollos in the book of 1-Corinthians. But in the last part of 2-Cor. he was sort of miffed at Apollos because Apollos didn't want to come back to Corinth while Paul was there.

Remember, Apollos came out of Alexandria so we just have to put a question mark. Did Apollos remain faithful? We can't answer; we have no evidence he didn't; we have no evidence that he did. But nevertheless under whose ever influence it was, in Corinth they were not testing the false apostles like they should have.

2-Corinthians 11:1: “I would *that* you might bear with me in a little nonsense; but indeed, do bear with me. For I am jealous over you with *the* jealousy of God... [that’s why you test these things] ...because I have espoused you to one husband, so that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent **deceived** Eve **by his craftiness** ...” (vs 1-3). That’s the same word that is used when Simon Magus beguiled the people “...by his craftiness...”—*through his subtlety*.

And how does Satan do it? *He always uses the Word of God, but twists it!* What did he say to Eve? ‘Yea, has God said you can’t eat of any of the trees of the garden?’ And then she fell for it hook, line, and sinker. “...so your minds might be corrupted from *the* simplicity that *is* in Christ” (v 3).

I think today the whole thing concerning the Passover is an example of how complicated false doctrine makes things when you have to straighten it out. Look at all the things that I wrote in *The Christian Passover* book, and all of them deal with all of the false doctrines. Understand this: ***the very first thing that Satan the devil goes after is the Passover***, because he knows that that is the covenant with Christ. Very important! That’s what he always goes after.

- Did they have trouble with the Passover? *Yes!* (1-Cor. 11).
- Did they misunderstand the Feast of Unleavened Bread? *Yes!* (1-Cor. 5).

Has the influence right there. That’s only the start. So, you remove from the simplicity of Christ into the complicated mind-twisting doctrines of Satan the devil.

Notice what happened, v 4. “For indeed, if someone comes preaching another Jesus...” They had a different Jesus then; preaching any other doctrine than Christ came in the flesh. When we get to the book of Hebrews we’re going to see how so important that is, and the very emphasis on what Christ did.

“...whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive, or a different gospel...”—the gospel of the Gnostics, and there are many versions of this. Paul is doing what he should do in withstanding it, in warning them.

“...which you did not accept, you put up with it as *something* good.... [you count this as a wonderful thing] ...But I consider myself in no way inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles” (vs 4-5)—***the false apostles!*** This has nothing to do with Peter because Peter was never the chief apostle. You read through the book of Acts, it’s Peter and

John. Peter, James and John. Peter, John, and the apostles altogether. Peter did exert some leadership, that is true. But when we get to the story of the Nicolaitans we will see that he never exalted himself in any way to become the chief apostle. As a matter of fact, when you get to 1-Peter 5, he just says ‘I am an elder.’ That’s how he thought of himself.

Verse 6: “For although *I may be* unpolished in speech, yet, *I am* not in knowledge; for in all things I have demonstrated this to you. Now, did I commit sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the Gospel of God to you freely? I robbed other churches...” (vs 6-8). That’s a whole different thing here concerning tithing. We won’t get into it now.

“...receiving wages *from them* for ministering to you. And when I was present with you and in need, I was not a burden to anyone...” (vs 8-9). Why? *That was Paul’s way of fighting these false apostles! That was Paul’s way of putting them to the test!* ‘Let’s see if you false apostles can get along without asking for money like I am not asking for money of the Corinthians.’

“...(for the brethren who came from Macedonia fully supplied my needs); for I kept myself, and will *continue* to keep myself, from being burdensome to you in anything. *As the Truth of Christ is in me*, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I don’t love you? God knows *I do*. But what I am doing, I will do, so that I may cut off *any* occasion...” (vs 9-12).

Lesson we can learn with this, among many: *False prophets like to come in and have dialogue so they can have an occasion!* Does that smack a little thing of truth concerning the ecumenical movement? *Yes!*

Paul didn’t mince words. “...from those who are desiring an occasion; so that in the things they boast of, they also may be found even as we *are*. For such *are* false apostles... [there they are being put to the test, being exposed for what they were] ...—deceitful workers who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ” (vs 9-13). They were not the apostles of Christ. When you read of the early church fathers of the Catholic Church that is the end result of it.

Verse 14: “And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works” (vs 14-15). That’s what they were doing.

- They were coming preaching *another*

Jesus!

- They were coming preaching *another gospel!*
- They were coming *bringing another spirit!*

—which was satanic and demonic, not of God. Coming right into the congregations of God, here in the Church of Corinth in the days of the Apostle Paul. I mean, when you understand how fierce this was, and how the battle started early, it's amazing! Let's see what he says about them.

Verse 22. "Are they Hebrews?... [they weren't Synthians or Barbarians] ...So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I.... [they were going by their genealogy, their pedigree] ...Are they *the* seed of Abraham? So am I." I've often wondered:

- Where did they come from? *Obviously, from the area of Palestine!*
- How many of them were in the crowds that followed Jesus and saw the miracles?

Where they could go around and later say, 'Well I was there with Jesus...' and then bring in their false doctrines.

- Why else would it say Hebrews? Israelites? seed of Abraham?

Verse 23: "Are they servants of Christ? (I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.)..." In other words, it's insanity to consider that false apostles could possibly bring you the Truth of Christ. Then he goes on showing all that he went through as compared to them in all the travels that he did.

Let's see what they did, 2-Corinthians 2:17: "For we are not like the many, who for *their own* profit are corrupting the Word of God... [that's what they were doing: corrupting it, twisting it] ... but we speak with sincerity, as from God, *and* before God, *and* in Christ."

2 Corinthians 4:1: "Therefore, having this ministry, according as we have received mercy, we are not fainthearted. For we have personally renounced the hidden things of dishonest gain, not walking in *cunning* craftiness... [having a secret agenda] ...nor handling the Word of God deceitfully..." (vs 1-2).

That tells you something very profound. Have you ever sat in a congregation where a minister gets up there and he starts speaking and he's handling the Word of God deceitfully? And the Truth is twisted and turned? If he has an *NIV Bible*, or a *New American Standard*, that's very easy to do. He has a corrupted version of the Bible. And yes, in our experience that is exactly what happened to

Worldwide Church of God. That is exactly what is happening to the Seventh Day Adventist right today, because they are not fighting against the false apostles that have snuck in and are bringing in their teachings.

A lot of these Scriptures we have already covered; we've covered them in different ways. But I want to cover it from the point of view that Christ commended the Church at Ephesus because they withstood the false apostles. As soon as the original apostles died then the onslaught began and it was just almost within just a few years everything was completely upside down.

Galatians 1:6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel.... [there were many gospels coming around] ...which *in reality* is not another *Gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ" (vs 6-7). What did we see that Elymas the sorcerer did? *He was perverting the right way of the Lord!* Here we have it now perverting the Gospel of Christ. How do you do that?

Verse 8: "But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, **LET HIM BE ACCURSED!**" Quite different from the Corinthians. They said, 'Oh, well let's hear this man out. That sounds interesting. He's a good speaker. He's using the Bible.' Paul says "...**LET HIM BE ACCURSED!**"

Verse 9: "As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, **LET HIM BE ACCURSED!** Now then, am I striving to please men, or God?..." (vs 9-10). That is in their sins and in their corruption and in their perversion of the Gospel and the handling of the Word of God.

"...Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ." (v 10).

I've experienced that, too. Some people get upset with me because I'm not an ecumenist and I don't go along with all of these weird and strange doctrines that a lot of people have. There's one congregation that I know of down in Texas where they have almost anybody speak. One man gets up there and says, 'I want all of you to know I'm a Trinitarian' and they never bring it up. Another man gets up and says, 'I want all of you to know I'm a 15th Passover keeper,' and they never bring it up. Let's all get along to go along! What are you doing? *You're walking down the broad way!* You're corrupting everything and going to have those problems.

Let's see how Paul handled those things. Do you think we can go wrong if we follow Paul's example? *No!* That's why the Church at Ephesus was commended, because they put them to the test, found them to be liars and rejected them. How else can you keep the purity of the Truth of the Gospel of Christ.

Speaking of those who were to be elders, Titus 1:9: "Holding steadfastly to the faithful word, according to the teachings of *Jesus Christ*, so that he may be able both to encourage with sound doctrine..." We're going to see how much doctrine comes up in this.

"...and to convict those who are gainsayers. For there are **many** rebellious and vain talkers and deceivers, especially those from *the* circumcision party... [Jews! How could it be Jews that were doing this?] ...**whose mouths must be stopped**...." (vs 9-11). That's a command of Paul, which he said these things are the commands of Christ.

When there is false doctrine that comes up it should be addressed, it should be tested and the mouth should be stopped. We may not be able to stop them literally, but at least what we can do is:

- have our knowledge of the Scriptures correct
- have the literature
- have the studies
- have the sermons available

—which then brings the Truth, which when a person hears it, it will stop their mouths.

I got a nice letter from someone who explained their whole odyssey trying to find the Truth. They and several others were keeping a 15th Passover. They got a hold of *The Christian Passover* book and really went through it, and they all kept the 14th Passover and they said it was such a wonderful thing to do, because after doing it on the 15th we did not have the experience on the 15th that we had on the 14th; we now know not only by knowledge, but by experience that the 14th is the Passover.' So, at least we can stop *some* mouths; not all.

"...who are subverting whole households, teaching things which *they* ought not, for the sake of selfish gain" (v 11).

Let's see what Paul did. I got castigated because I named some people in one of my letters that were preaching false doctrine. 'You're divisive, you're judgmental, you're not kind, you're not loving.' Okay, tell that to Christ when He pours out the seven last plagues.

1-Timothy 1:3: "When I was going to Macedonia, I exhorted you to remain in Ephesus ..."

Timothy is at Ephesus. Timothy carried it on until John, and when he had to leave the area of Palestine he came up to Ephesus.

"...in order that you might *solemnly* charge some not to teach other doctrines; nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which lead to empty speculations rather than to edification from God, which *is* in faith" (vs 3-4).

A lot of Protestants take this, which is Gnosticism, v 5: "Now the purpose of the commandment..." That means commandments are all done away with. *NO!* this means the end purpose of the commandment.

"...is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and genuine faith; from which some, having missed the mark, have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of *the* law, neither understanding what they are saying, nor what they are strongly affirming" (vs 5-7). So, you have these false prophets coming along; they don't even understand what they are saying, what they're affirming.

Here's how these things come along, 1-Timothy 4:1: "Now, the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith, *and* shall **follow deceiving spirits** and doctrines of demons; **speaking lies** in hypocrisy, **their consciences having been cauterized with a hot iron**" (vs 1-2). Then he goes on to explain about some of the teachings of Gnosticism, which is what they were fighting.

Verse 3: "Forbidding to marry; *and* commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, even *by* those who know the Truth"—commanding vegetarianism, asceticism, all that sort of thing. Boy, I tell you it's something!

1-Timothy 6:3: "If anyone teaches any different doctrine, and does not adhere to sound words, *even those* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine *that is* according to Godliness, he is proud and knows nothing. Rather, he has a morbid attraction to questions and disputes over words, from which come envy, arguments, blasphemy, wicked suspicions, vain reasonings of men who have been corrupted in *their* minds and *are* destitute of the Truth—*men* who believe that gain is Godliness...." (vs 3-5). That's a perfect description of how I felt in Pasadena for quite a few years, seeing all the things that were going on there.

"...From such withdraw *yourself*" (v 5). You can't associate with that kind of thing. You can't do it; it will backfire on you.

Paul could see this coming. Let's look at the ironic warning that he gave them in Ephesus, which

then ties right into the Church of Ephesus and false prophets, false apostles.

Acts 20:28—Paul is talking to the elders: “Take heed, therefore, to yourselves...” Now, that’s something all of us need to do, but especially those who are elders and teachers. We need to take heed to ourselves. We don’t need to get carried away with the self. We don’t need to get carried away with anything and look to any abilities that God has given us as though it’s something that we have on our own.

That’s why Paul told the Corinthians ‘*You have nothing you didn’t receive.*’ (1-Cor. 4:7). If any teacher, if any elder starts relying upon personality, eloquent speaking—speaking techniques to move and generate people’s responses—those are all carnal things. If God blesses, thank God for it. Don’t get carried away with anything. I tell you, I take this to heart. Believe me, I do!

Verse 28: “Take heed, therefore, to yourselves and to all the flock...” Be about the business of God, serving and loving the flock of God. As Christ told Peter, ‘Do you love Me? *Feed My sheep!* Do you love Me? *Feed My lambs!* Do you love Me? *Feed My sheep!*’

“...among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God...” (v 28)—with the Truth of God, the Word of God, that you may grow thereby.

“...which He purchased with His own blood” (v 28). All of those who are Christ’s belong to Him. His blood brought them in. His Spirit—through God the Father and Christ working jointly together:

- has called that individual
- has led them to repentance
- has brought them the Truth

If we can have a part in that, that’s fine.

Always remember the attitude of Nebuchadnezzar, and we saw this happen within the Church of God: Nebuchadnezzar said, ‘Look at this great Babylon which *I have built.*’ When he was warned a year before through the parable, ‘Don’t do it,’ and BAM! as soon as he said that he was struck insane. The lesson was, when you get lifted up in vanity God will set over you the basest of men. Have we seen that happen within the Church of God? *Yes!* All you need to do is look and see who’s leading it today and you’ve got the same thing. So no one can be lifted up *Christ is the One Who has done it!*

Verse 29: “For I know this: that after my departure... [his death] ...grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from

among your own selves men will rise up speaking **perverse** things ...” (vs 29-30). That’s about the third time we’ve seen that word—isn’t it? *Pervert the Gospel; pervert the way of the Lord!*

“...to draw away disciples after themselves. Watch, therefore, remembering that *for* three years ...” (vs 30-31). Think of that! This statement of Paul’s is not what some people would say is a hyperbole—an exaggerated statement for exclamatory effect.

“...**I ceased not to admonish each one night and day with tears**” (v 31). He knew what was going to happen. Let’s see that it happened:

2-Timothy 1:13: “Hold *as the* standard *for doctrine* the sound words that you heard from me, in *the* faith and love that *are* in Christ Jesus. Guard the good thing that was committed *to you* by *the* Holy Spirit that is dwelling in us. You know this, that all those who *are* in Asia have rejected me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (vs 13-15).

He names them! Now you think about that. How was it that they were able to turn all the churches in Asia away from Paul? That’s why when we read Rev. 2 & 3 we look at all of the false doctrine that is there and all the things that have taken place. That’s amazing! That is truly an amazing thing. You need to understand this, brethren:

- to really have the Spirit of God, which you do
- to really be of the firstfruits, which you are,

is truly an amazing miracle in itself. You need to think on that! There are a lot of people *playing* church, a lot of people *playing* ‘religion,’ and that’s how all these false prophets got in there, and they quit testing them; so they left. That’s incredible!

We said the same statement, too. Where have they all gone? An amazing thing—isn’t it? Sometimes you sit back and you think, ‘Lord, who will be saved?’ But I think there will be more saved if we get the doctrine straight and follow the example of the Church at Ephesus and put all the teachings and teachers and apostles to the test to find out whether they’re from God or not. Then we can at least have something to fight with, and it’s a spiritual battle.

2 Timothy 2:16, “But avoid profane and vain babblings because they will... [sounds like the church of ‘talking in tongues’] ...*only* give rise to more ungodliness, and their words will eat away at the body like gangrene; of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus, who have gone astray from the Truth,

claiming that the resurrection has already taken place, and are **destroying the faith of some**" (vs 16-18). What do we have? *We have the teaching of the immortality of the soul, that you're going to heaven!* Straight out of Gnosticism!

I just call your attention to 2-Peter 2. You can read the whole thing, and what these false prophets were doing.

Let's see the admonition in Jude vs 3-4; it's really quite a thing what happened. And this battle, brethren, started then and it's continued right on down to this day. Then we will see when we come to the Church of Smyrna, that other forces enter into it.

Jude was the brother of Christ, Jude 3: "Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight..."—to really put forth an effort; **it is a fight!** That's what the days of Unleavened Bread shows us. We have to fight against:

- self
- Satan
- this world

"...for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints. For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 3-4). That was the battle that was there.

Christ commended the Church at Ephesus for trying and testing them who were saying and claiming they were apostles, and found them liars. They worked, they had patience, They labored (Rev. 2:3)

Revelation 2:4: "Nevertheless, I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love." What does it mean to leave the first love? Some people understand the first love to be when they first come to the knowledge of the Truth and they begin to understand the Truth they have a love and a zeal for the Truth. They say that is their first love. That is one interpretation of it.

Just like with the ones here at Ephesus, they had the Gospel preached to them, the Truth was there, they loved God, they worked, they strived, and all of this, but something happened. There's another aspect of first love, which is more profound: the Greek word for *first* is 'protos.' The *first* love is **to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being!** That's the first commandment. **That's what they**

were losing! In other words they were beginning to get themselves into a position where it was more important to be with people than to fellowship with God. So, they began to lose their first love.

Another way of losing your first love, another way that it begins to happen, has to do with the second commandment. When, into the Christian church, did idols and images begin to creep in?

Deuteronomy 5:8. "You shall not make a graven image for yourself of any likeness of *anything...*" Is that all inclusive? *That sounds very complete to me!*

"...that is in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters beneath the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generation* of those who hate Me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments" (vs 8-10). If you lose your first love, what happens?

- you begin having idolatry of some kind
- you begin slacking off in keeping the rest of the commandments of God

(go to the next track)

- Where does idolatry begin? *Before you make any kind of idol!*
- If you lose your first love toward God then what happens?
- What do you as an individual do?
 - ✓ *You begin putting God off!*
 - ✓ *You put God off when you sin and you don't want to repent!*

That is the beginning of idolatry, and it begins in the mind!

Later we know they had all kinds of idols: statues, crosses, steeples, churches built and filled with all kinds of mystic idolatry straight out of Egypt and Babylon. I bring this up as another view of losing your first love.

- you may not have a cross
- you may not have a crucifix
- you may not have rosary beads
- you may not have a virgin Mary

But if you have an idol *in your mind* then you are committing idolatry and you have something before God, which then is *taking away your love of God!*

There are a lot of people today who have that. Just the way the world is with all the activities. I mean, just stop and think about all the activities that are done today on the Sabbath Day that keeps people idolized in activities: sports, all kinds,

whether you watch it or participate in it; sales, merchandising, whether you are part of it or whether you are buying; all the activities of coming and going. ***All of those are idols that cut people off from God!***

Ezekiel 14:1. “And some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I at all be inquired of by them? Therefore, speak to them, and say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Every man of the house of Israel...’” (vs 1-4). Who is spiritual Israel today? ***The Church!***

“...who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him according to the multitude of his idols” (v 4). Does that not sound an awful lot like if you don’t repent and do the first works, ‘I will come unto you and remove your lampstand, or candlestick.’ I think that we could include there: *idolatry began to creep in.*

Verse 5. “So that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart because they have deserted Me for their idols—all of them.”

When that began to happen God had to take action, and He did. How many of them in Ephesus really repented? *We don’t know!* But the candlestick at Ephesus has been removed, no longer there. When we’re dealing in something, which then we’re talking about a church, which fought off all of the false prophets, all of the false doctrine; they tried them, they tested them, they worked, they sacrificed. They loved God and then something happened to where they lost their first love. It was so severe that Christ told them to repent. That was totally different from the rest of the other churches.

Let’s read what He says in commending them, Revelation 2:6. “But this you have: that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” We’ll answer that when we get to Pergamos, that the deeds of the Nicolaitans have to do with the hierarchical government coming from the top down. So, they hated that.

The other part of it was the ‘religious’ doctrines that came with the Nicolaitans, which was Gnosticism, coming into the Church. They hated that, but they were so busy fighting it that they wore themselves out, lost their first love, for which then Christ had to tell them to repent.

Verse 7: “The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the tree of life that is in *the* midst of the paradise of God.”

The reason that I’m going through the seven churches leading up to Pentecost is because we find, according to what we have in Matt. 13, that ***the whole plan of God is like a harvest.*** In counting to Pentecost there are seven complete weeks you are to count to Pentecost. So likewise, we have seven churches here. We could have had many more because there were many more churches. There’s a significance to the seven churches that we have.

II. Church of Smyrna

This is a church that no one wants to belong to today. But it will be re-enacted again. We find in Rev. 6 the fifth seal, that there is going to come a martyrdom today. Very few people know—Carl Franklin brought it to my attention—that there are Sabbath-keepers in the Sudan that are being killed *because* they are Sabbath-keepers. Today there are those who are being killed for keeping the Sabbath.

We got an e-mail from a man who is in Serbia, and he cannot assemble on the Sabbath because his neighbors count the number that come into his house. When they sing hymns they have to virtually whisper. The only contact he has is with his computer. I hope we can serve people like that. We don’t know where in the world are those who are being killed and martyred for Christ.

We’ll go back and see the martyrdom was also there even beginning with the Church which was called Ephesus. All these things go side-by-side.

Revelation 2:8: “And to the angel... [the messenger] ...of the Church of *the* Smyrneans write: These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead but is alive. ‘I know your works and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich)...’” (vs 8-9).

This is just the opposite of the Laodiceans—right? Laodiceans say, ‘We’re rich and increased in goods, hooray, hooray, hooray! Look at how God is blessing us.’ I bet the Laodiceans at that time looked over at the Church at Smyrna and said, ‘You know you’re not very clever; you’re getting killed. Why don’t you just tone it down a little bit? Save your life! Why don’t you do like we do? We’ll just get along and go along.’

No! They had a real zeal for God. They were deprived of their property, of their lands, of their wealth. But they were faithful unto death.

Jesus says, “...(but you are rich), and the blasphemy of those who declare themselves to be Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan” (v 9). Now we come into an organized movement against the Church of God. Who is always against the Church? *Satan!* A synagogue means *a gathering together* of those who serve Satan. And to say that

they are a Jew does not mean that they are saying that they are literally of the line of Judah. That's one interpretation of it.

A greater interpretation—which applies and includes more than just Jews—because we have the Edomite Jews, we have the Ashkenazi Jews and things like this—but as you look out on the world scene today the synagogue of Satan includes also a lot of pagans and a lot of those who don't believe in Christianity in any form. So likewise, was it then that because every Gnostic religion—whether pagan, whether Jewish, whether Christian—all claimed to be the ones who had the keys of salvation. They were the ones then, the organized ones.

These were the ones who left the Church of Ephesus. They were tried, they were tested, they left, and now when they organized they came back against the Church of God. They did what the synagogue of Satan always does: *they get the civil authorities involved!*

1-John 2:18: “Little children, it is *the* last time; and just as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now **many antichrists** have risen up... [who all got organized into the synagogue of Satan] ...by which we know that it is *the* last time. They went out from among us, but they were not of us...” (vs 18-19). Why? *Because we tested them, we tried them and we found them to be false apostles!*

“...because if they were of us, they would have remained with us; nevertheless, *they left* that they might be exposed *to show* that *they* all **were not of us**” (v 19).

Let's see some of the things that they were preaching, 1-John 4:1: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this *test* you *can* know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that **Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God**” (vs 1-2). That's the first thing that they began to change. Remember, whenever these false prophets come along, they begin to tinker with the Passover and then the nature of God, and that's what they were doing.

Verse 3: “And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God. And this is the *spirit* of antichrist, which you heard *was* to come, and even now it is already in the world.” By time we come to Smyrna, it's organized.

Verse 4: “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world. They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the

world, and the world listens to them. We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception” (vs 4-6).

Here we have the organized synagogue of Satan coming after the Church of God, Revelation 2:10: “Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer.... [don't worry about a martyrdom] ...Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days...” Now there are two ways of looking at this: Ten years or ten different occasions of acute persecution.

“...Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death” (vs 10-11).

Let's look at the first martyr. There is a power that God gives to those who are in circumstances like that: a great power to preach, a great power to convict. Let's just pick up the last part of Stephen's sermon (Acts 7), because this is what they had to do. Brethren, the time is going to come—I don't know if it's going to fall upon any of us or not; it may or may not, we don't know—that I think God will spare a lot of those who are in advanced age. God is certainly not going to put upon anyone more than he can bear. But this is why we really have to know the Word of God. Look at what Stephen did here:

Acts 7:51—this is not an ecumenical statement: “O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so also *do* you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of Whom you have become the betrayers and murderers; Who received the law by *the* disposition of angels, but have not kept *it*.” And when they heard these things, they were cut to their hearts, and they gnashed their teeth at him. But he, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, looked intently into heaven *and* saw *the* glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right *hand* of God’” (vs 51-56).

God gave him that last minute strength and inspiration because he knew what was going to happen. They took him out and stoned him. And his attitude was:

Verse 60: “...‘Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge.’” There's a perfect example of loving your enemies right while they're killing you. That

would be hard for me; I know that would be hard for me. But if God would give me the strength I'm sure He would do the same thing. We don't know what it's going to be for the situation coming down the road here, but let's read some things here.

This is out of a book *Revelation Illustrated & Made Plain* by Tim LaHaye. But let me assure you that I'm going to bring you just some interesting informational things that he has historically. Some of his interpretations are really way off base, but he's got something here concerning the 'persecuted' churches:

Smyrna: This church age saw eight of the ten periods of persecution under Roman emperors.

You need to understand: We are living in an age where knowledge will increase. There is a full-blown meeting of the United Nations to develop it into a world government, and it will lead to the same thing that these religionists did against the Christians in organizing the government to persecute and kill the true Christians. Here are the persecutions that are listed:

Nero—54-68 A.D.

Domitian—81-96 A.D.

That's when John was exiled, then he wrote the book of Revelation.

Trajan—98-117 A.D.

Marcus Aurelius—161-180 A.D.

Severus—193-211 A.D.

Maximus—235-238 A.D.

Decius—249-251 A.D.

Valerian—253-260 A.D.

Aurelian—270-275 A.D.

Diocletian—284-305 A.D.

All of this persecution wore them out, and then Satan brought in his subversion of the Church and we will see what happened with Pergamos when we get there, because Pergamos is the key fulcrum in all of this concerning the doctrine in the Church.

Diocletian is considered the worst emperor in Rome's history and the greatest antagonist of the Christian faith. He led a violent attempt to destroy the Bible from the face of the earth. Under his leadership many Roman cities had public burnings of the sacred Scriptures.

I want you to understand what a tremendous blessing it is that we the whole Bible.

- Is God able to preserve His Word? *Yes!*
- Even in spite of burnings and corruptions? *Yes!*

- So that He can give it to His true people that He calls? *Yes!*

All the way down through history.

During the second and third centuries this persecution age saw hundreds of Christians brought into the amphitheater of Rome to be fed to hungry lions while thousands of spectators cheered.

How many have seen the movie *The Robe* with Victor Mature? Remember when it came down to being thrown to the lions? I think that the producers of it did something that was very reflective of human nature. It gave in the background those who were praying saying, 'Oh no, why are we here being thrown to the lions?' Someone blurted out in their prayer, 'Lord, You didn't tell us it would be this way.' That has always stood out in my mind. Now listen, be guaranteed of one thing: *It is never going to turn out like you figure, so that's why you have to have faith!*

Many were crucified; others were covered with animal skins and tortured to death by wild dogs.

Think of that the next time you watch a documentary where it shows the wild dogs of Africa going after their prey. Just think of Christians under animal skins.

They were covered with tar and set on fire to serve as torches. They were boiled in oil and burned at the stake...

Now it is said of the Apostle John that the reason that he was exiled to the Isle of Patmos was because he was to be killed by being boiled in oil and they threw him in and he didn't burn. So, they took him out and sent him to the Isle of Patmos.

...as was Polycarp in the city of Smyrna itself in A.D. 156. One church historian has estimated that during this period five million Christians were martyred for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

If it be that many, that's marvelous! But it just shows you that when you start adding up all of those who were killed at the reformation time. Anyone who believes that only 144,000 are going to be in the first resurrection you better get off your vanity kick and believe in God and the Word of God, because that's nothing but selfish vanity to be used to manipulate people to keep them under your control so that you can make sure that they feel they're one of the 144,000. In spite of all this it was a thriving church.

Evidence of the supernatural nature of the Church can be seen in the fact that the Church reached its greatest numbers in proportion to world population during this period of persecution.

Because something happens when—and I’m sure it’s God’s Spirit that does it—other people would see them burned at the stake and killed and crucified, and slaughtered then God’s Spirit would be with some of those who were spectators and convert them. That’s something to see all the innocent people lined up and slaughtered.

In addition to the establishment of churches in many parts of the world, this church age distinguished itself by its production of many hand-copied manuscripts of the sacred Scriptures and the translation of Scripture into many languages. Early in this period, the Bible was translated into Syriac, in what is known as the Peshito manuscripts, which became the official Scriptures of the Eastern churches and from which translations were made into Arabic, Persian, and Armenian. In the second century the Bible was translated into Latin in what is called the Old Latin Version.” And this Old Latin Version went all the way to Ireland and to Britain. I mean it’s amazing. “This became the Bible of the Western churches for more than a thousand years and has been translated into many different languages.”

The more the Scriptures were disseminated and used by the people, even in the face of persecution, the more the Church advanced in numbers until it was such a dominant factor in the Roman Empire that Christianity was established as the state church by Emperor Constantine in A.D. 312.

Well, that’s where he starts getting off. At that time the Church was sent off into a place in the wilderness. This is a profound lesson for us. We need to understand what this really is here.

Now let’s go back and look at this and understand something that is very important, Revelation 2:9: “I know your works and tribulation...”—even though they were killed, even though they were slaughtered and burned. Realize that they overcame. Realize that whatever means of death they were executed by—or in the future will happen, too—**they were victors! they overcame!**

So, the thing to learn from this is if you are in tribulation Christ is *with* you and *in* you. Did He

suffer tribulation and trial? *Yes!* Paul said that he wanted to be counted worthy to share in the same sufferings as Christ, *and he did!* That’s what these people did, too.

“...and poverty...” (v 9). Learn the lesson: ***Never set your heart on riches or physical goods!*** When you are the *poorest materially* you have an opportunity to be the *richest spiritually*. This is why when we are living in the age that we are now. If we’re all repenting Laodiceans, which I hope we all are, then we need to take the same lesson from the Church of Smyrna and learn it and apply it to ourselves. You better be rich in Christ and poor in this world, rather than rich in this world and poor in Christ. Christ knows the poverty. Was Christ a rich man when He was on the earth? *No, He wasn’t!* If you’re in poverty, Christ is there *with* you and *in* you.

“...(but you are rich)...” (v 9). That is if you die for Christ, if you’re martyred because of the Truth, if you give your life in however it may be, ***then you are rich indeed!***

Let’s see the time of martyrdom that is going to be, Revelation 6:9: “And when He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony that they held... [this is in vision] ...and they cried out with a loud voice, saying ...” (vs 9-10). This is the only way that God could show John that at the end-time there was going to be another martyrdom of saints.

“...‘How long, O Lord, Holy and true, do You not judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ And white robes were given to each of them; and they were told that they should rest a short time...” (vs 10-11)—remain in the grave, that’s what it’s talking about here.

“...yet, until *it* be fulfilled *that* both their fellow servants and their brethren also would be killed, just as they had been” (v 11).

Now let’s see how to overcome in circumstances like that. Revelation 12 shows that the martyrdom is coming again when Satan is cast down from the battle in heaven.

Revelation 12:9: “And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world... [and boy, is it set up today; it is unreal] ...he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven say, ‘Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our

God” (vs 9-10). That’s what they had there in the organized movement of the synagogue of Satan:

- Satan leading it
- Satan inspiring it
- Satan giving it power
- Satan giving it strength

Verse 11: “But they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb, and through the word of their testimony...” God is going to require a testimony from us. We’re going to be brought up. There’s going to come a time when it’s going to be illegal to say the name of Jesus Christ. It’s going to be illegal to use the Scriptures. Matt. 10 shows that we’re going to be brought before councils and judges.

“...the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death” (v 11). Why? *Because they trusted in Christ!* Christ was with them through this, *in everything!*

Verse 12: “Therefore, rejoice you heavens and those who dwell in them. Woe to those who inhabit the earth and the sea! For the Devil has come down to you, having great wrath *because* he knows that he has *only* a short time.” That’s when the persecution begins.

Verse 13: “And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who had brought forth the man-child.” Coming after the Church in no uncertain terms. And listen, you can trust me on this, if not trust your government, they know all about you, whether you answered the census form or not. They can monitor every phone call, every fax, every business transaction. They have the global positioning satellites that can find every human being on earth within a 100 square foot area. So, when the persecution comes that’s why God has to intervene.

Now, everyone wants to go to a place of safety. I do! You do! But let’s be realistic, not everyone is going to get there. Those that go are carried by, v 14: “And two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman, so that she might fly to her place in the wilderness, where she is nourished *for* a time, and times, and half a time, from *the* face of the serpent.”

I want to tell you something: There are going to be a lot of Protestants who expect that they’re just going to be just miraculously whisked off in a rapture, but they’re going to be standing there when the Tribulation begins. And they’re the ones—if they have anything to do with Christ, as well as with the Church of God—that are going to suffer the martyrdom. They are going to be killed. Why? *Because the Bible says*, ‘He who seeks to save

His life shall lose it.’ That’s what they’re doing. And so have a lot of people in the Church of God.

Verse 17: “Then the dragon was furious with the woman and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Quite a battle! So, it’s going to happen again.

Don’t worry about the doctrinal battles we go through today. Aren’t those mild compared to blood, guts, gore, lopping of heads, stabbing in the stomach, crucifying and burning? *Yes!* So, don’t disparage of the doctrinal wars.

Matthew 10:16: “Behold, I am sending you forth as sheep in *the* midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall also be brought before governors and kings... [could also mean judges] ...for My sake, for a witness to them and to the Gentiles. Now, when they deliver you up, do not be anxious *about* how or what you should speak; for in that hour it shall be given to you what you shall speak. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you” (vs 16-20).

Here’s how desperate it’s going to get, v 21: “Then brother will deliver up brother to death; and *the* father, the child; and children will rise up against *their* parents and *have* them put to death. And you shall be hated by all for My name’s sake; but the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved” (vs 21-22). Very profound! When that happens, when we have to understand this is what happened to the Church at Smyrna.

Verse 32: “Now then, whoever shall confess Me before men, that one will I also confess before My Father Who *is* in heaven.” Doctrinally they don’t have to be pure. As a matter of fact many of the things that the martyrs go through, they just have a love and zeal for God, and God inspires them to give the conviction and warning to those that arrest them.

Verse 33: “But whoever shall deny Me before men, that one will I also deny before My Father, Who *is* in heaven... [you don’t want that to happen] ...Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.” And at the end it is going to be coming down tremendously with all of the events of the book of Revelation. The end-time fulfillment of the Church in Smyrna is going to be just gigantic.

Verse 35: “For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s enemies *shall be those*

of his own household. **The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it**" (vs 35-39).

That's why it was said to the Church at Smyrna, '***Fear none of the things which come upon you,***' because you will live, indeed. That was quite an age at that time.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 13:4-12
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- 3) 2 Corinthians 2:17
- 4) 2 Corinthians 4:1-2
- 5) Galatians 1:6-10
- 6) Titus 1:9-11
- 7) 1 Timothy 1:3-7
- 8) 1 Timothy 4:1-3
- 9) 1 Timothy 6:3-5
- 10) Acts 20:28-31
- 11) 2 Timothy 1:13-15
- 12) 2 Timothy 2:16
- 13) Jude 3-4
- 14) Revelation 2:4
- 15) Deuteronomy 5:8-10
- 16) Ezekiel 14:1-5
- 17) Revelation 2:6-9
- 18) 1 John 2:18-19
- 19) 1 John 4:1-6
- 20) Revelation 2:10-11
- 21) Acts 7:51-60
- 22) Revelation 2:9
- 23) Revelation 6:9-11
- 24) Revelation 12:9-14, 17
- 25) Matthew 10:16-22, 32-39

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 11; 5
- 1 Peter 5
- 1 Corinthians 4:7
- Revelation 3
- 2 Peter 2
- Revelation 2:3
- Matthew 13

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- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
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The Seven Church Harvest III Church at Pergamos

Fred R. Coulter

The reason I'm calling this series *The Seven Church Harvest* is because for Pentecost there are seven weeks plus the 50th day. We'll also cover the 50th day, because there is even a harvest on that day, and that is the harvest outside of the Church age. Right now we're living in the Church age and Rev. 2 & 3 contains:

1. the seven churches which were there; literally seven churches
2. a prophetic history of God's Church down through history and it also shows the attitude of any individual Christian or individual congregations of Christians at any one time as you go down through history.
3. the possibility that at the end we also have as God views things, by attitude and works and things like this, that there will be seven churches

It's very interesting how you have the parallel there.

- the Church began on Pentecost
- you have seven churches down through history
- that all leads up to the return of Jesus Christ

III. Church at Pergamos

This time we're going to begin with the Church at Pergamos. Things really get into a very difficult way with the Church.

Revelation 2:12: "And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos..." Angel can mean *messenger*. I cannot picture an angel having the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, nor can I picture an angel of God eating things sacrificed to idols. This has to mean *the messenger*.

"...write: 'These things says He Who has the sharp two-edged sword. I know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is; but you are holding fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you because you have there *those* who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. Moreover, you also have *those* who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent! For if you do not *repent*, I will come to you

quickly, and will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the hidden manna; and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows except the one who receives it'" (vs 12-17).

Let's begin analyzing these things. First of all, the Church in Pergamos had a pagan history going way back, reaching clear back into the time of the Babylonian 'mystery religious' system. Alexander Hislop, in the book *The Two Babylons*, has this to say concerning the Church in Pergamos: In Pergamos there was the sovereign pontiff of the pagan religion. We are going to see that the king of Pergamos willed everything in Pergamos—everything concerning the 'religious' rites, the land, the city, the whole thing—to the Roman Empire.

The Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop, pp 240-241:

Still the sovereign pontiff of Rome, even after the Etruscan idolatry was absorbed into the Roman system, was only an offshoot from the grand original Babylonian system. He was a devoted worshipper of the Babylonian god; but he was not the legitimate representative of that God. The true legitimate Babylonian Pontiff had his seat beyond the bounds of the Roman empire. That seat, after the death of Belshazzar, and the expulsion of the Chaldean priesthood from Babylon by the Medo-Persian kings, was at Pergamos, where afterwards was one of the seven churches of Asia. There, in consequence, for many centuries was "Satan's seat" (Rev. ii. 13)." That is the seat of religious authority. "There, under favour of the deified kings of Pergamos, was his favourite abode, there was the worship of AEsculapius, under the form of the serpent, celebrated with frantic orgies and excesses, that elsewhere were kept under some measure of restraint. At first, the Roman Pontiff had no immediate connection with Pergamos and the hierarchy there..."

We're also going to see that the hierarchy is involved here.

...Yet, in course of time, the Pontificate of Rome and the Pontificate of Pergamos

came to be identified. Pergamos itself became part and parcel of the Roman empire, when Attalus III., the last of its kings, at his death, left by will all his dominions to the Roman people, B.C. 133. For some time after the kingdom of Pergamos was merged in the Roman dominions, there was no one who could set himself openly and advisedly to lay claim to all the dignity inherent in the old title of the kings of Pergamos. The original powers even of the Roman Pontiffs seem to have been by that time abridged, but when Julius Caesar, who had previously been elected Pontifex Maximus, became also, as Emperor, the supreme civil ruler of the Romans, then, as head of the Roman state, and head of the Roman religion, all the powers and functions of the *true legitimate Babylonian Pontiff* were supremely vested in him...

That's important because with the shift coming over, the ones who were the true Christians in Pergamos undoubtedly left and what remained was the beginning of the Catholic Church. This shows how the whole thing transited from one to the other.

Then he seems to have laid claim to the divine dignity of Attalus, as well as the kingdom that Attalus had bequeathed to the Romans, as centering in himself...

This shows then how Pergamos came to be identified with Rome. And there are some very important things concerning that. Pergamos was the throne of Satan the devil.

Verse 12, Christ says: "... 'These things says He Who has the sharp two-edged sword.' " That is the Word of God; a sharp sword with two edges. He's going to fight against them with His Word.

In Hebrews 4 we find that God's Word is likened unto a sharp two-edged sword. This is what we were talking about because all of God's Word proceeds from God, for out of the mouth of God, and Christ is saying here that with the sharp sword that is coming out of His mouth. He is going to judge them by His Word. He's going to come after them according to His power.

Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern... [judge] ... *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart. And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of

Him to Whom we must give account" (vs 12-13). In other words there is nothing, nothing whatsoever that God does not see or know or understand.

Those people who think that they can fool God or somehow do things that God says you shouldn't do, all they're doing is stacking up the two-edged sword against themselves and God's judgment will come upon them. The only thing is that a lot of people do not understand is that God will let wickedness prosper *for a while* to give them a space of repentance whether they will turn back to God or not. So here, God is forewarning them right at the beginning in Pergamos, that He is going to judge them with His sharp two-edged sword.

In Rev. 19 we find that when Christ returns He is going to use His sharp sword again, not only His power of plagues as He has, but He's also going to use the sword with which He's going to smite the nations.

Revelation 19:11: "And I saw heaven open; and behold, a white horse; and He Who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war. And His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns; *and* He had a name written that no one knows except Him" (vs 11-12).

See how the *eyes of the flame of fire* ties right back to Rev. 1. What we find in the book of Revelation where Christ said He's 'the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last,' many of these things going back and forth in the book of Revelation and tying it all together.

What we need to understand is that the book of Revelation is such that you have a good grasp of the rest of the Bible in order to begin to put all the things in Revelation together and to understand what's going on.

Do a study and go through and write the Ten Commandments as you go through, and then study the book of Revelation and see how many of these Ten Commandments are contained in there. We know that the Church of God keeps the Sabbath so it doesn't have to relate to the Sabbath directly there, but it says 'in keeping the commandments,' and here are those who have the faith of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments.

Verse 13: "And *He* was clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is The Word of God. And the armies in heaven were following Him on white horses; *and* they were clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and He shall shepherd them with an iron rod" (vs 13-15).

Notice how that goes right back to several things there even in Rev. 2 where it talks about Thyatira ruling with a rod of iron.

“...and He treads the winepress of the fury and the wrath of the Almighty God. And on *His* garment and on His thigh He has a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords” (vs 15-16).

We’re going to see that’s why God has to come and fight against those in Pergamos. Because not only do they have a hierarchy but then they change the nature of the worship of God and the commandments of God, which are the deeds of the Nicolaitans. Those deeds relate right down into today’s ‘religion’ of Catholicism and Protestantism, and all into all of the pagan religions.

Let’s continue on with Pergamos and all the things that are there. It’s just like anything else. We live in a society that is so wrapped up in evil, and in this case where Satan’s seat is. What is the old saying? *When in Rome do as the Romans do*. You become affected by it; you see the pagan religion there with all of it’s hierarchy, all of the organization that’s going on.

I remember watching a television program about so called St. Ignatius and how he helped organize things leading up to the Catholic Church. The thing that he did more than anything else was, he got all of the churches out of the homes—because that’s where they were meeting—and got them into an organized hierarchy. This is very similar to what we’re confronted with here.

Revelation 2:13 “I know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan *is*; but you are holding fast My name, and did not deny My faith...” That was for only a while. This is the only good thing that Christ has to say about the Church at Pergamos and that was only temporary.

“...even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells” (v 13). Not only is his seat, but that’s where he dwells. Antipas can also be equated to anti-pope or against the pope. Now you see how that ties in with the supreme pontiff in Pergamos as Alexander Hislop brought out in *The Two Babylons*.

Let’s talk about the things concerning Balaam now. Balaam becomes very important because Balaam’s philosophy was to *bring them all together in the same worship*. If you can do that then ‘you can bring God’s curse upon them because I cannot curse, myself.’ Balaam could not curse so he did told Balak that if you seduce them with the women and idolatry then God will have to judge them. We’ll see, sure enough, that’s what God had to do. It was quite a thing that was done!

Verse 14: “But I have a few things against you because you have there *those* who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.”

If you want to read the whole account of Balaam you can do that. Num. 22-24. We’re going to see the result of that counsel. This has quite a few implications because it also has to do with combining the ‘religious’ practices.

Deut. 12 becomes profoundly important because He already told them this several times, Deuteronomy 12:28: “Be careful to observe and obey all these words which I command you, so that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever when you do *that which is* good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.” We’re also going to see that the doctrine of the Nicolaitans impacts upon this as well.

Verse 29: “When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and you take their place and dwell in their land.” That’s what they were doing, coming in ready to take over the land and the children of Moab were right there.

Verse 30: “Take heed to yourself that you do not become ensnared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods that I may also do likewise?’”

What we’re dealing with, with the doctrine of Balaam, is ecumenism, bringing all religions together.

Verse 31: “You shall not do so to the LORD your God, for every abomination to the LORD, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. Whatsoever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it” (vs 31-32).

Balaam instructed Balak, ‘Now look, you get your religious leaders up here, and you get the women up here, and you will be able to seduce Israel. I can’t curse them but God will have to punish them, which will be better than my curse.’ So, let’s see what happened.

Numbers 25:1: “And Israel dwelt in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people to the sacrifices of their gods....” (vs 1-2). How important is it not to get involved with other religions? *Very important!*

Verse 3: "...And the people ate and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself to Baal Peor..." (vs 2-3). You go right into Baal worship. Baalism is the same as Baal worship though the names don't mean the same thing. It was at Peor that this took place. Baal is the Nimrod, the sun-god.

"...And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.... [Was the anger of the LORD kindled against Pergamos? *Yes!* He warned them!] And the LORD said to Moses, 'Take all the heads of the people and impale them before the LORD facing the sun...' (vs 3-4). In other words, in executing them go ahead and cut off their heads and hang them up.

"...so that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.' And Moses said to the judges of Israel, 'Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal Peor'" (vs 4-5). This ought to tell us that God does not want Sunday-worship.

Verse 6: "And behold, a man of the children of Israel came and brought to his brethren a woman of Midian, in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel..."—even while the correction was going on. I mean, you talk about gall and audacity!

"...who *were* weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose up from among the congregation and took a spear in his hand. And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman, through her belly..." (vs 6-8). Probably caught them right in the act and just did them in.

"...So, the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty-four thousand" (vs 8-9).

I want you to notice the parallel between Phinehas^[transcriber's correction] (Num. 25) and Antipas (Rev. 2). Antipas was a man who

- stood for the Word of God
- stood for the faith of Christ
- resisted all of this ecumenizing of bringing religions together
- kept the faith of Christ, but he was slain for it.

Now the parallel ends, because Phinehas^[transcriber's correction] was given a perpetual blessing, however it makes you wonder: could it be that Antipas was one of the descendants of Phinehas^[transcriber's correction].

Verse 10: "And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned My wrath away from the

children of Israel in that he was zealous for My sake among them, so that I did not destroy the children of Israel in My jealousy. Therefore, say, "Behold, I give him My covenant of peace"' (vs. 10-12).

Note sermon series: *Covenants of God*—going through all the covenants in the Bible. There is more than just what is called the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Here we find a special covenant given to Phinehas, the son of Eleazar:

Verse 13: "And he shall have it, and his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood..."—meaning that he will always have someone standing before God to serve God.

"...because he was zealous for his God and made an atonement for the children of Israel.' And the name of the Israelite who was killed, he who was struck with the woman of Midian, *was* Zimri, the son of Salu, leader of a chief house of the Simeonites. And the Midianite woman's name who was killed *was* Cozbi, the daughter of Zur. He was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian" (vs 13-15).

The way that you come in to seduce a nation is you get the leaders together and then it filters down to the people. That's the way it always has been. That's the way it's going today. That's why all these nations get together, make these agreements, have the trade agreements and so forth.

Suffice to say that when the children of Israel did conquer the land, they did go into Moab and they took and killed Balaam, and they killed all the males, even the young ones. Moses was angry at them because they didn't slay all of them, so he let them have a concession of having the small young girls who had never known a man, that they could keep them as handmaids. That was it. But it's very interesting here in Micah 6 we find that Balaam, the son of Beor, is also mentioned in relationship to coming before God. So we get the story flow how that relates to Balaam the son of Beor:

Micah 5:11: "And I will cut off the cities of your land, and throw down all your strongholds." I want you to know how closely that this follows the prophecy in Rev. 2 where God said He was going to come against them with a sharp two-edged sword, and that he would fight against them. Here's a lesson concerning the children of Israel in the same thing.

Verse 12: "And I will cut off witchcrafts out of your hand, and there shall not be fortune-tellers among you. I will also cut off your graven images, and your sacred pillars out of the midst of you; and you shall never again worship the work of your hands. And I will pluck your groves out of the midst of you; thus I will destroy your cities. And I will

execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have never heard” (vs. 12-15).

Micah 6:1: “Hear now what the LORD says, ‘Arise, contend with the mountains and let the hills hear your voice. O mountains, hear the LORD’S controversy; and you, strong foundations of the earth, for the LORD has a controversy with His people, and He will plead His case with Israel!” (vs 1-2). What is that controversy? *That controversy is related to Balaam the son of Beor!*

Verse 3: “O My people, what have I done to you?...” We’ll see how this parallels also the Church of Pergamos. What did God do to you?

“...And in what way have I made you weary? Testify against Me! For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of slaves; and I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam before you. O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab planned, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim to Gilgal, so that you may know the righteousness of the LORD’ (vs 3-5).

In other words all these things at the end of Micah 5 relate to what Balaam counseled Balak to do in order to seduce the children of Israel.

Verse 6: “With what shall I come before the LORD, to bow myself before God the Most High?...” We’re going to learn that the doctrine of the Nicolaitans coupled with Balaam, and eating things sacrificed to idols is a religious doctrine on how to approach God. So, this fits in tremendously with it. How do you come before God?

“...Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my life?.... [All of those revert back to the pagan practices.] ...He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?” (vs 6-8).

We find in Rev. 2 that they committed fornication. But this not only was that, he counseled them to eat things sacrificed to idols. Now eating things sacrificed to idols in today’s terminology has been shifted over from animal sacrifice to the Eucharist. What we really have here is the beginning of the Eucharist. All of these things tie in and go back to Babylon the Great.

Now remember Rev. 17, the woman, mother of harlots, ‘Mystery Babylon.’ She has in her hand a golden censor, cup and everyone is drinking out of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. This ties

right in with it. What is one of the first things that they began doing?

Let’s stop and think how we saw the Church of God change, that is the Worldwide Church of God. First of all they changed the nature of God. Then they began bringing in Easter, downgrading the Passover; they began bringing in having communion, which is the first step away from Passover going toward the Eucharist. And then they said, ‘Well why don’t we celebrate it quarterly like the Seventh Day Adventists do.’ So, they got that in. Then they said, Why don’t we do it weekly like the Protestants do? The final step is: ‘Why don’t we have the Eucharist like the Catholics do?’ That’s where it’s all going to end up and then you are truly eating something sacrificed to an idol because the Eucharist’s little wafers are contained in a little box on the altar that is called the tabernacle. The wafers are called ‘the host.’ Above it is a statue of Mary, and all of their prayers have to do with idolatry; even this little wafer is idolatry.

The final thing with the Eucharist is this: You have what is called *transubstantiation*, which means that the priest who asks the blessing on the wafer—which is round symbolizing the sun-god—has the power to command God to come down and put His presence directly into the bread so that the bread—when the participants eat it—is called the ‘actual body and blood of Christ.’ That’s what this is leading to. We find that over in Thyatira, too; how this thing has developed even more.

Remember, the fornication is not just physical fornication alone, but it is spiritual fornication. Wherever you have the Roman Gnostic system—as brought out in this book by Alan Knight—we have that we also have the sin of literal fornication. Now, just stop and think about it. Forty percent of the Catholic priests have AIDS—HIV. They didn’t get it drinking coffee at a coffeehouse. Enough said.

Let’s look at the Nicolaitans; there are two things we need to understand.

1. there is the hierarchy
2. they’re corrupting the Truth

Let’s first of all look at where Jesus warned the disciples about the corruption of the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees.

A comment was made that the wafer has stamped in it IHS, which Catholics claim is for ‘in His service.’ Now that is esoteric knowledge so everyone will think it’s a good thing. But those initials really go back to Nimrod, Horus and Semiramis; Isis, Horus, and Semiramis. That’s where it goes back to. God will let them bring their

blatant paganism right out into the open. Yes, IHS is on every Catholic grave, too. Amazing, isn't it?

Matthew 16:6: "And Jesus said to them, 'Watch out, and be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'" What had the Jews done? All of them? *They made traditions after traditions, after traditions*, rejecting the Word of God so that they would follow those. We have a very good lesson here when we come back to the Nicolaitans and how they corrupt the Word of God. We will see there were other forces involved which also came from Judaism and Simon Magusism that came together to form the doctrines of the Nicolaitans. And you're going to be absolutely amazed what that is.

Verse 7: "Then they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'It is because we did not take bread.' But when Jesus knew *this*, He said to them, 'O *you* of little faith, why are you reasoning among yourselves that *it is* because you did not bring bread? Do you still not understand? *Do you* not remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took *up*? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took *up*? How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking of bread *when I told you* to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?' Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (vs 7-12). That is their teaching.

What we are dealing with is the Jewish religion at that time, which also had brought in many of the pagan concepts into what they were doing; even in the sacrifices at the temple that they were performing. There's a great lesson for us here. When you go back and you understand what has happened, it's really quite a thing.

The first thing the Nicolaitans are noted for is hierarchy. Let's look at an article: *The Nicolaitans* by J.H. Allen, author of *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*. {transcriber's note: both can be found a websites listed at the end of this message} That's the one that Herbert Armstrong followed for writing his book *United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*.

We won't refer to it very much in the sermon but you can have it so you can read it. There will be a couple things that we will cover here a little bit later. First of all, let's understand that 'Nicolas' means, *to conquer* or *the conqueror*. 'Laos' means, *people*. Hence you get the word Nicolaitans, which means *the conquering or the overlording of the laity*. One of the sins of the Nicolaitans, one of their deeds, is making a great separation between the ministry and the brethren, so the establishing of the hierarchy.

Let's just read one paragraph, and see how this came into the Catholic Church and the Catholic Church starts right out in *My Catholic Faith* by Louis LaRavoire, which is that the Roman Catholic Church with it's hierarchy is the only Church of God on earth; that outside of the hierarchy you have no salvation.

from the article: *The Nicolaitans*, quoting from the *Century Dictionary*.

If anyone shall say that there is not in the Catholic Church a hierarchy established by the divine ordination, consisting of bishops, presbyters and ministers, let him be anathema, Council of Trent (trans) XXII6.

The Council of Trent was specifically set up for the counter reformation against the Protestants.

Let's see how that is directly against what Jesus said. That's why in the things that we do, if you've heard me say over and over again, which I will say again. We will not have a hierarchy in the Christian Biblical Church of God. We will have elders and overseers. We will have teachers and helps but *we will not have a hierarchy*. The brethren are not to be cut off from the elders, the ministers. They are not to be lorded over by them, and Christ made this very plain to the ones who became the apostles. Remember, the Church at Ephesus hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, so they knew to fight against the hierarchy, and the doctrine of corrupting the Word of God.

Matthew 20:25: "But Jesus called them..." That's after they had the dispute about the mother of John and James asking for the right and left hand beside Christ. Of course it made all the rest of them angry, so Christ had to settle an argument among the apostles.

"... 'You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them, and the great ones **exercise authority** over them'" (v 25):

- exercise lordship—the Greek word 'katakuriuo'—which means to *exercise dominion downward*. That's why it says *over them*.
- authority—the Greek 'katexousiazō'—*authority downward*
- princes (KJV)—civil rulers
- great ones—religious rulers

Did we not read that in part two of this series about Simon Magus? Was he not a religious ruler? Let's go back and just review that for a minute, because this becomes very important because this will help lead in to the other doctrines

of the Nicolaitans. We will see that the very doctrines of the Nicolaitans and the teachings that came from the Gnostics exist today. This is part of what we have been fighting when we have been seeing the deterioration of the Church of God.

Acts 8:9, "But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city..." Did we not read how God condemned that (Micah 5)? *Witchcraft and sorcery, and things sacrificed to idols, and Baal worship!*

"...and astounding the nation... [he had them hypnotized, mass hypnotism, deceived] ...of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one" (v 9). This came out from him. That's very important because we're going to see that the Nicolaitans talk about the doctrines of sanctity within, and how that connects with angels and with the problems that entered into the New Testament Church.

Verse 10: "To him they had all given heed..." Why did they give heed? Because he exercised 'katexousiazō'—*authority downward*. Let's look at it this way: Since he gave himself out as some great one, was he not above all the people? *Yes!* If they all gave heed to him, was he not over them and lording it down upon them with these means? *No doubt about it!*

Verse 10: "To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.'.... [that's quite a title] ... Now, they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries" (vs 10-11). Now you know why Peter so roundly rebuked him.

Matthew 20:26, Christ said: "However, it shall not be this way among you... [I wonder how many years those Scriptures were avoided?] ... but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant [minister]. That's what minister means, *a servant*."

(go to the next track)

Let's come here to 1-Peter 5. I know we've covered this somewhat in the past. I think we did when we covered with Simon Magus, but let's go ahead and read it into the record so we have it all here together.

Now 1 Peter 5:1: "*The* elders who *are* among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder..." This helps us understand that even though Peter was an apostle, he considered himself an elder.

"...and an *eyewitness* of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed" (v 1). He went with James and John to the

Mount of Transfiguration and saw Jesus in His glorified form.

Verse 2: "Feed the flock of God..." That's what it's to be. It's not to be an office over. It is not to be one of glory, self-serving, dictatorial things at all.

"...*that is* among you, exercising oversight..." (v 2). There is a difference between oversight and overlording. Oversight is that you oversee that everything is done properly and in order. Overlord is you make everyone come under you and force them to do your will. There's a vast difference.

"...not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions; but *by being examples to the flock of God*" (vs. 2-3).

The thing that anyone who is an elder has to remember: *all the brethren belong to God!* They are the flock of God. They are His. And as stewards we are to take care of the flock of God as we take care of another person's property. That's what a steward is. It is also called in today's language a fiduciary relationship. Which means that you look out for the best interests of the one that you are working for, such as in the case of a real estate broker in helping someone buy or sell a house. You have a fiduciary relationship with that person that you have to give the utmost of honesty, integrity, service, knowledge, disclosure and everything like that.

So likewise, it is with the elders and those who oversee; it is a fiduciary responsibility because you are responsible for those whom God has called. No man calls anyone else to Christ. Christ alone can call. Men have to make the Word of God available through preaching or writing or media or whatever means.

Notice the exaltation for those who are the elders at the resurrection, v 4. "And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory." We're not to look for rewards in this life: status, power, and especially getting into the things concerning politics and super-exaltation and things like this. *No! No way!* That's part of the doctrine of the Nicolaitans contained right in the name. The name names them for what they are: lords over the laity.

Now let's look at some other things concerning the deeds of the Nicolaitans. It doesn't say the deed but *the deeds*.

Someone gave me this book, *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight. I put it away and I didn't start reading it till I started on the plane trip coming back from Phoenix. Alan Knight lives in

Antioch, California, which is just north of us here. When I was about half way through reading the book I wrote him a letter and sent him the books: *The Christian Passover, Lord What Should I Do and The Seven General Epistles*. I told him that I thought his book was really quite good. Since I couldn't get his phone number I gave him mine, and he called me. I talked to him the other day on the phone, and I think we can do quite a bit with some of the things that he has here. He used to be in WCG and Ambassador College and he left Ambassador College after 2 years, 1960. He left Worldwide in 1970. But he has written this book, which is really quite good: *Primitive Christianity in Crisis: The Mystery of Lawlessness Prophecies; Nicolaitan Christianity for Our Time*.

'Primitive' Christianity means that it's the pure Christianity as Christ and the apostles taught it. This book shows what happened to it. Let me just summarize the first part of it which is called Hellenism, the Greek religions, all of them. There was a great religious reformation that took place, which moved away from animal sacrifices to the religion of the immortality of the soul, and the inner strength, and the worshipping of gods and angels. One of the things that came out of that were the mystery cults and they had a new spirituality, which then was concentrating from within. And this goes back and comes from the philosophy of Pythagoras and Orpheus, and it was the spiritual development of the inner spirit with the immortality of the human soul and its repeated incarnation in the human body.

At the same time that this was taking place there was also in the east, in Asia, in the 500s and 600s_{B.C.}, which ties into the time that the children of Israel were in captivity in Babylon. In history this time is called an Axial Period. Axial means a profound historical development that took place universally across the whole face of civilization. Not only did this religious reformation take place in Greece, which then spread to all of the Mediterranean area, because that was all conquered later by Alexander the Great. But also in the 5th and 6th centuries _{B.C.} it went eastward and developed into the religion of Hinduism and Buddhism and that is the same thing that we have today in Hinduism and Buddhism with reincarnation and karma, and the spirits and all of this sort of thing. So, it's really quite a thing how this also was centered around the stars, and then the planets, and the planets were originally called the wandering stars.

Then he brings in Greek philosophy, and brings about the historical development of the new Hellenistic religion. This becomes very important, especially in the series concerning Hebrews because Hebrews was written to the Hellenistic Christians. Hellenism, though it is paganism, did not come out

of paganism but it came out of pagan Judaism. This also affected the Jews.

pg 41—Gnostic Christianity in History

What does all this have to do with Christianity? It has everything to do with it because a large part of the Christian movement in the first century combined Hellenistic... [Greek philosophies] ...religion with New Testament Christianity to create a hybrid called Gnostic Christianity....

And that's what all the forces are dealing with when we read in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul.

pg 42—It should be obvious from the start that Gnostic Christianity in general is merely another manifestation of the reformation of Greek religion that began with Orphism and Pythagoreanism....

For Gnostics the world is altogether evil, and so its creator Yahweh and his religion must be absolutely evil as well....

This becomes important because the same philosophy comes down today of rejecting the Old Testament and the laws and commandments of God and is in fact the very heart and core of what I'm teaching against concerning sermon series: *Refuting Sunday-Keeping*, and out of the book : *Sunday Facts, Sabbath Fiction* by Russell Targo.

The Gnostics, however, were Christians. They came into existence in the first century of the Christian era, almost immediately after the death and resurrection of Christ and the founding of the church. The teachings of the Bible about evil, the emphasis on evil as the great problem of mankind, had to be incorporated into the mix....

pg 43—...However, in the Gnostic mainstream, Hebrew religion generally was viewed as totally evil....

That's the whole Old Testament. Sabbath-keeping, Holy Day-keeping, and so forth.

...Gnostics saw themselves as a reformation, not of Judaism but of the New Testament Church, the so called Primitive or 'Jewish' Christianity that prevailed for a time after the founding of the church in the 30s A.D.

Now here it talks about how they believe.

pg 44—The basic reinterpretation of biblical religion under Gnosticism is as follows: The world was not created by the highest deity, the Father...

This will begin to ring a lot of bells as we go through. How many times are we told that Christ was God? You can just start out with the first three verses of Gospel of John. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'

...The world was not created by the highest deity, the Father...

So they believed in the Father.

...But by an emanation from the Father. This is the demiurge, generally equated with Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament. He is an inferior, deluded and often evil being. His claims to be the supreme God are a wicked delusion, and man must by all means reject him and his religion. For Gnostics, the Old Covenant and the Old Covenant God have to be evil....

They viewed everything materialistically evil. Now this is a little more radical than what it's developed into. Since it's developed and it's come along and evolved where they dropped some of the radicalism of it, this kind of thing of being against materialism is the very foundation for the monastic societies, where you deprive yourself of all physical things. Swear a poverty vow, and so forth, which, by the way, those of Buddhism do. Many in Hinduism do. So you see it's with us today.

...If the material world is evil then its creator equally must be evil. The religion of the Old Covenant is a false religion based on materialistic animal sacrifice. It deceives man into seeking spirituality in the material world, keeping him in bondage to this world.

So now along comes Christianity and ah-ha. Now we have something that agrees with us. The end of animal sacrifices.

By a process of emanations or a fall from a higher state, spirit has become trapped in the material world. The true Father has sent Christ to rescue the spark of spirit that exists in some men, to reveal the knowledge (*gnosis*)...

And today the inheritors of gnosis are the Masons. To reveal the gnosis, or the knowledge. We are to grow in grace and knowledge. You're going to see how all this fits in. It is so clever. It is absolutely just unreal. That's why it's called the mystery of iniquity, or lawlessness.

“...that will rescue these souls from the God of the Old Testament and his material creation, and enable them to enter heaven....

So that's how going to heaven entered into the so-called Christian church.

....So Gnosticism viewed the religion of the New Covenant as a spiritual teaching that liberates man from material existence....

Because what are we to do? We are to not give into the desires of lust of the flesh. When we get done with this what is *the mystery of iniquity?* or *the mystery of lawlessness?* You're going to be surprised.

...It [Gnosticism] is a religion focusing on the heavens, and the inner life of the soul, the divine spark which is from the heavens and which takes us back there after death.

Mormonism today. In Mormonism you were once a spirit in heaven. And Adam and Eve had to sin so they could bring forth children, so that these spirits in heaven could come down and possess a human body so then they could be perfected and go back to heaven. That's Mormonism today. Mormonism is pure Gnosticism.

Some Gnostics especially relied on the writings of Paul, because of his common emphasis on the superiority of the New Testament. However, Gnosticism also relied heavily on the theory of progressive revelation, claiming special, private revelations to support their reinterpretation of New Testament Christianity. Many Gnostic texts claim a special revelation from Christ after the resurrection, which supersedes New Testament scripture.

Now what are those called in the Catholic Church today? *Traditions!* This is something! It talks about a little bit here concerning Simon Magus.

pg 51—Second Century and Later Gnostic Sects

...The Nicolaitans had disappeared by 200 A.D....

That is the radical Nicolaitans.

...and the Simonians by 250 A.D....

That is the ones who followed Simon Magus. Why did they disappear? *Through the evolution of moderacy then they were moderated and evolved into another form.*

...In any event many more Gnostic sects appeared in their place to carry on the tradition. As time progressed, Gnosticism flourished in many new forms as it continued to mix and match ideas from the broad range of Hellenistic religion and New Testament Christianity.

The Gnostic teacher Carpocrates founded his movement in Alexandria, Egypt, in the mid-100's. He taught that the world was created by inferior angels. Jesus was an extraordinary man with a pure soul, but not divine....

Carpocrates taught a libertine Christian ethic and antinomian theology....

The Greek word is *anomia*, which means *against law*.

...To become free from the evil creator God, one must aggressively insult the God of the Old Testament by flagrantly violating His law. According to Carpocrates, there is no fixed standard of morality. It is, after all, he claimed, only a matter of opinion, as witnessed by the multitude of opinions on the subject found throughout the world....

Isn't that exactly what we have in the ecumenical movement today? Your religion is only a matter of opinion, as they view it.

Now here's a quote, pg 52, from Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*.

"We are saved, indeed, by means of faith and love; but all other things, while in their nature indifferent, are reckoned by the opinion of men some good and some evil, but there is nothing evil by nature."

Once again, this does not mean they totally abandoned morality....

This is the key. The *mystery of lawlessness* does not get rid of moral values, but it substitutes its own standards.

...The argument was that nothing is intrinsically good or evil but depends on the situation and especially its relation to the issue of materialism....

...By breaking free from Jewish religion you will enable your mind to reorient itself towards the inner soul and its connection with the heavens and the spirituality that comes from above.

1-John 4 is a direct teaching against the Nicolaitan Gnostics who were bringing it into the Church.

1-John 4:1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

This tells us something very important. Wherever you have false prophets you have

demonism, *false spirits*. Go back and read the Gospel, how many times did Jesus come into a synagogue and the demons were the ones who recognized Him? But why would the demons be in the synagogue? *Because they want to be brought back to God somehow!* So, many of these teachings of Gnosticism and going to heaven are demonic spirits contriving a way to reconstruct Christianity so that they, through this person, can go back to heaven. That may sound a little weird but that's exactly what has happened. So, you have the *false prophets*, you have the *false spirits*.

Verse 2: "By this *test* you *can* know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in *the flesh* is from God." That's very important. I spent quite a section in *The Christian Passover* book, chapter 26, explaining: *Nature of God and Nature of Man*, and the kind of flesh that Jesus took upon Himself. Anyone who claims that He did not come in the flesh with the same flesh that we have—God indeed did do that—is of the antichrist.

The Gnostics said the world is evil, all physical things are evil, so therefore, flesh is evil. Since flesh is evil, God would not come in the flesh. It's impossible for God to come in the flesh because God would not do that. This is what he's talking about here. Today it's modified a little bit in Gnostic Catholicism, or Catholic Nicolaitanism, which is that they believe that Jesus came in the flesh. However, they have said that we go to heaven.

Verse 3: "And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God...." If it's not of God, who is it from? *Satan the devil*, because you only have the spirits, which are angels from God or the spirits which are angels from Satan the devil. He has his angels because Rev. 12 says that Satan fought, and his angels fought. So he has angels.

"...And this is the *spirit* of antichrist..." (v 3). Nicolaitanism is 'antichristism.' What does it do? *It uses the name of Christ!*

"...which you heard *was* to come, and even now it is already in the world" (v 3).

Verse 5. "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them. We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (vs 5-6).

Now, let me read this concerning the nature of Christ.

pg 77—Gnosticism in the Bible

...As we know, they almost universally call themselves Christians....

that is the Gnostics who had *gnosis*

...Further, there was no single body of Gnostic doctrine, nor even a harmonious community of Gnostic Christianity. They regularly condemned and fought among themselves, at the same time denouncing their external enemies—the Hellenistic mystery cults, Hellenistic philosophy, and Hellenistic Roman Christianity.

The New Testament sometimes refers to them by one of their most common doctrines. This is the docetic teaching that Jesus and the Christ are not the same person. Most but not all Gnostics believed that Christ was a spiritual being who entered into the man Jesus but withdrew just before the crucifixion and it was only Jesus [the man] who died on the cross. This is a natural product of Gnosticism's extreme interpretation of Hellenistic cosmology. If God is perfect and matter is evil, then it is philosophically impossible that God could mix with matter.

What was the first thing that K.J. Stavrinides did? *Changed the nature of God!* What did he say? *God is an emanation*, meaning *God is in everything that is created!* So, you had Hellenistic Christianity come in, and who was Stavrinides? He was half-Greek, half-Turkish; meaning he was an Esauite. Does that blow your mind or not?

Let's see something concerning this mystery of iniquity. This tells us that the mystery of iniquity will, which was working then and we're reading about it here now, would continue and come down clear to our time.

Paul says, 2-Thessalonians 2:7: "For the mystery of **lawlessness**..."—'anomia' where you get anti-nomeanism. That's kind of a difficult word to say so I'll just call it 'anomia,' which is the literal Greek word, meaning *lawlessness*.

Now we're going to read that Jesus gave a prophecy that this very thing would happen. The very thing that I'm telling you about right now, that I'm reading out of this book by Alan Knight, *Primitive Christianity in Crisis*. Remember the Gnostics were Christians, so-called. The Nicolaitans were Christians, so-called. They are called the *mystery of iniquity* or *lawlessness*, but they have a form of morality, which sounds very Biblical and as a matter of fact many times they even use some of the Biblical commandments because they accept them.

But notice what Christ said here. And this is concerning false prophets leading down to Matthew

7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven" What was the will of the Father concerning the Sabbath and Holy Days? *Keep them! All the will of God!* You shall not add to, you shall not take from. Meaning you shall not mix together, which is what they did.

Verse 22: "Many..." Who are the many?

Verse 13: "Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it." That's a majority of people! That's the majority of those who consider themselves Christian in this world. Hence it also includes all of the other religions of the world because they come from the same root: Babylon, Greece, Hellenistic Christianity; Babylon: Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Animism, and the whole thing all come out of Babylon.

Verse 22: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you....'" (vs 22-23). And they claim to be Gnostics—*knowing*. "...I never knew you...."

"...Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness ['anomia']." You know the Scripture that says, 'And hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. Anyone who says I know Him ['gnosis'] and keeps not His commandments is a liar, and the Truth is not in him'

With that background let's continue out of the book by Alan Knight:

pgs 106-107—Christ's view of Gnosticism

I think it appropriate to mention here a common fault in the world of Primitive Christianity....

Now that is the true Churches of God.

...Many tend to fixate on pagan customs and symbols in criticizing Nicolaitan Christianity....

That is the idolatry of the Catholics, the idolatry of the Protestants, and so forth, and they have their own.

...This is a valid issue, but the Bible demonstrates repeatedly that God is displeased by mixing his worship with pagan practices. But the Easter bunny, and Santa Claus and Christmas trees really are not the core issue....

In that, he's correct. That's a periphery. That's a start to begin stripping it away from them.

Mixing pagan practices with the worship of the true God, in an atmosphere of anything goes as long as you paint it Christian, is only one example of the spirit of lawlessness. The real, core issue is the underlying theological, *de facto* licensing of disobedience in general, the wave of sin and human misery that comes from it in the form of war, divorce, the entire gamut and daily grind of strife and emotional dysfunction that afflict mankind, and, most important, the disrespect for God himself and his creation-centered institutions that cuts man off from the true God of the universe.

That's the lawlessness we have today. Look at how the United States is today as a result of Protestantism and Catholicism and bringing in a gnosis that 'I am good enough on myself that I, me, myself alone will determine what is right.' Look at what we have, all done in the name of Christ.

After lawlessness comes Docetism...

which is that Christ descended into the body of a man

...asceticism...

Which then leads to the monasteries and depriving of the flesh.

We see that Gnostic Christians commonly infiltrate the true church....

Does that ring a bell? *Yes!*

This includes antinomian preachers operating inside the primitive church.... Antinomian Christians are depicted as hounding and slandering God's people with their false claims to be more spiritually advanced and the only true Christians accepted by God....

Which is precisely what they say today concerning Sabbath, exactly the same thing.

On page 117, I think is really a profound one. He goes through showing the forms of spirituality, and going through the different religions. This is a direct going after ecumenism.

pg 117—Does that mean all religions are a valid approach to God?

This is currently what is done in ecumenism. So, Nicolaitanism is also ecumenism—isn't it? Even the Catholics are now saying that there are many roads to God. Some are in Hinduism, some are in Buddhism, some are in Protestantism, and so forth, but we're all going to heaven. And even the Jews

believe that. I saw a rabbi on Larry King Live say, 'Well, yes we're all going to heaven. That's that fierce looking rabbi with the black beard and the deep-set eyes.'

Alan Knight^[transcriber's correction] says, 'I think not.' Here's something profound that he wrote:

...The religions of the world essentially are embodiments of natural human spirituality...

And I will add to it: coupled with demonic spirituality. Because wherever false prophets are there are false spirits.

...all shaped by historical and cultural processes into unique individual forms, incorporating much truth along with a large assortment of error. As sponsors of natural human spirituality they frequently guide their followers into genuinely godly conduct. They often do a great deal of good.

That is why it is the spirit of lawlessness, and why God hates it.

pg 128—The theological foundation of Gnostic libertinism is strikingly analogous to what survives in modern Nicolaitan Christianity. This is the teaching that moral conduct and law in general are commonly divorced from salvation. Even intentional sin will not disqualify your salvation as long as you maintain your inner spiritual relationship with God.

Which then is this: Once you have been saved you are always saved regardless of your conduct. And that's what the Baptists teach. They have Nicolaitanism, and that's what Worldwide is teaching now.

There was a woman one time who said she was trying to explain some things to her Baptist friend who said, 'No, regardless of what I do I'm saved. When the rapture comes I'll be raptured off.' She looked her right in the eye and said, 'You mean if you are right in the middle of committing the act of adultery, that you would be raptured?' She said, 'Yes.'

pg 128—Gnostic Ascetic Spirituality

...This is perfectly legitimate, they believe, *if* it is interpreted as protecting man from materialistic passions that tie him to the world, and as long as it is not associated with the deception of the Old Testament and Judaism....

That is you can do whatever you want.

...Thus, Gnostics could rail against the Old Testament and the evil Creator God

Yahweh, and proclaim liberation from Hebrew law, and then turn right around and substitute their own rules for human conduct that sometimes was quite similar or even more strict—
than the laws of the Bible.

Read *The Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfield & Goldin. That is more strict! I mean you talk about strict. What it is, it's the type where they have so many laws they don't want you to think. You are bound up by those laws. Now this gets into a little bit of Col. 2, which we'll cover a little later.

Individual ascetic practices varied widely. Marriage commonly was forbidden [1-Tim. 4], also wine and eating of meat [1-Tim. 4]. Water usually was substituted for wine in celebrating the Lord's supper....

That's exactly what the Mormons do today. Precisely. Mormonism is the most Gnostic religion today as far as getting right back to the believing in angels and so forth. That's what they say, when you're saved you become like an angel.

pg 129—Some [Gnostics] promoted systems of magical charms to overcome the evil angels who blocked the soul from ascending through the planetary spheres after death....

That is to reach heaven.

...Others provided secret passwords to accomplish the same goal....

Masons! Secret handshakes! And when the Mormons are married in the temple they are given a secret temple name.

...Some sects taught that Christian converts obtained various forms of power that rendered them invisible to the evil angels. Valentinian Gnostics believed their sacraments provided them with a spiritual body of light that made them invisible to the demons. They believed that participation in the Eucharist clothed them with the spiritual body of Christ, and this was the guarantee that they were spiritual and would be saved.

Which comes right down into the Catholic doctrine of taking the Eucharist today. That the only way to be saved is through the Eucharist.

We'll continue with this because this is very important. When we get into the section concerning Thyatira that it's developed even more. But suffice to say that Gnosticism and Nicolaitanism is alive and well in this world. One of the things that the Gnostics did was that they said, because the Sabbath was given of the God of the Old Testament, therefore they have a new revelation that they now

keep the eighth day instead of the seventh, and the eighth day is the first day of the week. That came in early, early on.

That's why it's so important to understand that Hebrews was written to Hellenistic Christians who were being infiltrated with the Gnostics, infiltrated with this thing, Sunday-keeping and so forth, and having a totally wrong perspective concerning the Old Covenant and the animal sacrifices and the New Covenant in Christ's sacrifice. This is really dynamite stuff and ties it all together. I know it's a little laborious to read some of these things but there is so much that it's absolutely incredible.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 2:12-17, 12
- 2) Hebrews 4:12-13
- 3) Revelation 19:11-16
- 4) Revelation 2:13-14
- 5) Deuteronomy 12:28-32
- 6) Numbers 25:1-15
- 7) Micah 5:11-15
- 8) Micah 6:1-8
- 9) Matthew 16:6-12
- 10) Matthew 20:25
- 11) Acts 8:9-11
- 12) Matthew 20:26
- 13) 1 Peter 5:1-4
- 14) 1 John 4:1-3, 5-6
- 15) 2 Thessalonians 2:7
- 16) Matthew 7:21-22, 13, 22-23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 1
- Numbers 22:24
- Revelation 17
- John 1:1-3
- Revelation 12
- 1 Timothy 4

Also Referenced:

Books:

- *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop
- *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight
- *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* by J.H. Allen (herbert-armstrong.org/Miscellaneous/Judahs%20Sceptre%20&%20Josephs%20Birthright%2028J.H.Allen%29.pdf)
- *My Catholic Faith* by Louis LaRavoire (amazon.com)
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Lord What Should I Do* by Fred R. Coulter
- *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter

- *The Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfield & Goldin
- *Sunday Facts, Sabbath Fiction* by Russell Targo

Sermon Series:

- *Covenants of God*
- *Hebrews*
- *Refuting Sunda-Keeping*

Article: *The Nicolaitans* by J.H. Allen
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The Seven Church Harvest IV Pergamos—Nicolaitans & Gnosticism

Fred R. Coulter

In part 3 of this series, as you'll remember, we covered things concerning the Nicolaitans out of the book, *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight. He did an excellent job in researching and bringing out all of these things and showing that the problems with Christianity today as it's known in the world has its roots going back to the 5th and 6th centuries B.C., at which time there was a great world-wide reformation of all religions, all the pagan religions; that is called an Axial Period.

This Axial Period developed beginning in the days of Hezekiah when they had the astronomical upheavals and the movement of the earth. When we deal you know how that's how the calendar shifted from 360 days to 365-1/4 days. Also the historical records going back beyond this Axial Period become very hazy.

The book of Daniel was written as the Axial Period for the prophecy from Daniel down to the second return of Christ. All the things that we are learning is that the whole book of Revelation ties in with the book of Daniel. You can't understand Revelation without having a good grasp of the entire Bible, but especially concerning the book of Daniel. And you can't understand Daniel unless you have Revelation because Daniel only brings the story up so far.

So likewise, it is with the Churches that God raised up. That's why we have in Rev. 2 & 3 seven churches. These seven churches depict:

1. the seven churches at that time
2. the historic prophecy of the seven churches down through history to the return of Christ
3. the particular attitudes that Christians would have scattered amongst any of the congregations of God at any particular time

As a matter of fact, when you read the Rev. 2 & 3 you might find from time to time you may be in one attitude or another. It's awfully hard to totally stay in the Philadelphia attitude all the time.

In part three we covered about the Nicolaitans and saw that they had two major things:

1. they had a hierarchy

The Gnostics from which the Nicolaitans came from had the hierarchy of people. Those who were the super-spiritual who were going to make it into whatever their definition of going to heaven was.

2. the weaker Christians who had to have the law to look at in order to keep it

They would make it under great duress into heaven, as they put it. The rest of the people were just animals, and they didn't count anyway. Not only did they have that with people but out of this grew the hierarchy that came to be the Roman Catholic Church.

The next greatest sin that they had, which Alan Knight points out very clearly in this book, was a form of righteousness which appeared so good, and appealed to human nature so well that without the Spirit of God it's awfully hard to detect where it's wrong. We have the same thing in Protestantism and in Catholicism today.

Let's see the warnings that Peter gave. Then we'll look at some of the warnings that Jude gave as to this very thing, which are the doctrines of the Nicolaitans. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans not only had their own form of standard of morality, but they also had a standard of morality where they would go back and borrow the commandments of God to add to their definition of what their 'religious' morality was.

We have the same thing in Protestantism. What is the first thing that they do? {note sermon series: *The Holy Sabbath* and *Refuting Sunday-Keeping*} What is the first thing that they do? *They reject the Sabbath! They reject the Holy Days!* They embrace Christmas and Easter, and all of the pagan holidays, Halloween and all of them. As a matter of fact, if you would look at the Roman calendar, nearly every day is a 'saints' day of some kind. And they have so many feast days in the Roman calendar it is unreal.

Then they come back and say, 'Ok, now that we've rejected this standard, we like the commandment concerning honor your father and mother; that gives us decency in the society. And you know we shouldn't have any murder, yea, we should also embrace that. And you know we should not steal. No, we don't like things stolen from us, we need to embrace that.' Likewise, all the way down.

Then when they get to the tenth commandment it sort of gets fuzzy again because *their* 'religion' is based upon how they feel. So if they have a desire for something, and since *they are the standard to themselves*, then coveting after something does not necessarily become wrong.

Hence it develops into a license to sin. Yet, at the same time, they were taught—and this is all part of the doctrine of the Nicolaitans—that once you were saved, you cannot sin to lose salvation. That’s what the Protestants call ‘eternal security’.

Let’s look at what Peter brought us and review 2-Peter for just a minute. Let’s understand something very important because he’s contrasting the two. First of all, he describes true Christianity.

2-Peter 1:1: “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained *the* same precious faith as ours by *the* righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

When we go through this you might put this vs your own righteousness through your own false religion. Because that’s what he brings out in the second chapter.

Verse 2: “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord” *versus* what was claimed to be added knowledge written in the Gnostic gospels, such as Barnabas, Clement, the Gospel of Truth, and the Gospel of Thomas, which then were the Gnostic gospels, which said, ‘We have greater revelation now after the resurrection of Christ, and our revelation is continuing and ongoing through the inner-workings of the spirit within us.’ Now you see how closely this substitutes what Peter is bringing here.

Verse 3: “According as His Divine power...”—which then is translated *Godhead*. This is the Divine power. The noun form of it is translated *Godhead* in Col. 2. This is vs the power of the angelic pleroma. This is vs the power of the abyss, the deep things of Satan. Peter setting the stage for chapters 2 and 3.

“...His Divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises...” (vs 3-4). This is a superlative in the Greek, that nothing can be better than this, that’s what it’s saying.

“...that through these you may become partakers of *the* Divine nature...” (v 4). That was the whole premise of the doctrine of the Nicolaitans and which goes all the way back to Adam and Eve, that you can partake of the Divine nature by going through these philosophies by following our way of doing things, and then you can come to the power of God.

I think that what we need to do when we’re studying, after you read this book, the Scriptures of God, especially when you come to the Epistles of Paul, Peter, John, Hebrews and Galatians. Every one

of them have elements in combating this Hellenized Christianity, meaning that they were bringing in Greek philosophies and attaching that to the Christianity which Christ brought. Peter is separating this out here as we will see when we come to 1-Pet. 2, what he says concerning them.

That by these promises of God “...you may become partakers of *the* Divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is in the* world through lust” (v 4).

Now then, he tells you that you must have works, and this is part of the doctrine of the Nicolaitans: you don’t need the works according to law.

Verse 5: “And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith, virtue ...” Faith means that

- you come to God
- you believe He is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him
- you believe that His Word is His sovereign Word
- you believe what God inspired to be written is so

Stop and think about it for just a minute. God, when He created, what did He do? *He commanded and it came into existence!* That’s what we are to believe concerning the Word of God; *it is sovereign!* It is the only way to eternal life. So, when he says here, “...having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith, virtue...”—virtue is the right kind of Godly conduct according to the standard of the commandments that God has given, which then, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are to be written in our hearts and our minds!

“...and to virtue, knowledge... [the true knowledge of Christ] ...and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, Godliness...[having the character of God] ...and to Godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the [agape] love *of God*” (vs 5-7). {Note: 1-Cor. 13} ***If you don’t have the love of God***, being able to speak in tongues, having all knowledge, understanding all mysteries, giving all of your goods to causes, and all of this sort of thing—***you are nothing!*** The love of God is defined by: *‘This is the love of God that we keep His commandments!’*

Verse 8: “For *if* these things exist and abound in you, they *will* cause *you to be* neither lacking effort nor lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the one in whom these things are not present is *spiritually* blind—so short-sighted *that* he has forgotten that he was purified

from his old sins. For this reason, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure; because *if* you are doing these things, you will never fall at any time. For in this way, you will be richly granted an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Therefore, I will not neglect to make you always mindful of these things, although you *already* know them and have been established in the present truth” (vs 8-12). Then he says he’s going to die shortly.

Verse 16: “For we did not follow cleverly concocted myths... [that is going directly against the doctrine of Nicolaitanism] ...*as our authority*, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His magnificent glory; because He received glory and honor from God the Father when *the* voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, **‘This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I am well pleased.’**” (vs 16-17).

Notice what he’s leading up to. I really want you to grasp what Peter is saying here, then in chapter two you will see the difference.

Verse 18: “And this *is the* voice from heaven that we heard when we were with Him on the Holy mountain. We also possess the confirmed prophetic Word...” (vs 18-19). That prophecy can be two things:

- 1) the prophets of old
- 2) the prophecy of the inspired speaking of Christ when He was here

The Gospels that were written by that time, many of the letters of Paul that were written at that time, which you will see at the end of 2-Peter; he talks about *the writings of Paul* as if they’re Scripture already, which they were.

“...to which you do well to pay attention, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and *the* morning star arises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture...” (vs 19-20). Prophecy in this case doesn’t mean just the Prophets in Scripture. This means *any inspired writings* of Scripture: whether it be the Law, the Prophets or the Psalms.

You can take the test of that and going through and looking at the warnings God gave in the Law, what would happen if you would add to or take away from. That’s precisely what is happened with Nicolaitanism. I mean when you go through and read this book it’s going to open up vast doors of understanding to you. You will no longer have a mystery as concerning the false Christianity of this world. I think it’s very important of us to realize this: that in order for us to reach the world we must have an answer for it. It’s one thing to come up and say: ‘You’re wrong.’ *Well, tell me why I’m wrong.*

‘Well, you’re just wrong.’ *How do you know I’m wrong?* ‘I’m telling you, you’re wrong.’

But if you go up and say: ‘What you’re doing is not right according to the real true Scriptures, and by the way you have a corrupt Bible with this *NIV* and *New American Standard*. And do you know why you are wrong? Here’s why you are wrong: You’re assuming to set yourself up above God.’ *Oh, no that can’t be!* Then we can say, ‘You are, because if you don’t believe the sovereign Word of God, you’re establishing your own righteousness.’ *Well, we keep the commandments.* ‘Do you really?’

Then we have an entrance into really preaching the Sabbath and Holy Days—don’t we? And that follows right along with the series *Refuting Sunday-Keeping*.

Also is in this book, *Sunday Facts and Sabbath Fiction* by Dr. Russell Tardo, all of the doctrines of Nicolaitanism against Sabbath and Holy Days is here, even down to the point that is almost identical as to what the Gnostics have said, that if you keep the Law you are a weak Christian, and that Christ ended the Law, Christ abolished the Sabbath. It comes right out of the cauldron of Nicolaitanism. That’s why when you come to 2-Pet. 1 and you are reading these words, there’s a reason that he wrote them. That’s what we need to understand.

Verse 20: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone’s own *private* interpretation.” That’s the first step to Nicolaitanism. A private interpretation then allows you, which is license, to reject the commandments of God you don’t like. *That is a private interpretation! Sunday-keeping is a private interpretation!* Eternal security, to where you can’t lose salvation regardless of willful sin, *is a private interpretation!* Peter is laying the groundwork here in no uncertain terms.

Verse 21: “Because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit.” Go back and read about any of the prophets of God, any of the apostles of God, and you can add into that. Do you think that they would go about writing their own words and doing their own thing? *Absolutely not!*

2-Peter 2:1: “But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, personally denying *the* Lord who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves.” The reason he’s saying this is because one of the doctrines is regardless of what you do you’re not going to lose salvation, and God is not going to punish you.

Verse 2: “And many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; *and* because of them, the way of the Truth will be blasphemed.” Isn’t that what they do? Isn’t that what they do with the Old Testament and the laws of God? *Yes!* This came in and infected the Church. The Churches of God there in Rev. 2 & 3 is a warning of what we need to be careful of. We need to be alert to the doctrines that we are not seduced from within, which is what happened to Worldwide Church of God, is happening to the Seventh Day Adventists, and will happen to the Church of God 7th Day, and any other church that doesn’t understand the doctrine of the Nicolaitans and *the mystery of lawlessness*.

There will be men who will come in and subvert it, and that is their goal. You need to understand the oath that the Jesuits take for the destruction of Protestantism and Sabbath-keeping groups. And since they cannot bring about an inquisition today, they infiltrate and just take down by attrition, and gain importance in position. Maybe for years and years and years never reveal their hand until they get their hands on the hierarchical control and then they can do whatever they *want*. ***It always begins by bringing in false doctrine!*** One of the first things: attack the Passover, attack the nature of God, confuse you concerning that, denigrate Jesus Christ and now you’re all set up for Protestantism. Since Protestantism is going back to Rome, that’s where all roads lead, that’s where it’s going to end up. It started right here.

Verse 3: “Also, through insatiable greed they will with enticing messages exploit you for gain...” If you don’t believe this, watch Pat Robertson some night. ***Vain words!*** Do you want a better life? Do you want more money? Do you want happiness? Do you want all these good things in life? *Well, of course, everybody does!* They’re appealing to covetousness.

God’s way is you *repent* of sin. Being converted sometimes is difficult. You don’t believe it read Apostle Paul. Sometimes you’re going to be persecuted for it, and yea, sometimes you may be even killed for it. Pat Robertson is appealing to everybody’s covetousness and give them good things. ‘And by the way, we’re going to have a campaign for \$100,000 tonight.’ Roll the drums, blow the horn!

“...for whom the judgment of old is in *full* force, and their destruction is *ever* watching” (v 3). Peter’s making the point here, if you don’t believe that God is going to punish for this, listen up!

Verse 4: “For if God did not spare *the* angels who sinned, but, having cast *them* into Tartarus, delivered *them* into chains of darkness to be kept for *the* judgment.” Then you can say, ‘God’s going to

take care of the angels. But you know, that doesn’t apply to human beings.’

Verse 5: “And *if* God did not spare *the* ancient world...” He wants us to learn a lesson concerning the Flood. And everywhere you go in the world and look at any archeological strata, you have the evidence of a flood perpetually before your eyes.

I remember when we were living in Salt Lake City and I would go visit brethren up in Montana. Well I would have to go east and north. When you’re going over the Continental Divide you really don’t feel like you’re going over the Continental Divide because it gradually goes up and up! When you’re up there pretty close to the 8000-9000-foot level, where the roads go through on the Continental Divide, they’re just little hills. Some of these little hills are kind of like sandy hills, kind of like limestone, and it’s the light tan colored stones.

One day as I was driving up I thought to myself, I’m going to take off on this little road, because it goes up to this mountain. It wasn’t a mountain, it was just like a little hill. I went up there and I thought I’m going to get on top of here. I looked around and I kicked a few rocks, and lo and behold what did I find? Fossils! There’s the evidence of the Flood everywhere!

Peter’s saying you need to understand because of sin. Read Gen. 6. All flesh had corrupted His way. The wickedness of man was constant from his youth up.

“...but saved Noah, *the* eighth, a preacher of righteousness, when He brought *the* Flood upon the world of *the* ungodly” (vs 5). Then someone will say, ‘Well, that was back then. That already happened, but not for us today.’

Verse 6. “And having reduced *the* cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, condemned *them* with a catastrophic *destruction*, making *them* an example *for those* who would be ungodly in the future.” Of course, if you preach that in San Francisco you’re run out of town with a spear in your back.

Verse 7: “And *if* He personally rescued righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the lawless ones *living* in licentious conduct.” Sometimes you’re stuck where you live. I think Lot should have moved, but he didn’t, so he was going around moaning and groaning. Finally the angels came and took them so that he would be able to get out of there.

Verse 8: (For that righteous man, dwelling among them, through seeing and hearing *their* lawless activities, *was* tormented day-by-day in *his* righteous soul,)” It went on every day.

Verse 9: “*The Lord knows how to rescue the Godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unrighteous to the Day of Judgment to be punished; but particularly those who walk after the flesh in corrupting lust, and hold in utter contempt the lordship of God. They are audacious and self-willed. They are not afraid to blaspheme the Divine powers*” (vs 9-10)—*despise lordship*, despising the rule, the true Lordship of Christ in your life.

Verse 11: “Whereas, angels, who are greater in strength and power, do not bring a railing condemnation against them before *the Lord*. But these—as irrational brute beasts, born to be caught and destroyed—blaspheme those things of which they are ignorant, *and shall be utterly destroyed in their own corruption...*” (vs 11-12)—which is license to sin, *and they do*.

Look at the society around us built upon Protestantism and Catholicism today. There was a time when they adhered to the rules more closely. There was a time when they actually kept the nine commandments that they say that they kept. They did a pretty good job with it. But what happens when you have a grace like they have and begin to water it down? *You have license to sin!* Then:

- they remove God out of the schools
- they removed God out of the government
- they remove God out of the courts

because it’s all a religion of license. Then they began to then put up barriers against the Truth of God, even against the nine commandments, which they held, because it’s the mystery of lawlessness and license to sin, and now look at our society, because that’s what it ends up in.

Verse 13: “They are bringing upon themselves *the reward of unrighteousness, while finding pleasure in satisfying their lustful desires day-by-day.... [to live excessively] ...They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their own deceptions, while feasting together with you*”—right there in the Church of God. This is why he’s writing this, because this was taking place within the Churches of God. He was writing a tremendous warning to them. God preserved that for us today.

Verse 14: “Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, *they are engaged in seducing unstable souls, having a heart trained in lustful cravings—cursed children Who have abandoned the straight way [which tells us if there’s a right way there’s a wrong way] ...They have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the reward of wickedness*” (vs 14-15).

His advice was to ecumenize the pagan

religions with Israel so God would have to curse them. That’s one of the sins that happened with the church of Pergamos along with the Nicolaitans. It became so bad that God said, ‘I’m going to fight against you.’ Now, as I mentioned before, you think about it. How bad must it have been in the Church of God for Christ to say, ‘If you don’t repent I’m going to fight against you.’

They’re trying to bring them into the congregation, and what they’re doing is actually infiltrating a ‘newer spiritual interpretation’ while they’re feasting with you. Yes, they would keep the Feasts of God for a while, but their true goal was to get rid of the Feasts of God and to bring in the pagan feasts. That’s the ultimate goal! A righteousness that looks so good it’s hard to believe that it’s wrong.

Verse 16: “But he received a rebuke for his own transgression; *the dumb donkey, speaking in a man’s voice, restrained the madness of the prophet. These false prophets are fountains without water, clouds driven by a storm, for whom is reserved the blackest of darkness forever. For they speak bombastic words of vanity...*” (vs 16-18).

What are great swelling words of vanity? They can even be brought out humbly, but they’re vain! As long as it goes against God’s way, regardless of how softly, how nicely, how logical it is put, *they are great swelling words of vanity*. For example you could say, ‘You’re just struggling so hard to try and keep the commandments of God. You know that’s not the way you need to do. You just need to walk away from that and you just need to have the inner peace within your heart. And that you connect with Christ.’ *Those are great swelling words of vanity spoken in a humble way!* So then on the other hand you can have great bombastic preaching too. Either way *it’s swelling words of vanity against God!* Anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

Verse 18: “For they speak bombastic words of vanity, enticing *others* through the lusts of the flesh by granting indulgences to sin, *and ensnaring* those who had indeed escaped from those who live in deception.”

Satan wants to bring the true believers back into the world and back into his religion! That’s why he infiltrates the Churches of God. I never heard of a true minister of God infiltrating a Protestant group to try and bring them down. Satan’s already got them. No one needs to infiltrate them; they’re already gone. So, who is Satan after? Who does he accuse day and night before the throne of God? *The saints of God!* That’s why they infiltrate into the Churches of God. That’s the place that Satan wants to get.

Verse 19: “While promising them freedom...” And that is their word. We have freedom, *freedom, freedom*; liberty, *liberty, liberty*!

“...they themselves are actually slaves of corruption because by whatever anyone is overcome, he is also held in bondage. For if, after escaping the moral defilements of the world...” (vs 19-20).

The pollution’s of the world to them in their way of thinking, you can overcome the pollution’s of the world not by keeping the commandments of God, but by rising above it. But the problem is when you rise above it, you rise into it, and they don’t realize that.

Verse 20: “For if, after escaping the moral defilements of the world through *the* knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again become entangled in them, and are overcome...” There are two steps in it:

1) first of all, you get entangled in it

And we’ve seen how people in the different Sabbath-keeping churches get entangled in this lawless philosophy, which ends up in Sunday-keeping and so forth.

2) they continue in it

They are overcome by it. When that happens: maybe even some of the very people you knew in a congregation that you attended now have gone back so far into the world that when you begin to talk to them about the Truth and the *way* of God, and the Sabbath and Holy Days, it’s just like there’s a blank curtain over their eyes and they look at you and say, ‘Now, now. We still love you, but we have graduated. We now have a greater spirituality.’ That’s how they will do it. If someone who’s been in the *true* Church of God comes back to you with that attitude they have been overcome, and unless they repent they have the Lake of Fire to look forward to. *No question about it!*

“...the final end is worse than the beginning” (v 20). Why? *Because they sear their conscience against the pricking of the Holy Spirit, because their sins have been deliberate!*

Verse 21: “For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing *it*, to turn back from the Holy commandment *that was* delivered to them. But the *pronouncement found* in the true proverb has happened to them: *The dog has returned to eat his own vomit; and the sow that was washed has returned to her wallowing place in the filthy mire*” (vs 21-22)—and is just so thrilled and happy to do so and squeals with delight.

Take *The Seven General Epistles* book and go read the section where I’ve combined 2-Peter and

Jude and you will see how that all comes together in a far more powerful way than just each one separately. While some commentators may think that Jude copied Peter or Peter copied Jude, that perhaps may be true, but I think that the magnitude of the sin was so great that in order to explain to the brethren how serious it was they used many of the same examples.

Jude 3: “Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled... [it was obligatory] ... to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints”—because now they were getting another faith.

Verse 4: “For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness [license to sin] and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” When you deny God, what did Jesus say?

Matthew 10:32: “Now then, whoever shall confess Me before men, that one will I also confess before My Father Who *is* in heaven..”

(go to the next track)

Verse 33: “But whoever shall deny Me before men, that one will I also deny before My Father, Who *is* in heaven.” There’s one thing for sure, you don’t want Christ to deny you, but that’s what they’ve done with their practices.

Let’s read Rev. 2 with the Church of Pergamos again, and let’s see why Christ was so vociferous in His correction of this church. Revelation 2:12: “And to the angel of the Church...” That means messenger, because you can’t conceive of a righteous angel being as wicked as this was.

“...in Pergamos, write: ‘these things says He Who has the sharp two-edged sword.... [His very word] ...I know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan *is*...’” (vs 12-13).

When you’re dealing with where the throne of Satan is and you’re living in the very city that is permeated with all of the wickedness of Satan, and you’re just bombarded with it day and night, what happens? *Your guard let’s down!*

Now, they resisted it: “...but you are holding fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells” (v 13).

After he was slain what happened? Verse 14: “But I have a few things against you because you

have there *those* who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication” There are two kinds of fornication:

- *physical fornication* by having temple prostitutes going clear back into rank paganism
- *spiritual fornication* (Rev. 17) with Mystery Babylon the Great, and ‘things sacrificed to idols.’

I think that’s the beginning of the Eucharist.

Verse 15: “Moreover, you also have *those* who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent! For if *you* do not *repent*, I will come to you quickly, and will make war against them with the sword of My mouth” (vs 15-16).

Now let me read some things out of *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight.

Pg 106-107—Christ’s View of Gnosticism

...Gnostic antinomianism takes first place—disobedience, immorality, religious lawlessness, the ‘mystery’ of lawlessness. The Apostle John in 1-John 3 couldn’t say enough about it—God and disobedience is nonsense, a logical impossibility.

That’s why the great swelling words of vanity, being this: ‘We have a new revelation concerning Sabbath. The number eight means new beginning. We all want to advance beyond, and since we are to be new creatures in Christ, we now can set aside the seventh day Sabbath and we can worship on Sunday, which is the eighth day, a new beginning.’ That sounds so good, and so smooth, and so righteous that it is so hard to detect that that is absolute blasphemy and sin. But that’s what it results in.

...Many tend to fixate on pagan customs and symbols in criticizing Nicolaitan Christianity. This is a valid issue, and the bible demonstrates repeatedly that God is displeased by mixing his worship with pagan practices....

But as Alan points out, it’s not just Santa Claus or the Easter bunny; it is the philosophy behind it that gives you the permission to sin.

...The real, core issue is the underlying theological, *de facto* licensing of disobedience in general, the wave of sin and human misery that comes from it in the form of war, divorce, the entire gamut and daily grind of strife and emotional dysfunction that afflict mankind, and,

most important, the disrespect for God himself and his creation-centered institutions that cuts man off from the true God of the universe.

Profound statement! You can see it everywhere. They have succeeded in making God, and belief in Him an opinion. Meaning that every other religion in the world is as valid as what you may think, because what you think is your opinion, and what I think is my opinion—and my opinion is right, and I stand before God because I have greater revelation than any of the rest of you. There you have it. When you turn on the Trinity channel, you’ll be able to pick it up just like that! You’ll pick that stuff up immediately.

pg 107—After lawlessness comes docetism...

—which is the dual nature of Christ. The Christ descended from heaven and possessed the body of the man Jesus. So, Christ did not come in the flesh, and the only thing that was crucified was the man Jesus, because the Christ left Him and returned to heaven. That’s docetism, meaning *the dual nature of Christ*. After that, asceticism, which we’ll talk about concerning Col. 2.

...The presence of those statements implies some Christians have a problem with recognizing Nicolaitanism for what it is....

When you get done reading this book you won’t have any problem.

...Instead they believe in tolerating it. Pergamum... [the Church at Pergamos] ...is a prime example of this. There are several other Scriptures in which Jesus makes a special point that Primitive Christians should not participate religiously with Gnostic Christians.

We see that Gnostic Christians commonly infiltrate the true church....

That’s why periodically the Church has to be scattered. That’s why periodically there are upheavals within the Church, because there’s greater work that God is doing to purge it of the Nicolaitanism.

This includes antinomian preachers operating inside the primitive church....

Antinomian Christians are depicted as hounding and slandering God’s people with their false claims to be more spiritually advanced and the only true Christians accepted by God....

And it's right in this book, *Sunday Facts and Sabbath Fiction*, that's what they say: 'We Sunday-keepers are only the true ones. If you keep the law, you keep the Sabbath, why you're a weak Christian. Brother and sister, we'll pray for you enlightenment.' That's how they look down. That's what happened! It's amazing! It's amazing what happens here.

pg 108—Hellenistic Christianity did not die with its radical cousin, Gnosticism. It is prophesied to be a continuing problem of the church....

Then Alan writes here how it comes down into—described there in 2-Thess. 2—the *mystery of lawlessness*, which only Christ can destroy.

Nearly all serious scholars—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish—freely admit the historical veracity of the Hellenistic conversion of Primitive Christianity....

That's why these Scriptures were written, and that's why the book of Hebrews was written. Very profound!

The earliest intellectuals of Roman Christianity did not dispute this, In fact, there were quite proud of their Hellenistic roots! Clement, Origen and others believed that Hellenistic philosophy, and specifically its religious component, was given to the pagan world by the will of God as an intermediate revelation of truth, to prepare pagans for the full revelation of God's (Hellenistic) truth in Romans Christianity.

There is a grain of truth to that. God did reveal to them *but not* to change their pagan religions into the kind that they changed it to. God revealed Himself to them that they would come to God. Notice what they did, and this, in fact, is talking about that religious reformation which took place.

Romans 1:17: "For therein *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith..." From God's faith *into* you, and your faith *back to* God.

"...according as it is written: 'The just shall live by faith.' Indeed, *the* wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the Truth in unrighteousness" (vs 17-18). That's precisely what they said, 'We don't need the Scriptures of the Old Testament. God of the Old Testament was evil and wicked. And those angels that helped Him create the world are evil and wicked. We need to get away from this.' Rather when God revealed Himself, *He revealed that He was Creator, He revealed that He was God!*

Verse 19: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest among them, for God has manifested *it* to them." They didn't have a revelation of their religion. What they had was a revelation of the true God. When they contrived their philosophical religion they now had not excuse. So, the *grain of truth* is entirely different than what they present.

Verse 20: "For the invisible things of Him are perceived from *the* creation of *the* world, being understood by the things that were made—both His eternal power and Godhead..." That's what Nicolaitanism is, and when we get to the depths of Satan, the depths of Satan is claimed to be coming right from the Godhead. ***But it's coming right from the fountain of Satan himself!***

"...—so that they are without excuse; because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful; but they became vain in their own reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened. While professing themselves to be *the* wise ones, they became fools" (vs 20-22). That is the foundation of 'philosophia,' *philosophy*. Hellenistic philosophy is a 'religion,' so God turned them over to them.

Notice what happens to the society after that. Just exactly as is happening in the world today, and in America especially.

Verse 23: "And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into *the* likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed creatures, and creeping things... [I want you to notice what God does every time that happens]: ...For this cause, God also abandoned them to uncleanness..." (vs 23-24). There comes a certain point where that God enforces a penalty. The ones who receive this penalty in their own delusions look upon it as new revelation.

"...through the lusts of their hearts, to disgrace their own bodies between themselves" (v 24). Do we not have the 'new religious revelation' today? That homosexual marriage is really the *in* thing? This is a great revelation. We have greater insight. Any confirmed homosexual, male or female, will tell you that God's condemnation of it in the Old Testament proves that He's an evil, wicked God who has no love.

Verse 25: "Who exchanged the Truth of God for the lie... [with all their stories and fables] ...and they worshiped and served the created thing more than the One Who is Creator, Who is blessed into the ages. Amen."

The second stage becomes even more severe, v 26: "For this cause, God abandoned them

to disgraceful passions; for even their women changed the natural use *of sex* into that which is contrary to nature; and in the same manner also the men, having left the natural use *of sex* with the woman, were inflamed in their lustful passions toward one another—men with men shamelessly committing lewd *acts*, and receiving back within themselves a fitting penalty for their error” (vs 26-27). Today that is spelled AIDS, and any of the other 60 venereal diseases.

Here’s the final step, v 28: “And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge, God abandoned them to a reprobate mind...”—one incapable of coming to the Truth, because you can only come to the Truth when you repent. It’s amazing! It’s all in the Bible! It is something! That’s why you need to understand God’s Word is a *living* Word.

‘Given over to a reprobate mind’—I can’t help but thinking of seeing this fellow on television. But anyway, when I heard him make the statement, ‘Yes, Larry, it’s a wonderful thing. You just sit there and you meditate and you come to the point of complete silence in your mind. Then you listen to the silence.’ How you can hear silence? *Well, MCI has the answer. You drop a pin!*

Notice what happens, a fitting description of our society, v 29: “Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, guile, evil dispositions; whisperers, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things *and practices*; disobedient to parents, void of understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable *and* unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God... [because He revealed it to them] ...that those who commit such things are worthy of death, not only practice these things themselves, but also approve of those who commit *them*” (vs 29-32).

I just read to you the *TV Guide*, and the police blotter, and the FBI’s most wanted, and the history of wars.

pg 110—The only Gnostic sect named in that connection is the Nicolaitans. Even more important, the historical sources indicate the essence of Nicolaitans Gnosticism is the same spiritualized antinomianism...

I like the Greek pronunciation: ‘*anomia*’—*lawlessness*.

...the idea that salvation is completely unaffected by even willful disobedience, and the licentiousness that naturally results.

Isn’t it amazing that now they estimate that 40% of all Catholic priests are infected with HIV—the *mystery of lawlessness*.

This does not mean the Nicolaitans were the only Gnostics bothering the primitive church. However, since they are mentioned by name, and since they appear to have been a more biblical and spiritual form of Gnosticism much in keeping with the form of Hellenistic Christianity that survives as modern Christianity, it seems an appropriate choice for designating those who carry forward the Gnostic tradition of religious lawlessness today.

Chapter 6: Forms of Spirituality

The first time I heard of the word *spirit* was when I was in high school, and I was a freshman in high school. That was the first time we had a sports rally. We all went down to the gymnasium, and it was for the football team. The cheerleaders were there. And they started out this thing: Do you have spirit? Everybody’s yelling. I couldn’t figure out what that was. What do you mean spirit?

But I think Alan does a very good job here in showing that there is, with the spirit of man, a spirituality of human goodness that people like to cultivate, which then filters through all the religions of the world through their do-goodism. And he points out then how this connects up with the demons. Now, please understand, all demons are not necessarily coming to you as evil and wicked. There are some self-righteous demons. Christ found them in the synagogue—didn’t He? *Yes!* And their goal and purpose is to associate, to possess people, come and associate with those who are the true believers in hopes that they may return to God forgiven. So, it gets to be quite a complex thing.

pg 126—Gnostic Immorality

...Of course, in the flexible antinomian environment of Gnosticism...

Gnosticism means, *to know*. The big G over the Masonic doors means Gnosis. You come to the Masons and you admit you know nothing. Only the Masons have the key to the understanding. All of the degrees is to finally work you to the depths of Satan to worship him. In this lawless environment

...you could craft your distinctions according to your taste. As we saw above, some Gnostics emphasized that specific rules of morality are only a matter of personal opinion, so one cannot lay down a rigid standard of right and wrong.

That’s what we have today.

If your new-found spiritual excuses do not wash with your fellow Gnostic churchgoers, you might have to find a new congregation.

There are various degrees of Gnosticism and Nicolaitanism. You know, if you want to have the hollering, shouting, jumping up and down, and leaping screaming kind, go to a Pentecostal church. If you want to have a stayed, very religious cold one, go to a Catholic Mass. If you want to have something very religious where you deny the flesh, well then, you go to that church. If you want to have one where anything goes, well then go to one where the enjoy life: wine, women, song, and so forth.

pg 127—No problem. Within the Gnostic Christian world you could pick and choose, from the radical [lawless] antinomian liberation of the far left were seemingly anything goes, to the far right Gnostic sects that took their asceticism seriously....

I'll talk about that when I get to Col. 2.

...Early Christianity was highly diverse, not unlike today. Some Gnostic churches allowed marriage and accumulation of wealth, while the conservative groups that didn't, damned to hell their more liberal brethren.

So it's no wonder you even have fights amongst Protestantism today. Now, this is straight out of Mormonism here, and the Mormons do this today.

pg 128—Water usually was substituted for wine in celebrating the Lord's supper....

Wine, after all, is evil and the Mormons take water and bread with their communion. Others however:

pg 129—...Valentinian Gnostics believed their sacraments provided them with a spiritual body of light that made them invisible to the demons. They believed that participation in the eucharist clothed them with the spiritual body of Christ, and this was the guarantee that they were spiritual and would be saved.

That is regardless of their behavior.

pg 140—The term *lawlessness* invokes certain images. A group of people sitting peacefully in church singing hymns seems anything but lawless. For some the term 'mystery of iniquity', as it sometimes is translated, conjures up ideas of a Satanic cult performing obscene rituals and maybe sacrificing babies as the ancient Canaanites did. Religious lawlessness, however, is not necessarily violent nor outwardly vulgar.

pg 141—Lawless Christians today say 'Let's worship God, but we're under the liberty of the New Covenant and we'll make up our own rules about how we worship and we'll decide for ourselves what moral standards if any we attach to it.'

They reject, with their freedom:

...the necessity of having a codified law in favor instead of having spontaneous demonstration of devotion to Jesus...

...from one's own heart (which, by necessity, ends from one's own heart (which, by necessity, ends up being an expression of natural human spirituality).

Let's understand this: **you cannot save yourself!** It does not come from within you from yourself, otherwise you could save yourself.

Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not **of** your own selves..." The Greek here is very explicit. The English word *of* comes from the Greek word 'ek'—*from something within*, out. It does not come *out* of you; not from within you.

"...it is the gift of God, not of works..." (vs 8-9). Remember, Sunday is a work. Christmas is a work. Think on that! It's a *human work* to substitute the righteousness of God.

"...so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (vs 9-10)—which is the good works of

- the commandments of God
- the statutes of God
- the Sabbath
- the Holy Days

all of these things are the *good works of God*.

- to love God
- to love each other
- to love your neighbor as yourself

Those are the things that *God gave you to walk in*. Those do not come naturally. You cannot conjure it up from within yourself. *It must come from God!*

True love from God, and the ultimate is to love your enemy. And you cannot do that without the Spirit of God. Love in its truest form is very difficult because the demands of it are so great that only the love of God can fill it. Not human spirituality and the fuzzy-wuzzy 'let's all be warm and good to each other.' That's not to put down natural affection that people have, and so forth. But that is to say do not replace the true love of God with

human love.

Now Alan gives a very good summary of it here. What do the Nicolaitan systems have today?

pg 141-142:

- We are free to utilize any custom or practice we wish in worshipping God, as long as we Christianize it....

In a book *My Catholic Faith*, which is one of their catechism books, it says that the Catholic Church made a practice of taking the pagan worship things and changing the name, because they had the *right* to Christianize them. Profound!

...Worship God in any way you feel appropriate. Listen to your heart. Spirituality is from the inner man.

No! Spirituality comes from without, from God.

- All Old Testament practices and customs must be rejected in worshipping God. Spirituality must spring spontaneously from within, not imposed from the outside.
- True spirituality cannot be found in obedience to biblical law....

If you go by Biblical law and you keep the Sabbath you'll never find spirituality, they claim, 'But you come to our church on Sunday and you'll find it.' You walk in there and they're singing songs and they're happy, and they're oh so good. They have got so many people there. How can all these people be wrong, and that choir sings praises to God and sends shivers up and down your spine, and you know this is got to be from God. You have to watch what they teach, not what you feel. You have to look at the commands of God and not just trust the sight of your eyes. You have to understand that it can't be from within because from within, Paul said, 'In my flesh I find no good thing.'

- True spirituality cannot be found in obedience to biblical law. On the other hand, the institutions and rules we substitute for it, being 'spontaneous' and spiritual, can be enforced and held as binding on Christians, even to the point of executing offenders.

Isn't that something?

- Do you believe in the Passover? *Yes!*
- Do you believe in Sabbath? *Yes!*
- Do you believe in the Holy Days of God? *Yes!*

You recant, you renounce it, or you lose your head, and I do this in the name of God. The Inquisition! killed millions!

- Disobedience to moral standard is acceptable, within limits...

- A little gambling doesn't hurt.
- A little cheating doesn't hurt.
- A little lying doesn't hurt.

Like this one woman who went into Wal-Mart. We have a lady down south who works in Wal-Mart part-time. And she has to guard the back door, because people can go out the back door. So, here comes this woman with a cart filled with a lot of expensive things.

So she said, 'May I see your receipt?' Oh, I don't have it. I don't have time for it. I got a doctor's appointment for my little son here, and I have to get there right away. 'Well ma'am, I need a receipt.' *Well, huh...* So she gave her some old receipts. She said, 'Well this is not for today. I need a receipt for what you have in there.' *Well, huh, I got to run off to the appointment right away.* So, she zoomed out. And they found over \$700 worth of things. Can you imagine \$700 worth of things in a Wal-Mart cart? I mean, she wasn't shopping at the Ritz there. No morals about it! *Well that's ok to do it. If Wal-Mart is dumb enough to let me take it, thank you.*

...if one finds obedience very difficult. Just do what comes naturally to you. Listen to your heart. Spirituality is from the inner, not the outer man.

That is all of your lust being there. And you watch some of these movies that are driven by lust. Anyway, I saw an ad in this movie with Michael Douglas. It was all on this driving lust of this woman who was stalking him sexually. He finally gave into it because, after all the inner feeling said, well this has got to be so good, how could this be wrong.

- There is no hard and fast definition of morality. Every man should judge for himself. Listen to your heart. Spirituality is from the inner man.
- God is pure love.... [therefore, He will never condemn you] ...All you have to do is be kind and positive towards others....

Go watch Oprah Winfrey. If you want to know about being kind and positive and doing good things, and she will have stories on there that are so heartbreaking that the whole audience is just crying, and they go away feeling so good. But it's all lawlessness. And this whole society is that way. {note sermon: *Stinking Thinking*.} This whole society is totally caught up in it.

...Other than that, specific conduct is not significant. Listen to your heart. Spirituality is from the inner man.

- We should lead a moral life as regards our fellow man. On the other hand, why would God, who lives in heaven and is so far above us, impose any specific standards on how we worship him?

That is Nicolaitanism. Here's some other part of it, pg 143:

- The total self-sufficiency and total exclusivity of grace [meaning you can't fall from grace]. Grace excludes the possibility of law and sin having any effect on salvation.
- Eternal security. Once-saved, always-saved, even if one turns back willfully into sin.
- Jesus not only forgives the penalty of sin, but abolished the law itself.

Meaning without law there is no sin. so therefore. why worry? Just be good.

- Church officials have the authority, not only to explain and apply biblical principles, but also to overturn and change the teachings of the Bible, including teachings of the New Testament.

Which come via this way: 'Well, Christ really didn't mean that.

- The work of the Holy Spirit includes not only inspiring and guiding Christians to understand and apply biblical principles correctly, but also how and when to overturn and change Biblical Scripture, including the teachings of the New Testament.

IV. Church at Thyatira:

Now let's come back to Rev. 2 and we'll begin the next section with Thyatira. I think with the background that I have brought to you from #3 and #4, when we get to the depths of Satan then you'll understand even more.

Revelation 2:18: "And to the angel of the Church in Thyatira write: 'These things says the Son of God, He Who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet *are* like fine brass. I know your works, and love, and service, and faith, and your endurance, and your works...' " (vs 18-19). They have mentioned for their *works* twice.

{Note DVD: *Israel of the Alps* (produced by the 7th Day Adventist Church)—explains more about this time in history than in any other time}

"...and the last *are* more than the first. But I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants into committing

fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols" (vs 19-20). Notice that's a reverse order in Pergamos. Pergamos is to eat things sacrificed to idols and commit fornication. Here fornication is put first because the spiritual fornication really comes to the fore.

Verse 21: "And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, but she did not repent. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their works. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Who searches *the* reins and hearts..." (vs 21-23). Christ is establishing His power of judgment over all the Churches.

"...and I will give to each of you..." [this comes down to an individual level] ...according to your works. But to you I say, and to *the* rest who *are* in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will not cast upon you any other burden" (vs 23-24).

So next time we will cover What is the Depths of Satan? *and* Where did that come from? And I think you are going to be absolutely amazed!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Peter 1:1-12, 16-21
- 2) 1 Peter 2:1-21
- 3) Jude 3-4
- 4) Matthew 10:32-33
- 5) Revelation 2:12-16
- 6) Romans 1:17-32
- 7) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 8) Revelation 2:18-24

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 3
- Colossians 2
- 1 Corinthians 13
- Genesis 6
- Revelation 17

Also referenced:

Book:

- *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight
- *Sunday Facts and Sabbath Fiction* by Dr. Russell Tardo (faithfulword.com/tracts/Sunday_Facts.pdf)
- *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter

Sermon Series:

- *The Holy Sabbath*
- *Refuting Sunday-Keeping.*

Sermons: *Stinking Thinking*

DVD: *Israel of the Alps* (produced by the 7th Day Adventist Church)

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The Seven Church Harvest V Church of Thyatira—What is the Depths of Satan?

Fred R. Coulter

We've come in our overview of the seven churches of Rev. 2 & 3 to the Church at Thyatira. The seven churches in Asia represent:

1. the churches that were then
2. a prophetic history of the Church of God down through time
3. the attitudes that anyone in any Church of God, let's put it this way, in any congregation of God down through history could have at any time

If the pattern follows that we have in the book of Revelation, that you have seven seals, out of which comes seven trumpet plagues, out of which come seven last plagues, then we have

4. the seven original churches, the seven down through history, and could it be at the end-time we are also going to have seven churches *as God views the churches*

Maybe not as clearly defined as the original seven, but nevertheless I think it's profound that these things are happening today, right now today. Let's read the message to the message to the Church at Thyatira.

Revelation 2:18: "And to the angel of the Church in Thyatira write..." As I mentioned this probably means 'messenger' because I cannot conceive of an angel in good standing with God that would get into the depths of Satan. And the Greek there is 'angelos,' which is used for messenger as well as angel.

"...These things says the Son of God, He Who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet *are* like fine brass" (v 18). He's saying that He sees and He knows, and is penetrating as fire, and His feet like fine brass. Fine brass can have an illusion to judgment.

Verse 19: "I know your works... [they have works] ...and love, and service, and faith, and your endurance, and your works; and the last *are* more than the first." {note DVD: *Israel of the Alps* that shows what happened to the Waldensians} I think it fits very, very nicely, and I think it's very profound that they connect themselves with Thyatira. Because they also had a woman prophetess called Ellen G. White.

Verse 20: "But I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants into committing fornication..."

When we drop back here to Pergamos we find, v 14: "...to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication." Here in Thyatira it's reversed. They commit the spiritual fornication first and then they eat the things sacrificed to an idol. I believe eating things sacrificed to an idol has nothing to do with meat, but has to do with the introduction of the Eucharist.

Christ says, v 21: "And I gave her time to repent..." God always does that. He always gives space for repentance. Whenever there is sin, if people prosper and sin for a while they need to be careful and not mistake that as approval. If it's sin it's sin even if you prosper in the sin, because there is pleasure in sin for a season. Don't mistake that as God's approval. Maybe He's just giving you space to repent. I think that the space for repentance for a lot of people who have been in the Church of God is probably right now getting smaller and smaller, and the judgment is going to come. Just like it did here.

"...And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, but she did not repent. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their works. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches..." (vs 21-23). Now right in the middle of the seven churches, this is it. *All* the churches

"...shall know that I am He Who searches *the* reins and hearts..." (v 23). God is showing that there is individual judgment upon all of us.

"...and I will give to each of you according to your works. But to you I say, and to *the* rest who *are* in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known **the depths of Satan**, as they speak; I will not cast upon you any other burden, but hold fast what you have until I come" (vs 23-25). Then He gives the admonition to overcome.

Now let's go to Revelation 17, and this is the fornication that is coming upon the whole world. I'm going to give a sermon concerning the beast, and the United Nations. They are coming together to lay the ground work to have world government, taxation upon international things so that they will have a separate income, and how then they can devise a way to get rid of sovereignty for all the nations. And the Catholic Church is right smack in the middle of it. {Note: several sermons can be found on *The Beast* at cbcg.org}

When I say the Catholic Church, I am meaning *all of the religions of the world*, because they're all coming home to Rome because that is Babylon the Great. But I think the commentaries in the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century—and obviously going back before that—could not conceive of a world dictator.

Like the Seventh Day Adventists, they said *the beast* of Rev. 13, both of them represent the Catholic Church, because the Catholic Church in the ages before—like at the time of the Reformation with the Protestant churches coming out—ran the government. The church ran the government! They told the kings what to do. They could not conceive of a time when there would be a civil government that would be a dictator over the whole world. Rev. 17 tells us that the one who is going to do the directing will be the woman. We'll see this is the same system referring to Jezebel.

Revelation 17:1: "And one of the seven angels who had the seven vials came and spoke with me, saying to me, 'Come here; I will show you the judgment of the great whore who sits upon many waters... [you know that means nations, kindreds, tongues, and so forth] ... with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication'" (vs 1-2)—and we're all made drunk with it. Part of that is the whole educational system; part is the religious system, and it's all being combined together now. I don't think that any of us have had a clue as to how involved the Catholic Church has been with the United Nations.

How many have heard of Robert Muller? He received a special crucifix of pure gold from the pope when he came to the United Nations to speak, because Muller is a New Age Catholic. This book--*The New World Religion* by Gary Kah—details a lot of it.

Verse 3: "Then he carried me away in *the* spirit to a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast that had seven heads and ten horns, full of names of blasphemy. And the woman *was* clothed in purple and scarlet, and *was* adorned with gold and pearls and precious stones; *and* she had a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominations and *the* filthiness of her fornication; and across her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (vs 3-5). {note sermon series: *The Mystery of Lawlessness*}

Alan Knight does a wonderful job describing it in his book: *Primitive Christianity in Crisis*. By the way, he came last Sabbath. He lives

just about 30 minutes away from where we meet in Fairfield. I thought he did a good job in describing the *mystery of lawlessness*, and also *the depths of Satan*, and we're going to see that *the depths of Satan* gets down into actual Satan worship. So you see how far those in the Church of God can go in their apostasy away from God.

Jezebel and Mystery Babylon the Great are the same system under different names. So, the message to the Church in Thyatira is labeling very clearly that they are having the same problems that the children of Israel did with Jezebel. What did the Apostle Paul write concerning women? *I do not allow a woman to teach, and have authority over a man!*

Here we have this great sin, not only of a woman teaching, but bringing false doctrines. Remember the occasion of Josiah? When they found the Law in the temple? *There was no one to tell them the Truth except Huldah the prophetess over in the wardrobe area of the temple!* They went and talked to her and she gave a message from God. Women can give messages from God provided that they know the Truth. But she didn't do it publicly; she did it privately. That's not to put women down and say they're of no account. That's just to say that women are not to be preachers and prophetesses *publicly* in the way that Jezebel was here.

1-Kings 15:25: "And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah and reigned over Israel two years. And *he* did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin with which he made Israel to sin" (vs 25-26).

What happened when Jeroboam set up the golden calves? What did he institute? *He instituted state religion, and he made himself a high priest and offered on the altar!* What do the two calves represent? *Sun-worship!* Between the horns of the calf were the sun-disk. So, you have sun-worship!

2-Kings 16:25: "And Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all who *were* before him, for he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin with which he made Israel to sin to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. And the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he showed, *are* they not written in the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Omri slept with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. And Ahab his son reigned in his place. And in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel. And Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all who *were* before him. And as if it had been a light

thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat..." (vs 25-31).

Now notice the comparison here. We need to get the severity of the sin of marrying Jezebel, "...he also took Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, for a wife. And he went and served Baal, and worshiped him" (v 31).

What we need to understand is that Israel did not go into captivity because of Sabbath-keeping. Israel did not go into captivity because of Holy Day-keeping. ***They went into captivity because they served Baal and Ashtoreth, which is the same system that we call Catholicism today!*** Catholicism has been Christianized by putting Christian-sounding names on all of the pagan abominations. That's why it's called the *mystery of iniquity*.

Verse 32: "And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. And Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him" (vs 32-33).

This is telling us how bad, evil and miserable that this was. So then, we have our first introduction of Elijah. What does he do? He goes and tells Ahab that there's going to be famine.

So many people want to be Elijah it's incredible. I told you about the psychologist in Israel. He works for the government and his job is to handle all the 'religious kooks' that come, and there are a lot of Jews who are religious kooks. They think they are reincarnations of David, Jeremiah, and especially Elijah.

There was a time when a man came in and said he was Elijah. And, of course, he had to keep him from doing trouble and try and talk him out of it and get him to go home and be calm. The next day another man came in and said he was Elijah. So, the third day he decided to do this. He had them both to breakfast and didn't tell one or the other that they were coming. They sat down to breakfast and he said, 'Elijah I'd like you to meet Elijah.'

That's a big mistake that a lot of people do. They look in the Bible to try and find some spectacular position for them to fulfill, like Elijah or Ezekiel. If anyone wants to find themselves in the Bible as to who they are, you go to one place: ***All have sinned and come short of the glory of God***, and start there. Anything else beyond that is nothing more than just vanity and self-serving.

What happens in all of those cases is that in their vanity, their mind and their ideas *become their idols*. Now, you think about that! Every thought that exalts itself above the Word of God, which people

follow, use, worship, adore and promulgate is *idolatry*. I don't think many people have understood that.

- Did we have that in our Church of God experience? *Yes!*

We had Elijah, Ezekiel, and the 'only apostle on earth.' All of those became idols!

- Did people worship the man? *Yes!*
- Do they still do it today? *Yes!*

We need to understand that.

If you want to be Elijah, please go find yourself a widow woman with a boy, and go quietly minister to her and her son for 3-1/2 years, and eat flour and oil. Make sure that you *have the powers* so that God will make the flour and the oil last out of the barrel and out of the cruse for 3-1/2 years. Then come and tell us you're Elijah and we'll believe you.

1-Kings 18:1: "And it came to pass *after* many days the Word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year saying, 'Go, show yourself to Ahab. And I will send rain upon the earth.' Then Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. And *there was* a great famine in Samaria. And Ahab called Obadiah, who *was* over the house. (And Obadiah feared the LORD greatly; for it came to pass when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)" (vs 1-4).

The long and the short of it is, Obadiah went and told Ahab that Elijah's coming and he has a message for you. So he did.

Verse 17: "And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, 'Are you he that troubles Israel?'" Isn't this always the way? The same thing Satan always does. He attacks the messenger—right? Can't refute the message. This is called today in the White House 'spin control.'

Verse 18: "And he answered, 'I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and you have followed Baalim. Now, therefore, send *and* gather to me all Israel to Mount Carmel, and four hundred and fifty of the prophets of Baal, and four hundred of the prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table.' Then Ahab sent to all the children of Israel and gathered the prophets together to Mount Carmel" (vs 18-20).

Here's the message that then we can apply to the Church at Thyatira, v 21: "And Elijah came to all the people and said, 'How long will you vacillate between two different opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow Him. But if Baal is God, *then* follow him.' And the people did not answer him a word."

Let's analyze this statement for a minute. What happened to these people with their Baal worship? *They got dumbed-down*—didn't they? *Yes!* When you, in your mind, get so dumbed-down from the Truth that the true God is only *an opinion* in your mind and not an absolute firm belief by faith, you're in trouble!

That's what's happened to the Churches of God. They have gotten dumbed-down so much that doctrine becomes *an opinion*. Then you do 'presto-chango' and you put in the *NIV Bible* and *VOILA!* you've got *Satan's corrupted bible* to help foist off *his* doctrine. All we're doing in these things are repeating the same the thing that the children of Israel went through.

God is using this in Rev. 2 to tell us what was the doctrine that they had in the Church at Thyatira. They had the doctrine of Baalim and Ashtoreth under a 'christianized form.' That's what they were up against in Thyatira.

Along with Baal-worship comes Sunday-worship, Christmas, Easter and New Years. A man called Dave Meyers has done a good job in exposing the occultism of all the holidays of this world. I'm sure that he's got some excellent information concerning that. Every one of the holidays of this world has an exoteric meaning, meaning that this is for the general public to consume. Then it has an esoteric or inner meaning, which means the true meaning of this is the worship of Satan. It's exactly the same thing that we have in the Church at Thyatira.

When these men come into our midst it's always true: ***the agents of Satan the devil infiltrate the true Church!*** Have you ever heard of a true minister trying to infiltrate the Catholic Church? I mean, think of it! Or infiltrate a Protestant church? *No!* But ***they always infiltrate the true Church!*** That's why we have to always be on our guard.

Now then, you know the rest of the story. God showed who was God with the offering and the sacrifice by Elijah. The prophets of Baal did their thing; they stood up and down and yelled and screamed and flagellated themselves and blood dripping on the ground, and all of that trying to bring about an answer from Baal. Of course, Elijah mocked them and really brought out the Truth and God showed them. His prayer was a very short prayer.

Verse 37: "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You *are* the LORD God, and that You have turned their heart back again." It's not long prayers; it's ***believing effectual prayers*** that's important.

Isaiah 5—this is exactly what happened when Jezebel came in. They take the Word of God and they change it.

When I got into the motel I wanted to check on the news and see what was happening. After the news was over they had a Catholic Mass, and I watched this. It was something! I haven't watched one in a long time. Here's the priest and he's going through his thing, you know. 'Da-da-da-da; a-a-a-amen.'

You could see all of the Gnostic and Nicolaitan teaching, and more particularly—when you get this book and read it by Alan Knight you'll understand it—how they, with the Eucharist, lock the bread up in the little tabernacle, which is an idol. Then when they have a Mass they unlock it and take it out. In other words, *Christ is the prisoner of the priest*. God is the One Who has to answer to the commands of the priest to come into the bread with His literal presence.

The people out there know nothing. You talk about dumbed-down. They know nothing! It was really something to see that. How they just all are like lemmings; they all get up there and go 'gahh,' They have the bread stuck on their tongue and all that sort of thing while the priest merrily drinks the wine—which they do. I watched them; they did drink it! Then they play this music and, then since it was on television, they showed all the statues and idols and scenes of the heavens and clouds, and angels and nice music, and everybody all uplifted. Well, not knowing God this is very appealing, and they go out of there justified. That's exactly what happened with Jezebel. The end result is found here:

Isaiah 5:20: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil... [that's what they do with their idols] ...who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (vs 20-21)—to have these doctrines!

Verse 22: "Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine... [think of this as *spiritual fornication*, the spiritual wine] ...and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Who justify the wicked for a bribe..." (vs 22-23). As long as you pay for an expensive Mass you can have all your sins forgiven. Or if you're the king of France—King Louis XIV^[transcriber's correction]—and he really had a very sinful life and the pope sent a message through the cardinal saying, 'You can have all your sins absolved if you will do a good work for the pope.' And the king says, 'What's that?' And the pope says, 'Kill the Huguenots.' So, he did; hundreds of thousands!

Verse 24: “Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame burns up the chaff; their root shall be like rottenness, and their blossoms shall go up like dust because they have cast away the Law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel.” That’s the first thing that they do, and we have New Testament Gnostics today, which say that we don’t need the Old Testament; same thing that infiltrated the early Church. They compromise with deceit. They blend things together.

Now let’s look at a couple things that are very important. Let’s understand something concerning the Word of God: How powerful is the Word of God? *Heb. 4 says it’s a sharp two-edged sword!* How powerful is the Word of God? Does God mean what He says? *Yes!* We saw that it’s living, that it’s quick. But God commanded and things were created. So, we should not take any of the Word of God lightly. That’s the very first thing that these prophets do.

Remember the Stavrinides event? What did he bring in? *Greek philosophy! Hellenistic philosophy, straight from the cauldron of Satan the devil!*

Paul tells us something very important. Always remember this in anyone bringing a ‘secret agenda’ or heresy:

1. they change the nature of God and Christ
2. they change the Passover

Those are their first two steps. Why are those the first two steps that they take?

- to get you away from the true God so you’re worshipping a false god
- to get you out of covenant with Christ, which the Passover is the covenant

If you are in covenant with Christ and remain in covenant with Christ then you cannot be deceived.

That’s how important the Passover is. That’s why they go after these first two things. Same thing happened here in Corinth. The thing that people like to do, and what the Hellenist Greeks did was this: they claimed and they said—which Alan Knight documents in his book—that what happened was that God revealed, through the Hellenistic pagan religion, the things which were going to come with the New Testament.

When they heard these things they said, ‘Wow! Now we’ve got people we can really convert,’ because the Hellenistic religion did away with all animal sacrifices. It became an inner religion, *a religion of the mind*, and they had their sacraments. Valentinus, one of the first Christian Gnostics, said that if you took the sacraments of the

Gnostics you would become invisible to demons and they would not bother you. That’s almost akin to the Eucharist—isn’t it? Not quite! Close to it!

Notice what Paul says, 1-Corinthians 10:20: “But that which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not wish you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink *the* cup of *the* Lord, and *the* cup of demons...” (vs 20-21). What did we see concerning the cup of mother Babylon. That is the cup representing all the doctrines, representing all the things of Satan the devil. That’s the same cup as Jezebel. You cannot do it.

“...You cannot partake of *the* table of *the* Lord, and *the* table of demons. Now do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?” (vs 21-22). This all has to do with the Church at Thyatira.

Today with the ecumenical movement going on, ‘religion’ becomes *an opinion* and as long as it is a ‘good’ opinion. And a ‘good’ opinion means this: I accept you regardless of what your religion is if you accept me. That’s why in any discussions with people concerning the Bible, never let them say, never let them get away with saying, ‘That is your opinion.’ You can answer back, ‘No, it’s not my opinion, ***it is the Word of God.***’ Even if they won’t hear you at least it’s going to be a witness to them. You know as I mentioned last night, now’s the time we need to stand up for Christ. Stand up for the Truth.

Remember what God told Jeremiah? He said, ‘Jeremiah, go to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem and see if there is one man that stands for the Truth. One man that will do what is right, and I will pardon the whole thing.’ *Couldn’t find a single man!* Let that not be in the Church of God today. Let it be that we *stand for the Truth*. When people ask us questions we give them the straight answer. Maybe they really want to know. If they don’t want to know then at least it’s a witness against them. And just like the thing that we had there with the man in Judaism. He was greatly offended when we told him the truth about Judaism and so forth, but now he has apologized and has seen where he’s been wrong. That’s taken a period of three years to do. So, you see also think in the long term with these things.

2-Corinthians 6:14. “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers...” This is directly against ecumenism. Brethren, if we don’t have unity in Christ with the Spirit of God there will never be any unity at all. Do you understand that? Men coming together seeking to do ‘good,’ to bring groups back together and hopefully reconstitute Worldwide Church of God, or whatever, is never going to work.

The reason it's not going to work is because *they are not seeking Christ!*

I have this printout from *Like Minds*, where the man was bragging and saying why they don't have a statement of beliefs. 'We don't want to be locked into it, because we may be wrong and then we'll have to explain why we change. Therefore, our group is very loving and warm. We have those who believe in a 15th Passover, those who believe in a 14th Passover. We even have those who attend a Baptist church and they're in our prayer group and they pray with us. We have those who believe in the Trinity, and those who don't. And those who eat unclean meats and those who don't. And we get along just fine.'

Well, let me tell you something. That mental attitude is *their idol*. Here's what Paul said. "...For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness?" (v 14). Either there is the Truth of God and we follow it and keep it, or it is a matter of opinion.

Verse 15: "And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: 'I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,' says *the* Lord..." (vs 15-17)—the opposite of ecumenism.

Didn't Elijah consider himself the only one? Then God had to console him and say, 'Well now, Elijah, don't be so depressed. You know, I have 7000 that haven't bowed the knee to Baal.' And Elijah didn't know a single one of them. It's the same way with us. There are people out there that we don't even know of that God is dealing with. God is not restricted to any organization. God is going to do what He is going to do.

Recently down in New Zealand, there was a woman that runs sort of a boarding house. She had one young man who was in college move out, so she put an ad in the paper for someone else to come in. A young man answered the ad, and he came from a church group in New Zealand that never heard of Worldwide Church of God, never heard of Church of God 7th Day, but they are a church group that keeps the Sabbath and the Holy days, and the 14th Passover. So, we don't need to get all lifted up and get all exclusive. God is going to do it. Hopefully we can be part of what God wants us to do for what He's going to do. But that was really something! The key is *Christ in you, the hope of glory*. That is the profound substance of God's way.

Verse 17: "'Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,' says *the* Lord, 'and touch not *the* unclean..."—and we could add there: *or believe the unclean thing*. What is the unclean thing? *False doctrine coming out of the cup of mother Babylon!*

"...and I will receive you; and I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says *the* Lord Almighty" (vs 17-18). I tell you, that's something! We really need to understand that. Christ warned the Thyatirans about eating things sacrificed to idols, or idolatry.

(go to the next track)

Let's apply this to false doctrine, false interpretations of the Bible, misuse of the Word of God, as well as, to the literal idol that is made. Years ago when I was writing *A Harmony of the Gospels*, the man who encouraged me to write it, David Grady, called KABC in Los Angeles, the big super-power station there, and they had a 'religious' program on called *Religion on the Line* from nine to midnight. And he was able to get me on there for four Sundays in a row. I was there with a Jewish rabbi, and a Catholic priest. I could tell you several stories concerning that but I'll just relate one.

Every Sunday night someone calls in and asks the Catholic priest why they worship idols, and he says, 'We don't worship them, we just have it for a reminder. We just have it for veneration' and so forth. When he got done I said, 'Well, in the Ten Commandments...'—you know the Catholics removed the 2nd commandment; they shortened it—'...it says you ***shall not make*** any idols of anything, in heaven above...' and so forth. Well, needless to say, at midnight I got out of there quickly because the Catholic priest was a big 300-pound German called Duelmeier, and I got out of there as quickly as I could.

Idolatry starts in the mind! That's what's so important. The ***making of an idol is a manifestation of the imagination of the mind!***

2-Corinthians 10:3: "For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds, casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ..." (vs 3-5).

This is how you overcome. It starts right here. Everything starts right there *in your mind!* ***All:***

- false doctrine
- idolatry
- lust

- fornication
- adultery
- thievery
- covetousness

—and everything else. So that’s why in overcoming, if you can cast it down when it raises itself up then you can have success in it.

Ezekiel 14:1: “And some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me [Ezekiel]. And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts...’” (vs 1-3). That can be anything that is contrary to the Word of God.

“...and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I at all be inquired of by them?... [notice what idols in your heart can do]: ...Therefore, speak to them, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Every man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him according to the multitude of his idols, so that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart because they have deserted Me for their idols—all of them’” (vs 3-5). Notice how that fits in with the Church at Thyatira and sacrificing things unto idols.

Verse 6: “Therefore, say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Repent and turn yourselves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations””’” (vs 6). It’s the same message that God gave to the Church at Thyatira—isn’t it? Almost identical!

When you talk about the house of Israel you are also *spiritually* talking about the Church of God. That’s why it is so important that we really stick with the Word of God. That’s so fundamentally important that we don’t have ideas, and we don’t have thoughts that we exalt above God

- whether of self
- whether of doctrine
- whether of other people

—whatever it may be because it can all become an idol. When it comes to its full bloom and manifestation, then it’s going to be consequences that God is going to take care of. Isn’t it almost the same thing?

Verse 7: “For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger who lives in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to a prophet to ask of him concerning Me; I the LORD will answer him Myself. And I will set My face against that man, and I will make him for a sign and for a proverb.

And I will cut him off from the midst of My people; and you shall know that I *am* the LORD” (vs 7-8).

In reading this I want you to think about the church experiences that we have just recently gone through in these last few years. Has God done this? Has He answered them? *Yes!* Himself? *Yes!* And, in some cases, *with death!* God is not to be mocked. That’s the whole message of Rev. 2 & 3.

Verse 9: ““And the prophet, if he is deceived, and he speaks a word, I the LORD have deceived that prophet. And I will stretch out My hand upon him and will destroy him from the midst of My people Israel. And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity; the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeks unto him. So that the house of Israel may never again go astray from Me, nor be defiled again with all their transgressions, but that they may be My people, and I may be their God,” says the Lord GOD” (vs 9-11). That’s almost identical to 2-Cor. 6—Isn’t it? The wording is just a little different.

What happens when we do this? This also gives you a perfect prescription on how to have true Godly humility. Humility is not something you put on. Humility comes from *knowing* God. God is the most humble being in the universe—correct? *Yes, He is!*

- True humility is not something you work up.
- True humility is not something you put on.
- *True humility comes from the Spirit of God from the Word of God*

—because you understand the greatness of God.

Now let’s look at what happens when idols are set up, and let’s think of this of Thyatira and Jezebel (Rev. 2) as we read this.

Isaiah 40:18: “To whom then will you compare God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him? The workman melts a graven image, and the goldsmith spreads it over with gold, and casts silver chains. He who is too poor for *that* offering chooses a tree that will not rot...” (vs 18-20). That’s what the Aborigines do in the jungles, they get a tree that won’t rot. The American Indians make totem poles, etc.

“...he seeks for a skillful workman for himself to prepare a graven image that will not totter. Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood *from* the foundations of the earth? *It is* He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers; *it is* He who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in; Who brings the rulers to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth

as vanity. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, then He shall blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away like stubble. ‘To whom then will you compare Me, or who is My equal?’ says the Holy One” (vs 20-25).

He’s showing how foolish that idolatry is. Absolutely incredible!

Verse 26: “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who has created these *things*, who brings out their host by number? He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might, for He is strong in power; not one fails.” That’s quite a lesson in idolatry. There are several lessons here on idolatry.

Let’s analyze a little bit more concerning the Church in Thyatira. Again I will mention the DVD *Israel of the Alps*, and you will see how the Catholic Church literally wore out the Waldensians: slaughtered them, killed them most unmercifully.

Revelation 2:20: “But I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess... [you have allowed her] ...to teach and to seduce My servants into committing fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols.”

Let me read to you some of the things that took place during the historical era of the Church of Thyatira. This covers from 600_{A.D.} clear down to 1965. We have the elevating of the pope, kissing of the pope’s foot, image worship, use of Holy water, canonization of dead saints. Pope John Paul II made 26 saints in Mexico. For what purpose? *Politically!* To overthrow the political party and the political system in Mexico, which since the revolution has not allowed the Catholics to control the political party. That’s what it’s all about.

{following dates are all A.D.}:

- 998—fasting on Fridays and during Lent
- 1079—celibacy of the priesthood

By the way, while I was up here in West Springfield I drove around to see of the sights and I saw what looked like a big church up on the hill. You go down here just a little ways and looks like a church. And I thought, ‘I’ll bet that’s Catholic.’ But it didn’t look really like full-fledged Catholic Church, but it was up on the hill. So, I drove around up there and guess what it was? *It was a nunnery!* A Catholic brothel! Prayer beads!

- 1184—the inquisition
- 1190—sale of indulgences
- 1215—transubstantiation
- 1220—adoration of the host

They do worship it; they bow down before it. Can you imagine that you’re so superstitious that you bow down before a crumb of bread? Amazing!

- 1229—Bible forbidden to laymen
- 1414—cup forbidden to people at communion
- 1439—doctrine of purgatory declared doctrine of seven sacraments affirmed
- 1508—Ave Maria approved
- 1534—the Jesuit order was founded

And the Jesuits are still doing their dirty work. How many have seen the full Jesuit oath?

- 1545—tradition granted equal authority with the Bible

And the Mormons do that, too. They say, ‘We believe the Bible in so far as it’s accurately translated. But they never show you where it’s falsely translated. They bring out the Book of Mormon, and Mormonism is nothing more than Gnosticism.

- 1545—apocryphal books put in the Bible
- 1854—immaculate conception of Mary
- 1864—syllabus of errors proclaimed
- 1870—infallibility of the pope declared

And what happened shortly after that? Twenty-four years after that all the papal states were taken away from the pope by Garibaldi. God gave His punishment. He gave space for repentance.

- 1930—public schools condemned
- 1950—assumption of the Virgin Mary
- 1965—Mary proclaimed mother of the church

And as soon as the pope can do it, to make Mary the mediatrix, co-redemptrix with Christ; queen of heaven.

Verse 24: “But to you I say, and to *the* rest who *are* in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will not cast upon you any other burden.” Is it possible to go clear into the *depths of Satan*? *Yes!* All you have to do is read about King Manasseh in the Old Testament; he went *into the depths of satanism*.

Deuteronomy 18:9: “When you come to the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire...” (vs 9-10). This is becoming a novelty situation of mind over matter with those people who believe in helping to get into the depths

of your being, and find your real self. Yes, Anthony Robbins, and many others.

“...or that uses divination...” (v 10)—to call up demons, or to have angel help. Today, one of the big movements is the angels within.

“...or an observer of times, or a fortuneteller, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or one who seeks oracles from the dead. For all that do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations, the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For these nations whom you shall possess hearkened to observers of times and to diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you *to do so*” (vs 10-14).

All of that leads *into the depths of Satan*. When you understand the truth of Masonry then you will understand that when they get to the highest degree it is open known worship of Satan the devil. And you cannot get any deeper into Satanism.

From: *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight, pg 207—Thyatira and ‘The Deep Things of Satan’:

...we are seeking to unravel a mystery that unites multiple religious traditions encountered in previous chapters—the mystery cults, Gnostic Christianity and modern Hellenistic Christianity.

That’s why Hebrews becomes a very fulcrum book in understanding this. And when you get this book and you get done with this book you will be able to understand that all Protestantism is Hellenistic Christianity. All Catholicism is Hellenistic Gnostic Christianity. And we can say it with profound assurance that that is so.

This is the story of Thyatira, the fourth of seven churches held up by the apostle John as examples of the problems New testament churches in general experienced over time. What is special about this church is its problem with antinomian... [that is lawless] ...apostasy linked to false teachings described as ‘*the deep things of Satan*.’.... [or the depths of Satan] ...This is a theology described as being at the root of the tolerance of sin at Thyatira (Rev. 2:20-23)....

And there is a Chaldean connection. That’s why I tied together beginning with Mystery Babylon the Great and Jezebel, and now we come full circle to the depths of Satan.

pg 208-209—The Chaldean Connection

The Chaldean Oracles are short fragments of text preserved in the writings of various Hellenistic authors. The fragments themselves are believed to go back to the Chaldean priesthood of ancient Babylonia, hence the name. It is in the Chaldean Oracles that we find numerous references to spiritual depth in relation to the highest God, the supreme Father. One of the terms we find is ‘Paternal Depth.’ This is the equivalent to the Depth of God the Father (or Satan, as John insisted it really was)....

Here is a quote from one of the Chaldean Oracles:

Such is the Mind which is energized before energy, while yet it had not gone forth, but abode in the **Paternal Depth**, and in the Adytum of God **nourished silence**.

So, whenever we get into these things of silence and meditation I think of Deepak Chopra.

This fragment describes the Depth of the Father as spirituality in its purest form....

Because the Gnostics would come in and say, ‘Look, you Christians have just the fundamental things. We have a revelation, which was given to us after the resurrection of Christ. And now we have new understanding. And part of that new understanding you need to realize is that the Sabbath, which was created by the God of the Old Testament and those evil angels, is evil and you need to get rid of it and come to the new creation—the eighth day. Come and worship Jesus with us on Sunday.’ That goes back to Clement, Origen, all of them.

pg 213: “First we are told that Christ, ‘the Son,’ came forth from the Depth itself...”

Did not Paul say that you have received another Jesus? Gal. 1. becomes important for us in relationship to what was going on. When you understand that these Hellenistic Gnostic Christians, and they called themselves Christians, believe also in angel worship. Notice what Paul says here concerning the Gospel, and this was written in 52-53_{A.D.} What did he write to the Thessalonians? He said, ‘For the mystery of iniquity does already work’ (2-Thess.).

Galatians 1:6: “I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another *Gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ” (vs 6-7). Not throw it away, pervert it and preach another Christ. Paul told the Corinthians in 2-Corinthians 11, that if somebody comes preaching another Christ and

brings another spirit, you count it all as wonderful, new understanding. What was told when they were changing the doctrines? Wonderful, new understanding? *NO!*

Verse 8. “But if we... [which includes Paul, all the brethren and all the apostles] ...or even an angel from heaven...” That becomes very important because Hellenistic Gnosticism and Hellenistic Christianity believed in angels. When we get into Col. 2 you will understand that even more. But this is why he mentions it here.

“...should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again...” (vs 8-9). I can understand with the emphasis and the power with which Paul wrote, why this is so important. What is this?

- This is idolatry!
- Another thought!
- Another gospel!
- Another Christ!
- A perversion!

That’s why he was so emphatic with this. And I tell you, if he is I’m going to be. If it offends some people, so be it. Maybe it will help them repent.

“...If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ” (vs 9-10). That’s the way it needs to be. I mean there is a demarcation point that is clear.

All right, now let me read this to you.

pg 112-213—What are the specific religious teachings attached to Paternal Depth Theology in Valentinian Christianity? It is found in one of the Valentinian texts from Nag Hammadi... [that’s the Gnostic writings about Christ] ...*The Gospel of Truth*. We will now be looking at a series of passages from this Gnostic Christian text that reveal the full range of religious beliefs involved in Paternal Depth.

First we are told that Christ, ‘the Son’, came forth from the Depth itself:

Here’s the quote:

“...his Son...who came forth from the depth, he spoke about his secret things, knowing that the Father is a being without evil. For that very reason he brought him forth in order to speak about the place and

his resting-place from which he had come forth...”

From which came the doctrine that exists today: that your rest is in Christ and He has done it all for you. That’s coming out of the *depths of satanism*. Did Christ do everything for you? Does He keep the Sabbath for you? *No!* It’s amazing!

“...from which he came forth, and to glorify the pleroma... [the fullness] ...the greatness of his name and the sweetness of the Father.”

We learn several important things from this passage. First, notice the Depth is designated as the ‘*resting-place*’ of Christ. So now divine rest in Christ is added to the *pleroma* in being identified with the Depth....

In this passage also, Christ is depicted as having come to reveal the existence of the Depth and to speak about the ‘*secret things*’ because the Father is ‘*a being without evil*.’

Then it gives another quote:

“...nor did they think of him as small nor that his is harsh nor that he is wrathful, but (that) he is a being without evil, imperturbable, sweet...”

Versus the God of the Old Testament, Who’s imperturbably evil because His has anger and He has hostility, and He brings correction. This is some stuff.

This is the typical Gnostic teaching that the true heavenly Father is pure love, nonjudgmental and without anger, in contrast to the harsh, punishing and demanding God of the Old Testament. Resting in the Depth of God is viewed as a beautiful state of communion with the all-loving Father, who offers access to the spiritual Depth freely, by his grace (*the sweetness of the Father*), not placing demands or requirements on his worshippers as Yahweh does.

Now let’s talk a little bit about the ‘pleroma.’ Page 214, the Paternal Depths they are talking about here:

“Therefore, all the emanations of the Father are pleromas...”

Remember when Stavrinides said God is everywhere.

- God does not have a body
- God does not have a head.

- God does not have eyes
- God does not have hands
- He doesn't need it because God is in everything.

What comes from God are 'emanations.' This is going right back to Hellenistic Paganism where then these emanations then are the energies coming from Satan. What the Church of God heard was *the depths of Satan* brought to them by Stavrinides who is a Greek philosopher. And by the way, he was also half Turkish, meaning he was an Esauite. Think on that one for a while!

"...and the root of all his emanations is in the one who made them all grow up in himself."

...According to the Valentinians, all enlightened Christians are *pleromas* in their own right, patterned after, connected to and nourished from the master *pleroma* or Depth of the Father, through Christ.

I tell you this is some stuff.

pg 216—...The word *pleroma* itself means 'fullness' in the sense of 'complete' and 'perfect.' Once you 'know' the Depth of God you have become spiritually perfect and spiritually complete. Your root is established in Christ. You have need of nothing. There is no need to strive for perfection by obedience to the law, nor anything external, for you are internally complete, possessing the Depth of God within yourself. Notice also that spiritual truth is revealed exclusively from within...

You determine what is right and wrong, not the Law of God.

Valentinian Paternal Depth theology contains many elements strikingly analogous to modern Protestant teaching, including self-sufficient grace, and drawing guidance exclusively from the Spirit... [the inner self] ...rather than any external source such as codified law....

pg 221: "...once Valentinian Paternal Depth theology is translated into modern terminology you find essentially the same spiritualized lawlessness taught throughout Hellenistic Christianity today....

I call your attention: where did Paul warn twice of the unpardonable sin? *Heb. 6 & 10*, because those Hellenistic Christians were getting into the same thing that we see today in Protestantism. I mean this is profound stuff, brethren. This is amazing!

...It is the same radical grace alone theology, demanding rejection of written biblical law in favor of obedience to the Spirit, and promising a guaranteed salvation that cannot be revoked, regardless of one's conduct.

That's what Baptists today believe. A woman in the Church asked her Protestant friend one time, because the Baptist woman was talking about the rapture, that God was going to rapture them up, take them. The Church woman asked her, 'Let me ask you, since you don't have to keep any law, what if you were right in the middle of the act of committing adultery when the rapture came, would you be raptured?' *Yes!* Talk about a lawless theology.

Now this is out of the book here, *The New World Religion* by Gary Kah. Now if this book *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* is the right hand, this book *The New World Religion*, by Gary Kah is the left hand. He says concerning Cayce:

The New World Religion, by Gary Kah, pg 77:

...blended certain Christian ideas and terminology with the ancient religions of the occult." He tried to redefine Christ by turning Him into an occult figure who would fit all of the world's mystery religions—an impossible task. Summarizing Edgar's erroneous religious views, biographer Thomas Sugrue states.

The system of metaphysical thought which emerges from the readings of Edgar Cayce is a Christianized version of the mystery religions of ancient Egypt, Chaldea, Persia, India, and Greece.

And that's what the coming *beast* will be.

...It fits the figure of Christ into the tradition of one God for all people, and places Him in His proper place, at the apex of the philosophical structure; He is the capstone of the pyramid.

pg 97—talking about New Age thought in the churches:

Price's theology emphasizes man's supernatural "God-like" qualities...

Part of this whole humanistic New Age movement is to tap the inner powers within. You have greater powers than you know. This goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden, brethren.

Price's theology emphasizes man's supernatural "God-like" qualities and

presents the idea that man is quite capable of achieving heaven on earth—that is, if he allows the ‘universal energy’...

As Alan Knight describes, *from the Paternal Depth to emanate down.*

...to direct his life. His philosophy is typical of New Age spiritual leaders. In his 1981 book, *The Super Beings*, he theorizes, “It has been said that behind all [science] fiction is a basis of fact.”

Then he goes on to ponder about the things that were written:

What did the original creator of this comic strip and movie character have in mind when he first conceived the idea?

That’s the idea of Superman. And what is the most favorite movies of the kids to day? *Superman!* What is another movie? *Star Wars!* ‘And let the *force be with you.*’ You’ve all been propagandized.

Did he intuitively believe that man may someday evolve... [evolution is in it] ...into a super-human creature with “out of this world” powers?

Why are they striving for cloning? Is it possible that they could genetically splice into a human being genes from a beast so that *the beast* who comes on the scene will be literally be a beast? *Possible!* They can now with gene splicing, grow human ears on the backs of mice. Enough said! He goes on to surmise:

Modern Science reports that the entire universe is made up of energy. The Illumined Ones...

They have the hierarchy and the principalities and all of that in there.

...tell us that this Energy is in reality the One Presence and Power of the universe—all Knowing, all-Loving, everywhere present, and that this pure Mind Energy is individualized in man, as man.

What do we have with the whole New Age religion? *Back to the pure pagan Gnostic teachings*, and it’s being taught in the schools.

Now, just one more quote, pgs 116-117, by Barbara Marx Hubbard who is a Jew:

“Born of a Jewish agnostic, affluent background in 1929, I received no spiritual training.’ Her “seeking” let her down many paths until eventually she read *The Phenomenon of Man* by Teilhard Chardin.”

Teilhard Chardin is a Catholic New Age priest. And he has had a lot of input into the United Nations through Robert Muller. You need to get this book and read it. I mean, it is something! She explains:

“It was an epiphany for me.... [a new birth] ...There is a continuing, evolving pattern in the process of nature that leads to greater whole systems, higher consciousness and freedom...and it’s going on NOW. It’s unfinished. The world is evolving, not just the individual. Not only do I have unused growth potential...so does the world...so does our species...and so does the universe! Something new is coming. the magnetic attraction was right. I could trust my intuition.”

That’s why they try and get all people to think these things so there can be a ‘quantum leap’ in human evolution. Where all of a sudden we leap and we become super-men and super-women. What all that is doing is setting us up for demon occult control. This whole world is going to be controlled by it. I mean we are sitting right on the threshold of the greatest and biggest deception to hit this world. That’s why first the Churches of God were taken down. That’s why we cannot sit back and just let it continue to happen. Now she continues on with her revelations:

“The floodgates of my mind had opened [now she’s demon possessed]. It saw as if an unseen hand...”

Have you heard that before? Brethren, that is a Masonic term, and when Herbert Armstrong preached it, which he was encouraged to do by Stanley R. Rader, and was known by Stanley R. Rader that that was a Masonic term to get him into the big-wigs of this world. Christ is not coming as an unseen hand. What Herbert Armstrong was preaching, and he didn’t know it, was New Age satanic preaching leading the way to the coming of *the beast*. Now if there are some of you who are offended because you idolize Herbert Armstrong, then be offended. That is the truth.

“It was as if an unseen hand was activating the memory bank of my brain. I organized nothing. I “thought” of nothing. I simply recorded the stream of ideas....Sometimes a voice that called itself “Jesus” interpreted authoritatively....In other passages it seemed as though the voices were those of our elder brothers and sisters who have gone before...”

That's called the hierarchy—the principalities and powers.

...I felt that 'I'...

Notice, 'I feel that I'—that's what this whole New Age thought is about is 'I.' That's why they teach little kids self-esteem.

“...—my normal walking, conscious personality, who has been a seeker—virtually co-created the text with a hierarchy of other, higher selves...Other sections seemed to come from a collective species consciousness.”

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 2:18-20, 14, 21-25
- 2) Revelation 17:1-5
- 3) 1 Kings 15:25-26
- 4) 2 Kings 16:25-33
- 5) 2 Kings 18:1-4, 17-21, 37
- 6) Isaiah 5:20-24
- 7) 1 Corinthians 10:20-22
- 8) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- 9) 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- 10) Ezekiel 14:1-11
- 11) Isaiah 40:18-26
- 12) Revelation 2:20-24
- 13) Deuteronomy 18:9-14
- 14) Galatians 1:6-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 13
- Hebrews 4
- Revelation 3
- 2 Thessalonians
- 2 Corinthians 11
- Colossians 2
- Hebrews 6; 10

Also referenced:

- DVD: *Israel of the Alps* (produced by the 7th Day Adventist Church)
- Sermons Series: *Mystery of Lawlessness*
- Sermon Subject: *Beast of Revelation* (cbcg.org)
- Books:
 - ✓ *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
 - ✓ *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight
 - ✓ *The New World Religion* by Gary Kah

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The Seven Church Harvest VI Churches of Sardis & Philadelphia

Fred R. Coulter

I'll finish up a little bit here concerning Thyatira and concerning the things with that, then we'll move right on into Sardis. Let's read just a couple of things here again that we need to understand.

The Abyss & the Depths of Satan:

Revelation 2:24: "But to you I say, and to the rest who *are* in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine..." That is the doctrine of Balaam through Jezebel, the doctrine of committing spiritual fornication, the doctrine of eating things sacrificed to idols.

"...and who have not known the depths of Satan..." (v 24)—which means that there were some that went way beyond as we saw. The *depths of Satan* or the paternal depth, as we read from the book *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight

"...as they speak; I will not cast upon you any other burden" (v 24).

We will see that Paul, even in the book of Romans was bringing out something that directly connects with the deep. Remember that the Gnostic teaching was, the secret teaching, it had to come as an emanating energy or angel to you and this would enlighten you. When we read Rom. 10 you're going to see that Paul is refuting that kind of thing along with the depth.

Romans 10:6: "But the righteousness *that comes* through faith speaks after this manner: 'Do not say in your heart, "Who shall ascend up to heaven?"' (that is, to bring Christ down)."

That was the whole thing concerning Gnosticism. When you get into the philosophical religion of the pagan Greeks, what did they have? *They had the gods that went up into heaven to bring down to mankind!* This is a reference to the infiltration of this kind of thought into the Church, though this is quoted clear back in Deuteronomy.

Verse 7: "'Or, "Who shall descend into the abyss?"'..." The lord of darkness was the one who, when the sun set, would go into the abyss or the darkness to bring the sun back at sunrise the next day. What do we have about the abyss? We have a couple things concerning the abyss—don't we?

"...(that is, to bring Christ up from among the dead.)" (v 7). That all ties in with the mythological thing of Isis, Osiris and Horus, the god

of the dead, and you would have to be resurrected through Horus' powers.

Verse 8: "But what does it say? 'The Word is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart.' This is the Word of faith that we are proclaiming." God has made this available for all human beings when you stop and consider the number of languages that the Bible has been translated into. It's pretty close to over 300 languages—the New Testament in about 1800 languages, and the Gospel of Mark into over 2000 languages. God has made it available in a language that's in your mouth and in your heart. It requires no special esoteric initiation or knowledge to get to it. It is available to you because you can think and you can read, and what has been preached has been preserved for us in His Word.

Let's talk a little bit about the abyss, the depths of Satan, the paternal depths. Revelation 9:1: "And the fifth angel sounded *his* trumpet; and I saw a star *that* had fallen from heaven to the earth, and there was given to him the key to the bottomless abyss." That's the same word in:

Romans 10:7: "Or, 'Who shall descend into the abyss?'" Well, He was already resurrected!

Revelation 9:2: "And he opened the bottomless abyss..." What came out of the abyss? *Millions of demons, because there are demons in the abyss who are restrained and reserved for the last time!*

Verse 11 talks all about them, tells all about them down through v 10; v 11: "And they have over them a king, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew *is* Abaddon, but *the* name he has in Greek *is* Apollyon [Satan]." He is the king of the abyss, or the paternal depths.

When people got into the deep things of Satan what they did was, they got into actual Satan-worship. What Christ is saying here in Rev. 2 is that He will have mercy upon those who did not get into the doctrine of spiritual fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols and did not get into the depths of Satan. This tells you that those three things can disqualify you from being in the Kingdom of Heaven or Kingdom of God, because if I say Kingdom of Heaven someone is going to say, 'Well, Fred Coulter is saying you are going to heaven.' I'm not saying that! That's what Matthew used to describe the Kingdom of God, which is the Kingdom of Heaven.

We also know from Rev. 20 that when Christ returns the very first thing that is going to happen after the Beast and False Prophet are killed:

Revelation 20:1: “Then I saw an angel descending from heaven, having the key of the abyss... [there’s an angel who’s in charge of the abyss] ... and a great chain in his hand. And he took hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him *for* a thousand years. Then he cast him into the abyss, and locked him *up*, and sealed *the abyss* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were fulfilled; and after that it is ordained that he be loosed *for* a short time” (vs 1-3). Any sermons I have on the Last Great Day, I go through and explain what that means.

Deep Things of God:

Now then, let’s look at the opposite of *the deep things* of Satan. Let’s look at *the deep things of God*, because this is what we should desire. This is why vanity and carnality can never understand it.

1-Corinthians 2:9: “But according as it is written, ‘*The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*’”

I might just interject here, in discussing the wedding feast and the guests and the bride and the groom, regardless of where we fit into that—and God is the One Who makes the decision anyway—we are going to have an inheritance so great and so marvelous that it can’t even enter into our minds to fully comprehend it.

If you’re not part of the bride but are a guest, don’t feel slighted. I don’t say that from the point of view that I necessarily think that I’m going to be part of the bride. I just want to be there in the first resurrection is what I want to be. Let God do all the deciding and be thankful for it.

If you love God, He’s provided things that you cannot hear of, you cannot see of, and it doesn’t enter into your mind because you love God. He’s going to give you certain Scriptures which will give you an inkling of it and that’s about all. Like Paul said, we view things through a glass darkly. Even this we view darkly.

Verse 10: “But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even **the deep things of God.**” What we need to understand here is this: ***God will reveal the deep things to us that are contained in His Word if we hunger for it, if we thirst for it!*** If we go to God with this attitude—and this is something we should continually pray about—God being so great, and so

marvelous, and His Word is so fantastic, and there are so many things put in there: ‘line upon line and precept upon precept.’

Here’s what David said; this was part of his prayer, Psalm 119:18: “Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.” This is what we want out of God’s Word, that we can behold wondrous things; we can understand it. We are living in the last generation before the return of Christ and we have *all* the Word of God. Think how much there is for us in the Word of God that we yet do not even understand.

Part of what we’re going to cover today, I’m just going to have to tell you *I don’t understand*. I do want to understand, but as of this point I don’t understand. I hope to but God is going to have to reveal it, just like He says here, *by His Spirit*. Here’s how we know that it’s not by might nor by power but by God’s Spirit. Therefore, we can say to understand these things:

- it’s not by intellectual genius
- it’s not by brain power
- it’s not by cloistering yourself off into a monastery and all you do is pour over the Word of God

No! It’s revealed by His Spirit!

1-Corinthians 2:11: “For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God.”

That’s how we’re going to understand these things. But we have to have that open, willing, yielded attitude to God, but at the same time have our guard set firm that we do not get involved in false doctrines and wrong thoughts and self-exaltation and vanity and things like that.

Now let’s come back to Rev. 2 and see something else which right here in the middle of the seven churches, Thyatira is church #4, of which the Seventh Day Adventists allude to it in the DVD *Israel of the Alps*, that they are somehow connected with them. However, most Seventh Day Adventists today proclaim themselves to be Laodiceans. So, whether they are Thyatira or Laodicea I don’t know, But the Seventh Day Adventists services I attended when our kids would graduate from the class, when we sent them to Seventh Day Adventist school, the services are just a bore. I’m sort of debating in my mind, are they even part of Sardis? I don’t know.

Here’s the thing, though we have the seven churches, doesn’t all of this tell us that we should not judge who belongs in what category. Let God do the judging. It’s all we can do to judge ourselves

with the Word of God. if we find ourselves in any of the spiritual conditions of the churches where they are told to repent, *then let us be busy about repenting* instead of trying to categorize everyone and try and figure out in our minds who belongs where. Ultimately God is going to make the decision. It's the same way with the place of safety. Everyone wants to go there. But if everyone got there, we would say, 'who's going to be in charge?'

Revelation 2:23: "And I will kill her children with death..." These are all of the children of the spiritual fornication with Jezebel. How many that is, I do not know.

Here's a warning for all the churches right in the middle of the whole sequence of explaining about the seven churches. "...and all the churches shall know..." (v 23). This message, when you go through and read it, says over and over again, 'He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches...' which then tells us also that Christ is the One Who is doing the judging, and in particularly we will find that out right here:

"...all the churches shall know that I am He Who searches *the* reins and hearts; and I will give to each of you according to your works" (v 23).

This means something very special here brethren, according to the reins that He searches the hearts. "...searches *the* reins and the hearts..." Let's look at a couple of Scriptures in the Psalms and see how that works.

Psalms 7:8: "The LORD shall judge the people..." There we go. Is that not judgment back there in Rev. 2:23? *Yes!*

"...judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity within me" (v 8). Which then is not his own really, but the righteousness that comes from God, and in particularly for us who are under the New Covenant. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us as a gift to inspire us to want to draw closer to God, not to give us license to sin. But you think of what a tremendous gift that is, that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to each one of us. Just think what an absolute sinful thing it would be to take that and turn that around and use it for license to sin. As Paul said, 'God forbid, or may it never be.'

Verse 9: "O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous..." Is this a prophecy toward the end-time? *Could very well be!* Who is the wicked one? *Satan the devil!* And the wickedness of the wicked come to an end—all the wicked.

"...for the righteous God tries the hearts and reins" (v 9). That's why it's important that we have the heart of David and the *mind of Christ*.

That's what God is trying. Here again we find in this particular case, though those in the first resurrection will constitute a group, there is no salvation by group because you belong to it. There is salvation individually because

- God has called you individually
- you grow in grace and knowledge individually
- God tries your heart and reins individually
- judges you upon your attitude and your conduct individually

But when the resurrection comes then we will be part of the group in the first resurrection. However, if you are in a particular organization, that does not guarantee salvation, nor does it guarantee you're going to go to a place of safety. It just means that you're affiliating with that organization at this particular time.

Psalms 16:7: "I will bless the LORD Who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the nights." So, your reins have to do with your thoughts, your mind and your attitude, coupled with God's Spirit. Since God's Spirit is in you God can know at any time what your thoughts, your heart, your mind and your attitude is. This is what it means that 'I try the reins and the heart to give to every man according as his work shall be.' Notice the attitude here of David, but also this blends right on in to the attitude of Christ:

Verse 8: "I have set the LORD always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore, My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices; My flesh also shall rest in safety.... [this right here is a direct prophecy of Christ]: ...for You will not abandon My soul to the grave; neither will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.... [Then it goes right on into the resurrection]: ... You will make known to Me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore"(vs 8-11).

That's what all of this trying the hearts and the reins is all about. Qualifying for the resurrection, it's the Father Who makes us qualified.

Psalms 26:1: "Judge me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity..." God is always judging us. We need to be careful in it that when we ask God to judge us that we be sure and have repentance first. That's very important.

"...I have trusted also in the LORD without wavering. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart" (vs 1-2)—which God is constantly doing all the time. That's very important.

That's why I keep stressing, and have stressed over and over again, that **God's way is a way of life! We walk in the way of the Lord!** And we do so because *it's a way of life*. It's not something we do on Sabbath, or something that we do on the Holy Days, but it's something that *runs through everything that we do in our life* all day long.

I know what it's like working out in the world. When I was doing real estate loans I had to plow back and forth, and up and down the roads, and in and out of real estate offices and interviewing people. I tell you when you first start out doing loans and you walk into real estate offices they can spot you just like that! Those real estate agents are used to that. Here you come with your little rate sheet in hand, and if you have been out there canvassing, and you are really striving to get a loan because you know your funds are really low, and you don't have much money and you only make it on commission, and you walk in the door and you have that hungry look. You can spot it. So, the real estate agents are very nice but they always have the test, which is this: they give you the crummiest loans possible. And if you can qualify these unqualified people and get them the loan, then they will start doing business with you.

But nevertheless, I had to learn the situation where all of you do in your work. When you go out in the world and are working, it takes effort to keep your mind on God's way. You have to take special time during the day, maybe five minutes here or ten minutes there, to be thinking on God's way and praying mentally and so forth. I did most of that as I was driving to and fro from place to place.

God will examine us and God will prove us, and try our reins and our hearts. That way then God is directly involved in our lives. It's not that Christ is way up there, which He is, in heaven, but through the power of His Holy Spirit in trying our reins and heart and examining us and with Christ in us then He is right here.

It's the same way when we gather together to study God's Word. We ask the blessing of God on what we study so that we understand His Word. God is the One Who can do that. If we're not in a right attitude then we end up like Mal. 2 where, because of sin, God says He's going to 'spread the dung of the feast upon the face of Levites.' We've sat in Holy Day services like that, too—haven't we? *Yes!* Here's the opposite of it.

Let's come back and finish up Thyatira of Revelation 2:25. "but hold fast what you have..." In other words, even the things that you have though they may not be perfect, you hold fast what you have.

"...till I come" (v 25). This an indication that this church is going to be in existence when Christ returns? *Possibly!* But the Lord can come upon us at any time—can He not? We cannot necessarily say that it's just at the second return, though I would say that's what it means more than anything else.

Verse 26: "And to the one who overcomes, and keeps My works unto *the* end..." There are two ends: your life and the return of Christ.

"...I will give authority over the nations; and he shall shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces; as I have also received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.... [that is a type of the glory that you will have as a spirit being] ...The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vs 26-29).

V. Church at Sardis:

Revelation 3:1: "And to the angel of the Church in Sardis, write: "These things says He Who has the seven spirits of God..." These are the seven spirits that go to and fro in the earth that keeps God in communication with what's going on.

Right here in this motel that I was staying in they had a little monitor section with four little screens on a big TV that monitored the front door, the back door, the side door and the gate that goes in and out. It's operated by an automatic lift that you have your little key card that you put in there to open it. So, you can be out there, like it happened to me, and my card didn't work to let me out, so I pushed the button and the clerk in there looked on the monitor, pushed the button, the arm raised and I got out of there.

Well, God has the same procedure with these seven spirits. They are constantly going to and fro in the earth, kind of like roving television eyes. They inform God as to what is going on. What He is saying here is that He knows exactly what's going on all the time.

"...and the seven stars. I know your works, *and* that you have a name as if you are alive, but are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which are about to die.... [this is a pitiful case] ...For I have not found your works complete before God" (vs 1-2). They have incomplete works.

Verse 3: "Therefore, remember what you have received and heard, and hold on *to this*, and repent. Now then, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you shall by no means 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 because they are worthy. The one 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” (vs 3-5).

I tell you, that’s really something—isn’t it? This is a pitiful, *pitiful*, **pitiful** condition! I would have to say that I do agree that the Church of God 7th Day, in the main, does fit this description. However, I’ve seen an awful lot within other Churches of God who fit this description, so lest we label an organization, let’s be fair and say that this can happen to anyone anywhere.

But look at it. They are in such a bad condition that He says: “...I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life....” Which means if they don’t repent then He’s going to blot the name out of the Book of Life. This thing of ‘once saved, always saved,’ is not true. The condition is not with God, because He’s perfect. The condition resides *with us* because we are imperfect.

Here they came to the point that they had a name but they were dead. I’ve referred to this at times as a corpse with a pulse. Kind of like a body on life support. You can actually have someone who is brain dead, but keep them alive on life support. They do this to harvest the organs to sell. Did you know that they have bidding wars on hearts, lungs and livers, and all this sort of thing?

Verse 4. “You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments...” What does it mean to defile? What are the garments? *The white linen is the righteousness of the saints* (Rev. 19)! So, if you defile the garments *you are defiling the righteousness of God*, which means that they are so sloppy in their commandment keeping that it’s all they can do to keep the remembrance of God in their lives. Otherwise, how could He say that they are dead?

Now let’s see another category of Christians, which I have covered before but now is the time to read it in the record. I want us to understand in this that God gives us choices, and our choices are very important. God gives us free independent moral agency *to choose*. How we choose and how we work in relationship to those choices then builds our spiritual character with Christ in us. Sardisites are in such a condition that Christ is telling them, ‘If you don’t strengthen up just a few little things that remain, I’m going to have to blot your name out of the Book of Life.’ In other words, they will become spiritually dead forever.

Corinthians 3:11: “For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds

upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay *or* stubble” (vs 11-12). Here’s a very good example that you cannot have a complete carryover, because in Rev. 2 & 3 there are seven churches. But here in 1-Cor. 3:11 there are only 6 categories. Which means that you can’t go pick out these six and apply them to the seven. You would have to have seven categories and then maybe you could do it. But gold, silver, precious stone; wood, hay, or stubble; we’ll concentrate on the wood, hay, or stubble here because those are problematic.

Verse 13: “The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day *of trial* will declare *it...*” This *day* that declares it is the day of trial, not necessarily at the resurrection, because the resurrection is going to be the finality of it.

But as we saw with Thyatira, God is judging continuously, ‘because it shall be revealed by fire...’ And 1-Pet. 4:12 says it’s the fiery trial that comes upon us:

- How many here have had fiery trials?
Every one of us!
- How many have failed their fiery trials?
- How many have recovered from it?

If you fail temporarily, that’s getting rid of the dross out of the gold, silver and precious stones. You may be geologically ugly on the outside as a precious stone. I say that because when I was up in Idaho we had someone in the Church who had a ranch and it went back up on the hills behind, and it was actually volcanic stone underneath. There were these rocks that spewed out—I don’t know what they call them—I think they’re moon rocks, but they’re like anywhere from the size of just a little stone to the size of an ostrich egg, and you cut them. On the outside they are ugly, and they have deep pot marks in it from the volcanic action. But you cut them and you open them up and there are beautiful crystals inside, because *the heat refines* the stone, *the heat refines* the silver and *the heat refines* the gold. So if you’ve been through fiery trial, and you’ve made it through and you figured that you had failed, but God lifted you up out of it; what He did, ***He purged away some of the dross***. With the heat—with the precious stone—***He has created greater inner character***, just like those rocks that came out of the volcano.

“...because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one’s is. If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet, as through fire” (vs 13-15). This comes the closest to describing the Sardisites—doesn’t it? Those in Sardis who make it into the Kingdom of

God, just make it to be saved.

Verse 16: “Don’t you understand that you are God’s temple, and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him...” (vs 16-17). Doesn’t that sound very close to the Sardisites? *That you have a few which have not defiled their garments*, which is telling us that *most of them* have defiled their garments, or they have defiled the Holy Spirit within their bodies because they are not clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Or they’ve taken the righteousness of Christ, which is even worse, and they have defiled it.

Now one of the defilements that you find in the Old Testament is because you have touched a dead body. So all of the analogies there concerning Sardis are really something. They undoubtedly have to be the worst Church of any of the seven. At least the others, they could repent and still retain something. Remember what He said to Thyatira, ‘I will give you the morning star.’ They have glory! But here it’s told of the Sardisites, ‘You have a few who have not defiled your garments.’ They’re just going to make it by ‘the skin of the garment.’

“...because the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are. Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks *himself* to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, so that he may be wise *in God’s sight*. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God for it is written, ‘He entraps the wise in their own craftiness.’ And again, ‘*The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain*’” (vs 17-20). That ties right in with what I said about all those who are seeking some great religions office, see. That’s all vanity, and God is going to turn it into foolishness.

Verse 21: “Therefore, do not let anyone boast in men; for all things are yours.”

Now let’s look at some more concerning defilement. It’s one thing to commit adultery and fornication as Pergamos and Thyatira did; it’s another thing to get into the *depths of Satan*, which Thyatira did. It is still bad enough. Ephesus lost their first love, and it’s terrible to be a Laodicean that you are lukewarm and claim to God you have need of nothing. But the worst case is the Sardisites who are nearly dead and have defiled the little bit that they had.

This may help us understand a little more of defiling, Ezekiel 36:16: “And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying. ‘Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and by their doings...’” How do you defile the garments of Christ? *By doing your own thing!* Obviously then, leaving Christ out of it because it’s not a live work, it’s a dead work.

“...even as the uncleanness of a woman’s impurity was their way before Me” (vs 16-17). You can’t defile a garment personally any more than that. I mean, that’s descriptive enough in itself.

Verse 18: “Therefore, I poured My fury upon them because of the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols *by which* they defiled it.” When there is defilement, God is going to punish.

Let’s see what else defiles. We saw that defiling is doing your own way and doing your own thing by ignoring God’s way. When God has called you and put you in His way, when you go do your own thing then you’re walking out of the way of the Lord. If you have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ then you are defiling those garments.

(go to the next track)

Mark 7 is talking about the defilement of eating with unwashed hands. Let me just interject right here, this has nothing to do with clean or unclean meats. This has to do with eating clean food though you have dirty hands and you get a speck of dirt on it and you eat it, it is not going to defile you spiritually. The intestines will take care of it and it will purge it out into the draught, which is the sewer.

Mark 7:20: “And He said, ‘That which springs forth from *within* a man, that defiles the man.... [spiritual defilement] ...For from within, out of the hearts of men...’” (vs 20-21). Isn’t it interesting that concerning Thyatira Christ talks about judging the hearts and the reins, and then He says to Sardis that ‘you have defiled your garments.’ Then He shows what defiles them. So, the Sardisites are polluting their garments by their own thoughts and their own ways.

“...out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man” (vs 21-23).

We are not necessarily told that Sardis is in this particular condition of doing these grievous sins, but they are just so dead that what they are doing is like a walking corpse.

If you’re dead, you have no life in you, which means the Holy Spirit is barely dwelling. Proverbs 21:16: “The man who wanders out of the way of understanding...” If you do your own thing and do your own ways, you’re *wandering out of the way of understanding*, which then is the way of the Lord—is it not?

Notice what happens. "...shall remain in the congregation of the dead" (v 16)—and Sardis is the congregation of the dead.

Proverbs 15:10: "There *is* grievous correction for him who forsakes the way; he who hates reproof shall die." That's why Christ told them, 'Look, the minimum you have to do is strengthen the few things that are left and I won't blot your name out of the Book of Life.' They are right on the verge of committing the unpardonable sin.

Matthew 25:1: "Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be compared *to* ten virgins, who took their lamps *and* went out to meet the bridegroom" There have been many, many interpretations of it, which is half of the Church will go to a place of safety, and half of the church will go into the Tribulation. It's not talking about that.

Verse 2: "And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish." Could we not say that those in Sardis were foolish? *Yes!*

Verse 3: "The ones who were foolish took their lamps, *but* they did not take oil with them.... [they thought they could just live on the little bit that they had] ...Took oil in their vessels *along* with their lamps" (vs 3-4).

The lamps were actually like little shallow seashells with a little V-lip to pour on one side. And you would put the oil in there and then you had a wick that would come out on the side. You would light the wick and then it would draw the oil out of this little reservoir in this little dish-like seashell thing. Obviously, it couldn't burn very brightly, and it couldn't burn very long, either. So, you had to have extra oil, and it's very obvious that if you have just this little reservoir of oil in it. We can liken it unto the Holy Spirit and the light can be likened unto the Word of God; the lamp that lights my way. All of those other Scriptures are valid, and you can put them there. It's really foolish to expect it to last very long if that's all you have. This is what's it talking about here.

Verse 5: "Now, when the bridegroom was gone a long time, they all became drowsy and slept." Showing that they all had their problems and their difficulties.

Verse 6: "But in *the* middle of *the* night there was a cry: 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Go out to meet him.' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps 'Give us *some* of your oil, because our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, '*No*, lest *there* not *be* enough for us and *for* you. But instead, go to those who sell, and buy for yourselves'" (vs 6-9). Now, we have to

come to Christ to buy without money; 'all you that thirst come, receive water and food without price' (Isa. 55).

Another thing is true: Whatever spiritual knowledge and understanding you have is of God's Spirit, which the oil is likened too, and the flame that is burning is your light because we're told to let our lights shine. That is then the Spirit of God working in you producing something likened unto the lamp that is burning. You cannot give to someone else of your Spirit that you have up here in your mind. *You cannot!*

When I go out and visit and I meet someone for the first time, I hear this over and over again: 'I have learned more,'—in whatever time they've been receiving the sermons and the Care Packages and so forth—'than I've every learned in the years I've been in the Church.' This is why we send the Care Packages, because there's still time to buy. We send it free, and say, 'Here, this is a sample of what you have missed all these yon many years.' Some people are very overwhelmed when they first get the Care Package because there's a lot in it.

This is the one that I don't quite understand. I've heard many interpretations of it. I've heard many things given concerning it, v 10: "While they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut." This tells us that only certain ones are going to be with the marriage, which ties in with Pentecost.

This is the thing that I don't understand. Let's see if we can understand it this time, v 11: "And afterwards the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us' But He answered *and* said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch, Therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of man is coming" (vs 11-13).

This is a little different than v 30: "And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness.' There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." These were cast into the Lake of Fire, the unprofitable servant. It says over here, the door was shut. It doesn't say that they are cut off from salvation, they are cut off from the marriage. It doesn't say that they committed fornication or adultery, they were five foolish virgins.

Is this telling us that Christ isn't going to marry foolishness? For those who are not zealous? He says, 'I don't know you.' Does it mean that He is casting them off forever? *I don't think so*, but I think He does not know them to be qualified to be the bride. Obviously they're not cut off from salvation, because it doesn't say that there's 'weeping and

gnashing of teeth.’ It just says that they are excluded from the wedding.

I think in just discussing it this way I have a little better understanding of it than I had before. It does not say that they have lost salvation. It says that they’ve lost out on the marriage.

Verse 13: “Watch, Therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of man is coming.”

Now, the next one talks about giving talents to different ones. He gave five talents to one, two talents to another; they both doubled them. Let’s read the reward that they have:

Verse 21: “And his lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant! *Because* you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’” That’s the one who received the five talents and doubled them. Here they received salvation, plus responsibility but they’re not married to Christ—are they? *No!*

Remember, in Rev. 14, those that marry Christ—the 144,000—go with Him wherever He is. If these people are given responsibility over five cities or over two cities, then they are not with Christ but they are working under Him—are they not? *Yes!* Same way with the one who received the two.

Now we come to the one who is dead, v 24: “Then the one who had received the single talent also came to *him and* said, ‘Lord, I knew that you are a hard man...’” This is part of defiling your garments if you’re accusing God of things, which He’s not.

“...reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter” (v 24). Not realizing that the Holy Spirit would give the ability to reap where you have not sown and give you the ability to scatter where it has not been scattered.

Verse 25: “‘And *because* I was afraid, I went and hid your talent in the earth. *Now* look, you have your own.’ His lord answered *and* said to him, ‘*You* wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather what I did not scatter’” (vs 25-26). See how different that is from the ten virgins. Just the door is shut. Here, wicked and slothful servant. The other ones, the foolish were just negligent.

Verse 27: “‘Therefore, take the talent from him, and give *it* to the one who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, and *he* shall have abundance; on the other hand, *as for* the one who does not have, even that which he has shall be taken from him. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness.’ There shall be weeping and

gnashing of teeth” (vs 27-30).

This sounds an awful lot like Sardis—doesn’t it? *Yes it does!* You just have a few things and you need to take care of the few things. You only have a few in Sardis. This is the first time I’ve ever done a real in-depth analysis of Sardis.

Let’s see something very similar. This follows right along the line with it. But suffice to say that the warning that Christ gives to Sardis is very similar to the warning that is given in the parable of the one who received the one talent. And the one talent is not receiving very much. The Sardisites are told that you have the few things; strengthen the few things that remain.

Luke 12:47: “And that servant who knew the will of his lord, but did not prepare... [which the Sardisites didn’t, the five virgins didn’t, the unprofitable servant didn’t] ...nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*”—which can also show a variation in judgment depending on the individuals circumstances and attitudes, and so forth.

Verse 48: “But the one who did not know, and did *things* worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For to whomever much has been given, from him shall much be required; and to whom much has been committed, from him they will demand the more” Sardis was not in that group, unfortunately.

Now, let’s finish Sardis here by giving the admonition of the Apostle Paul. There is still hope. If anyone is spiritually dead but they have just a little spark left, there is still hope if they can be stirred up by Christ and strengthen the things which remain. I think this fits the Sardisites just as well:

Ephesians 5:11: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness...” If they have their works which were dead, are they unfruitful works? *Yes!* Unfruitful works of the self, then which is darkness just like the five virgins the lamps were going out.

“...but rather expose *them*; for it is shameful even to mention the things being done by them in secret. But all of these things being exposed by the light are openly revealed.” (vs 11-13). Christ is the Light, and the Holy Spirit is the Light.

Verse 14: “Therefore, He says ... [and we can put in to the Sardisites] ...‘*You* who are sleeping—wake up...’ Kind of applies to the five foolish virgins too—doesn’t it?

“...and arise from the dead! And Christ shall shine upon you.’ So then, take heed that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as those who are wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (vs 14-16). For the Sardisites, he better redeem the

time because the evil days are coming and he doesn't have much time because he is nearly dead, and he's ready to have his name blotted out of the Book of Life.

So, that takes care of Sardis. As I said, I've never gone through and studied Sardis in depth before, and we've always done what we always did. We have said, 'That's got to be the Church of God 7th Day.' Well, maybe that applies to a lot of them, but maybe some of the people we knew in Worldwide Church of God are in the condition of dying and could apply to them, by doing their own way and doing their own thing. Just like we discuss wherever we go: Where did they all go? *Thousands!*

I'm glad God is the Judge and knows the heart. We don't know how many are at home, maybe even some we don't even know of, who maybe have moved and we don't know where they are. Maybe they're faithfully keeping the Sabbath, maybe they're just doing things on their own. Maybe there is hope for them.

You know if we can come in with some of the things that we can do, kind of like the paramedics when they come up upon someone who's ready to die? *They can give them mouth-to-mouth resuscitation!* They can give them heart thumps. They can get these electrodes and zap them and their heart gets going again. Or they can give them, in rare extreme cases, a shot of adrenaline right directly in the heart muscle and it will start beating again. Maybe there are some out there in that condition. If we can help them, that'd be something we need to pray about, that they would have just enough life maybe to ask for some help and we can help them. That would be something if we could do that.

VI. Church at Philadelphia:

This is the Church that everyone wants to be. Why? *Because it is the Church that is the purest of all!* How many churches have said that they are the Philadelphians? We even have one Church of God labeled the Philadelphian Church of God, but it's anything but that!

Let's not look for ourselves in the Bible and say that we are Philadelphians. But let's look at the lesson of the Philadelphians and see if we can conform our lives to that. If we happen to fall into any of the other categories, looking to what Philadelphia has done and is doing, that is a pattern for all of the rest to follow in their repentance. All the rest are told to repent except Smyrna and Philadelphia. So let's look at that.

Revelation 3:7: "And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia, write: 'These things says the

Holy One, the One Who *is* true; the One Who has the key of David, Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens.'"

- Who is this? *Christ!*
- What does this tell us? *He's fully in charge!*
- What does this also tell us about the Philadelphians? *They are looking to Christ always!*

Understand that He is the One. {Note sermons on *Key of David*} and the key of David is actually the understanding or the heart of David, if we could put it that way. And also the tabernacle of David, which is referred to as the Church by James in Acts 15.

Verse 8, "I know your works...." It's a little different than the other ones:

- I have a few things against you.
- I have somewhat against you.
- Your works are not perfect.

Here it says, v 8: "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door..." And we know that means a means of preaching the Gospel. But also an open door can mean *understanding the Scriptures*, too. Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things out of Your Law.' God reveals them by His Spirit. So, it can mean that, as well.

"...and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name, Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie..." (vs 8-9).

They are confronted with exactly the same system that Smyrna was, the synagogue of Satan. In this case with the Philadelphians, they are not martyred like the Smyrneans. So the confrontation is a little different.

"...—behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you" (vs 9). There are some people who say that that doesn't mean worship; that means only homage. But if you are as Christ is in the resurrection, then God is going to make them come and worship before you. That's not to take away worship from God the Father or Christ. But that is to acknowledge that those of the synagogue of Satan who sought to set up Satan's system, which we're in confrontation with today, they did not have their mission from God.

But those who were faithful to God in this way, which also means that the Philadelphians did

not take upon themselves to try and politically correct the synagogue of Satan's system in the world. That's why so many people who are getting involved in these things, and the sovereignist movement, and all of those things, they are trying to change it by physical means. We understand you cannot change it by physical means, or political means, **but only by the Spirit of God and Christ is the only One to do that**, so rather than be unfaithful to Christ to go out and do His work to try and change it, we remain faithful to Christ and always keep His Word.

This is the blessing everyone wants, v 10: "Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the time of temptation which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth." A lot of people think this is the Tribulation. This is not! I have a sermon that I did on it quite a while ago, went through the Greek and showed it's different than Tribulation, which I will not do at this point; I will just summarize it.

"...upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth." What is that temptation? *Worshipping the image of the Beast and receiving the mark of the Beast!* That temptation is going to come upon us before there is any fleeing to a place of safety. The misinterpretation of this has caused people to think, 'Boy, if I'm a Philadelphian and I call myself a Philadelphian I'm going to escape the Tribulation.'

We'll talk a little bit about escaping the Tribulation, but suffice to say that—I've also given some things concerning the place of safety—there will be a place of safety. But just please understand this, **even if it is Petra**—all of the foolish of men trying to go over there and buy shares in a motel so that they'll have a comfortable place to stay, or go over there and help clean out the caves so they won't have to live in centuries of dung, all of that sort of thing—**none of that's going to work because the angels of God are going to be those who will take you to a place of safety**, just like Lot was taken out of Sodom.

Suffice to say, if you know where the place of safety is and you don't get there did the knowledge do you any good? *No!* If you don't know where it is and you get there you will find out where it is when you arrive. Which means that **in order to go to a place of safety it's a matter of faith and trust in God!** And if you don't go you're still Christ's. You have a different mission to fulfill, and maybe that is to give your life as a witness against this world's system.

- Did Christ die as a martyr? *Yes!*

- Did the apostles die as martyrs, except John? *Yes!*

They tried to martyr him by throwing him in boiling oil, but he didn't burn. Apparently an angel just booted him right out of the boiling oil cauldron. Can you imagine the executioner standing there watching this happen? So again, let's not take judgment into our hands, which alone comes from God.

But in the book of Revelation we need to understand something very important, like where in it says here, "...keep you from the time of temptation which *is* about to come upon the **whole** world..." (v 10). That's why we are living in the age of globalization.

Watch your televisions and you watch how many things around there concerning globalization: in economics, in education, and in religion. It's everywhere! When it says 'all the world' it means that!

"...to try those who dwell on the earth.." (v 10). Is there any restriction to that? *None!* That's the whole world.

Verse 11. "Behold, I am coming quickly; hold fast that which you have so that no one may take away your crown." We lived in a time when there were a lot of people doing 'crown stealing'—right? *Yes!* And it's a man! Don't let *any man*. And who would be a man who would come and steal your crown? *A false prophet who appears to be a true prophet!* And people have gone after them—haven't they? *We all need to be like the Bereans!* 'Search the Scriptures whether these things may be so or not.'

If it sounds phony, it probably is. We need to just label a lot of those men that are going around doing this as vanity-filled false prophets who are ravaging wolves within, coming around in sheep's clothing so they can steal crowns. That's the attitude that we need to take toward them. Now granted, that is not very ecumenical, but **we are called to be separate. Come out from among them and be you separate and touch not the unclean!**

Verse 12: "The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out any more; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him* My new name. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vs 12-13).

Let's go back and let's focus in on the thing concerning *a little strength* because this is very important. You can liken that to a little strength *physically* because obviously *spiritually* they have a

lot of strength—don't they? Also, *little strength* means that you don't have political power, you don't have notoriety in the world; ***your strength comes from God!***

2-Corinthians 12 tells us if they have a little strength and are succeeding what is it that they are relying upon for their strength?

2-Corinthians 12:7: "But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations, *there* was given to me a thorn in the flesh, **an angel** of Satan to buffet me..." This is not a disease. this is an 'angelos.'

God said, 'All right, I'm going to make sure you stay humble,' because he's going to be afflicted by this demon from time to time, which would come around and cause him great distress. How many of the Jews were stirred up wherever Paul went, and so forth. This is all part of that.

"...to buffet me, so that I might not be exalted. I besought the Lord three times for this, that it might depart from me; but He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you...' (vs 7-9).

What happens when you have trials come upon you and you see all your weaknesses? *You turn to God!* But if you have a lot of strength and have a lot of notoriety, and if you're a great personality and you're all these great *physical* things the last thing you're going to do is go to God. ***If you're weak the first thing you're going to do is go to God because you know His strength is in Him and not in you!***

Verse 9: "But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you... [which shows that the Philadelphians are relying on the grace of God continually] ... for My power is made perfect in weakness'...." Even John the Baptist said to the Sadducees and Pharisees, 'Don't say we've got Abraham for our Father, because God is able to raise up unto Abraham children of these stones.'

So, when you're weak then ***the power of Christ in you can make you strong*** through the grace. That's what it's talking about, and the Philadelphians have to be strong. Otherwise, how can they resist the synagogue of Satan? It's a spiritual battle.

"...Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (vs 9).

Let's look at our calling; *the Philadelphians understand their calling*. Whereas, perhaps maybe the Laodiceans in their own smugness pretty well think, 'Well, I'm so good God had to call me.; There's a vast difference in attitude here!

Verse 26: "For you see your calling,

brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are highborn *among you*."

Why? *Because God takes the things that are nothing in the eyes of the world and makes something out of them through His Spirit!* That's why God called Abraham at 75-years-old and put him through 25 years of trials before Isaac was born for him to understand that it's not by flesh, it's not by power, it's not by physical things, '*but by My Spirit.*' By the time Isaac was conceived Sarah and Abraham both understood that.

Here's what God has called. This is why, brethren, we have so much trouble in the Church; I mean trouble with each other; that's not doctrinal problems.

Verse 27: "Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the lowborn of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are" (vs 27-28).

So, lots of times when our carnality comes out in it's grandest glorious weakest form, and we offend because we are foolish, or we offend because we are weak, or we cross each other's paths in a way because we are stumbling around without the guidance of the Spirit that we really need, we can cause problems within the Church.

But with the love of God and the Spirit of God we can overcome that and have brotherly love, which is what Philadelphia means. If we understand our calling, that God is going to do something great.

But can you imagine when Christ says, 'Hmm, Prince Philip, Prince Charles...'—and Prince Charles may be King Charles by that time—'...I want you to come before these people and bow down and worship them.' *But Lord, these were the nothing and the off scouring of those that we destined to death. And we wanted nothing to do with them but merchandise them, and take from them, and deceive them.*

God is going to say, 'You either bow and worship or I'm going to break your legs.' Now you think of that! Because of that, let's not get all lifted up. But God has *called us*. We are nothing! God is the One Who gives us the strength. We rely on

- His strength
- His way
- His ability

more than anything else!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 2:24
- 2) Romans 10:6-8
- 3) Revelation 9:1
- 4) Romans 10:7
- 5) Revelation 9:2, 11
- 6) Revelation 20:1-3
- 7) 1 Corinthians 2:9-10
- 8) Psalm 119:18
- 9) 1 Corinthians 2:11
- 10) Revelation 2:23
- 11) Psalm 7:8-9
- 12) Psalm 16:7-11
- 13) Psalm 26:1-2
- 14) Revelation 2:25-29
- 15) Revelation 3:1-5
- 16) 1 Corinthians 3:11-21
- 17) Ezekiel 36:16-18
- 18) Mark 7:20-23
- 19) Proverbs 21:16
- 20) Proverbs 15:10
- 21) Matthew 25:1-13, 30, 13, 21-30
- 22) Luke 12:47-48
- 23) Ephesians 5:11-16
- 24) Revelation 3:7-13
- 25) 2 Corinthians 12:7-9
- 26) 1 Corinthians 1:26-28

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 9:3-10
- Malachi 2
- Revelation 19
- 1 Peter 4:12
- Isaiah 55
- Revelation 14
- Acts 15

Also referenced:

Book: *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight

DVD *Israel of the Alps* (produced by the 7th Day Adventist Church)

Sermons:

- *Key of David*
- *Tabernacle of David*

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The Seven Church Harvest VII Churches at Philadelphia & Laodicea

Fred R. Coulter

We are going through the seven churches of Revelation 2 & 3, and we are seeing that there is a parallel in the harvest leading up to Pentecost between the seven weeks of harvest and the seven churches. Then on Pentecost we will cover the 50th day harvest, which then will be the final harvest of God. These prophecies can apply:

1. to the seven literal churches then
2. to the history of the Church of God down through time
3. to any attitude that a person can have in any Church at any time
4. to show all the main doctrinal problems into which the Church of God would have infiltrated into them.

Satan always infiltrates the true Church of God! You never hear of anyone from the true Church of God infiltrating a church of Satan; like infiltrate the Catholics and change them. *No way!* We are to be separate from them. It's interesting that these things come into the Church.

As we are looking at the Church at Philadelphia let's understand something. Christ is the One Who has the *key of David*. Christ is the One Who opens and closes. Opening can refer to:

- preaching the Gospel
- to understanding the Word of God

{note sermons: *The Key of David* and *Tabernacle of David*} The *tabernacle of David* is the Church.

The reason why it is called *the tabernacle of David* is because we are to have the same spiritual attitude of David, the same heart as David. That means the closeness that we have to God. We won't get into a full length discussion of Acts 15 and the problem of circumcision, and so forth, but what we'll come to where James renders his decision.

Acts 15:13: "And after they were silent, James answered *and* said, 'Men, brethren, listen to me. Simeon [Peter] has related how God first visited *the* Gentiles...' (vs 13-14). I think that that is quite ironic when you read Gal. 2, how that Peter got trapped by the circumcision party into separating from the Gentiles. And yet, he was the first one to go to the Gentiles, to Cornelius and his family, as recorded in Acts 10 & 11. God revealed to Peter that God was *no respecter of persons*, and there was a miraculous conversion of Cornelius and his household by giving of the Holy Spirit before they were baptized—afterwards they were baptized, of

course—but to show Peter that God was calling the Gentiles. So, he went through and explained all that.

"...first visited *the* Gentiles to take out a people for His name" (v 14). It's important to understand when you come to:

Hebrews 4:9: "There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping for the people of God." In Acts 15 it's talking about Gentiles *as the people of God*, as we find in 1-Pet. 2:10_[transcriber's correction].

Acts 15:15: "And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, 'after these things, I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which has fallen; and its ruins I will build again, and will set it up; so that the residue of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, says *the* Lord, Who does all these things'" (vs. 15-17). This is another strong statement that we can use to go along concerning the Sabbath and the Word of God, and Gentiles, and all of this.

Verse 18: "Known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world. Therefore, my judgment is *that* we do not trouble those of the Gentiles who have turned to God; but *that* we write to them to abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* sexual immorality, and *from* what has been strangled and *from* blood" (vs. 18-20). These are also contained in the Law of Moses.

Verse 21: "For from *the* generations of old, Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him in the synagogues, being read every Sabbath Day." His judgment does not release the Gentiles from Sabbath or Holy Day-keeping. What it does, it releases *all*, not just the Gentiles, from all the code of Jewish law. {note: book *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin} You cannot understand the writings of Paul, or what is said concerning the Law of Moses in relationship to the Pharisees and Sadducees unless you understand that all the code of Jewish law are those laws which the Jews made to put around the Ten Commandments and the Word of God. In effect *their traditions*, as Jesus said, rejected the Truth of God. This was the problem that they were having concerning circumcision.

That's why Paul, in Rom. 4 shows that Abraham was converted and the father of the faithful while he was uncircumcised, and circumcision came later. That's all that I need to get into with this. Suffice to say, these Gentiles were keeping the Sabbath, attending the synagogue. Would there be

the enforcement of the laws of Judaism put upon them rather than keeping the laws and commandments of God? *The decision was made they should keep the laws and commandments of God!*

But the main point I wanted to make here for the Church at Philadelphia is that the tabernacle of David shows:

- the attitude of David
- the obedience of David
- the love of God that David had

This is why the Church at Philadelphia, which is called *the church of brotherly love*, in order to have brotherly love you have to have the love of God first. And we will see that they have the love of God first, and love the brethren.

Revelation 3:8: “I know your works.... [so they had works] ...Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name”—which shows that they’re faithful.

Why is it important to understand the weakness of human beings? Which none of the other churches were commended for understanding that they were weak? Weak can mean several things:

- not very much strength in numbers
- understanding the weakness of the flesh in relationship to obeying in the spirit

What happens when you are weak? *Being weak and relying on the strength of God shows you are relying on the strength of God through the grace of God to do what God wants!* Remember what Christ said, ‘The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.’ The problem comes about when we get to the Laodiceans, that they think that the physical things and their physical abilities give them a great standing before God. But it doesn’t.

Now let’s read what happened here concerning Paul, 2-Corinthians 12:7: “But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations, *there* was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel [‘angelos’] of Satan...” It could mean an angel, or a fallen angel of Satan, he has his angels (Rev. 12:9-10).

“...to buffet me, so that I might not be exalted” (v 7). apparently this angel went around and stirred up trouble and opposition for Paul. You read all the trouble and difficulties he had everywhere he went, stirred up the Jews against him.

Verse 8: “I besought the Lord three times for this, that it might depart from me; but He said to me,

‘My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness.’....” (vs 8-9). If we have a little strength that means we recognize our weaknesses, which means then we look to the grace of God and the help of the Holy Spirit.

“...Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for **when I am weak, then I am strong**” (vs 9-10)—*being strong in the Lord!*

The Philadelphians were strong in the Lord. That’s important to understand; we have to understand this, brethren: ***We cannot accomplish spiritual things by our own spirituality or carnal means!*** We cannot do that! We can make it look like we’re doing it, but in the final analysis there is going to be a test that will come, which will prove that we can’t. Have we not seen that in operation many, many times over? *Yes, indeed!*

Isaiah 35:3: “Make the weak hands strong and make the feeble knees sure. Say to those of a fearful heart, ‘Be strong, fear not...’” (vs 3-4). That’s what we need to do because we are going to be confronted with an enemy in the synagogue of Satan.

“...behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, with the full recompense of God. He will come and save you.’ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness waters shall break out, and streams in the desert” (vs 4-6). Then it blends on from there in to the Millennium and the coming of Christ. We have to have our power and strength in Christ.

Remember, Paul also said, ‘I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me.’ That’s where our strength comes from. It doesn’t come from our ability. It doesn’t come from great knowledge and understanding. It comes from:

- God’s way
- God’s Spirit
- God’s Truth
- from God Himself

Psalms 73:26: “My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever, for lo, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all who go a whoring from You” (vs 26-27).

This is very important because the Philadelphians are one of those churches that did not get involved in false doctrines, which is called *going*

whoring, drinking of the cup of the fornication of the harlot of Babylon the Great.

Verse 28: “And me, it is good for me to draw near to God; I have made the LORD God my refuge, that I may declare all Your works.” Not relying upon himself, nor relying upon his ability, but always upon God. We will see being faithful to the Word of God as no other church, and that’s becomes important.

Psalm 35—here is how a Philadelphian fights the battle. Let’s look at some of those who trust in physical things to fight their battles for them. Our battle that we are fighting is the synagogue of Satan, and that means on a spiritual level, on a political level and on an economic level the whole world has been deceived by the synagogue of Satan. {Note sermon: *The Beast that Was, and is Not, and Yet is*}

Now then, for those who do not rely on God, what is one of the types of organizations that we find out there and has cost us trouble from time-to-time? It is the organization, or the kind of organizations, there are many different movements in it, which is we need to get back to the Constitution once delivered in the United States. These are called the sovereignists, saying that we all have our sovereign rights and we need to exercise that and get back to the Constitution once delivered.

Granted, the Constitution is being changed defacto. But even if you get back to the constitution once delivered, what do you have? As great as the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the United States is, what do you have? *You have a carnal government!* What they are trying to do with these means by saying you should withdraw from Social Security, you should not have a driver’s license, you should not have a car license on your car, you should not have a bank account, etc., etc., etc. They are trying to fight the enemy with carnal means.

The Philadelphians will fight the enemy *with spiritual means*, all the while recognizing that it says, ‘Be subject to the higher powers.’ When we draw the line—which is not too far down the road—is when they want us to go against our faith. We draw the line and say, ‘*Absolutely, no!*’ When they say, ‘Receive the mark of *the beast*, and worship the image of the beast,’ we say, *no!* The whole setup is going to be a whole new numbering system. Everything else that we have is leading up to that.

The *mark of the Beast* will be the final tip that is put on the finished product. And that’s where God says, ‘You draw the line.’ I call your attention to Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego when they were told to bow down to the idol. That’s where they drew the line and said, ‘No, regardless of what you

do to us we will not bow down to the idol. I it’s God’s will that we die, we die. If it’s God’s will we don’t, we won’t.’ So, they were cast into the furnace of fire and they survived. Christ was actually in there with them protecting them.

Here’s how a Philadelphian fights the battle, Psalm 35:1: “Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me ...” That’s why I do not get into doctrinal arguments unless it gets down into affecting the brethren and what they believe. Then it becomes a spiritual battle.

“...fight against those who fight against me” (v 1). I’ve had to claim that promise many times within the Church down through the years. God has always delivered us from every single one of the problems; but if I’d have gone out and tried to exercise my carnal power I would have been slaughtered.

Verse 2: “Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help. Also draw out the spear and the lance against those who pursue me; say to my soul, ‘I am your salvation’” (vs 2-3). I want you to see how closely this ties in with 2-Cor. 12, and Paul relying upon God and the power of the Holy Spirit rather than in his own carnal means. Always remember: ***you cannot accomplish spiritual things with carnal means!*** It cannot be done!

Verse 4: “Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion, those who seek after my soul; let them be turned back and humiliated, those who devise evil against me. Let them be as chaff before the wind; and let the angel of the LORD drive them away. Let their way be dark and slippery; and let the angel of the LORD pursue them; for without cause they have hidden their net for me; without cause they have dug a pit for my soul. Let destruction come upon him in a time he will not know; and let his net which he has concealed catch him, let him fall into destruction. And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD; it shall rejoice in His salvation” (vs 4-9).

Notice he’s not joyful in the fact that his enemy is defeated by God, which he’s happy and thankful that God is the One Who has done it. But he joys in God. Even when an enemy falls don’t rejoice in that, because we are to love our enemies. Rejoice in the fact that God is the One Who fought the battle. Nevertheless:

- Is this not the attitude of David?
- Is this not a key to David in trusting God for power?
- Trusting God to fight his battles?

This is why the Philadelphians are commended for what they do because they trust in God.

Verse 10: “All my bones shall say ‘O

LORD, Who is like You, Who delivers the poor from him stronger than he; yea, *even* the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?” Then it blends right on in to some of the prophecies concerning Christ.

Verse 11: “Cruel witnesses rose up; they asked me of things that I knew nothing about. They rewarded me evil for good, bereaving my soul. But when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into my own bosom” (vs 10-13). In other words, he had his prayers answered because he looked to God rather than out there fighting the enemy.

We covered Psalm 34 during the Days of Unleavened Bread. As a matter of fact, the last Holy Day God delivers us out of all of our troubles. Let’s go back and see how this applies to the Philadelphians, and how important this is.

Revelation 3:9: “Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan...” What is the synagogue of Satan? I will just give you a very brief review of it. The synagogue of Satan consists of all those in the world who are the rich, who are the powerful, who worship and serve Satan to accomplish his plan on this earth. It is called *The Committee of 300* by Dr. John Coleman. It includes a cross section of all governments, all religions, economics and politics. The book *Diplomacy By Deception* by Dr. John Coleman will answer how Satan is able to deceive the whole world.

What the Philadelphians are commended for is that in the face of the synagogue of Satan—... “...who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie...” (v 9)—it’s not to referring just to Jews only, but to all of those who claim that they have the right way for the right society, for the right religion, for the right salvation, and all of that’s included in the coming one-world government and one-world religion. That’s quite a sweeping statement here.

They “...are not, but do lie...” That’s why *Diplomacy By Deception* is so profound. Everything that is this whole one-world government and one-world religion that is coming is ***based upon a lie***. Many lies! Some of the legislation that’s being put through Congress, and right here in California—in every state in America and around the world—are legislated things to implement the United Nations standard:

- for education
- for conduct of society
- for children
- for adults
- for law

And there’s going to be a world court that’s going to come up, which then will make it possible—through treaty, through the United Nations—for someone to be arrested in a country, like the United States, and taken to Rome to be put on trial for hate crimes by speaking against the Catholic Church, or the Jews, or the Buddhists, or the United Nations.

So, the *true Philadelphians* resist all of this. God is going to turn the tables. He’s going to make them come and worship before our feet. “...—behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you” (v 9).

This is very important because Christ loves those who love Him, though God loves the whole world. But this is talking to the Church, and this is the special love that comes from God. This is a special love back to God. If we do the things that are pleasing in His sight, He loves us. He gives a promise that everyone wants. and everyone thinks that this is going to a place of safety. It may or may not. {Note sermon: *The Temptation to Try The Whole World*}

Verse 10: “Because you have kept the Word of My patience [or patiently kept My Word]...” What is involved in love? *Keeping the Word of God! Keeping the commandments of God!*

Let me give you an example: in marriage, in faithfulness. We had a wedding here two weeks ago, and the vows that they took to enter into covenant to God to love each other, to be faithful to each other: For the husband to provide for the wife; for the wife to submit herself to her husband; for the husband to love her, and for them to become one flesh. Now then, if a couple so married continue in that, then they are faithfully, patiently—through thick and thin, through trial and difficulty, through disappointments and arguments, through triumphs and failures—kept their covenant with Christ.

Now then, if on the other hand as some of the other churches have done:

- lost their first love
- held the doctrine of Balaam
- the doctrine of Nicolaitans
- the doctrine of Jezebel
- the depths of Satan

They have not faithfully, patiently kept the Word of God, meaning they were lacking in their love to God. If you patiently keep His Word that means you are keeping His commandments. No question about it!

Now, let’s just enter in some Scriptures for this. We need to just to have the Scriptural proof of

it. This ties right in with the whole attitude of the Philadelphians.

1 John 5:2: “By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God...” If you love the children of God that is brotherly love—is it not? Does not Philadelphia mean *the church of brotherly love*? So, this ties right in it.

“...we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (vs 2-3).

Wait till we get to the Church at Laodicea and I'll read something that will just literally blow your mind.

John 14:23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘**If** ...’ There is the condition. That’s very important. The condition is upon us. The condition is not upon God.

- God is true
- God cannot lie
- God will not lie
- God is love
- God is Truth
- God is all powerful

So, the condition is upon us because it is our choice to make.

“...‘**If** anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word...” (v 23). And isn’t that what is said of the Philadelphians, ‘you have patiently kept My Word’? *Yes!*

“...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him” (v 23). Meaning that through the power of the Holy Spirit, you have the Spirit of Christ in you and you have the Spirit of begetting from the Father, which then is the two-fold action of the Holy Spirit within you.

Verse 24: “The one who does not love Me does not keep My words...” Which means you can’t pick and choose what you are going to do or what you won’t do according to the Word of God, because as we will see later, that is part of *the mystery of iniquity*.

If a person says, ‘I love the Lord, come to church on Sunday,’ he doesn’t love God. He may think he does. He may have a feeling in his heart, but he doesn’t have faith based upon the facts of the Truth of God. So, he truly has ‘a religion of opinion’ because first you must keep the words of God, and keep His sayings. Since Christ was the LORD God of the Old Testament, this means everything that’s in

the Old Testament that applies to us today, as well as everything in the New Testament.

Here’s a warning, “...and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me.” (v 24). That becomes very profound and important for us to understand.

Now let’s see something else that’s important concerning that, about we have not denied the name of Christ. The Philadelphian

- has not denied His name
- has not denied Christ
- has faithfully kept the Word of God

and that’s why God is going to decide who the Philadelphians are. No church name, no human proclamation, because it is a spiritual thing that takes place.

Matthew 10:32: “Now then, whoever shall confess Me before men, that one will I also confess before My Father Who *is* in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, that one will I also deny before My Father, Who *is* in heaven” (vs 32-33). That is straightforward—isn’t it? It doesn’t take any great interpretation—does it? *It means that!* So, when the Philadelphians are commended for not denying His name that means that *they have always stood for His name!*

Now, in spite of all the conflict here, v 34: “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s enemies *shall be those of his own household*” (vs 34-36). Truth divides as well as unites. But first it must divide you from the carnal reality of this world into the spiritual Truth of God.

Verse 37: “The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me” (vs 37-38). That’s why the Philadelphians are commended, that in spite of their weaknesses they rely upon the strength of God for their spiritual strength and success.

Verse 39: “The one who has found his life shall lose it... [this will tie right back in to the temptation that comes upon the whole earth] ... and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.”

I know some of this is basic, and some of this is more detailed and for a higher level if some of

this is new to you. But I'll try and make it as clear as I can here.

Revelation 3:10: "Because you have kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep you from the time of temptation..." Temptation is an entirely different thing than tribulation. Let's see what kind of temptation this is.

"...keep you from the time of temptation, which is about to come upon the whole world..." (v 10). Please understand something concerning Revelation. When it says *all the world* it means *all the world!* And the fulfillment will be in our day, today.

"...to try those who dwell on the earth" (v 10). With all of the globalization that we have. Concerning the economics in China and why it's such a 'wonderful thing' that we have the trade thing with China. It showed a Chinese building with a McDonald's sign. And I thought 'one world society,' that's what it all is. What was the rationale for approving this treaty? *'Well, we can influence them more and show them our way of life if we are engaged with them.'* Which in a sense is true, but what is happening in that, the whole world is being Babylonianized. It's going to be a whole one-world thing, **and it's coming!**

(go to the next track)

What is a *temptation* that is coming upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth? A lot of people think it is *the* Tribulation but *the* Tribulation, though it affects many people in the world, there are still human beings left over at the end of the Tribulation. Even when Christ returns they survive through it. So this has to be before it. Christ is going to keep us from that time of temptation. Does that mean that we will flee to a place of safety? *Possibly!* But let's look at *the temptation* that is coming. This is *temptation* that is coming, and it will be two-fold. We are living in these days so we need to cover it.

Revelation 13:11: "And I saw another beast rising out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, but spoke like a dragon.... [it's the coming one-world religion] ...And he exercises all the authority of the first beast before him; and he causes the earth and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he performs great wonders, so that he even causes fire to come down to the earth from heaven in the sight of men" (vs 11-13).

Here is the deception, *the temptation*, v 14: "And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by means of the wonders that were given to him to perform in the sight of the beast, saying to those who dwell on the earth..." That's exactly the same thing

that is back there in Rev. 3:10:

"...saying to those who dwell on the earth that they should make an image for the beast..." And the image of *the beast* has always been the female goddess, *always!* That's why today's education is so much involved in environmentalism so that they can get in line with Gaia, which is 'mother earth'; or the virgin Mary; or the virgin of Guadeloupe; or whatever other virgin, the virgin of Fatima, whatever. It's all the same thing.

So, they make an image for *the beast* "...which had the wound by the sword, yet, was alive. And he was given *power* to give life to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast also could speak; and he causes everyone who will not worship the image of the beast to be killed" (vs 14-15).

So, *the temptation* is going to be that you make this image to the beast and you bow down to worship it or you're going to be killed. That's one part of it. Christ gave the promise to the Philadelphians that they would be spared from the *hour of temptation* that comes upon the whole earth. Notice that the Tribulation hasn't started, yet. This is *the hour of temptation!*

Now notice what else happens here, v 16: "And he causes all..." You might go to v 14 meaning *all that dwell on the earth*. Do we today have the power to do something to all on the earth for the first time in the world's history? *Yes, we do!*

Verse 16: "And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, to receive a mark in their right hands, or in their foreheads." We've covered it concerning 'the Digital Angel,' a small little chip the size of a dime—and they'll get it smaller—which is called a transceiver.

As I mentioned years ago before the information ever came out concerning the Digital Angel chip, which they are perfecting right now, that it is not just a system to buy and sell. But it is a *system of control*. A transceiver means that someone out there with the same kind of mechanism that they have with the satellites that they use for cellular phones, they can actually with this Digital Angel take away your free moral agency by making you do what they want you to do. And as I said, that's why the mark of the beast is so absolutely treacherous because ***you give up your choice!*** And since you have chosen God and God has chosen you, ***if you give up your choice you are giving up God!*** That's why the *mark of the beast* is so damnable.

Verse 17: "So that no one may have the ability to buy and sell unless he has the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name"—the

number is 666. The number 666 applies to the *first* beast and the *second* beast of Rev. 13, which is wrapped up in all the Babylonian Mystery Religion system.

Today there is a vast criminal movement going on, which they can hardly stop, which is the theft of not only you're financial things such as credit cards, bank statements and things like this, but the *theft of your identity*, that with these things they can in a planned way take everything out of your bank account. Even one company worth \$20-million was taken down in five hours and they had to declare bankruptcy and they didn't know who did it. I suggest you do all you can to protect your personal identity and everything like that. Don't throw out bank statements and bills in the garbage in the street. Any checks that you write, by all means use permanent ink, because they can take your checks, they can drop them into a solution that eliminates all the ink, but it keeps all of the markings and everything, the printing for the bank on there and they can fill it out to their heart's desire. And since they have your number they can get into the bank and find out how much you have. So, you protect it!

The solution to this will be *the mark of the beast*, so we will have full proof identity of who you are. Whether you are online with the computer, or buying and selling in a store, or whatever it may be. And I think *the mark of the beast* will be voluntary at first. But don't worry, they are targeting everyone who believes in the Bible anyway. So, you are already marked one way or the other. It gets down to this: will you be a true Philadelphian and trust in Christ? Or will you look to save your own life but lose it eternally? ***The Philadelphian chooses to trust God!***

I'm sure there are other things that we could add to Rev. 3 many other Scriptures, but suffice to say that the attitude that the Philadelphian has what you might say, the perfect loving Philadelphia attitude described by the Apostle Paul.

Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love... [I want you to notice how these verses fit in so well with the *Philadelphian Church of God*] ...if any fellowship of *the Spirit*, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing" (vs 1-2). That means minding the one and selfsame thing that is attaining to the Kingdom of God.

Verse 3: "*Let nothing be done through contention or vainglory...* [because a true Philadelphian will not do that] ...but in humility... [recognizing your weaknesses] ...each esteeming the others above himself." That applies not only for

brethren, but that applies for elders and teachers and ministers in relationship to the brethren. Paul said that he wanted to see the Corinthians elevated to a high status of spirituality. And that should be the goal of any minister, any elder, and to see the brethren promoted, yes, above him spiritually. That is true love.

Verse 4: "Let each one look not *only* after his own things... [to get your own, save your own] ... but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus" (vs 4-5)—which then was the mind of true humility that the Philadelphians have.

Verse 6: "Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant [in the Greek means *slave*] ...and being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross" (vs 6-8).

What it means that we're going to have to do if we're Philadelphians, I don't know. But I know this: *God is the One Who makes the decision and the choice!* What we need to do is conform our lives to the Word of God and the Truth of God so that we will function as Philadelphians without having to go around and trumpet our horn and say we are Philadelphians. Know this for sure: anyone who proclaims himself to be a Philadelphian probably is not. What they want to do is escape to go to a place of safety.

Then He gives a warning, Revelation 3:11: "Behold, I am coming quickly..." There's the time setting, right close toward the end of the age. Quickly to God or to Christ may be slow to men, because some men will say, 'My Lord delays His coming.' But He isn't delaying His coming; *He's right on time!* The only problem is carnal men have their own time schedule and Christ is not going to go by carnal men's time schedules. He's going to go by the time schedule of God the Father.

"...hold fast that which you have... [don't let anyone take it away] ...so that no one may take away your crown" (v 11). What we're seeing happening with a lot of brethren who may have been Philadelphians to begin with, someone is stealing their crown because they are not holding fast.

Notice this superlative, this promise to this church is the superlative promise to any of the seven churches; v 12: "The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God... [a pillar is one of the strong supports] ...and he shall not go out anymore..." In other words, he will stay right there in the temple of God. Of course, he will go in and

out from there but he's not going to go out from there and not come back.

"...and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him My new name*" (v 12).

I'm just going to interject here some speculation: I believe that v 12 describes the ones who are in the first resurrection who will be the *bride of Christ* more than any other. That's just my opinion, so it's not dogma. But when you look at all of it there: the name of the Father, the name of Jerusalem, and the name of Christ. What happens when a bride gets married? *Takes the name of the husband*—correct? *Yes!* So I'll leave it at that.

We'll do the Laodiceans quickly; we've beaten enough on the Laodiceans enough so we don't need to spend very much time on them.

Verse 13: "**The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**" Isn't it profound that one of the most basic themes in the Bible is to *obey the voice of God!* If you obey, that means you hear. So, He lays it out for everyone.

VII. Church at Laodicea:

Now, the Church of the Laodiceans—big, bad, nasty Laodiceans! Let me say before we get into that, that *Christ loves* the Laodiceans, but they have some very difficult problems to work on and overcome.

Verse 14: "And to the angel of the Church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God. I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot" (vs 14-15)—cold means being *unconverted*; hot means *being converted*.

Verse 16: "So then, because you are lukewarm..." You're half carnal, you're half spiritual, you're right in-between. Right here I've got a lukewarm partial cup of coffee, and when you try and drink that you just don't like it.

"So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth... [vomit] ...For you say..." (vs 16-17). This is the only church of the seven that has the gall and audacity to talk back to God. They don't think they're talking back to God, but they are.

"...*I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing*..." (v 17). They are trusting in all the physical things as evidence of their great conversion, yet, they're corrupt and have need

of nothing!

When you talk about physical things, let's understand something: *physical blessings do indeed come from God!* But ***if you compromise the way that you believe***, as the Laodiceans have here, and become lukewarm, can also Satan the devil reward you for that and you deceive yourself that this comes from God? *No question about it!*

Remember during the temptation of Jesus Christ (Matt. 4 and Luke 4), what did Satan tell Jesus Christ? He took Him on a high mountain and he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and all the glory of them:

- the riches
- the wealth
- the splendor
- the buildings
- the whole thing

And he said, 'If you will fall down and worship me all of this will be Yours, because I give it to whomsoever I will.' If you do like this church group, here's a perfect Laodicean attitude.

"...and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (v 17). This is one of the most scathing corrections. I think the most scathing correction was for Thyatira because they got clear into *the depths of Satan*. But here they don't understand their spiritual condition.

- They are not in right standing with Jesus Christ.
- Their lives are miserable because they are not keeping the commandments of God the way that they should.
- They are poor spiritually because they're looking to all the physical things and saying, 'Look at all of these things that we have.'
- ✓ Isn't that how the church we came out of measured their spiritual condition? *Yes!*
- ✓ Where is it now? *All removed!*

If you trust in physical things God will remove them, and He has done it.

- "...and blind..."—you can't even understand your own spiritual condition
- "...and naked..."—you don't have the righteousness of Christ through the garments

This is taken from off the Internet, and this is reference to a congregation; I don't know where it is:

I suppose the problem arises from several sources...

This is in relationship to Lazarus and the rich man and U.S. and Britain in prophecy.

...Inconsistencies such as this don't bother me any more because I've learned after 10 these many years, that every question doesn't necessarily need an answer. Sometimes the best answer is 'I don't know,' which I've never said enough of. Amen. This concept of systematic theology is laudable...

Now let me just say something. What we do when we go through Romans, Colossian, Ephesians, Philippians and Revelation—take a topic and a subject and go through it, that is systematic theology—that means you are systematically going through something so you can come to a full understanding of it. Apparently, this person was saying, 'Look, the way to understand these difficulties is to have a systematic way of analyzing it, of studying it so that you can come to the truth of the conclusion here.'

...This concept of systematic theology is laudable but I wonder if it is even necessary. Far better to take the advice of the old Quaker, in Benjamin Franklin's auto-biography. When asked why he didn't have a doctrinal statement, the Quaker told Franklin that such a statement would lock them into beliefs that might later prove to be wrong, and the statement would only make it harder to accept that.

Which is a silly answer, indeed! How can you believe unless you have a form of belief based upon Scripture? Then you take that and put it into a statement of beliefs. Now, if there are some things you may learn, you need to change later, you can change it. No problem! That's why we have a beliefs booklet that we send out to everyone.

I agree that we should not have a static doctrinal statement. We already have the Bible for that.

Now, if someone says, 'What do you believe?' You just hand them a Bible and say, 'Read the Bible.' *No, I want a summary on it.* 'Read the Bible!' What it really does is this: it means that you don't believe anything. And we'll see what happens.

A systematic theology is not a doctrinal statement. It is a process for approaching the Scriptures in a way that help us to recognize the inconsistency in our views of Scripture and reconcile them. This process generates a dynamic view of the

Bible that changes as we grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

That was his answer to it. Which is basically true. And we do grow in grace and knowledge; here's the answer:

I'm happy to say that our congregation doesn't have a doctrinal statement. So we have people who keep a different Passover date, different calendars, different ideas on who Jesus is, God in the flesh verses a created being, tithing, etc. Some systematic theology we would have, but what we do have by the grace of God is people who truly enjoy being together.

Answer: "I'm glad to hear of your diversity. In the end the tolerance required to have such diversity may lead to greater unity."

Go figure it out! No wonder they don't have a doctrinal statement.

Do you realize how many people are out there that are buying into this kind of thing. To have within the congregation all of these divergent beliefs. And what is the rule? *You are dumbed down to the lowest common denominator!* What is the lowest common denominator with people like this? *A social club!* They enjoy being together. A social club then becomes an idol because

- you have put getting along with people on a social basis *before your relationship with God*
- you have put how people think of you and feel about you *before understanding the Word of God*
 - ✓ how God looks at you
 - ✓ how God feels about you

This describes a perfect Laodicean attitude of lukewarmness and wretchedness:

- they can't see
- they can't understand
- they have no doctrine, they have no statement
- they have no spine
- they have no backbone.
- they are not cold
- they certainly are not hot

They are lukewarm! And another way of saying that is bland, *bland, bland!* They wouldn't stand for anything.

Christ says here's the counsel for them, v 18: "I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by

fire...” This does not necessarily mean the tribulation. It could, because every person’s work is going to be tried by fire. What He’s saying, the trials and difficulties that are coming upon you because of being ‘lukewarm and being spewed out of My mouth, I counsel you to gain spiritual of character of gold.’ {note: 1-Cor. 3:10-23; I covered that when we went through the dead Church of Sardis}.

“...so that you may be rich... [true spiritual riches, not just the physical things] ...and white garments...” (v 18)—which then is the righteousness of the saints, which then is *learn to obey*; you need to *learn the Scriptures*.

“...so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see” (v 18). In other words, strip back the scales that are still there. The scales should be done away in Christ that you see. When someone is baptized and have the Spirit of Christ then the veil is removed and they begin to understand. But the Laodiceans then close down the veil again over their eyes. “...that you may see.”

Here’s a little encouragement, v 19: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten...” God still loves them. But just like with children they have to be rebuked and chastened.

“...Therefore, be zealous and repent” (v 19). Repent of your attitude toward God. Repent of stupidity like this congregation I just read of here.

I heard of one where they have everything under the sun. One man gets up there to preach to them and says, ‘Well, I guess you would call me a believer in the trinity.’ If you haven’t proved the Truth of God, if you haven’t proved that God is a family, if you haven’t got into the Word of God...

He is a supposed minister. Another minister gets up and says well, ‘I can’t find any place in the New Testament where it commands us to keep the Sabbath.’ BINGO! Are you bringing in Sunday-keeping? Shows you he doesn’t know his Bible. It’s amazing what goes on out there in the name of Christ, but it’s all Laodiceanism. They have to repent.

Verse 20: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock...” Christ hasn’t given up on them, yet! He’s still knocking; but what a thing that they thrust Christ out. It would be like you leaving your house and you locking yourself out of your house, and you can’t get back in. Well it’s the same way with those who thrust Christ out of their life. Christ does not want that. He’s knocking at the door.

“...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door...” (v 20)—which means based upon

repentance and the condition of *if*; you must open your mind to all your sins and your weaknesses, and your wretchedness, and the high-fluting attitude of that every physical thing is a guarantee of the spiritual something and you don’t even see or understand the Word of God.

“...**If** anyone hears My voice and opens the door... [you have to open.] (Christ says): ...I will come in to him... [real conversion] ... and will sup with him... [that is you will have a relationship with Him] ...and he with Me. To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (vs 20-22).

There is *the seven church harvest* representing the seven weeks of harvest that we have in counting toward Pentecost.

REVIEW:

I want to go back and review just a few things here in very quick order. So I want to bring out all the things that describe Christ because we are dealing with God, we are dealing with Christ—Who is God—and God the Father. Remember the revelation came from the Father to Christ, and Christ gave that to John to write it down so it would be for all the churches. But remember Christ is the Head. Christ is over all the churches.

Revelation 1:11: “...I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last...”

Verse 17: “...I am the First and the Last.”

Verse 18: I am “...the One Who is living; for I was dead... [showing about His life, His crucifixion, resurrection] ...and behold, I am alive into the ages of eternity. Amen. And I have the keys of *the* grave and of death.”

Showing that He is the One Who can open the graves and bring us out because He was resurrected from the dead.

Revelation 2:1: “To the angel of the Ephesian church, write: ‘These things says He Who holds the seven stars in His right hand, Who walks in *the* midst of the seven golden lampstands.’”

Christ is walking in the midst of the Church always. And when we gather together on the Sabbath and ask for Christ’s blessing and His Spirit, He will answer that prayer. But we need to have open hearts and open minds in that continuously.

Verse 8: “...These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead but is alive.”

Verse 12: “...Who has the sharp two-edged

sword.”

Verse 18: “...He Who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet *are* like fine brass.”

We’re dealing with the power and authority of Christ. That’s something! When we really comprehend that Christ is the Head of the Church and He is working with *all* of His people, even the Laodiceans, and if there’s anything we can do to help them come to repentance we should do that. That’s part of some of the things that we’ve been doing down through the years.

Revelation 3:1: “...These things says He Who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.”

Verse 7: “...These things says the Holy One... [His nature is Holy] ...the One Who *is* true; the One Who has the key of David, Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens” Christ is the one Who controls all of this.

Verse 14: “...These things says the Amen... [He has the final authority] ...the faithful and true Witness... [could also mean martyr because the Greek is ‘martus’] ...the Beginner of the creation of God.” All the way through the New Testament you find that everything was created by and for and through Christ.

Verse 20: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.”

Christ—the Lord of glory, the One Who is Head of the Church—is right now *trying all the reins and hearts*, as we saw with the Church in Thyatira.

- He knows all of our works
 - He knows whether we’re lukewarm or zealous or dead
 - He knows whether we’ve gotten off the track doctrinally
- even into the things of*
- Nicolaitanism
 - Balaamism
- into the things concerning*
- the depths of Satan

He knows all of that. And yet, ***Christ calls out to His Church to repent and to change!*** So, you’ll have to come to Pentecost in order to find out about the harvest for the 50th Day.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 15:13-14
- 2) Hebrew 4:9
- 3) Acts 15:15-21
- 4) 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
- 5) Isaiah 35:3-6
- 6) Psalm 73:26-28
- 7) Psalm 35:1-13
- 8) Revelation 3:9-10
- 9) 1 John 5:2-3
- 10) 1 John 14:23-24
- 11) Matthew 10:32-39
- 12) Revelation 3:10
- 13) Revelation 13:11-17
- 14) Philippians 2:1-8
- 15) Revelation 3:11-22
- 16) Revelation 1:11, 17-18
- 17) Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18
- 18) Revelation 3:1, 7, 14, 20

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Galatians 2
- Acts 10; 11
- 1 Peter 2:10
- Romans 4
- Revelation 12:9-10
- Psalm 34
- Matthew 4
- Luke 4
- 1 Corinthians 3:10-23

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin
- *The Committee of 300* by Dr. John Coleman
- *Diplomacy By Deception* by Dr. John Coleman

Sermons:

- *Key of David*
- *Tabernacle of David*
- *The Beast that Was, and is Not, and Yet Is*
- *The Temptation to Try The Whole World*

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