

THE SEVEN CHURCHES

A Biblical Study at the Reformed Bible Church of Southern California

April 28, 2013

“...the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” Rev. 1:20

(...continued)

3. How is the Great Tribulation connected to the description of the Seven Churches (Rev. 1:20; Rev. 2 & 3)?

What makes this tribulation so different is that it is a spiritual tribulation, not seen with human eyes but only with the eyes of enlightenment (Prov. 20:12; 29:13; Eph. 1:18). The Lord will enlighten His Elect (Matt. 24:24) to see the “falling away” (II Thes. 2:3-4) and protect them from falling into this apostasy.

A. Before we look at each of the seven churches, let us differentiate between the church and the temple of God. What is the difference?

1) The Church - is an organization consisting of both saved and unsaved individuals, as a representation of the kingdom of heaven on earth. (Matt. 13:24-30; I Cor. 3:1-4; 7:12-16)

2) The Temple of God - consists of truly saved individuals, because God does not reside in the unsaved; the proper habitation of God. (I Cor. 3:16-17; II Cor. 6:16-18)

B. Why is this comparison helpful before looking at the Seven Churches?

When we see two groups of individuals in each church, we realize that God cannot be condemning the truly saved because He sees His atonement in them, but must be identifying the apostasy of the unsaved. Since no man can identify the saved and the unsaved in the church, each person must embrace the warnings of apostasy in the church before “the candlestick be removed out of his place (Rev. 2:5),” meaning one group be taken out of the church (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23) and the other left (Matt. 25:1-12).

C. The Seven Churches

1) The Church of Ephesus - Left Their First Love (Rev. 2:1-7)



a) “I know thy works...” vs. 2-3 Doesn't it appear this church is doing some things right? What kind of works are these? Matt. 25:34-46

- How do we differentiate the works of those who are saved in the church from the works of those who are unsaved in the church?

We cannot differentiate; it is the work of God to make His will known through both the just and the unjust. The last day will declare, “every man's work shall be made manifest...it shall be revealed by fire (I Cor. 3:11-15).

b) “Nevertheless...thou has left thy first love. Remember from whence thou are fallen...” vs. 4-5 What is the focus of the error? Matt. 10:37-38; Deut. 6:5-7; 5:16

- How do we know this pertains to those who are unsaved in the church? Is it possible for those who are saved to leave “their first love”? Eph. 1:3-12

c) “He that hath an ear, let him hear...to him that overcometh will I give...” vs. 7 Who are those who will have the ability to “overcome”? Only the saved in the church will be given this ability. I Jn. 5:4-6; Jn. 6:37,44

2) The Church of Smyrna - The Persecuted Church (Rev. 2:8-11)



a) “I know thy works...” vs. 9 Notice for this church there is no list of works that they have done “correctly.” Why not? (Eph. 2:10)

- “...I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.” - There is no fluff in this statement. Is this group within the church or without? If we compare “spiritual things with spiritual” (I Cor. 2:13-15), how do we distinguish between one who says he is a “Jew” from one who is not? Ro. 2:28-29; 9:6

b) “Fear none of those things thou shalt suffer...be thou faithful unto death...” Why is a persecuted church an encouraging thing? John 15:18-21; I Peter 4:12-17

- If each church has two groups of people, will the unsaved feel comfortable being persecuted in this kind of church? Matt. 13:20-21

c) “He that hath an ear, let him hear...” Why does this only pertain to the saved? Prov. 20:12



“In that day seven women (Rev. 2&3) shall take hold of one man saying, We will eat our own bread (John 6:35) and wear our own apparel (Is. 61:10) only let us be called by thy name (Mk. 13:6) to take away our reproach.”
- Isaiah 4:1

ONCE DEFINED AS HERESY

“Man has God's gift of free-will and that is all what is needed. By directing his will in the right way the natural man could make himself good in the eyes of God and do the good God required of him. He is not a dead sinner dependent on an efficacious operation of God in the heart.” - British Monk Pelagius

IS NOW KNOWN AS THE GOSPEL OF WORKS

