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## **The 7 Churches**

The seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 were specific fellowships in the time of the writing of Revelation. So it would only seem logical that these messages were to be given specifically to those fellowships. And, thus, they would apply to those fellowships only.

However, are we to believe that these were the only fellowships at that time? Were there not other fellowships that were around these? Were these the only ones that were going to see and experience the times spoken of in Revelation? Really? Were there not other fellowships that could have been addressed regarding the “pros” and “cons” of their walk in the faith? Of course there were. There were many.

What about the church in Corinth? Or Thessalonica? Or even Philippi? Was Asia Minor really the only place that would undergo the tribulation spoken of in Revelation (as this is where these seven churches were, in Asia Minor)? But even then, what about Colosse? The church in Colosse was in Asia Minor along with the church in Galatia. The question is this: why weren't these other fellowships addressed?

Is it possible that these seven churches in Revelation represent the body of Messiah in the end times? We believe this is very plausible and quite possibly the answer as to why these seven churches were the only ones addressed in Revelation.

When persecution came from Rome in the days they lived in, I'm pretty sure these seven churches were not the only ones affected. Yet, quite possibly, because they best represented what was to come in the future, they were the ones addressed.

We know that history is cyclical and the time of judgment will come again to His people. In fact, we believe that it's very possible the Father will segregate all who call on His name into one of these 7 churches before the times of Revelation truly begin.

Let me say that again. We believe that it's very possible the Father will segregate all who call on His name into one of these 7 churches before the times of Revelation truly begin.

Thus, they say that any interpretation of these messages to the seven churches applying to today or any time in the future is simply a twist and manipulation of Scripture. But please consider the words of Yeshua:

### **Mark 7:6-7**

<sup>6</sup>He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.’<sup>7</sup> They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

This is when Yeshua is basically slamming the Pharisees and teachers of the law found here in Mark 7. But notice how He refers to the prophet Isaiah. Yeshua declared that Isaiah was speaking of those at the time of His ministry in the New Testament. Is this really who Isaiah was speaking of when he wrote those words all those years before? No. Actually, Isaiah was prophesying to those of HIS own day. But we know that history is cyclical.

### **Ecclesiastes 1:9**

“What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.”

And so, if Yeshua took a prophecy that was given to one generation and applied it to another, are we to believe that this can't apply elsewhere? God's people in the Old Testament were captured, killed and taken into slavery. And Revelation shows that this will happen again as well.

### **Revelation 13:10**

“If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.”

And it's in the seven churches where we find the condition of the hearts of all believers around the world, to determine just where they will stand and what they will have to endure in the times of Revelation.

We believe that regardless of where we all are in the world, it is possible that we will fall into one of these seven churches. You cannot run from the end times. The whole world will be affected in one way or another. Sure, some places may be worse than others but, eventually, there will not be one place that will not be affected by the world events. Yet, the Father knows how to protect His people in the midst of what would seem completely impossible. To illustrate this point, please consider the following:

### **2 Kings 6:14-17**

<sup>14</sup>Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. <sup>15</sup>When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. “Oh, my Lord, what shall we do?” the servant asked. <sup>16</sup>“Don't be afraid,” the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” <sup>17</sup> And Elisha prayed, “O (Yahweh) LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” Then (Yahweh) the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

The Father knows how to protect His people, no matter where they may be. And at the same time, He knows how to bring discipline to His people no matter where they may be just the same. You cannot

run from the end times. The whole world will be affected one way or another. And the spiritual church that we find ourselves in will determine what we will see and undergo in the time of the tribulation, again, regardless of where we live.

The separation of the church, as a whole, into these seven congregations will happen spiritually first. That separation could be happening even right now.

When the time Revelation begins, whatever spiritual fellowship we are in, then the correction or protection for that fellowship will apply to us accordingly. Though you may be in the one fellowship and your neighbor down the street in another, the physical correction or protection will still apply to each household accordingly. Thus, this does not mean that one church will be here and another church there. We can be spread all over, yet still receive what we are to undergo; OR be protected - just the same - in the midst of it all.

We have heard that some suggest these seven churches actually represent seven main denominations found in the faith today. Thus, they hold that those in the churches addressed are actually those who hold to the doctrines of those faiths represented today. It's hard to say, but I guess that is something that we need to be open to when going over the seven churches.

Others believe that each of the seven churches in Revelation represent a time period in history. Though we are open to this as a plausible interpretation, it's not something that we currently hold to.

The fact is, there COULD be an element of truth to all three of these interpretations, having all of them correct at the same time.

Of the seven churches, only Smyrna and Philadelphia were NOT reprimanded. The other five had issues to "clean up," if you will. Of these two who were not reprimanded, only Philadelphia was promised to not suffer the hour of trial. So what does this tell us? Quite possibly that it's the church of Philadelphia who will truly be protected in the end times from the wrath of man as alluded to in Revelation 12.

We personally believe that we as believers will never undergo God's wrath. HOWEVER, God's discipline is a different thing.

Consider:

#### **Hebrews 12:7**

["Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?"](#)

The context expounds it further. That being said, IS it possible that the churches will go through the tribulation as a time of discipline or simple refinement? Could it be that even though Smyrna, though given no reprimand, will be the ones called to shine the light of the truth in the midst of the persecution (the ones who stand before the rulers possessing and sharing the truth) for all? Quite possible.

But even those protected in the wilderness will have to pass under the rod as mentioned in Ezekiel 20. We cover this in our teaching titled "The Blood Moon Tetrads and the Greater Exodus." Yet, we know through history that when judgment is to happen, it always begins in the house of God.

Thus Peter's words:

### **1 Peter 4:17**

“For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

We even see in Ezekiel chapter 9 judgment happening in the house of God. Verse 6 specifically says that they started at the sanctuary.

### **Ezekiel 9:5-6**

<sup>5</sup>As I listened, he said to the others, “Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. <sup>6</sup>Slaughter old men, young men and maidens, women and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were in front of the temple.

And how much more so could this be true in the end times with what is said to the other churches in Revelation? If, and I say “IF,” this is truly the case, he may indeed separate all of his body into one of the seven churches to determine WHAT discipline they will be receiving in the end times.

But if this is the case, how would that separation happen? What would it truly look like? And how would it play out in the time of God’s discipline? Will it be a spiritual separation only? Could it actually somehow be a combination of both?

The discipline of God’s people is to get them to repent and start following Him from a pure heart. And if we think about it, what is it that brings us to our knees in repentance and examining our ways? It’s persecution and hard times.

These are the major elements that bring believers around the world down from their pride or personal agendas to truly humble themselves. Consider Hosea, a book that I personally believe has a cyclical view attached to it regarding the end times, even though it applied to the times of his day.

### **Hosea 6:1**

“Come, let us return to (Yahweh) the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds.”

Persecution and tribulation causes us to shed any and every element in our life that doesn’t reflect the holiness that he has called us to. Will it happen again? We believe quite possibly so.

Let’s briefly examine the seven churches found in Revelation 2 and 3 to examine the characteristics of each and find which one that we as individuals may fall into. If Yahweh is indeed separating us into one of these churches in the times we are living in, may we be open and honest with ourselves and change what needs to be changed before it all starts.

Please know, that as we examine these churches to see just where we might stand, that this is not a time to think more highly of our selves than we ought, but rather with sober judgment.

### **Romans 12:3**

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, **but rather think of yourself with sober judgment**, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

First we find the church of Ephesus.

### **Revelation 2:1-3**

<sup>1</sup>To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lamp stands: <sup>2</sup>I know **your deeds**, your **hard work** and **your perseverance**. I know that you **cannot tolerate wicked men**, that you have **tested those who claim to be apostles** but are not, and have found them false. <sup>3</sup>You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

Up to this point, there is no doubt that the believers in this fellowship were at one point faithful followers of Yeshua. In fact, with all the positive that is mentioned about them you can't help but wonder what the negative about them could even be. Seriously.

It is here where it seems that the church's name might be significant. According to some sources, the name Ephesus means, "Desirable." With all that this church had going for them at one time, it only makes sense that they were cherished and desirable in the eyes of Yeshua. Yet there is indeed a negative element that He addresses.

Consider:

### **Revelation 2:4**

"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love."

Pause for a moment. Let's read that again.

"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love."

That means they have forsaken the ways of Yahweh. Consider where this is ALSO mentioned:

### **Deuteronomy 31:16**

"And (Yahweh) the LORD said to Moses: 'You are going to rest with your fathers, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will **forsake me** and break the covenant I made with them.'"

Also...

### **Joshua 24:15-16**

<sup>15</sup>"But if serving (Yahweh) the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve (Yahweh) the LORD." <sup>16</sup>Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to **forsake (Yahweh) the LORD** to serve other gods!"

It would seem that these in the church of Ephesus completely forsake Yahweh and turn from His ways. Consider what is said next:

### **Revelation 2:5**

"Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If

you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from it's place.”

He said, “Repent and do the things you did at first.” It would appear that they have completely turned from the Father’s ways. But, “Why?” is the question. It may be answered in the next verse.

### **Revelation 2:6**

“But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”

They hate the practices of the Nicolaitans. As we explained in our FAQ teaching to “The Church His Model,” the Nicolaitans were those who tried Lording authority over God’s people.

The word Nicolaitans found in Revelation is a compound word that is composed of THREE Greek words. The three Greek words used in this word's construction are:

1st - NIKOS, .... Nikos is defined as "a conquest; victory; triumph; the conquered; and by implication, dominancy over the defeated." Another transferred name in which this term is used is "Nicomopolis," which is composed of Niko, which means conquest and polis, which means city. Hence, the city of conquest, or city of victory.

Next is LAOS. It means “people”. Another use of this word is found in NICOLAS, which is transferred and is composed of Nikos-laos and means one who is "victorious over the people,".

And lastly, TON. TON is the third and last word entering into the construction of the proper name Nicolaitan. TON, in which Omega, the long "o", is contracted into short "a", thus making the word TAN which is plural in all the genders of the definite article 'the.'

We therefore have, without the Greek construction, the English hyphenated word NIKOS-LAOS-TON, but with its lawful contractions, becomes the English translation found in Revelation. .... Nicolaitan

What is the real-world meaning of the word?

The full meaning of the word "Nicolaitans" in its native tongue is that the leadership of the Church have gained a triumphal victory or conquest over the LAITON, the laity, until they have been compelled to submit to the dominion of men who have become that thing which God hates.

Could Ephesus represent people who may have been burned from these “church leaders” and have in turn walked away from the Faith? All the while holding their disdain for any and all “church leaders” that try to usurp the Authority that belongs to Yeshua.

We don’t know for sure. But it does seem to fit the mold. Yeshua then concludes with this:

### **Revelation 2:7**

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

The next church is Smyrna.

### **Revelation 2:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the

Last, who died and came to life again.<sup>9</sup> I know your afflictions and your poverty - yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

This church is afflicted and poor in the physical, yet are obviously rich in the spiritual. It's here where the possible meaning of the name of Smyrna comes to significance. It is believed by many that the name Smyrna carries similarity to the word "Myrrh" for a reason. Myrrh is a tree resin with a bitter taste that was crushed and used in perfume, in incense, and as a preservative in burial. A bitter taste when crushed while at the same time producing a sweet aroma; a parallel to the church in Smyrna that just seems too coincidental.

There has been much speculation as to just who the individuals are that claim to be Jews but are actually a synagogue of Satan. But regardless of who they are, the church of Smyrna are slandered by them.

Yeshua continues.

### **Revelation 2:10**

"Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life."

This is the only church that is informed they are about to suffer even though they receive no reprimands from Yeshua. There is no explanation given as to why this is the case. Even though there is NO reprimand given at all, they are still informed that they will go through hard times of persecution.

Could these be those who are to give testimony in the end times like Yeshua mentioned in Luke 21?

### **Luke 21:12**

"But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name."

Is it possible that the church of Smyrna will be those standing and giving testimony for Yeshua? We don't know. But it does seem plausible. Who else but to put in front of those in authority but those who have a pure heart and will answer according to the Spirit?

Yeshua then concludes to them:

### **Revelation 2:11**

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death."

The next church is Pergamum.

### **Revelation 2:12-13**

<sup>12</sup> To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. <sup>13</sup> I know where you live - where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness who was put to death in your city - where Satan lives.

Here we see a fellowship that is where Satan has his throne. Definitely implying a geographic location. Question is, had his throne always been there up to that point. And, is it still there today? Doubtful, on both accounts. It is very plausible that Satan's throne is mobile for each era throughout history. Leading one to wonder just where it's at today.

Yet this church was faithful to the Lord's name. They didn't renounce their faith in the midst of persecution. Which to me, speaks *volumes* of one's character. But Yeshua still had something against them. Verse 14:

#### **Revelation 2:14**

[“Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.”](#)

So, among all those who stayed faithful to the name in persecution, there were some who held to the teaching of Balaam. So what was the teaching of Balaam? This is important. If we're going to know what this church was doing wrong, we need to know what happened with Balaam.

The story of Balaam and Balak begins in Numbers 22. Balak had hired Balaam to curse Israel but Yahweh would not let him do so. Instead, Yahweh made him bless them. And that's mostly the end of the story. Of that which is given to us in the book of numbers, that is, until we get to Chapter 31.

Compare:

#### **Numbers 31:1-3**

[<sup>1</sup>\(Yahweh\) The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Take vengeance on the Midianites for the Israelites. After that, you will be gathered to your people.” <sup>3</sup>So Moses said to the people, “Arm some of your men to go to war against the Midianites and to carry out \(Yahweh's\) the LORD's vengeance on them.”](#)

Consider verse 8 regarding just who this vengeance fell on.

#### **Numbers 31:8**

[“Among their victims were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba - the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword.”](#)

Yahweh's vengeance fell on Balaam. Why? He obeyed and blessed Israel. Right? Well, yes. Of that which is detailed in the book of Numbers anyway. However, as given in here in Revelation, there is obviously more to the story and the reason as to why Yahweh had His vengeance fall on Balaam.

It's obvious that Balaam couldn't curse Israel, but he evidently showed Balak how to get the blessings of Yahweh off of Israel. How is that? Through disobedience. The disobedience was through sacrificing to other gods. He caused them to blend in with them through the rituals of their pagan deities. This story concerning Balaam is actually an excellent example of how obedience brings the blessings of Yahweh on his people and how disobedience removes them.

It is in this text of Revelation that many refer to in saying that we are not to eat food sacrificed to idols. But nowhere is this an instruction in Torah. Paul makes this clear to the Corinthians and we explain this further in our teaching titled “Meat Sacrificed to Idols”. Please refer to this teaching when possible.

The phrase in question here is, “eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.” These ten words are translated from the following FOUR Greek words:

fagei√n ei' dwlo/quta kai« porneuvvai

Which are translated: eating offerings and immorality. It's actually the act of participating in pagan rituals to other god's. This included being at the pagan altar at the time of the sacrifice, eating the sacrifice and then engaging in sexual activity as a part of the ritual. You see, it's one thing to eat something that has been sacrificed at a pagan altar. It's something completely different to eat OF the offering WHEN it is placed on that altar.

In other words, it is wrong and against the Torah to eat meat sacrificed to idols while participating in that act of idol worship at the temple, which commonly included temple prostitution. It is not an issue to eat meat sacrificed to idols once it hits the markets and is removed from the direct act of worshipping idols at the temples.

Again, for further detail on this topic, please see our teaching titled “Meat Sacrificed to Idols”.

But how does that apply to today? It's pretty obvious that believers today don't go in to pagan temples and engage in pagan rituals. The bottom line here was that they were trying to serve Yahweh and other god's at the same time. Joining in the rituals of pagan deities while claiming to be a follower of Yahweh. Today, many blend in the rituals of the pagan deities just how the Israelites did so because of Balaam.

For an example of this, we encourage you to watch our two part teaching titled “Sunburned”.

It is here where the name Pergamum might have some significance. Pergamum, or literally “Pergamos,” is derived from two Greek words: “pergos,” which means tower or elevation, and “gamos,” which means married. The words together actually mean “married to the tower.”

Married to the tower. At first, this may seem awkward or just not make any sense. Yet, as a believer our mind should take us back to the Tower of Babel, because what went on in Pergamos is very similar to that of the days of the Tower of Babel, engaging in sun god and false deity rituals, practices and traditions that stem all the way from the Tower of Babel itself.

Yet this wasn't the only thing that Yeshua had an issue with in this fellowship.

### **Revelation 2:15**

[“Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.”](#)

Again, we see people submitting to the Nicolaitans as we found with those in the church of Ephesus. We see that all of these are no small matter in the eyes of Yeshua as He says:

### **Revelation 2:16**

[“Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”](#)

Notice how he says He will fight against “them”. Meaning those who are in rebellion. Showing what? Regardless of your faithfulness at the beginning, even in the face of death, we are to be faithful to the end. And faithfulness is found in obedience.

Obedience shows what side you are on. Anyone who is still in rebellion to obedience at the time of His coming, even if they claim His name, will truly find themselves on the wrong side of the battle. For indeed, He said He would fight against “them”.

He then concludes:

### **Revelation 2:17**

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.”

The next church is Thyatira.

### **Revelation 2:18-19**

<sup>18</sup> To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. <sup>19</sup> I know **your deeds**, your **love** and **faith**, your **service** and **perseverance**, and that you are **now doing more** than you did at first.

Wow. Again, we see a people who appears to be on target in their walk. Their deeds, their love, faith, service and perseverance are all acknowledged. And they are even noted as still growing. I don’t know about you, but these attributes speak volumes to me. Really. I can’t imagine having something negative that would counter such a heart with these attributes.

But, Yeshua still had a reprimand to give them.

### **Revelation 2:20**

“Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, **who calls herself** a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.”

Many hold that since the message to this Church includes a reference to “that woman, Jezebel,” they believe that the name Thyatira comes from the Greek words “thea,” - a female deity, goddess - and “tyrannos,” - a tyrant or ruler. In this, they conclude that Thyatira means “ruled by a woman.” We agree that it does indeed make sense, but it is just a theory and not held by many.

Some hold that the name Thyatira means a sacrifice of labor, or the perfume of affliction. Knowing that Asia Minor is modern day Turkey, what seems very possible for the name Thyatira is that of the similarly named city of modern day Turkey: Thyateira, located in Akhisar. The Turkish equivalent of Thyatira carries the meaning of “hill graveyard.” It is in this that makes verse 23 carry significance in the warning to this church.

### **Revelation 2:23**

“I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am He who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.”

Her dead will be an example to the other churches, thus, the possible meaning, “hill graveyard” - on a hill for all to see, if you will. Though this is the case, many still hold to the meaning of, “ruled by a woman.”

It is from here that many say a prophetess is a bad thing. When this is simply not true. Miriam, Moses’ sister was a prophetess. Anna in Luke chapter 2 is also noted as a prophetess. And there are many others.

The problem here is that the individual CLAIMED she was a prophetess. Yeshua did not declare she actually was one. Yet this individual does the same thing as found in the church at Pergamum: getting God’s people to participate in idol worship - to participate in the practices of the pagan deities. But in this case we see that the individual influencing God’s people had been given a chance to repent but has refused.

Consider:

### **Revelation 2:21-23**

<sup>21</sup>I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. <sup>22</sup> So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. <sup>23</sup>I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and **I will repay each of you according to your deeds.**

Some have suggested that this parallels that of the whore of Babylon later in Revelation, and we agree that it does seem similar. But that is something we believe would be difficult to prove. Yet, there is no doubt there will be great punishment for those who hold to this influence from this self-proclaimed prophetess. And let it be noted for all, as stated in verse 23, that Yeshua repays ALL according to their deeds, an element that is often overlooked by many. It is according to our deeds: that which we live out.

Yeshua continues:

### **Revelation 2:24-25**

<sup>24</sup>Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan’s so-called deep secrets **I will not impose any other burden on you:** <sup>25</sup> Only hold on to what you have until I come.

So why do these who do not hold to her teaching have to go through anything? Because they still tolerate her teachings that they knew was wrong as mentioned in verse 20, which is breaking Torah.

### **Leviticus 19:17**

“Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt.”

Yeshua then closes:

### **Revelation 2:26-29**

<sup>26</sup> To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations - <sup>27</sup> ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery’ - just as I have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup> I will also give him the morning star. <sup>29</sup> He who has an ear,

let him hear with the Spirit says to the churches.

Next, we have the church Sardis.

### **Revelation 3:1**

“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.”

Whoa. Let's read that last part again...

“I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.”

In other words “Your works makes others believe you are alive, but you are dead.” This could also be rendered that it's the works that are dead. Compare the next verse.

### **Revelation 3:2**

“Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.”

Thus, it could be the deeds that are equally dead as well. This seems to parallel that of those mentioned in Matthew chapter 7.

### **Matthew 7:21-23**

<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

These here obviously had some kind of good deeds or works. But as mentioned in other teachings we have said, It's the phrase "Away from me, you evildoers" that needs to be examined.

The word "evildoers" is the translation from THIS Greek phrase:

"ergazomenoi ten anomie".

It actually means "who work lawlessness".

So you can have all kinds of good deeds or works that looks good to others but are you pursuing the righteousness that the Father has given us? That is found in His law.

Obviously the church of Sardis had their focus on works that the Father could care less about as he said they were dead. Works by themselves are worthless if they are not accompanied in a relationship founded in Torah.

Compare the next verse as Yeshua details what they should pursue.

### **Revelation 3:3**

“Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not

wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.”

Here we see they obviously have heard the truth so they are completely without excuse. Even to the point of missing the Return of Yeshua.

#### **Revelation 3:4**

“Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.”

Here we see a glimmer of light to this church. Having a few names who are pursuing Righteousness. It is because of this that one would find it hard to categorize these seven churches as *only* being something in the spiritual for the end times. For, if it was ONLY in the spiritual, it would seem that these few who are truly pursuing would be in a different fellowship. Yet, we see them in a fellowship that is filled with those who have dead works.

But this almost seems to give us hope that regardless of what church we may find ourselves in, we can overcome and be like those who have not had their clothes soiled. After all, when we truly walk in Him, we are a new creation. He remembers our past no more; then considered as one had never had our clothes soiled. See what I mean?

So it's quite possible that these “who have not soiled their clothes” could very well have been in the first group at one time but have already repented and now walking in obedience. So again, we see in Sardis two groups. Those of dead works and those who have not soiled their clothes. Nothing is given to us regarding the second group. And we are left to assume that they are now faultless.

It is here where we see the possible significance of the name Sardis. The name Sardis actually means, “escaping ones,” or “those who come out.” The focus obviously being on those of the second group; those who are faultless - those who could be the “escaping ones,” or “those who come out.”

It almost makes me wonder if it is through those who have not soiled their clothes that the others in Sardis truly heard the message, as explained in verse 3.

We must also notice though, that those who have not soiled their clothes were not informed that they would undergo any difficult times. We are only given that they would walk with Yeshua dressed in white, for they are worthy. **Making us wonder that they will indeed be spared the time of persecution.**

Yeshua then concludes:

#### **Revelation 3:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. <sup>6</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Notice the phrase “like them” in the first sentence of verse 5. Like who though? Like those who have not soiled their clothes from verse 4. They are told that those who overcome will be like those who have not soiled their clothes but are dressed in white.

Let me read this verse again.

“He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.”

It almost seems that we see the two groups segregated again. Those who overcome and those who have not yet. This would **indeed** imply that the later group will not undergo the tribulation. And we confess that they are not declared that they would be spared from it, but it does indeed seem to imply this to be the case.

Reading verse 4 and 5 one more time:

### **Revelation 3:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. <sup>5</sup> He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

And speaking of those who will not undergo the tribulation, this appropriately leads us to the next church, Philadelphia.

Philadelphia means “brotherly love” from the Greek word “Phileo,” which means “to love,” and “adelphos,” which means “brother.” Together meaning “brotherly love.” The significance? Consider:

### **1 John 4:12**

“No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.”

If the name is to carry any weight at all, then this verse alone speaks volumes for this church. This is the church that most everyone claims they are of, or at least hope to be. Why is that? Because they only receive affirmation and promise of deliverance with no reprimand.

### **Revelation 3:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. <sup>8</sup> I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Here we see Yeshua acknowledge their deeds, but contrary to the church of Sardis, their deeds are the righteous deeds. He says they have little strength. In fact, the Greek word used for “strength” here is Dunamin. It’s the same word used in Acts chapter 1.

### **Acts 1:8**

“But you will receive power (Dunamin) when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Here Yeshua says they have little left implying that they were steadfast in their faithfulness with the strength that had been given them. He also says to them “you have kept my word” - Logos. Please see our teaching titled “Narrow Minded” It is in this teaching that we explain that keeping His word means

keeping His Torah. And here we see that the church of Philadelphia did just that and not deny His name.

### **Revelation 3:9**

“I will make those of you who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars - I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.”

Here again, like with the church of Smyrna, we see those referred to as the synagogue of Satan mentioned, yet that they will humbly acknowledge that Yeshua loved these followers in Philadelphia, making one wonder if that is what those of that synagogue claim only for themselves: that only they are loved by Yeshua.

### **Revelation 3:10**

“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on earth.”

And here we see the promise that everyone wants to claim for themselves. And quite honestly, you can claim it all you want, but it's only going to those Yeshua says are in this fellowship. It is this verse that many claim to as a pre-tribulation rapture. Let it be known that we do not hold to the belief that is called “pre-tribulation rapture”. A teaching is forthcoming on that topic per many requests.

It would seem that this verse could be referring to those who will be protected in the wilderness from the time of the Antichrist as given in Revelation 12.

Some have said that Yeshua is referring to a specific hour only and not the time of the tribulation as the Greek here says “hora” (ώρα) for the word hour. And we agree that it does indeed say hour here. But it also says it here:

### **John 12:27**

“Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour (hora)?’ No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.”

Was Yeshua referring only to that specific hour? Of course not. It was a general reference for the time of the cross that He was in.

It is also used here:

### **1 Thessalonians 2:17**

“But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short (hora) time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you.”

Though “hora” can be a reference for a specific hour in the day, it is also used as a general reference for a time period. And likewise, the hour Yeshua mentions that the church of Philadelphia will be delivered from will be the same. A time of trial for the whole world to be tested. The tribulation.

Yeshua continues:

### **Revelation 3:11**

“I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”

How can a man take your crown? As we saw in Numbers with Balak and Balaam, someone who is in the Father can only be overcome through disobedience. Meaning this, don't let someone lead you into disobedience and lose what you have.

### **1 Corinthians 15:33**

“Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’”

Yeshua concludes:

### **Revelation 3:12-13**

<sup>12</sup>Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

<sup>13</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Also, some assume that the promise given to this church is just saying that they are saved from the wrath at the time of the end of the tribulation and not saved from the tribulation itself.

This doesn't seem to line up with what is said to all the other churches. The others were all told that they were about to suffer. Meaning the tribulation. It only makes sense that this verse is also referring to that of the tribulation as well. Meaning they would be protected through the tribulation.

None of Yahweh's people will suffer the wrath at the end as His people do not suffer wrath. Yet this church was promised to not undergo the trial that was coming. If this is only referring to that of the wrath at the end, how is that any different from any of the other churches? As *no* believer will undergo the wrath.

And finally the last Church, Laodicea.

### **Revelation 3:14-16**

<sup>14</sup>To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. <sup>15</sup>I know your deeds, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish you were either one or the other! <sup>16</sup>So, because you are lukewarm - neither hot nor cold - I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

Again, we see that deeds are a topic of concern. Their deeds made them luke warm. Many assume that Yeshua was wanting them hot and not cold. But He specifically said “I wish you were either one or the other!” If being cold was a bad thing, why would Yeshua wish that they were either hot OR cold? That would mean that He would be saying “I wish that you were either good OR bad”

We know that it's God's will that no man perish.

### **2 Peter 3:9**

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

Knowing this, the logic of cold being bad and Yeshua wanting them to be cold, just doesn't make sense.

It's even been alluded that this is a reference of under water streams. Most come out cold. But there are some that come out hot. Those that come out cold are refreshing. And those that come out hot are healing. Thus, both are useful and even needed. Thus, Yeshua's reference to his desire of them being hot or cold. Remember, it's because they are luke warm that they are about to be spit out.

To understand exactly what is going on here, we must consider the meaning of the name "Laodicea,". We must examine the Greek root words from which this name is derived.

The two Greek words used in this name's construction are:

LAOS, again, meaning "people" and DIKE meaning "principle, decision or rights". In other words, Laodicea means "The rights of the people".

The Laodiceans were focused on their rights and trusted in their ability to rule themselves, judging and deciding matters to the exclusion of Yeshua's rule and authority. And it is because of this, with their focus on themselves, that we see their attitude that Yeshua addresses in the next verse.

#### **Revelation 3:17**

"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."

Wow.

"But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."

I can't help but think of Hosea when reading of Laodicea.

#### **Hosea 12:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> Ephraim boasts, "I am very rich; I have become wealthy. With all my wealth they will not find in me any iniquity or sin." <sup>9</sup> "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt; I will make you live in tents again, as in the days of your appointed feasts.

Laodicea was in turmoil and didn't even know it.

Here we truly see the spiritual condition of this fellowship. Their focus is on the physical aspects of life only and are missing the true riches found in the eternal Word. Not that physical things are wrong to have. But they should not take precedence over spiritual growth. Our spiritual growth should not suffer as a result of our physical possessions. It is only in the Word that our spiritual growth is founded.

Consider the next verse:

#### **Revelation 3:18**

"I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes so you can see."

Gold, white clothes and salve. Because they were poor, blind and naked as mentioned in verse 17.

I can't help but be reminded of the parable of the 10 virgins. Where the 5 wise had enough oil in waiting for the bride groom and the 5 foolish who did not. They asked for oil from the 5 wise but received this answer:

**Matthew 25:9-10**

<sup>9</sup>“No,” they replied, “there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves. <sup>10</sup> But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

Please see our teaching titled, “The Ten Virgins” for a detailed look at this parable.

Another verse to consider when reflecting on this in Revelation is:

**Proverbs 23:23**

“Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding.”

Continuing:

**Revelation 3:19**

“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.”

This is a straight forward warning. If they don't repent, they WILL be rebuked. If they do not turn from their ways, their rebuke will come in the time of the tribulation.

He then concludes:

**Revelation 3:20-22**

<sup>20</sup> Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup> To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

How is it that Yeshua will come in? It's quite simple. He is the Word. It is the eternal Word that is to be in our heart. For a better understanding on Him being the Word and how that applies here, as mentioned earlier, please see our teaching titled, “Narrow Minded.”

So, there's the seven churches. And again, we believe that it's very possible that the Father will segregate all who call on His name into one of these seven churches before the end times truly begin. The church we end up in is dependent on our obedience, or lack thereof, to His Word today.

There is a belief that the messages here in Revelation 2 and 3 are not to the churches but rather only to the Angels of the churches. Which at first glance, this can seem to be the case as Yeshua starts each message off with, “To the Angel of church in ...”

So, is He ONLY talking to the angels or giving each angel the message that they are to deliver to the church?

It is here, also, that many use to defend for there being a single pastor to be over a congregation. However, the word used here is “aggelo.” It simply means “messenger” or “angel.” And as we will see, the message went to them just the same. Why? Because they were part of the fellowship, as well. So, again, is He ONLY talking to the angels or giving each angel the message that they are to deliver to the church?

Compare:

### **Revelation 1:10-11**

<sup>10</sup> On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.”

Here we see that everything John sees is indeed for the churches.

Next,

### **Revelation 2:10**

“Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Again, it says, “I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison...” Some of who? Some of the angel (singular) or some of the church? The church.

Another:

### **Revelation 2:23**

“I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.”

Each of who? The angel of Thyatira or the church of Thyatira? The church. Then verse 24 really shows that these messages are for the churches as a whole.

### **Revelation 2:24**

“Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you):”

So the first part of the message, though addressed in the singular form, went to those who joined the woman Jezebel. Compare.

### **Revelation 2:22**

“So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.”

And we see verse 24 addressed the rest of the congregation even though it all starts off in a singular perspective. These alone show that these messages are truly for the churches as a whole. And as we've shown in our teachings titled “The Church: His Model and The Church: His Model, FAQ's, leadership in a church is PART of the church and not the head covering of the church.

Lastly, there is one common thread that all the churches have in common. What is that? To each church is said, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." So what is it that the Spirit says to the churches? Please see our teaching titled, "Walking in the Spirit" to understand just what the Spirit truly says to the churches.

Also, if you notice, all seven churches are instructed to overcome. We are instructed to overcome BEFORE it all begins. What are we instructed to overcome though?

### **Romans 12:21**

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

### **1 John 5:2-5**

<sup>2</sup> This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. <sup>3</sup> **This is love for God: to obey his commands.** And his commands are not burdensome, <sup>4</sup> for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world? **Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.**

So, it's believing that Yeshua is the Son of God and obeying Gods commands. Remember, those who repent and do this now will be protected in the times of the tribulation as shown in the messages to the seven churches. Thus, the common message given to them all.

Now, have you ever heard of the "Left behind" theory? It's concerning the view of the pre-tribulation rapture. It's the belief that holds many know that Yeshua is returning but continue in their lifestyle that they know is not pleasing to him. Then, when Yeshua comes and they miss the rapture, they will THEN truly repent, but only to face the wrath of the antichrist.

This theory, that many hold to, actually has an element of truth to it. Regardless of which of the seven churches we are currently in, if one chooses to continue in a path of disobedience, they will find themselves to have missed the protection offered to the faithful like those of Philadelphia.

What do you believe their response will be? Of course, start following in truth. But where do we see this in the Scriptures?

Compare:

### **Revelation 12:14-17**

<sup>14</sup> The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. <sup>15</sup> Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. <sup>16</sup> But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup> Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring - those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Notice what happens after the enemy turns from those who are protected. He then pursues the rest of the offspring. But notice the specifics of who he pursues:

“those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

Sound familiar?

Compare:

**1 John 5:3-5**

<sup>3</sup>**This is love for God: to obey his commands.** And his commands are not burdensome, <sup>4</sup> for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world? **Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.**

Believing that Yeshua is the son of God and obeying Gods commands. If we pursue this now, we will find ourselves with those being protected from the enemy. If we wait, we will only find ourselves in a completely different situation than what we had hoped for. Thus, the REASON for the warnings of the churches in Chapters 2 and 3. Now is the time to make the changes in our life.

May we all be honest with ourselves in reviewing the reprimands that these churches received and examine our lives daily to change to his likeness accordingly before the times of Revelation truly begin.

We hope you have enjoyed this study. Remember, continue to test everything.

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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