

"The Seven Church Harvest" #7

Pentecost – 2000: Churches at Philadelphia & Laodicea

Fred Coulter - June 4, 2000

We are going through the seven churches of Revelation 2 & 3, and we are seeing that there is a parallel in the harvest leading up to Pentecost between the seven weeks of harvest and the seven churches. Then on Pentecost we will cover the *50th day harvest*, which then will be the final harvest of God. These prophecies can apply:

- to the seven literal churches then
- to the history of the Church of God down through time
- to any attitude that a person can have in any Church at any time
- to show all the main doctrinal problems into which the Church of God would have infiltrated into them.

Satan always infiltrates the true Church of God! You never hear of anyone from the true Church of God infiltrating a church of Satan; like infiltrate the Catholics and change them. *No way!* We are to be separate from them. It's interesting that these things come into the Church.

As we are looking at the Church at Philadelphia let's understand something. Christ is the One Who has the *key of David*. Christ is the One Who opens and closes. Opening can refer to:

- preaching the Gospel
- to understanding the Word of God

{note sermons: *The Key of David* and *Tabernacle of David*} The *tabernacle of David* is the Church.

The reason why it is called *the tabernacle of David* is because we are to have the same spiritual attitude of David, the same heart as David. That means the closeness that we have to God. We won't get into a full length discussion of Acts 15 and the problem of circumcision, and so forth, but what we'll come to where James renders his decision.

Acts 15:13: "And after they were silent, James answered *and* said, 'Men, brethren, listen to me. Simeon [Peter] has related how God first visited *the* Gentiles..." (vs 13-14).

I think that is quite ironic when you read Gal. 2, how Peter got trapped by the circumcision party into separating from the Gentiles. And yet, he was the first one to go to the Gentiles, to Cornelius and his family, as recorded in Acts 10 & 11. God revealed to Peter that God was *no respecter of persons*, and there was a miraculous conversion of Cornelius and his household by giving of the Holy Spirit before they were baptized—afterwards they were baptized, of course—but to show Peter that God was calling the Gentiles. So, he went through and explained all that.

"...first visited *the* Gentiles to take out a people for His name" (v 14).

It's important to understand when you come to:

Hebrews 4:9: "There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping for the people of God."

In Acts 15 it's talking about Gentiles *as the people of God*, as we find in 1-Pet. 2:10

Acts 15:15: "And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, 'after these things, I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which has fallen; and its ruins I will build again, and will set it up; so that the residue of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, says *the* Lord, Who does all these things'" (vs. 15-17).

This is another strong statement that we can use to go along concerning the Sabbath and the Word of God, and Gentiles, and all of this.

Verse 18: "Known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world. Therefore, my judgment is *that* we do not trouble those of the Gentiles who have turned to God; but *that* we write to them to abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* sexual immorality, and *from* what has been strangled and *from* blood" (vs. 18-20).

These are also contained in the Law of Moses.

Verse 21: "For from *the* generations of old, Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him in the synagogues, being read every Sabbath Day."

His judgment does not release the Gentiles from Sabbath or Holy Day-keeping. What it does, it releases *all*, not just the Gentiles, from all the code of Jewish law. {note: book *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin} You cannot understand the writings of Paul, or what is said concerning the Law of Moses in relationship to the Pharisees and Sadducees unless you understand that all the code of Jewish law are those laws which the Jews made to put around the Ten Commandments and the Word of God. In effect *their traditions*, as Jesus said, rejected the Truth of God. This was the problem that they were having concerning circumcision.

That's why Paul, in Rom. 4 shows that Abraham was converted and the father of the faithful while he was uncircumcised, and circumcision came later. That's all that I need to get into with this. Suffice to say, these Gentiles were keeping the Sabbath, attending the synagogue. Would there be the enforcement of the laws of Judaism put upon them rather than keeping the laws and commandments of God? *The decision was made they should keep the laws and commandments of God!*

But the main point I wanted to make here for the Church at Philadelphia is that the tabernacle of David shows:

- the attitude of David
- the obedience of David
- the love of God that David had

This is why the Church at Philadelphia, which is called *the church of brotherly love*, in order to have brotherly love you have to have the love of God first. And we will see that they have the love of God first, and love the brethren.

Revelation 3:8: "I know your works....

[so they had works]

...Behold, I have set before you an open door, 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"

—which shows that they're faithful.

Why is it important to understand the weakness of human beings? Which none of the other churches were commended for understanding that they were weak? Weak can mean several things:

- not very much strength in numbers
- understanding the weakness of the flesh in relationship to obeying in the spirit

What happens when you are weak? *Being weak and relying on the strength of God shows you are relying on the strength of God **through the grace of God** to do what God wants!* Remember what Christ said, 'The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.' The problem comes about when we get to the Laodiceans, that they think that the physical things and their physical abilities give them a great standing before God. But it doesn't.

Now let's read what happened here concerning Paul,

2-Corinthians 12:7: "But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations, *there* was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel ['angelos'] of Satan..."

It could mean an angel, or a fallen angel of Satan, he has his angels (Rev. 12:9-10).

"...to buffet me, so that I might not be exalted" (v 7).

Apparently this angel went around and stirred up trouble and opposition for Paul. You read all the trouble and difficulties he had everywhere he went, stirred up the Jews against him.

Verse 8: "I besought the Lord three times for this, that it might depart from me; but He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness.'" (vs 8-9).

If we have a little strength that means we recognize our weaknesses, which means then we look to the grace of God and the help of the Holy Spirit.

"...Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities,

in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for **when I am weak, then I am strong**" (vs 9-10)

—being strong in the Lord!

The Philadelphians were strong in the Lord. That's important to understand; we have to understand this, brethren: ***We cannot accomplish spiritual things by our own spirituality or carnal means!*** We cannot do that! We can make it look like we're doing it, but in the final analysis there is going to be a test that will come, which will prove that we can't. Have we not seen that in operation many, many times over? *Yes, indeed!*

Isaiah 35:3: "Make the weak hands strong and make the feeble knees sure. Say to those of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, fear not...'" (vs 3-4).

That's what we need to do because we are going to be confronted with an enemy in the synagogue of Satan.

"...behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, with the full recompense of God. He will come and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness waters shall break out, and streams in the desert" (vs 4-6).

Then it blends on from there in to the Millennium and the coming of Christ. We have to have our power and strength in Christ.

Remember, Paul also said, 'I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me.' That's where our strength comes from. It doesn't come from our ability. It doesn't come from great knowledge and understanding. It comes from:

- God's way
- God's Spirit
- God's Truth
- from God Himself

Psalms 73:26: "My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever, for lo, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all who go a whoring from You" (vs 26-27).

This is very important because the Philadelphians are one of those churches that did not get involved in false doctrines, which is called *going whoring*, drinking of the cup of the fornication of the harlot of Babylon the Great.

Verse 28: "And me, it is good for me to draw near to God; I have made the LORD God my refuge, that I may declare all Your works."

Not relying upon himself, nor relying upon his ability, but always upon God. We will see being faithful to the Word of God as no other church, and that's becomes important.

Psalms 35—here is how a Philadelphian fights the battle. Let's look at some of those who trust in physical things to fight their battles for them. Our battle that we are fighting is the synagogue of Satan, and that means on a spiritual level, on a political level and on an economic level the whole world has been deceived by the synagogue of Satan. {Note sermon: *The Beast that Was, and is Not, and Yet is*}

Now then, for those who do not rely on God, what is one of the types of organizations that we find out there and has cost us trouble from time-to-time? It is the organization, or the kind of organizations, there are many different movements in it, which is we need to get back to the Constitution once delivered in the United States. These are called the sovereignists, saying that we all have our sovereign rights and we need to exercise that and get back to the Constitution once delivered.

Granted, the Constitution is being changed defacto. But even if you get back to the constitution once delivered, what do you have? As great as the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the United States is, what do you have? *You have a carnal government!* What they are trying to do with these means by saying you should withdraw from Social Security, you should not have a driver's license, you should not have a car license on your car, you should not have a bank account, etc., etc., etc. They are trying to fight the enemy with carnal means.

The Philadelphians will fight the enemy *with spiritual means*, all the while recognizing that it says, 'Be subject to the higher powers.' When we draw the line—which is not too far down the road—is when they want us to go against our faith. We draw the line and say, '*Absolutely, no!*' When they say, 'Receive the mark of *the beast*, and worship the image of the beast,' we say, *no!* The whole setup is going to be a whole new numbering system. Everything else that we have is leading up to that.

The *mark of the Beast* will be the final tip that is put on the finished product. And that's where God says, 'You draw the line.' I call your attention to Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego when they were told to bow down to the idol. That's where they drew the line and said, 'No, regardless of what you do to us we will not bow down to the idol. If it's God's will that we die, we die. If it's God's will we don't, we won't.' So, they were cast into the furnace of fire and they survived. Christ was actually in there with them protecting them.

Here's how a Philadelphian fights the battle,

Psalms 35:1: "Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me ..."

That's why I do not get into doctrinal arguments unless it gets down into affecting the brethren and what they believe. Then it becomes a spiritual battle.

"...fight against those who fight against me" (v 1).

I've had to claim that promise many times within the Church down through the years. God has always delivered us from every single one of the problems; but if I'd have gone out and tried to exercise my carnal power I would have been slaughtered.

Verse 2: "Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help. Also draw out the spear and the lance against those who pursue me; say to my soul, 'I am your salvation'" (vs 2-3).

I want you to see how closely this ties in with 2-Cor. 12, and Paul relying upon God and the power of the Holy Spirit rather than in his own carnal means. Always remember: ***you cannot accomplish spiritual things with carnal means!*** It cannot be done!

Verse 4: "Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion, those who seek after my soul; let them be turned back and humiliated, those who devise evil against me. Let them be as chaff before the wind; and let the angel of the LORD drive them away. Let their way be dark and slippery; and let the angel of the LORD pursue them; for without cause they have hidden their net for me; without cause they have dug a pit for my soul. Let destruction come upon him in a time he will not know; and let his net which he has concealed catch him, let him fall into destruction. And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD; it shall rejoice in His salvation" (vs 4-9).

Notice he's not joyful in the fact that his enemy is defeated by God, which he's happy and thankful that God is the One Who has done it. But he joys in God. Even when an enemy falls don't rejoice in that, because we are to love our enemies. Rejoice in the fact that God is the One Who fought the battle. Nevertheless:

- Is this not the attitude of David?
- Is this not a key to David in trusting God for power?
- Trusting God to fight his battles?

This is why the Philadelphians are commended for what they do because they trust in God.

Verse 10: "All my bones shall say 'O LORD, Who is like You, Who delivers the poor from him stronger than he; yea, *even* the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?'"

Then it blends right on in to some of the prophecies concerning Christ.

Verse 11: "Cruel witnesses rose up; they asked me of things that I knew nothing about. They rewarded me evil for good, bereaving my soul. But when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into my own bosom" (vs 10-13).

In other words, he had his prayers answered because he looked to God rather than out there fighting the enemy.

We covered Psalm 34 during the Days of Unleavened Bread. As a matter of fact, the last Holy Day God delivers us out of all of our troubles. Let's go back and see how this applies to the Philadelphians, and how important this is.

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

What is the synagogue of Satan? I will just give you a very brief review of it. The synagogue of Satan consists of all those in the world who are the rich, who are the powerful, who worship and serve Satan to accomplish his plan on this earth. It is called *The Committee of 300* by Dr. John Coleman. It includes a cross section of all governments, all religions, economics and politics. The book *Diplomacy By Deception* by Dr. John Coleman will answer how Satan is able to deceive the whole world.

What the Philadelphians are commended for is that in the face of the synagogue of Satan—

"...who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie..." (v 9)

—it's not to referring just to Jews only, but to all of those who claim that they have the right way for the right society, for the right religion, for the right salvation, and all of that's included in the coming one-world government and one-world religion. That's quite a sweeping statement here.

They "...are not, but do lie..." That's why *Diplomacy By Deception* is so profound. Everything that is this whole one-world government and one-world religion that is coming is **based upon a lie**. Many lies! Some of the legislation that's being put through Congress, and right here in California—in every state in America and around the world—are legislated things to implement the United Nations standard:

- for education
- for conduct of society
- for children
- for adults
- for law

And there's going to be a world court that's going to come up, which then will make it possible—through treaty, through the United Nations—for someone to be arrested in a country, like the United States, and taken to Rome to be put on trial for hate crimes by speaking against the Catholic Church, or the Jews, or the Buddhists, or the United Nations.

So, the *true Philadelphians* resist all of this. God is going to turn the tables. He's going to make them come and worship before our feet.

"...—behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you" (v 9).

This is very important because Christ loves those who love Him, though God loves the whole world. But this is talking to the Church, and this is the special love that comes from God. This is a special love back to God. If we do the things that are pleasing in His sight, He loves us. He gives a promise that everyone wants. Everyone thinks that this is going to a place of safety. It may or may not. {Note sermon: *The Temptation to Try The Whole World*}

Verse 10: "Because you have kept the Word of My patience [or patiently kept My Word]..."

What is involved in love? *Keeping the Word of God! Keeping the commandments of God!*

Let me give you an example: in marriage, in faithfulness. We had a wedding here two weeks ago, and the vows that they took to enter into covenant to God to love each other, to be faithful to each other: For the husband to provide for the wife; for the wife to submit herself to her husband; for the husband to love her, and for them to become one flesh. Now then, if a couple so married continue in that, then they have faithfully, patiently—through thick and thin, through trial and difficulty, through disappointments and arguments, through triumphs and failures—kept their covenant with Christ.

Now then, if on the other hand as some of the other churches have done:

- lost their first love
- held the doctrine of Balaam
- the doctrine of Nicolaitans
- the doctrine of Jezebel
- the depths of Satan

They have not faithfully, patiently kept the Word of God, meaning they were lacking in their love to God. If you patiently keep His Word that means you are keeping His commandments. No question about it!

Now, let's just enter in some Scriptures for this. We need to just to have the Scriptural proof of it. This ties right in with the whole attitude of the Philadelphians.

1 John 5:2: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God..."

If you love the children of God that is brotherly love—is it not? Does not Philadelphia mean *the church of brotherly love*? So, this ties right in it.

"...we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (vs 2-3).

Wait till we get to the Church at Laodicea and I'll read something that will just literally blow your mind.

John 14:23: "Jesus answered and said to him, '**If** ...' There is the condition. That's very important. The condition is upon us. The condition is not upon God.

- God is true
- God cannot lie
- God will not lie
- God is love
- God is Truth
- God is all powerful

So, the condition is upon us because it is our choice to make.

"...**If** anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word..." (v 23).

And isn't that what is said of the Philadelphians, 'you have patiently kept My Word'? *Yes!*

"...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (v 23).

Meaning that through the power of the Holy Spirit, you have the Spirit of Christ in you and you have the Spirit of begetting from the Father, which then is the two-fold action of the Holy Spirit within you.

Verse 24: "The one who does not love Me does not keep My words..."

Which means you can't pick and choose what you are going to do or what you won't do according to the Word of God, because as we will see later, that is part of *the mystery of iniquity*.

If a person says, 'I love the Lord, come to church on Sunday,' he doesn't love God. He may think he does. He may have a feeling in his heart, but he doesn't have faith based upon the facts of the Truth of God. So, he truly has 'a religion of opinion' because first you must keep the words of God, and keep His sayings. Since Christ was the LORD God of the Old Testament, this means everything that's in the Old Testament that applies to us today, as well as everything in the New Testament.

Here's a warning,

"...and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me." (v 24).

That becomes very profound and important for us to understand.

Now let's see something else that's important concerning that. We have not denied the name of Christ. The Philadelphian

- has not denied His name
- has not denied Christ
- has faithfully kept the Word of God

and that's why God is going to decide who the Philadelphians are. No church name, no human proclamation, because it is a spiritual thing that takes place.

Matthew 10:32: "Now then, whoever shall confess Me before men, that one will I also confess before My Father Who *is* in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, that one will I also deny before My Father, Who *is* in heaven" (vs 32-33).

That is straightforward— isn't it? It doesn't take any great interpretation—does it? *It means that!* So, when the Philadelphians are commended for not denying His name that means that *they have always stood for His name!*

Now, in spite of all the conflict here,

v 34: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies *shall be those of his own household*" (vs 34-36).

Truth divides as well as unites. But first it must divide you from the carnal reality of this world into the spiritual Truth of God.

Verse 37: "The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me" (vs 37-38).

That's why the Philadelphians are commended, that in spite of their weaknesses they rely upon the strength of God for their spiritual strength and success.

Verse 39: "The one who has found his life shall lose it...

[this will tie right back in to the temptation that comes upon the whole earth]

... and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it."

I know some of this is basic, and some of this is more detailed and for a higher level if some of this is new to you. But I'll try and make it as clear as I can here.

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

Temptation is an entirely different thing than tribulation. Let's see what kind of temptation this is.

"...keep you from the time of temptation, which *is* about to come upon the whole world..." (v 10).

Please understand something concerning Revelation. When it says *all the world* it means *all the world!* And the fulfillment will be in our day, today.

"...to try those who dwell on the earth" (v 10).

With all of the globalization that we have. Concerning the economics in China and why it's such a 'wonderful thing' that we have the trade thing with China. It showed a Chinese building with a McDonald's sign. And I thought 'one world society,' that's what it all is. What was the rationale for approving this treaty? *'Well, we can influence them more and show them our way of life if we are engaged with them.'* Which in a sense is true, but what is happening

in that, the whole world is being Babylonianized. It's going to be a whole one-world thing, ***and it's coming!***

What is a *temptation* that is coming upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth? A lot of people think it is *the* Tribulation but *the* Tribulation, though it affects many people in the world, there are still human beings left over at the end of the Tribulation. Even when Christ returns they survive through it. So this has to be before it. Christ is going to keep us from that time of temptation. Does that mean that we will flee to a place of safety? *Possibly!* But let's look at *the temptation* that is coming. This is *temptation* that is coming, and it will be two-fold. We are living in these days so we need to cover it.

Revelation 13:11: "And I saw another beast rising out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, but spoke like a dragon...."

[it's the coming one-world religion]

...And he exercises all the authority of the first beast before him; and he causes the earth and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he performs great wonders, so that he even causes fire to come down to the earth from heaven in the sight of men" (vs 11-13).

Here is the deception, *the temptation*,

v 14: "And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by means of the wonders that were given to him to perform in the sight of the beast, saying to those who dwell on the earth..."

That's exactly the same thing that is back there in Rev. 3:10:

"...saying to those who dwell on the earth that they should make an image for the beast..."

And the image of *the beast* has always been the female goddess, *always!* That's why today's education is so much involved in environmentalism so that they can get in line with Gaia, which is 'mother earth'; or the virgin Mary; or the virgin of Guadeloupe; or whatever other virgin, the virgin of Fatima, whatever. It's all the same thing.

So, they make an image for *the beast*

"...which had the wound by the sword, yet, was alive. And he was given *power* to give life to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast also could speak; and he causes everyone who will not worship the image of the beast to be killed" (vs 14-15).

So, *the temptation* is going to be that you make this image to the beast and you bow down to worship it or you're going to be killed. That's one part of it. Christ gave the promise to the Philadelphians that they would be spared from the *hour of temptation* that comes upon the whole earth. Notice that the Tribulation hasn't started, yet. This is the *hour of temptation!*

Now notice what else happens here,

v 16: "And he causes all..."

You might go to v 14 meaning *all that dwell on the earth*. Do we today have the power to do something to all on the earth for the first time in the world's history? *Yes, we do!*

Verse 16: "And he causes all, 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."

We've covered it concerning 'the Digital Angel,' a small little chip the size of a dime—and they'll get it smaller—which is called a transceiver.

As I mentioned years ago before the information ever came out concerning the Digital Angel chip, which they are perfecting right now, that it is not just a system to buy and sell. But it is a *system of control*. A transceiver means that someone out there with the same kind of mechanism that they have with the satellites that they use for cellular phones, they can actually, with this Digital Angel, take away your free moral agency by making you do what they want you to do. And as I said, that's why the mark of the beast is so absolutely treacherous because ***you give up your choice!*** And since you have chosen God and God has chosen you, ***if you give up your choice you are giving up God!*** That's why the *mark of the beast* is so damnable.

Verse 17: "So that no one may have the ability to buy and sell unless he has the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name"

—the number is 666. The number 666 applies to the *first* beast and the *second* beast of Rev. 13, which is wrapped up in all the Babylonian Mystery Religion system.

Today there is a vast criminal movement going on, which they can hardly stop, which is the theft of not only you're financial things such as credit cards, bank statements and things like this, but the *theft of your identity*, that with these things they can, in a planned way, take everything out of your bank account. Even one company worth \$20-million was taken down in five hours and they had to declare bankruptcy and they didn't know who did it. I suggest you do all you can to protect your personal identity and everything like that. Don't throw out bank statements and bills in the garbage in the street. Any checks that you write, by all means use permanent ink, because they can take your checks, they can drop them into a solution that eliminates all the ink, but it keeps all of the markings and everything, the printing for the bank on there and they can fill it out to their heart's desire. And since they have your number they can get into the bank and find out how much you have. So, you protect it!

The solution to this will be *the mark of the beast*, so we will have full proof of identity of who you are. Whether you are online with the computer, or buying and selling in a store, or whatever it may be. And I think *the mark of the beast* will be voluntary at first. But don't worry, they are targeting everyone who believes in the Bible anyway. So, you are already marked one way or the other. It gets down to this: will you be a true Philadelphian and trust

in Christ? Or will you look to save your own life but lose it eternally? ***The Philadelphian chooses to trust God!***

I'm sure there are other things that we could add to Rev. 3 many other Scriptures, but suffice to say that the attitude that the Philadelphian has what you might say, the perfect loving Philadelphia attitude described by the Apostle Paul.

Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love...

[I want you to notice how these verses fit in so well with the *Philadelphian Church of God*]

...if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing" (vs 1-2).

That means minding the one and self-same thing that is attaining to the Kingdom of God.

Verse 3: "*Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory...

[because a true Philadelphian will not do that]

...but in humility...

[recognizing your weaknesses]

...each esteeming the others above himself."

That applies not only for brethren, but that applies for elders and teachers and ministers in relationship to the brethren. Paul said that he wanted to see the Corinthians elevated to a high status of spirituality. And that should be the goal of any minister, any elder, and to see the brethren promoted, yes, above him spiritually. That is true love.

Verse 4: "Let each one look not *only* after his own things...

[to get your own, save your own]

... but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus" (vs 4-5)

—which then was the mind of true humility that the Philadelphians have.

Verse 6: "Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant

[in the Greek means *slave*]

...and being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross" (vs 6-8).

What it means we're going to have to do if we're Philadelphians, I don't know. But I know this: *God is the One Who makes the decision and the choice!* What we need to do is conform our lives to the Word of God and the Truth of God so that we will function as Philadelphians without having to go around and trumpet our horn and say we are Philadelphians. Know this for sure: anyone who proclaims himself to be a Philadelphian probably is not. What they want to do is escape to go to a place of safety.

Then He gives a warning,

Revelation 3:11: "Behold, I am coming quickly..."

There's the time setting, right close toward the end of the age. Quickly to God or to Christ may be slow to men, because some men will say, 'My Lord delays His coming.' But He isn't delaying His coming; *He's right on time!* The only problem is carnal men have their own time schedule and Christ is not going to go by carnal men's time schedules. He's going to go by the time schedule of God the Father.

"...hold fast that which you have...

[don't let anyone take it away]

...so that no one may take away your crown" (v 11).

What we're seeing happening with a lot of brethren who may have been Philadelphians to begin with, someone is stealing their crown because they are not holding fast.

Notice this superlative, this promise to this church is the superlative promise to any of the seven churches;

v 12: "The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God...

[a pillar is one of the strong supports]

...and he shall not go out anymore..."

In other words, he will stay right there in the temple of God. Of course, he will go in and out from there but he's not going to go out from there and not come back.

"...and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him* My new name" (v 12).

I'm just going to interject here some speculation: I believe that v 12 describes the ones who are in the first resurrection who will be the *bride of Christ* more than any other. That's just my opinion, so it's not dogma. But when you look at all of it there: the name of the Father, the

name of Jerusalem, and the name of Christ. What happens when a bride gets married? *Takes the name of the husband*—correct? *Yes!* So I'll leave it at that.

We'll do the Laodiceans quickly; we've beaten enough on the Laodiceans enough so we don't need to spend very much time on them.

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

Isn't it profound that one of the most basic themes in the Bible is to ***obey the voice of God!*** If you obey, that means you hear. So, He lays it out for everyone.

VII. **Church at Laodicea:**

Now, the Church of the Laodiceans—big, bad, nasty Laodiceans! Let me say before we get into that, that *Christ loves* the Laodiceans, but they have some very difficult problems to work on and overcome.

Verse 14: "And 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. I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot" (vs 14-15)

—cold means being *unconverted*; hot means *being converted*.

Verse 16: "So then, because you are lukewarm..."

You're half carnal, you're half spiritual, you're right in-between. Right here I've got a lukewarm partial cup of coffee, and when you try and drink that you just don't like it.

"So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth... [vomit] ...For you say..." (vs 16-17).

This is the only church of the seven that has the gall and audacity to talk back to God. They don't think they're talking back to God, but they are.

"...I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'..." (v 17).

They are trusting in all the physical things as evidence of their great conversion, yet, they're corrupt and have need of nothing!

When you talk about physical things, let's understand something: *physical blessings do indeed come from God!* But ***if you compromise the way that you believe***, as the Laodiceans have here, and become lukewarm, can Satan the devil also reward you for that and you deceive yourself that this comes from God? *No question about it!*

Remember during the temptation of Jesus Christ (Matt. 4 and Luke 4), what did Satan tell Jesus Christ? He took Him on a high mountain and he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and all the glory of them:

- the riches
- the wealth
- the splendor
- the buildings
- the whole thing

And he said, 'If you will fall down and worship me all of this will be Yours, because I give it to whomsoever I will.' If you do like this church group, here's a perfect Laodicean attitude.

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

This is one of the most scathing corrections. I think the most scathing correction was for Thyatira because they got clear into *the depths of Satan*. But here they don't understand their spiritual condition.

- They are not in right standing with Jesus Christ.
- Their lives are miserable because they are not keeping the commandments of God the way that they should.
- They are poor spiritually because they're looking to all the physical things and saying, 'Look at all of these things that we have.'
- Isn't that how the church we came out of measured their spiritual condition? *Yes!*
- Where is it now? *All removed!*

If you trust in physical things God will remove them, and He has done it.

- "...and blind..."—you can't even understand your own spiritual condition
- "...and naked..."—you don't have the righteousness of Christ through the garments

This is taken from off the Internet, and this is reference to a congregation; I don't know where it is:

I suppose the problem arises from several sources...

This is in relationship to Lazarus and the rich man and U.S. and Britain in prophecy.

...Inconsistencies such as this don't bother me any more because I've learned after lo these many years, that every question doesn't necessarily need an answer. Sometimes the best answer is 'I don't know,' which I've never said enough of. Amen. This concept of systematic theology is laudable...

Now let me just say something. What we do when we go through Romans, Colossian, Ephesians, Philippians and Revelation—take a topic and a subject and go through it, that is systematic theology—that means you are systematically going through something so you can come to a full understanding of it. Apparently, this person was saying, 'Look, the way to

understand these difficulties is to have a systematic way of analyzing it, of studying it so that you can come to the truth of the conclusion here.'

...This concept of systematic theology is laudable but I wonder if it is even necessary. Far better to take the advise of the old Quaker, in Benjamin Franklin's auto-biography. When asked why he didn't have a doctrinal statement, the Quaker told Franklin that such a statement would lock them into beliefs that might later prove to be wrong, and the statement would only make it harder to accept that.

Which is a silly answer, indeed! How can you believe unless you have a form of belief based upon Scripture? Then you take that and put it into a statement of beliefs. Now, if there are some things you may learn, you need to change later, you can change it. No problem! That's why we have a beliefs booklet that we send out to everyone.

I agree that we should not have a static doctrinal statement. We already have the Bible for that.

Now, if someone says, 'What do you believe?' You just hand them a Bible and say, 'Read the Bible.' *No, I want a summary on it.* 'Read the Bible!' What it really does is this: it means that you don't believe anything. And we'll see what happens.

A systematic theology is not a doctrinal statement. It is a process for approaching the Scriptures in a way that help us to recognize the inconsistency in our views of Scripture and reconcile them. This process generates a dynamic view of the Bible that changes as we grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

That was his answer to it. Which is basically true. And we do grow in grace and knowledge; here's the answer:

I'm happy to say that our congregation doesn't have a doctrinal statement. So we have people who keep a different Passover date, different calendars, different ideas on who Jesus is, God in the flesh verses a created being, tithing, etc. Some systematic theology we would have, but what we do have by the grace of God is people who truly enjoy being together.

Answer: "I'm glad to hear of your diversity. In the end the tolerance required to have such diversity may lead to greater unity."

Go figure it out! No wonder they don't have a doctrinal statement.

Do you realize how many people are out there that are buying into this kind of thing. To have within the congregation all of these divergent beliefs. And what is the rule? *You are dumbed down to the lowest common denominator!* What is the lowest common denominator with people like this? *A social club!* They enjoy being together. A social club then becomes an idol because

- you have put getting along with people on a social basis *before your relationship with God*

- you have put how people think of you and feel about you *before understanding the Word of God*
 - how God looks at you
 - how God feels about you

This describes a perfect Laodicean attitude of lukewarmness and wretchedness:

- they can't see
- they can't understand
- they have no doctrine, they have no statement
- they have no spine
- they have no backbone.
- they are not cold
- they certainly are not hot

They are lukewarm! And another way of saying that is bland, *bland*, ***bland!*** They wouldn't stand for anything.

Christ says here's the counsel for them,

v 18: "I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire..."

This does not necessarily mean the tribulation. It could, because every person's work is going to be tried by fire. What He's saying, the trials and difficulties that are coming upon you because of being 'lukewarm and being spewed out of My mouth, I counsel you to gain spiritual character of gold.' {note: 1-Cor. 3:10-23; I covered that when we went through the dead Church of Sardis}.

"...so that you may be rich..."

[true spiritual riches, not just the physical things]

...and white garments..." (v 18)

—which then is the righteousness of the saints, which then is *learn to obey*; you need to *learn the Scriptures*.

"...so that you may be clothed, 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).

In other words, strip back the scales that are still there. The scales should be done away in Christ that you see. When someone is baptized and have the Spirit of Christ then the veil is removed and they begin to understand. But the Laodiceans then close down the veil again over their eyes. "...that you may see."

Here's a little encouragement,

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

God still loves them. But just like with children they have to be rebuked and chastened.

"...Therefore, be zealous and repent" (v 19).

Repent of your attitude toward God. Repent of stupidity like this congregation I just read of here.

I heard of one where they have everything under the sun. One man gets up there to preach to them and says, 'Well, I guess you would call me a believer in the trinity.' If you haven't proved the Truth of God, if you haven't proved that God is a family, if you haven't got into the Word of God...

He is a supposed minister. Another minister gets up and says well, 'I can't find any place in the New Testament where it commands us to keep the Sabbath.' BINGO! Are you bringing in Sunday-keeping? Shows you he doesn't know his Bible. It's amazing what goes on out there in the name of Christ, but it's all Laodiceanism. They have to repent.

Verse 20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock..."

Christ hasn't given up on them, yet! He's still knocking; but what a thing that they thrust Christ out. It would be like you leaving your house, locking yourself out and you can't get back in. Well it's the same way with those who thrust Christ out of their life. Christ does not want that. He's knocking at the door.

"...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door..." (v 20)

—which means based upon repentance and the condition of *if*; you must open your mind to all your sins and your weaknesses, and your wretchedness, and the high-fluting attitude of that every physical thing is a guarantee of the spiritual something and you don't even see or understand the Word of God.

"...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door..."

[you have to open.] (Christ says):

...I will come in to him...

[real conversion]

... and will sup with him...

[that is you will have a relationship 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 20-22).

There is *the seven church harvest* representing the seven weeks of harvest that we have in counting toward Pentecost.

REVIEW:

I want to go back and review just a few things here in very quick order. So I want to bring out all the things that describe Christ because we are dealing with God, we are dealing with Christ—Who is God—and God the Father. Remember the revelation came from the Father to Christ, and Christ gave that to John to write it down so it would be for all the churches. But remember Christ is the Head. Christ is over all the churches.

Revelation 1:11: "...I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last..."

Verse 17: "...I am the First and the Last."

Verse 18: I am "...the One Who is living; for I was dead..."

[showing about His life, His crucifixion, resurrection]

...and behold, I am alive into the ages of eternity. Amen. And I have the keys of *the* grave and of death."

Showing that He is the One Who can open the graves and bring us out because He was resurrected from the dead.

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.'"

Christ is walking in the midst of the Church always. And when we gather together on the Sabbath and ask for Christ's blessing and His Spirit, He will answer that prayer. But we need to have open hearts and open minds in that continuously.

Verse 8: "...These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead but is alive."

Verse 12: "...Who has the sharp two-edged sword."

Verse 18: "...He Who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet *are* like fine brass."

We're dealing with the power and authority of Christ. That's something! When we really comprehend that Christ is the Head of the Church and He is working with ***all*** of His people, even the Laodiceans, and if there's anything we can do to help them come to repentance we should do that. That's part of some of the things that we've been doing down through the years.

Revelation 3:1: "...These things says He Who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars."

Verse 7: "...These things says the Holy One..."

[His nature is Holy]

...the One Who *is* true; the One Who has the key of David, Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens"

Christ is the one Who controls all of this.

Verse 14: "...These things says the Amen...

[He has the final authority]

...the faithful and true Witness...

[could also mean martyr because the Greek is 'martus']

...the Beginner of the creation of God."

All the way through the New Testament you find that everything was created by and for and through Christ.

Verse 20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Christ—the Lord of glory, the One Who is Head of the Church—is right now *trying all the reins and hearts*, as we saw with the Church in Thyatira.

- He knows all of our works
- He knows whether we're lukewarm or zealous or dead
- He knows whether we've gotten off the track doctrinally

even into the things of

- Nicolaitanism
- Balaamism

into the things concerning

- the depths of Satan

He knows all of that. And yet, ***Christ calls out to His Church to repent and to change!*** So, you'll have to come to Pentecost in order to find out about the harvest for the 50th Day.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- Acts 15:13-14
- Hebrew 4:9
- Acts 15:15-21
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

- Isaiah 35:3-6
- Psalm 73:26-28
- Psalm 35:1-13
- Revelation 3:9-10
- 1 John 5:2-3
- 1 John 14:23-24
- Mathew 10:32-39
- Revelation 3:10
- Revelation 13:11-17
- Philippians 2:1-8
- Revelation 3:11-22
- Revelation 1:11, 17-18
- Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18
- Revelation 3:1, 7, 14, 20

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Galatians 2
- Acts 10; 11
- 1 Peter 2:10
- Romans 4
- Revelation 12:9-10
- Psalm 34
- Matthew 4
- Luke 4
- 1 Corinthians 3:10-23

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Books:

- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin
- *The Committee of 300* by Dr. John Coleman
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Sermons:

- *Key of David*
- *Tabernacle of David*
- *The Beast that Was, and is Not, and Yet Is*
- *The Temptation to Try The Whole World*

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