

H O U S E o f W I S D O M

P. O. B O X 2765

B u r l e s o n, T e x a s 76097

Email: woody@dtgministries.org

14 August 2009

The Seven Churches - Part II

Introduction

John to the seven churches which are in Asia (Rev 1:4): Why these churches, and not Jerusalem, Rome, Corinthians or others? **2 Tim 1:15:** *You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me...* (Revised Version) These seven churches are types of all the churches today. John is like the bowl on top of the lamp-stand (Zech 4:2-3), receiving the golden oil (revelation of truth) from the two olive trees (Christ), and sending it to the seven churches, all of which have turned from God in various degrees. When John heard a voice behind him (Rev 1:10), he turned and saw seven golden lamp-stands, and one, described in figurative language like the risen Savior walking among them. **Rev 1:20:** *The secret of the seven stars that you saw on my right hand, and the seven golden lamp-stands: the seven stars are messengers of the seven assemblies, and the seven lamp-stands that you saw are seven assemblies.* (Interlinear) The stars are spiritual messengers of the churches, people who have light. The lamp stands (candlesticks) are called churches (literally - assemblies), which John lists as cities.

Seven: This number appears in the book of Revelation 54 times in 31 scriptures. It only appears 33 times in all the rest of the New Testament. However, it is Revelation which reveals that as a spiritual number, it represents 'a fulness of an experience', and not 'perfection' as I once believed. The number for perfection is three.

Lamp Stand (candlestick): When a lamp (candle) is lit, it give light to all who are in the house (Mt 5:15-16), and light is a symbol for God's word (Ps 119:130, 105) which gives knowledge and understanding of spiritual things.

A City: **Pr 18:11:** *The rich man's wealth is his strong city...* **Pr 14:24, 18: 24.** *The crown of the wise is their riches... 18. ...the prudent are crowned with knowledge.* Inwardly, wealth, riches are figures of a person's knowledge. A person's thinking determines the 'mind-set' they carry, which is represented by one of the symbols as a city. A city has gates through which people enter. The gates of the mind are the eyes, ears, nose and mouth. The spirit (breath), which comes out of the mouth, expresses our thoughts, and is likened to a city - Pr 25:28. Learn the symbols, then you can read the Bible with God's understanding.

The seven churches are seven mind-sets and spiritual experiences through which a person progresses. When understood, these mind-sets can be see in any religious organization by their teachings and what they do. To each church is revealed certain categories of information: 1) an attribute of Christ; 2) their works - then a general description of good and bad; 3) a rebuke, or shortcoming; and 4) the reward to those overcoming. Ultimately, these categories are represented in Revelation by two great cities - Babylon (Rev 14:8) - which is confusion about God, and New Jerusalem (Rev 21:10) - the mind of Christ, also called the book of life (Rev 13:8).

The Process

Ephesus: **Rev 2:1:** *To the messenger of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith the one holding the*

seven stars in his right hand, the one walking in the midst of the seven golden lamp-stands; The 'right hand' is a symbol for mighty works, strength (Ex 15:6; Ps 89:13). The Greek translated 'holding' (2902) also carries a meaning of 'force, might.' Why must Ephesus be reminded that Christ is their strength, that it is He who walks among all the churches? Because they left their first love (verse 4), which is their rebuke. They are however, commended for their work and patience, which evidently includes discerning false teachers (v2), and not condoning evil. This group is admonished to 'remember' from where they fell and repent, or else lose the light they have (v5). Those overcoming will be given to eat of the 'tree of life', which is Christ, the wisdom of God (Pr 3:13, 18; 1 Cor 1:24).

Rev 2:2-3: *2. I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou can not bear them which are evil: and thou have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3. And have borne, and have patience, and for my name's sake have labored, and have not fainted. 4. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou have left thy first love.*

Living according to worldly ways, I became convinced by the Spirit to go back to church. i.e. I was listening to my "first Love." Going back, I immediately became involved in giving Bible studies, and began to get my understanding from the Bible - according to man. i.e. I left my first Love. Also, it was not long before I began to see the divisions among fellow believers, of which I did not understand at the time. Being fresh out of the world, I could see the world in the church - especially the music, and this upset me when I thought about it.

Rev 2:5: *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.* It is after we have gone through an experience that we can look back and understand it. Each church/city we understand becomes a light (cp Mt 5:15-16) in our sanctuary (mind). When all seven lamps are lit, we have a fulness of that experience and God moves us to the next stage of spiritual development. It is the similar with the seals, trumpets, etc.

Smyrna: Rev 2:8-9: *8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 9. 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.* Those of Smyrna were told that they were rich (spiritually), but needed to be reminded that Jesus is the first and only son of God, and it is he who gave his life for all the world - look at the cross. **Isa 44:6:** *Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.* Connect this verse with: **Isa 43:10:** *Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.* (cf Part I, pg 3, par 2-4) Christ, the first and only Son of God, not formed physically, as was Adam, but created inwardly (cp Rev 3:14).

In this mind-set are encountered *those saying themselves to be* (spiritual) *Jews, and are not, but are a synagogue of the adversary* (v9). The trials begin - who has truth, to whom do I listen. There are personal trials at work and at home. Determining with whom to associate does not end with leaving a church. Thousands are leaving their churches, but most do not know, or, cannot accept the truth of what is really wrong with their organizations. Therefore, they take their errors with them - I did the same thing.

I was raised a Christian, and went to church until I was about 20. I married, went to college and had a successful career going for twenty years when things began to come apart. I could see that our worldly lifestyle was destroying our marriage, and it was destroying me morally. It took several years before I made a firm commitment to turn my life around, which brought a new set of problems and challenges.

Rev 2:10-11: *10 Be not afraid of the things that thou art about to suffer; lo, the devil is about to cast of you to prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days; become thou faithful unto death, and I will give to thee the crown of the life. 11 ...those overcoming may not be hurt of the second death.* The Greek for *devil* is *diabolos*. Every human being born into this world has this character trait. The word is equated to “satan, dragon and serpent” in Rev 12:9. Each word gives a slightly different view of the sin-nature, which is the ‘lack of trust of God.’ *Diabolos* accuses others rather than to take responsibility for one’s own sins. It is an adverse attitude toward God and others. This can be seen in the story of Cain and Abel. Because of it, we are imprisoned by our fleshly minds. The “crown of life” are the spiritual riches from God fills, as mentioned in the introduction.

The second death: In figurative language, the second death is described as being thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev 21:8). Paul stated: **2 Cor 5:14:** *For the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:* People can be spiritually dead and yet physically alive, but all eventually die physically. There are two resurrections, the second being for the wicked who did not come up in the first one. Their judgment includes being cast into the lake of fire which brings about the second physical death.

Many teach that the “lake of fire” is hell, a physical place, where the wicked will spend eternity in torment. It is not a literal place, but a fleshly (earthly) mind-set which will consume anyone not abiding in Christ. Here is what Isaiah says of torment by fire: **Isa 42:25:** *Therefore he hath poured upon him (Israel) the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.* A Person cannot be set on fire literally and not know it. Therefore, the fire is inside, and it will consume a person spiritually. James gives an excellent example using the tongue: *And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.* Here, the Greek for ‘hell’ is *geenna* fire, where the worm (old man) does not die (Mk 9:45-48; Job 25:6). Isaiah states it this way: *"And they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."* (66:24, Revised Version) Isaiah is saying that the wicked (spiritually dead) will not change. The ‘lake of fire’, *geenna* fire, according to James, is manifested by the tongue. The wicked are those who do not allow God to quench the inward fire. Therefore their names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life, and they will physically die the second death.

Pergamos: **Rev 2:12:** *And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;* Those in Pergamos use the Bible, which they think is the “two-edged sword”, to determine how to live their lives. This is the very reason there are many disagreements over such things as the day on which to worship, which laws to keep and what law is abolished. The sword, however, is a figure of the words out of the mouth of Christ (Rev 1:16), said to be a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart* (Heb 4:12). The Bible is the written word through which Christ speaks to the heart. Instead of listening to the Spirit, I was trying to follow the Lord by own understanding of the Bible. So, there is a need to be reminded that Christ is wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24), and it is he who explains the book - not man.

Rev 2:13: *I have known your works, and where you dwell - where the throne of the adversary is, and you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith, even in the days in which Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death beside you, where the adversary dwells.* [Literal] The dragon gives the beast (sin nature, pride, unchanging attitude) its power, throne and great authority (13:2). The dragon is that old serpent, called devil and satan (12:9). The serpent (dragon) is SELF, or man’s wisdom (Mt 10:16; Gen 3:1). Most Bibles transliterate the word ‘satan’ and ‘martyr’ instead of supplying the meaning of ‘adversary’ and ‘witness’. Because of the adversity of the heart, the voice of Christ (Antipas is a type), the faithful witness

(Rev 1:5), is put to death. The result for some is dramatic, as seen in the verses below.

Rev 2:14: *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 stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.* Balaam was a prophet of Israel who had sunk to serving self and prophesying for personal gain (Num 22-24), not unlike many preachers today. The ‘stumbling block’ to Israel was that Balaam taught Balak to send Moab’s women among the sons of Israel and lead them into sexual immorality (fornication), and eventually into idol worship (Num 25:1-3). Ezekiel describes the inward: **Eze 14:3:** *Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity (perverted thinking) before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?* In scripture, a harlot is a symbol of an evil mind-set (cf Rev 17:1-5). For a person to eat things sacrificed to idols is to receive the false teachings of these preachers, which when assimilated into the thinking, sidetracks that person into spiritual fornication, that is, into being married spiritually to other than Christ - called also a ‘harlot’ or ‘adulteress’ (cp 17:5 & 14:4; Rom 7:1-4).

Rev 2:15: *So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans ⁽³⁵³¹⁾, which thing I hate.* The teaching of the Nicolaitans is different, and in addition to the teaching of Balaam. The concept of the teaching of the Nicolaitans comes from the Greek word, its related words and the roots. Nikopolis ⁽³⁵³³⁾, which comes from the same root ⁽³⁵³⁴⁾, means “city of victory”, a name given to many cities built, or those that had their names changed by a conqueror to commemorate a victory. Nicolaitan ⁽³⁵³¹⁾ means “victory over the people”, and having the roots of 3534 (victory) and 2994 (Laodiceans), or victory over the Laodiceans. A Laodicean, discussed in more detail later, is a mind-set of a person trying to abide with a sin nature. A prevalent teaching among churches today is that sin cannot be overcome in this world, and you will not stop sinning until Jesus comes and changes you. It was stated that Ephesus hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, as did Christ (2:6). However, many in Pergamos tolerate those holding these teachings and accept it themselves. Therefore, there is no incentive to overcome sin in their lives. Yet, seven times Jesus says to the churches, “To him that overcomes...”, indicating that He expects people to overcome sin at every stage.

Rev 2:17: *The one having an (spiritual) ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches; To the one overcoming 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 one knows, except the one receiving it.* Each assemble in each city (mind-set) is given a promise to those overcoming. There are two significant things promised to those in Pergamos.

The ‘hidden manna’ is in reference to the manna put into a solid gold jar and stored inside the ark of the covenant. Only the high priest had access, and then, only once in a year on the day of atonement. Manna is a symbol for the written word (cf Dt 8:1-3) wherein the truth is hidden in symbols, parables and stories, as viewed allegorically, and can only be understood as revealed by the Spirit. **Pr 25:2:** *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.* The promise is that, if you continue to listen and overcome, Christ will, in type, make you a high priest by showing you the hidden things of God. **1 Cor 4:5:** *so, then, nothing before the time judge ye, till the Lord may come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of the darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then the praise shall come to each from God.* (Young’s)

The meaning of ‘white stone’ is revealed in type by what the high priest wore: **Ex 28:9-12:** *9. And thou shalt take two onyx (which were white) stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel... 12. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial.* The ‘white stones’ in which are written the names of the tribes of Israel, representing the government of Israel (Isa 9:6). Your name written in the stone signifies being a member of spiritual Israel, and a member of the church of the firstborn (Heb 12:22-23), having your name written in heaven (Lk 10:20). The overcomer receives a new

name (character) in Christ (cp Rev 14:1).

Thyatira: Thus far, there has been a steady degradation in spiritual quality, which can only be seen in a person's life by looking back to the experience through which they have come, and also can be seen in larger groups once understood. However, there is also encouragement for the sincere believers in each group, as well as promises to those overcoming. **Rev 2:18:** *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.* The seven spirits speaking to the churches represent the fullness of the spirit in Christ. The mind-set of Thyatira is in the pit of darkness, the depths of Satan (verse 24), and has to be reminded that it is Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, who speaks to the conscience. His understanding (eyes - Eph 1:18) is like fire because it consumes sin (cp Jer 23:29; 5:14), and his feet like fine brass because he took the impure nature of man and polished it as an example for us to follow.

By the time I returned, the church I had left 28 years earlier had formally adopted a different teaching about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one with which I did not agree. I eventually left the church, and my job, to enter into the ministry. During that time I spent several hours preparing a study to show from the Bible how I understood the Father and Son. However, the result left a feeling that something was not right. About two years later the Lord put someone in my life who helped me understand. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels (human messengers of God) unawares.* (Heb 13:2)

Rev 2:20: *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou suffer that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* From a very young age I have always heard the name of Jezebel associated only with a bad character, and there is nothing positive about the woman in Bible history. Ahab, king of Israel, married her and took up her religion, which was Baal worship - *and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.* (1 Ki 16:30-33) Ahab committed spiritual fornication by marrying a priestess of the god Baal, a symbol of self worship. Anything that we put before God in our lives becomes an idol. To eat something sacrificed to an idol, is to assimilate those things into our minds, our thinking and way of life which are contrary to truth and the service of love. In Pergamos, some were tolerated who held the teaching of Balaam; but in Thyatira, all are being taught from the source of fornication. Do you recognize the spiritual fornication happening today?

Rev 2:21: *And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.* In the end, every person will have been given a time to repent. Jezebel is a type of the spiritual mind-set of leaders who persistently refuse to listen and obey the Spirit of God. They are guilty of casting stumbling blocks before the people.

Rev 2:26-27: *26. And he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give [authority] over the nations: 27. 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.* Israel committed fornication with all the nations (Eze 16:26, 29; Isa 23:17) by putting her trust in their strength and power, rather than in God's. The nations are types over which we are to have authority. The characteristics of the nations represent those inward things that need to be removed in order that we can be extracted from the web of the sin and confusion in our lives. There is another tidbit here about the Son of God not understood by those in Thyatira - *even as I received of my Father* - as the Son of man. Jesus, though he never sinned, never the less had to overcome the defects of the human nature given him. **Heb 5:8:** *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.* Jesus is the begotten Son of God from eternity and has always listened to and obeyed his Father (cf 12:49-50).

Rev 2:28: *And I will give him the morning star.* The morning star is in the east, and is the last star to disappear as rising sun becomes brighter. Jesus is called *the root and the offspring of David, the bright and*

morning star (22:16). It is interesting that Balaam was impressed by God to speak a prophecy to Balak concerning the Messiah: **Num 24:17:** *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.* An overcomer in Thyatira receives the understanding of Jesus as the real Son of God (not the role playing Son taught by most churches today) which allows them to advance to the next mind-set.

Sardis: The word means “red ones”, this church being similar to the opening of the second seal (Rev 6:3-4) where they are given a “great sword” - the Bible. **Rev 3:1-2:** *1. And to the messenger of the assembly in Sardis write: These things says the one having the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars: I have known your works, and that you have the name that you live, but you are dead; 2. become (one who) is watching, and strengthen the rest of the things that are about to die, for I have not found your works fulfilled before God. (Literal) You have the name that you live, but you are dead* is descriptive of vast majority in today’s religious organizations. Why? Because, intellectual knowledge may cause one to change directions, but it takes more than just facts to change a person inwardly - I know, because I was in that place before. It is receiving of the spirit of truth, understanding and applying the concepts in one’s life. Example: Professed believers use the term “born again” (Jn 3) to described their experience, when really they have only been converted, which is not bad, as long as they are willing to progress in truth. We all have been taught to read the Bible and do what it says, according to a man’s understanding. Therefore, those in Sardis have to be reminded that Christ is the source of the spirit of revelation, and not man. A man may deliver the message, but it is the Spirit of truth which convicts the heart.

Rev 3:3: *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.* The first time the word “remember” is used in Revelation is when Jesus says to Ephesus, “Remember from where you have fallen.” (2:5) Now, He is saying “Remember - how you have received.” Ephesus fell out of abiding, or hearing the spirit, then left her first love. Sardis is brought back to abiding, which when received, will advance one to the Philadelphia experience. Anyone, though having read or heard it, and having the smallest amount of truth, came by it as the spirit impressed their heart, and it is the heart that needs understanding. (Pr 2:2; 3:5; 8:5; Eph 4:18)

Rev 3:5: *He that overcomes, 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.* Raiment, or clothing, is woven. The weaving terms used in the Bible are ‘warp’ and ‘woof’ (Lev 13:51). The warp goes on the loom first, and the woof is the ‘filler’ thread. From my study of Leviticus 13, I came to understand the warp as my works, and the woof as my faith. Raiment is a symbol of character composed of thoughts and manifested by our faith and works. God changes our character by changing the way we think. **Rev 19:7-8:** *7. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Righteousness is the way God thinks. (cp Mk 4:26 & Mt 13:20)*

Philadelphia: **Rev 3:7-8:** *7. 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 opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens; 8. 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.* The church of ‘brotherly love’ is evident by the changes taking place in those that hear and do (Lk 8:21). *He that is holy, he that is true* is the Father (Jn 17:3; 1 Jn 5:20 - Young’s)

The key of David: A key is used figuratively of unlocking knowledge and understanding. **Lk 11:52:** *Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that*

were entering in ye hindered. How did the lawyers take away the key? Generally, by teaching the people to expect a different kind of Messiah. The churches today, in principle have done the same. This is ascertained in the incident when Jesus confirms to his disciples on what teaching the foundation of his church would be built. When Peter answered Jesus' question, stating that he (Jesus) was the son of the living God, Jesus told him, *flesh and blood did not reveal [it] to thee, but my Father who is in the heavens* (Young's Mt 16:16-19). Jesus went on to say, *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven...* It is the spirit of the Father which speaks through His only begotten Son, the key that opens the door of truth. It is the Son of God who anoints the believer, and you have *no need that any one should teach you; as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him.* (1 Jn 2:27 Revised Version).

Why the key of David? Saul was the type of king the people wanted, where David was the type of king God desired them to have. Think of them as types of spiritual kings we have desired - Saul, a type of the fleshly kingdom, and David a type of the spiritual kingdom, which God desires to set up in our hearts. *...as the Lord hath sworn to David... To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah...* (2 Sam 3:9-10; also Isa 9:6-7; 22:22).

The Bible has a sizable record of David's life, including what he wrote in the Psalms, and he was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:13-14). Jesus' human descent is via the lineage of David, and many things of David's life are applied to the Savior. (Cp Mk 15:34 & Ps 22:1; Jn 19:23-24 & Ps 22:18; Jn 19:36 & Ps 34:20; Jn 13:18 & Ps 41:9) I believe there is more to learn from the life of David, as it appears that the 'key of David' opens the door to a better understanding of the humanity and spiritual kingdom of the Savior, especially the cross.

Rev 3:9: *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.* We walk with our feet, which represent the application of spiritual knowledge in our lives, manifested by the direction of the heart. The 'synagogue of satan' is the gathering of those controlled by the serpent (12:9), or their adversarial attitudes. These are not going to worship the righteous, by falling at their feet, but will acknowledge that the righteous are walking in love. Looking inward, our thoughts of adversity will be brought under control: **Lk 10:19:** *I give to you the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions...* (Young's) I give you authority (with knowledge and understanding) to put the adversarial and rebellious thoughts under your feet - i.e. under control.

Rev 3:10: *Because thou did keep the word of my endurance, I also will keep thee from the hour of the trial that is about to come upon all the world, to try those dwelling upon the earth.* (Ibid) Anyone 'dwelling on the earth' is a figure of a person listening to self or others, as opposed to a person listening to the spirit of truth, who figuratively is 'dwelling in the heavens.'

Rev 3:11-12: *11. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12. Him that overcomes 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.*

I come quickly is a statement that at this level of spiritual understanding, a person realizes how short is time, and that God is preparing his people to give the gospel to the world. A crown is a symbol the knowledge of the truth received from God. (cp verses 24 & 18 of Pr 14). We are warned of false prophets (Mt 7:15), and of those who teach a false Christ (Mt 24:4-5) Do not let man's doctrine sway you from the truth - follow your heart as the spirit of God leads.

When I came back to the Lord, I returned to what I knew, which was the church that I had left, and its

teachings. I was severely disappointed with what I saw and experienced, and began to look for some other way to serve the Lord. Eventually, I made a major change by leaving full time employment and took a position with another man's ministry. Since I had followed this man's teachings for many years, I felt strongly that he was living and teaching the truth. This was, and still is, the most shocking of my experiences. Now, I know by experience what Jesus meant when he said, *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.* (Mt 7:15-16) The Lord showed me that I needed this experience so that I would let no man take my crown.

The promise is significant to those of Philadelphia who overcome. To be a pillar in the temple of God is not only to be well grounded in truth (1 Tim 3:15), but to be a teacher and one who leads out by example. Jesus, and even Paul, recognized this ability in Peter, John and his brother James (Mk 9:2; 14:33; Lk 8:51; Gal 2:9). It also involves character - *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.* Name is indicative of 'character', and when connected with the understanding of a 'city', it can be seen that the promise is to have the character of the Father and Son. **Phil 2:5:** *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:* **Rev 14:1:** *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.* It is absolutely mind boggling to try and visualize a sinful human being brought to a point of having God's character! Think about it, because it is a promise, not only for the 144,000, but to everyone who will spend eternity with the Savior.

Laodicea: When I first began to see the spiritual side of the seven churches, I thought that surely they must not be in order. It seemed to me that Philadelphia was the place to end up. However, Philadelphia only has a "little strength", and I believe God desires each of us to have 'a lot of strength.' Eventually, the Lord showed a friend of mine, Scott Stanley, and confirmed it to me, that a person who is "lukewarm" (*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot:* Rev 3:15) is trying to abide in Christ while the sin-nature is still active. Thus we have the man of Romans 7 - what I want to do, I do not, and what I don't want to do, that is what I do. It is a church experiencing part-time abiding.

Rev 3:14: *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;* Christ's ministry on earth was about three years; by Jewish reckoning, he lay in a tomb three days and was resurrected, fulfilling what he had been telling his disciples for more than a year before it happened. From this we have gathered the idea that the number three represents spiritual perfection, or completion. There are three things said about Jesus, when completely understood and accepted will bring a person to a state of being complete in Christ.

Amen: This word is transliterated from Hebrew into Greek, then into English and dozens of other languages. It is probably the best known Bible word around the world. The Hebrew root means, "to confirm, be faithful, to nourish." In the New Testament the Greek word appears 152 times in 126 scriptures. Jesus used the word in the phrase, *Verily (truly) I say* in 77 scriptures. To be called the 'amen' is to realize that the Son of God is the one through whom all truth comes from the Father; he is the nourisher of them that seek him; it is he that confirms the truth in our hearts.

Faithful witness: Jn 8:18: *I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me.* Often Jesus said in various ways, that he only spake what his Father taught him (Jn 5:30; 8:26, 28; 12:49-50; 14:24), and today, as a faithful witness, he is speaking the Father's words to those who have ears to hear.

The beginning⁽⁷⁴⁶⁾ of the creation⁽²⁹³⁷⁾ of God: The Greek word translated 'beginning' is *arche*⁽⁷⁴⁶⁾. It also means "origin" and can be translated "chief or first." The Greek for 'creation' is "the act of founding, building, establishing, formation." The Son of God was not created, but he was birthed, and therefore has a

beginning. The Bible is clear that the Son is not equal to the Father in knowledge and power (Jn 12:49-50; Jn 14:28). Jesus not only referred to God as his Father, but also as his God (Jn 20:17). So what does it mean that the Son is the 'beginning of the creation' of God? When parents bring a child into the world they teach them from the beginning, how to talk, walk and the ways of life. When God planned the creation of humanity, He foresaw their fall, and need of a Savior. The Son was brought forth in eternity (Pr 8:22-26) and taught the Father's plan, and how to carry it out. The climax of the Son's understanding of his Father's plans and desires for humanity, came with his experience as a human being on this planet. This is why Paul could say, *Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:* (Rom 15:5). Christ's mind was the first to be created by and in the Father. This is why Jesus could say to Phillip, *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father* (Jn 14:9). We are to be one with the Father and the Son (Jn 17:21).

Rev 3:15-17: *15. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17. Because thou say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

A 'lukewarm' person can be ascertained from the next verse: **Jn 15:4:** *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* When I first began to understand that the Spirit is always present to guide me (Isa 30:21), I thought it would be simple to 'hear and do.' However, because of the lack of understanding (lack of a fulness of true riches) of the power of the sin nature (wretched, miserable, poor, blind & naked), my fruit bearing was mixed with my own faulty works. There was yet something more to know in order to be complete in Christ - I needed to buy of the gold tried in the fire, i.e. the faith of Christ. Our challenge, then, is to abide in the Vine every moment of the day so that our fruit is that of righteousness.

Rev 3:20-21: *20. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if anyone hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21. To him, the overcoming, 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.* Jesus overcame the sin nature by suffering (Heb 5:8), and therefore, He is our example. The revelation of his life, and especially the cross, will give the understanding and motivation to overcome when we act on the power God puts within each of us (Eph 3:20).

Jesus is knocking at the door and inviting each of us to the marriage supper (Rev 19:11-21). which if we do accept, we are, in a figure, sitting with Jesus at the right hand of the Father. What an awesome thought!!

Eph 1:18-20: *18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.*

Summary

Lev 24:1-4: *1. THE LORD said to Moses, 2. "Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil from beaten olives for the lamp, that a light may be kept burning continually. 3. Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the Lord continually; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations. 4. He shall keep the lamps in order upon the lamp stand of pure gold before the Lord continually.* (Revised Version)

There are some who will reach spiritual completeness (a level of understanding so they are not sinning)

before the Son of God returns to take his church home. The tabernacle in the wilderness is a parable of that spiritual development which takes place in the last generation of earth as we know it. Only a priest can enter the veil to trim and replenish the lamps (Ps 119:105) with oil (spiritual character - Job 29:6; Ps 23:5), who is a symbol of a person abiding in Christ. In the first apartment, a priest (one abiding in Christ) eats from the 'bread of persons' (Jn 6:32-33) to light the lamps to give light in the temple of his mind (1 Cor 3:16). The seven churches reveal the experience.

It is significant to understand two statements given to all seven churches, and the fact that the two statements are reversed at one point. Here is the order of the statements in the first three churches: **Rev 2:7:** *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says ...; To him that overcomes will I give...* Beginning with Thyatira, the order is reversed. Why? When a person first comes to Christ, it is because of a conviction they feel in their heart, but they do not yet understand the leading of the Spirit. In the first three assemblies, there is a degradation in spiritual quality because the person lacks Christ's faith (understanding), they need to get beyond the teachings of man. The emphasis is on learning to hear first, then to overcome.

This concept can also be seen when Genesis one is viewed as a spiritual creation. 1) A person is void of God's understanding and covered with deep waters, i.e. man's ideas (Pr 18:4), then God begins to separate light from darkness. 2) and He puts a difference between heavenly and earthly waters (thoughts). 3) On day three, dry land is made to appear separate from the seas. Now, seed can be planted (cf Mk 4), and watered by the Spirit.

Thyatira is the only church that has to be told that the one speaking is the Son of God - they are given the Godhead message. Those accepting it overcome the biggest, most significant error in the teachings of world religions. Now, they begin to build a spiritual foundation on the rock. **Mt 16:15-18:** *15. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16. And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17. ...Jesus ... said..., Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood (a human) hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell (ignorance) shall not prevail against it.* A 'rock, stone' is a symbol for a spiritual concept. The concept on which Christ is building his church is the fact that He IS the Messiah, the Son of the living God. *And all the churches shall know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve.* (Rev 2:23 Revised Version) Now that a person is listening to the Spirit, the focus becomes that of overcoming. Christ takes that individual to the next level of understanding (an area in need of overcoming). Overcome here, and then I will give you the next step (listen to what the spirit says). Below is an abbreviation of my experience.

Ephesus: I came back to the Lord because I followed the impressions of my heart, and I returned to what I knew, which was the church I had left. Without realizing it, I had left my first love - I stopped listening.

Smyrna: Then, I started serving the organization more than I was serving Christ.

Pergamos: My church doctrines became what I thought others needed, and those in my church whom I judged corrupt, were just not living up to those teachings.

Thyatira: Eventually, I discovered the truth that there is only one true God - the Father, and Jesus is the only begotten of the Father (1 Cor 8:6; Jn 17:3).

Sardis: My spiritual hearing is better, now that I understand the Godhead. However, I thought that I had reached the ultimate level of understanding of what others needed in order to overcome sin. Little did I know at the time that I was, for the most part, a walking dead man, having only the foundation on which the house must be built.

Philadelphia: Listen to the Spirit of Christ 24/7 - hear and do his instructions. This is how I am to build my spiritual house. I cannot go wrong as long as I hear and do (Isa 30:21; Jn 15:4-7). The twisted, perverted thinking (Old man) is being exposed.

Laodicea: I remember being somewhat confused about listening to the voice. If a person is doing what the

Lord has told them, then they should not be sinning. However, I was judging others by my definition of sin. The Spirit may lead a person into a certain experience because of some issue that needs to be resolved, and two major issues in my life that needed resolving were that of leaning on man, and thinking I had to be married to do the Lord's work - I was trying to abide yet having a sin nature. Laodicea is given the understanding of the sin nature.

What next? I can tell you now that a better understanding of the cross is needed in order to grasp the enormity of God's love, and let it sink into the heart. Additionally, there is a difference in having the spirit of Christ and having the spirit of the Father (Rom 8:10-11). When we have the spirit of the Father, then will we be able to say about our enemies, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they are doing."

Rev 2:10: *...ye shall have tribulation ten days; become thou faithful unto death, and I will give to thee the crown of the life..* In reverse, there are three key elements to this section of scripture - a crown, death and tribulation. A spiritual crown was explained on page two as having God's knowledge. The tribulation requires one to be faithful unto death to self, the 'old man' and the 'sin nature', in order to receive the crown. **Jam 1:12:** *Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.* (RSV) What does this mean? I left my church with a head full of its teachings. Slowly, over the years God has been showing me the error of those teachings. First, they caused me an internal struggle to let go of the old and receive the new. Then, when I went back to my church to share what was learned, most came against what I had to say. People, who I thought were good friends, turned to be my enemies. Now, put my experience in context of God's entire church giving the truth to the world, and how much more trying it will be. **Mt 10:22:** *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endures to the [completion]* ⁽⁵⁰⁵⁶⁾ *shall be saved.* [correct Greek meaning - see below]

Why tribulation ten days? **Mt 24:13-14:** *13. But he that shall endure unto the [completion], the same shall be saved. 14. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the [completion]* ⁽⁵⁰⁵⁶⁾ *come.* The word end is misleading, as most will understand it to be about time. *Telos* ⁽⁵⁰⁵⁶⁾ means *termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be, always of the end of some act or state, but not of the end of a period of time.* This is the spiritual completion by having the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5).

The gospel preached to the world is the sounding of the trumpets. Look at the feast types: **Lev 23:24, 27:** *24. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation... 27. Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.* The preaching of the gospel (trumpets) leads into the Day of Atonement. This is in type, the ten days of tribulation!

The law (Bible) was given solely to teach humanity to love God with all the heart, mind and soul, and to love our fellow humans as ourselves - *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* (Mt 22:36-40). **Mt 5:17-18:** *17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* All the law was fulfilled in the only begotten Son of God at the cross. Now, it must be fulfilled in God's people so that all things are finished. **Gal 5:14:** *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* **1 Tim 1:17:** *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*