



MESSIAH'S MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

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

Revelation 2 & 3

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INTRODUCTION

SEVEN MESSAGES FROM MESSIAH, Y'SHUA

It is commonly thought that the Lord Jesus Christ, The Messiah, did not leave His Church any written communications. This is not true! The whole Book of Revelation is the word of the Heavenly Master. John, on the Isle of Patmos, was a scribe, penning the words dictated to him by the Messiah. Paul, we know, sometimes dictated his letters to a helper, concluding the final paragraphs with his own hand.

This revelation of Jesus Christ, including the seven short messages to the seven Asian Churches, was written near the end of the 1st century (about 95 or 96 A.D.) The Revelation completes the inspired canon of Scripture - to which nothing can be added, or from which nothing must be taken away. This is also the final written message of the Master to His people.

The seven letters are presented with deep solemnity. Each letter is addressed to the angel, or messenger, of the local church; that is, to the leadership of the local assembly - not necessarily to the presiding leader, but to the collective leadership - the pastors, evangelists, elders and deacons.

These letters, addressed to the leadership, clearly show that the Sovereign Master holds the leaders responsible for the growth of the assembly. If there are actions worthy of praise, He commends them; and if there are declining conditions, the blame is laid upon them.

But that *every individual* of the assembly is included in the messages of warning and exhortation is evident from the concluding words of each message.

[“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”](#)

We might ask first, for whom are the seven letters of the Messiah meant? Were they intended only for the seven specific churches named? Surely not, for if that so, why should they be preserved in the Scriptures? We can be assured that, as with the rest of Scripture, they are intended for all churches - for every assembly at any time.

In reading these letters, if any part applies to us, either as an assembly or as an individual, we need to accept it, and heed it. In the very first letter, we are told that the Lord Jesus walks in the midst of the candlesticks - light-bearing assemblies. He presences Himself amongst His people, not only to comfort and cheer, but also to evaluate, to judge and to trim!

As we read the commendations of the Lord for certain matters in some of the churches, we might ask, “Would the Lord be able to commend me, or my church on this point today?” When there is condemnation, we need to consider likewise, if we could honestly be absolved of this blame, or if it also applies to our lives.

By the end of the first century, five out of these seven particular assemblies needed to be revived. There was spiritual decline; there was sin in each of these five. What of the churches today? We are not called to judge or evaluate other churches - the Lord does that! But we are told that every assembly must examine itself in the light of the Word of God - and particularly in the searching rays of these seven letters from the Messiah.

The Master does **not** call upon us to judge ourselves by the standards around us. We are not told to compare our church with other churches, to see if we are somewhat better than they. The churches of the Reformation even, are not the standard. It is the ascended Redeemer who walks amongst us! And it is in His eyes and estimation that we stand or fail.

We can, of course, learn from present churches, and also from the records of the apostolic church - and the epistles to the early churches. All provide messages of guidance and correction. Naturally we do not like to admit our own wrongs or spiritual decline; but that is just what these letters call us to do. Moreover, it is the purpose of the Spirit of Christ, through the Written Word, to convict and minister, to the reviving and edifying of the Church.

SEVEN CHURCH AGES

As well as being a message for any assembly at any time, the seven Asian churches have a prophetic significance. Each of the seven churches represents, or is a symbol of the church **in general**, at different periods of its history.

Ephesus represents the church in the Apostolic age - from Pentecost to approximately the end of the 1st century. At the end of that period, the church in general was declining in love for the Saviour.

Smyrna is a symbol of the post-apostolic age - the 2nd and 3rd centuries, in which the church in general was cast into terrible persecution. The "ten days" mentioned in the letter to Smyrna represents the ten years of the final and fiercest persecution.

Pergamos represents the church as it declined in the next period - commencing at the time of Constantine who was "converted", and with him, thousands of his subjects. It was during this period, after persecution had ceased, that the world became more "churchy," and the church became more worldly.

Thyatira gives a picture of the church during the Middle Ages, until the time of the Reformation. It was an age when the bishop of Rome ascended to supremacy, and the church tolerated idolatry and corruption - symbolized by Jezebel.

Sardis represents the Reformation church - 17th & 18th centuries. It was an age when true life once again breathed in Christendom. After the main decades of reformation, in which God used such men as William Farrel, Martin Luther, Zwingli and the British Protestants as instruments of revival, the fervour cooled down, and the renewed church began to live on its past reputation. The name and doctrine of the reformation continued, but the life declined and died.

Philadelphia symbolizes the period when the church experienced great evangelical revivals, and missionary outreach; mid-18th century, and up to the early 20th century. This period saw a worldwide open door, and the church entering that door. It was a period characterised by faithful witness, and yet, at the same time, it saw many cults arising, including the Judaisers.

In *Laodicea* we see the final condition of the church in general - a period of indifference, with the love of many waxing cold. This condition developed and deepened as the 20th century progressed. In the 21st century the Laodicean condition

has become more and more the norm. While there is still missionary outreach, the church in general today has lost the vision, and has become indifferent to open doors.

SEVEN CONTINUING CONDITIONS

It is important to note, further, that although each of the seven churches represent these different periods of church history, each of the seven conditions continue in the world, to some degree, right up till the Lord's return.

There has always been and still are a few believers and assemblies that manifest the all-but-perfect Ephesian condition. The Smyranean condition of endurance in persecution also continues today, in many countries. The worldliness of the Pergamos state has never fully disappeared, but has so often been coupled to the other deteriorating conditions. The idolatry and fornication condoned by Thyatira is still being condoned - and particularly so in these ecumenical days.

The deadness of Sardis has continued and is still very evident in much of Christendom. The Philadelphian evangelistic and missionary activity continues, although the truly missionary church is more of an exception, rather than the norm today. The Laodicean lukewarm-type of Christianity that needs a lot of "entertainment," is now becoming the normal "Christianity" of the age; and this condition will deepen, as the age comes to a close.

We send forth this booklet with the fervent prayer that it might reach readers who have ears to hear what the Messiah is saying to the churches today.

1

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

Revelation 2:1-7

"To the messenger of the assembly in Ephesus write: 'He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, *and* who walks among the seven golden lampstands, declares these matters:

"I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate those who are evil. And you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them *to be* false; and you have been bearing up *and* have endurance, and because of My Name you have laboured and have not grown weary.

"But I have *this* against you, that **you have left your first love**.

"Remember then from where you have fallen, and repent and do the works *you did* at first; or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand out of its place - unless you repent.

"Yet this you have *to your credit*; you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat from the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God".' "

"YOU HAVE LEFT YOUR FIRST LOVE"

Ephesus was a city in which both Paul and Apollos laboured. The church there had

been a mature church, for Paul was able to share many deeper truths with the Ephesian saints in his letter of A.D. 64.

We would say today, the Ephesian church was an excellent assembly. It had much to be commended for, and the Master gives full credit. The assembly continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine. When grievous "wolves" entered into the flock, the assembly would not tolerate error or evil, but rather they examined the false, and exposed them. The corrupting works of the Nicolaitans were detested and rejected by this assembly, which was zealous for the truth that had been imparted to them.

The Ephesian church was an active church. It had works and labour. The saints were not sleeping, but engaged in the spiritual warfare around them. They had not fainted along the way, or given up. No! They were concerned to maintain a faithful and bright witness in the world. Their candlestick was a light in the darkness - a beacon on a hill, and a revealer of the works of evil.

The assembly also had its share of persecution and suffering, under which they exhibited patience and endurance. For the Name of the Y'shua they counted it a joy to suffer. They would far rather suffer, than compromise and sin.

Does this not seem a perfect assembly? How many assemblies today can compare with this exhibition of faithfulness? Yet the Master had reason to rebuke the assembly on one matter - the assembly had left its First Love!

The word "somewhat" in the A.V. translation does not appear in the original, and it softens the words of the Messiah. The Amplified Bible brings out the point clearly.

"But I have this (one charge to make) against you, that you have left (abandoned) the love that you had at first - you have deserted (Me), your first love."

This is not some little fault that could be overlooked, but rather **the root of a condition that would continue to deepen**, and sap the assembly of spiritual life. The Lord warns that unless it was repented of, and the first condition reinstated, He would remove their witness.

Although they were active, faithful, patient and enduring, the Ephesian church was in a state of spiritual decline! They must have known, as we today must know, that works without love is nothing! Devotion without love is nothing! Patience without love is nothing! Service without love is nothing!

The Ephesians must have had copies of Paul's first letter to Corinth. They must have read there that without love, they would be as clanging cymbals, noisy gongs or tinkling brass. They must have learned from the thirteenth chapter that even though they gave their bodies to be burned, or to be crucified, or to be torn asunder, if they did not have love, it would be profitless.

These things were well known. They probably preached them often in their meetings. The trouble was that the loss of love was a gradual decline - almost imperceptible in its first stages. But now it could be said that they had abandoned that love. No doubt it came as a shock to them - to be so charged by the Lord.

What is the love they had left? They had love for the name of the Saviour. They had love for the service of the Lord, but their love for the Master Himself had declined. And as their love declined, so they became removed from the Person of the Lord. This was **heart departure** from the Messiah.

Can you and I be included in this church? It is not a matter of how much we serve

the Lord, but rather, is our love for Him still aglow? Is our love still centered in the Saviour Himself? Or have we grown tired of the Heavenly Master - to some extent? If it were some earthly love we tired of - but no! It is the Lord of Glory, who first loved us. It is the One who gave Himself, and suffered so much for our redemption. He, the Lover of our souls, is the One from whom we depart.

The Messiah calls upon the Ephesian believers to remember. And the same Messiah calls upon you and me, my reader, to think back. Think back on the past; on the time you first came to the Saviour; think back on the times of consecration, or surrender with its deep joy. Think of the gratitude and love you had for the Master then. Remember how keen you were to witness for Him; to tell others with such enthusiasm, about your wonderful Redeemer. Remember the times when you reveled in His presence. You loved to be with Christians, to praise, worship, pray and to study the Bible. Remember how you longed to serve Him, to go to the uttermost parts with His message.

Now how is your love? Is it still fervent, or has it grown cold, or lukewarm? Is there a greater desire to stay at home and rest, rather than to attend the prayer meeting? To read the newspaper, rather than the Word? To talk with friends, rather than with your Saviour? Has your tongue lost its enthusiasm for your Saviour?

Can the Messiah now speak to us and say, "Why have you grown weary of Me? Have I been a disappointment to you? Have I proved to be an unfaithful lover to you that you have left your first love for Me so so on? Am I preparing a place in Heaven for you, but you are not longing to share it with Me? Why?"

In the words of the Saviour, can you not hear His heart panting after the love of His people - after your love? Have we not realised that God is a jealous God? Nothing can compensate for the lack of heart for the Messiah? He ever looks for, and is jealous of, the affections of His Bride.

The tragedy goes deeper still - not only can we abandon our love for the Master - we sometimes replace that love with some other. Other loves make their bid for our hearts. Desires, ambitions, the world or the flesh, bid and receive our love, and thus we play the harlot, and grievously offend the Lord.

The Messiah charges the Ephesians of [leaving](#) their first love. He does not say they have [lost](#) it. They are in a position where they can return again. And the Saviour, with grief in His voice, calls them to repent. Yes, He demands repentance. This is not an option that He puts to them, but a command.

If we have suffered heart departure from the Master, we are commanded to do the "first works" - which does not mean "activity", but a renewal of the first love- the love from which the first works can flow. Without love for Y'shua, we cannot really love others. Without love for Him, our love for others will die, or at best, be shallow.

The [alternative](#) to our love being revived is [removal](#). This is not a question of one's salvation, but concerns the witness of the assembly and individual. In a real sense it is the natural result of any spiritual decline which has not been arrested. It may not be that your body, or church building will be removed, but your witness, your candlestick will be extinguished. It may be that the service that you are so proud of will be snuffed out. Your structure may remain, but you will be as a skeleton, or at best, a noisy gong.

Look around you today, and see the remains of what was once a live, zealous church - see throughout Christendom, relics of a past brightly burning candlestick. Look around you and see some who were once ardent believers, serving the Lord, but who are now spiritual shipwrecks. But look, now, my brother, my sister, look

within! Beware of the subtle, creeping decline. Where there are signs of decline, beseech the Saviour to restore you and revive your love for Him without delay.

If we have suffered the loss of first love, let us humbly confess it to the Heavenly Master and seek His Face. We must meditate upon Him and look full in His wonderful face, and let Him recapture our whole-hearted love once again.

To elders, pastors, deacons, I repeat. The Messiah addresses you firstly, as responsible oversight. He has placed you in this position in the assembly. Whenever there is decline, you are held responsible to the Master. To overlook, neglect or to refuse to take action, proves you unfaithful to the Messiah's charge. You are men of God, shepherding the church of the Living God. You must be on the alert for signs of decline. And if decline has already set in, heed the solemn words of Joel 2:15-17:

“Blow the trumpet in Zion; Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders; gather the children and nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room, and the bride out of her *bridal* chamber.

“Let the priests, the ministers of YHWH, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, ‘Spare Your people, O YHWH, and do not make Your inheritance a reproach, that they should be a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?””

2

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA

Revelation 2:8-11

“And to the messenger of the assembly in Smyrna write: ‘The First and the Last, who died, and came to life, declares these matters:

“I know your works, your tribulation, affliction and poverty - yet you are rich, and *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Look, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have affliction for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. He who overcomes shall by no means be harmed by the second death”.’”

“I KNOW YOUR TRIBULATION AND POVERTY”

The Messiah presents Himself in the opening of the letter to Smyrna, as the Eternal God, and yet also, as the Man, who suffered, died and rose victorious.

His message comes to the severely persecuted believers of the Asian city. The message is one of commendation and encouragement. This church was not commanded to repent and be revived: the very persecution they endured served to keep the believers close to the Saviour.

The Master brings encouragement to them. And if He knows the works of an assembly, He knows also its sufferings. He knows all the details of each individual

member's trials. He has, in fact, permitted the very trials they were passing through. The believer is never forgotten - especially when passing through tribulation.

The Smyrnan church was despised by the world. They were counted as fools to forfeit the offers and the "advantages" of the world, and to hazard their lives for the Galilean. But the Master knew their so-called poverty - their lack of material things, as well as their sufferings.

The Messiah then encouraged them:

"You are not suffering for a worthless cause. You are not denying yourselves for some paltry or earthly gain. I am He who lives. I was dead, but I rose, and am alive for evermore. I have walked the way you are walking. I trod the long way to Calvary. I endured the shame - I endured the cross - and that for you. Now I am calling you to walk that path for Me.

"You are counted as poor and destitute - but you are actually rich. You are rich towards God, and God is rich towards you. Blessed - happy, enviably fortunate and spiritually prosperous are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are you when people shall revile and persecute you and shall say all kinds of evil things against you falsely on My account. Be glad and supremely joyful, for your reward in heaven is great. You are counted as poor, but you are heirs of the kingdom. You have been blessed with all the spiritual blessings in heaven. You are spiritually rich.

"I have passed through sufferings and was put death - but I am alive. Now some of you will be cast into prison and shall die for My sake. Fear not, for I know, and I am with you. I will enable you to be faithful unto death. You also shall live because I live. And I will give you a crown of life."

Thus these words bring overwhelming assurance from the Heavenly Master. He expects nothing of His people that He Himself has not experienced. What comfort it is to the believer to know that the Master knows, and has permitted his trials.

Persecution comes not only from the world, but also from religious men. Those claiming to be Jews, mentioned here, were the religious. They were Jews, who having forfeited their right to be called the children of Abraham, persecuted the godly line. It has been the same down through the centuries. Apostate religion becomes the oppressor of the true.

This verse can be applied also to the Judaisers - those who seek to bring believers under the yoke of the Jewish law, and who, failing to do so, abuse and revile them. Many modern sects fall into this category today.

Amidst the abuse and accusations of the false, the suffering church is re-assured. They were indeed following the Victorious Redeemer. It was no myth. He was real. Christianity to those believers was not a religion, but Christ. He was vital in their lives. The Master's words were strengthening, and therefore they were prepared to suffer and to die for Him.

Today the Smyrnan church is very much in existence - not so much in the "free" world, but very much in the other half - in the communist and Islamic worlds. It has been estimated that 150,000 Christians are slain each year, and that many thousands of believers are in prisons for Y'shua's sake, at this present time.

But let us look at the Church in our own countries today. For some it seems quite a popular thing to be a Christian. Instead of persecution, there is prosperity and easiness, but these have often helped to weaken the church spiritually. If the

Saviour said today, “I know your tribulation and poverty”, many of our churches would blush with shame. Rather, could the Saviour not say, “I know your comfort, and your wealth. I see your lovely church buildings, your beautiful homes and cars; I see your fashionable clothes, your TV sets, DVD’s and your Play Stations, and all your abundance of goods, but you are poor - miserably poor. You know little of My presence, My power, joy and suffering. You are materially rich, but spiritually poor!”?

Is it not true, my reader? We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the Messiah, even as the Smyrnan Christians, but how real are these blessings in our experience? How much of our Christianity is Christ, and how much is tradition, meetings, social life and outward performances? We need a great revival of spiritual experience today!

Often YHWH sends revival to a country to prepare it for persecution (as in North Korea). But sometimes He sends persecution to revive His people. The Church must be revived! Or should it refuse God’s reviving grace, there remains the solemn warning of Revelation 3:16, which we come to in the seventh letter.

In some countries there is little persecution of the church, but this is no sign that Satan is inactive. He is still the enemy of souls, and still hates the church. Satan’s aim is to extinguish the testimony for Christ on the earth. When Satan seeks to use persecution to achieve his purpose, he usually defeats himself, for God uses that same persecution to purify and revive His people.

Satan, however, uses diverse methods, and in much of the world he has been quite successful. His activity so often is within the church itself, but it also comes through the subtle infiltration of the world. Compromise, decline, comforts, ease, popularity, respectability, position and wealth are some of his chief instruments to weaken the assemblies.

Should a church be on fire for the Messiah, it will face opposition and trouble in many ways, as Satan seeks to extinguish the flame. An uncompromising believer in the midst of a battle, with blows from within and without, from friend and foe. But how wonderful to hear the Master’s words, **“I know.”** How wonderful to receive the comfort and assurance, “Fear none of those things which you shall suffer.”

Certainly fearful and troublesome times are upon the world. And it could be that in India and the free world, we will see much more martyrs’ blood, and Bibles burnt in our midst, in the coming days. If so, we have the comforting message to Smyrna.

But let us not wait till persecution drives us to the Lord. May the current events, and the spiritual conditions around us, set us to prayer for true spiritual revival now!

3

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS

Revelation 2:12-17

“And to the messenger of the assembly in Pergamum write: ‘The One who has the sharp two-edged sword, declares these matters:

“I know your works, and where you live, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My Name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

“But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who

hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit *acts of immorality*. Thus you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans which I hate!

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

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. 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 *will be* written, which no one knows but he who receives it”.’ “

The Messiah, the Lord Jesus, is not always the meek and gentle shepherd as He is often portrayed. He once with righteous anger, cleansed the temple in Jerusalem; and He will either cleanse the church that harbors evil, or disown it.

Not only does our Master see and know the condition of His people in all places, but He takes action, which, as Head of the Church, He has a right to do; and indeed, must do.

In the letter to Pergamos the Messiah introduces Himself as the One who wields the sharp two-edged sword. This no doubt refers to the Word of God, the Sword that is sharper than any ordinary two-edged sword. And the Saviour handles this Sword, with all the authority that is His, judging the Church, discerning the very thoughts and intents of the heart.

First, however, the Messiah commends where commendation is due. He acknowledges the fact that the Pergamos assembly was situated in a devilish place - the seat of Satan.

There are some places on the earth that seem to be the very throne of Satan - places like Tibet and Bhutan, or like certain cities or parts of cities in all countries. And Pergamos was one such place. Yet, in a very real way, the whole earth is the sphere in which the devil is enthroned.

We, as believers, are called to walk through this realm; and a constant danger is in regarding ourselves as citizens of the world, rather than as strangers passing through. We are called to maintain a testimony for our Heavenly Master and this requires a wariness of “settling down” in the world.

Pergamos could be commended, for the assembly held fast to the Name and Faith of Y’shua. They were orthodox — perhaps we should even say “evangelical,” in their doctrine, and they were very definite in what they believed. Even when Antipas was martyred, they held to the Faith. They must have hazarded their lives, at that time, for the Saviour. Oh that today, this could be said of far more churches!

It is tragic that many have departed from the Faith in these compromising days.

The Messiah, next, needs to severely rebuke the Pergamos assembly. There were those in the church who held the doctrines of Balaam, and of the Nicolaitans, and yet, were tolerated. The sin of this assembly was tolerance of evil teachings and practices.

In Smyrna, Satan was a roaring lion, persecuting the saints. In Pergamos, he came quietly and subtly, seducing the believers from within.

In the book of Numbers 23 and 24, we read of the gain-inspired prophet Balaam, who was ordered to curse the traveling Israelites. When cursing failed, he taught the Moabite king, Balak, to ensnare the Israelites. It was a teaching of guile, which all

too easily succeeded in seducing the Lord's people, whose strength lay in their being separate and undefiled from the nations around. Soon 24,000 people were involved in this plague of idolatry and fornication.

The Nicolaitans may have been some of the followers of Nicolas (Acts 6:5) who had become a grossly impure sect. Some expositors see them as a "conquering" clerical hierarchy. They evidently combined paganism with a Christian profession. The evil tolerated by the Pergamos church was spiritual idolatry and fornication. The sin was that of [worldliness](#).

For the Christian, any object short of God Himself, that demands his obeisance, is spiritual idolatry. Spiritual fornication is any illicit intercourse with the world. In the early church - the Ephesian church, evil and the Nicolaitan doctrine were condemned. Anything tainted with the world was considered wrong. But the Pergamos church tolerated worldliness.

Today, the world has flooded the church and this evil is being condoned by Christian leaders. There are those in the church who would teach a worldly policy; their doctrine. "Let us condone sin that Grace may abound." This *indifference* to evil is an insult to God, and grieves the Head of the Church.

Consider spiritual idolatry - anything that comes before God. The [love](#) of the world and its enticements, entertainments, its adulations and limelight is not of God. The [lust](#) and [craving](#) for material things is sin. Maybe it is a bigger, modern home, a luxury car, a portable DVD, a latest fashion garment, or even feather in one's hat; any one of a million objects can rob us of our devotion to God.

Maybe it is TV in the home. In some lands, every home has a god-shelf, and children are taught to worship metal or wood. In other lands, children are seated before the TV god, to digest its subtle filth and beguiling doctrines. But some reply, "TV is ok if it is controlled." Well, make sure it is controlled, because if you do not control TV, it will control you! And what about all the shady programs? And now there's the many lurking dangers on the internet!

The Word of God is very definite. Friendship with the world is enmity to the Almighty. (James 4:4). Jude 22 makes it clear also that we should hate "even the garments spotted by the flesh." But this is not popular "church" teaching in these flesh-pleasing days.

Consider spiritual fornication! What fellowship has Christ with the world? How then can a believer become entangled with worldly loves? Our need is imperative - to come clean out of unholy alliance and commit our lives to holy and godly living!

Any encouragement of conformity to the world, even though it takes the name of Evangelical Christianity is a doctrine of Balaam. This is a challenge especially to Christian leaders, for it is easy to overlook worldliness in our midst. Do we encourage or condone worldliness in any form? The Word of God is solemn; for if after we have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Messiah, we are again entangled therein, and are overcome, the latter end is worse with us than the beginning. (2 Peter 2:20)

If our eyes go after the world - its delights, fashions, and methods - our eyes are full of adultery, as Peter puts it. Truly our lives would be much more victorious if we simply obeyed the Master's commands, "Touch not the unclean thing," and, "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world." We need to wait, both as individuals, and as churches, before Yahweh our Heavenly Father, to discover the worldly snares in our lives and around us; the things the Lord hates!

It is not very popular to preach this today, however, and it was not easy for the

leadership of Pergamos to rebuke the creeping worldliness penetrating the assembly. But to fail to correct is to tolerate, and for this, the Messiah judges and commands, Repent!

Again, this is not optional but imperative. “Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly.” If we refuse to put away the worldliness in our lives and in our assemblies, the Master will visit us, not in revival, but with the Sword of His mouth.

This message of rebuke and command, comes not to the leadership only, but to each individual in the assembly, for each one is involved in the state of the church.

A special promise is given once again to the one who overcomes. He shall eat of the hidden manna. The temptation in Pergamos was to eat things offered to idols - to partake of the world. The Saviour will feed the victorious believer with far more than the passing and enticing foods of the world. He will feed him with heavenly food — the Bread of Life, even Himself. There is also the white stone - a sign of the Master’s recognition and favour - an individual reward - a secret between the one who overcomes and his Saviour.

“Therefore, beloved, since you know these things beforehand, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your own stability.” (2 Peter 3:17)

4

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA

Revelation 2:18-29

“And to the messenger of the assembly in Thyatira write: ‘The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, declares these matters:

“I know your deeds, *your* love, service, faith and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have *this* against you, that **you tolerate the woman Jezebel**, who calls herself a prophetess; *and she* teaches and leads my bond-servants astray, *so that they* commit *acts of* immorality, and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her immorality, and she did not repent.

“See! I will cast her upon a bed of *sickness*, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation unless they repent of her deeds. And I will strike her children dead; and all the assemblies will know that I am He who searches the kidneys and hearts - *the mind and soul*; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

“But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira who do not hold this teaching, and who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call *them* - I place no other burden on you. But hold fast to what you have until I come.

“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations: AND HE WILL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES [Psalm 2:9], as I also have received *authority* from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies”.’”

“YOU TOLERATE THE WOMAN JEZEBEL”

In the letter to Thyatira, the Messiah refers to Himself as the Son of God, with eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like fine brass. As Son of God, He wields authority over the House of God. His eyes like “a flame of fire” speak of His searching and penetrating judgment. His feet of “burnished bronze” symbolizes the divine firmness with which He judges and deals with evil. And there were matters in the Thyatira assembly that demanded a strong dealing.

As in the former letters, the Messiah first commends the commendable. In Thyatira, this included love, service, faith, patience and works. These are some fine qualities. And the works of the assembly had even increased since the beginning.

The assembly, however, had declined spiritually in spite of increased activity. Apostasy had entered, deepened, and continued unchecked in the church. That the apostasy in Thyatira was no small thing is seen from the fact that the possibility of revival and recovery was not envisaged. The assembly was not directly commanded to repent, as the churches of Ephesus and Pergamos were. There is, however, in keeping with the long suffering grace of God, the provision to escape the coming punishment, for those associated with Jezebel, should they repent.

In this letter the Messiah speaks to a remnant - the “rest” in verse 24. In the Pergamos assembly, it was a minority involved in the evil. In Thyatira it seems to be a minority who were faithful; and to this group the Master commands and exhorts, “Hold fast till I come.”

In the message to Pergamos we have seen worldliness besieging the church and believers' lives. Now in the message to Thyatira, we find the same sins - idolatry and fornication present, but in this church [the seduction is from within the church](#) - not from without.

Here the Master rebukes the toleration of an evil “woman” and her works. The source of corruption is the false prophetess, Jezebel, who symbolises all systems and people who lead God's people away from the truth and from God Himself.

Jezebel, of whom we read in 1 Kings 18-21, is a type or symbol of an apostate condition. The woman was the wife of King Ahab, and she was determined to establish Babylonianism - the worship of Baal, the counterfeit Messiah, and the Queen of Heaven - in the northern Kingdom. As king, Ahab was responsible to Adonai Yahweh for the state of the kingdom, but no! He tolerated the evil activity of his wife, and permitted her to teach and govern, and thereby produce the apostate state of Israel.

In Thyatira, the leadership is accused by the Messiah of tolerating “Jezebelism,” which was leading His church deeper and deeper into apostasy. Today “Christendom” is full of false prophets; there are many antichrists; there are many Jezebels seducing the people. The Apostles warned us of them, and here the Master Himself warns us. If we would be true to Y'shua, we will not tolerate Jezebelism in the assembly, or traffic with the agents of Satan.

Babylonianism has for ever sought to penetrate and destroy the church from within. We are quite aware of its early infiltration of the Roman Church, where idolatry was encouraged, and where ‘the queen of heaven’ was enthroned.

Rome gradually replaced the authority of the Word of God with the authority of a man. Unscriptural pronouncements were, and are still being added, so that Mary was made the “way,” salvation was bought with money, and “saints” became mediators. A system was formed, which, over the centuries, deluded millions and robbed them of the salvation freely offered by God. Many of Rome's doctrines,

holy days, rites, ceremonies, vestments, titles and teachings have been retained and propagated by “Protestant” groups.

Protestantism certainly did not escape infiltration by Babylonianism. Modernism destroyed the faith, and blinded many to the truth in the Reformation church, just as surely as the apostasy did in the Roman church.

In the last few decades there have been deep stirrings within Romanism. Many Catholics have found the Lord, and many others are seeking. The Saviour is graciously working, and leading Rome-deluded souls into the light and to Himself in these days. We rejoice with Heaven over each one who comes to repentance, and in these days, we should be ready to help and guide these seeking ones. The Saviour has given space for repentance, and many individuals are availing themselves of the opportunity.

In recent years, we have witnessed the subtle penetration of much of the church by “new age” teachings - particularly the emphasis on a new world religion - a synthesis of all religions. This “world religion” seems to be the main aim of the World Council of Churches.

All around we witness a surge towards this one worldwide system - a “church,” of course, which Christ will disown. It is the monstrosity which He reveals and describes in the Revelation chapter 17 – [“Mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots.”](#) This counterfeit religion is being built up before our eyes - an apostasy far deeper than Rome and Protestantism - an abomination so great that God commands those who would be faithful: [“Come out of her, My people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues”](#) - her judgments!

In Ecumenism, Liberalism, Modernism, and in such false prophetesses as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, and Armstrongism, we see a host of Jezebels all over the face of the earth. Many people would tell us to seek a unity - not of the Spirit, but of man’s making; to conform to a compromised standard; to believe that God, if alive, can be disallowed; to believe that Christ was sinful, and now dead; to tear pages from The Word; and to cast away a vital faith.

We see now the new age teachings of evolution, karma, reincarnation, “Christ-consciousness” and “you shall be gods”, being propagated in Christian circles, as though they were fundamentals of the faith. Some teachers are even advocating the new world order, as though that were an alternate name for the Kingdom of God.

In the modern Thyatiran church, there are Jezebels who advocate immorality - physical as well as spiritual. Some in clerical robes teach that the standards of the Bible are out of date. Today is an age of tolerance, of free love. To abstain from impurity, they say, can be dangerous. To restrain the lusts of the flesh is psychologically harmful; (except they use the word “free expression” as a substitute for “lust”.)

In the Messiah’s letter we also see that the corrupters accuse the faithful of knowing the depths of Satan. So it is always! The wicked will be quick to charge the righteous with impurity, and of commerce with unrighteousness.

In the worldwide ecumenical movement today, there exist treacherous plots to completely change Bible standards; to paint black as white; to portray evil as good; and to brand as mentally ill, those who hold to Bible purity. Seducing Jezebels are working swiftly, and successfully throughout Christendom right now, teaching the esoteric mysteries - the hidden mysteries of Babylon that have come through the demonic-inspired writings of Alice A. Bailey, Pierre Teilhard De Chardin, Benjamin

Creme, and a host of others!

Now let us consider our own position individually. Are we entangled with, or trading with any Jezebel? Are we linked with a Christ-dishonouring, compromising or apostate system? Do we have fellowship with any group that promotes or tolerates Jezebels ... whether it be Rome, Ecumenism, Liberalism, Modernism, New Age, or the cults? The voice from Heaven cries:

“Come out of her, My people, so that you will not participate in her sins, and that you will not receive of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4)

In our assembly meetings, do we introduce or tolerate idolatry or fornication in a “religious way”? Are our customs and practices based on the Word of God, or are they products of paganism, Jezebelism, the World, or expediency?

At this time, as the end of this age draws near, we need to search our lives and our assemblies for anything that is corrupting a pure Scriptural faith - in doctrine, in witness, and in living. Are our leaders permitting fornication in the church in the forms of worldly music, and entertainment, or advertising and schemes? Is idolatry being introduced in the forms of art and sculpture and modern “effects” - gimmicks that take eyes away from the Saviour?

How we need a genuine revival of the Holy Spirit today! We need to be brought right back to the Scriptural truth and practice. We need to be wary of the subtle influence, not only from the world, but apostasy within the Church. Tolerance will bring the Master’s rebuke and condemnation upon us.

The Messiah has given the professing church much time to repent; yes, hundreds of years, but she still remains firm to her own damnation. She will be finally cast into a bed of affliction, of which we read in Revelation 17. The end of the harlot will then be Hell’s eternal Lake of Fire.

The command of the Messiah to the remnant was, “Hold fast till I come.” This may seem a small thing, but it is not so small in a corrupt, perverse and God-hating world. To “hold fast” infers the need for diligence and preparation - the need to take the whole armour of God and having done all to stand in the evil day.

“Till I come” is a word of great encouragement to the remnant, for it brings the reminder that there is a limit; a limit to the trials of the believer, and a limit also to the wretchedness that raises its head in opposition to God. The coming of his blessed Redeemer is always the hope and cheer to the faithful disciple of Christ.

The one who overcomes is once again promised a special reward - a double reward. First, the privilege of association with Messiah in ruling His Kingdom. How fitting; for the disciple is learning to overcome by his experience in this evil world, to wield the authority of Messiah; the authority of His Name, His Word and His Blood.

The second reward is the Morning Star, which is Y’shua Himself. The Lord of Glory is the greatest reward of the victorious believer. What a disappointment to those who love Him less. The heart that is not centered on Christ will ever look for other rewards and gain for itself. It is love for the Beloved Master that will inspire the believer to be faithful to Him in an evil world. And after trials, opposition, and abuse, where would joy and reward be, if the triumphant believer failed to receive His Redeemer as his great reward? But no! The Morning Star has been promised - Jesus, Y’shua, in all His heavenly beauty.

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT SARDIS

Revelation 3:1 – 6

“And to the messenger of the assembly in Sardis write: ‘He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, declares these matters:

“I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, and **you are dead**. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain and are about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed before God.

“Remember, then what you have received and heard; and keep *it*, and repent. But if you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will have no idea as to the hour I will come upon you. *But* you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me *dressed* in white; for they are worthy.

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the Book of Life, *but* I will confess his name before My Father, and before His *angelic* messengers.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies”.’”

“YOU HAVE A NAME — BUT YOU ARE DEAD”

Before launching into His message the Messiah first presents to Sardis, His credentials. He is the One who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.

The term “seven Spirits” is not teaching a new doctrine, but refers to the many-sided ministry of the Holy Spirit - or the sevenfold Holy Spirit. Seven being the perfect and complete number, the phrase emphasises that the complete work of the Spirit is in the Messiah.

The Holy Spirit is the Executor of the Mind of Messiah. He is the One who gives life, power, wisdom and every needed gift and grace.

The “seven stars” are the leaders, or leadership, of all assemblies that the Master recognises - even those who have declined. They still belong to Him, and they are still responsible to Him.

In the letter to Ephesus, the seven stars are said to be in the Messiah’s right hand - the mighty, upholding hand of God. Here in the letters to Sardis it is the hand of authority that holds the stars; the hand that deals with the church. The Saviour again emphasises that He knows all about the assembly, the good and the evil. He knows the work and of what type it is.

It must have come as a shock to Sardis, to learn that in spite of all its works, it was dead. Here was an assembly with a reputation, but in reality it was spiritually dead. What a paradox! The Church of the Living God, dead! What a tragedy!

Consider this poor church. It is not absence of works which is causing the state of death. It is not wrong teaching, or tolerance of evil that evokes the condemnation. No! It was **the sin of relying on the past, and on past reputation; of living on past spiritual experience while living in a state of carnality in the present.**

This is an assembly that everyone would say “lives.” It had a great reputation. It was known as an evangelistic church, which had done much for the kingdom of the Messiah. The church was renowned in its city, as a very active and missionary church. Preachers deemed it a privilege to preach in its pulpit. The older folk could tell of the past - times of blessings, times of revival, times when the believers were on fire for Y’shua, and when the saints gathered purposefully in prayer, to besiege the

Throne of Grace.

Yes, much could be told about the outreach and success of this assembly. Over the years the fame had been maintained, but the life had gradually declined. And now the Saviour looks at the same church. In spite of its reputation, it's dead!

It still has its works, but its works are found wanting; they have no divine life. Gospel meetings are held, but there are no conversions; prayer meetings are held, but few answers from the Throne of Yahweh; ministry meetings; but no true edification. There is activity, but no momentum. The works are unfulfilled. There are Christians working, but without the work of God. There is action, but no unction; form but no power.

How many assemblies are in this condition today! They have a name - and it is easy to fool others, but God sees and condemns - you are dead! Today there is plenty of activity and organisation - far too much of these; but we need life and power. Dead churches have neither. Sometimes God is organised right out of the churches. How we need the seven-fold Holy Spirit!

Elder, pastor, deacon, brother, sister, this is a challenge of tremendous importance to each one of us, now! Consider your own assembly, and your own life! Do you find life and power from on High? Or is it just activity that is seen? Is it spirituality or carnality that we participate in?

Do you still have a prayer meeting; and is it well-attended? Or is it only a handful? Is the prayer meeting charged with burden and passion for souls? Or are the requests just a formal "offering"? Is there a desire to linger in the presence of Yahweh, besieging the Throne, or does the meeting need to finish on the dot? Are home and missionary needs and circumstances prayed over in detail? Or are the petitions reduced to "God bless the missionaries?"

Consider the Gospel Meeting - or has it been replaced by another type of meeting? Are unsaved brought in? Are they drawn by the risen Saviour? Or is the Gospel meeting barely attended even by Christians?

Brother, sister, consider your church. Being a part of the Messiah's Body, you have a share in His Church, and a great responsibility to the Master. If you find dearth and death, the Master's words come as a command to you: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain."

This is a positive command - it leaves no room for such carnal reasoning as, "Oh what can one do; you can't expect much these days." It is easy to find a hundred external reasons for spiritual dearth, but one of our greatest failings and sins is that of relying on past reputation.

Wherever we see spiritual death in our midst, we should hold to the Word and come to the Throne of God, and plead for a Holy Spirit revival of the dying remnant.

Let us consider our personal lives. Are we personally resting on our past? Can we look back to times of real fellowship with the Heavenly Master, to times of zeal and power, of blessing and great joy in Y'shua, and now must hang our hands in sorrow, realising that our spiritual life has declined?

The Messiah issues a five-fold command to Sardis, and all who are in this state of death.

(1) **Be watchful.** If we fail to watch at this crucial time, we will find the few sparks that are left, will be fully extinguished. What a condition - not a spark left! Further, if we fail to watch, we will find the Day of YHWH overtaking us - coming as a thief in

the night.

(2) **Strengthen** the remaining and dying things. These are the former channels of life, which are now close to being extinguished for lack of spiritual water. To strengthen calls for positive action.

(3) **Remember**. We are called to think back - to bring back to mind the Source of our life. It is not activity, it is not a "thing," but it is Christ, Y'shua the Messiah, Himself. The Sardis condition is the eventual outcome of an Ephesian church which does not repent of leaving its first love. To truly remember implies obeying that which we have first heard and held.

(4) **Hold fast** is a warning against carelessness in handling the things of God. The Word of God is not something to hold lightly. It is a warning also of corruption, and of the trends that would rob us of our faith, should we cling to it lightly.

(5) **Repent**. Again, this is a command; but a command that offers the possibility of recovery. It throws the onus back to us.

"Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, says YHWH of Hosts."
(Malachi 3:7)

The five-fold command of the Lord is imperative. It leaves no room for slothful reasoning such as, "I am so weak; I am only one; What's the use?" If we dare take the name of Christian, we must implicitly obey the Heavenly Master.

To **watch, strengthen, remember, hold fast** and **repent** needs more than wishful thinking. There is a need for a determined attitude, and for self-discipline and sacrifice. We need to "buffet our bodies," as Paul puts it. We need to purposefully wait on God in prayer till He revives spiritual life in us, and in our assemblies. If we set our minds and souls to obey the Master, we will find that He has set His Hand to bless us!

The fearful alternative to obedience to the Messiah's command, is judgment. The Master promises to come upon the unrepentant, the dead assembly. He will come as a thief - unexpected, and cast it into tribulation, like the offenders in Thyatira.

Although the tribulation is not directly mentioned in this letter, it is implied in the context. The Word of God does not describe the Messiah's return as a thief upon the church, but upon the world - in ushering in the Day of YHWH - the time of "Jacob's trouble," "The Great Tribulation."

We do not believe this passage is teaching a partial rapture of the church, or a falling away doctrine. What it does teach is that the Master rejects a lifeless profession. Much of Protestantism, and Christendom, will be found lifeless at the Messiah's return. Much will be found to be false, and thus excluded from the true living organism called the Church, the Messiah's Body.

"Profession" will not save an individual or a church from the Tribulation and the Lake of Fire. Look at much of Christendom today! Not only do many fail to watch and expect the Saviour's return, many do not even believe He is coming back. And yet, as such, these ones may be engaged in tremendous sized works - works, alas, that are also carnal, and dead.

The one who overcomes, however, looks for his blessed Redeemer, who brings his reward with Him. And to the joyful believer, the Saviour fulfils His three-fold promise.

1. **"He shall walk with the Messiah in white"** - this seems to be a reference to the

garments of the Bride of Christ in Revelation 19:8:

“She has been permitted to dress in fine (*radiant*) linen - dazzling and white, for the fine linen is (*signifies, represents*) the righteousness - the upright, just and godly living (*deeds, conduct*) and right standing with God - of the saints (the set-apart people of God.)” (*Amplified*)

2. “His name shall not be erased from the Book of Life.” This is a promise not a threat. It does not teach that some believers will be lost, but rather it gives assurance to those who are battling and seeking to overcome, that their names, which have been recorded from the foundation of the world, will always be in the Book of Life. The promise assures the believer that the Word of God will not fail.

While seeking to overcome on earth, for various reasons the believer’s name may be erased from many a church register, but it will never be erased from God’s register. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? (Romans 8:28-39)

The Messiah does not encourage any believer to continue in a defeated walk. He wants all to overcome by the grace that He supplies.

“Through God we do valiantly,
and He treads down our adversaries.” (Psalm 60:12)

3. He shall be owned and confessed by the Messiah, before the Father and His angels. The believer who overcomes may be excommunicated, abused and denied on earth, but to his joy, he will be welcomed and owned by his Saviour. What a high honour, if in that day, my Master puts His hand upon my shoulder, and says, “This is my faithful servant!”

6

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA

Revelation 3:7—13

“And to the messenger of the assembly in Philadelphia write: ‘He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shuts, and who shuts and no one opens, declares these matters:

“I know your deeds. See! I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My Name.

“Look! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie – Watch! *for* I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

“Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which is about to come upon the whole world, to try those who live on the earth. I am coming quickly - *soon*!

“Hold on to what you have, so that no-one will take your crown.

“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will never again go out *from it*; and 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 My new Name.

“He who had an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies”.’”

THE MESSIAH HOLDS THE KEY

In His message to Philadelphia, the Messiah does not include a word of condemnation. This does not mean the assembly was perfect. The church had “a little power,” but it was faithful in keeping the Word of God; and so the Master brings encouragement to the believers.

Philadelphia was an active assembly, and like the six other assemblies, had works. This assembly’s works, however, were coupled with faithfulness to the Heavenly Master, and thus He was gratified in this assembly. He rejoiced to commend; “You have kept My Word, and have not denied My Name.”

In this message to Philadelphia, the Messiah presents Himself as the “Holy and True” - to show this assembly, and us, that His power and an open door are never coupled with untruth and unholiness. Rather, the open door and His power are linked to the faithfulness of believers in keeping His Word.

The Messiah presents Himself as the One who has the Key of David and who opens and closes doors, in spite of man’s efforts that are contrary to His will. The key of David is symbolic of the power of administration. It is a symbol of the right of the Master to enter and exercise authority in the believer’s and assembly’s life.

The Messiah holds the key of administration in the Kingdom of God. He holds also the key of hell and death, as well as the key to the doors of grace, revival, evangelism and missionary outreach. He is the One, who in virtue of His holding the key, is able to close doors, and is able to open them.

As the God of Grace, He delights to unlock and open the storehouse of grace. As the Almighty God, He delights to unlock the treasures of strength and blessing. As the long-suffering Saviour, He opens the doors of evangelism and missionary outreach, and keeps those doors open until His will is accomplished.

The Master holds also the key to the revival which we so desperately need right now. Let us remember that the Master holds the key. We need to look to Him for revival. We may try to force the door open through our self-efforts, our organising, our programs, popular preachers, entertainment and carnal methods, but there remains one key, and Christ holds the key.

It is not a matter of our seeking to persuade the Master to use that key. He is more willing to bless than we are willing to receive blessing. He is waiting and longing to revive His work, but He does not always find the willing people He can use. He is indeed willing to open the doors. He is willing to open the windows of Heaven, and pour out a blessing that’s more than we could ask or think. So it is not a matter of “working up revival,” but of being [prepared](#) for His reviving power, and of entering the doors He opens to us.

Philadelphia’s commendation for “keeping the Word of God” meant more than simply reading of a passage of Scripture, and holding correct doctrine. It meant more than attending meetings and “the Lord’s Table.” To “[keep His Word](#)” means [prompt and implicit obedience to His Voice and Written Word](#).

As the Saviour said, “If a man love Me, he will keep My Word.” It means then, to treasure up the Word of God in our hearts, so that it governs our lives, and accomplishes God’s purpose in us.

The Word of God is the Sword that separates us from all else, to the Saviour. The Word is also a razor that continually convicts and cleanses us from daily defilement. The Word lightens our way, and reveals the hidden things of darkness. It is the Word that needs to be both heard, and obeyed.

How we should long for truth and holiness! How we should long to obey every word of our Master, whom we profess to love.

“Not denying His Name,” implies faithfulness to Y’shua in circumstances under which it is not a popular or easy thing to do. “Name” here means more than a title. The Name stands for all the Messiah is. It means the revealed truth of who He is, what He has done, and His rightful authority in the believer’s life. It is possible to take the Name of Christian, and yet deny “His Name” by rejecting or ignoring His directions for us.

The Messiah mentions the “little strength” of this assembly; but weakness can prove a blessing, if it drives us to the Strengthener. Paul could say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” and quotes the Saviour’s word:

“My grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in (your) weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

In Christian life and service, we can be assured that the Master does not expect of us, that which we cannot do. He does not command except He provides, with the command, the resources to fulfil it. When He says “Go,” He opens the door. Sometimes it is for us to make definite steps towards a door, to see it open before us. What seemed an escape-proof gate to Peter, opened of its own accord when he stepped toward it, accompanied by the angel of the LORD. (Acts 12:10)

It is folly on the other hand, to try to force doors open that the Master has closed, or that He has not opened. Such closed doors should not cause anxiety, for the key is in the Messiah’s hand, and He can open when and where it is His Will. If the Master closes one door, however, He will open another, unless He wants us to stay still. It is not always the door we have our hearts set upon that He wants us to enter! The real tragedy, of course, is the doors that we do not enter, even though He has opened them for us.

The letter to Philadelphia warns also of a false cult, which was evidently troubling the assembly. The name of the cult is not given; neither does it matter. The teachings of the cult, however, keeps raising its head, deceiving numbers who are young in the faith.

The cult’s warped adherents claimed to be “Jews,” and thought that [that](#) had given them a superiority and the right to wield authority over the church. They were false! Failing to understand the Scriptures, the basis of salvation, the nature of the Church and the difference between Israel and the Church, they taught that the church must live by the Jewish law.

Judaisers! Not only did they insist on a religion of ordinances for themselves, but for everyone else also. Not knowing the redemption that is in the Messiah through faith alone, nor the freedom of the Spirit, they condemned forthwith, those who lived by the faith of the Son of God.

Today Christendom has its share of Judaisers. Today there are still sects who claim that when we come to Y’shua the Messiah, we become “Jews.” They confuse many with their fanciful and unfounded theories. And there are sects which insist on the observance of the Old Covenant. The Master warns of such, and brands them as the synagogue of Satan. They are neither of the Synagogue of Israel, or of the Assembly of the Church.

Paul warns likewise of the Judaisers in the book of Galatians.

“I WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL”

The promise to the faithful church is one of preservation. The Philadelphian church had kept the Word of Christ's endurance. They were sharing in His endurance - what He endured on the cross, and in the Saviour's patient outreach to a lost world - and so they were to be kept from the coming worldwide hour of trial.

While Jezebel and her associates of Thyatira would be cast into tribulation, this church would be kept from it. How? By the Rapture - the catching up of the church to meet her Lord in the air. The very next verse in this message is part of the promise - "I come quickly." This was an add-on to His earlier promise:

"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's House are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you, for I am going *there* to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that you also may be where I am." (John 14:3)

Philadelphia was certainly not looking for the Tribulation, but for her coming Saviour and Head.

The Philadelphian overcomer is promised that he would become a pillar in God's temple. The experience gained in holding fast to the Saviour while in the arena of difficulties and oppression, would fit the believer for a strong position in the Eternal Kingdom. The stamp of recognition and approval is to be placed upon him.

What of us today? How many doors are open, but yet they are never entered by the Lord's people? How many fields are open, but without receiving sufficient ambassadors for Christ. [Obedience is a key word in the Christian life.](#) It is a key word for evangelism and revival. If we would implicitly obey the Master's words, we would find doors opening before us; doors of opportunity, doors of service, and doors of blessing. Where is our obedience?

May each reader be able to say sincerely, "My fixed aim is to keep the Word of the Messiah and of His patience; my aim is to obey My Master, and to enter the doors that He opens to me, no matter what the cost may be."

7

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA

Revelation 3:14-22

"To the messenger of the assembly in Laodicea write: 'The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God, declares these matters:

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would have you were *either* cold or hot. So then, because [you are lukewarm](#), and neither cold nor hot; I will spew you out of My mouth.

"Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich; and white garments so that you may be dressed and that your shameful nakedness be not exposed; and salve to put on your eyes that you may see.

"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline. So be earnest and repent.

"Look here! I am standing at the door, knocking; if anyone hears *and heeds*

My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will eat *in fellowship* with him, and he with Me.

“To him who overcomes, I will grant the right to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies’.”

“I WOULD RATHER YOU WERE COLD, THAN LUKEWARM”

The Laodicean assembly was one which the Messiah could barely own. In the message to this church, He pictures Himself standing *outside* the door. The assembly, however, did profess to own the Messiah, and therefore He speaks to it - not a word, of commendation, but rather, of judgment. And to the few faithful in the assembly, He brings exhortation.

First the Messiah presents Himself as “the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.” As the “Amen,” Y’shua is the One in whom all the promises of God are fulfilled. As Paul has written:

“For all the promises of God in Him are **yes**, and in Him, **Amen**, unto the glory of God by us.” (2 Corinthians 1:20)

Y’shua is “the faithful and true Witness.” During His sojourn on earth, the Messiah fulfilled the will of God, and proved Himself as that witness. Now He expects all His people to follow in the same train. As He walks amongst the churches, He is a true witness to all that goes on in His Name. He witnesses the faithfulness and the love of the saints, as well as the apostasy, the evil and indifference. And He will witness to the former, and against the latter, at that coming time when every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (Romans 14:10-12)

“The beginning of the creation of God” is a phrase snatched by some cults and used out of context. Often, without even an enquiry into the true meaning of the word “beginning” it is used to prove the pernicious doctrine that says Jesus was the first created being - a teaching that is contradicted throughout Scripture.

The word “beginning” means, “origin,” or “author.” The Messiah, Jesus Himself, is the great Creator. Paul explains:

“For in Him all things in heaven and on earth were created, *things* visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created through Him and for Him.” (Colossians 1:16)

The Messiah is the Cause, and the Origin of Creation. And it is through the Messiah that the whole creation will be consummated.

How evident it is then; all that does not have Christ is without purpose; all that is without the Cause is vain. How utterly empty is an assembly, or a life, when the “Alpha and Omega” (the Beginning and the End), is forced to take a place outside!

This letter to Laodicea, without a word of commendation, launches into the charge against the assembly - it was lukewarm! The assembly was neither cold nor hot - it was in an insipid, sickening, in-between state. This state of being is a sin of such repugnance that the Messiah promises the assembly that He will spew it out of His mouth. The lukewarm state of professing Christians sickens Him!

The Master longs to have all His people hot - but if they would not be hot, it were better that they be cold, rather than to be in this compromising, middle-of-the-road state - a state in which many Christians are living today. Maybe the reason He would rather have them cold than lukewarm, is because it is easier to touch the heart

of a hard, cold sinner, than the heart of a complacent Christian.

All three conditions, hot, cold and lukewarm, can be applied to believers. The hot represents those who are fervent in love, worship, zeal, service and obedience to the Saviour. The cold are either backsliders or unconverted, who make little or no pretence of obedience to Christ.

The lukewarm are those in between. They are professing believers, who attend church meetings, and speak the right language. They pray and read the Word; they may preach or teach in Sunday School; they are engaged in many Christian works. But they are content, careless, apathetic and indifferent to the Master and His commands. They are visionless, passionless and powerless. Those in this condition do not renounce Christ, neither do they sacrifice anything for Him.

They will say, "I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Yes, they have the right doctrine; materially they are progressing. The assembly has its new building; yes, it is progressing - and quite proud of it. But the miserable lukewarm believers, and assemblies, do not even know that their *actual* condition is wretched, poor, blind and naked.

The materially poor assembly in down-town Smyrna was, no doubt, looked down on by the Laodiceans, and yet it was the Smyrneans whom the Messiah called rich. The real difference is that the risen Saviour was in the midst of the assembly at Smyrna; and an assembly that has Him, has everything. The Master was outside the Laodicean church, and in spite of all its show of affluence, the assembly was bankrupt without Him.

Laodiceans talk about being blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, but they live as spiritual paupers. They speak about the Almighty God, but know very little of His power in experience. Today there is much learning in the churches - and in the eyes of many churches, there are great riches of intellect, theology, science and philosophy in their midst. Here, as in all "wealthy" conditions, there is the great tendency to rely on one self, and to reject the Messiah as the Source of all wealth, health and knowledge.

The terrible thing is that complacent believers think they have need of nothing. If someone suggested extra prayer meetings, and setting aside a day or night for humbly waiting on Yahweh, to seek His power and blessing, in view of the prevailing spiritual decline, the Laodiceans would reply, there is no such need. Should concern be expressed that souls are not being won, or the workers on the fields are so few, the complacent would immediately make excuses.

Today this lukewarm, compromising state is prevailing, but it is nauseating to the Master, and brings His condemnation, "I will spew you out of My mouth."

A lukewarm Christian, in the light of these words, might well ask himself whether he is really born again. Of course, our 21st century doctrine says that you can be a lukewarm Christian and still be commended by the Master. But the Messiah says He will spew such out of His mouth. And as He will never renounce His own, dearly-bought Bride, the question the lukewarm should be asking is, "What is wrong with me? Do I really belong to Christ?" But the lukewarm are more likely to consider themselves as in need of nothing.

Although the Messiah has promised the rejection of Laodicea, He offers counsel. It is apparent, however, that His exhortation and commands are directed to individuals in the church. The evil city of Sodom was condemned, yet YHWH brought a remnant out of the city.

Here, the Master counsels: "Buy of Me!" Strange, maybe, seeing He has just

proclaimed them miserable and poor. Yet when the Messiah invites them to buy of Him, it is an invitation to buy without money and without price. This emphasises the valuelessness of Laodicea's riches. Using their increased goods as payment, what could they expect to buy from the Lord?

And yet, the way back to the hot, spiritual state, will cost something! The way back to spiritual power and blessing is open to individuals, but I need not think it will simply involve washing my face, and making a new resolution. It will cost me something! The way back is the way of confession, repentance, restitution, surrender, faith, obedience and the way of the cross.

The Messiah's rebuke to Laodicea is necessitated because of the very fact that He loves His people, and must reprove and chasten when a devious course is not corrected. There were some in Laodicea who belonged to Y'shua, but while they continued to stay in this condemned "church," they were participants in its lukewarmness - and thus the command to be zealous and repent. The Master cannot overlook the appalling lukewarm condition; He must command and chasten.

The first step in our return to our Saviour is a recognition of our need. While we protect our flesh and pride and refuse to acknowledge our dire need - while we remain content and "in need of nothing," we will continue on, in that sickening state. We should therefore, examine our hearts and condition, and humble ourselves before the Heavenly Master.

Let all the people of the Messiah examine themselves! Is this detestable lukewarm state in me, or in you? Let each assembly who belongs to the Eternal One gather to seek His Face. Let the sin of lukewarmness, complacency, prayerlessness, pride, bitterness, with worldliness and all other sins be put away from our midst, and from our personal lives! And let us heed the Saviour's invitation:

"I am standing at the door, knocking; if anyone hears and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will eat in fellowship with him, and he with Me." (3:20)

The Saviour has been compelled to stand outside the assembly, for He cannot condone the condition of the assembly by His Presence. Laodicea was "empty," even as Israel was when Y'shua spoke to them: "Look! Your house is left desolate for you." (Matthew 28:38) The Laodicean assembly was no longer a habitation for the Spirit of God.

Now as the Master knocks, He says; "If **anyone** hears My voice." Here's the call to the individual. To hear, of course, means to hearken and obey. The door to be opened is the one which allows Him to enter, to correct, and to take full sovereignty over the life. **The key to this door is one that the Messiah does not hold - it is the key that each one of us holds.** It is the key that enables us to decide who controls our individual lives.

The reward of opening our lives to the Saviour is great. He offers to come in and sup with us. This is fellowship indeed. Oh the privilege of having the Lord of Glory at our tables; of having fellowship with the Living God!

John, in his first epistle, points out that our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son. This has always been the purpose of God - to have fellowship with His creature, man. Has He not planned a family with whom He can share Himself? Has He not planned a Bride who can share the glory and future of His Son?

Always He seeks to give Himself to His people, to share Himself with them, so that they, in response, might participate ever more fully in His purpose, plans, work and love.

To Laodicea, as to nominal Christians today, such fellowship holds no real charm. But the Master speaks to His own. He offers a far deeper fellowship than Laodicea, or any other church could ever give.

The Messiah offers a reward to the overcomer - the privilege of sitting with Him on the Father's throne. To overcome in this context, is to judge the lukewarmness, and indifference in one's own life, and to turn from it. To overcome may involve even separation from a Laodicean-like church - the church that stands under judgment; and it will mean separation from the evils that have robbed us of our joy and our spiritual strength.

In Ephesians 2:6 we read that believers are already seated with the Messiah Y'shua in heavenly places - this is their position "in Him"; and it is given to them, right now, to learn to live in [the authority of Christ](#), in fulfilling God's plans.

In a day beyond the Rapture, overcomers will be given great authority in God's eternal kingdom, depending on their faithfulness during this little while on earth. Paul says, "[If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.](#)" (2 Timothy 2:12).

And to overcome, as the Master requires, there may be suffering involved. But how far better it is to suffer, rather than to sin! (1 Peter 3:17)

Y'shua Himself overcame during His sojourn on earth. He was not indifferent; He was not passionless; He was not worldly, and lacking in prayer, devotion and love! He did not wink at iniquity, nor did He court popularity by overlooking hypocrisy, apostasy and evil! Rather, He fulfilled the works of God. He loved not His life unto blood. He did not regard position and reputation as something to be won, but He took the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death - even the death of the cross. To us who would follow, is given grace to follow in His steps. (1 Peter 2:21)

The Messiah's letter to Laodicea concludes with the same exhortation that ends each of the seven messages:

["He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the \(Holy\) Spirit says to the churches."](#)

May the Master find many of our ears open to hear, and to obey. And may He be your sweet and abiding Portion, according to your need at this very hour.

AMEN!