

REVELATION'S SEVEN CHURCHES

(APPENDIX 3)

What Is the Mystery of The Seven Stars?

Revelation 1:20 opens up with, *"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."* This lesson will focus on the second and third chapters of Revelation, which speaks of the seven churches. When John wrote these chapters, these seven churches did physically exist, however, to apply these verses to only those seven churches of the first century would make chapters 2 and 3 refer to past events and make the scriptures of non-effect for us today, but we are told that the book of Revelation is to reveal future events. As we will see, the seven churches are not only seven literal churches but they also signify seven different time frames in which God's people, the church, have and are going through since the cross.

What Is the Meaning of The First Church?

Revelation 2:1-7 tells us, *"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have [somewhat] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of*

the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

The Ephesus church represents the time period immediately after the cross of 31 AD until approximately 100 AD. This is also known as the Apostolic period. The city of Ephesus was the center of all Christendom, which is also symbolic of the Apostles being the physical center of Christendom. Jesus Christ of course is the Spiritual Center *"for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 3:11).

As we will see, at the beginning of each church period, Jesus introduces Himself in a particular manner. This manner gives comfort in the area that would be attacked the most during that time.

In verse 1, Jesus reveals that He is *"in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."* From the lesson *The Longest Time Prophecy*, the seven golden candlesticks are in the Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary. There, Jesus began the heavenly service as our only mediator between God and man

(1 Timothy 2:5). This would conclude the priesthood that God gave to Israel, which pointed to Christ. The understanding that Jesus is now our High Priest would be attacked during this time period because the Jews did not accept Christ as the fulfillment of the prophecies, which is evident by the crucifixion (Mark 15:12-14) and the stories perpetrated after the resurrection (Matthew 28:11-15).

Further, we have *“ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Jude 1:4). These ungodly men exaggerated grace, as much is done today, to the point that the teachings denied Jesus being in the heavenly sanctuary, being our High Priest. Phrases like, “We are saved at the cross”, “We are saved by grace alone”, “It was all completed at the cross”, etc. made grace to cover more than just confessed sins – it guaranteed salvation no matter how a person lived afterwards. And history is repeating itself again, but more on that later.

Verse 2 reveals that the early church would go through some leadership challenges as the doctrines of Christ would be used to test and prove, revealing the leaders in error. This correlates with what John and others saw: 1 John 2:19 says, *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would [no doubt] have continued with us: but [they went out], that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”*

During this time of doctrinal challenges, Timothy was placed

in charge at the physical Ephesus church as is noted in 1 Timothy 1:2-3, which says, *“Unto Timothy, [my] own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, [and] peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.”* Note that Paul exhorts Timothy to teach no other doctrine and in Revelation 2:2, a praise is given for rebuking the false teachers. These false teachers were tested by the Word of God, and found to be liars. By the way, these are the seeds of what would become the antichrist power, even the grace only movement, which denies countless verses that shows works are involved, not to earn Heaven but to reveal a saved relationship with Him.

Verse 3 reveals how hard the early church worked in taking the Gospel to all nations. This is recorded throughout the epistles and specifically in Philippians 4:3, which states, *“And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and [with] other my fellowlabourers, whose names [are] in the book of life.”*

However, verse 4 reveals that they fell away from their first love (Revelation 2:4). What is that first love? Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:3 (*“Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”*) to 2 Thessalonians 2:10 (*“And with all*

deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved”). And we studied already that the truth is found in the Word (John 17:17), Jesus (John 14:6), and His Law (Psalm 119:142). Further, as the apostles were dying one-by-one, it was becoming doubtful that Jesus was going to return in their lifetime. This explains the many references to encourage the early church to be persistent in their faith. Paul even tried being a model Christian in this aspect as he was nearing the time to be silenced. 2 Timothy 4:6-8 tells us, *“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”* What encouragement!

Notice that verse 5 calls for repentance. According to the Bible, one repents of sin (Ezekiel 33:14-15). And what is sin? 1 John 3:4 says, *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”*

Now, the Nicolaitans of verse 6 were a heretic group, which rose up at this time. The scriptures reveal that they believed that faith alone saves and thus they can live as the world. James dealt with this group penning, *“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast*

faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:17-20).

Verse 7 states "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith." This is direct council for the working of the Holy Spirit. How can one tell if they are listening to the Spirit? Remember, the Spirit leads to the Word (John 16:13), to Jesus (John 16:14), and to the Law (John 16:8). So, if one follows "in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18) the scripture, the example set by Jesus, and God's Ten Commandments, they are then listening to the Spirit. To disobey would give evidence of not listening to the Holy Spirit.

Also, in verse 7 is a reference to the word OVERCOMETH. It takes a lot to overcome sin. It takes a lot of praying, a lot of discipline, and a lot of time seeking heavenly things. But it is all worth it in the end. But remember who you are relying on – Jesus. You see, overcoming begins with choosing to do good (James 4:17) and submitting the free will to Him (James 4:7). None of the things we do are meritorious, in fact, they are fruit of Christ working in us.

Verse 7 also makes reference to the "Tree of Life." In regards to overcoming sin, God puts a stipulation upon the access to this very important tree. Revelation 22:14 says, "Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may

have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Remember that keeping the commandments is the revelation of a saved relationship with Christ, not to earn heaven, but because Christ has saved us, we do not want to disobey His law.

What Is the Meaning of The Second Church?

Revelation 2:8-11 reveals, "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and [I know] the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but [are] the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

This time period picks up after 100 AD and continues until 313 AD. The later date begins the reign of Constantine. This time frame covers the persecution years where Christians were fed to the lions, hung on posts to be used as human torches, as well as many other cruelties.

Verse 8 opens up with Jesus identifying Himself as once being dead and is now alive again revealing the fact that He alone understands death and

the resurrection. This gives comfort to the people of this time period seeing the second and third century was marked by a great number of Christian martyrs. As they saw their fellow Christians entering into the grave, they needed hope and believing in a future resurrection was that hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 states, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." We are not to comfort one another by channeling spirits. We are not to comfort one another by declaring a loved one is walking the streets of gold already or looking down upon us. We simply are told to look forward to the second coming, the resurrection. In the meantime, the loved one is in a state of sleep.

Verses 9 reveals that the early church was living in a period of physical poverty but yet was spiritually rich. How can that be? Matthew 6:19-21 says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in

heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Verse 9 also states that people will “say they are Jews, and are not.” Now remember, this period is very anti-Christian. Anything dealing with Christianity was destroyed so John used symbolism such as beasts, waters, and other things. Even the word JEW is symbolic. Romans 2:28-29 reveals what John means. “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither [is that] circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he [is] a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision [is that] of the heart, in the spirit, [and] not in the letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God.” Therefore, in reality, John is saying, people will call themselves Christians but really, they are not. They may sit next to people in the same pew, but really, they are not with God’s people spiritually. How do we know? John reveals that they are really working for the “synagogue of Satan.” There are only two choices. We either worship God or Satan. Jesus even stated “He that is not with me is against me” (Matthew 12:30). The synagogue is not a physical, satanic worship building. It is the spiritual choices that we make every moment of our lives.

Verse 10 gives comfort to those who were imprisoned and suffered various things. Jesus expanded upon this during His earthly ministry. Matthew 10:28 says, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him

which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” The sad thing is that these persecutors think they are doing God service (John 16:2).

Verse 10 also identifies a ten-day period, which is symbolic of ten years using God’s day for a year principle (Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6) as we have already studied. The most intense and bloodiest persecutions occurred from 303 to 313 AD under Roman leaders of Diocletian and Galarius.

The “crown of life” of course is a reference to eternal life and the reward to the righteous.

Verse 11 again urges the fact that we must overcome by none other than the power of Christ. And the power that He gives is His Holy Spirit (John 15:26), which leads to the three areas of truth as previously listed numerous times.

What Is the Meaning of The Third Church?

Revelation 2:12-17 says, “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, [even] where Satan’s seat [is]: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to

commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth [it].”

This covers the time frame of 313 to 538 AD. The later date begins the supremacy of the beast power.

In verse 12, Jesus introduces Himself as having a sharp sword with two edges. Hebrews 4:12 defines this: “For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” This time frame would see the greatest departure so far from the Word of God fulfilling what Paul saw. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 tells us, “Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”

Emperor Constantine ended the persecutions in 313 and embraced Christianity or at least he professed to. To unify an Empire that was beginning to crumble, Constantine began to Christianize various pagan customs, which allowed paganism to enter in through the front door.

The seat referred to in verse 13

is none other than Rome. In fact, the transition of power from pagan to religious Rome is denoted in Revelation 13:2, which says, “*And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as [the feet] of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*”

The faithful though, during this church period held on to God’s name. Why is that important? Revelation 7:2-3 says, “*And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*” In a previous lesson, we learned that one is saved if they are sealed in their foreheads. What is sealed there? Revelation 14:1 tells us, “*And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty [and] four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.*” The forehead of course is symbolic of the mind or heart where the law is written (Hebrews 10:16). Further, the name of the Father according to Mark 14:36 and elsewhere is Abba. Of the law, there is only one commandment that the Father’s name appears in and that is referenced in Exodus 20:8-11, which says, “*Remember the s**ABBA**th day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day [is] the s**ABBA**th of the LORD thy God: [in it] thou shalt not do any work,*

*thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that [is] within thy gates: For [in] six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them [is], and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the s**ABBA**th day, and hallowed it.*” That means, even up to the fourth century, God still had Sabbath keepers keeping the right day. Praise the Lord!

Verse 14 brings out the apostasies. The compromised church held to “*The doctrine of Balaam*” which was idol worship as revealed in Numbers 22, 23, and 24. Basically, the church took the pagan gods and Christianized them. Instead of having the god of water, air, fire, travel, etc., now there is the saint of travel, the saint for finding things, etc. Additionally, the doctrines of Balaam included sun or Baal worship (Numbers 22:41). This is substantiated by the book *Catholic Customs and Traditions*, “On March 3, 321, Emperor Constantine ordered a weekly holiday on the ‘venerable day of the sun.’ His motive, however, was probably based more on his devotion to the cult of the sun, as his father before him, than on Christian conviction.”

Balac was a prophet of God who, for the sake of greed, taught Balaam how to trick God’s people in to going after the world (Numbers 25:1-8), thus forgetting the true God much like the church leaders did during this period. People claiming to be servants of God were actually leading the people into forgetting the true God and His ways.

The fornication is symbolic of spiritual adultery as brought out in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Basically, the truth in the Word was cast down to the ground (Daniel 8:12). Those that follow the perverted truth commit spiritual fornication.

Verse 15 denotes the continuance of the false teachings from the Nicolaitans. This theory basically expanded to the point of all going to heaven because nobody is really bad enough to deserve hell.

Verse 16 is a call to repent, and again, sin is what we repent of (Acts 3:19).

Verse 16 also references the sword again which is the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). And remember the context of Hebrews 4:12 is with the Sabbath subject (Hebrews 4:4-11). The departure from the Word and especially the Sabbath is so great at this point. This allowed all kinds of heresies into the church, which took a strong foothold that it even exists throughout the world today. And people say that doctrines do not matter. Well, they matter to God!

In verse 17, another call is made to listen to the Holy Spirit drawing us to those three areas of truth which is used to set people free (John 8:32) from heresies.

The “*hidden manna*” is a reference to Jesus being the Bread of Life (John 6:31-35) who is hidden in our hearts.

The “*white stone*” represents the character of being honorable and undefiled. This is also evident by many references to the color white especially in

regards to garments.

The “*new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth*” is called the Born-Again experience. It cannot be described, only experienced. Saul experienced it in becoming Paul (Acts 13:9), Abram experienced it becoming Abraham (Genesis 17:5), Jacob really experienced it through wrestling and became Israel (Genesis 32:28), as well as many other examples. But those who have not experienced such cannot understand people who have.

And remember, there is a difference between claiming to be born again and really being born again. “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*” (1 John 3:9).

What Is the Meaning of The Fourth Church?

Revelation 2:18-29 states, “*And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet [are] like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last [to be] more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a*

bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have [already] hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

This time frame picks up in 538 and continues to 1798 AD, which is the time the Antichrist is recognized to have both religious and political supremacy and ends when the death blow occurs 1,260 years later.

Verse 18 introduces Jesus with “*eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet [are] like fine brass.*” To make fine brass, a heating process is used. So, the entire reference to Jesus can be summarized in 1 Peter 1:7, which says, “*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*” In short, faith was being made “*fine*” through trials and

tribulations, which is exactly what the faithful went through. Remember, by this time, the Antichrist had full authority and was recognized by the state. At the same time, God’s faithful went into hiding. This period of time covers the 1,260 years of hiding in the wilderness during the Antichrist supreme rule of 1,260 years.

Notice verse 19 contains a list of things that God knows about. Did you catch that the list begins and ends with? “*Works.*” Further, “*the last [to be] more than the first.*” That is a lot of work. This is where the thought of working one’s way to heaven came in. This was especially true in regards to souls being in purgatory. By purchasing indulgences, people were told that they were stock piling their ticket out of purgatory sooner than normal or that they were releasing a loved one from purgatory. Extreme penance was also conducted following confession of their sins. And many other pagan superstitions based upon works, though Christianized, entered in at this time. This is what would eventually stir Martin Luther to nail the *95 Thesis* to the church doors in Germany.

Verse 20 is very similar to the Balac and Balaam reference in verse 14, which means that the previous departure from the truth prepared the way for a greater departure by this time. It was under Jezebel, as recorded in 1 Kings 16, 18, 19, and 2 Kings 23, where she led Israel further away from God and into Baal worship. So much so that Elijah thought that he was the only faithful one left. 1 Kings 19:10 says, “*And he said, I have*

been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, [even] I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." What was God's response? 1 Kings 19:18 tells us, "*Yet I have left [me] seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."*

There is still a faithful remnant. Praise the Lord! This is always true. There is and always has been a faithful few that follow God all the way.

Note how Jezebel dealt with those who were faithful to the true God. They were slain, which is exactly how the Antichrist dealt with the faithful saints. Any one caught with scripture in their possession was burned at the stake as a heretic. One of several confirming references that we studied before is found in Revelation 17:6, which says, "*And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."*

Verse 21 tells us how longsuffering is our God. He permitted these acts to continue to allow plenty of time for repentance. You see, no one can ever accuse God of acting rashly, too quickly, or not providing enough time, however, He could not let this continue forever. He even prophesied that the full 1,260 years would not be unchallenged. Matthew 24:21-22 says, "*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the*

world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Verse 22 is explained by Revelation 18:3, which says, "*For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."* There is but one fate before all unless they repent, and that is hell. Unfortunately, the world's motivator is the earthly treasures. God is telling us that during this time frame as well as at the end of time, merchants will do just about anything, including paying homage to Rome, just to get ahead financially.

Notice verse 23 states that she produces offspring -- children. Of course, in this case, the offspring takes after their mother, who is the "mother of harlots" (Revelation 17:5). The mother is a harlot and her daughters are harlots as well. So, since we are looking at the time of a false worship system, other false systems would spin off who also are not adhering to 100% of the Word of God. Rather, they too would compromise truth and error in varying degrees. In short, though the children may protest against the mother "ordained by God," over time however, the protest will become quiet even to the point of apologizing for protesting, which in 2017, they did by declaring the protest to be over. But God says, because they have turned from the truth

and went back to following error, He "*will kill her children with death*" and He will do it at the time when His Son "*will give unto every one of you according to your works."* This occurs at the second coming as revealed in Revelation 22:11-12, "*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."* And then it is finalized in the fires of hell. As we have already studied, at some point, the judgment that began in 1844 will switch over from the judging of the dead to the judging of the living. Everybody will be locked into one side or the other. The plagues will fall on those who have "*the mark of the beast, and [upon] them which worshipped his image*" (Revelation 16:2). Then Jesus returns with His reward. And keep in mind, people may fool people, but none can fool God. Why? "*I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts*" (verse 23).

Yet verse 24 does give hope. The reformation is not dead. God still has his faithful people who do adhere to God's Word. These people, as history reveals, were called Waldenses, Huguenots, and others. All of which carried the torch of truth for a period of time.

Verse 25 exemplifies the principal "*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent*" (Acts 17:30). The people were held in spiritual darkness for hundreds of years.

They may not have had all the truth, but that which they had, they were commanded to “*hold fast.*”

Verse 26 is so appropriate. If we keep the Word of God until the end, we will be saved. That means we must base all of our teachings upon the Word and the Word alone -- a “*Thus Saith the Lord!*” Jesus stated such even when He walked upon this earth. Matthew 10:22 tells us, “*And ye shall be hated of all [men] for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*”

Verse 27 describes Jesus' role. The result of the lost described here was also prophesied in Psalms 2:7-9 says, “*I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou [art] my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give [thee] the heathen [for] thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth [for] thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*”

The “*morning star*” referenced in verse 28 applies to Jesus Christ in regards to the faithful and is even referenced by Peter. In 2 Peter 1:19, we are told, “*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.*”

Verse 29 also draws us to the importance of truly being led by the Spirit right into His truth.

What Is the Meaning of The Fifth Church?

Revelation 3:1-6 reveals, “*And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*”

This covers the period from the fall of Papal Rome in 1798 until the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets in 1833, which is ten years preceding the next feast.

Verse 1 introduces Jesus as having the seven spirits referring to the proper Holy Spirit leading to all truth. So, this time period would see the greatest resistance to truth and promptings of the Holy Spirit. It would also be the birth of the false movements of the Holy Spirit as well.

What is the name referred to in

verse 1? History reveals that it is Protestant. From the nailing of the 95 Thesis on the church doors by Luther in 1517, God's people began to escape from spiritual Babylon, however, they did not come fully out of Babylon hence the reference to being “*dead.*” As the reformation period continued, many began to follow men and not the Word of God once again. When a reformer died, many stopped learning at that point and would not accept light from other reformers. Praise God though that there are a few that always seek more and more light. By the 1800's, many Christians were becoming comfortable in the world unfortunately.

Verse 2 refers to imperfect work. That is because not all of the truth that was trampled down for centuries had been uncovered. This is why it is important to always be searching for more light. It is not like any of us get an instant dump of knowledge of truth upon us. We must learn it step-by-step.

Verse 3 notes that many Protestants are going to be caught by surprise even though their leaders such as Luther, Wesley, and others promoted the soon return of Christ. No one need to be caught by surprise, in fact, those that are, even though they declare themselves to be Christian will be lost.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-5 tells us, “*For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in*

darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

Praise God for verse 4. Again, there is still a faithful few who are saved who wear undefiled garments for they have confessed their sins and received the replacement garment. This is brought out through the representation of Joshua as the saved. Zechariah 3:1-7 shows, “*And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: [is] not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.*”

Verse 5 refers to the next phase of Jesus’ ministry, which is the

review of all the records – first the dead and eventually the living. Refer to *The Longest Time Prophecy* study for all the details as well as *The Real Trial of the Century*. This phase is symbolic of the feast day called the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur.

Verse 6 draws us for the fifth time to the importance of following the lead of the Spirit into the Word (John 16:13), Jesus (John 16:14), and the Law (John 16:8). By now, we should recall a statement made in other lessons and that is, when God repeats Himself, it is extremely important.

What Is the Meaning of The Sixth Church?

Revelation 3:7-13 tells us, “*And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no*

man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, [which is] new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and [I will write upon him] my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

This time frame is during the Second Great Awakening covering the period of 1833 to 1844 AD.

In verse 7, Jesus is holy and true. He also opens a door that no one can shut while He shuts another that no one can open.

Focusing first on the action, if there was an earthly door, then someone would be able to find it and open it as well as close the other. But, if the door is not on earth, but rather in heaven, then nobody here on earth would be able to close it and the prophecy would stay true.

What is that door? To answer this, let us ask another question. Where is Jesus? According to Hebrews 9:24, the Bible says, “*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, [which are] the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*” He is in the heavenly sanctuary. We also found out at the beginning of this study that Jesus was seen in the Holy Place denoted by the seven golden candlesticks for Revelation 2:1 says, “*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden*

candlesticks." This is confirmed in Hebrews 9:12 as well: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us]." As the earthly priest was an example of the true who entered once a year into the Most Holy Place, Jesus would at some point leave the Holy Place in heaven and enter into the Most Holy Place. In other words, at some point, Jesus would close the ministry in the Holy Place and no one can reopen that ministry while He opens the next ministry in the Most Holy Place that no one can close.

How sure are we upon this point? Let us look at the second point of Revelation 3:8. Just as the seven golden candlesticks signify the Holy Place, there is something that identifies the Most Holy Place that matches the character of God, which is Holy and True. What is it? Romans 7:12 tells us, "Wherefore the law [is] holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Psalms 119:142 states, "Thy righteousness [is] an everlasting righteousness, and thy law [is] the truth." The law, which is true and holy, is in the Most Holy Place.

Further, Daniel saw this action take place: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, [one] like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him" (Daniel 7:13).

Verse 8 is similar to 7 where we note that being faithful to God's Word is what is important to God.

In verse 9, we recall from

Revelation 2:9 that those "which say they are Jews, and are not, but [are] the synagogue of Satan" refers to those that call themselves Christians and are not. God is comforting these people in that they are to keep in mind that no matter what happens, realize one day, the wicked will know that they are lost. The ultimate recognition of this is when the saints are with Christ and the lost are outside the city.

Verse 10 is a prediction of an event of great magnitude that will shake the faith of the world. Those who are true Christians will stand while those who were in name only will fall away. The details of the trial will be revealed in a future lesson. It is basically the study of Revelation 10:1-11 entitled *The Longest Time Prophecy* and detailed in *Come Out of Her My People*.

Verse 11 is good council. Holding on to revealed truth and practicing it shows a saving relationship, and the crown will be given to these people.

Verse 12 is a direct reference to the sealing process as we detailed in *Marked, Sealed, and Delivered*. The "name of God" written in the forehead identifies the saved (Revelation 7:3).

Verse 13 is the sixth reference to the importance of allowing the Holy Spirit to work in people's lives leading into all truth.

What Is the Meaning of The Seventh Church?

Revelation 3:14-22 tells us, "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the

faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

This is the time frame of 1844 until the end. Notice that this is the last church, which means this is what will hold true to all who live up to the second coming.

Laodicea is the time frame where people have become so indifferent about God and His Word. It is also known as the judgment time as studied in *Nailing It to His Cross*.

Verse 14 introduces the fact that Jesus is the creator as compared to other theories such as Evolution and Atheism. This

would be one of the greatest areas of conflict that the last generation would face. Since the 1840's, evolution has done just that. It has attacked the creation story relentlessly. For the details of how extensive this battle is, we invite you to look at the study guide *Which Will You Follow*.

In verses 15 and 16, God describes three groups. Those in the HOT group are the most desirable where they follow "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Those in the COLD group are those who want nothing to do with religion and God, yet since they are so determined, He can work with them as He reveals Himself. However, the majority fall into the middle category known as lukewarm. God hates this condition. Why? Because He cannot work with them. He sends them light on His truth and they are indifferent. They believe that Jesus paid the price, which He did, and that there is absolutely nothing for Christians to do but wait for their own death or the second coming. These people do not feel the need of repentance, no need of a conversion, and no need to change their lifestyle. They cannot see anything drastically wrong in their lives because they are blinded by the comforts of the world. They do not know what real sacrifice is. Sure, they will list what trifling thing they endured as if it were a great accomplishment, but when one looks at Martin Luther and the reformers as well as Paul, Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, it does not even come close. But yet, they still do not want to change.

Verse 17 says it plainly. They are trusting in external riches as confirmation that God is blessing them not realizing that this has nothing to do with the Christian experience. This is the wealth gospel.

If that were true, Jesus would be lost because He had nothing to show as far as external riches were concerned. These people will miss eternal life because truly they are blind, poor, and naked spiritually. How sad that it is the total opposite of Revelation 2:9, the first church, where they were physically poor but spiritually rich.

Verse 18 brings out three specific councils. The first is to "buy gold tried in the fire." As discussed before, our faith is what is tried by fire (1 Peter 1:7) and while we have the opportunity to know what true faith is, we should take advantage of it.

The second is to buy "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." Also discussed before is that of the white raiment, which was brought out with Joshua being accused by Satan (Zechariah 3:1-7). The white raiment is Christ's righteousness, which is the means by which the saints will enter into heaven.

The third is to "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." The focus is on using our eyes. What could that be? John 16:13 tells us, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." It is the Holy Spirit revealing truth.

Verse 19 brings out true love, which is based on guiding and disciplining when necessary. The fake love focuses more on not hurting somebody's feelings even if this results in keeping somebody ignorant of the truth. Take for instance this whole study. The political correct side would say that this material hurts the feelings of devout Catholics, hence, it is not very loving therefore, the author would not be Christlike. God's side says that one loves another so much that they do not want to see them deceived. They reveal the truth in as kind a way as possible especially since this type of deception will cause eternal consequences.

Verse 20 is the gentle call of inviting Jesus into one's heart. Supping with Jesus is to feed on His Word. John 6:50-51 tells us, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Verse 21 appeals to each of us to become overcomers. And what is to be overcome? 1 John 5:4 says, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, [even] our faith." If we are living in sin, we are not overcoming sin, but rather it is overcoming us. Although Jesus is the One who truly gives us the victory, if we are continuing in sin the evidence points to a lack of allowing Jesus to work in us.

In regard to the thrones, that will be another lesson. And verse 22

Revelation's Seven Churches

is the seventh reference to allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

May you allow God to keep you and protect you and may His Word warm your heart that you

may be counted as Hot.

Seven churches, described and identified

	Ephesus 2:1-7	Smyrna 2:8-11	Pergamos 2:12-17	Thyatira 2:18-29	Sardis 3:1-6	Philadelphia 3:7-13	Laodicea 3:14-22
Period described	The early church, to AD 100	The church under pagan persecution, to 313	Paganism enters the church, to 538	Supremacy of Vatican (Dark Ages), Reformation, to 1798	Fossilization, to late 1833	Awakening, Bible spread and studied, to mid 1844	The end-time church, content but sinful, to End.
Opening	To the angel of the church . . . write						
Description of Christ	Holds 7 stars, walks among 7 lampstands	First and Last, Died and came to life	The One with two-edged sword	Eyes of fire, feet like brass; searches minds	Holds 7 spirits and 7 stars	Holy, true, holds keys, opens and shuts	Amen, true witness, Beginning of creation
What Christ knows	Works, labor patience	Works, trials, poverty; blasphemy of false Jews	Works, living where Satan's throne is	More works, love, service, faith, patience	Works, (and see "What you have")	Works	Works: neither cold nor hot
Commendation	Tested false prophets, perseverance	Rich in spite of poverty	Held to My name & faith even if martyred	(above)	Have few names undefiled	Kept command to persevere	–
Rebuke	Left first love	–	Ones with doctrine of Balaam	Jezebel with immorality permitted	Works imperfect	–	Lukewarm, wretched, blind, naked
Counsel	Remember, repent, do first works	Do not fear suffering	Repent	Hold fast till I come	Watch, strengthen remainder	Hold fast, preserve crown	Buy gold, clothes, eye ointment
Warning	Lampstand will be removed	–	Will fight with sword of mouth	Jezebel into sickbed, children killed	I will come as thief if you do not watch	–	I will spit you out; rebuke & punishment
What you have	My hatred for Nicolaitans	Tribulation coming	Also have ones with Nicolaitans doctrine	Rest do not have false doctrine, not Satanic depths	A name as alive, but dead (and see above)	A little strength, My word and name	Not what you think you have
Reward for overcomers	Eat from tree of life	Not hurt by second death	Hidden manna, white stone	Power over nations; morning star	Clothed in white, name in book, confessed	Made pillar, inscribed with new name	Sit on my throne
Other promises	–	Eternal life to ones faithful to death	–	Rest are given no other burden	Undefiled ones will walk in white	Submission of false Jews; Kept from hour of trial	Eat with those who open door
Closing	Listen to what the Spirit says to the churches						