

A Study on the Book of Revelation. [1-5]



One of the most common misrepresentations of the book of Revelation is that it is presented as a book of doom and gloom. God is portrayed as an angry God, bursting to pour out His wrath upon the earth. This cannot be further from the truth. The book of Revelation covers a period spanning nearly 3000 years of which only 7 years are attributed to the wrath of God. So in order to understand this book we have to approach it with a firm understanding that God is NOT judging the world DURING the time of His grace which He purchased by the precious blood of Christ. As Isaiah says, “**So have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.** For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but **My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,**” Says the Lord, who has mercy on you.” Isaiah 54:9-10 Therefore this book is not all about judgement but it aims to give us a snapshot of God’s gracious purpose being worked out against a backdrop of every kind of opposition finally being brought to a predetermined end.

The book of Revelation is NOT a sealed book, it is written so we may understand it. However a point needs to be made against the approach of studying the word of God as if it is some multiple choice concept. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth; He is NOT the Spirit of options. We might not have got the whole truth to help us see the complete picture, yet the part we hold should NOT contradict any other Scriptural truth. Selective application to suit our own purpose or concept to the disregard of other truths is the source of ALL division. We need to be able to answer questions to a satisfactory level so as to tear down paths that are divisive and be established on truth.

Derek Prince taught in order to understand end times prophecies you first must find the SPINE then you can connect the rest of the bones. If you do not have the SPINE then you will miss align the body. Therefore in our study of the Book of Revelation we need to discover **solid foundations in the revealed knowledge of God** in order to shape our understanding of this book. One of the points of anchor is the continuity that is created when we reconcile the prophecies of Daniel with the events the Lord spoke of at the end of the Covenant of the Law in [Matthew 24:15-22, Mark 13:14-20, Luke 21:20-24]. That is the Lord’s OWN interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel to apply to the destruction of the Second Temple is our FIXED Point from which we can build.

The prophecies of Daniel and the prophecies of John seem very similar but are NOT addressing the same event. Our anchor point helps us to make this distinction. Daniel's prophecy ends with this statement, "when the power of **the Holy People is completely shattered ALL these things shall be finished.**" Daniel 12:7 Speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70, when Jerusalem was left desolate, the Jews driven, sold and scattered into the world. But the tribulation John writes about is NOT of total destruction but of deliverance. [Zechariah 14, Revelation 19] This is one of the points that shows Daniel was not speaking a day beyond AD70, while John speaks of the return of the Lord. Failure to make this distinction will end up in muddling two time periods which will severely hinder our understanding of this book. So the book of Daniel is a lens through which we are able to better understand the events that are yet to unfold at the end of the Covenant of Grace.

This study is a collection of teachings of the servants of God and throughout the study abbreviations are used as references. Derik Prince [D.p], Duane Sheriff [D.s], Joseph Prince [J.p], Kenneth Hagin [K.h], Dr. Michael Brown [Dr.M.b.]

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Revelation 1: Introduction.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants what things it behoves to take place in QUICKNESS. And He signified it through having sent His angel to His servant, John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, as much as he SAW. Blessed is the one READING, and those HEARING the WORDS of the PROPHECY, and KEEPING the things having been written in it; for the time is near. [vs. 1-3]

To understand the book of Revelation, we first have to start by identifying when it was written. Many have estimated it to have been written around AD96, however there are also studies that have objected to this estimation and have presented their own reasoning to that effect. So it would be fair to say nobody seems to know for sure. Now, we do not prove the truth of God by secular records or tradition of men which is open to bias and prejudice, rather we prove secular records by the unshakable truth of the word of God.

This study takes the FIRM position that the book was written pre AD70, even before AD64, based on one simple compelling fact, that is none of the authors of the new testament especially John made any mention of their beloved Jerusalem being burned to the ground, not a word of woe or lamentation about the loss of life of their countrymen and home and the destruction of temple which in itself would have given them ample opportunity to affirm the prophecies of the Lord in their letters. [Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 17,21] But Not one word in that respect. Luke, who recorded Paul's ministry to the last two years of his life, records his final discussion with the Jews of Rome and how they have received no disturbing news in

regard to him from Jerusalem. [Acts 28:21] Peter's last letter acknowledging the writing of Paul to the Hebrews, written from Rome and recognising his own impending death said nothing. Jude who affirms the words of the apostles' warnings, almost citing the words of Peter, proving his letter comes after them says nothing also. However this only proves ALL their letters were written before the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

Secular record shows the Jewish revolt started AD66 and lasted until AD70 when Jerusalem was totally destroyed. An estimation of three and half years representing the final portion of Daniel's prophecy. However none of these turmoil were reflected in the epistles of John or any of the other writers. And John was busy affirming the going out of Jewish brothers to the Gentiles, his own plans to visit and warning of the opposition that was growing against them from their own Jewish brethren since only they opposed the coming of Messiah in the flesh. Proving at the time John was writing his letters, the Jews were preoccupied with opposing "the Christian sect" rather than having to deal with Rome. [Acts 28:22, 1 John 4:1-3 & 2 John 1:7-8] And beyond AD70 there was no recorded Jewish persecution of the Christians.

The third epistle of John was written to Gaius of Derbe, a Macedonian who once was Paul's travel companion and is referred to in Act 19:29; 20:4 and Romans 16:23 he is credited for the very thing John commends him for. Encouraging him for his treatment of the brethren, for receiving them, especially of the Jewish workers that went forth to minister to the Gentiles. "**For they went forth on behalf of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.** Therefore we ought to receive such men, **so that we may be fellow workers in the truth.**" 3 John 1:7-8 They went forth, the reference being from Judea and Jerusalem, so he says, "strangers as they are" that is to Gaius and to his church. [Philippians 4:15]

Now in his last two epistles John refers to himself as an "ELDER." In the gospel of John he referred to himself as the disciple. In the book of Revelation he refers to himself as the servant of the Lord and a brother to the churches in Asia. The term elder is used for church leaders, Acts 14:23, Acts 15:4, Acts 20:17. The point being he refers to himself as an elder in regard to a church he is overseeing. And his last letter was written on behalf of the workers that went forth from his care. "Diotrephes, the one loving to be first among them, **does not welcome us.**" 3 John 1:9 in the same manner Paul spoke of Timothy and Titus. And John's only recorded field of ministry was to the Jews. "James and Cephas **and John, those esteemed to be pillars,** gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, **but THEY to the CIRCUMCISION.**" Galatians 2:9 Therefore we have ground to suppose he is the elder of the church in Judea.

Now some traditions have John in the church of Ephesus before he was put in prison where it was believed he wrote the gospel and the epistles in which he referred to himself as an elder. Then was John addressing himself when he wrote to the messenger of the church of Ephesus? So such traditions that make such claims are questionable. More to the point these traditions also claim it was around AD96. Then the question is, why would John write in his epistles the rise of the antichrist spirit from among his Jewish brethren when Jerusalem was no more? All of the other writers are in support of this, and they were ALL written before AD64 [the great fire of Rome] when opposition from their own brethren was the highest.

Next point to address before we go further is the idea Peter was referring to Rome when he wrote of his wife saying, "**She in Babylon elected with you greets you,** and my son Mark." 1 Peter 5:13 Now if Babylon was a code used for Rome, then we would have Scriptural proof that John wrote the book of Revelation prior to Peter's death. However this is flawed, when Peter wrote referring to Babylon he meant exactly that, Babylon of Mesopotamia where he was with his wife and son. He being an apostle to the Jews would have had reason to travel to the east, where Jews who were exiled by Nebuchadnezzar and the king of Assyria still dwelt. "**Parthians and Medes and Elamites; and those inhabiting Mesopotamia.**" Acts 2:9 And at the time when the letter from Paul, [Hebrews] went out to all the Jews, written while Paul was

in prison in Rome. Showing they were in the furthest corners from one another Peter in the Old Babylon in reference to the Jews and Paul in the new Babylon in reference to Gentiles.

Also we need to distinguish between Mark Peter's son and John whose surname is Mark, whose mother is called Mary and is the cousin of Barnabas. [Acts 12:12, Colossians 4:10] John-Mark is the assistant of Paul, whom Paul instructed Timothy to bring to Rome. [2 Timothy 4:11] Now, family relations are clearly stated throughout the bible, James was known to be the brother of the Lord, Jude called himself the brother of James, John and James as the sons of Zebedee, and Andrew the brother of Peter. Then if John-Mark was indeed Peter's son, then the Holy Spirit would have certainly made it known. Even so, why would John-Mark go to assist another apostle in ministry rather than his own father. Last of all John-Mark was the cousin of Barnabas yet Barnabas was never introduced as the brother of Peter, nor the brother-in-law of Peter. Therefore if Barnabas had no link with Peter then neither did John-Mark. The point is to clearly distinguish Peter's travel to Babylon of Mesopotamia rather than to Rome therefore Peter's reference to Babylon has got NOTHING to do with Rome.

Now this brings us to the main point of our discussion, the phrase "**what things it behoves to take place in quickness.**" The point is what we understand this term to mean determines what we believe about when the book of Revelation was written. Now if John simply meant things which are shortly to take place, then he must be referring to the Great tribulation of AD70 followed by the Roman persecution of the church, which Revelation 12 describes therefore the Book of Revelation MUST have been written prior to those events. The point is this statement MUST be read in relation to, "Therefore write the things that YOU HAVE SEEN, and THE THINGS THAT ARE, and **THE THINGS** that are **ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE after these.**" [vs. 19] This statement gives us the context in which we are to understand what He meant, He did NOT mean a compacted set of events but a clearly demonstrated chronological events to take place in a short while. **This is the starting point, if we get this wrong we won't understand the rest of the book.**

The point is when John wrote this book, Jerusalem was NOT yet destroyed. Revelation 12 clearly shows Jerusalem must fall first before the devil turns his attention to the church. For as late as Paul's and Peter's life there WAS NO systemic CHRISTIAN persecution by the ROMANS. Now if there was such an outcry against Christians in Rome, why would Paul ask Timothy to come and also bring John-Mark to the mouth of the lion in which he was held as a prisoner without a word of warning, and why would he even begrudge those who left him? [2 Timothy 4:9,11] And it is commonly accepted that Emperor Nero blamed the Christians for the great fire of Rome that destroyed two-third of the city, yet Paul makes no mention of it, in any of his letters written from Rome. The point is John was exiled long before the might of the Roman empire turned its hands against the Christians.

"Blessed is the one READING, and those HEARING the WORDS of the PROPHECY:" The first point is that prophecies must be spoken out loud, it must be declared. From the days the Law was given to Israel, they were instructed to read out loud the words of the Law to the people in regular intervals of seven years. [Deuteronomy 31:10-11] Jeremiah also after he wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, he said to Seraiah, "**When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words.**" Jeremiah 51:61 Paul also exhorted Timothy saying, "Until I come, **give heed to the public reading of Scripture,** to exhortation, to teaching." 1 Timothy 4:13 That is the written word becomes Rhema as it is spoken out loud in order for it to effectively work in those who hear. [Romans 10:17] So John makes a point that those who hear are blessed by the words written in this book of Revelation.

"KEEPING the things written in it:" To Keep means to give heed, the Lord taught on the parable of the soil saying, "And that in the good soil, **these are those who, having heard the word, KEEP it in a worthy and good heart** and bring forth fruit by perseverance." Luke 8:15 Paul also exhorted Timothy saying, "**Retain the pattern of sound words, which you have heard from me,** in the faith and love that

are in Christ Jesus. **Keep the good deposit entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit**, the One dwelling in us.” 2 Timothy 1:13-14 James also makes a point saying, “**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only**, deceiving yourselves.” James 1:22 That is to keep what we have heard that we may bear fruit by it.

John, **To the seven churches in Asia**: Grace to you and peace from **Him BEING and who WAS and who IS COMING, and from the SEVEN SPIRITS before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the FIRSTBORN of the DEAD**, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. **To the One loving us and releasing us from our SINS through His BLOOD, and He has made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion to the ages of the ages. Amen.** [vs. 4-6]

In the greeting John is expressing the Triune God. The first expression represents God the Father by relaying His eternal nature. “Him being and who was and who is coming.” which Isaiah also uses similar terms to describe God, “I, the Lord, am the first; And with the last I am He.” Isaiah 41:4 which the Lord also used to describe Himself as the “Almighty” in [vs. 8] The “**Seven Spirits before His throne**” is an expression for the Holy Spirit. Isaiah describes the Spirit of God in seven expressions: The **Spirit of the Lord**, the Spirit of **Wisdom & Understanding**, the Spirit of **Counsel & Might**, the Spirit of **Knowledge & the Fear of the Lord**. [Isaiah 11:1-2] Finally He is also expressed as a Man as it relates to the Lord Jesus Christ, in His relation to us and for us. [Hebrews 2:9,14] So with ALL CLARITY John is portraying the Lord both in the essences as God as well as Man and a member of the Godhead. [2 Corinthians 13:14, Colossians 2:9]

Next point we want to highlight from this greeting is, what it truly means to be born again. Here John describes the Lord Jesus Christ as “**the firstborn of [from] the dead.**” This expression relates to us a transfer of existence, from being flesh/natural which is subject to sin & death to being made alive in the Spirit through Him. [Romans 8:9, 1 Peter 3:18] This is the reason baptism holds such significance in the Christian faith because it expresses death to one state of being to be alive in another, we are born again, we are born from the dead. The last point being to express how this was achieved, that it is through the sacrificial blood of the Lord Jesus Christ we are set free from our sins and the flesh. [Colossians 1:13-14, Hebrews 9:14,26] In short, through his greeting John proclaimed the essence of the gospel to the seven churches.

Behold, **He is Coming with the CLOUDS**, and **EVERY EYE will see Him**, and **THOSE who PIERCED Him, and ALL the TRIBES of the earth will WAIL because of Him**. Yes! Amen! “**I am the Alpha and the Omega,**” says Lord God, **the One being, and who was, and who is coming, the Almighty.** [vs. 7-8]

Here John is describing for us the “first return” of the Lord, this is NOT to be confused with the Second Coming of the Lord. Now there is a simple rule of thumb we can apply, if the Lord’s return is described on “clouds of heaven” then it is speaking of Him gathering His bride to Himself. However if it is speaking of Him on horse or engaged in a battle it is speaking of His Second coming.

So we see Him here described as coming in with “Clouds.” as He told His disciples saying, “And then **the sign of the Son of Man will appear** in heaven, and **then all the tribes of the earth will mourn**. And **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven**, with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:30 at which point His elect will be gathered to Him from the four corners of heaven. “And **He will send His angels** with a great trumpet call, and **they will gather together His elect from the four winds**, from the **ends of the heavens to the ends thereof.**” [vs. 31] That is both those who fell asleep in the Lord, “heaven” and those who are alive and remain “earth.” As did also the angels told His disciples, “They beholding, **He was lifted up, and a cloud hid Him from their eyes**. And as they were looking intently into heaven as He was going, then behold, **two men in white apparel stood by them, who also said,** “Men, Galileans, why

do you stand looking into heaven? **This Jesus, having been taken up from you into heaven, will thus come in that manner you beheld Him going into heaven.**” Acts 1:9-11

There is a point we want to highlight here, John describes this event from Jewish and Gentile perspectives. Now the term “those who pierced Him,” is used to describe the Jews in Zechariah, “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; **then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.**” Zechariah 12:10 which John also cited when the Lord was crucified, John 19:37. The rest of the EYES are to describe all the other tribes of the earth. At which point John describes ALL the tribes of the earth will mourn, “wail.”

However the church is not mentioned among these groups because the church is gathered to Him. Paul describes this event as, “**The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we, the living remaining, will be CAUGHT AWAY together WITH THEM in the CLOUDS for the MEETING of the Lord in the AIR ; and so we will be always with the Lord.**” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 Which he affirms again in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. We are His body, so when the world sees the Lord they will see His entire body with Him, therefore Paul says, “we will always be with the Lord.”

Now there is a question worth asking, Zechariah 12 in part seems to describe the second coming of the Lord, however John cited this very page when the Lord was crucified. Why did he not distinguish the mourning at His death, which Luke describes [Luke 23:27-31] from the mourning at His return? It seems as though John simply applied the verse because it was true, they did look at Him on the cross pierced therefore **the verse has every right to be applied at His crucifixion as well as at His return, it is the same Lord.** The only difference is at His return they will realise that the Messiah they were expecting all this time was the very same One who was pierced at Calvary. While He was on the cross they did not recognise Him, with all the markings written above His head, as John writes, “**He came to [his] own, and the own did not receive Him.**” John 1:11 As Paul also says, “**Christ having been crucified, a stumbling block indeed to the Jewish and foolishness to Gentiles.**” 1 Corinthians 1:23

So on His second Coming, He is not INTRODUCED to them as the King they are expecting but in the revelation of, who He was, the crucified One. As Joseph said to his brothers, “**I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.**” Genesis 45:4 And Zechariah follows that revelation by the mourning of the WHOLE nation according to the time of the reign of king David, from the kingship [the house of David], the priesthood [the house of Levi], the prophetic [the house of Nathan], even the opposition, the discontented, those who reject Him, [the house of Shimei] every tribe of Israel is recorded in mourning. [Zechariah 12:12-14] So John in essence applied the identifying mark described at His return to the very moment He received that mark. A circular perspective, a prophetic declaration that the same ONE pierced on the cross will return.

I John, your brother and **FELLOW-PARTAKER in the TRIBULATION and KINGDOM and PERSEVERANCE in Jesus**, was in the island called **PATMOS on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus**. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, like that of a trumpet, saying, “**What you SEE, write in a book and send to the seven churches: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamum, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.**”
[vs. 9-11]

The first point we want to address is the use of the term “tribulation” which might give the impression that John is making reference to the Great Tribulation. Which the Lord described as, “For then **there will be GREAT TRIBULATION, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, and NEVER shall be.** And unless those days had been shortened, **no flesh would have been saved;** but

because of the elect, those days will be shortened.” Matthew 24:21-22 However, the simplicity of John’s expression does not quite signify the magnitude of the event they have gone through or were going to go through.

The point is John uses the term tribulation in respect of a persecution every Christian ought to expect in their sphere of influence, as Paul gave an example of saying, “For **you became imitators, brothers, of the churches of God in Judea** being in Christ Jesus. For **THE SAME AS THEM, you also suffered from [your] own countrymen as they also did from the Jews.**” 1 Thessalonians 2:14 Likewise John affirms the tribulation each is enduring for the sake of their faith in Jesus. As Paul also says, “**Through many tribulations it behoves us to enter into the kingdom of God.**” Acts 14:22 And John ties it all together in one expression **fellow-partaker, in tribulation**, kingdom and perseverance in Jesus. That is fellow partaker with the Gentiles, in respect to Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and Not the Great Tribulation of the NATION of Israel by the hands of the Romans, which was political.

Now we come to the main point of our discussion. In the earlier discourse we have shown that tradition that claims that John was exiled from Ephesus in AD96 to be flawed and does not hold true to the reasoning provided. Now the question is from where was John exiled? The 2nd and third 3rd epistles of John had him planted as an ELDER of a church, and we have asserted that John was an elder of the church of Judea along with James and Peter. John tells us he was in PATMOS on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. So the biblical reasoning would be John was exiled from the ministry the Lord has given him, that is toward his Jewish brethren to whom he was ministering in Jerusalem.

The firmness of this point is related in the epistles of Peter and James. Though their letters are helpful to ALL members of the body of Christ however in the strictest sense, they were written to minister to the Jews. “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, **to the elect sojourners of the DISPERSION** of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” 1 Peter 1:1 As well as James, “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, **to the TWELVE TRIBES in the Dispersion.**” James 1:1 The point we are making is how faithfully they adhered to the field of their ministry, as John would have done also. John’s first epistle is centred on assuring the fact Jesus Christ is Son of God and refuting the opposition that went out. The main audience for such a teaching is Jewish believers as he wrote to assure his sister-in-law in his second epistle. None of the letters to the Gentiles strove to affirm the reality of this truth, it was simply accepted.

Now it is on this grounds we present the [subjective] reasoning as to when and why John was on Patmos. This is based on John’s relationship with the family of the high priest in Jerusalem. This point was made clear the night the Lord was taken prisoner. John writes, “And Simon Peter and the other disciple were following Jesus. **Now since that disciple was KNOWN to the HIGH PRIEST, he also entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest.** But Peter stood at the door outside. Therefore **the other disciple, who was known to the high priest**, went out and **SPOKE to the DOORKEEPER** and brought in Peter.” John 18:15-16 We would like to emphasise how well John was known to the high priest that the servant girl of the high priest knew him well enough to obey him.

Now our inference is, John being the disciple of the Lord, his faith has brought him increasingly in stern opposition to the families of the priesthood. Acts 4 records their first encounter, “And it came to pass on the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem, and **Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of high-priestly descent.**” Acts 4:5-6 where Peter along with John gave his bold witness to the Lord. Followed by Acts 5, where the apostles were flogged for their persistent preaching in the name of Jesus. The conflict further increased when Stephen was stoned and killed under false accusation and [persecution from Saul] resulted in many of the believers being dispersed. During Herod Agrippa I, under Claudius Caesar in the time of the great famine, **Heord killed** James the brother of John [not the family of the high priest] and Peter was also arrested by Herod for a time after which he went into hiding. The next major event we see them all

together is during the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 after Paul finished his first mission trip approx. 18 years after his conversion. Which ignited a deeper division in the church of Judea on the account of the Law being put aside.

Now the next turmoil we see is when Paul was arrested, and in the church of Judea at that time there was only James and the elders and NONE of the apostles were mentioned. [Acts 21:17-18] During the time of the governorship of Felix under Emperor Nero, Ananias was the high priest in Jerusalem. [Acts 23:2] Compared to those gathered at the first council of the church of Judea in Acts 15:6. The point is the Roman empire evident by Paul's trial was unaware of what was going on, in regards to the perceived conflict of the sects. So if John was exiled it was not on the initiative of the Roman empire but at the request of the rulers of Jerusalem and if so, it goes to show the Jews were on good terms with the Romans for them to accommodate such a request. So the **subjective point of view is**, John was exiled by the order of a Roman emperor **from Jerusalem** on the request of the family of the high priest's, "on **account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.**" on lenient grounds because of his relationship.

Now Gaius to whom John addressed his third epistle, was Paul's travel companion, then it would mean John's letter to him by fair expectation must have been written after Paul was arrested. Paul's comment in regards to those who turned against him fits with the comments John makes in regards to Diotrephes, whom Gaius would know therefore John must have been exiled after. "You know this, **that all those in Asia turned away from me**, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes." 2 Timothy 1:15

Now after the destruction of Jerusalem, persecution against Christians and Jews would have been at an all time high, so it seems inconceivable that John [a Christian Jew, a perceived enemy of the state] would simply be exiled for criticising the emperor, such assertion contradicts John's own admission of the charges against him. Therefore John was exiled prior to the start of the Great tribulation, when relationship between Rome and the Jewish rulers was amicable and it was on the account they wanted him to be put out of the way **for his preaching of the word and of his testimony of the Lord.** And also before the great fire of Rome AD64, when sentiments against Christians would have been most violent.

And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. **And having turned, I saw SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS, and in the MIDST of the lampstands, One like the Son of Man**, having been clothed to the feet, and having been girded about at the breasts with a golden sash. **Now His head and His hairs are WHITE like wool, white as snow; and His EYES are like a flame of FIRE; and His FEET are like fine BRONZE, as having been REFINED in a FURNACE; and His VOICE is like the voice of MANY WATERS; and He is holding in His RIGHT hand SEVEN STARS, and a sharp TWO-EDGED SWORD is going forth out of His MOUTH; and His FACE is like the SUN shining in its full strength.**
[vs. 12-16]

The Seven GOLDEN Lampstand(s) are [Seven] Seven branched Menorah each representing a church and the Lord walking in the midst of them. In the opening verses John writes, "from **the seven Spirits before His throne**, and from **Jesus Christ, the faithful witness.**" [vs. 4-5] A Lampstand, [Menorah] in the old testament is the representation for the Holy Spirit, and is made entirely of Gold representing Divinity [J.p]. The representation here being the Lord governing over His church through the Holy Spirit. "For where **two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in their midst.**" Matthew 18:20 That is One Lord being present in all His churches in the same manner through the fullness of His Spirit. "**For also in one Spirit we all were baptised into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:13 The head of that body is the Lord Himself and His one Spirit in all His churches binds all into one body. "And He put all things under His feet and **gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body**, the fullness of the One filling all in all." Ephesians 1:22-23

Now the description John gives us here is from the perspective of a person who does not recognise what he is seeing. He describes the Lord as, “one like the Son of Man.” resembling the vision Daniel saw, “I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, **a certain Man clothed in linen**, whose waist was girded with **gold of Uphaz!** His body was like beryl, **His face like the appearance of lightning**, **His eyes like torches of fire**, **His arms and feet like burnished bronze** in colour, and **the sound of His words like the voice of a multitude.**” Daniel 10:5-6 We need to take into consideration there are so many things that link these two prophets that were separated by hundreds of years, each prophesying the end of their respective Covenants. John describes himself as “the disciple whom the Lord loved” and Daniel is called, “man who is greatly beloved.” Daniel and John are closely linked in their visions and it is in respect to this fact we are able to fully understand Revelation.

There is significance to the manner the Lord is described here: “**The eyes like a flaming fire,**” to mean there is nothing that is hidden from His sight, He searches the mind and hearts of all. [Revelation 2:23]

“**His feet are like fine bronze refined in a furnace,**” bronze is metal that represents judgement. That Jesus was tested in His obedience to bear the judgments of many. Isaiah writes, “**All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**” Isaiah 53:6 Paul writing of the perfecting of the Lord, that is the refining through suffering says, “He in the days of His flesh, having offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears **to the One being able to save Him from death**, and having been heard because of reverent submission, **though being a Son, He learned obedience from the things He suffered, and having been perfected**, He became **the author of eternal salvation to all those obeying Him.**” Hebrews 5:7-9 Also in Philippians he writes, “**And having been found in appearance as a man He humbled Himself**, having become **obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**” Philippians 2:8 So the bronze represents the judgement He bore on our behalf.

“**His voice is like the voice of many waters,**” waters to mean many nations and tongues. The angel speaking to John in Revelation 17 described the waters to mean, “**The waters that you saw where the prostitute sits are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.**” Revelation 17:15 So John is describing the Lord as One speaking to the nations, to every tribe and tongue. Daniel also describes His voice as the voice of a “multitude,” meaning many people.

“**A sharp two-edged sword is going forth out of His mouth,**” [D.s] teaches saying “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” Proverb 18:21 The point he makes is, out of His mouth comes the power of life or death and he gave the example of the church of Pergamos where the Lord said, “**Therefore repent! But if not**, I am coming to you quickly, and **I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.**” Revelation 2:16 The word of the Lord that comes out of His mouth is life to those who receive it but it is also death to those who reject it. The Lord said, “**And if anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I do not judge him;** for I did not come that I might judge the world, but that I might save the world. The one rejecting Me and not receiving My words has one judging him: **The word which I spoke, that will judge him in the last day.**” John 12:47-48 Hearing the word of the Lord is not an easy matter, it either bears fruit or brings a consequence. The Lord will not hold us accountable for that we do not know, but of what we know He expects us to walk accordingly. “**And everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required;** and from him to whom much has been committed, more will they ask of him.” [Luke 12:45-48]

“And when I saw Him, **I fell at His feet as though dead.** And He placed His right hand upon me, saying, “**Fear not. I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. And I was dead, and behold I am living to the ages of the ages, and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.** Therefore write the things that **YOU HAVE SEEN**, and **THE THINGS THAT ARE**, and **THE THINGS that are ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE after these**, the **MYSTERY** of the seven stars, which you saw on My right hand, and the seven

golden lampstands: **The SEVEN STARS are the ANGELS of the seven churches, and the SEVEN LAMPSTANDS are the seven CHURCHES.**" [vs. 17-20]

The first point here is, even though John has known the Lord according to the flesh, and he has seen the Lord transfigured on the holy mountain where he saw Him in relation to the glory of the Son of Man with Moses and Elijah standing besides Him, however here he is seeing the Lord for the first time according to the magnificence of His glory according to the Spirit. So the Lord reveals Himself to John saying, "I am the First and the Last, and the Living One," describing His divinity, "**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.**" Colossians 1:15 Followed by "I was dead, and behold I am living to the ages of the ages," describing His humanity, "**We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, because of the suffering of death.**" Hebrews 2:9 Finally, "I have the keys of Death and of Hades," according to His all encompassing authority, "**And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace by the blood of His cross through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens.**" Colossians 1:20 The final point is the depiction of His victory over the devil, that is, it was through Sin and Death the devil ruled over the world. "**Through His death He might destroy the one holding the POWER of DEATH, that is, the devil.**" Hebrews 2:14

Sin and Death are the bases of the devil's kingdom, that was the ROOT of ALL his authority over all the earth. The command God gave to Adam was, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**" Genesis 2:17 And when Adam acted in disobedience he surrendered **his body unto death through Sin**, and the devil gained power over mankind. The law of Sin and Death was established, and he ruled unchallenged because all were under Sin. "**Those who all their time to live were subject to slavery through fear of death.**" Hebrews 2:15 However, when Jesus Christ put away Sin by the sacrifice of Himself He rendered the devil without ANY authority. [Hebrews 9:26] It is IMPORTANT for us to note that the Lord having been given ALL authority in heaven and on the earth [Matthew 28:18] describes Himself, rather encompasses His authority over the earth under the term, "the keys of death and hades." The point is we need to have a CLEAR revelation of how SIN is TOTALLY and UTTERLY put away through Jesus Christ in order for us to truly realise our victory over the devil, that he has NO RIGHT, NO POWER because Sin has been put away from us once and for all. We now have EVERY Authority over this Earth in Christ.

The next point for us to see is the time frame that is expressed in this book of prophecy. The Lord tells John, "write the things **that YOU HAVE SEEN**, and **THE THINGS THAT ARE**, and **THE THINGS** that are **ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE** after these." Now the things he has seen are described to us in the opening verse where John writes of himself saying, "**who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, AS MUCH AS he SAW.**" [vs. 2] The things that are, are in regard to the seven churches he is instructed to write to. The things that are to take place "after these," is to tell us the beginning point from where this book of prophecy is to go forth. In order for us to grasp what is written in the book of Revelation, we have to have a grounding, a marker of sorts for us to gain a point of reference. So as much as the above statement is a description of a time frame it is also relating to us a compass by which we may gain our bearings.

Now the seven churches can double as depictions of types of churches, condition of churches and can be held up as an example for us to learn from. However, **it is an UTTER MISTAKE** to classify the seven churches as a depiction of the church ages and to put every subsequent event described "after these" to the period of the seven years of tribulation. By such an approach we render the point of reference, the Lord Himself gave us to be useless. The key is from what John has seen, to what things are according to his time, to things to come, starting from John's own time period.

The angel told John in the final chapter, "**DO NOT SEAL the WORDS of the prophecy of this book; for the time is near.**" Revelation 22:10 Now if we put every subsequent event from the description of the

seven churches into the period of the seven year tribulations then that statement does not make sense. Especially when we consider the prophecies of Daniel, when he wrote of the day when the Messiah was to come, and described the end of the Law, the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem which were a mere 500 years away from his time period but was told by the angel, "Go your way, Daniel, **for the WORDS are closed up and SEALED till the time of the end.**" Daniel 12:9 Yet John, writing of events far beyond 2000 years and still counting to this day is told not to seal the book.

Therefore the events that are to take place in "quickness," or "are shortly to take place," are in simplicity in regards to the Great tribulation Jerusalem was on the brink of going through, the wars that are about to rage in the world and the persecutions of Christians that was to shortly follow. And from this point forward the age of the Grace of God is unveiled with all the oppositions even to the final days when Christ reigns on the earth for a 1000 years, a GREAT VAST TIME spanning nearly 3000 years is described to us. Even the seals of chapter 6 contain within themselves these very 3000 years period, from the first opening of the first seal to the last when final judgement is rendered, when heaven and earth pass away. The point is it is NOT describing the 7 year wrath of God, the very grounds of such assumptions are shattered by what is contained within the seals.

The final point is in regards to the Mystery of the seven stars and seven golden lampstands. "The SEVEN STARS are the ANGELS of the seven churches." [J.p] teaches that the seven stars are not literal angels, that the word for angels can also be translated to mean messengers. "Ἄγγελος" Anglos in Greek is both Messenger and Angel. So when the Lord makes references to the stars in His hand, He is speaking of the messengers of the churches to mean His pastors. These are the ones the Lord equipped to shepherd His people, to instruct them in the ways of righteousness. "Take heed to yourselves and **to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has set you overseers, to shepherd the church of God,** which He purchased with [his] own blood." Acts 20:28 Now this method of describing the servants of the Lord as messengers has precedence in the book of Malachi, "**For the lips of a PRIEST should keep knowledge,** and people should seek the law from his mouth; **For he is the MESSENGER of the Lord of hosts.**" Malachi 2:7 The word used for messenger here, "Mal-ak" and in Hebrew it also means both Angel and Messenger. And the Levites, the priests in the old covenant were the shepherds, who were tasked to look after the flock of Israel. [Ezekiel 34:7]

So a messenger by definition is a sent one. The Lord Himself is described as the Messenger of the Covenant, "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. **And the Lord, whom you seek,** will suddenly come **to His temple, even the MESSENGER of the COVENANT,** in whom you delight. Behold, **He is coming.**" Malachi 3:1 And the Lord said to His disciples, "**As the Father has sent Me I also send you.**" John 20:21 Finally Daniel describes those who instruct others in the way of righteousness as stars, saying, "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and **those who turn many to righteousness like the stars** forever and ever." Daniel 12:3

"The SEVEN LAMPSTANDS are the seven CHURCHES," As we have said above the Lampstand is the representation of the Holy Spirit, so the point is the churches are depicted as one body unit through the one Holy Spirit. What Jesus Christ was to Israel, "I was sent only to those being lost sheep of the house of Israel." Mathew 15:24 the churches were to be in their given spheres. They as one body of Christ were to represent the Lord in all the fullness of His Spirit, that is each church is depicted as a complete body of Christ. "Now **you are the body of Christ, and members in particular.** And some indeed God has appointed in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, various kinds of tongues." 1 Corinthians 12:27-28 Paul calls the church in Corinth as the body of Christ and the members, as parts of the body each equipped with a particular gift of the Spirit to meet the need of the body and to be effective in the sphere God has given them.

It is on the account of this Paul emphasise the unity of the Spirit, **“To walk worthily of the calling to which you were called, with all humility and gentleness; with patience bearing with one another in love; being diligent to KEEP the UNITY of the Spirit in the bond of peace;”** Ephesians 4:2-3 He is NOT telling us to be united in one Spirit, since we all have the same Spirit of God, however he is telling us NOT to divide the Spirit. That is the gifts and the workings of the Spirit are manifested in different forms within the body forming us into one functioning whole body. And fractures within the church tears that unity of the WORKING of the Spirit, and the whole is made to lack because of such separation. [1 Corinthians 12:15-21] And also in Philippians, **“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affections and compassions, fulfil my joy so that you may be of the SAME MIND, having the SAME LOVE, united in soul, MINDING THE SAME THING.”** Philippians 2:1-2 Having the same understanding, joined in purpose and striving to keep the peace by putting aside selfish ambitions. As the Lord also taught, saying, **“And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.”** Mark 3:25

The point is we can attribute ALL the gifts of the Spirit within the seven branches of the Spirit of God. Many have taught that all the gifts of the Spirit were manifested in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, but this is expressed in Him as Seven eyes, which are the Seven Spirits of God. [Revelation 5:6]

“You are the light of the world. A city lying on a hill is unable to be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but upon the lampstand, and it gives light to all those in the house. Thus let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and they should glorify your Father in the heavens.” Matthew 5:14-16

The Holy Spirit does Not work by Himself. He is “the” very LIGHT but is represented as the Lampstand. We are made into light, the lamp when we are born of God and are upheld by the Holy Spirit to work His purpose. It is through us He accomplishes the purposes of God, it is through us He works His miracles, expresses the truth, preaches the Gospel, and raises up children for God. [Ephesians 4:11-13] And the working of God through the body of Christ is expressed in, **“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of workings, but the same God is working all things in everyone.”** 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

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Revelation 2: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira.

In this chapter John is writing of the Things that ARE. That is he is admonishing the seven churches of Asia according to their current state. Many have taken the representation of the seven churches to describe the seven ages of the churches. [Dr.M.b] objects to such an approach making a point that in one time period there can be many churches that fall into a variety of these categories. Take for instance the time when the letters were written to the churches in Asia, in that one time period there were seven different manifestations of churches. Therefore concludes it is virtually impossible to categorise the ages under such divisions. And if indeed the seven churches are seven ages then when the Lord comes back at the end of the ages there would be no one to rapture, since in the strictest sense it would be the church age of Laodiceans.

This being said, as Paul wrote saying, **“Now these things happened to them as types and were written for our admonition, to whom the ends of the ages are arrived.”** 1 Corinthians 10:11 We can make the same application here. That the records of the faults of the early church can also serve as an admonishment for us. Teaching us the dangers of false doctrine we tolerate, how forgetting the foundations of our faith can be a cause of our death and many more valuable lessons for us to learn from. So rather than an age, these seven churches are a representation of TYPES of churches that can coexist in a moment in time, and if we

truthfully judged ourselves we can identify ourselves under one of those categories. So the Lord repeatedly says, “The one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” The Book of Revelation is a remedy to ALL our doctrinal issues, giving us insight to the Lord’s own perception of His church.

Now the manner the Lord reveals Himself to these churches, and also the reward He bestows seems to have significance in regards to the exhortation given to them. It is also **important to note the message was to the Pastor of that particular body** of Christ, “the Messenger of the church,” and their faithfulness in their duties translated into the effectiveness of the congregation. “**Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but willingly according to God; and not for base gain but eagerly, not as exercising lordship over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.**” 1 Peter 5:2-3 And the Lord showed how He fed His flock through stewards He has put in charge of His house. [Matthew 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-48] So their obedience or disobedience affected the whole body.

Ephesus.

“To the **MESSENGER of the church in EPHESUS** write: These things says **the One holding the seven stars in His right hand, walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.**” [vs. 1]

The church of Ephesus is represented here as one who had to combat the barrage of false doctrines preached by false teachers and seem to have lost their enthusiasm. To them the Lord is revealed as the One who is upholding the churches by the strength of His might and as the Head of the body.

Right hand is a representation of power and authority. Isaiah writes, “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. **I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.**” Isaiah 41:11 And Paul expresses the strength of the Lord as, “And He said to me, “**My GRACE suffices you, for the power is perfected in weakness.**” Therefore will I boast rather most gladly in my weaknesses, **so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**” 2 Corinthians 12:9 also [Philippians 4:13] The point the Lord seems to emphasise to this church is the strength of Christ is manifested through Grace.

“**Walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:**” represents the Headship of the Lord. The illustration is One Lord walking among the churches having the same Spirit, that is Christ the head and His body in whom is His Spirit. “**For just as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body being many are one body, so also is Christ. For also in one Spirit we all were baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink one Spirit.**” 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 The significance of our relationship with the Lord is expressed as between a husband and wife. “The husband is head of the wife **as also Christ is the head of the church, He Himself Saviour of the body. But even as the church is subjected to Christ, so also wives to [their] own husbands in everything.**” Ephesians 5:23-24 So the point is we can at times lose sight of that in the service we render to Him, when we take up tasks He has not equipped us for or venture into areas He has not called us.

“I know **your works and your LABOUR and ENDURANCE, and that you are NOT ABLE to TOLERATE evil ones.** And you have **TESTED those CLAIMING to be APOSTLES and are NOT, and you have FOUND them FALSE.** And you **have perseverance, and have endured** for the sake of My name, and **have not grown WEARY.**” [vs. 2-3]

[J.p] points out that from the works the Ephesians produced, LOVE and HOPE were markedly missing when contrasted against the statement Paul made towards the Thessalonians. “Remembering before our God and Father your **work of faith and unceasing LABOUR of LOVE, and the ENDURANCE of the HOPE** of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 1:3

The first thing the Lord commends the Messenger of Ephesus is for, **“Not able to tolerate Evil ones.”** That is in regard to those who persist in sin, from among the congregation. Paul said we should not judge those in the world but ourselves. **“For what is it to me to judge those outside? Do you not judge those within? But God will judge those outside. “Expel the evil out from among yourselves.”** 1 Corinthians 5:12-13] And he also exhorted Timothy saying, **“But those sinning, rebuke before all,** so that the rest might have fear as well.” 1 Timothy 5:20 The point is the Lord is commending them for not allowing evil to fester among them.

The next point the Lord commends them for is in regards to the doctrine and teachers they give heed to. Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying, **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.** And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.” 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 And the reason he says such things is in regards to those who went out to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. **“But I am afraid, lest by any means, as the serpent in his craftiness deceived Eve, your minds might be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity in Christ.”** 2 Corinthians 11:3 This accusation seems to be mainly centred on those who seek to mix Law and Grace, in the same way he admonished the Galatians. [Galatians 1:7, 2:4]

And the Elders of the churches in Ephesus were recorded in Acts 20 as receiving clear warning from Paul of the danger that was to come. **“I know that after my departure, grievous wolves will come in among you,** not sparing the flock, and out from your own selves, **men will rise up, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.** Therefore stay awake, remembering **that three years night and day I never ceased admonishing each one with tears.”** Acts 20:29-31 And the commendation the Lord gives them here seems to be proof that they have taken Paul’s warning to heart and have been diligent to vigorously test those who claim to be apostles according to the doctrine they teach. So in all honest assessment **“the Messenger of the church of Ephesus,”** seems to be an ideal devoted leader, he was commended for his diligence, faithfulness, effort and perseverance.

“But I have against you that you have ABANDONED your FIRST LOVE. Remember therefore from WHERE you have FALLEN, and REPENT, and do the first works. But if not, I am coming to you, and I will REMOVE your LAMPSTAND out of its PLACE, unless you should repent.” [vs. 4-5]

[J.p] teaches that they have fallen from the restful position they were in His right hand. That is in the dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, when we fall, we fall back down to rules and regulations and self effort. It is NOT to say they went back to the Law since it is evident they have been diligent to root out false apostles and false doctrines. This being said, we can fall from Grace in the works we do for the Lord. Paul in Ephesians writes, **“Now to each one of us grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”** Ephesians 4:7 The point is when we labour outside of the grace and gift of the Lord, we essentially are labouring under our own might therefore have fallen from grace. And falling from the elevated position of Grace renders our labour to be without love, our endurance to be without joy because we rely on our own strength.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians **“Henceforth be empowered in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”** Ephesians 6:10 To the Colossians he wrote, **“Being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might, unto all endurance and patience with joy.”** Colossians 1:11 To the Philippians he wrote, **“For God is the One working in you both to will and to work according to His good pleasure.”** Philippians 2:13 The point is when we are moving and working according to His gift and Grace our labour is of love, our endurance is in hope with joy and we are strengthened by His might, and we are at rest. Therefore the Lord is not admonishing them for their lack of labour or perseverance nor of their diligence which they have all performed very well, but because they have done it on the strength of their own might.

That is when we operate outside of His grace and gift we have lost sight of our calling in the Lord. “there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;” [1 Corinthians 12:4-6]

“And He was saying to them, “**The LAMP is not brought in so that it might be put under the basket, or under the bed. Is it not that it might be put upon the LAMPSTAND?** For there is nothing which is hidden except that it should be made manifest; nor has taken place a secret thing, but **that it should come to light.**” Mark 4:21-22

So when the Lord says here, “**I will remove the lampstand out of its PLACE,**” He is not saying “I will cast you away,” nor “I will remove the lampstand from you,” but **He is referring to the lampstand’s place of influence.** A lamp when lit is put on a lampstand so all those in the room may see. Therefore when we operate outside of the gift and calling of the Lord, the Lord will not continue to uphold us in a place where He has not equipped us to perform. God sees a body, a unity of the Spirit equipped to a performance of a vision instilled in the Messenger of that particular church. So the Messenger’s departure from that vision is translated to mean failure of that congregation.

Paul exhorted Timothy saying, “**Do not be negligent of the gift in you,** which was given to you through prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the elderhood. **Ponder these things; be ABSORBED in them, so that your progress may be evident to all.**” 1 Timothy 4:14-15 [And] “But you, be sober in all things, endure afflictions, **do the work of an evangelist, FULLY CARRY out your MINISTRY.**” 2 Timothy 4:5 So the Lord is not saying you are not working with the same level of love as in the beginning, but you have left the first love, that is from the desire that was at work in you. There first must be a desire of in order for there to be a fulfilment of. [2 Corinthians 8:11] So the admonishment is for departing from what the Lord has gifted and equipped them for, so the Lord asks them to come back to their first calling.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “**For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and in Achaia, but in every place your faith toward God has gone abroad,** so as for us to have no need to say anything.” 1 Thessalonians 1:8 In contrast we would expect the Galatians church to be hidden.

“But you have **THIS, that you HATE the works of the Nicolaitans, which I ALSO HATE.** The one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one overcoming, **I will give to him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.**” [vs. 6-7]

The Lord also commended them for their opposition to the workings of the Nicolaitans. Now to what the practice of the Nicolaitans was is not directly stated anywhere in the bible and seems to be debated among many believers. The website [GotQuestions.org], associated the word Nicolaitans to the Greek word, “Nicolah,” meaning “let us eat.” We also have taken this approach, since wherever the name “Nicolaitans” is mentioned the corresponding reward associated with those who overcome the practice has something to do with eating, “**to eat of the tree of life,**” and also “**to eat of hidden manna.**” [vs. 17]

Furthermore, the term the Lord used to describe their deeds as “Hate,” is significant. The other place where the Lord used such a term is in regard to Esau, “**Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.**” Malachi 1:2-3 And Paul teaching on the deeds of Esau says, “**Lest there be any FORNICATOR profane person, as Esau, who for ONE MEAL sold his birthright.**” Hebrews 12:16 What provoked God to such a response of ‘hate’ in regards to Esau is the fact he despised his inheritance. The bible records, “And Esau said, “Look, **I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?**” Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And **Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ATE and DRANK,** arose, and went his way. **Thus Esau DESPISED his BIRTHRIGHT.**” Genesis 25:32-34 The Point is like Esau the Nicolaitans are also driven by the desires of their flesh, they also live for the pursuit of eating and drinking and satisfaction in fornication. They cannot look beyond their present

fleshly desires as to value the eternal riches of the kingdom, and this God hates, because it despises His kingdom.

The reward: **“I will give to him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”** Jesus is the Bread of Life, He is the Tree we are grafted to, He is the life but we partake of Him here on earth through His word and Spirit. The reward here is, **“the tree of life which is in the paradise of God,”** therefore in respect to not live in pursuit of earthly gratifications, but to set our minds on things above. [Colossians 3:1-3] However the Nicolaitans are living in pursuit of these earthly pleasures, which later we will discover to include sexual immorality. So they continue to eat and drink as they have always done in the past, being unwilling to give up their pleasure in partaking in those things. As Paul says, **“For many are walking—of whom I have told you often and now I say even weeping—as enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is the belly and glory is in their shame, those minding earthly things.”**
Philippians 3:18-19

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Smyrna.

“And to the **MESSENGER of the church in SMYRNA** write: These things says **the First and the Last, who became dead and came to life.**” [vs. 8]

The church of Smyrna is a church that seems to be going through great tribulation of persecutions. And His appearance to them seems to be in the manner to encourage them to be faithful even unto death, through showing Himself as God and in assurance of life after death. This is one of the churches where the Lord had nothing to correct them for.

“I know your tribulation and poverty—but you are rich—and the blasphemy of those claiming themselves to be Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.” [vs. 9]

The main concept the Lord addresses with the church of Smyrna is the tribulation which they are enduring specifically from those of the Jewish faith. Paul recalling what he endured when he came to minister in Asia says, **“You know from the first day on which I arrived in Asia,** how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and tears, **and trials having befallen me in the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink back from declaring to you anything being profitable.”** Acts 20:18-20 So here we see the Lord putting the persecuted and the persecutors side by side. [Even though that seems to be the case for them, the overall concept the Spirit of God is relaying to us is, the nature of religion of works.]

The Lord also contrasts their natural state which is in tribulation and poverty against the true riches that is of faith. As James says, **“Has not God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith** and heirs of the kingdom that He promised to those loving Him?” James 2:5 And that tribulation they are enduring is a means that proves their faith. Peter says, **“At present for a little while if it is being necessary, having been put to grief by various trials, so that the proven genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold, perishing though being refined by fire, may be discovered to result in praise and glory and honour in the revelation of Jesus Christ.”** 1 Peter 1:6-7 So the tribulation they suffered and endured faithfully, to the Lord this is true riches, it is a proven genuine faith.

Now the conflict the Lord is addressing here is defined on this terms, **“Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time the one having been born according to flesh was persecuting the one born according to Spirit, so also it is now.”** Galatians 4:28-29 This is the essential element that distinguishes the statement the Lord made against the persecutors.

[To be Jews and are Not]: The answer to this statement is in recognising the establishment of a new Covenant of God. [Jeremiah 31:31-34] That through Jesus Christ the Law was fulfilled and Sin and Flesh have been done away with. It is now the advent of the Spirit: the Promise of God, and every relationship with God from this point forward is recognised upon this truth. **“Now you are not in flesh but in Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you; but if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.”** Romans 8:9 So even though Israel is beloved for the sake of their fathers, that is according to the flesh, what truly makes one a child of God is having the Spirit of Christ.

That is, the merit of the flesh is no longer valid. Paul wrote saying, **“For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; instead, a NEW CREATION.”** Galatians 6:15 So when John says, “claiming to be Jews and are not” he is not speaking according to blood descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but as it relates to spiritual truths. That is the concept of Jew is according to the term of relationship with God. Paul writes, **“For the one on the outside a Jew is not, neither that on the outside in flesh is circumcision. But he who is a Jew is one on the inside; and circumcision is of heart, in spirit, not in letter, of whom the praise is not of men, but of God.”** Romans 2:28-29 And he later elaborates on this point saying, **“For not all who are of Israel, are these Israel. Nor because they are seed of Abraham are all children. Rather, “In Isaac your offspring will be named.” That is, the children of the flesh, these are not children of God; but the children of the promise are regarded as offspring.”** Romans 9:6-8

The point is in the Law according to the flesh, Israel was once betrothed to God and her children to be the children of God. But now the Spirit has come; and the children of God are those who are born of His Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ. So the Lord says, **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, if not by Me.”** John 14:6 That is Jesus Christ has become a stumbling block to a great portion of the children of Israel resulting in them being cut off which Hosea speaks of and Paul used to make his point saying, **“In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ there it shall be said to them, ‘You are sons of the living God.’”** Hosea 1:10 Speaking of those through unbelief have not obtained the Promise which Paul explains as a period of separation through the partial hardening of Israel. But Paul also makes a note of the day to come of the reestablishment of the promise, saying, **“For if their REJECTION is the reconciliation of the world, what will their ACCEPTANCE be if not life out from the dead?”** Romans 11:15

[A Synagogue of Satan]: is a difficult point to reconcile, but John is speaking from the fundamental point of a changed nature, according to the new creation. That is when the Law was given, Israel under covenant was in obedience to God, while the rest of the world was in disobedience. But now by the same measure those who are in the Grace of God through Jesus Christ are in obedience to God and anyone outside of the Covenant of Grace is in disobedience to Him. That righteousness is no longer from the Law but of faith through Jesus Christ. [Romans 10:3-4] So when John was writing this the ones who were opposing the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ were mostly from the Jewish faith. As Paul wrote saying, **“For as regards the gospel, they are enemies on account of you; but as regards election, beloved on account of the patriarchs.”** Romans 11:28

The Lord also makes this point clear in His discourse with the Jews, He first affirms that they are indeed the seed of Abraham saying, **“I know you are Abraham’s seed...”** John 8:37 but He later counters this point saying, **“If you were children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham. & “You are doing the works of your father.”** [vs. 39,41] To which they responded, **“we have one Father, God.”** [vs. 41] And the Lord directly addresses the essential issue saying, **“If God were your Father, you would have loved Me, for I came forth from God and am here; for not even have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you desire to do the desires of your father.”** John 8:42-44 So though they are the

blood descendants of Abraham they are in the same state as the rest of the world that is under Sin, which is the essential aspect for being the child of the devil. "For we have already charged **both Jews and Greeks all to be under SIN.**" Romans 3:9 Note: the work of Abraham is Faith not Law and to a sinner without faith the Law is a death sentence.

Now the above discourse is rooted in the point He made earlier saying, "Therefore **I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He,** you will die in your sins." [vs. 24] This is the essential point the Lord was making, NOT being of the seed of Abraham but to have the same nature as God having been set free from the bondage of Sin. Therefore any service to God, from this point forward that does NOT set people free from this condition of SIN through the recognition of the Son of God, is no longer in service of God. So when He says a synagogue of Satan, it is on this basis, people who are still in the flesh and not of the Spirit. MORE importantly it is in reference to the practice of religion. The point is even though the Law is good and holy, the practice of it in the flesh is to strengthen SIN. [1 Cor. 15:56] It is the devil who is empowered by it, by holding us in bondage, and bringing condemnation and guilt on those who practise it. Therefore the term Jew and are NOT is in reference to the nature of Sin, while synagogue of Satan is in reference to the practice of Law not Grace. It is IMPORTANT to note, it is NOT the Law that is the problem, our relationship to it is! So those who minister it are not ministering righteousness but condemnation. [2 Corinthians 3:7-8]

So since they have rejected the Lord, now they in essence stand in opposition to God. The Lord warned His disciples saying, "**They will put you out of the synagogues;** but an hour is coming that **everyone having killed you will think it is to OFFER a SERVICE to God.**" John 16:2 Religion of works is the major source of persecution, the first murder committed was in respect to religion, that is the one who laboured in his own effort "Cain" killed the one who was accepted by faith and grace "Abel." [Genesis 4]

[**The Blaspheme**]: This is an aspect to show how they rejected the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul encountered such opposition in various places he ministered. When he first preached, Antioch in Pisidia "But the Jews, having seen the crowds, were filled with jealousy, and **began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, blaspheming.**" Acts 13:45 And again when he preached in Corinth, "Paul was occupied with the word, earnestly **testifying to the Jews Jesus to be the Christ.** But of them **opposing** and reviling *him*, [**blasphemed**] having shaken out the garments, he said to them, "Your blood be upon your head; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." Acts 18:5-6 The point is there is ONLY one way to God that is through the Lord Jesus Christ and any opposition to this truth is not in service of God, which is the point this statement makes. As Moses warned saying, "**I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren,** and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that **whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I WILL REQUIRE it of him.**" Deuteronomy 18:18-19

"Do not fear what you are **ABOUT TO SUFFER.** Behold, the devil is about **to cast some of you into prison, so that you might be TESTED;** and you shall have tribulation **TEN DAYS.** **Be faithful unto death, and I will give to you the CROWN OF LIFE.**" [vs. 10]

So we see the Lord here encouraging them to standfast and not to fear, informing them of the trials of prison that awaits them. Now this is not in a manner of temptation which the Lord says we should always flee from and not endure. But a test of faith in the likeness of Job and Peter. The Lord said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, **Satan demanded to have all of you to sift like wheat. But I begged for you, that your faith may not fail.** And you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Luke 22:31-32 The point is the Lord does not allow us to go through anything without first equipping us with what we need to see us through.

So we also see here the devil being allowed to test them and God putting a specific condition as with Job in regards to the time period, “ten days” which perhaps can be translated according to a biblical time frame as ten years. And James writes, “Brothers **as an example of suffering evils and of patience**, take the prophets **who spoke in the name of the Lord**. Behold, **we count blessed those having persevered**. **You have heard of the perseverance of Job**, and you have seen **the outcome from the Lord, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful**.” James 5:10-11 As assured outcome of blessing for our endurance.

So the trial of suffering in faith is something to be rejoiced over, it is valuable to God, it is a means through which we are refined. Peter writes, “Beloved, **do not be surprised at the fire among you taking place for a trial to you**, as if a strange thing were happening to you. **But as you have shared in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice**, so that also **in the revelation of His glory you may rejoice, exulting**.” 1 Peter 4:12-13 More so it is presented as a right of passage, as Paul encouraged the churches sayings, through much tribulation it behoves us to enter the kingdom of God. [Acts 14:22] James also asserts the necessity of this process and says, “**Blessed is the man who endures trial**, because, **having been APPROVED**, he will receive **the CROWN of LIFE** that He has promised to those loving Him.” James 1:12 [1 Peter 1:6-7] This process of approval is given more depth when compared against the church of Laodiceans.

The Crown of Life: is the gift of eternal life which Paul used interchangeably with the Crown of Righteousness, “**I have fought the good fight**, I have finished the race, **I have kept the faith**. From now on **the CROWN of RIGHTEOUSNESS** is laid up for me, **which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me** in that day; but not only to me, but **also to all those loving His appearing**.” 2 Timothy 4:7-8 Paul extends the same reward to ALL, so it is not in respect to his impeccable service he attributes this reward but the endurance of faith to the end.

“The one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **The one overcoming shall not be injured by the second death.**” [vs. 11]

The Reward: “shall not be injured by the second death,” is a privilege of every child of God who remains in faith in Him, and it is NOT specific to the church of Smyrna. So the Lord in highlighting this aspect of the reward, is to build faith in His children. The three Hebrew children when faced with the fire of Nebuchadnezzar said, “If that is the case, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace**, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. **But IF NOT, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods**, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” Daniel 3:17-18 The point is the same, the Lord requires of us to be faithful unto the very last end so His reward to His children here is Not a promise of deliverance from the situations they are faced, but to strengthen them in the midst with the knowledge that death will not conquer them, eternal life is what awaits them. “Be faithful unto death.”

So to this church the Lord starts with giving praise to the faith that is in them, saying “you are rich.” It also bears testimony to the fact that it is on the account that they are rich in faith that He allowed them to face such trials. That is God will not allow His children to go through what will overcome them. The overall concept from this church is to be faithful to the very end.

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Pergamum.

“And to the messenger of **the church in PERGAMUM** write: These things says **the One having the sharp two-edged sword**.” [vs. 12]

The church in Pergamum seems to be in a palace where Satan is worshipped and where false doctrine seems to have taken hold. So to them the Lord is revealed as one having a “sharp two-edged sword.” As

mentioned above, in the teachings of [D.s] a two-edged sword is in respect to life and death. That is the word of the Lord that comes out of His mouth is life to those who receive it and death to those who reject. The Lord said to Jeremiah, “**Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.** See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, **to root out and to pull down,** to destroy and to throw down, **to build and to plant.**” Jeremiah 1:9-10 Having authority both to root out and also to plant. So this church is faced with the same admonition, repent and live or bear the consequences.

“I know where **you dwell, where the throne of Satan is; and you hold fast to My name, and you have not denied My faith,** even in the days of Antipas My witness, **My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.**” [vs. 13]

[D.p] in his teaching has taken the term “the throne of Satan” to mean literally that. And his approach was found to have merit which we will discuss in a later chapter. The point we want to make here is, the significance of the throne is in respect to worship. Paul says, “Therefore **concerning the eating of the things sacrificed to idols,** we know that **an idol is nothing in the world** and that **there is no God except one.** Truly **even if indeed there are those called gods,** whether in heaven or on earth, **as there are many gods and many lords,** yet to us there is one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we through Him.” 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 The point Paul makes later is that though idols may be lifeless objects who cannot see, hear or speak nonetheless there is a spiritual significance to them, that is sacrificing to idols is in fact sacrificing to demons. Moses said of the children of Israel in reference to their previous practice of idol worship, “**They sacrificed to demons, not to God, to gods they did not know,** to new gods, new arrivals that your fathers did not fear.” Deuteronomy 32:17

So an altar on which a sacrifice is offered, is the throne where the recipient of that worship is enthroned. It is in this respect we view the throne of Satan, that like all other principalities and powers of wickedness and demons he seemed to be directly worshipped in Pergamum. That is Pergamum seems to be host to a temple where sacrificial offerings were directly made to Satan, so as to be his dwelling place. So the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ were faced with stern opposition for their faith even to the point of martyrdom. And the Lord commends them for staying faithful even in the face of such persecution.

“But I have a **FEW things against you,** because you have **some there holding the teaching of Balaam, who would teach Balak TO CAST A SNARE** before the sons of Israel, to **eat things sacrificed to idols,** and to **commit sexual immorality.** So **LIKEWISE** you also have **some holding the teaching of the Nicolaitans.** Therefore repent! But if not, **I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.**” [vs. 14-16]

The Lord begins His correction by saying that He has “**FEW things,**” against the leader of the church of Pergamum. In contrast, the Lord said to the messenger of the church of Ephesus, “**I have THIS against you,**” and gave one point of admonishment. So here, we ought to expect Him to highlight at least two concepts that essentially must contain a unique point in one aspect or another. It is in this regard that we differentiate the Lord’s admonishing in respect to Balaam and His admonishing in respect to the Nicolaitans. That these two ideologies though similar in deeds yet are presented from opposite perspectives.

Now Balaam, was a prophet in the old testament, who for the sake of money taught Balak the king of Moab, [how] to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel. And the incident was recorded as, “Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and **the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.** So **Israel was joined to Baal of Peor,** and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.” Numbers 25:1-3 Later Moses described the same incident as, “Look, **these women caused the children of**

Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.” Numbers 31:16 The point is that the sexual immorality the men of Israel took part in and the act of eating things sacrificed to idols were part of one plan. That is, Balak the king of Moab having a treaty with the people of Midian [Numbers 22:4,7] sought to destroy the children of Israel [according to the advice of Balaam]. So he along with the elders of Midian used the daughters of Midian and Moab to seduce the men of Israel through sexual immorality with the purpose of bringing them to the table of Baal so that they may eat things sacrificed to him and to bow down before him.

So in this incident Balaam is the teacher, the instigator, Balak is the disciple, the executor and Israel were the victims of the scheme. So when the Lord said, “**you have some who hold to the teaching of Balaam,**” it is to be equally associated with Balak the executor of such teaching. **NOTE: Balaam’s teaching is NOT that these things are harmless,** but a purposeful act to put a wedge between God and Israel. So Balaam is fully aware, sexual immorality is NOT acceptable to the Lord, he is MOST CERTAINLY aware eating things sacrificed to idols and bowing before an idol is NOT acceptable to the Lord. So the point the Lord was making in regards to the teaching of Balaam was, there were some among them, who have taken upon themselves to put a stumbling block before their brethren. Now it does not need to be specific to the act of sexual immorality or eating things sacrificed to idols but in whatever manner they have sought to make them stumble. The Goal being breaching the Covenant of Righteousness.

In the first council of church in Jerusalem after much deliberation the apostles and the elders reached these basic four consensus which Christian believers should seek to adhere to, “**For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us,** to lay upon you no further burden, **except these NECESSARY things: TO ABSTAIN from things SACRIFICED to IDOLS, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality.**” Acts 15:28-29 So compelling the Gentiles to be circumcised is setting a stumbling block. As Paul says, “Behold, I Paul say to you that **if you shall become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.** Now again I testify to every man receiving circumcision that he is a debtor to keep the whole Law. **Whoever are being justified in the Law,** you are severed from Christ; **you have fallen away from Grace.**” Galatians 5:2-4 And Paul makes the point, “These compel you to be circumcised, **only that they might not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.**” Galatians 6:12 The Similarity to Balaam being the pursuit of personal gain even if it was relief from persecution at the expense of the fall of another, through breach of the Covenant. In whatever regard they have sought to do this, it was NOT accepted by the Lord.

We also need to carefully consider the significance of the reference to “where Satan’s throne is” and “where he dwells.” The act that is being highlighted here is the act of setting in motion temptations, which the devil has been doing since the garden of Eden. It is in this respect we are instructed NOT to tempt each other, to set in motion an act by which a brother or sisters can be made to fall, that is to take the palace of Satan himself. Paul writes, “No longer, therefore, should we judge one another; but rather determine this, **NOT to put ANY STUMBLING BLOCK or SNARE before your brother.**” Romans 14:13 God does not tempt us to acts of Sin, nor does He expect us to endure such temptation but rather to flee from it. “**Flee sexual immorality.**” 1 Corinthians 6:18 [AND] “**Flee from Idolatry.**” 1 Corinthians 10:14

Now in regards to the Nicolaitans, as we have discussed earlier these two doctrines are opposites. They UNLIKE the ones being admonished according to the teaching Balaam, have taken it upon themselves to continue practising those very things, **seeing no fault with them.** So the admonishing here is from the perspective of, “the one thinking to stand, let him take heed, lest he fall.” And Paul in 1 Corinthians 10 laboured extensively to exhort people to stay away from such practice of sexual immorality and eating things sacrificed to idols, giving Israel in the wilderness as an example. Even though he commended faith and put no strains on a believer yet he elaborated the consequence of such acts. He distinguished being able to freely buy and freely associate with people from purposely partaking of things sacrificed to idols

[in an idols temple]. Now the act of eating in idols temples is not far from taking part in sexual immorality, which was a normal practice in those temples. There is temptation which Paul specifically referred to, **“No temptation has seized you, except what is common to man.”** 1 Corinthians 10:13 So the Nicolaitans have set their eyes on the pursuit of earthly pleasures and were unwilling to turn from them. That is to say they live for the satisfaction of the flesh.

So the association the Lord makes between Balaam and the Nicolaitans saying, “Likewise” or “Thus” is in respect of their relationship to Jacob, the inheritor of the promise. What Balaam was to Jacob according to Lot, in contention, the Nicolaitans are to the Promise according to Esau, in despising. And in both respects the reference to the devil is applicable, Balaam in the act of temptation, and Nicolaitans in regards to eating, as in the garden of Eden. So in respect to Balaam, it is in setting a snare to break the Covenant while the Nicolaitans are unwilling to give up Sin, in setting their mind on the flesh. [2 Corinthians 12:21, Philippians 3:18-19] Paul in Colossians 3:1-2 exhorts us to live for the promise by setting our minds on heavenly things, as a consequence we put off earthly things. Esau could not look forward to his inheritance so despising it he sought to satisfy himself in the present. The same can be said of us when we live to satisfy our flesh above the truth of God.

So the Lord’s admonishment to the messenger of Pergamum is not that he himself was involved in such practices but that he has been complacent and has not with stern hand sought to deal with those who practised such things, as the messenger of the church of Ephesus has done and was commended for it. So if he does not repent to take steps to correct them to turn them away from such practices, the Lord is giving him a word to take to the congregation that, **“I will make WAR AGAINST THEM with the sword of My mouth.”**

The admonishment of “the sword of My mouth:” That is the word of the Lord brings life to those who receive it and death to those who reject it. So the Lord says to the UNREPENTANT, **“I will make WAR against them,”** to war is to count them as an enemy, it is NOT to chasten, as in children. [Hebrews 12:7] So it is in the manner of, **“And out of His mouth goes forth a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations; and He will shepherd them with a rod of iron.”** Revelation 19:15 The significance is that they are given time to repent to cast away the false doctrine they are entertaining. The Lord used “Hate” to describe what the Nicolaitans were practising, the implication being as Esau despised his birthright seeking to satisfy his belly, the Nicolaitans have also NOT attained to the Spirit being set on the flesh. [Romans 8:5-6] Paul in 2nd Corinthians says, **“Examine yourselves WHETHER you are in the FAITH; test yourselves. Or do you not recognize yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are UNAPPROVED?”** 2 Corinthians 13:5 So the fact Nicolaitans continued in the practice of such things unabated was proof that Christ was not in them, they were NOT born again.

Paul writes, **“For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even as far as the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrows, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”** Hebrews 4:12 That is in a way to say the word of the Lord, reveals those who are truly His. Paul used the same example in his letter to Timothy, **“Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those being His,”** and, **“Let everyone naming the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.”** 2 Timothy 2:19 Paul makes this statement in reference to those **“who have gone astray concerning the truth.”** Likewise here the doctrine the Nicolaitans were in pursuit of was evidence that they also were not His.

“The one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one overcoming, I will give to him the MANNA having been hidden, and I will give to him a WHITE STONE, and on the stone [a] NEW NAME having been written, which no one has known, except the one receiving it.” [vs. 17]

The First Reward: “I will give to him the manna having been hidden.” We have brought to attention the fact that the reward seems to be counterpart to the practice the Nicolaitans were accused of, that is the pursuit of earthly gratification. So in a place where false teaching seems to be flourishing in this respect the Lord says, to those who overcome, He will give a hidden Manna, that is truth they have not known that they may be satisfied. Manna is an expression for a spiritual food, Paul writing of Israel’s journey through wilderness says, “**All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink.** For they were drinking from the spiritual rock accompanying them, and **the rock was Christ.**” 1 Corinthians 10:3-4 So the contrast is between spiritual food that edifies against the pursuit of food that perishes. The Lord said, “Do not work for the food that is perishing, but **for the food enduring unto eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you;** for God the Father has sealed Him.” John 6:27

The Hidden Manna in respect to those who overcome the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans who live according to the Spirit and not the flesh.

The Second Reward: “I will give to him a **white stone**, and on the stone new **a name having been written.**” Here the Lord seems to be affirming the surety of the new creation. **The colour white** to signify righteousness, to be without blame, **the stone** in respect to permanence of the new creation as to be engraved in stone and **the new name** in respect to being made spirits. The Lord Himself has a name like that, “Now His eyes are like a flame of fire, and upon His head many diadems, **having a name having been written, which no one except He Himself knows.**” Revelation 19:12 The significance of this reward is that the admonishing is given to those among the congregation who are NOT even saved. As we have said, the unrepentant are counted as an enemy, not children. So the reward to those who overcome, those who repent from their old ways is they will be born again, to be a new creation in the likeness of the Lord. So like Him, being joint heirs with Him, they will receive a name no one knows, the new name accords to the spirit nature as we have one that accords to our flesh.

The White Stone is in respect to the doctrine of Balaam, those who have NOT been made to stumble the Covenant of Righteousness! That is they have not been enticed into a religion of works, i.e. circumcision and the likes of which.

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Thyatira.

“And to the messenger of **the church in THYATIRA** write: These things says **the Son of God, the One having His EYES like a flame of FIRE, and His FEET like burnished BRONZE.**” [vs. 18]

The church of Thyatira is a church mixed with vastly contrasting factions, it is a divided church. NOTE: it is NOT one church, but many churches under one area being overseen by one messenger. We have examples of this in the letters of Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus exhorting them, to be diligent in instructing those who they have charge over to be careful not to teach any other doctrines. [2 Timothy 2:14; Titus 1:10-14] So while messenger of church in Thyatira is greatly commended for excelling in the Grace of God, but at the same time the Lord admonishes them for having among them those who hold the teaching of Satan.

To them the Lord is revealed as “**His eyes like a flame of fire,**” the reference being in regards to the One who sees the secret things of the heart. King David writes, “If I say, “**Surely the darkness shall fall on me,**” Even the night shall be light about me; **Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day;** The darkness and the light are both alike to You.” Psalm 139:11-12 The significance being there is nothing hidden from His sight. Paul writes, “And there is no creature hidden before Him, but **all things are uncovered and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom is our reckoning.**” Hebrews 4:13

The reference to “**His feet like burnished bronze,**” is an expression to the judgement He bore on our behalf. Yet His portrayal here is to express the judgement He brings. So the Lord is portrayed as One who sees the deep truth so as to judge correctly, according to His assessment. “You judge according to the flesh; I am judging no one. **But even if I judge, My Judgement is true, because I am not alone,** but I and the Father, having sent Me.” John 8:15-16

Paul writes, “For what is it to me to judge those outside? **Do you not JUDGE those WITHIN?** But God will judge those outside. “Expel the evil out from among yourselves.” 1 Corinthians 5:12-13 Now this is not some malicious act of judgement but to correctly admonish one another in love for the benefit of all, as children are corrected by a loving parent for their benefit. So what we are expected to do, the Lord must first be doing among us. Paul writes, “**For if we were judging ourselves,** we would not come under judgement. **But being JUDGED by the LORD, we are DISCIPLINED,** so that we should not be condemned with the world.” 1 Corinthians 11:31-32 Here the Lord states clearly, that He will take steps to correct us so that we may not perish along with the world. We are assessed, we are judged and we are disciplined, which by a general definition is not a pleasant experience, “**And all discipline indeed** for those being present, **does not seem to be of joy, but of grief;** but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those having been trained by it.” Hebrews 11:12

Now an example of how to correctly judge ourselves is portrayed in the messenger of Ephesus, who was diligent in correctly judging those who do evil, refusing the false apostles and opposing the Nicolaitans. So even though he had the similar problems as Pergamum and Thyatira, the Lord did not need to admonish the flock, He gave him charge over. However we see the Lord, in the case of Pergamum and in the case of Thyatira, giving warning and ready to pronounce and judge those unruly members. They were judged by the Lord because they themselves were not PROPERLY judged by the minister who had charge over them.

“I know **your works, and your LOVE and FAITH and SERVICE and perseverance; and your LATTER WORKS are GREATER than the first.**” [vs. 19]

Here the Lord assesses them in the same manner as the messenger of the Ephesus, as mentioned above [J.p] compares the assessment to Paul’s evaluation of the church in Thessalonica. “Remembering before our God and Father your **work of faith and unceasing LABOUR of LOVE,** and the **ENDURANCE of the HOPE** of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 1:3 So we see here they also have produced works of faith and love.

The LATTER works are GREATER than the FIRST: To understand this statement we have to KNOW what our WORKS are founded on. Now **Grace works in us to the fulfilment of a purpose.** “**To each one of us GRACE has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.**” Ephesians 4:7 The point is, if Grace is what works in us according to Christ’s gift, then we can exceed our former works ONLY as we are faithful according to the workings of Grace. Paul said, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been void. Rather, **I TOILED more ABUNDANTLY than all of them,** yet **NOT I, but the GRACE of God that was with me.**” 1 Corinthians 15:10 The point is Grace must be allowed to work, and it only works as we operate in faith to the exercise of Christ’s gift. The eye excels as it performs the duty of seeing and NOT smelling.

Paul makes the point, “**Now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, being able to build you up.**” Acts 20:32 And Peter makes the point that we grow in grace, “**But grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.** To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.” 2 Peter 3:18 So whether it be in our personal growth, or be it in the service we render to the Lord, it will ALWAYS be according to Grace. That is Grace is an all-encompassing feature of this Covenant and the successful application of it will produce works of Love and of Faith that WILL continue to grow. So Even though the messenger of Thyatira had great unruliness among those whom he had oversight YET his works exceeded

his former while those of the messenger of Ephesus who by all rights was more disciplined in his administration yet lacked because he forsook the GRACE that was at work in him.

“But I have against you that you TOLERATE the woman Jezebel, the one CALLING HERSELF a PROPHETESS and TEACHING and MISLEADING My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And I have given her TIME that she might REPENT, and she is NOT WILLING to repent of her SEXUAL IMMORALITY. [vs. 20-21]

The admonishing the Lord gives to this messenger is that he **“TOLERATE the WOMAN Jezebel,”** the implication is that the messenger is FULLY aware that what this woman was teaching was wrong. Therefore he is admonished for NOT standing up against what he knows to be wrong. And Jezebel is a reference to a woman who seems to be overseeing a church in the region of Thyatira under the watchful eye of this messenger and has been engaged in teaching false doctrine. The Lord instructed His ministers to be careful to judge according to the teaching they bring. The false apostles that went out to promote the Law are examples of such admonishment. 2 Corinthians 11:12

Now there is much speculation that Jezebel refers to the “spirit of Jezebel.” However, **even if Jezebel was a spirit, there must be a manifested example of it working, through a specific person.** John plainly stated, the spirit of the antichrist is working through many who have gone out into the world, who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. [1 John 1:18; 4:1-3, 2 John 1:7] So in order to understand what the Lord meant here, we have to apply the same principle the Lord used to admonish the other messengers. The Lord plainly pointed out the Nicolaitans as well as those who held the doctrine of Balaam, therefore the reference to Jezebel must also be consistent. So the application is to the manner Jezebel was known for, **“But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, BECAUSE Jezebel his wife STIRRED him up.”** 1 Kings 21:25 And it is in this respect the Lord charges her, saying, **“TEACHING and MISLEADING My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols.”**

Now we can summarise the deeds of JEZEBEL of the Old testament in these main terms. NOTE, she is not recorded in any act of sexual immorality, but the PROMOTION of Baal and Asherah worship through which Israel’s unfaithfulness to God was magnified. **“Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, WHO EAT AT Jezebel’s TABLE.”** 1 Kings 18:19 So not only did she support them, she also ensured their dominance in the land by killing the prophets of the Lord. [1 Kings 18:4] Another feature of Jezebel is she exercised forged authority, **“She wrote letters in Ahab’s name, sealed them with his seal.”** And it is evident she knew the Law of the Lord, because she used the Law of blaspheme to kill Naboth the Jezerite. **“Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with high honour among the people; and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, “You have blasphemed God and the king.” Then take him out, and stone him, that he may die.”** 1 Kings 21:9-10 which is exactly according to Leviticus 24:15–16. Note she did not use her name nor charged Naboth of blaspheming her gods! But the God of Israel, Singular!

Now the first evidence that the Lord is referring to a living woman is the statement the Lord makes saying, **“calling herself a prophetess.”** A prophet or prophetess is one who is able to hear from the spirit realm. John says, **“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”** 1 John 4:1 Here John associates clearly that a false prophet is one who gives heed to a deceitful spirit. Now, there is **a reason why the Lord pointed out she calls herself a prophetess.** If we apply it to Jezebel of the old testament, it is on the basis of usurped authority, that is this woman is NOT called to be a prophetess but has claimed the title for herself and has exercised authority in that respect. [Consider]: the messenger of Ephesus was admonished for leaving his

calling, the messenger of Thyatira was commended for operating in his calling, here we have Jezebel being rebuked for operating in a USURPED calling.

We now come to identify what THIS Jezebel taught to mislead the servants of the Lord. The first thing we need to point out is that like Jezebel of the old, this woman is NOT directly charged with an actual immoral sexual conduct. There is sexual immorality [fornication] as in dishonouring the temple of the Holy Spirit, which Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 6:13-17, the emphasis being on the “body.” AND there is Sexual Immorality as unfaithfulness to the Lord that is through being joined with demons in the practice of eating things sacrificed to idols which Paul also explains in 1 Corinthians 10:14-22, the emphasis here being in “eating,” as an aspect of worship. And it is of this type of immorality the Jezebel of the new testament is charged with.

Paul in his teaching laboured to draw a clear distinction from being able to freely purchase meat from any market without giving any due regard, and also being able to freely eat whatever is placed before us, from intentionally eating things sacrificed to idols in an idol temple. He showed that such an act is to have active fellowship with demons, as Israel once did when she was joined to the Baal of Peor. And he gave as an example the Lord’s Supper as well as the sacrifice Israel made in the Temple to be a counterpoint to such practice. “Consider Israel according to flesh: **Are not those eating the sacrifices fellow partakers in the altar?** Then what do I mean? That what is sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? **Rather, that what the Gentiles sacrifice, THEY SACRIFICE to DEMONS and NOT to GOD.** And I do not want you **to be FELLOW PARTAKERS with demons.** You are **NOT ABLE** to drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. **You are NOT ABLE to partake of the table of the Lord AND of the table of demons.** Or **do we PROVOKE the Lord to jealousy?** Are we stronger than He?” 1 Corinthians 10:18-22

[Worthy of NOTE]: In eating things sacrificed to idols, the implication is eating the flesh of animals whose **blood was poured out to demons** in sacrifice. **Blood is covenant, it is agreement, so the eating of such meat in that kind of setting is to be JOINED,** it is to have fellowship. So those who eat of the flesh of such animals are partakers of that union. **And to be JOINED is what is considered as an act of ADULTERY.** Paul makes this point clear in the statement he makes, saying, “Foods for the belly and the belly for foods,” but God will destroy both this and these. **Now THE BODY is not for sexual immorality, BUT FOR THE LORD, and the LORD FOR THE BODY.”** 1 Corinthians 6:13 Even though Paul makes this point in reference to physical sexual immorality, the point remains that in eating and drinking things sacrificed to idols we re submitting our body to demons. “**Consider Israel according to flesh.**” So our unity with the Lord in the spirit might not be affected but we have submitted our body to demons just as much as we unite our body to “harlot” through sexual immorality.

Therefore Paul asks, “**Do we PROVOKE the LORD to JEALOUSY?**” That is Jealousy as in a Husband! So Jezebel is directly charged with the act of promoting **sexual immorality and eating things sacrificed to idols,** and **these are ONE ACT!** This is illustrated in the manner the Lord expected her to REPENT. Now, sexual immorality is the description but the act is eating things sacrificed to idols, with the heart intent of honouring that sacrifice. [1 Corinthians 8:7] So the Lord says, “I have given her time that she might REPENT, and she is NOT WILLING to repent of her **SEXUAL IMMORALITY.**” Now if these two acts were indeed separate surely He would expect her to repent of the sexual immorality as well as for eating things sacrificed to idols, but He asks her to repent ONLY of one act. And the Lord ties these two practices under one statement saying, “They **shall no more offer their SACRIFICES to demons,** after whom they have **played the HARLOT.**” Leviticus 17:7

The implication is it leaves the manner of expression of infidelity open to us. That is though in this case it is referring to eating things sacrificed to idols, in our case it may be bowing down to a statute, or taking and applying the teachings of some philosophy, or appreciation and honouring of all manner of false gods,

or the worship of angels [Colossians 2:18] YET ALL these are aspects of the ONE act of SPIRITUAL SEXUAL IMMORALITY against our Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ. The unfaithfulness of Great Babylon can be expressed in the same manner, NOT in eating things sacrificed to idols but in all manner of practices through giving heed to deceitful spirits. So the Lord is not speaking of physical sexual immorality but adultery committed against Himself, which CAN only be expressed in affections given to another, through union, fellowship or worship, which in this case was best expressed through eating things sacrificed to idols. John gives us such an example in himself, **“And I fell before his feet to worship to him.** And he says to me, **“SEE that YOU NOT DO THIS.** I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers, holding the testimony of Jesus. **Worship God!**” Revelation 19:10; 22:8 This is recorded twice in a matter of three chapters, it is NOT because JOHN is slow to understand it is simply to emphasise the point with absolute clarity to us.

Another point that proves the Lord was not referring to an actual physical sexual immorality is in reference He makes in regards to those who **committed ADULTERY with her.** The Lord says, **“UNLESS They REPENT of HER deeds.”** Note: **“HER DEEDS,”** then the implication is NOT that they themselves took part in direct immoral SEXUAL ACT with her, but have been misled by following her. That is whatever spirit she has given heed to and have been in pursuit of to lead her astray, they also have become a victim of and have taken part in her adultery. In contrast Paul admonishing those who actually took part in a physical sexual act says, **“Lest of my having come again, my God should humble me as to you, and I should mourn over many of those having before sinned and NOT HAVING REPENTED** of the impurity, and **SEXUAL IMMORALITY,** and sensuality **that THEY HAVE PRACTISED.”** 2 Cor. 12:21 So this Jezebel, as the Jezebel of old is charged with the SAME offence which is, encouraging unfaithfulness TO GOD.

So she taught and misled people into such practices. **“For if anyone sees you, having knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple,** will not his conscience, being weak, be built up so as to eat the things sacrificed to idols? **For the one being weak is destroyed through your knowledge—the brother for whom Christ died.”** 1 Corinthians 8:10-11 The [SUBJECTIVE] speculation is she might have practised it as an expression of her faith, as Paul says, **“Therefore the one thinking to stand, let him take heed, lest he fall.”** 1 Corinthians 10:12 Or she is simply unwilling to give up that practice, as the Lord says, **“she is NOT WILLING to repent of her sexual immorality.”** However, in whatever manner it was taught or practised the examination of their heart by the Lord proved it to be an act of ADULTERY in HIS sight. **“And some, by HABIT OF IDOL until now, EAT AS OF A THING sacrificed to an idol;** and their conscience being weak, it is defiled.” 1 Corinthians 8:7 The intent of the heart plays a major significance. **The LORD is FOR THE BODY.**

Behold, **I will cast her into a SICKBED, and THOSE committing ADULTERY with HER into great TRIBULATION,** unless **THEY shall REPENT of HER DEEDS.** **And I will kill her children with death,** and all the churches will know that **I am the One SEARCHING AFFECTIONS and hearts; and I will give to EACH of YOU according to your works.”** [vs. 22-23]

[The Judgement]: Now the Lord’s pronouncement of Judgement here, is NOT in the same respect as the unruly members of the church in Pergamum. In their case the Lord was prepared to make war on them, because they were literally considered as an enemy because they were still in the flesh and not of the Spirit, therefore needed to be saved. However the admonishment here is as to children, as described above [1 Corinthians 11:31-32, Hebrews 12:10-11]. **That is the woman referred to as Jezebel was SAVED as well as those who committed Adultery with her.** This point is illustrated in the measure the Lord took against them. The first point that supports this view is that the Lord referred to those who were misled by her into acts of Adultery as, **“MY SERVANTS.”** So unlike those of Pergamum who were unknown here the

Lord is referring to those who are BORN AGAIN and seeks to admonish them by giving them over to be disciplined.

An example of such an act is the steps Paul took to discipline one who slept with his father's wife in the church of Corinth. "In the name our Lord Jesus, of you having been gathered together and of me in spirit, **with the power of the Lord Jesus, to DELIVER such a one TO Satan for DESTRUCTION of the FLESH**, so that **his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.**" 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 Again Paul took similar drastic steps against those who mislead others, through seeking to be teachers of the Law without having understanding. [1 Timothy 1:5-7] "I commit to you this charge, Timothy, my child, according to the prophecies going before as to you, that by them you might wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience, **which some, having cast away, have caused a SHIPWRECK CONCERNING the FAITH**, among whom **are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan**, that they **may be DISCIPLINED not to blaspheme.**" 1 Timothy 1:18-2 The implication is the shipwreck they caused was to others. [Titus 1:11] And in both instances Paul took steps to discipline them by delivering them over.

Now it is IMPORTANT to NOTE, Paul does NOT have authority to hand over a person of the world, to satan! Since they are already his. Paul writes to those in Corinth, "**For even if I should boast somewhat more abundantly CONCERNING our AUTHORITY, which the LORD has GIVEN US for building you up and not for tearing you down**, I will not be ashamed, so that I might not seem as if to frighten you by means of the letters." 2 Corinthians 10:8-9 As stated above, God judges those outside, while we are to judge ourselves and those within. So just as "Hymenaeus and Alexander," were subject to Paul's authority and were disciplined for propagating wrong doctrine, Jezebel was also subject to the authority of the messenger of Thyatira to be disciplined by him accordingly. His failure to act accordingly prompted the Lord to take steps to judge her and those who went astray with her. "**For if we were judging ourselves, we would not come under judgement.**"

So she [being judged by the Lord] was cast into a "**SICKBED**" and those who committed adultery with her were threatened with being given into "great **TRIBULATION.**" This is what it means by being handed over to Satan, so that we may be disciplined. "**But being judged by the Lord, we are disciplined**, so that we should **not be condemned with the world.**" 1 Corinthians 11:32 In the SAME MANNER Paul took steps to discipline the immoral as well as those who persist in false doctrines, the Lord is ALSO doing here. As Paul says, "**for destruction of the flesh**, so that **his spirit may be saved.**" that is to be disciplined in the flesh so that we may not be condemned. So PAUL stands as an example of what a shepherd ought to do, in imitating the Chief Shepherd according to the working of the Spirit of God within him. **What did we HONESTLY expect being handed over to Satan REALLY meant?** The ONLY example we have of such an act was Job, who was handed over to **TRIBULATION** and to a **SICKBED** by being put in the hands of Satan.

Note there is a tribulation that comes from the world on the account of our faith. "**In the world you have tribulation.** But take courage; I have overcome the world." John 16:33 And there is tribulation we experience from the world on the account we have not given heed to the warning of the Lord. "**I will cast her into a sickbed, and those committing adultery with her into great tribulation, UNLESS they shall REPENT of her deeds.**" In a similar way the Lord spoke of king Solomon saying, "**I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will CHASTEN him with the ROD of men and with the BLOWS of the sons of men. But My MERCY shall not depart from him.**" 2 Samuel 7:14-15 This is NOT the judgement of anger and wrath, but correction of a loving Father. "If you endure discipline, God is treating you as sons; **for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?**" Hebrews 12:7 The **HARD PART to reconcile is, SUCH DISCIPLINE** takes the form of being handed over to Satan!

This is an important point to grasp that God is light, He dwells in unapproachable light and He is the source of ALL life not death. That is God's actions are ALWAYS for good, they are ALWAYS in the light. **“Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the FATHER of LIGHTS, with whom there is NO VARIATION or shadow of shifting.”** James 1:17 God does NOT cause sickness to come upon us, He will not impoverish us, nor harm us into destruction but this does not mean we do not bear the consequence of our actions. Peter says, **“Be sober-minded; watch. Your adversary the devil prowls about** as a roaring lion **seeking whom to devour,** whom you should **resist, firm in the faith,** knowing **the same sufferings to be accomplished** in your brotherhood throughout the world.” 1 Corinthians 5:8-9 The point is, **God is NOT the Author of ANY Suffering,** yet suffering is used for our benefit, be it to strengthen, to prove or even to discipline us. The Lord Himself learned obedience by the things which He suffered. [Hebrews 5:8] So every bit of our proving, strengthening, as well as our discipline, are ALL expressed through our exposure to the forces that are at work in this world.

Now, let us consider the effect of taking Communion in an unworthy manner. “For the one eating and drinking **NOT DISCERNING the BODY,** eats and drinks **JUDGEMENT** on himself. Because of this, **many are WEAK and SICK among you, and many are FALLEN ASLEEP.”** 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 Now if the discernment of the body was ONLY the question of recognising the benefit which the body of the Lord is to afford us, as in the stripes He bore, then why does Paul say “we eat and drink judgement?” We eat bread and drink water everyday yet, we do not bear judgement for that act yet we bear judgement when we eat bread and drink water in an unworthy manner at the Lord's table. So the discerning of the body is NOT ONLY in recognising the price the Lord paid for our wellbeing but ALSO taking careful consideration of the brethren [the BODY of Christ]. For this reason Paul clearly distinguishes between eating at home without judgement, to coming together to eat YET to disregard and dishonour another through lack of patience or respect or love resulting in judgement. “So then, my brothers, **coming together in order to eat, WAIT for ONE ANOTHER.** If anyone is hungry, **let him eat at home, SO that you might NOT come together for judgement.”** [vs. 33-34]

Then, a person who partakes of the communion in an unworthy manner has faltered in the successful application of the conditions by which he may benefit and has become subject to the hostile world and reaps its effect. God did not cause sickness or weakness or death to come on such a one but the goodness of God which was intended to protect from this hostile world through the act of communion was simply made without effect.

Likewise, because Jezebel was Unwilling to repent from the practice of her adultery, drastic steps were taken so she may reap the rewards of her deeds. As she had repeatedly partaken of the table of demons so her BODY was given over to bear the consequence of her actions. **“All things are lawful,”** but **NOT all things are PROFITABLE;** “All things are lawful,” but not all edify. **Let no one seek the good of himself, but that of the other.”** 1 Corinthians 10:23-24 Even in the act of eating things sacrificed to idols as in also of the Lord's table not seeking the good of the other has consequences and she by her action has led many others into acts of adultery. [1 cor. 8:9] If lack of LOVE in sharing communion resulted in being WEAK, SICK, and even to fall asleep, what would be the consequence of misleading the servants of GOD? [Consider]: If the table of the Lord is to bring health and wellbeing to us, should it be strange Jezebel reaped sickness from partaking of the table of demons, sickness is an oppression of the devil with whom she had fellowship. [Acts 10:38]

Yet in respect to her children the Lord says, **“I will kill her children WITH death.”** Now you cannot kill anyone except by death so the Lord is not speaking of physical death, nor is He referring to her children according to her body but spiritual. As Paul says, “For if you should have ten thousand guardians in Christ, yet not many fathers; **for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”** 1 Corinthians 4:15 [&] **“I exhort you for my child whom I have begotten in chains, Onesimu.”** Philemon 1:10 So the

significance of the Lord's statement is that a born again person through Jesus Christ does not come into judgement but has passed from death to life. [John 5:24] However, the measure taken against Jezebel is, the one's she brings into faith to be part of the church will still be subject to death, because they are begotten under a false gospel. As the Lord says of Israel, "**I will not have mercy on her children, for they are the children of harlotry.** For their mother has played the harlot; **She who conceived them** has behaved shamefully." Hosea 2:4-5 That is they are NOT born again meaning not having the Spirit, but have a mere form of religion, so her children are killed WITH death because they are subject to death.

Jezebel is an example of what it means to "Apostasy" from the faith through Generation. Paul warns, "**And out from your own selves, men will rise up, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples** after them." Acts 20:30 When Paul says, from among yourselves he meant believers and the things they teach have the same effect as, "**For there are also many insubordinate, empty talkers, and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whom it is necessary to silence, who OVERTHROW whole households, TEACHING things that they OUGHT NOT** for the sake of base gain." Titus 1:11 So we can consider Jezebel to be one who came from among them, yet she has taught perverse things resulting in the destruction of others. So while she herself is saved, she brings forth nothing. Paul writes, "If the work of anyone that he built up will remain, he will receive a reward. **If the work of anyone will be burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved,** but so as through fire." 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 However her actions bear consequence to the many that are brought up under her doctrine! [1 Timothy 4:1-4]

"But I say to you, **to the rest of those** in Thyatira, **as many as DO NOT HAVE this TEACHING, who have NOT KNOWN the depths of Satan,** as they say: I will not cast upon you any other burden. But **hold fast to what you have until which time I might come.**" [vs. 24-25]

Here the Lord compared the teachings of Jezebel, "misleading My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols," as to knowing the depths of Satan. As described above what the Lord is highlighting through this teaching is the fellowship people enter into with the devil, to KNOW as in to be intimate through the act of eating and drinking which is an expression of worship. So to the rest in Thyatira, who have not given heed to such teachings, those who have excelled in their works as they are growing in the Grace of God no other burden is placed upon them but to continue to be faithful until the end.

"**And the one overcoming and KEEPING My works until the end, I will give to him authority over the nations, and he will shepherd them with a rod of iron,** as the vessels of the potter are broken in pieces—just as **I also have received from My Father. And I will give to him the morning star.** The one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." [vs. 26-29]

KEEPING My works: This is the only church the Lord gave a clear indication that the works that were done by them were His works. We have shown how the messenger of Ephesus differed from the messenger of Thyatira in the performance of their duties. That is, the works performed here excelled that of those done in Ephesus because they were according to the Grace of God in the exercise of Christ's gift through faith. Which in Paul's words would literally translate to mean, "But on the contrary, having seen that **I have been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision** just as Peter of the circumcision— **for the One having worked in Peter for apostleship** of the circumcision, **did also in me toward the Gentiles—**" Galatians 2:7-8 It is only in this account one is able to exceed their beginning, as they faithfully perform the bodily function assigned. We are under the Covenant of Grace, and we ONLY excel as Grace is allowed to work her purpose in us.

The First Reward: "**I will give to him authority over the nations, and he will shepherd them with a rod of iron:**" This reward is according to the teaching of the parable of the talents which the Lord gave in Matthew 25:14-30. And it is in this respect the Lord attributes the reward here, because this messenger

excelled in the works of the Lord according to the talents given to him. **“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master!’”** Matthew 25:21 There is a point worth considering here, in regards to, “the rod of iron.” The [SUBJECTIVE] implication is, the Lord was seeking to encourage this messenger in the part he seemed to be lacking in, that is to be forceful in the administration of the authority granted to him by the Lord. As Paul says, “I will not be ashamed,” of the authority granted to him for the edification of the church of Corinth which included taking steps to correct them. So just as Paul exhorted the Corinthians saying, **“Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life?”** 1 Corinthians 6:3 The same can be said of the messenger here, “Do you not know you are to rule over the nations?”

The Second Reward: “I will give to him the morning star:” This reward is in respect of the main purpose the kingdom of God is engaged in this world, that is to turn many to righteousness. The angel informs Daniel saying, **“Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, AND those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.”** Daniel 12:3 The implication of the Morning star is in regards to being made in the likeness of the Lord. The Lord calls Himself, “I am the Root and the Offspring of David, **the Bright and Morning Star.**” Revelation 22:16 And Peter writing of seeing the glory of the Lord says, “And so we have **the prophetic word confirmed**, which you do well to heed **as a light that shines in a dark place**, until **the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts.**” 2 Peter 1:19 The day Peter is referring to is the return of the Lord, when we are raised up to be like Him. “Beloved, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. **We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is.**” 1 John 3:2

Both rewards are tied to one fact, that is being made co-heirs with Christ. **“And if children, also heirs: heirs indeed of God, and: joint-heirs of Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him, **so that we may also be glorified together.**” Romans 8:17 So the Lord says, “I will give to him authority over the nations,” followed by “—just as I also have received from My Father.” And “I will give to him the morning star,” which is an expression for being made into His likeness.

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Revelation 3: Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.

Sardis.

“And to the messenger of **the church in SARDIS** write: These things says **the One having the SEVEN SPIRITS of God and the SEVEN STARS.**” [vs. 1]

The letter to the messenger of the church of Sardis is to exhort a failing servant of God into diligence. The issues that are brought to light are squarely put on his shoulder with dire consequences. He has failed to uphold the truth he has received and has failed those over whom he had oversight, they are dead and dying. To him the Lord is revealed as “the One having the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.” The [Subjective] illustration is the Lord is signifying how well this messenger was equipped to perform his duties. Paul warning the elders of Ephesus said, **“Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock**, among which **the HOLY SPIRIT has set you OVERSEERS**, to shepherd the church of God, **which He purchased with [His] own blood.**” Acts 20:28 This is a fully loaded statement, that conveys the GRAVITY of the responsibility, ANOINTED and APPOINTED by the HOLY SPIRIT to watch over the flock which HE PURCHASED by HIS own BLOOD means.

The Seven Spirits of God are as Isaiah describes, “**The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord.**” Isaiah 11:2 which is the FULL expression of the Lord’s Ministry. The Seven stars are

the messengers, so the illustration is one of UNION that the Seven Stars are anointed by the Seven Spirits of God through Him. This point needs to be stressed, because it is one of STEWARDSHIP and the consequence of failure is the main object of the message that is being portrayed here. Paul said, “**For if I preach the gospel, there is no boasting to me, for necessity is laid upon me. But WOE BE TO ME if I should not preach the gospel.**” 1 Corinthians 9:16 Woe is not a term used in respect of reward but one of cost. Many have taught the value of a thing is measured by what one is willing to pay for it. So the flock are valued by the life of Jesus Christ and the treatment of them, to abuse or fail them is a direct expression of the value one places on the very life of the Lord.

“I know your deeds, that **you have the CHARACTERIZATION that you are ALIVE, and YET you are DEAD. Be WATCHING, and STRENGTHEN the things that REMAIN, which are ABOUT to DIE;** for I have **NOT found your works having been COMPLETED in the sight of My God.**

Remember, therefore, **WHAT you have RECEIVED and HEARD —and KEEP IT and REPENT.** If therefore you shall **NOT WATCH, I will come like a thief, and you shall not know at what hour** I will come upon you.” [vs. 1-3]

“**CHARACTERIZATION,**” meaning for all accounts and purposes he is presented as one ALIVE meaning Born Again, yet he is counted as though dead. He is a star in the hands of the Lord, “**My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.** And I give them eternal life, and never shall they perish to the age, and **never will anyone seize them out of My hand.**” John 10:27-28 So we know he was saved, and being set as a star over the church means he was also equipped to be a shepherd however because he is an unfaithful servant and has failed miserably at his task, on this account he is CONSIDERED as one dead.

Now if he was not saved the Lord would not be admonishing him to return to his duties. That is, being born again is a MINIMUM requirement to be minister of the Lord. The Lord teaches, “**Is a blind man able to lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?** A disciple is not above the teacher, and **EVERYONE FULLY TRAINED will be like his teacher.** And **why do you look at the splinter that is in your brother’s eye** and not notice **the beam that is in [your] own eye?**” Luke 6:39-41 We normally use this text in reference for addressing one another’s sins, but **THAT IS NOT THE POINT.** The Lord is letting us know if we ourselves are not born again, as to be saved from our own sin through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we CANNOT lead another to the same freedom. Sin is only dealt with in GRACE. And the Lord made this point in reference to the Pharisees and Scribes, which He described in another place saying, “**They are blind guides of the blind.** And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.” Matthew 15:14

So even though this messenger is considered as one dead, the Lord admonishes him to return to the performance of his duties. “**Be watching, and strengthen the things that remain, which are about to die.**” It is in this respect his **REPENTANCE** is based on, “**If therefore you shall NOT WATCH.**” So the ISSUE in question is one of DUTY and the essential duty of a shepherd is simply to WATCH over the flock. Paul writes, “Obey you those leading and be submissive—**for they WATCH over your souls, as about to GIVE ACCOUNT—**” Hebrews 13:17 So the point the Lord is empathising here is failing His flock is a GRIEVOUS CHARGE. James says, “Not many of you should be teachers my brothers, **knowing that we will receive greater judgement.**” James 3:1 He says this in respect to the responsibility of the shepherd to feed the flock. And Paul encouraging Timothy writes, “**Give heed to yourself and to the teaching.** Continue in them; for doing this, **you will SAVE both YOURSELF and THOSE HEARING you.**” 1 Timothy 4:16

The Lord addressed this very issue in the parable of the servants of the household in Luke 12:42-48, in which He portrays the variety of conditions the servants of the house may fail in the performance of their duties. From wilful negligence to being unaware of what is required and each was admonished

accordingly. And in reference to the evil servant's who failed to give His household their food in due season, the Lord says, **"But if that servant should say in his heart, 'My master delays to come,' and should begin to beat the men-servants and the maid-servants, and to eat and to drink and to get drunk, the master of that servant will come in a day in which he does not expect, and in an hour that he does not know, and he will cut him in two and will appoint him a place with the UNBELIEVERS."** Luke 12:45-46 So the messenger of Sardis and the evil servant are alike in the conduct of their duties therefore both were counted as one dead because their portion is along with the unbelievers of this world.

Now, this might seem contrary to the generally accepted message of salvation, but this parable was given on the account of Peter's question, **"Lord, do You speak this parable TO US, or ALSO TO ALL?"** Luke 12:41 That is the application of it, is it to us whom You have appointed as apostles or to all new testament believers? The Parable of Talents [Matthew 25:14-30], the Parable of servants of the household [Matthew 24:44-51; Luke 12:42-48], the Parable of the Minas, [Luke 19:12-27] All have the same theme, the Master of the house or the King is gone to wedding feast or to a far country to receive a kingdom, and has either appointed rulers over His household or given gifts that they may make profit and at His return requires an accounting of what they have done. Paul writes, **"Now to EACH ONE of US GRACE has been given according to the measure of the GIFT of Christ."** Ephesians 4:7 which is in respect to gifts given to EVERY believer. To this he adds, **"And He gave SOME indeed to be APOSTLES, and some PROPHETS, and some EVANGELISTS, and some SHEPHERDS and TEACHERS, toward the perfecting of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ."** Ephesians 4:11-12 which is in respect to the RULERS appointed over the household to give them their food in due season.

So the issue under discussion here is NOT of salvation BUT the Accountability of being Appointed the Servant of the Lord. And we have here, the Lord Himself applying the terms of these parables to this real life New Testament Messenger of the Church and holding him accountable accordingly!

The evidence that shows this messenger was judged due to negligence is that, the Lord says, his works are not complete before God. And the Lord backs that point with the fact that this messenger was fully equipped to be able to perform his duties. **"REMEMBER , therefore, WHAT you have RECEIVED and HEARD —and KEEP IT and REPENT."** Now these Seven churches are located in an area [Asia] where Paul was recorded to have spent the longest amount of time preaching and teaching. [Acts 19-20] Paul told the elders of Ephesus as he was departing from the regions of Asia, **"Therefore stay awake, REMEMBERING [for] THREE YEARS night and day I never ceased ADMONISHING each one with tears."** Acts 20:31 Though Paul is reminding them of the danger that is to come, the main point is the time which he spent in that region equipping the elders in the performance of their duties.

And the best example we have of the admonishment Paul would have given to those he placed in charge is the letters Paul wrote to Timothy. **"Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, give heed to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not be negligent of the gift in you, which was given to you through prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the elderhood. Ponder these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Give heed to yourself and to the teaching. Continue in them; for doing this, you will save both yourself and those hearing you."** 1 Timothy 4:12-16

Now having said all these, the main point to consider in regards to how well equipped this messenger was, is the punishment the Lord was prepared to pass, as to hold him accountable even to the point of being cast out into outer darkness. This is the point!!! The Parable of servants of the household which Luke records, have four types of servants. The faithful diligent servant, the negligent misleading destructive servant, the slothful servant, and the bewildered servant. And from all the servants only the negligent and destructive servant was cast his portion in the outer darkness with the unbelievers.

So the Lord uses the expression, **“I will come like a thief, and you shall not know at what hour I will come upon you,”** and He gives a condition, **“If you shall not watch.”** Now we know that no one knows that day and hour when the Lord will return, so why does the Lord give a condition? The point the Lord seems to be signifying is to a saved person that day will NOT come upon them as a surprise. This very point is made clear by Paul, **“For you yourselves fully know that the day of the Lord comes in this manner, as a thief by night.** For when they might say, “Peace and security,” **then suddenly destruction comes upon them,** as the labour pains to her having in womb; and they shall not escape. **BUT YOU, brothers, ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, so that the day SHOULD OVERTAKE YOU like a thief.** For you are all sons of light and sons of day; we are not of night nor of darkness.” 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4 So the same day comes upon ALL, yet the unsaved are caught off guard, while the saved experience fulfilment. It is on this basis the Lord admonishes the Messenger of the church of Sardis, that if he does not change his ways to be diligent in the performance of his duties, he will be caught out JUST LIKE the unbelievers of the world.

Now, there is a difference to be considered between Jezebel and the Messenger of this church. The Lord says, **“And everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from him to whom much has been committed, more will they ask of him.”** Luke 12:48 Jezebel is one **“who CALLS HERSELF a prophetess,”** she was NOT equipped or appointed by the Lord to the performance of such duties and has gone into error, and the one who had oversight over her was admonished and she was punished accordingly. But this star was ANOINTED and APPOINTED by the HOLY SPIRIT for this very task, so he was held FULLY accountable for it. As Ezekiel prophesied saying, “As I live,” says the Lord God, **“surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field,** because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and **did not feed My flock”**— **therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord!** Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and **I will require My flock at their hand.”** Ezekiel 34:8-10

“BUT you have a FEW people in SARDIS who have NOT SOILED their GARMENTS, and they will walk with Me in WHITE, because they are WORTHY.” [vs. 4]

The Lord begins this sentence with, “But” which serves as a contrast to the previous statement. That is unless the Messenger of Sardis repents he will be caught out with the unbelievers of the world, which in effect categories him among those who have soiled their garments. Now the question is what is considered to be soiling one’s garment?

Now the ministry of the kingdom of God deals in TRUTH, the Lord said, **“If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples. And you will know the truth, and the truth will SET YOU FREE.”** John 8:31-32 So the basic essence of the struggle of the kingdom is to uphold the purity of the truth we have received. Paul fighting against those who sought to corrupt the simplicity of the gospel says, “Even because of the false brothers brought in secretly, **who came in by stealth to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus** that they will enslave us, to whom **WE DID NOT YIELD in SUBJECTION for even an hour, so that TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL would be PRESERVED with you.”** Galatians 2:4-5 John warned his sister-in-law against those who propagate false doctrine saying, **“Watch yourselves, so that you SHOULD NOT LOSE what THINGS we have WORKED FOR,** but you may receive a full reward.” 2 John 1:8 The importance of this task is relayed in Paul’s faithful instruction to Timothy saying, **“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, ENTRUST these to FAITHFUL men who will be COMPETENT to teach others also.”** 2 Timothy 2:1-2

It is in this respect the messenger of Sardis, through slothful conduct has allowed the purity of the truth of the GRACE of GOD to DIE through being MIXED with Law. Now we assert this view based on Paul’s

statement, “But **if seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also have been found sinners**, is Christ then a minister of sin? Never may it be! **For IF I BUILD AGAIN these things that I had torn down, I PROVE MYSELF a TRANSGRESSOR.**” Galatians 2:17-18 meaning, I have soiled my garment. That is to say, the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is **the SOLUTION for Sin, NOT the Law!** Therefore SIN does NOT SOIL the Garment of Righteousness that is through Faith **BUT the Law does.** **NOTE:** Grace is the SOLUTION, NOT a COVER which the Law was, so the MIRACLE effect of Grace is we will walk FREE from Sin.

Now nakedness is the expression used to describe being in SIN, when Adam and Eve sinned the Bible records, “Then **the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were NAKED;** and they **sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.**” Genesis 3:7 So a person in sin is expressed as NAKED as being in shame. Isaiah wrote of Israel, “When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; **so I spread My wing over you and covered your NAKEDNESS.** Yes, I swore an oath to you and **entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine.**” Isaiah 16:22 That is through the Law God provided Israel a means to temporarily COVER her sins, through animal sacrifice as He did for Adam and Eve. However here we see the Lord separating from among the BELIEVERS in Sardis, “**a few people in Sardis who have NOT SOILED their GARMENTS and THEY will walk with Me in WHITE.**” Meaning unsoiled garment is a WHITE garment which in contrast implicates the others HAVE soiled their WHITE garment. The implication of this statement is even though they all ONCE obtained the righteousness of faith, MANY in Sardis through giving heed to false doctrine and seeking to be established by Law, they have as a consequence spoiled their garment. Considering we were naked when we were in sin and the fact that they EVEN had a garment to soil is the significant point.

White Garment is only used in reference to a saved person, the angel told John, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation, and **they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**” Revelation 7:14 And the residents of Sardis are not charged with failing to wash their garments but of the act of spoiling it. That is the garment of Righteousness of Faith is soiled ONLY when we depart from faith to be under Law and works, through which we make ourselves transgressors. Paul says, “**Whoever are being justified in the Law, you are SEVERED from CHRIST;** you have **FALLEN** away from **GRACE.**” Galatians 5:4 Meaning GRACE will CLEANSE us from SIN through faith but will become INERT in the presence of LAW. This is what it means to soil the garment of righteousness which we have received from the Lord through faith.

God does not mind a contrite heart, because there is always forgiveness with Him, but a proud heart He will not endure. And nothing is more prideful than self-righteousness. So under the slothful careless watch of this messenger, the believers in Sardis have slowly been persuaded to take up their righteousness in their own hands and through it they have become the architect of their own death. In contrast the Lord says, “those who have not soiled their Garments, will walk with Me because they are worthy.” Their worthiness is tied to the fact they are united with Him “walking with Him” which reflects how the others are not depending on Christ.

Now, how can the Lord say **strengthen what remains**, that which is about to die? Paul in Colossians showed how one can be misled to observe sabbaths, festivals, foods in respect to the pursuit of the noble cause of subduing the flesh but become a victim through being moved from GRACE. [Colossians 2:16-23] The main point is the MOVE away from GRACE is a gradual process. As Paul says to the Hebrews, “**Do not be CARRIED AWAY** by various and strange teachings; **for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods**, in which those being devoted were not profited.” Hebrews 13:9

So here also among the flock this messenger had oversight, some who were weak and being slowly led away from the truth of Grace and are coming to the brink of death. So he is reminded to watch and care for them, and the Lord reminds this messenger how he himself has “received and heard.” Meaning remember

how freely it was given to you. Paul also uses the same method to remind the Galatians of their BEGINNINGS, "I wish only to learn this from you: **Did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law or by hearing of faith?**" Galatians 5:2 So he is instructed to **strengthen what remains**, that which is about to die. That is to fan into flame this **flickering** light of the truth of Grace, because IF it goes out what remains is a form of religion that appears to be alive to the world but is DEAD. This is the gravity of his failure, when measured in the lives of those he allowed to fall away. This also testifies to the fact the gifts and calling of God is without repentance.

"The one overcoming thus **will be CLOTHED in WHITE GARMENTS**. And **I will NEVER BLOT OUT his name from the book of life, and I will CONFESS his name before My Father and before His angels**. The one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." [vs. 5-6]

The Condition: "**Clothed in White Garments**," There is only one way we obtain this WHITE garment, that is through the righteousness of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. [Rev 7:14] So to a church who has moved away from the True foundation of righteousness through faith, the associated reward is simply LIFE. That is even those who have SOILED their garments through being entangled with the Law can REPENT as the Galatians did when they were exhorted. "My children, of whom **I travail AGAIN until that Christ shall have been formed in you.**" Galatians 4:19

The Reward: "**I will never blot out his name from the book of life,**" Note those who are NOT "blotted out" are the ones who are dressed in White, that is those whose Garments are NOT SOILED. Soiled meaning to Spoil, our own righteousness was spoiled from the moment we knew right from wrong, so that is not what is referred to here, but of the righteousness we received by faith. The mention of this reward in reference to a wilfully negligent steward and in reference to those who have Soiled their garment being entangled with Law is significant.

There are consequences to being moved from the TRUTH of the Gospel of the Grace of God. We are under the Covenant of Grace, and IF we can fall from Grace as to break the covenant, through which we make Christ of no effect to us how do we presume what we believe and practice does not have any bearing on our salvation. Paul said, "If indeed **you CONTINUE in the FAITH**, established and firm, and **NOT being MOVED AWAY from the hope of the gospel that you have heard**, having been proclaimed in all creation under heaven," Colossians 1:23

"**I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.**" The Lord used this same expression when He taught His disciples saying, "Therefore **everyone who will confess in Me before men, I also will confess in him before My Father** in the heavens. And **whoever shall deny Me before men, I also will deny him before My Father** in the heavens." Matthew 10:32-33 Now the [subjective] implication is the Lord used this term as an expression of standing for the truth of God. In the same way the Lord says in Luke, "**For whoever may have been ashamed of Me and My WORDS**, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He shall come in His glory, and that of the Father and of the holy angels." Luke 9:26 The point is the practice of false religion is a result of people valuing men above the truth of God. So the reward of the Lord here reflects this aspect, that only a FEW in Sardis, who have not succumbed to the persuasion of the practice of Law.

The point is, denying the Lord does not need to take the form of some outrageous act of apostasy. Many have taught saying the devil does not come to you holding a pitchfork, he comes disguised as an angel of light. Now John said of the rulers, "Nevertheless, **indeed many even of the rulers believed in Him**, but on account of the Pharisees **they were not confessing**, so that **they might not be put out of the synagogue.**" John 12:42 [D.s] pointed out that salvation is a product of believing in the heart and confession of the mouth. [Romans 10:9-10] So these rulers through fear of men have in effect denied the Lord even though they believed in Him. The point is our manner of practice of faith is an expression of our

acceptance or rejection of the Lord. So we may say we believe in Him, but if our practice of faith devalues the finished work of the cross, pushing aside the Grace of the God then we in effect have denied Him by our works. As Paul says, “They profess to know God, but in their works they DENY Him.” Titus 1:16 [1 Timothy 4:1-4]

[NOTE]: The question is how do you reconcile a **Soiled garment to being born again?** We normally associate being born again in the same way a flesh is born, as we have a body of flesh we expect we have the component that makes up the spirit in us to be born NEW. **BUT THAT IS NOT THE CASE!** To be born again is to be born from death to life through faith in Christ. We are put into the body of Christ and we have His ONE Spirit in us, and **are UNITED as one with Him.** One body and ONE Spirit! The very reason marriage is used to explain our relationship with Him. The spirit of life in us is NO LONGER according to Adam but of Christ, that is He is our life. **“For you have died, and YOUR LIFE has been hidden with Christ in God.** When **Christ your life may be revealed,** then you also will appear with Him in glory.” Colossians 3:3-4 And the life of Christ is the Holy Spirit. [1 Peter 3:18] So the New Spirit we have is the Holy Spirit who is in us ALL through Him. This unity is dependent on the simple faith of trusting God. Otherwise being faithful to the very end even unto death would have no meaning.

Paul preaching in Athens said, “So indeed God, having overlooked the times of ignorance, now commands all men everywhere to repent, because **He set a day in which He is about to judge the world in RIGHTEOUSNESS by a Man whom He appointed,** having provided a guarantee to all, having raised Him out from the dead.” Acts 17:30-31 Note the world is Judged in righteousness not SIN. And a Soiled Garment is NOT a question of reward of the kingdom which is of good works which Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. That is we are rewarded for good works NOT for earning righteousness, therefore we may lack good works yet have righteousness of faith. So the question is of the fundamental issue of the foundation of Christ, which is the righteousness of faith. So a believer judged on this ground is not judged in respect to reward but along with the rest of the world in respect to qualification for life.

We in the church have made Sin the focus, when All the while the truly deadly ENEMY is self-righteousness through the Law. When we make SIN the object which the Law does we by default exalt our own ability and Sin will have power over us. But when we know self-righteousness is our deadly enemy then we by default exalt the GRACE and Righteousness of God and the outcome is we have victory over SIN. So when we make the assumption a Christian is only judged in respect to the reward of the kingdom we by default take for granted the righteousness of faith, which is the main issue. So the right question is, can we be moved away from the foundation of righteousness of faith? The answer from Galatians and in respect to the church of Sardis seems to be, Yes!

Paul in says in Hebrews, “For it is impossible for **those once having been enlightened,** and having **tasted of the heavenly gift,** and having become **PARTAKERS of the HOLY SPIRIT,** and having **tasted the goodness of God’s word and the power of the coming age—** and **THEN having FALLEN AWAY—**to restore them again to repentance, crucifying in themselves the Son of God and subjecting Him to open shame.” Hebrews 6:4-6 We make mention of this in order to absolutely refute the view that it is IMPOSSIBLE for a Christian to fall away. The person described above is a BORN AGAIN believer, meaning had received the Holy Spirit, yet is described as having fallen away. And Paul associates this to a land that has received the rain but brought forth thorns and thistles and he says its end is to to be burned. [Hebrews 6:7-8] Now this is not some fear mongering as Paul backs that statement that God is not unjust to forget the least of your good works.

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Philadelphia.

“And to the messenger of **the church in PHILADELPHIA** write: These things says **the Holy One, the True One, having the key of David**, the One opening and **no one will shut**, and shutting and **no one opens.**” [vs.7]

The messenger of the church of Philadelphia is an example of one, who is TOTALLY assured in the Love of the Lord. So to them the Lord is revealed as, “**the HOLY One, the TRUE One, having the key of David.**” That is, HOLY & TRUE are in reference to His Deity, as Isaiah says, “To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?” says **the Holy One.**” Isaiah 40:25 And John writes, “So that **we may know Him who is TRUE**; and we are **in Him who is TRUE**, in His Son Jesus Christ. **He is the TRUE God and eternal life.**” 1 John 5:20 And the aspect of His humanity is expressed in David as having FULL authority to bring to pass His purpose. Which Isaiah also captures, “For **unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son** is given; And **the government will be upon His shoulder.** And His name will be called **Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.** Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, **upon the throne of David and over His kingdom**, to order it and establish it with judgement and justice from that time forward, even forever. **The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.**” Isaiah 9:6-7

We have discussed in the previous chapters the significance of, “the keys of Death and Hades,” which is in respect to Sin. And this is applicable to everyone, Paul writes, “For **as indeed in Adam all die**, so also **in Christ all will be made alive.**” 1 Corinthians 15:22 That is both believers and unbelievers will be resurrected. The Lord said, “**For an hour is coming in which all those in the tombs will hear His voice**, and will come forth—those having done **good to the resurrection of life**, and those having done **evil to the resurrection of judgement.**” John 5:28-29 The significance of these keys are EVEN Death and Hades will have to give up the dead that is in them.

Now the significance of having the key of David is in respect to what it opens and shuts. David, is in relation to the throne that will forever endure before God on which Christ now sits as Isaiah pointed out above. So the door this key opens is into the kingdom of Heaven, so the way He has opened no one can shut and once He has shut it no one can open. “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, if not by Me.” John 14:6

“I know your deeds. Behold, **I have SET before you a DOOR having been OPENED**, which **no one is able to shut it, BECAUSE you have LITTLE POWER**, and yet you have **KEPT My word and have NOT DENIED My name.** Behold, I give those from the synagogue of Satan—**those declaring themselves to be Jews, and are not, but they lie**—behold, I will cause them that **they will come and will worship before your feet, and they shall KNOW that I have LOVED you.**” [vs. 8-9]

Here we can see a relationship between the Church of Smyrna and the church of Philadelphia. The main difference between the two is, while the former are about to go into tribulation of persecution, that they may be proved, here the church of Philadelphia has persevered through and has overcome. So the Lord relates their victory to us in a past tense and in the expression of the assurance of an opened Door that no one can shut.

So when the Lord says, “I have set before you a door having been opened,” He is referring to an entrance into heaven. As Stephen cried out, “Behold, **I see the heavens having been opened**, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” Acts 7:56 before he himself was stoned to death. The illustration for us is that the entrance into heaven is given under the condition, “you have **KEPT My word and have not denied My name.**” That is there is an element of proving our faith, which the Lord teaches in the parable of the soil, in respect to the trials of persecutions that come on the account of the word, which Paul also addresses in Hebrews 10:32-39 in regards to those who endured affliction for their faith in Christ and ends that statement with, “**But My righteous one will live by faith; and if he might shrink back**, My soul

does not take pleasure in him.” **But WE ARE NOT of those DRAWING back to DESTRUCTION**, but of faith to the preserving of the soul.” [vs. 38-39] So there is an element of perseverance on our part.

Peter also teaching on the same concept says, **“To an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading**, being reserved in the heavens for **YOU, WHO** are being **GUARDED by the POWER of God through FAITH**, for the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, in which you greatly rejoice, **at present for a little while if it is being necessary, having been put to grief by various trials**, so that **the PROVEN GENUINENESS of your FAITH, more precious than gold**, perishing though being **refined by fire, may be discovered to result in praise and glory and honour in the revelation of Jesus Christ.**”

1 Peter 1:4-7 The important point to note here is, the power of the strength to overcome trials is of God not our own, which the Lord also expresses here saying, **“Because you have little power.”** This is the secret of the kingdom of God, from obtaining righteousness to being preserved to inherit the kingdom, **ALL is ROOTED** in our acknowledgment of our own frailty even in the service we render to Him. Which is the essence of the meaning, **“God opposes the proud, but gives GRACE to the humble.”** Proverbs 3:34

The mistake is when we think the ability to endure even the smallest of trials and temptations to be an expression of our own strength or of our own faithfulness, it is **NOT!** It is the expression of our faith in **HIM** who is able to see us through. **“Being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might, unto all endurance and patience with joy.”** Colossians 1:11 [Ephesians 6:13; 2 Corinthians 1:9-10] Paul, made this point abundantly clear in his discourse with the Lord, **“And He said to me, “My GRACE suffices you, for the POWER is perfected in WEAKNESS.”** Therefore will **I boast rather most gladly in my weaknesses**, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me... **for when I might be weak, then I am strong.”** 2 Corinthians 12:9,10 That is under the covenant of **GRACE**, the weakest and the least of themselves are the **STRONGEST** because the power is of God. Isaiah also says, **“He gives POWER to the WEAK, and to those who have NO MIGHT He increases STRENGTH.”** Isaiah 40:29 We grow in **GRACE** as we rely more on His strength and not our own, which is the secret to overcoming the world. **“For everyone having been born of God** overcomes the world; and **this is the victory having overcome the world: our FAITH.**” 1 John 5:4 If faith then it is through the might of His power manifested in **GRACE**. [Ephesians 6:10] **GRACE is ALL Encompassing.**

At that time, as explained above with the church of Smyrna, the main opposition to the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was from Jews. So the same source of persecution that is **“those declaring themselves to be Jews, and are not,”** is also mentioned here, the meaning of which was explained above. However the objection is given a new substance here, the Lord says, **“they shall know that I have loved you.”** Which is the concept the Lord related to us in the parable of the prodigal son, [Luke 15:11-31]. The idea being the older son who served God under the Law being upset at the younger brother who came from living in **SIN** to be **FREELY** ushered to inherit the kingdom. Paul also uses the words of Moses to express the same sentiment, **“I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.”** Romans 10:19 Which was intended to draw them in, as Paul says, through the mercy shown you they also may receive mercy, that is if God can accept a Gentile unknown to Him through faith He will also accept me through faith apart from works of the Law. [Romans 11:31]

Nevertheless the contention is for the affections of God which is expressed as **an offence of the cross**. [D.s] That is to say, the faith of Abraham **NOT** the body of Abraham is the main object, which Paul addresses in Romans 4:9-13. So Paul says, **“Now brothers, if I still proclaim circumcision, why still am I persecuted? In that case the offence of the cross has been abolished.”** Galatians 5:11 The point which Paul is making is through the Cross of Christ the ordinance of circumcision that came through Abraham was abolished. [John 7:22] **“For NEITHER circumcision NOR uncircumcision is anything; instead, a NEW CREATION.”** Galatians 6:15 Which he teaches in detail in Ephesians 2:14-22. **“He might reconcile BOTH to God in one body through the CROSS**, by it having slain the hostility.” [vs. 16] So if we regard

ANYONE according to the flesh we have missed the message of the cross. It is NOT only our Sin that was crucified on the cross but also our FLESH is put to death as to eradicate any concept of division. [Colossians 2:11] So we see God declares His LOVE to a foolish nation, through a covenant that was established through Abraham. [Galatians 3:14]

They will come and will worship before your feet: “And He put **ALL THINGS under His feet** and gave **Him to be HEAD over ALL THINGS to the church, which is His body**, the fullness of the One filling all in all.” Ephesians 1:22-23 The reference being we being in Christ, His body that everything in heaven and earth is brought to subjection to Him, by extension His body the church.

[J.p] teaches the name Philadelphia means love of the brethren and it is to this church the Lord is expressed in the portrayal of His love. John writes, “**Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.** No one has seen God at any time; **if we should love one another, God abides in us, and His love is having been perfected in us.**” 1 John 4:11-12 So the church of Philadelphia is a representation of an ideal church which is expressed in being steadfast in our TRUST of the Lord and LOVE of the brethren.

The concept of being proven of the genuineness of faith seems to have been TOTALLY eradicated from modern day Christianity! Our FAITH in the GRACE of God will be tested!

“Because **you have KEPT the word of My patient ENDURANCE**, I also will keep you out of **the hour of the TRIAL** being about to come upon **the whole inhabited world**, to try those dwelling upon the earth. **I am coming quickly.** Hold fast to what you have, **so that no one may take your crown.** [vs. 10-11]

The first point here is, “you have kept the word of My patient endurance,” that is to say, because you have persevered through the affliction that was brought to bear, on the account of your faith in Me. For this reason I will keep you from the trials that will come upon the world. The point is there are two distinct types of trials, one is from the world against faith in Christ, the other is the trials the world itself goes through. So as Christians we ought to experience the former but NOT the latter, because we are in the world but not of the world. In the same manner when God made distinction between Israel and Egypt, saying “**I will make a difference between My people and your people.**” Exodus 8:23 Now there is a [subjective] point to consider, that is in the case of the unruly members of Thyatira who were threatened with GREAT tribulation if they do not repent of their manner of practice which accords with the world.

Now, when we study the significance of “the hour of Trial that is coming upon the world,” in respect to the church of Philadelphia, we must approach it from the perspective of John’s own time. **NOTE:** these churches are NOT PARABLES but real life churches who were commended and rebuked for their works and were being WARNED of events that were SOON to transpire. So when addressing the hour of trial described here we have to consider, Revelation is told from the perspectives of two great events which the prophet Daniel describes in respect to the Covenant of the Law and John in respect to the Covenant of Grace. These events are related in Revelation 12 which describes the first of these trials and Revelation 16-19 which describes the last. So we need to see the events described here through these lenses.

The problem is we look back and UNDERESTIMATE the ferocity of the events of those days, so we reason it to be in the future. But if we can understand the significance of the shift that took place in those days we can understand why the Lord described it as, “For then **there will be GREAT TRIBULATION, such as HAS NOT BEEN from the BEGINNING of the world** until now, and **NEVER SHALL BE.** And **UNLESS** those days **had been shortened, NO FLESH would have been saved;** but because **of the elect**, those days will be shortened.” Matthew 24:21-22 Which illustrates the **MAGNITUDE** of the effect when the Covenant of Law was brought to an end to make way for the Covenant of Grace, which Paul expressed in [Hebrews 12:25-29] quoting the prophet Haggai, “**Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also heaven.**” Haggai 2:6

A major shift has taken place, NOT that flesh was judged as the day of the fall when mankind was condemned to death but the spirits were now judged, the Lord said, “**the ruler of this world is judged.**” John 16:11 Paul in Colossians says, “**Having disarmed the rulers and the authorities, He made a show of them in public, having triumphed over them in it.**” Colossians 2:15 Now Paul makes this comment in respect to the Law being nailed to the cross, but the principalities did not give the Law, God did. However the effect of which was Sin and the flesh were brought to an end, making way for mankind to be saved by faith at the same time condemning the enemies of God. The result of which was Satan and his angels who HAD power over mankind through the law of Sin and Death were cast out of heaven to the earth. So the angel cries out, “**Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great fury, knowing that he has a short time.**” Revelation 12:12 This fury was expressed in the persecution that was brought on Israel and the turmoil that engulfed the world.

These are the events that took place during AD64-AD70 which the Seven churches of John’s time faced. Now the kingdoms that ruled the world are described from the perspective of Israel, first Babylon then Persia and Mede, followed by the Greeks and now by the Romans even though India and the far east never fell under any of these empires. So the great fire of Rome would be an expression of turmoil that engulfed the world because the world was perceived through their empire. Which was followed by the civil war that raged at the death of Nero when the year of four emperors was coming to pass. At same time Jerusalem was also under siege and the surrounding world was pulled into these conflicts, which are described in Daniel 11:40-45, Revelation 12:16.

Now Daniel 12:1 and Luke 21 address those days from the perspective of the nation of Israel but Matthew 24 and Mark 13 expand their perspective to encompass the whole world, comparing it from the beginning of creation. For which the Lord gave them warning signs that if they gave heed to it would enable them to escape those trials. Here also we see the Lord making the same point, “**Because you have kept the word of My patient endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of the trial** being about to come upon the whole inhabited world.” Now, there is a point worth considering, to keep something in the general sense means in the midst of opposition, we keep the Law because there is a possibility of breaking the Law. So when the Lord says here, “I will keep you,” it means to be shielded in the MIDST of turmoil, which rapture is NOT. Rapture is the day of redemption, it is to depart, it is to be caught away, it is to be saved from NOT sustained through.

To TRY those dwelling upon the earth: Now this is not in respect to condemn, even in the days of the wrath of God which Revelation 16 relates to us, we see how the people refused to repent. The trying is meant to bring them to realisation of their need for God. So the world is TRIED and is NOT receiving the wrath of God which Revelation 16 is an expression of. Meaning the trying is during a period when both the children of God and those of the world dwell together.

When the Lord says, “**Hold fast** to what you have, so that **no one may take your crown.**” He is speaking in reference to the crown of righteousness which Paul also spoke of saying, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, **I have KEPT the FAITH.** From now on the **CROWN of RIGHTEOUSNESS** is laid up for me, which **the Lord, the righteous judge, WILL AWARD to me in that day.**” 2 Timothy 4:7-8 That is this crown of righteousness is obtained and maintained ONLY through faith. Paul writes, “That I may gain Christ and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness** which is of the Law, but **that which is through FAITH from Christ, the righteousness of God on the basis of faith.**” Philippians 3:8-9 So the Lord is addressing the same issues which the church of Sardis have fallen into when they soiled their garments which in effect means they lost their crown of righteousness.

The point is the only way anyone can steal our crown is in relation to the FALSE DOCTRINES we give heed to. Paul makes this point clear in his letter to the Colossians, “**Let no one DISQUALIFY you,** delighting in humility and the worship of the angels, detailing what he has seen, **being puffed up vainly**

by his mind of the flesh.” Colossians 2:18 which the NKJV translates as, “**Let no one cheat you of your reward.**” And Paul makes this statement in respect to, “**Take heed lest there will be anyone taking you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the principles of the world and NOT according to Christ.**” [vs. 8] So the deception is how one can be persuaded into Law and into self-righteousness, through which they are robbed of their CROWN.

So there is a Reward for the things we do for the kingdom, it is the profit we bring BUT Paul is speaking here in respect to our own walk, Law or Grace, works or Faith, the reward for which is eternal life. The Lord gave several parables that are so closely related but each brought out a different aspect of the kingdom of God. The owner of the vineyard rewarded each worker the same “a denarius,” that is in respect to eternal life, and their work was expressed in terms of ENDURANCE not fruit. [Matthew 20:1-16] However, in the parables of Mina and Talents, the ruler and the nobleman rewarded the workers for what they have done **according to what was entrusted to them FREELY**, this is in respect to profit for the kingdom. [Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27] We make a mistake when we clamp all the rewards under one term.

So the overall concept we ought to take from the message given to the church of Philadelphia is when we walk in the trust of the Lord and love for one another, God will keep us from the tribulations of the world. Not from the tribulation that comes on the account of our faith in Christ, but the tribulation the world experiences for itself, which God in response uses to enable them to realise their need for Him. It is NOT to say this church is raptured and the others are not, NEITHER is it to say this is the rapture age, since all the other types of churches coexist at the same point of time.

“The one overcoming, **I will make him a PILLAR in the temple of My God**, and he shall NOT GO OUT anymore. **And I will WRITE upon him the name of My God**, and the name of **the city of My God**, the **NEW Jerusalem** coming down out of heaven from My God, and **My NEW name**. The one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” [vs. 12-13]

The church of Philadelphia is one to whom nothing more is added, only to exhort them to continue steadfast in faith. To them the reward set before them is of the EVERLASTING AGE of the NEW heaven and earth. Johns says, “**And I saw a NEW heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea is no more. **And I saw the holy city, the NEW Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God**, having been prepared as a bride, having been adorned for her husband.” Revelation 21:1-2 It is in this respect the Lord rewards them, because they have gone through the trials of faith and have persevered to overcome through the strength of the Lord. [Matthew 5:11-12, 1 Peter 4:14]

The Reward: “I will make him a PILLAR in the temple of My God.” Now this reward is told from the perspective of the New Jerusalem and John speaking in that respect says, “**And I saw NO temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty is ITS TEMPLE, and the Lamb.**” Revelation 21:22 The essence is there is a difference between the concept of temple in present Heaven and Earth compared against the concept of temple in the New Heaven and Earth. This difference will be discussed in detail in chapter 21.

Now in respect to being made a pillar, Paul says, “James and Cephas and John, **those esteemed to be pillars**, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship.” Galatians 2:9 That is even though we are one temple in the Lord, the Lord has set some in a place of authority. The ministry gifts are an expression of that. Consider the simple expression, “Now the **one prophesying is GREATER than the one speaking in tongues**, unless he should interpret, so that **the church might receive edification.**” 1 Corinthians 14:5 Paul makes this distinction because while one edifies himself the other edifies the church. In the parables of Minas and Talents, the Lord showed how each servant is rewarded accordingly. “**I will give to each of you according to your works.**” Revelation 2:23 Note the reward of God is proportional to what you have done according to the Grace given to you. Therefore a man in a town of ten leading one to Christ is no

different from a man in a town of million leading one hundred thousand to Christ, they both were faithful with what they have.

The second aspect of the reward is, I will write upon him, **the name of My God**, the name of **the new Jerusalem** and **My new name**. Now to have a name written is a permanent fixture it is to belong, even compared with the mark of the beasts it is to distinguish those who belong to him. John says of God's servants who serve Him, "**And they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.**" Revelation 22:4 That is they belong to God. The concept of being separated [singled out] is portrayed in Revelation 7 & 14, in respect to the 144,000 who are the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. John says of them, "they are **singing as a new song** before the **throne**, and before the **four living creatures**, and the **elders.**" AND "**these following the Lamb wherever He shall go.**" Revelation 14:3,4 The illustration is one of being ever present before the throne of God, it is rendering service to God which one else can, and always being in the presence of the Lamb. And he says, "**His Father's name is written on their foreheads.**" Revelation 14:1

Based on the precedence of Revelation 14 the reward to the church of Philadelphia can be applied likewise. A counterpart to the privilege given to those who gave their lives for the Gospel from among the Jews, a similar prestige is also awarded to those from among the Gentiles. That they bear the Name of God, the Lamb's new name and the name of the new city of Jerusalem in which the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb. So they being made PILLARS in the temple of God means they will be forever in the New City serving God, **they shall not go out**. The name of the New City is written on them, that is to say they belong in it. John says of the new city in respect to the new earth, "**And the nations will walk by its light**, and the kings of the earth **bring their glory into it [New City]**. And its **gates shall not be shut** by day, for there will be no night there. And **they will bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it.**" Revelation 21:24-25 The illustration here is the nations coming in and going out of the city, while these will be EVER present in it, serving God.

This reward is one that looks forward to the age of ages to come. We can attribute ALL of the other rewards mentioned to the seven churches to be an aspect of every child of God, with the exception of this one. Isaiah writes, "**Even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters;** I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." Isaiah 56:5 Isaiah says this in respect to the foreigner and eunuchs contrasted against those born of natural bloodline. That is God commending the faith of the outsider. The same point applies here: there is a walk of faith which pleases Him which distinguishes one child over the other, which is illustrated in the Seven churches. [Hebrews 11:5-6] This church has grasped the GRACE of God, walked in FAITH and has ENDURED which the Lord seems to value highly. "He does not delight in the strength of the horse; **He takes NO pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord takes pleasure** in those **who fear Him**, in those **who hope in His mercy.**" Psalm 147:10-11 It takes faith to walk in Grace.

Looking at this church, there is only one thing that is unique to them in comparison to the other churches. That is, the Lord says of them "**you have little power,**" meaning in every aspect of faith, from the endurance of suffering, to rendering service to God, they have done it ALL in His power and Grace. And because they have allowed His Spirit to work through them they have fulfilled all His purposes. To this God gave the greatest honour.

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Laodicea.

"And to the messenger of **the church in LAODICEA** write: These things says **the AMEN, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of God's creation.**" [vs. 14]

The Lord in His discourse to Seven churches addressed all kinds of Christian conditions, strict ones, faltering ones, careless ones, faithful ones, suffering ones, and deceived ones. This being said because the Lord is addressing the church we automatically think they ALL must be saved, however this is not true. For instance, to the church of Sardis, the Lord said, “you have a FEW people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments,” that is from ALL the believers in Sardis, ONLY a few get to walk with Him in white then the rest must have fallen away. So it is in this respect that we perceive the church of the Laodiceans as a fallen church. They are the furthest departed from the faith from ALL the other churches. To them, the Lord revealed Himself as:

The Amen: The word Amen means, “so be it.” And it is used in relation to the Lord in the letters of Paul to Corinthians, “**For as many as are the promises of God, in Him is the “Yes.”** Therefore also in Him, the “**Amen**” by us is for glory to God.” 2 Corinthians 1:20 So the significance of Amen is to illustrate that the Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of ALL of God’s promises, He is the completion, He is the finished work. So the Lord uses this term to identify Himself in respect to His GRACE! That is all that is required from us is to receive Him by faith.

The Faithful True Witness: At the beginning of the book of revelation the Lord introduced Himself, “Jesus Christ, **the faithful witness**, the **FIRSTBORN of the DEAD**, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To **the One loving us and releasing us from our SINS through His BLOOD.**” So we see the Lord here seeking to establish them again to the basics of the faith. The Lord reveals Himself as the Son of Man who saved us from our Sins which is witnessed through His resurrection, which Paul encapsulates in Romans 10:9-10, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

The Beginning of God’s Creation: is NOT to say the first to be created but the **INSTIGATOR** of, through whom creation came forth. “In **the beginning God created** the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1 As the Lord says in the end of the book, “**I am the Alpha and the Omega**, the First and the Last, the **Beginning and the End.**” Revelation 22:13 [Hebrews 13:8] Isaiah says of God, “I am He; **I am the first, and I am the last.** Surely **My own hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens.**” Isaiah 48:12-13 To the same degree Paul also says of the Lord, “**He is the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn over all creation, because **in Him were created all things in the heavens and upon the earth.**” Colossians 1:15-16 So here the Lord reveals Himself to them as God, the Creator.

The overall concept is that the Lord is declaring the Basics of Salvation to a Church that is so estranged to Him, in these three aspects! We have to believe in the Grace of God and not our own works, we have to believe in His righteousness through which He washed away our sins, being raised from the dead and we have to believe He is God. These truths are the **FOUNDATIONS** of the Christian faith.

[NOTE]: Colossians 1:15-18 Describe Him in two categories, as in the form of God, from everlasting, before ALL things having created both invisible and visible, as John describes Him in John 1:1. And Paul says, all things were created by Him for Him, and in HIM they **CONSIST** [anchor point] which is an aspect of being in the form of God. Which Paul used in the past to describe God, in Acts 17:28. So the Lord is Described here, as Hebrews 1:2-3 in His pre-existence form as God. **THE WORD.**

Verse 18, describes Him as in Son of Man, but here also as the first of that creation, as the head of the church being the firstborn from the dead. For this purpose Paul says, He may have the preeminence in all things. The point being, He is the First, As Adam was the first of the natural world. [created on third day] Everything on earth was created around Adam, from the plants, animals, finally even Eve. Making Adam the firstborn of the natural world. And it is in relation to the Lord, the new heaven and new earth are also formed, where ALL things are made New. Since according to the natural world He is the Last Adam, but according to spiritual mankind He is the firstborn, the beginning of that creation of God. This is what makes us spirit, ALL things are made new in Him and we live in faith, of that truth while we are still in the

flesh. [1 Cor. 15:47-49] The question is does Rev 3:14, relate to His pre-existence form as God or as the head of the church? That is answered in Rev 1:5, "Jesus Christ the faithful witness, & the firstborn from the dead," which relates to the description given here, in respect to the New Creation, the New Man, the new heaven and new earth. [D.s] uses EVERLASTING FATHER from Isaiah 9:6 to support this.

So what He meant is, Jesus Christ AS the Son of Man of the spiritual mankind, is the firstborn, the beginning of God's [new] creation. Jesus Christ is the form of Man which He took to reveal the Father to us, not to split hairs, but when we think of creation and everything being made by Him, for Him and in Him, it is easier to think of Him as the Word God, who was from everlasting with the Father. And everything else in relation to the church, as the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of Man, made flesh and raised to be life giving spirit.

And He has bound Himself to the form of the New Spirit mankind for all eternity. When we see Him we will be like Him, so either He remains in the spirit mankind form for our sakes, for all of eternity being the head of the new creation or we are transformed to become God the Word as He is, then we all would agree the former is true! As Revelation 21:22 says, God and the Lamb are the temple.

“I know your works, **that you are neither COLD nor HOT.** I wish you would be cold or hot. **So because you are LUKEWARM,** and neither hot nor cold, **I am about to SPIT you out of My mouth.** **FOR** you say, **‘I am rich,** and I have grown rich, and **I have need of nothing.’** And you **DO NOT REALISE** that you are **WRETCHED, and MISERABLE, and POOR, and BLIND, and NAKED.**” [vs. 15-17]

Now the messenger of the church of Laodiceans must also have been saved, since he was also instructed and equipped and appointed by the Holy Spirit to be an elder of the church as much as the rest, and is represented as a star in the hands of the Lord. Yet he also has failed in his tasks, that is for fear of persecution he has muddled Law and Grace and was content judging himself to be a success, yet the Lord rebukes him.

Our Understanding of **LUKEWARMNESS** is one of the most misinterpreted verses in the bible. The best explanation for these verses was obtained from the teachings of [Dr. M.b and J.P] Their perspective can be illustrated in this manner, that a part time worker is FAR BETTER than an unemployed person. That is a full time Christian being Hot, the part Time Christian being Lukewarm and the Unemployed Christian being Cold. Then if the Lord was indeed addressing the FERVENCY of a Christian then surely a lukewarm Christian is far better than a cold dead fish!

So [Dr. MB] approaches the Hot and Cold issue by presenting both are useful to the Lord. As drinking hot tea or drinking cold water that quenches the thirst. And [JP] makes an observation through the Law of leprosy. He says as long as there is a patch effect in the skin then that person is considered unclean, however if the leprosy has taken hold and if he is the same colour from top to bottom that person is declared clean. “**And if leprosy breaks out all over the skin,** and the leprosy **covers ALL the skin of the one who has the sore,** from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, then the priest shall consider; and indeed **if the leprosy has covered all his body,** he shall **pronounce him CLEAN** who has the sore. **It has all turned white. He is clean.**” Leviticus 13:12-13] And he gives as an example Gehazi, Elisha servant who was struck with leprosy on the account of his covetous conduct and the bible records, he became “**white like snow.**” [2 Kings 5:27] Later we see Gehazi in the presence of the king and not in isolation. [2 Kings 8:4]

The idea being the Law is represented as Cold and Grace is represented as Hot. Therefore, the Spirit led life being Hot and the laborious work of the Law being Cold. Now it is NOT because there is justification through the Law, as Paul taught saying, “Now it is evident that **NO ONE is justified before God by the Law,** because “**The RIGHTEOUS will LIVE by FAITH.**” But **the Law is NOT of FAITH.** Rather, “**The**

one HAVING DONE these things **will LIVE by them.**" Galatians 3:11-12 [Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:20] However the preference of the Lord being either one OR the other.

Now this makes sense when we first consider the Law INDEPENDENT of our flesh. Paul says, "So indeed, the **Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.**" Romans 7:12 At the same time we have seen the Law is not of faith but the performance of works. Now the Law failed in its tasks to make us right before God, because: "**For of the Law being powerless in that it was WEAK through the FLESH.**" Romans 8:3 So in its basic nature the Law is good if anyone was able to keep it, which in this instance is expressing the Cold aspect of the spectrum of God's preference. But we being flesh, in which Sin dwelt CAN NEVER fulfil the requirements of the Law, EVEN though it is a valid path, since CHRIST kept ALL the Law. [Matthew 5:17-18]

This being said Paul did say, "For **if a Law had been given being able to impart life**, then righteousness indeed would have emerged from out of the Law." Galatians 3:21 However Christ was NOT trying to obtain righteousness through keeping the Law, He is already righteous. But as the Law was given to expose our Sin, so what the Law could not do in Christ was find Sin in Him, thereby establishing the righteousness of God, in the body of mankind. Christ was NOT seeking to be Justified by the Law, He is already without SIN, but resisted the temptation of sin unto the shedding of His blood through which He condemned Sin in the flesh. [Romans 8:3-4, Hebrews 12:4]

Therefore, the Lord is NOT SAYING to us to Do the Law, but He is making the point that the Law of itself is Good since He Himself gave us the Law, however because we are flesh we are UNABLE to keep it. Therefore the point becomes, IF YOU CAN justify yourselves through the Law very well, but SINCE you CANNOT then depend TOTALLY on My Grace by putting ALL your TRUST in Me. So the overall sentiment of the Lord in this matter is then, **DO NOT MIX LAW and GRACE and become LUKEWARM.** That is Do not Mix My Grace with the works of the Law by which your FLESH may find opportunity to glory, AND that is NOT acceptable to Me. "**So that all flesh may NOT boast before God.**" 1 Corinthians 1:29

Which is a theme that is repeatedly portrayed as a shadow throughout the old testament. "**Do not mix wool and linen,**" & "**do not sow your vineyard with two types of seeds.**" Deuteronomy 22:9,11 Wool is an illustration of Law, a material that causes sweat, Linen is of Grace that is rest. Two types of seeds are an illustration of the Covenant of marriage, either we are married to God through the Law and bear that seed or we are married to the Lord through Grace and bear that seed, but it CANNOT be both. The Lord said, "**They were Yours, and to Me You gave them,** and they have kept Your word." John 17:6 Which Paul also illustrated in Romans, "Likewise, my brothers, **you also have been put to death to the Law** through the body of Christ, **for you to belong to another, to the One having been raised out from the dead,** so that we should **bear fruit to God.**" Romans 7:4.

I am about to SPIT you out of My mouth: So here the Lord is declaring to us the consequence of straddling the fence. The concept which we need to grasp is, **Law and Grace are two SEPARATE COVENANTS.** We CANNOT mix them, either we are under the covenant of the Law or we are under the Covenant of Grace. Paul said, "For sin will not rule over you, for **you are NOT under LAW, but under GRACE.**" Romans 6:14 [Galatians 5:18] So when we mix the two, we in effect NULLIFY them, and end up NOT belonging to any COVENANT, and estranging ourselves from God. It is far easier for us to see the issue of the Law and Grace in a definite context of covenants, so we would not go back to the old covenant and seek to establish its regulations. That covenant is CLOSED by the blood of Jesus Christ. [Hebrews 9:15] The Law was given to expose Sin, however God in Christ has put away Sin, therefore **the first [the Law] has become OBSOLETE.** [Hebrews 8:7,13]

Now it is evident from the response of the messenger of the church of Laodiceans that he has mixed Law and Grace. **“FOR you say, ‘I am rich, and I have grown rich, and I have need of nothing.’**” The Lord is NOT speaking about money here, this statement is related to the previous condition which is **LUKEWARMNESS**. So the Lord is pointing out that he is boasting in himself, he is certain that he is serving God in his own estimation, and God approves of his works. As far as fervency goes he is up there, just as the Pharisees who were fervent and full of zeal, if it meant self-righteous works of Law, he has kept to some standard and has qualified himself. So like the Pharisee he says, **“The Pharisee having stood, was praying toward himself thus: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of the men—swindlers, unrighteous, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice in the week; I tithe all things, as many as I gain.’”** Luke 18:11-12 They saw themselves rich in righteousness and disdained others. However, the Lord’s assessment of this messenger is, **“you do not realise,”** in the same way the Lord judged the Pharisees saying, **“they are blind guides.”** [Matthew 23]

Hosea also makes the same point in regards to Ephraim that is the northern ten tribes of Israel that departed from the Lord when they split from Judah. **“A cunning Canaanite! Deceitful scales are in his hand; He loves to oppress. And Ephraim said, ‘Surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; In all my LABOURS they shall find in me NO INIQUITY that is SIN.’”** Hosea 12:4-8 The point is that like the Laodiceans they have found their labour to be justification apart from the truth of God, yet they were lost as can be, even though God still recognised them. So the Lord recognises the Laodiceans even though they were estranged from Him as Ephraim was when worshipping the golden calf and justifying themselves in it. Laodiceans are the church’s equivalent of Ephraim and as the Lord divorced first Ephraim and handed them over to Assyria the Lord says to these I am about to spit you out.

Self-Righteousness is a far SINISTER and very GRIEVOUS condition to God than Sin, it is the root. [D.s] teaches the very first Sin is the idea that I can know good and be good without God, that is SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS. The Grace of God has no problem dealing with our Sins, [Romans 5:20] it has come specifically for that purpose, to help the helpless however self-righteousness puts a STOP to the Grace of God. Note the desired outcome is the same but the working of it is contrary, as flesh is to Spirit. Paul said, **“For the flesh desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.** For these are opposed to one another in order that you should not do those things you might wish. **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.”** Galatians 5:17-18 The application of this verse is not only in regards to Sin, but also to say, if you seek to justify yourself through works of the flesh, then you render the Spirit of no effect. And it is precisely because of their perception of themselves, counting on their own righteousness which gave cause for the Lord to warn them of being spat out. **The true condition of this church was NOT what they perceived themselves to be.** It is the same condition that afflicts most of the world, none see themselves as sinners.

Paul showed the dangers of seeking to be established by the Law in his letter to the Galatians. **“Behold, I Paul say to you that if you shall become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.** Now again I testify to every man receiving circumcision that he is a debtor to keep the whole Law. **Whoever are being justified in the Law, you are SEVERED from Christ; you have FALLEN AWAY from GRACE.”** Galatians 5:2-4 There OUGHT to be **NO AMBIGUITY**, seeking to approve ourselves under a Law, is to seek to establish our own righteousness. [Romans 10:1-3] The Law is the VERY expression of self-righteousness, **“The one having done these things will live by them.”** Leviticus 18:5 That is to say, the one who does them QUALIFIES HIMSELF through them. However to Trust in Christ is to Trust in His righteousness which He demonstrated through the Law and was proved when He was raised from the dead.

The Lord taught saying, **“A disciple is not above the teacher, and everyone fully trained will be like his teacher.”** Luke 6:40 That is, the guiding influence of the shepherd determines the spiritual condition of the flock. Therefore if a shepherd is slack, the flock will be unruly, if the shepherd takes up strange fire so do

the flock, and if he is asleep so will they be. Throughout the Seven churches we see whatever element the shepherd was lacking in, was a cause for rebuke in the body. Paul as an example of a good overseer sought hard to impress on the churches his ways to them, “**Therefore I exhort you, become imitators of me.** On account of this I sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, **who will remind of you my ways that are in Christ Jesus, as I teach everywhere in every church.**” 1 Corinthians 4:16-17 And he exhorted the flock saying, “Remember those leading you, **who spoke the word of God to you,** of whom, **considering the outcome of their way of life,** you are to **imitate the faith.**” Hebrews 13:7

Now, Paul said to the Galatians, “You were running well. **Who hindered you, NOT to OBEY the TRUTH?** This persuasion is not of the One calling you. **A little leaven leavens the whole lump.**” Galatians 5:7-9 The point is the doctrine of this messenger in mixing Law and Grace has so permeated the whole church; they were moved from the foundation of the faith and all those who were under his care were **NOT SAVED. No one can be born of the Spirit through the Law.** So the Lord describes their condition as, “you are **wretched,** and **miserable,** and **poor,** and **blind,** and **naked.**” That is, they are Wretched: without peace; Miserable: without Joy; Poor: lacking in faith; Blind: not having the Spirit; Naked: still in the shame of Sin. So when the Lord says I am about to spit you out of My mouth, it is to say, I have given you a reasonable amount of time to repent, as He did to Jezebel. So if they do not repent, and cast away their own righteousness and be established in the righteousness of faith, they by their doctrines would have alienated themselves from Him.

Salvation is through obedience to the truth. [1 Peter 1:22] This is not some set of regulations but holding to the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, which we heard. Christ is our salvation, by faith, He is our righteousness. So Peter says, “**Set your hope FULLY upon the GRACE** being brought to you in the **revelation of Jesus Christ.**” 1 Peter 1:13 Do NOT be moved from this simple truth. [Colossians 2:23] The deception of self-righteousness moves you from the foundation of Christ and here is where the danger lies, when you make a PRACTICE of meriting yourself, you make Christ of no effect to you! So Peter also warns saying, “Therefore beloved, knowing this beforehand, **YOU BEWARE, lest you should fall from [your] own steadfastness,** having been **LED AWAY by the ERROR of the lawless.** But **GROW in GRACE and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**” 2 Peter 3:17-18 The ERROR of the Lawless is not SIN, it is simply thinking they can qualify themselves. Nobody goes thinking I will rob, kill and destroy but COUNTLESS will DIE thinking I am NOT that bad.

Consider the Galatians, who Paul bears witness to saying, “**Did you receive the Spirit** by works of the Law or by hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? **Having begun in the Spirit,** are you now being perfected in the flesh?” Galatians 3:2-3 To them he says, “**My children, of whom I travail again until that Christ shall have been formed in you.**” Galatians 5:19 The point is even those who received the Spirit when they first believed had to be admonished and brought back to the TRUTH of the faith, in order for Christ to be formed in them. That is if they DID NOT REPENT, they would HAVE MADE CHRIST of no benefit to them, and would have FALLEN from GRACE.

Last point we want to make is, fervency as burning Hot for the Lord, is not something that is worked up. Paul said, “**I TOILED more ABUNDANTLY than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.**” 1 Corinthians 15:10 A person operating under GRACE in the gifting of the Lord Jesus Christ will always be burning HOT, because the power that is at work in them is not of theirs but of GOD. **Grace is the MOST effective workforce.** Our part is to recognise the desire the Lord has put on our heart and to act on it in faith, which gives birth to more fervency as Grace continues to work in us. [2 Corinthians 8:12] Working the things of God should NEVER be taxing or burdensome or troublesome to us but a natural expression of the Spirit of God working in us, even in the midst of opposition, it is REST yet FERVENT because it is God working in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure. [Philippians 2:13] Christianity is from the inside out we bring out what God has already deposited in us. “**As EACH has**

received **A GIFT**, to them serving each other as **good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**" 1 Peter 4:10

"I counsel you **to buy from Me GOLD having been REFINED by FIRE** so that you may be **RICH**, and **WHITE GARMENTS** so that you may be clothed and the **shame your of nakedness** might not be made manifest, and **EYE-SALVE to ANOINT your eyes so that you may see.** As many as **I might LOVE, I REBUKE and DISCIPLINE**; therefore **be zealous and repent.**" [vs. 18-19]

Here we see the Lord is pleading with them to bring them back to the faith. The main issue with this church as we have identified, is the mixing of Law and Grace. It might seem to us that these concepts are minor in terms of our relation with one another, but in the days of Paul and John, it was a hot issue to the point of persecutions. [Galatians 5:11] That being said, obeying the gospel of Christ has consequences of itself. [2 Timothy 2:8-9; 3:12] So the Lord begins His admonishing of this church from the point of being proved in "the genuineness of faith." [1 Peter 1:6-7]

Buy from Me Gold Refined by Fire: Job said, "**When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.**" Job 23:10 Being rich in the kingdom of God, is used in reference to faith. [James 2:5, Revelation 2:9] A rich faith is a tested faith and our faith in God is measured by our willingness to suffer affliction for the truth He has revealed to us. [Matthew 10:32-33] Paul taught by saying, "**Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the gate**, so that he might sanctify the people by [His] own blood. **Therefore WE SHOULD GO forth to Him outside the camp, BEARING His REPROACH.**" Hebrews 13:12-13 And also saying, "**Through many tribulations it behoves us to enter into the kingdom of God.**" Acts 14:22 [1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2:14, 2 Timothy 3:12] [D.s] in his "Married to Jesus" teaching used the bitter cup test used to examine the faithfulness of a wife as an illustration for the testing every child of God married to the Lord has to go through. [Numbers 5:11-28]

The Lord in the parable of the soil said, "And the **one having been sown upon the rocky places**, this is the one **hearing the word and immediately receiving it with joy.** And he has in himself no root, but is temporary. And **having come tribulation or persecution on account of the word**, immediately he falls away." Matthew 13:20-21 The point is the first thing that comes against the word of God sowed in our heart is persecution. It is a SPIRITUAL matter, the devil must respond when his kingdom is being pillaged. It is not our families, friends, neighbours or colleagues it is the kingdom of darkness that reacts against the truth of God. So Paul encourages the Thessalonians who were being persecuted by their countrymen not to be moved by these tribulations and says, "Because of this I also, enduring no longer, **sent in order to know your faith**, lest somehow **the one tempting had tempted you, and our labour would be in vain.** 1 Thessalonians 3:3-5

This aspect the Lord relates to us, according to our own willingness to suffer for Him, so He says, "**buy from Me.**" We have a choice, either we are willing to face these reproaches for His sake, or we acclimatise ourselves to appease the world by watering down the truth of God until it is no threat to the kingdom of darkness and be moved from the faith. So when the Lord says they are poor, while they believed themselves to be rich, then the scale they applied to measure themselves must be in error. The Lord is measuring their faith, but they are measuring their works of the flesh through the pursuit of fruitless religion. They saw themselves perfect, through a religion that is suited to the world around them without even enduring the ridicule of coming to faith in Christ. Paul calls such religious practices, the philosophy of the world, "**Take heed lest there will be anyone taking you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the principles of the world and NOT according to Christ.**" Colossians 2:8 Through which they have fooled themselves thinking they are qualified.

So the main issue under discussion here is enduring tribulation for Christ by which we are proved in faith, and refined as gold. This concept is related to us in terms of Law and Grace, which at that time was a cause

for persecutions. So the tribulation we suffer and endure faithfully, on the account of His name, to the Lord this is true riches. However because they have shied away from it, compromised by mixing Law and Grace as a consequence they are still naked, wretched and miserable and blind yet they do not know it. So the Lord is seeking to encourage them to endure tribulation by obeying His truth. There is no justification through the Law.

White Garments: “you may be clothed and **the shame your of nakedness** might not be made manifest.” The reference the Lord makes to, “the shame of your nakedness,” is addressing the condition we entered into through the fall of Adam and Eve when they knew they were naked. [Genesis 3:7] And every act of Sin is a consequence of that day. So it is the very concept of Sin itself, not so much the deeds of, the Lord is addressing, from which all of us need to be saved. [Romans 5:12-14] So Paul in Hebrews says, “But now He has been revealed once in the consummation of the ages **for the PUTTING AWAY of SIN by the SACRIFICE of Himself.**” Hebrews 9:26 The point is if we think DEEDS we think Law, only the Law specifies deeds through which Sin can be imputed. However if it is the very nature of Sin itself then No Law can EVER address it, meaning we need a NEW nature in us, we need to be born again. So we need to put off the nature of Sin that is through Adam and put on the nature of Righteousness that is through the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As discussed above in respect to the church of Sardis, there is ONLY one way we can obtain the white garment, that is through the righteousness of faith. “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation, and **they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**” Revelation 7:14 As Paul says, “**I may gain Christ** and be found in Him, **NOT having MY OWN righteousness** which is **of the Law**, but that which is **THROUGH FAITH** from Christ, **the righteousness of God on the basis of faith.**” Philippians 3:8-9 Sin CAN NEVER be overcome by works of Law, but only through faith in Jesus Christ. So the very lack of the White Garment of Righteousness is evidence that this church is not saved! Because they also, like the Jews by seeking to establish their own righteousness through mixing with the Law, they have not FULLY submitted to the righteousness of God which is ONLY through faith. [Romans 10:1-3] We CANNOT cover ourselves, it is a fig leaf, we need to FREELY receive our covering from God in Christ by faith. “Also for Adam and his wife **the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.**” Genesis 3:21 Christ Himself is our covering which God gave as a sacrifice for us.

Eye Salve to Anoint: [D.s] teaches eyes are references to the Holy Spirit, “a Lamb standing as having been slain, having seven horns and **seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.**” Revelation 4:6 And David in the Psalms writes, “**I will instruct you and teach you** in the way you should go; **I will guide you with My EYE.**” Psalm 32:8 That is to say, I will guide you with My Spirit. And Paul prayed for the Ephesians, “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation** in the knowledge of Him, **the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;**” Ephesians 1:17-18

So the point the Lord is making here is, our understanding of spiritual truth is entirely based on having His Spirit in us. Paul says, “But **the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God**; for they are foolishness to him, and **he is not able to understand them**, because spiritually they are discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14 And John says, “And you, **the anointing that you received from Him abides in you**, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But just as **the same anointing teaches you concerning all things** and is true and is no lie, and **just as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him.**” 1 John 2:27 The anointing John is speaking of is, the Anointing of the Holy Spirit, through whom we are able understand all things. [John 14:26] So as Salve is an ointment used to promote healing, our understanding needs healing, which we obtain through the Spirit of God who dwells in us. [John 16:13, 2 Timothy 1:7]

As many as I might love, I rebuke and discipline: Paul writing to the Hebrews says, “My son, **do not regard lightly the Lord’s discipline**, nor faint being reproved by Him. **For the Lord disciplines** whom He loves, and **He scourges EVERY SON whom He RECEIVES**. If you endure discipline, **God is treating you as sons.**” Hebrews 12:5-7 Now Paul used this verse in relation to those coming into faith who were having to endure the assault that comes from the world. [Hebrews 12:3] And the successful application of this process produces in them the fruit of righteousness. [Hebrews 12:11]

Note: the second soil, **the rocky ground**, received the word with JOY, so like “**every son He receives**,” they also had to be subjected to the trial of faith, “a rebuke & a discipline.” There is an aspect of tribulation that comes to EVERY believer, Paul wrote to the Hebrews, “**But remember the former days** in which, **having been enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings**, this indeed, **being made a spectacle both by revilings and tribulations**; now this, having become partners of those passing through them thus.” Hebrews 10:32-33 and Paul ends this admonishing with “**But we are not of those drawing back to destruction**, but of faith to the preserving of the soul.” [vs. 39] The rocky ground did end up falling away by drawing back. So the idea is the rebuke and discipline is for ALL He receives, even if they are among those who fall away. However, the redeeming quality of the Lord is, in giving them the opportunity to stand for Him again, as He restored Peter. [John 21:15-18] This being said, “today is the day of salvation,” so it is also today the day to make a stand for the Lord, it is Never to be put off. [2 Corinthians 6:2]

So the plain approach is, this church has not yet acquired the features that identify one as a true Christian, they are buds, barely escaping from the world. Faith, not yet tested, no garment of salvation, no eyes [Spirit] to see and understand, which are aspects of the fruit of Righteousness, that comes through the training of endurance. The point is they needed to be encouraged to make a stand for Him, to endure the trials of faith. So the Lord is showing them they need to have their faith tested as Gold, and is assuring them the necessity of this process, it is not to be avoided through compromise, by giving in to the world around them. So be it old or young, the church of Laodiceans have NOT KNOWN the Lord in a true and intimate way, in order to be distinguished from the world and suffer persecution for His sake. So no matter how they perceive themselves through the practice of meaningless religious exercise they are still in the world and blind to spiritual truths.

What makes their rebuke different from that of Sardis? The main difference between the church of Sardis and the church of Laodiceans is “a soiled garment.” That is the church of Sardis are MATURE Christians, they have endured ridicule and obtained the White Garment. However through the course of time they have given heed to false doctrines and were moved away from the righteousness of faith, and have made themselves transgressors. Paul says to the Galatians, who endured the same things as the church of Sardis, “**Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed also in vain?**” Galatians 3:4 The suffering he is referring to is the persecution and tribulation everyone goes through when coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. However the church of the Laodiceans have not even obtained the Garment of righteousness in order to spoil it, let alone suffer for it.

[JP] teaches **Laodicea means people’s rule**. The implication being this church is ruled by popular opinion of the people not by the truth of God therefore they are indistinguishable from the world around them. So the Lord is speaking to the effectiveness of the church. A dead church may make disciples after itself by ingratiating itself to the world around them but not after Christ. So the offer the Lord makes to this church is the same one He makes to those in the world, He is offering SALVATION.

“Behold, **I stand at the door and knock**. If anyone should **hear My voice** and open the door, **then I will COME IN TO him and will DINE with him**, and he with Me. [vs. 20]

This is the summary that reveals the true state of the church of Laodiceans. The Lord is NOT JUST seeking to have fellowship with them, this is A CALL TO SALVATION. The Lord said, “If anyone loves Me, **he will KEEP My word**, and My Father will love him, and **we will come to him and will make a home with him.**” John 14:23 It is through obedience to the truth, that we have a relationship with the Lord. Peter said, “**Having purified your souls in OBEDIENCE to the TRUTH** unto sincere brotherly love, love one another fervently, out of a pure heart, **having been born again**, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, **by the LIVING and ABIDING WORD of God.**” 1 Peter 1:22-23 This word is the foundation on which the new creation stands on, it is the revelation of Jesus Christ. The implication is that if anyone can be persuaded away from this foundation to self-righteousness then their salvation is brought into question. For which the church of Sardis is an example of, and the Galatians were a warning.

Therefore if Christ is outside our hearts, seeking to come in that is to say we have not got His Spirit dwelling in us. “Now you are not in flesh but in Spirit, **if indeed the Spirit of God DWELLS in you**; but if anyone **does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.**” Romans 8:9 So Christ coming to dine with us is an expression for having His Spirit in us. So He asks if anyone hears My voice, meaning does this ring true in your ear? As the Lord said to Pilate, “**Everyone being of the truth hears My voice.**” John 18:37 Then invite Me in and enter into a Covenant with Me.

To DINE is an aspect of fellowship, we have an example of this the day the Covenant of the Law was established between God and Israel. Paul summarised the day Moses inaugurated **the Covenant of the Law**, saying, “**For of every commandment having been spoken by Moses to all the people** according to the Law, **having taken the blood of calves and of goats**, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, **he sprinkled both the book itself and all the people**, saying, “**This is the blood of the covenant, which God commanded unto you.**” Hebrew 9:19-20 After which the 72 elders of Israel, with the High priests and Moses went up the mountain and they ate and drank in the presence of God. [Exodus 24:1-9] This is the same CONCEPT that is being related to us here, there is no fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, if we ourselves have not first entered into **the COVENANT of His GRACE** through His blood, ONLY then does HE come in and DINE with us also.

A Christian might be neglectful and might not fellowship with God as he ought to but Christ will always be in his heart, if he is born again. However this church was so bound exalting themselves in their own righteousness they have not submitted to the righteousness of faith that is through the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore they are outside His covenant and were estranged from Him.

The one overcoming, **I will give to him to SIT WITH Me on MY THRONE**, as I also overcame and **sat down with My Father on His throne.** The one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” [vs. 21-22]

The Reward: The main point the Lord is highlighting in this reward is, “to SIT with Me.” To sit is to enter into rest. “**For the one having entered into His rest, he also rested from his works, as God did from [His] own.**” Hebrews:4:10 So the Reward is a reflection of the Rest of Grace and NOT the Labour of the Law for which this church was rebuked for mixing the two. The issue being they are seeking to justify themselves for their sins through their works.

So the main point of the Reward of REST is in respect to SIN, “**But this One, having offered one sacrifice for SINS in perpetuity, SAT DOWN at the right hand of God.**” Hebrews 10:12 Paul explains our position in Christ in this respect and says, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of **His great love with which He loved us, made us alive with Christ** even we being dead in trespasses—**by GRACE you are SAVED**— and **He raised us up together** and **SEATED US TOGETHER** in the heavenly realms in **Christ Jesus.**” Ephesians 2:4-6

Now to sit on the throne is also to rule and reign with Him, that is to SERVE in the ADMINISTRATION of the Kingdom of God. Paul writes, He must reign until all His enemies are put under His feet. [1 Corinthians 15:25] So every subsequent work of righteousness is an expression of the covenant of Grace for which we labour through the Spirit of God. [1 Corinthians 15:10] That is we labour in faith through His Grace according to the gift Christ has given to us, in the good works for which God has prepared us. [Ephesians 2:10] However, **in respect to Sin we NEVER labour, we are already seated with Him**, having been made alive in Him, so are always able to approach Him with ALL Boldness. [Hebrews 4:16]

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Revelation 4: The Throne in Heaven.

This chapter is quite hard to get into grips with, because it is describing to us heaven for which we have no point of reference. Now this chapter is a pivotal point in the interpretation of the book of Revelation, not in terms of information relayed to us but [because of] what we ourselves have attributed to it. The Book of Revelation is a book that unfolds upon itself, therefore if we attribute a wrong assertion at one point, this will have a major consequence on our understanding of the rest of the book. So in this chapter we will be addressing these assertions that cause division in order to build on revelations that uphold the whole. Now the major point of contention addressed in this chapter is the concept that this chapter is speaking of the RAPTURE.

The main purpose of this chapter is to prepare us for the event that will unfold in Revelation 5. Daniel after describing the four beasts then described God in Heaven, saying **“Thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat.** His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. **His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.** A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. **Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.** The court was seated, and the books were opened.” Daniel 7:9-10 This is the passage that corresponds to this chapter, the description of the Majesty of the Throne of God.

“AFTER THESE things I looked, and behold, **a DOOR was standing OPEN in heaven,** and the first **VOICE that I heard LIKE a TRUMPET** was speaking with me, saying, **“Come up here, and I will show to you what it behoves to take place AFTER these things.”** [vs. 1]

The interpretations that support the idea of attributing rapture to this chapter build on these three foundations. “After these things,” linked with “a Door open in heaven,” linked with, “Come up here, with a voice like a trumpet,” so by linking these together a narrative is constructed, that when John was called up, it is a representation of the call of the rapture of the church. And this gives rise to the idea that the sea of glass, clear as crystal which this chapter later describes to be a representation of the church in heaven. Therefore every subsequent event from this chapter onwards is attributed to the time of the great tribulation, which is a very common MISTAKE. Such an approach obscures our understanding of the rest of the book.

Now the church will indeed be saved from the “WRATH” not “TRIALS” that is to come upon the world through the RAPTURE, there is a difference between wrath and trials. However when John said here, **“After these things,”** he is NOT saying from this point forward the church is raptured. As mentioned in previous chapters in the teaching of [Dr.M.b] the seven churches are NOT a representation of the church AGES, they are a representation of the seven TYPES of churches that can coexist at any given moment in time. Therefore After These does NOT necessarily mean after these set of events, rather from John’s perspective it means “after this vision” I saw another vision. So John says, **“I looked,** and behold, a Door.” That is after the things the Lord revealed to him in regards to **“the things which ARE,”** that is the

state of the Seven the churches which are in Asia, now the angel is taking him to reveal to him a NEW set of events, **“the things which are to take place shortly.”**

The Door opened in Heaven: As described in the previous chapter in respect to the church of Philadelphia, **“Behold, I have set before you a door having been opened,”** is in respect to an entry into heaven which the Lord has made for us. It is NOT necessarily by rapture, since ALL who have fallen asleep in the Lord were not raptured but were received into heaven. To be raptured is to be taken up to be with the Lord in the **CLOUDS**. Another point to consider is, the rapture call is announced with the **TRUMPET** of God NOT with the **VOICE** of the angel that **“SOUNDS LIKE”** a trumpet. Paul writes, **“The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a LOUD command, with the VOICE of an archangel, AND WITH the TRUMPET of GOD.** And the dead in Christ will rise first. **Then we, the living remaining, will be caught away [Raptured] together with them in the CLOUDS for the meeting of the Lord in the AIR.”** 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 as well as in Matthew 24:31 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1

The church will be raptured but NOT at this point. The proof is Revelation 9 the fifth trumpet, when the locusts come out to torment the earth they were instructed not to touch those who have the mark of God on their foreheads. **“And it was said to them that they shall not harm the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men NOT having the SEAL of God on the FOREHEADS.”** Revelation 9:4 The ones who have the seal of God are **CHRISTIANS** as Paul in Ephesians writes, **“In whom you also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel your of salvation, in whom also having believed you were SEALED with the Holy Spirit of promise.”** Ephesians 1:13 **This is the Seal of God.** And Revelation 7 which is an expression of the whole redemption of mankind, begins with **“ I saw another angel, having ascended from the rising of the sun, having the SEAL of the living God.”** Revelation 7:2-3 going forth to seal the elect of God on their foreheads beginning with the 12 tribes of Israel and ending with the nations. This is the church before the **RAPTURE!**

The point is the church is mentioned after chapter 4 but NOT in direct terms. Throughout the new testament, the church is expressed through the local expression. The church in Judea, the church in Rome, Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, the church in this one’s house and the church in that one’s house, the point is the church is a gathering of people. So beyond chapter four it is no longer referred to in this respect, as it was in chapter 2 and 3 in respect to a local expression. However from this point forward it is referred to by one unifying feature, **“the Seal of God,”** that distinguishes the body of Christ from the rest of the world. Not as a collection [church] but as an expression of, each individual has to make for themselves. So John, writing of the persecution of the church, says, **“He [the dragon] went to make to war with the rest of her children keeping the commandments of God and holding the testimony of Jesus. [the church]”** Revelation 12:17 And in Revelation 14:14-16 John describes the **RAPTURE** of the church **“as the gathering of the harvest”** through the Son of Man sitting on the **CLOUDS** as the Lord Himself and Paul also described His return.

So when we **STRIVE** to apply the rapture to chapter 4, we in effect **BREAK** the Gospel and attribute salvation to the Gentiles **AFTER** Jesus Christ is revealed. This is an **UTTER ERROR**, once Christ is revealed there is **NO MORE** salvation to the Gentiles. [Matthew 25:10-1] Therefore when we **FORCE** such a perspective we end up creating a **FALSE** Gospel. However, the Lord will again make distinction between Jew and Gentile after the Rapture of the church, that is to say, the **FIRST** will be **LAST** which is addressed in chapter 11, ending with the revelation of the Ark of the Covenant in heaven.

Everything the angel showed John must be put in context. So the angel did not just show him events of the future without first grounding him in the present in order for him to have a **CLEAR** perspective. So we see the Lord revealing the **ENTIRE** plan of God in the **SEALS** [spanning 3000 years], then refining it further to show us the times of **TRIBULATIONS** leading to the **RAPTURE** of the church in the **TRUMPETS** [spanning 2000 years] then refining it further to show us the condition on earth in terms of Jew and

Gentiles and of the WRATH to come in the BOWELS [7 years, broken down into 2 periods] and finally leading to the RETURN of the Lord to rule and reign on earth, ushering the FINAL JUDGMENT and the NEW heaven and earth [spanning 1000 years]. The Book of Revelation is the revelation of the ENTIRE plan of God, NOT just a description of the 7 year wrath of God which is but a VERY SMALL PART! [Chapter 11, Chapter 16-19: which are the descriptions of the two portions of the 7 year period.]

“Immediately I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sitting upon the throne, and the One sitting, in appearance was like JASPER and CARNELIAN stone. And a RAINBOW was around the throne, in appearance like an EMERALD. And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and sitting on the thrones twenty-four elders, having been clothed in WHITE GARMENTS; and on their heads, GOLDEN CROWNS.” [vs. 2-4]

So here John is describing to us what he saw in heaven, and his description accords with the vision the prophet Ezekiel saw. Which gives us a means to interpret Scripture with Scripture through the images which they describe to us. Now Ezekiel is seeing the same vision as John but he is describing it from the point of view of a prophet standing upon the Earth, while John is describing it from heaven itself. This bears witness to the fact that before the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, NONE of these GREAT men of God entered into heaven, with the exception of Enoch and Elijah who were raptured. [Hebrews 11:39-40]

So Ezekiel’s perspective of the throne of God is, “And **ABOVE the FIRMAMENT over their heads** was the **likeness of a throne**, in appearance **like a sapphire stone**; on the likeness of the throne **was a likeness with the appearance of a Man high above it**. Also from the appearance of **His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the colour of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it**; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. Like **the appearance of a RAINBOW in a CLOUD on a rainy day**, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.**” Ezekiel 1:26-28

So Ezekiel is seeing the throne of God while standing on the earth and it is revealed to him above the heads of the Four Cherubim, above whose head is a great expanse, a firmament. This is the same firmament that is described at the creation of heaven and earth. “Then God said, **“Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the WATERS from the WATERS.”** Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from **the waters which were above the firmament**; and it was so. And **God called the FIRMAMENT Heaven.**” Genesis 1:6-8 The point is Ezekiel is seeing the throne of God from the earth through the heavens. And from Ezekiel’s description the 24 elders are markedly missing, that is before the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ No entrance was made available for mankind to enter into heaven. **NOTE:** even though Ezekiel was of the Covenant of the Law, still not one of twelve tribes of Israel were present in his vision, because through the Law there is no justification.

Now there are floods of images and colours described here and surely each of them has significance, as [J.p] says there is no insignificant detail in the bible, however we are at a loss to what they mean.

The Rainbow: that surrounds the throne of God seems to be in respect to the Covenant God entered with Noah saying, **“I set My RAINBOW in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the COVENANT between Me and the EARTH.** It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the **rainbow shall be seen in the CLOUD**; and **I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you** and every living creature of all flesh; **the waters shall NEVER again become a flood to destroy all flesh.**” Genesis 9:13-15 Ezekiel points at this covenant saying, **“a RAINBOW in a CLOUD on a rainy day.”** again in respect to his point of view, from the earth. Peter also makes a reference to the promise of God that the present earth is reserved for fire not water. [2 Peter 3:5-7]

The Twenty-Four Elders: Our approach is that the twenty four elders consist of two groups of elders. The first set are the twelve fathers of Israel, through whom the twelve tribes were established. The second set are the twelve apostles of the Lord through whom the families of the world were established. Note: None of whom were of the Law but of the Grace of God, through which all were made righteous by faith, and we see them here dressed in white garments and wearing the golden crown of righteousness.

The FIRST twelve are According to God who married the families of Israel through the Covenant of the Law. The LAST twelve are according to the Son of Man who married the families of the world through the Covenant of His Grace. This interpretation is based on the word of the Lord, **“Truly I say to you that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit down upon His throne of glory, you having followed Me, you also will sit on TWELVE THRONES, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”** Matthew 19:28 So we KNOW to whom the twelve thrones belong. Now the description of the NEW Jerusalem that comes out of heaven has these 24 defining features: it had twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the walls were founded upon twelve pillars which bore the name of the twelve apostles of the Lord. [Revelation 21:12-14] Therefore we can deduce that the other twelve thrones must represent the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel.

The point is the throne of God is described to us ACCORDING to His Covenants, the Rainbow, in terms of the destruction of the world, which He entered with Noah. The Twelve tribes of Israel in terms of the Covenant of the Law which He entered in through Moses. Finally the Twelve Apostles the Covenant of His Grace which He established through His Son, which is also the Covenant of Abraham. [Galatians 3:16-17]

“And out of the throne come flashes of lightning, and voices, and thunderings. And there were **SEVEN LAMPS of FIRE burning before the throne**, which are **the SEVEN SPIRITS of God**. And before the throne was something like a **SEA OF GLASS, like crystal**. And in the **MIDST of the throne** and **AROUND the throne** were **FOUR LIVING CREATURES**, being **FULL of EYES** in front and behind.”
[vs. 5-6]

The first point is the Seven Lamps of Fire, which are described as the Seven Spirits of God. Now the normal illustration of the Holy Spirit in the Temple and the churches as in the first chapter of this book is on a Lampstand. In the first example of the Dove being sent out from the Ark by Noah, the Dove always returned back to the Ark, “because she found no resting place for the sole of her foot.” [Genesis 8:6-12] So the Holy Spirit on the earth is expressed resting upon a person or persons. In Acts 2, the day of Pentecost we see the tongue of fire resting on the 120 disciples of the Lord. [Acts 2:1-4] The point being, in heaven there is no description of a lampstand just the Lamp of Fire, that is the Direct portrayal of the Holy Spirit Himself.

The Sea of Glass like Crystal: Ezekiel also had the same vision and he describes it as, “The likeness of the **FIRMAMENT above the heads of the living creatures** was like **the colour of an awesome CRYSTAL, stretched** out over their heads. And **under the firmament** their wings spread out straight, one toward another. When they went, **I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty**, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings.” [Ezekiel 1:22-24]

As mentioned above John is describing to us what he is seeing from the perspective of being present in heaven. The change in perspective is evident that, when John sees the four living creatures he sees them in the midst and around the throne, but Ezekiel sees them below the great expanse of awesome crystal. So from John’s point of view the firmament which Ezekiel describes to be above the heads of the four living creatures looking up from the earth, he is seeing it in front of the throne of God. As described above in the creation of heaven and earth, God separated the waters from above from the waters below. The waters below He gathered together and called SEA. As there is water below there was also water above which the

firmament separated. So what Ezekiel sees from the earth describing the firmament as “an awesome CRYSTAL, stretched out over their heads,” that is heaven, John sees from heaven itself as “a SEA OF GLASS, like crystal,” that is the waters of above. As Isaiah also says, “**Heaven is My throne, and the earth a footstool of My feet.**” Isaiah 66:1 The point is they are both describing heaven from different perspectives.

Four Living Creatures being full of EYES: As described in previous chapters from the teaching [D.s] the eyes are the representation of the Holy Spirit. Here Ezekiel also in his vision makes this direct link for us and says, “As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and **their rims were FULL of EYES, all around the four of them.**...Wherever **the Spirit wanted to go, they went**, because there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, **for the SPIRIT of the living creatures was in the wheels.**” [Ezekiel 1:18, 20] The point is though there are four living creatures but only one SPIRIT is described and they ALL moved in UNISON as if one body. They ALL went one way and the other together as the Spirit directed. So when John says they were full of eyes front and back, that is to say they are full of the Spirit. There is a purpose for describing the eyes, if it only meant spirit, it is evident that ALL of God’s creations have a spirit in them, but having eyes to see is an aspect of having the Spirit of God. [Ephesians 1:17-18]

Now we NEED to further address [against] the assertion that the Sea of Glass clear as crystal to be a representation of the raptured church. In chapter 15 John gives another description of a same scene as above saying, “**And I saw something like a SEA of Glass mingled with FIRE, and those conquering over the beast, and over its image, and over the number of its name, standing upon the SEA of GLASS, having harps of God.**” Revelation 15:2 Here we see people standing upon the sea of glass, the full meaning of which will be addressed in chapter 15. However it is enough to convey the point that the sea of glass does NOT represent people but simply heaven itself. The point being, if people were represented in chapter 15 standing on the sea of glass, then people would also have been represented here, if it indeed applied to the raptured church. Now, at the VERY least, the SEA of Glass represents the Kingdom of God, if we adequately compare it to the SEA on earth from which kingdoms of mankind were stirred out.

“**And the First living creature was like a LION, and the Second living creature like a CALF, and the Third living creature having the face as of a MAN, and the Fourth living creature like an EAGLE flying. And the four living creatures, each of them had six wings respectively, full of eyes all around and within; and they did not have rest day and night, saying: “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, the One having been, and the One being, and the One coming.”**[vs. 7-8]

The main approach for this chapter is how God chose to make Himself known to us. In the first instance, we have the three Covenants described above, now we have the four living creatures with four faces. [J.p] teaches associating the four living creatures to the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. That is each face of the living creatures portrays the manner God has chosen to reveal Himself to mankind through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul writes, “[God] In these last days **has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the ages, who, being the RADIANCE of His GLORY and the EXACT expression of His SUBSTANCE,** and upholding all things by the power of His word.” Hebrews 1:2-3

As above, our point of reference is Ezekiel who also describes the living creatures, “As for the likeness of their faces, **EACH had the face of a MAN**; each of the four had **the face of a LION** on the right side, each of the four had **the face of an OX** on the left side, and each of the four had **the face of an EAGLE**. Thus were their faces.” Ezekiel 1:5-8 Now when comparing the description of Ezekiel with the one of John’s we notice there are two main distinguishing features. The ones Ezekiel describes had four wings and each one of them had four faces. And Ezekiel records they were Under the throne of God, their wheels touching the earth. “This is the living creature **I saw UNDER the God of Israel by the River Chebar,**

and I knew they were cherubim. **Each one had four faces and each one four wings**, and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings. And **the likeness of their faces was the SAME AS THE FACES** which I had seen by the River Chebar, **their appearance and their persons.**” Ezekiel 10:20-21 However the ones John describes are in the midst and around the throne of God and they each have a single face and six wings and are ever present before the throne of God.

Now the first point we need to address is what “Faces” signify. [D.s] teaches that a face is an expression, an illustration of an aspect of God and he makes the point that we recognise people by their face not their feet. And in his teaching, he showed how the Glory of God and His face were interchangeably presented through the discourse Moses had with God. When Moses asked God, **“Please, show me Your glory.”** God responded saying, **“You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.”** And the Lord said, **“Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My GLORY passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My FACE shall not be seen.”** Exodus 33:18,20-23 So Moses who saw the back of God received the Covenant of the Law through which the GLORY of God was REFLECTED to him through the intermediary of angles. As Paul writes, **“Now if the ministry of death, having been engraved in letters on stones, was produced in GLORY,** so as for the sons of Israel not to be able to look intently into the face of Moses, **on account of the glory of his face which is fading.”** 2 Corinthians 3:7

So Ezekiel represents the Covenant of the Law through which the glory of God is related to us by the Cherubim on earth as His ambassadors to us, in these four expressions. As Paul says of the Law, **“It was added on account of transgressions, until the Seed to whom promise has been made should have come, having been ORDAINED through ANGLES in the hand of a mediator.”** Galatians 3:19 And God said of Michael, **“Behold, I send an angel before you to GUARD you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him,** for he will not pardon your transgression, **FOR MY NAME is in him.** **“But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say,** then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.” Exodus 23:21 The place God is referring to is NOT ONLY the land of Israel but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. So the Law was our guardian administered by angels to bring us to Christ. [Galatians 3:23-24] [The essence of which is described in Zechariah 6. [?]] So the five books of Moses: More specifically Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy represent the establishment of the Covenant of Law as given by angels. [Acts 7:38,53] Through which they reflected GOD’S glory to us as the moon does of the sun.

Now, the Covenant of Grace was established through the Lord Jesus Christ, **“For the Law was given through Moses; Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ.”** John 1:17 So as God used the Cherubim to reflect Himself through Law as a foreshadow but NOW the SUBSTANCE of which was expressed through His Son, who is the express image of His Glory. Paul said, **“For it is God, having said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” who shone in our hearts for the radiance of the knowledge of the GLORY of GOD in the FACE of Jesus Christ.”** 2 Corinthians 4:6 So Christ who was at the bosom of the Father revealed HIS GLORY in the Covenant of His Grace. [John 1:18] So John sees the Cherubim in heaven, but the GLORY of the GOD is DIRECTLY expressed to us in the Gospel of His Grace by the Holy Spirit. As Peter says, **“In those things which now have been proclaimed to you by those having proclaimed the GOSPEL to you by the Holy Spirit having been SENT from heaven, into which angels desire to look.”** 1 Peter 1:12 So the four books of the Gospel: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John represent the establishment of the Covenant of Grace. And of this GLORY Paul says, **“How will the ministry of the SPIRIT not be MORE in GLORY?”** 2 Corinthians 3:8

Now, the Cherubim Ezekiel describes had four faces each and they all moved as one, their wings touching one another and are expressed as one unit. However the ones John saw in heaven were around and in the midst of the throne and each one had a single face with a different expression. The difference in their description is to convey to us the essence of the Covenants represented. The Law was given as one unit to one nation, centred in one physical place [Jerusalem] and was administered by angels. However, the Gospel which is Covenant of Grace is expressed in a manner of the glory of God that covers the whole earth. So it is expressed through a distributed people yet one body, each having a part to play that serves the good of the collective administered by the Holy Spirit who works in ALL. [1 Cor. 12:4-6] So while the four faced Cherubim are expressed in one place in the Law, in the Gospel they are expressed as four Cherubim each with a different face expressing a part of the same message by which the whole is revealed, which is the very essence of the church, the body of Christ. **“But speaking the truth in love, we should grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, being joined together and being held together by every ligament of its supply, according to the working in the measure of each individual part, the increase of the body makes for itself, to the building up of itself in love.”** Ephesians 4:15-16] [1 Cor. 12:15-26]

The point is in Ezekiel’s vision the glory of God was reflected through Cherubim given in the Law as a foreshadow, and this glory was fading away. But in John’s the glory of God was NOT reflected through angles but the very substance of which is revealed in the Son and was proclaimed as an everlasting glory through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. As the Lord said, **“And I have given them the GLORY which You have given Me, so that they may be one, as We are one—”** John 17:22 Now the meaning of these face is gathered from the teachings of [J.p]

The Gospel of Matthew is an expression of the face of a LION: That is of a KING. This book was written to address the Jews, so from the offset, it introduced the Lord as, “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, **Son of David, Son of Abraham.**” Matthew 1:1 To illustrate, He is the rightful King of Israel, Abraham being the root of the people and David the rightful King. The gospel ends with the Lord declaring, **“All authority in heaven and on the earth has been given to Me.”** Matthew 28:18 Which is an expression of gaining a Kingdom that is the throne of His father David.

The Gospel of Mark is an expression of the CALF: That is of a SERVANT. Calf is an expression of labour as such there is no genealogy attributed to Lord, that is a Servant is not known in such a way. And the gospel is told as an expression of a devoted Servant who labours immediately, from one task to another. The gospel ends with the Lord giving detailed instructions to His disciples for the performance of tasks as it relates to servants. [Mark 16:15-18]

The Gospel of Luke is an expression of the MAN: That is of MANKIND. This gospel was written by a Gentile to Gentiles, to express the far reaching aspect of the redemption of the Lord to all the families of the earth. As Isaiah says, “Indeed He says, **‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’**” Isaiah 49:6 As such the genealogy of the Lord goes back as far as the first man Adam. And the gospel is told making a close reference to the history of the world. The gospel ends with the Lord expounding on the realities of the **RESURRECTION** and the promise of empowering mankind through the Holy Spirit being sent out! Which is an expression that the Sins of ALL of Mankind has been rolled back as far as the first man, resulting in life.

The Gospel of John is an expression of the EAGLE: That is of GOD. Eagle being the expression of His Deity as having a bird’s eye view, which John describes as **“an eagle flying.”** The genealogy of the Lord is traced to the very beginning, asserting He Himself is God. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”** John 1:1 And throughout the book John captures in detail

the dialogue of the Lord repeatedly testifying to the people of this fact. The significant feature we want to highlight from near the end of this Gospel is the part where the Lord breathed into His disciple, saying **“Receive the Holy Spirit.”** [John 20:22] which is what God did in the beginning when Adam was created. **“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”** Genesis 2:7 So from beginning to end the Lord Jesus Christ is portrayed as God.

And whenever the living creatures will give glory and honour and thanksgiving to the One sitting upon the throne, the One living to the ages of the ages, the twenty-four elders will fall before the One sitting upon the throne, and they will worship the One living to the ages of the ages, and THEY WILL CAST THEIR CROWNS before the throne, saying: “Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will, they existed and were created.” [vs. 9-11]

The living creatures cry out, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, the One having been, and the One being, and the One coming.” [D.p] taught how the Triune God does nothing apart from one another, and he expressed how the Fullness of the Godhead was represented from the beginning of Creation through the act of redemption. So when the angels cry out “Holy, Holy, Holy” it is to address each member of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

And one taught, that at this announcement of giving glory, honour and thanksgiving to God, the 24 elders who in essence represent the whole of mankind, fall down casting their crowns before the throne, the significance of which is to declare the redemption of mankind is ATTRIBUTED to GOD ALONE! That is as an expression that it is not their own righteousness as to merit the crown but His, so they cast it before the throne that Only He deserves the glory and honour. As Paul declared it saying, **“But indeed, therefore, I also count all things to be loss because of the excelling knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, because of whom I have lost all things, and esteem them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, NOT having my own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through faith from Christ, the righteousness of God on the basis of faith.”** Philippians 3:8-9 Note ALL twenty-four representatives, the twelve of the Law and the twelve of Grace attributed to God alone.

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Revelation 5: All Authority and Power.

Here we have a perfect opportunity to illustrate how what we understood in the previous chapter will affect our perception of every subsequent chapter, which is the unfolding aspect of the book of Revelation. That is if we attribute Rapture to the previous chapter then the scene that unfolds before us here is one of JUDGEMENT. However if the Lord was indeed revealing His ENTIRE plan from the First day of redemption to the very last day of judgement then the scene described **here is one of Mercy and Grace.**

The events described in this chapter follow on in the initial description that Daniel gave of the Throne of God in the last chapter. [Daniel 7:9-10] To introduces us to the main event that is described in THIS chapter, where the Lamb takes the scroll from the right hand of God, which is an expression of receiving Dominion Authority and Kingdom, Daniel prophesying of this **VERY DAY** said, **“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; [the scroll] all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”** Daniel 7:13-14 This is the grounds on which we are to understand the Scroll in the hands of God.

“And I saw on the **RIGHT HAND of the One sitting upon the throne A SCROLL**, having been written inside and on the back, **having been SEALED with SEVEN SEALS**. And I saw a **strong angel proclaiming** in a loud voice, “**Who is WORTHY to OPEN the scroll, and to BREAK its SEALS?**” [vs.1-2]

The essence of what John is witnessing here is the beginnings of the establishment of the kingdom of God on Earth. As Daniel prophesied saying, “And **in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed**; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; **it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever**. Inasmuch as you saw that **the stone was cut out of the mountain with out hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold**—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this.” Daniel 2:44-45

So here we see God sitting on His throne and in His RIGHT HAND which signifies power and authority a perfectly [Seven] sealed scroll. Now, in order for God to establish His kingdom on earth, He has to do it through a human representative, because when God created the world He gave all dominion of the earth to Adam. God could easily judge and destroy the earth however because of His love for us He has sought out a means by which He may save us and establish His kingdom both in heaven and on earth through one Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says, “For the administration **of the fullness of the times, to bring together ALL things in Christ**— the things in the **HEAVENS and the things upon the EARTH**— in Him. Ephesians 1:10-11

Now the first point we want to make is God had in His hands ONE Scroll sealed with Seven Seals! It is from this one SCROLL, the Seven TRUMPETS, as well as the Seven BOWELS came out. The Lamb did not receive a Scroll with Seven Seals, then another for the Trumpet and another for the Bowels, but Just One Scroll. This is the unfolding nature of this prophecy. This point needs to be STRESSED because the significance of which is to ILLUSTRATE, the REVELATION of the ENTIRE plan of God through this one ACT. The VERY reason why we CANNOT, even IMPOSSIBLE to attribute the RAPTURE to be prior to the event described here.

Now the question worth asking is, Why was the scroll so perfectly SEALED? David in the Psalms said, “**No one can REDEEM the life of another or give to God a ransom for them**— the ransom for a life is **COSTLY**, no payment is ever enough— **so that THEY should LIVE on FOREVER and NOT see DECAY**.” Psalms 49:7-9 The Perfect Seal represents the word of God. That is the judgement of death pronounced upon Adam’s SIN was so ABIDING that Nothing in ALL of Creation could undo it. So God sought out a means by which His Justice could be satisfied. The perfect seal also represents the far reaching consequences of that one event. That is, Not only was the Earth Shaken but Heaven itself. [Haggai 2:6] Paul says, “**But we speak in a mystery, the wisdom of God having been HIDDEN**, which God foreordained before the ages for our glory, **which NONE of the RULERS of this age has UNDERSTOOD**. For if they had understood it, **they WOULD NOT have CRUCIFIED the LORD of GLORY**.” 1 Corinthians 2:7-8 That is the redemption of mankind from SIN and the consequence of that event were both concealed within the scroll. Because if they knew losing their grasp on earth will result in their own judgement to hell they would have NEVER crucified HIM.

So the Scroll Sealed with Seven Seals contained within it the secret plan of God that was established from the foundation of the world. So we see the angel asking the question, “Who is Worthy to open the Scroll?” and we see below a Lamb as though SLAIN taking the scroll to open this SECRET! Whereby the principalities and powers in the heavenly places received a rude awakening, as His victory was FIRST established in heaven, in this astonishing term, “**WAR broke out in Heaven**.” Revelation 12:7 After which John says, “And I heard a **great voice in heaven**, saying: “**Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ have come**, because **the accuser of our brothers**

has been thrown down, the one accusing them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10 So heaven itself was shaken when mankind was redeemed from death and a Man was exalted to sit at the right hand of power of God. Bringing about the close of the AGE and the CASTING OUT of ALL causes of offence from the whole creation of GOD that RIGHTEOUSNESS may reign forever. And this Secret could never have been revealed until ALL was FINISHED in Christ.

And Paul describes the whole process from the first thing that was ANNULLED which is the authority of Death, “For since **death came by a man, so also by a Man has come the resurrection of the dead**. For as indeed in Adam all die, so also **in Christ all will be made alive**. But each in [their] own order: **Christ the firstfruit, then those of Christ at His coming**, then the end, **when He shall hand over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He shall have ANNULLED ALL DOMINION, and all authority and power**. For it behoves Him to reign until He shall have put all the enemies under His feet. **The LAST enemy to be ABOLISHED is death.**” 1 Corinthians 15:21-26 That is everyone who dies in Christ has passed from the authority of death to Life, the reason the early Christians made the point to say they fell asleep in Christ NOT died. [John 5:24]

“And **NO ONE in heaven, nor upon the earth, nor under the earth**, was able to open the scroll, nor to see it. And I was **WEEPING** loudly, because **no one was found WORTHY to open the scroll, nor to see it.**” [vs. 3-4]

As we have shown above the purpose of the scroll is to purchase the earth back from the grip of death and corruption. And no one in all of creation was able to make payment for the SINS of mankind in order to annul the Perfect Seal of judgement of death spoken over Adam. So here we see all aspects of creation mentioned, heaven, earth, and under the earth and no one in all creation was found to be worthy to open the scroll. Which in itself speaks of Christ’s Deity for only God can be outside of all creation, of heaven, earth and under the earth.

Again, the point NEEDS to be stressed that John was NOT weeping here because God’s wrath did not find a means to be vented out on the earth, he is not crying so the earth could be judged. We have Ezekiel as an example who lived in a time of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God, yet even he fell crying before God when he saw the six angels go out the sanctuary putting to death all those without the mark of God. [Ezekiel 9] So the Scroll must represent such beauty that the revelation of which will bring unspeakable joy to mankind, this is the reason why John WEPT at the prospect it might NOT be opened.

“And one of the **ELDERS** says to me, “**Do not WEEP**. Behold, **the LION of the tribe of Judah, the ROOT of David, has OVERCOME to open the scroll and its seven seals.**” And I saw in the **MIDST** of the **throne** and of the **four living creatures**, and in the **MIDST of the elders, a Lamb standing as having been SLAIN, having seven HORNS and seven EYES, which are the seven Spirits of God** having been sent out into all the earth. And He came and **took it out of the right hand of the One sitting on the throne.**” [vs. 5-7]

One of the elders answers John to console him. There is a [subjective] point to be made here, it is not an angel that answered John, but an ELDER that is one who has the same vested interests as with every other human being in seeing the scrolls being opened.

Now even though no one in heaven, earth and under the earth was worthy to open the scroll, the one that opened the seal is described in human terms, “The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David.” As mentioned above, “the Lion” is to illustrate the Lord’s Kingship. [Matthew 1:1] And the elder calls Him the ROOT of David not the branch of. In respect to this the Lord asked the Pharisees the question, “**How do they declare the Christ to be Son of David?** For David himself says in the book of Psalms: ‘**The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, until I place Your enemies, as a footstool of Your feet.”**’”

David therefore calls Him Lord, and how is He his son?" Luke 20:41-44 That is even though the Lord Jesus Christ came through the lineage of the family of David, His Beginning is from everlasting, so He is both the Son and the Father of David, both the Branch and the Root.

So One who is outside of all creation had to take on flesh blood, and Paul describing the Lord's roots in Israel writes, "And from whom **is Christ according to the flesh, being God over all**, blessed to the ages." Romans 9:5 He also writes in Hebrews "Therefore, **since the children have partaken of blood and of flesh, He also likewise took part in the same things, so that through His death He might destroy the one holding the power of death**, that is, the devil." Hebrews 2:14 So death through Sin was a means by which the devil had power over the world and everyone of us who have sinned were subject to be held by death indefinitely until our sins were accounted for. So when the Lord introduced Himself at the beginning of the book He says, "Fear not. I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. And **I was dead, and behold I am living to the ages of the ages, and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.**" Revelation 1:17-18 So Christ through death had obtained the power over Death and Hades and rendered the devil powerless when He put away Sin once and for all. [Hebrews 9:26]

So we see Him here as a Lamb slain [crucified] with seven horns and seven eyes which represent the Seven Spirits of God, and receiving the Sealed Scroll by which our covenant with sin and death was forever ANNULLED. [Isaiah 28:16-18] And Paul describes this vision as, "How much more will **the blood of Christ, who through the ETERNAL SPIRIT offered Himself unblemished to God**, purify our conscience from dead works, **in order to serve the living God!** And because of this, **He is the mediator of a NEW COVENANT**, so that, death having taken place for **REDEMPTION of the transgressions under the first covenant**, those having been called **might receive the promise of the ETERNAL inheritance.**" Hebrews 9:14-15 In this one description, Paul showed the Lamb was SLAIN, through the ETERNAL SPIRIT [seven horns and seven eyes] and receiving the promise of ETERNAL inheritance [opened the sealed Scroll.] NOTE: The Law was established as a COVENANT of Death NOT LIFE, that is the Law to a sinner is condemnation and death not life. [2 Corinthians 3:7]

The focus being Christ had to die first before He could take the scroll from the right hand of God. Then what His blood purchased becomes the foremost IMPORTANT thing. So through death Christ won the victory over the world, and He has made a way by which a harvest may be gathered to God and at same time judgement to be pronounced on the heavenly hosts: the enemies of God. As the Lord said, "**Now the ruler of this world is judged.**" John 16:11 So the Scroll with the Seven Seals represents Authority and Power by which the current age in heaven and earth is to be brought to a close and the kingdom of God to be established and to reign forever. [1 Corinthians 15:24-28]

And the Seven Horns: represents perfect rulership. Isaiah says, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and **the government will be upon His shoulder**. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom**, to order it and establish it with judgement and justice **from that time forward, even forever.**" Isaiah 9:6-7

The point is the scroll is NOT JUST a representation of future events nor of Judgments but a cumulation of ALL events through the One act of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"And when **He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders FELL DOWN before the Lamb**, each **having a HARP**, and **GOLDEN BOWLS** being full of incenses, **which are the PRAYERS of the SAINTS**. And they are singing A NEW SONG, saying, "**Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals, BECAUSE You were SLAIN, and You PURCHASED to God by Your blood**, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and **You have made THEM a kingdom and priests to our God; and THEY WILL REIGN UPON the EARTH.**" [vs. 8-10]

There are several places where the four living creatures are paired up with the twenty-four elders, the significance of which is to show the representation of both heaven and earth being brought under the One rule of the Lord. As Paul in Colossians says, "Because all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him, and **by Him to reconcile all things to Himself**, having made peace by **the blood of His cross through Him, whether the things on the EARTH or the things in the HEAVENS.**" Colossians 1:19-20 and also in [Ephesians 1:10, Philippians 2:9-11] The only place where the twenty-four elders were mentioned alone is Chapter 11 when the announcement is referring only to the earth. So the scene described here shows all of heaven and earth represented by these two groups, being brought under subjection to Him. So when Jesus was raised from the dead, He said, "**All authority in heaven and on the earth has been given to Me.**" Matthew 28:18

So the secret to this chapter is found in the answer given to the question the angel asked, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seal?" The fact that it took the blood of Christ to receive the scroll and break its seals is the answer. "**Because You were slain, and You purchased to God by Your blood.**" The point is God did NOT sacrifice His Son JUST so He could judge the world. [John 12:47] And the reason given, "**You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.**" The Redemption of the earth is the purpose.

Again, to illustrate by ALL KINDS of assurance that this chapter is NOT after the Rapture but the beginnings of the Redemption of God. The scene described here is labelled with the term "**A NEW SONG**" which is a song of redemption and reigning upon the earth. This was the proclamation in heaven when Christ was lifted up from the earth and entered into heaven itself by His blood and obtained from GOD the PROMISE. "**For Christ has entered not into holy places made by hands, copies of the true ones, but into heaven itself, NOW to APPEAR for us in the PRESENCE of God.**" Hebrews 9:24 Through which the Lord Jesus Christ made the way for us, so we who were created flesh and blood and of the earth, may enter into heaven with Him. "Therefore brothers, **having confidence for entering the holy places by the blood of Jesus**, by a new and living way, which **He dedicated for us through the veil that is His flesh**, and having a great priest over the house of God." Hebrews 10:19-21 THIS is the SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OPEN DOOR in heaven.

So Christ came to earth as a Lamb and He purchased the world to God by His blood. Having obtained victory over the devil and death. **Christ the Man** received the kingdom both of heaven and of earth. And the victory He has won over the devil in authority and dominion He has given to us.

The final point we would like to make in respect to the rapture of the church is, when the Twenty-four Elders and the four living creatures fell before the throne, they had a HARP and GOLDEN BOWLS filled with the prayer of saints. Now if the church was raptured why would they have prayers of the saints? The saints themselves would have been in heaven with them and those "left" on the earth have yet to receive the proclamation of the two prophets.

"And I looked, and I heard **the voice of many ANGELS around the throne, and of the living creatures, and of the elders; and THEIR number was myriads of myriads** and thousands of thousands, saying in a loud voice: "**WORTHY is the LAMB having been SLAIN, to RECEIVE** the power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing!" [vs. 11-12]

Now this is the second aspect of the Scroll. The first was to purchase to God the earth and redeem mankind from their Sins in order to break the seal of Death that was binding upon all children of Adam. The second aspect of which is to receive the kingdom of both heaven and earth. As Paul says of the Lord, "And having been found in appearance as a man **He humbled Himself, having become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also highly exalted Him** and granted to **Him the name above every name.**" Philippians 2:8-9 NOTE, it is Jesus Christ the Son of Man, who was exalted having suffered the

taste of death. The Word is always God, but Christ as Man having been brought low for the suffering of death is now highly exalted to the throne of God and us with Him. As Paul says, **“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, because of the suffering of death, having been CROWNED with GLORY and with HONOUR, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.”** Hebrews 2:9

One of the main divisive points of our understanding of the book of Revelation is the point of Rapture as mentioned in the previous chapter. For this reason every opportunity was sought out to repeatedly point out anything that refutes the traditionally accepted “theory” that by all means possible we may be grounded on a single foundation of truth. Now, traditional teaching assumes the church to have been raptured at this point, before the Lord opens the SEALS of JUDGEMENT upon the earth. However in the scene described above we have a myriad of myriads of angels in heaven yet there is NOT a single description that can be attributed to the redeemed church, only the twenty-four elders who are symbolic representatives of mankind.

So the scene John is describing to us is, the Lord Jesus Christ Triumphantly entering heaven and receiving from God the Father ALL Authority and Power. And ALL of Heaven, “the Angels” celebrates. This is a vital point, the RAPTURE has not taken place because the gospel was NOT even preached. Because Only when He had received this scroll did the Lord send the Helper, the Lord of the Harvest to the earth that the gospel was preached. **“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes forth from the Father, He will bear witness concerning Me. And you also bear witness, because you are with Me from the beginning.”** John 15:26-27

“And I heard every creature which is in heaven, and upon the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and everything in them, saying: “To the One sitting on the throne, and to the Lamb, blessing and honour and glory and might to the ages of the ages.” And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshipped.” [vs. 13-14]

Paul in Philippians summarises what is being celebrated, **“Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider to be equal with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself, having taken the form of a servant, having been made in the likeness of men. And having been found in appearance as a man He humbled Himself, having become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also highly exalted Him, and granted to Him the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in the heavens and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** Philippians 2:6-11 So we are looking at the complete picture, all of creation proclaiming Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father.

The Lord Jesus Christ has entered heaven and exalted to sit upon the throne with His Father, having accomplished eternal redemption! What follows is the proclamation of this Victory to all the inhabitants of the earth, in the breaking of the Seals.

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