

Pentecost Resurrection #8

Seven Weeks of Harvest & The Seven Churches

As we saw, there are parallels between things in the Old Testament and in the New Testament; and so we want to continue on that today. And I just might recommend that you need to get the series that we have done on *Assaults Against the Church* and there might be another short series or two that we could add concerning the Church. But we're going to see some parallels here today.

Let's come to Deuteronomy 16 first. And just as we have seen, God always uses the Holy Days to fulfill His will. And the Holy Days are a prophecy of what He is going to do. Now it's not always completely shown in the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, some of the things that we have seen—and if you've gone through book *God's Plan for Mankind [Salvation] Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days*, you'll see that a good number of those things are not understood until the book of Revelation was written. And then that gives you some keys to take some of the things that we're going to cover today in Deuteronomy 16 and Leviticus 23, that then we can go to the book of Revelation and see a fulfillment of that. Just like we went through the three Passovers *From Mt. Sinai to Mt. Sion*, and so forth; likewise, we are going to see that there is a significance of the seven weeks counting to Pentecost and there is a significance of the 50th day that has a spiritual fulfillment in the book of Revelation.

So let's begin here—Deuteronomy 16:9:

"You shall count seven weeks to yourselves..."

Now, how long is a week? *Seven days*. If you don't have a full week, you would say, like it does up here, just a few verses up: v 8, the very next verse up: "Six days you shall eat unleavened bread...." And it states six days because the instructions for the first day have already taken place, so you have six days left. So the key is: With a week you cannot have a partial week—must be a full seven days.

Now let's continue on—Deut. 16:9:

"...Begin to count the seven weeks...."

[Now, we're going to see something else when we get to Lev. 23—so seven weeks]

...from the time you *first* began to put the sickle to the grain. And you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God according to the sufficiency of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give according as the LORD your God has blessed you. And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you, and your son, and your

daughter, and your male servant, and your female servant, and the Levite inside your gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, those among you, in the place which the LORD your God has chosen to place His name there" (vs 9-11).

Well, in the New Testament God places His name wherever He puts His Spirit. So those people, as it says in the New Testament, "where two or three are gathered together there I am in the midst of you"—that's the place that God has chosen, because those are His people. So that's why we don't go to Jerusalem and that's why Jesus said we're not going to worship in Jerusalem, but those that are going to worship God will worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4).

Now, let's go to Leviticus 23 and let's look at something that really helps us understand this. How many are acquainted with accounting and bookkeeping procedures? A lot of you may be. Some of you may not be, but they have what is called a "double-entry" bookkeeping system. Now a "double-entry" bookkeeping system is what they use in all businesses so that they can balance the books. You have income come in, you have expense go out. And each time there is a "double-entry" into the books. So you can take the "double-entry" and you can balance it out. I know when I was taking accounting at the College of San Mateo, I took a whole year of accounting, so that's what we had to do. We had to learn to do that and practice doing it, so then we could make all the books balance and justify it. Now when you get a certified accountant's seal of approval on your books, that means he has checked all of the accounts, all of the "double-entry" bookkeeping and has found it to balance.

Now why do I bring that up here? *Because it is a principle.* And the principle is this: We are to take a "line here, a line there, precept upon precept" and build the Scriptures together. So back in Deut. 16 we have seven weeks—a week being seven days.

Now let's read it here in Leviticus 23:15:

"And you shall count to you beginning with the next day after the Sabbath...

[And as we have stressed, that's the weekly Sabbath—and that's what the Hebrew means. And the next day after the Sabbath is what day? *First day of the week.*]

...beginning with the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete."

Now, isn't that interesting? We have seven weeks, then the double-entry bookkeeping on counting is what? *Seven Sabbaths, showing when the week ends.* A week never ends on a Sunday—in spite of how they've rearranged the calendar in Europe.

Now we need to understand this: When you count seven weeks and seven Sabbaths for 49 days, you have a continuous block of days ending in seven Sabbaths—**seven complete weeks**. If you go the way the Pharisees do, counting beginning the day after the first Holy Day, you end up with two partial weeks. As a matter of fact, you do not have whole weeks in any of the setup. For example: If the Holy Day is on a Sunday, which it was this year, they begin counting on Monday. So every week is deficient, because seven days—you have six plus one; six plus one; six plus one—and you go from one week, in order to get the seventh day, you must pick up the first day of the next week. That's not how God wants it. So this you can liken to "double-entry" bookkeeping. Likewise, when those who believe in a Monday Pentecost, they can never reconcile the "double-entry" bookkeeping, that there is never, *never* a Monday following a weekly Sabbath. Now if you can provide that for me, then I'll listen to your argument.

"...seven Sabbaths shall be complete. Even unto the day after the seventh Sabbath you shall number fifty days. And you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD" (vs 15-16).

Now, we'll talk a little bit more about that tomorrow.

Now, we've also seen in our study—let's turn back here to Revelation 2 & 3—that Pentecost is a *grain harvest feast*. And we know that Jesus gave the parable concerning the harvest, planting of the seed, the removing of the tares; and He said the harvest is at the end of the age. Well, when we come to Rev. 2 & 3 we need to ask some additional questions: When John was given this vision of the book of Revelation, were there more than seven churches in existence at that time? *Yes! Many more*. As a matter of fact, Paul wrote to seven additional churches, only one of which is named here in Rev. 2. Why would God choose seven churches? And why would He put it in the way that He put it? Now when we combine the fulfilling of God's plan on the Holy Days, and also on His other instructions—because you see, the beginning of the harvest was the Wave Sheaf Offering Day, but the harvest continued.

Seven weeks until you come to the day after the seventh week, which then is the 50th day. Then you combine that with the importance then of receiving the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Act 2). Let's also ask another question that's very important: Does God, in prophecy, show all the major nations of the world in relationship to the 12 tribes of Israel? *Yes, He does, in the different prophecies*. He talks about Babylon; He talks about Tyre; He talks about Greece and Rome—doesn't He? *Yes!* And beginning with Daniel, we have, as we have seen, the beginning of God's dealing with the nations of the world in the end-time. And in the book of Revelation we have the fulfilling of it.

Now, what is the most important thing that God is doing on earth today? Let's ask that question: What is the most important thing that God is doing? Which means the most

important thing in God's mind, His people, who are called what? *The Church*. Since that's the most important, do you think that God would leave out prophecies concerning His Church that are essential in understanding the completing of His plan? Now, I heard of a category of belief called *Pretists*—and they say that everything that we find in the prophecies and Revelation was completed in 70 AD—even the resurrection. Well, they don't keep the Holy Days of God and they don't know how to put the Bible together and they're completely wrong!

So, let's answer the question: Since the Church is the most important thing that's going on, on the earth today, and He has given His Spirit to all of those who repent and He brings them into His Church—because they receive the Holy Spirit—then God did give a prophecy of His Church. And that's the first thing we find in the book of Revelation—2 & 3—is a prophecy and a projected history of the Church of God, from the time of John down to the return of Jesus Christ. How many churches do we find? Ten, twelve? *No, seven!* And since the resurrection is the harvest, do not the prophecy of these seven churches also tell us that this is the harvest of God, as depicted back in Deut. 16 and Lev. 23 concerning His Church? Because the grain harvest of itself has no spiritual consequence. But since we are the harvest of God this has great spiritual consequence.

So, we're going to do a little review concerning the harvest of the seven weeks, as depicted by the seven churches today. Now, let's come to Revelation, the last part of chapter one, and let's see the instructions that God gave to John.

Revelation 1:19—after He told him He had the keys of the grave and of death:

"Write the things that you saw...

[which is the verses right up to v 19]

...and the things that are...

[That means the seven churches that were present tense—are—at the time he was writing.]

...and the things that shall take place hereafter."

Now how far does the 'hereafter' go to? *From that time all the way out to New Jerusalem*. So in this,

- God is including the Church;
- He's including what He is doing in heaven;
- and He is including what He is going to do with the nations of the earth,

all in relationship to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ—and then finally ending in New Jerusalem. So, this is really a tremendous book! That's why, in the proper order of the Bible, it is the seventh division of the Bible; and fittingly so because you cannot understand the rest of the Bible without Revelation, and you cannot understand Revelation without the rest of the Bible.

Now notice what He says here,

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

And what we see here—and I've covered it in other sermons, so we're just going to review some of these things—showing the seven week harvest of the Old Testament is pictured by the seven church harvest of Rev. 2 & 3. Then we are going to see there's one more day to Pentecost in order to celebrate the harvest. And how is God going to use that day? So we'll see this. Now what we are going to see:

- This talks about the churches **then** that were existing.
- It's a prophecy of God's Church **down through history**.
- It is a prophecy of the **attitudes** within the Churches of God down through history.

And also, we can say because there are three fulfillments of things, as we have seen:

- We have the **present** churches
- The **prophetic** churches
- And then what do we have left? The churches **at the end-time**.

Now let's understand the way that these seven churches are divided down by these particular cities back toward the end of the first century AD is this:

- They depict all of the problems and difficulties that the Church will face.
- They depict all the struggles that the Church will have with the world.
- They show how that Christ is the Head of the Church.
- They show how He deals with the Church as a whole; and with each of us individually.

So, at the end, as God looks down at the churches, He sees them differently than we do. We see different corporate Churches of God—one here, one there, one another place. That's fine. God doesn't look to corporations. He looks to the teachings and the attitudes within those

churches as identifying them as His. Now, I received an e-mail from a woman where when she read there in Rev. 5 the seven horns in the head of the Lamb, showed that Jesus was the Head of the Church, and she said, "How can He be the Head of all the Churches of God if this church has those problems and this church has these problems and that church has another set of problems?" Well, the answer is: They're all identified here in Rev. 2 & 3. And since He's the Head of the Church, just like He is the Head of each one of us with His Spirit, when we go astray does God correct us? *Yes!* When the Church goes astray, does God correct it? *Yes!* And so, we will see as we read the summary of this overview of the churches—Rev. 2 & 3—in our lifetimes we have lived thorough almost every phase of these churches. We have seen them, haven't we? And we've seen the problems that people have had. We've seen the successes that people have had. We have seen how many have heeded the admonishments of Christ and have repented and have overcome. So we see all of that in these two chapters.

So as we read this, let's look and see how the Church functions under Christ's leadership and even when there are problems, God does not kick them out unless there is no redemption. Let's give you an example: I talked to a man recently who had been in the Church of God 40 years—and he came out of the Catholic Church. And when all of the problems started within Worldwide, at that time, he became discouraged and went here and went there and almost gave up on God, but he never gave up on God. So when I talked to him, now being pretty close to 80 years old, he was rather distraught and worried that he may have committed the unpardonable sin. And so, I reminded him that as long as there is life there's hope, and as long as there is conscience there is repentance. So his situation was not that he had committed the unpardonable sin, but he was like the prodigal son who had gone and had done everything that he should not have done and finally God convicted him in his conscience to repent and come back.

So likewise, this is how God is dealing with the seven churches. Not only with us individually, in our lives and what we do, but also collectively in the different groups of the Churches of God. So let's begin right here with the Church at Ephesus.

Revelation 2:1: "To the angel of the Ephesian church, write: These things says He Who holds the seven stars in His right hand, Who walks in *the* midst of the seven golden lampstands."

He's always in the midst of His Church, isn't He? *Yes, He is!* One other side thing we need to understand: the lampstands, if you walk in the midst of them, have to be in a circle—not on a Menorah. How can you walk in the midst of a Menorah? If you can do that let me know. So these have to be in a circle, showing that the Churches are connected to each other: one era, if we could put it that way, comes out of the previous one which sows the seed for the next one. And **Christ is always in the midst of it;** and sometimes He's happy with what the Church is doing, and sometimes He is a little peeved at what they are doing, and other times He's

downright angry at what they are doing—and He warns them that correction is coming! So, we'll see that. He always acknowledges what they do.

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

[So, this is something we always need to do. That goes right back to what Jesus told His disciples, beginning in Matt. 7: 'beware of false prophets, come to you in sheep's clothing, etc.]

...And *that* you have borne *much* and have endured, and for My name's sake have labored and have not grown weary" (vs 2-3).

Now this tells us positive things that we do. It also tells us another thing. And if you get into a discussion with someone who says, 'Well, you don't need any works.' Say, 'Oh my, can we read—do you have a Bible?' And when I would go out and visit new people, I would never take a Bible with me, I would always use theirs. I would say, 'Do you have a Bible?' And I would open to this place. This told me several things:

- Do they read the Bible, because I can see if they had been reading it, or if they marked it or whatever.
- It shows that in using their Bible I don't have one that is not the same as theirs.

Verse 4: "Nevertheless, I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love....

[Now, in the Greek *first* is 'prōtos' which means *primary*—and that means *leaving off loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being*. So, what happened to them, they got all involved in busy activities of helping people in a physical way and they did not retain the love of God to really teach them what they really needed to learn spiritually. And obviously, this happened over a period of time. And we see that much in the Protestant churches today. They're focusing on things they can do to work in the community, etc.]

...Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; for if *you do* not, I will come to you quickly; and I will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent" (vs 4-5).

So, this shows us that we always need to repent.

So, what can we do every day in praying to God? *Just exactly as Jesus said: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us"*—every day. That keeps us in a repentant attitude toward God. Now He gives them another commendation:

"But this you have: that you hate the works of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate" (v 6).

And we'll talk about this a little later as we come to the church in Pergamos. Suffice to say, the Nicolaitanes fall into two categories:

- Who preach that once you have attained a certain height of righteousness you don't need the law anymore.
- Are those who exercise the rule as dictators over God's people.

Now, in every one of the churches He gives an admonition very similar to v 7:

"The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches....

[Isn't that something! What are the three words which tell us concisely how we are to have our relationship with God? *Obey My voice*. You find that through the whole Bible, so you have it right here.]

...let him hear what the Spirit says to the **churches**...

[And notice, it includes all of them, not just that one church; because there will be various degrees of attitudes even within one congregation.]

...To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the tree of life that is in *the* midst of the paradise of God."

Now we're going to see, as we go through, out of the seven churches—and we'll talk about this a little later on—only two have not been given correction by Christ. Five have been given varying degrees of correction, and some of them quite strongly. But remember, **they're still God's Church**, so He intervenes to correct them. And we will see, as we read through this, many of the things, with the exception of outright martyrdom, which we know is coming—now I'm sure that there are some in other countries that have been outright martyred. Living in some of the countries that are out there today they get very wild and they can be in a terrible situation. Now, let's move on.

Verse 8: ". And to the angel of the church of *the* Smyrneans write: These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead but is alive. I know your works and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich)..." (vs 8-9).

And you see, that's what's wrong with this world, today. We have the most in physical goods we could ever want, and we are the most dissatisfied, unhappy people filled with all kinds of problems and difficulties, even within the Church because success is not how much you have in the bank; success is not how much you own; success is not the number of gadgets that you have. **Success is: Do you know God!** And Harry and I were talking about that yesterday. He

brought up about the *Seven Laws of Success*. And I said: You know in the past we had it all wrong; because given six of the laws of success and the last is have contact with God. That should have been the first one. Because you can't have any success in life for the purpose of life and why you're here and where you're going unless you know God and have contact with Him. So it doesn't matter your physical circumstances.

"...(you are rich), and the blasphemy of those who declare themselves to be Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan...."

[And that's just a summary of all the false church systems that came out of the synagogue and later went into the Roman Catholic Church. And we could also include with that the other religions of the world.]

...Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer...." (vs 9-10).

And living in the age that we are living in and looking at the election that we are looking at today, and the state of the world, we know we're going to suffer. We don't know how long it will be, we don't know what is going to transpire, but we are going to be—if it comes out the way it looks—we're all going to be 'Obamaized'—and what that means we'll have to wait and see. One person said: 'You have a good clue if you look as to what happened in So. Africa. So we're going to face the same things here.

"...Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried...

[Put in your notes there: Matt. 10—that happens to give a witness to those people in the world.]

...and you shall have tribulation ten days....

[Now, I want you understand the word 'tribulation' here, because that's different than we find the Church of Philadelphia back in Rev. 3—because a lot of people think the 'time of temptation' coming on the whole world is the tribulation—it is not, it's the time just before the tribulation. Now if a day is a year, that means ten years.]

...Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life" (v 10).

Question: Do we all have to be faithful unto death? *Yes, indeed!* And the older you get, the more that you realize that. Now hold you place here and let's come to Psalm 71—I know I have covered this before, but for those of us who are getting old and gray, which I am; and those of you who are joining me, which you are; and those of you who are still young and have no thought of when you will be old, which you will be—remember this promise:

Psalm 71:14: "But I will hope without ceasing, and I will praise You more and more. My mouth shall show forth Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I do not know how many they are...."

[that is 'my enemies']

...I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD; I will speak of Your righteousness, even of Yours alone. O God, You have taught me from my youth; and until now I have declared Your wonderful works....

[now notice v 18]:

...But now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me until I have declared Your strength to this generation, and Your power to everyone who is to come" (vs 14-18).

So when we're old and gray-headed God is not going to forsake us. He has brought us to this point to see us safely in the grave. That's why Paul said, when someone dies in the faith, we're not to be sorrowful like others in the world who have no hope.

So that ties right in here with what we're talking about concerning the Church of Smyrna.

Revelation 2:10: "...Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life...."

[And also, Matt. 10 where it says: 'Do not fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the life. Fear Him who can destroy both in Gehenna.'] (Now, v 11):

...The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the **churches**....

[Again, *all of the churches*; because in the past we've had this sort of spiritual smugness, which is the opposite of what it should be. 'Oh, we're Philadelphians, we're not like them.' And what happened? *We became like the other churches*—didn't we? And even like the world—didn't we? *Yes!*]

...The one who overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death" (vs 10-11).

Now, v 12: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write: These things says He Who has the sharp two-edged sword."

Now this is kind of a little different version of God and Christ. As one man who heard a sermon in his Sunday-keeping church where he said, 'Homosexuality is an abomination to God.' And he got up and walked out and said, 'God loves everyone.' Well, He does! But the question is: *Do you love Him?* And in loving people, He corrects those, remember—as we'll see a little later—all those He loves. So here we have a serious problem. That's why He says,

'has the sharp two-edged sword'; because when it comes time for correction, when it comes time for taking action Christ is going to do it after many warnings and times that they need to overcome and repent—if they would.

"I know your works...

[and to everyone He says, 'I know your works'—which means *God knows everything about us*, doesn't He? If His Spirit is in us, which it is, doesn't He know everything? *Yes!* That's why He cleanses out the sin within so that we can repent and change.]

...and where you dwell..." (v 13).

So this is: they were living in the world, and even though they should not have been part of the world, they absorbed into their church structure things of the religions of the world, which are inspired of Satan the devil. That's why! That's why Protestantism is not going to wake up until they come to the point that they cast off all of the basic things that are in these old commentaries and teachings going back to the 1600s. Because all that is is reformed Catholicism.

"...know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan *is*...

[It's true! If you live in the middle of 'Sin City' it's going to effect you, right? *Yes!* Now in Pergamos, they had a huge temple to Zeus; and a great altar to Zeus—Satan's throne is.]

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

Now, if you're living right in the middle of 'Sin City' Satan is going to have a convenient bombardment range, isn't he? *With his spirit of the power of the air, yes indeed!* Did they fall victim to these things? *Yes!*

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

Now hold your place here and let's come to the book of Jude. Let's understand how serious that the doctrine of Balaam is. Jude (pg. 1,142 in the new Bible)—now let's see how this is equated. Let's pick it up here in v 10:

"As for these...

[that is the ones who are sinning]

...whatever things they do not understand, they blaspheme...

[Isn't that interesting. Don't they do that with the Sabbath. They don't understand it and say, 'Oh, you're trying to get justification by works of law.' **No way!** They blaspheme.]

...but whatever things they understand by instinct, as irrational brute beasts, they are corrupting themselves in these things.

[now notice v 11]:

Woe to them! For **they have walked in the way of Cain...**" (vs 10-11).

Now what is the 'way of Cain'? *The way of Cain is taking what God has commanded and you're doing it with your own rules and regulations and not Gods—because he brought an offering he should not have brought, and God told him it wasn't satisfactory. So this means the attitude of taking pagan things and adding to the way of God as it came down through history. That's why it says 'the way of Cain.'*

Now, notice how he connects this:

"...and for gain, they have wholly given themselves up to **Balaam's delusion...**

[And 'Balaam's delusion' was that he could curse the children of Israel and God forced him to bless; and the 'delusion of Balaam' was that he taught Balak to invite the children of Israel over for a nice religious meal and sacrifices of meat—which they didn't have very much of when they were in the wilderness; they just had all that horrible manna, you know—and to come over and commit fornication and have a good time. 'We'll provide the music and we'll have a wonderful Rock Concert.' Well, you can read that in Num. 24-25.]

...and have perished in the rebellion of Korah" (v 11).

That is trying to take to yourself the things that you shouldn't be.

Now we have one man who has done that recently. There have been many others. But he has said that he and his wife are the two witnesses. And not one of the things that they have said would come to pass has happened. So he has said, 'Well, if they don't happen by Pentecost [which is tomorrow] then I'll declare myself a false prophet.' And then a little later he thought it over and said, 'Well, maybe I better give myself a little more time.' He says, 'By the end of July.' Where there were to be millions and millions killed in America and blood running in the streets. Let's see what his excuse is at the end of July. I don't think he's going to repent, fold up his tent and say, 'I'm a false prophet.' Because how is he going to support himself? See, *after gain!*

Now notice when we allow these things within the Church—v 12:

"These are subversive stains in your love feasts...

[That's what the feasts of God are: they are *love feasts*. To learn to love God and love each other.]

...feasting in person together *with you*; fearlessly they are **feeding themselves**. *They are* clouds without water, being driven by the winds; trees of late autumn, without *any* fruit, uprooted, twice dead..."

Showing that they're going to face the second death. So this gets to be pretty serious stuff.

Come back to Revelation 2—So when we have Balaam and Balak, we also have "the way of Cain" connected with it. That's why Jude, in vs 3-4, we need to "strive for the faith once delivered to the saints."

Now Revelation 2:15—notice how serious the condition of this church was:

"Moreover, you also have *those* who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate."

(go to the next track)

Let's pick it up in Revelation 2:16—this is here, this and the next one with Thyatira are here so that everyone will realize there is a limit to what God will tolerate in trying to bring you to repentance. And when you cross that line you make yourself an enemy of God. And this is what the children of Israel and the house of Judah have never been able to figure out. When Jeremiah told the Jews, 'Turn yourself in and go captive into Babylon and God will bless you'; he said, *You're with the enemy*. 'No, God raised up Nebuchadnezzar against you because of your sins—and He's going to give one last chance. If you go, you'll survive. If you don't, you die.' So this is what it is with the church at Pergamos. You can only go so far in bringing satanic things into the Church—there's going to be a severe penalty to pay. Now, have we seen that happen in our day? *Yes!* Let's read it:

Revelation 2:16: "Repent! For if *you* do not *repent*, I will come to you quickly, and will make war against them with the sword of My mouth....

[Christ fighting His own Church because of sins and wrong practices and bringing in satanic philosophies, satanic interpretation of Scripture, and so forth. So He wants everyone to get the point.]

(v 17): ...The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the hidden manna; and I will give

him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows except the one who receives *it*."

So in each case, as we go through this, we are seeing what? *Upon repentance, then God will restore them*. That's important to understand. God will restore them.

Now we continue with the church in Thyatira, and here they went even further than the church at Pergamos. Although He had a lot of good things to say about them.

Verse 18: "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things says the Son of God, He Who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet *are* like fine brass. I know your works, and love, and service, and faith, and your endurance, and your works...

[So He mentions 'works' twice—so they did a lot of things. And I think the closest in history we can come to understand this, is if you've seen the DVD that we send out called *Israel of the Alps*. If you've seen *Israel of the Alps* this pretty well describes this era of the Church in history.]

...and the last *are* more than the first...

[So we'll just have to see who that is. However, in my own mind—so I don't have my cowbell out, so I'll ring it in abstentia—I think that the end-time of these of the church at Thyatira are the Seventh Day Adventist. And there are a lot of Seventh Day Adventist who are keeping the Holy Days today.]

...and the last *are* more than the first. But I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel...

[and Jezebel was the daughter of the high priest of Canaan or Baal—so this is sun-worship; so this is direct prophecy of Catholics. And what is the Roman Catholic Church called? *The mother church*.]

...who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants into committing fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols" (vs 18-20)

—and that's exactly what the Eucharist is; sacrifice of the mass—that's what they call it. And they claim that the priest has the power to call Christ down to put His presence into the bread and into the wine. So what they do, they sacrifice Christ over every time they have a mass. When He was sacrificed ONCE!

So this is why God is so furious with this doctrine. Right along with that is also the doctrine of the trinity, which elevates Satan to a god-like status, when you understand it.

"And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, but she did not repent....

[And I think that was when the Protestant Reformation occurred; because they had the Council of Trent for how many years? *Over 40 years*. And there were even some at the Council of Trent who were saying the same thing as the Protestants: 'We need to go with the Scriptures alone'—*sola scriptura*. Other say, 'No, we need to go with tradition and Scripture.' Well, you know the end result of that is it's mostly all tradition and hardly any Scripture at all anymore. So they had a chance to repent but they didn't do it. Same way with her children. And the final conclusion, as you will read in *Rome's Challenge to the Protestant*—which is in the new Bible, the New Testament and also in *The Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days, Which?*—that end of the Council of Trent they came to the conclusion that they should include tradition because Sunday-keeping was a tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. And the Protestants, though they claim *sola scriptura*, retain Sunday, so they said, 'We'll look"—Protestants are not going by the Scriptures alone but they are going by the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, therefore 'we proclaim that the doctrine of the Council of Trent is *we go by tradition and by Scripture*.' So they had their chance and they blew it.

Now notice what God says He would do:

"Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation...

[now this is not THE great tribulation—but INTO great tribulation]

...unless they repent of their works" (v 22).

So if you follow the history of the Roman Catholic Church, from the time of the Protestant Reformation on down through their financing of the confederacy to a great extent to overthrow the Republic of the United States of America. And also their implications into the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, and you follow that down to the time of Garibaldi. Now Garibaldi was an Italian who then rose up to take away the power of the Roman Catholic Church—which he did. He took away all of the papal states—the temporal kingdoms of the pope, took it all away. And I think it was in 1880 or 90-something—I forget the exact date—the pope was confined in exile to the Vatican. And he was confined in exile to the Vatican and couldn't go travel anywhere until the Lateran Agreement that was signed between the papacy and Mussolini in 1929.

So He did. He corrected them!

"...unless they repent of their works."

They didn't do it, so He stripped it all away. Now notice v 23:

"And I will kill her children with death...

[That's beginning to happen with the Protestant churches today. I have an article which says that Evangelical Protestantism is in a 'death spiral.' They've had lots of chances to understand the Word of God. They've had lots of chances in changing their ways and keeping the Sabbath and keeping the Holy Days and getting rid of all the occult holidays, etc.]

...and all the churches..."

In other words, now hear ALL the Churches of God, by seeing the hand of God against His own Church and against those split-offs out of the Church of God, which became the Catholic and the Protestant and the Orthodox Church that ***God means business.***

"...and all the churches shall know that I am He Who searches *the* reins and hearts...

[So then He brings it back to each individual. So we have to ask the question ourselves: How do I stand before God? Well, if you're totally trusting in Christ, His sacrifice, His mercy, His kindness, His forgiveness, growing in grace and knowledge and have the Spirit of God, then you know you are standing in right standing with Him.]

...[But He] searches the reins and hearts; and I will give to each of you **according to your works**" (v 23).

So that's what we need to always...notice everyone, 'according to your works.' Protestants say, 'works don't count.' God says they mean a lot.

Now notice He says, all right—v 24:

"But to you I say, and to *the* rest who *are* in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will not cast upon you any other burden, But hold fast what you have until I come. And to the one who overcomes, and keeps My works unto *the* end, I will give authority over the nations; And he shall shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces; as I have also received from My Father; And I will give him the morning star....

[meaning *eternal life.*]

...The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vs 24-29).

So in all of this, we can see some of these things transpiring even today. Now we have seen this in the history of the Church, let's come to Revelation 3—now we've also seen this—and

it brings up the question: How far will a person sink away from God and God still deal with them. And I think Sardis is the epitome of that.

Revelation 3:1: "And to the angel of the church in Sardis, write: These things says He Who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works, *and* that you have a name as if you are alive, but are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which are about to die....

[So if you haven't died spiritually yet]

...For I have not found your works complete before God...

[So this is the lowest level of the line between acceptance and rejection.]

...Therefore, remember what you have received and heard, and hold on *to this*, and repent. Now then, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you shall by no means know what hour I will come upon you....

[And isn't it interesting, do trials always come when you know they're coming? *No! They always come as a surprise.*]

...You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white because they are worthy....

[Now notice this verse here, v 5]:

...The one who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments...

[which then are the white linen, the righteousness of the saints]

...and **I will not blot out his name from the book of life...**

[which tells you how close to losing salvation that those who are in this condition really are.]

...but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vs 1-6).

You see, human beings—with our nature—we have times when we're uplifted and inspired and enthusiastic and really going after things. We have times when we get kind of flat and blahs. We have times when certain people even give up more than they ought to and end up straying from God further than they should—and they know it. But if they repent and come back to God, He is merciful and kind and He won't cut them off, He will accept them back. However, their reward—though it's going to be good for all eternity—will be entirely

different than those who didn't go through that. So that's why it's important that we understand how consistent we need to be in our relationship with God.

Now we find in the next church, the church of Philadelphia...and of course everyone wants to be a Philadelphian, as I've said how many times over and over again. And unfortunately, there's a Church of God that calls itself The Philadelphia Church of God, and Philadelphia means *brotherly love*. And it is anything but "brotherly love." They are actually bringing into it the works of the Nicolaitanes and the harsh, overbearing authority so much so that if you don't belong to that corporate church you cannot even talk to your mother or your father or visit your own children.

So it shows the mental stupidity of people who do not test and prove; who do not know their Scriptures; who only follow what a man tells them; and they can't discern when he twists and distorts the Scriptures. How can you say you're the "church of brotherly love" but if you visit your father or mother or your children who are not in this church you're sinning against God? Doesn't work that way.

Now let's pick it up here in v 7:

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write: These things says the Holy One, the one Who *is* true; the one Who has the key of David...

[And the 'key of David' is *unlocking the understanding of the Scriptures*]

...Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens....

[Now we've also seen that happen, too, haven't we? Have there been doors to a college closed? *Yes, indeed*. Did God shut it? *Tight as can be!* So God is the one Who has to open the doors; shut the doors.]

...I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door...

[and that can mean *open to understanding Scripture*; that can mean *open to preaching the Gospel*; that can mean *open to understanding the prophecies that we see in the world today*. So it can mean many things.]

...and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name" (vs 7-8).

So the measure—the measure—of whether you are a Philadelphian or not is: Do you keep the Word of God and not deny His name. Let's examine this just a little bit. Let's come to the book of Titus.

Titus 1:9: "Holding steadfastly to the faithful word, according to the teachings of *Jesus Christ*, so that he may be able both to encourage with sound doctrine and to convict those who are gainsayers....

[So it shows what everyone who is a teacher is supposed to do concerning the Word of God.]

...For there are many rebellious and vain talkers and deceivers...

[Wow! Is that not true today? Just turn on your television. Look at that. Remember 'Rev' Wright. 'Rev' Wright is NOT RIGHT—probably wrong!]

...especially those from *the circumcision party*, Whose mouths must be stopped...

[That is within the congregations that he was responsible for. Obviously, you can't stop them out in the world.]

...who are subverting whole households, teaching things which *they* ought not, for the sake of selfish gain. One from among them, *even one* of their own prophets, said, 'Cretans *are* always liars, *and* evil, wild beasts, *and* lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. For this reason you *must* rebuke them severely, that they may be sound in the faith...

[Which means this: *That a minister or elder has full authority to rebuke for sin when it becomes a great public problem within a congregation. And he says 'severely'*]

...Not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men, which turn away from the truth" (vs 9-14).

You're not to allow anything to turn you away from the Truth.

"To the pure, all things *are* pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing *is* pure; rather, both their minds and consciences are defiled. They personally profess to know God, but in *their* works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and reprobate unto every good work" (vs 15-16).

So when it says 'we have kept the Word of God' back here in Rev. 3—"...you have kept My Word, and have not denied My name" (v 8). That shows what? *A faithful adherence to the Words and Scriptures of God.* Now let's see what's going to happen.

Revelation 3:9—Now God always reverses the punishment, doesn't He? As we read this, I want you to think about the book of Esther and I want you to think about Mordecai and I want you think about Haman, the Agagite, who was going to destroy all the Jews. Let's read it:

Revelation 3:9: "Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan...

[Now that's the collective thing of all the religions in the world at the end-time—which is coming.]

...who proclaim themselves to be Jews...

[which means *they have the way to salvation.*]

...and are not, but do lie—behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you."

So keep this in mind. It doesn't matter what your physical circumstances are as long as you know that God loves you, there is nothing, *nothing, nothing*, NOTHING in this world that can take you from God—as long as you keep that in the forefront of your mind. God's going to turn it all around. They're going to worship before our feet. Now, I've said at times this means that we will be God and they will worship us; or could it mean that they will come before our feet and worship God instead of us—that's probably what it means more than anything else; and we will see them. Just think of that!

The agents of Satan the devil are going to be forced to bow the knee to God! Now if they don't, that's it! They'll have a little friendly persuader out there, as they look out on the landscape—it's called The Lake of Fire. That can persuade you. Next time you watch a History Channel on volcanoes—I saw one the other night. You look at all that flowing lava and you look down into the top of the volcano and you see the floating lava there, you are looking at a lake of fire. So that will be a little friendly persuader. It'll be interesting...we're going to see this! Now notice v 10—Christ loves us because we keep His Word:

"Because you have kept the word of My patience..."

Let's go back to the Gospel of John, chapter 14, and let's see how this ties right in with what Jesus said on that Passover night—the last Passover. This is why the love of God is so important, and loving each other also is important. And I know we've gone over this many times.

John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments...."

[Isn't that what He commended the Philadelphians for—they kept His Word? *Yes.*]

...And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it...

[Nor neither are they willing to repent to receive it. The world loves its lies! If you don't believe that you haven't paid attention in this election.]

...but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world shall see Me no longer; but you shall see Me. Because I live, you shall live also. In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I am in you. The **one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father**, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him" (vs 15-21).

So here is what He's referring to back there in Rev. 3.

Now let's come down here to v 23:

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word...

[That's what it said of the church at Philadelphia—*kept His Word.*]

...and My Father will love him...

[it says that God loves him]

...and We will come to him and make Our abode with him....

[Now v 24 seals the whole understanding]:

...The one who does not love Me does not keep My words...

[So if you're ever in a discussion with someone who says they love the Lord, and they're keeping Sunday or they are keeping the holidays of this world, you might ask them: Do you love Jesus? 'Oh yes, I love Him.' Do you keep all His Word? 'Oh no, Paul had a greater revelation and that replaces the teachings of Jesus, which was only to the Jews.' They DON'T LOVE GOD!]

...The one who does not love Me does not keep My words and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me" (vs 23-24).

So Who are you rejecting? Whenever you reject any part of the Word of God, you're rejecting God the Father.

Now, how long do you think you can get away with that? Well, God will let you think you can get away with it for a while; maybe even a long, long time. Maybe it'll just put you in so much spiritual blindness you won't ever know anything.

All right, now back to Revelation 3 and let's look at the rest of the harvest. So you see, as Christ looks down here at the harvest, what do we have? *We have some weeds, we have some tares, we have some mold, we have some problems and difficulties—yes!*

Let's continue on—

Revelation 3:10: "Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the time of temptation..."

[We'll include the sermon *The Temptation Coming Upon the Whole World*. Now this tells you how close to the end in the history of the Church this is, because we'll read it.]

...I also will keep you from the time of temptation which *is* about to come upon the whole world...

[Now we need to understand that whenever the Bible says 'the whole world' it means ***the whole world.***]

...to try those who dwell on the earth."

And I'll just basically summarize it this way: It has to do with the mark of the Beast and worshipping the image to the Beast. Let's understand something: If you cannot buy and sell, you have no rights! Keep that in mind with the mark of the Beast. I'm going to give some updated sermons on the mark of the Beast, because they are proposing some awesome, fantastic things to control the whole human race. Now, I'll just leave it at that. But it's going "try those who dwell on the earth." The whole world, to "try those who dwell on the earth." Then He gives a warning, because there are crown-snatchers out there, coming after us.

"Behold, I am coming quickly; hold fast that which you have so **that no one may take away your crown.** The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out any more; and I will write upon him..."

[Now, I want you to notice, very carefully]:

...the name of My God...

[name #1]

...and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem...

[#2]

...which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him* My new name... [#3]" (vs 11-12).

So we will be given three distinct names, won't we?

Now, come back to Revelation 13 and let's see Satan's version of this.

Revelation 13:16: "And he causes **all**...

[does it say *the whole earth*?]

...the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, to receive a mark in their right hands, or in their foreheads; So that no one may have the ability to buy and sell unless he has the mark

[#1],

or the name of the beast

[#2],

or the number of his name [#3]" (vs 16-17).

So there is Satan's counterfeit of the name of God, the name of New Jerusalem, and the name of Christ.

Now, let's come back to Revelation 3—and I think I have just enough tape to give the Laodiceans a good lick today, as well.

Revelation 3:13. "The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

So the key is this: In reading through and studying this, we need to examine our lives, our approach, our spiritual standing before God in the light of ALL the seven churches; and not just self-righteously come to the Church of Philadelphia and say, 'Oh, are we not blessed.' Now, here are those Laodiceans. If the Laodiceans repent they're going to do great! And I think we just all need to admit, as I've said before, we've all been Laodiceans from day one!—so we need to be busy repenting.

"To the angel of the church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God....

[Which ties right in with the very first part where Jesus said, 'I am the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. And ties in with Rev. 21: 'I'm the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.' He's the one Who's the Beginner of the creation of God.]

...I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot....

[You're 'cool'—isn't that favorite word today? It's cool!]

...So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth" (vs 14-16).

So God is going to change the circumstances to wake you up. Did He do that within the Church? *Yes, He did.* Sent a lot of false prophets. Did it stir you up? Did it get your attention? Did you have to do something? *Yes!* How many were removed for two things?

- Because of sin
- Because of those who couldn't stand the sin

God separated them.

"For you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' ...

[That's the key. It may have started out small, but it became *rich and increased with goods.*]

..and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (v 17).

Which in the latter stages of Pasadena and Big Sandy perfectly fit the atmosphere that was going on there. And I think that it was a rather fair piece of justice on God's part that the auditorium, which was mistakenly called a temple to God—which it never should have been—was sold to a Chinese Pentecostal Church, and they had in their dedication of it, they had Benny Hinn, one of the leading Pentecostal false prophets of this world, come and bring the dedicatory sermon in the auditorium. Just exactly as God did with the Babylonians in the temple, He sent the Babylonians in there and they stripped it and destroyed it and took everything away. Well, they haven't quite done that yet down in Pasadena, but it's been known to have earthquakes, so hold on.

So He says here we have something we need to learn:

"I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire so that you may be rich...

[the true, spiritual riches which come from God]

...and white garments so that you may be clothed...

[Now notice: Those churches that were in trouble, they had dirty garments; had to be cleaned up.]

...and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see" (v 18).

Understand your condition. Don't think someone is picking on you. And when you hear someone speak against the Laodiceans, you say, 'Oh, there they go again.' Well, maybe we ought to understand, it's in the Word of God, and if we're living in the end-time—which we are—and these are the circumstances which we have—which we do—then we better pay attention.

Verse 19: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten...

[God loves the Laodiceans. But there's something that they need to do after they have been rebuked and chastened.]

...Therefore, be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice...

[It's not too much different than 'obey My voice' is it?]

...and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vs 19-22).

So here, as we go through and we read of the seven churches, we can identify many things which we have personally experience in coming out of the world, coming to understand the Truth, learning the ways of God, learning how to change and grow and overcome and so forth. So they are all there. Now this takes care of the seven weeks of the harvest. There's one more day of the harvest, which we will talk about appropriately tomorrow, which then is the 50th day. What is God going to do for the final day of harvest on the 50th day? And who will they be?

FRC:bo

Transcribed: 6-30-08

Scriptural References:

- Deuteronomy 16:8-11
- Leviticus 23:15
- Revelation 1:19-20
- Revelation 2:1-10
- Psalm 71:14-18
- Revelation 2:10-14
- Jude 10-12
- Revelation 2:16-29
- Revelation 3:1-8
- Titus 1:9-16
- Revelation 3:9-10
- John 14:15-21, 23-24
- Revelation 3:10-12
- Revelation 13:16-17
- Revelation 3:13-22

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 4
- Acts 2
- Matthew 7, 10
- Numbers 24; 25
- Revelation 21

Also referenced:

Sermons: *Assaults Against the Church (series)*

From Mt. Sinai to Mt. Sion

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