

FOT 2022 DAY 3

THE 7 CHURCHES OF REVELATION — PART 1

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One of our key features during the Feast is to look forwards to the Millennium.

I spoke at some length previously about the 7 Churches of Revelation Chapters 2 and 3.

I'd like to go over the story again and show how these Churches prophetically lead up to the Millennium and God's Kingdom — the 7 years leading up to Jesus' return.

In Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 ... Jesus "dictates" letters to each of 7 Churches in Asia Minor.

The first question is why just these 7? There are probably dozens in total? But only 7 have been chosen by the Lord Jesus Himself.

There are several options as to what these Churches represent.

- i) **Historic — in the 1st Century**
- ii) **Types of Characteristics — 7 types of believer**
- iii) **Eras: Apostolic to end-time**

However ... **I'm going to suggest that the 7 Churches all exist in the end-time — the last 7 years!** Leading up to Christ's return.

Consider:

Revelation 2:5

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else **I will come to you quickly** and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. (*Ephesus*)

Jesus says He is going to COME QUICKLY!

Revelation 2:16

16 Repent, or else **I will come to you quickly** and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. (*Pergamos*)

Jesus is coming quickly to fight!

Revelation 2:22, 25

22 Indeed **I will cast her** into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her **into great tribulation**, unless they repent of their deeds.

25 **But hold fast what you have till I come.** (*Thyatira*)

These people are going to be thrown into great tribulation — doesn't sound like 90 AD. Sounds like an end-of-the-age comment.

Revelation 3:3

3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, **I will come upon you as a thief**, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. (*Sardis*)

Revelation 3:10-12

10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from **the hour of trial** which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. (*"The hour of trial" — the Wrath of God comprising the 7 Trumpet Plagues*)

11 Behold, **I am coming quickly!** Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

12 **He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem,** which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

The language is of Jesus' imminent return? Not eras many centuries ago!!

My suggestion is that each of these 7 Letters applies to the Church in each of the last 7 years.

So. The Ephesus Letter is advice and guidance for believers during the First Year — when the White Horse runs out. (Corresponding with the First Seal)

The Smyrna Letter is for Year 2 — the Red Horse. (Corresponding with the Second Seal ... etc)

If correct — it removes the problem of verses such as:

Revelation 1:1-3

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—**things which must shortly take place**. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, *(they haven't taken place yet and we are 1900 years on from when this was written)*

2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

3 **Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it;** for **the time is near.**

Things are going to “shortly take place” within a 7 year period.

Revelation 22:6-7

6 Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants **the things which must shortly take place.**

7 **“Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”**

If the whole book of prophecy — including Chapters 2 and 3 — is all end-time ... then everything occurs in 7 years —which is fairly quick!

To complete the picture ... one misleading verse needs to be unravelled.

Revelation 1:19

19 Write the things **which you have seen**, and **the things which are**, and **the things which will take place after this.**

It looks like **3 categories** — **what you've seen ... things which are** (assumed to be the current 7 Churches) ... **and things which will take place in future.**

Grammar can allow for only 2 categories!

Henry Alford — Greek Grammar: “Write the things which you saw and what things they signify and the things which will take place after this”.

So.

- 1) **Write about Jesus ... His appearance and His Angel (the things you saw)**
- 2) **Things in the future (which starts with the Letters to the 7 Churches — future!)**

Revelation 1:19 (AMPLIFIED)

19 Write therefore **the things you see, what they are [and signify]** and **what is to take place hereafter.**

Only 2 categories — what John had seen (Jesus etc) — and then everything else is future.

The 7 Churches of Revelation Chapter 2 and 3 are future — prophecy. Now imminent!!

Of course ... prophecy is “through a glass darkly”.

Let's review these 7 Letters “as if” for the final 7 Years — and 7 Seals.

EPHESUS

Revelation 2:1-3

1 **“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,**
‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand,
who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;
3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have laboured for My name’s sake and have not become weary.

Jesus is in/with all of His Church.

He commends their endurance (at Year 1 ... there’s still a long way to go).

Note Key Reference to deceivers — false messengers — liars. Must test and critically evaluate! **DECEPTION!**

Compare to the First Seal/Horseman.

Revelation 6:1-2

1 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.”

2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. (“Conquering” = “overcoming”)

The White Horseman is religious deception! Will seek to overcome Truth. Likely to be a major problem in Year 1.

Revelation 2:4-5

4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent.

Repent of losing your First Love! Too much appearance — or externals — no longer of the heart?

Note Jesus is “coming quickly” — approximately 6 years later!

Revelation 2:6

6 But this you have, that **you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

Hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans?

Somewhat mysterious? If these letters have an end-time application — we're looking for a "group" in our day?

People of Islam perhaps?

Opposition to believers in the original Ephesus came from worshippers of Diana —a moon goddess.

Allah appears to be a Moon God (hence all of the moon crescents).

But also:

Acts 19:28-30

28 Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "**Great is Diana of the Ephesians!**"

29 **So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theatre with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.**

30 **And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him.**

A commotion!

Acts 19:34-35

34 But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "**Great is Diana of the Ephesians!**"

35 **And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus?"**

An image — a stone which fell down from heaven —which they worshipped at the Temple of Diana — a Moon Goddess.

Acts 19:35 (ESV)

35 ... **the sacred stone that fell from the sky?**

Muslims worship towards the Kaaba in Mecca ... with its black meteorite. They pray towards it — make pilgrimages.

And will persecute and behead saints!

Provisionally identify modern-day Nicolaitans as Islam?

SMYRNA

Revelation 6:3-4

3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “**Come and see.**”

4 **Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.**

Year 2 — Red Horse of conflict ... war ... absence of peace.

Revelation 2:8-10

8 “**And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:**

9 “**I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.**

10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, **and you will have tribulation ten days.** Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Tribulation (some — not yet “Great”!) — martyrdom even (no Place of Safety).

Be mentally ready for difficult times.

Jesus has the tee shirt — died — but now lives — forevermore!

Don't fear! War ... imprisonment — even death!

Blasphemy of Jews?

Possibly: **The physical Jews wish to start animal sacrifices.** They already have priests ... utensils ... an altar. Possibly awaiting a red heifer?

Any sacrifice they offer will be blasphemy. **Only Jesus' blood counts!!**

Since the sacrifices are stopped at 3½ year point — Revelation 2:9 may indicate they start in Year 2?

PERGAMOS

Revelation 6:5

5 **When He opened the third seal**, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and **behold, a black horse**, and **he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.**

Year 3 is the Black Horse picturing economic shortages ... price increases.

Revelation 2:12-16

12 **And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,**
These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

13 **I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is.** And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, **who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.**

14 **But I have a few things against you**, because **you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.**

15 **Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans**, which thing I hate.

16 **Repent, or else I will come to you quickly** and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

Satan dwells (still?) and his throne is in Pergamos — modern-day Turkey.

In John's day there was a huge ... awesome altar to Zeus. Lost eventually but rediscovered in the 1800's and now in a museum in Berlin.

Hitler was fascinated by it! Erdogan wants it back!!

Balaam — original — **a great false prophet ... who caused God's people to stumble ... commit idolatry.** Other scriptures (Revelation Chapter 13) talk of a great false prophet in the end-time.

Jesus' instruction in Year 3 — need to hold fast.

The False Prophet introduces the Mark of the Beast. Either submit to the Beast (idolatry) and receive his mark — or you won't be able to buy and sell. (Including food ... light ... heating ... and all essentials?)

Temptation and great pressure on the saints to compromise ... give up the faith ... so as to eat? Which means TAKING THE MARK OF THE BEAST!

But **HOLD FAST!**

Revelation 2:17

17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat.** And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." '

GOD HAS WAYS! During these difficult times we may have the hidden manna to eat?