



## LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

### (Introduction)

Revelation Chapter 1 indicates that the Apostle John, while exiled on the Isle of Patmos, was given a revelation of Yahshua, The Messiah in a vision; thus is he called 'John, The Revelator'. He was instructed to write a letter to each of the 7 churches of Asia to bare witness of Yahshua's testimony in order "**to show his servants the things that must shortly come to pass**" -

Revelation 1:1. While the spirit of prophecy was upon him, John saw seven golden candlesticks (7 churches) and in their midst was one with the appearance like the Son of Man (Elohim/Israel) who held **seven stars** in his right hand. The seven stars are the seven angels (**burning spirits**) who stand before the throne of Elohim. The 7 Spirits are generally described in Isaiah 11:1-2 as **The Spirit of YHWH**, which would come to rest upon Yahshua, the Messiah.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the (1) Spirit of YHWH shall rest upon him, (2) the Spirit of Wisdom and (3) the Spirit of Understanding, (4) the Spirit of Counsel and (5) the Spirit of Might, (6) the Spirit of Knowledge and of (7) the Fear of YHWH". Isaiah 11:1-2

The verification of this is found in Revelation 5:5-6 where the Lamb of YAH (Yahshua, Lion of the Tribe of Judah, The Root of David) is seen with seven (7) horns (**powers**) and seven eyes (**7 Spirits of YHWH**).

"And one of the Elders said unto me, weep not; Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns (**powers**) and seven eyes, which are the **Seven Spirits of YAH**, sent forth into all the earth". Revelation 5:5-6.

**ASIA** was the name of a Roman province in western Asia Minor, which included Mysia, Lydia, Caria, the coastal islands and western Phrygia. The borders of this province were, for the most part, those of the earlier **Kingdom of Pergamum**. The 7 Churches were actually physical churches that existed in this area with all of the actual churches having come into being by 100 A.D.

Originally all were early Sabbath-keeping churches (*of Hebrew Israelites and converts or proselytes*) that were raised during the Apostles' ministries and those of their successors. Influence from Paul's ministry undoubtedly resulted in the founding of remaining churches in the Lycus River valley at Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae that were deeply affected by the pagan culture and political environment surrounding them. The letters to the seven churches were addressed to **Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea**, and denoted several things:

- 1) They were actual **letters** (epistles) to real churches with different "spiritual" strengths and weaknesses, praise and admonitions to:
  - a). the entire church body as a whole (many members of **one body**); and
  - b). the individual believers within each church body (**individual members of the body**)
- 2) Each church had characteristics that would be displayed during **each church period of growth**, as well as **each dispensation (or age) of church history** beginning with the early apostolic church, and its events, down to our modern day church. [A **dispensation** is the

*The United Congregation of Israel*

*management of household affairs by law or rule; the manner in which Elohim administers salvation to his saints throughout time*].

3) They were letters of prophesy on each type of church (and condition of the church) during its history, and prophesy of conditions:

- a). that would be present in churches found in the latter days (our times); and
- b). that would be personified within each individual believer of the church in these latter days.

The actual history of each church will lend a significant amount of understanding on the strengths, weaknesses, the warnings, counsel, praise and reward of each church (and believers).

**When all seven letters are read in succession, they conclude a prophetic picture of the “Church Era” from it’s meager, but righteous beginnings with Yahshua’s disciples sowing the seeds of the true gospel at Ephesus down to the fallen, blind church of Laodicea. Those of us alive today (2011) are witnessing the end of the Age of Grace (the Church Era) that is currently undergoing “judgment”; which must begin at YHWH’s own house (*separation of the wheat and the chaff in the church*) before judgment begins in full fury upon the world!!**

These seven letters (messages) found in Revelation Chapter 2-3, were written to the churches at:

Ephesus, **the Apostolic Church (Lost First Love, the Law)** - Part One

Smyrna, **the Suffering Church (Persecuted)** – Part Two

Pergamos, **the Compromised Church (Married Church & State)** – Part Three

Thyatira, **the Corrupt Church (Heretic of the Universal Church)** - Part Four

Sardis, **the Dead Church (Dead but Reformed)** – Part Five

Philadelphia, **the Faithful Church (Missionary, the Faithful Few)** – Part Six

Laodicea, **the Lukewarm Church (Apostate)** – Part Seven

The Conclusion Letters to The Seven Churches ■

Part One

## THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS (2:1-7)

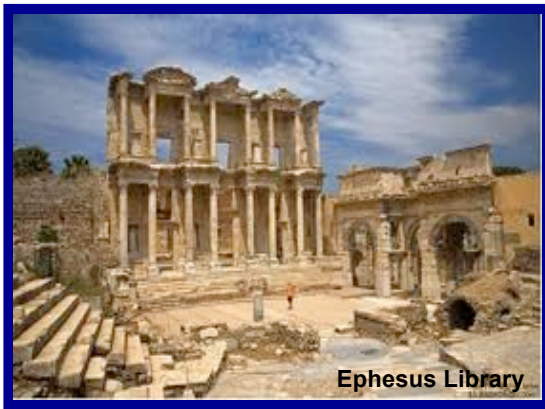
(THE 'LOVELESS' PRODIGAL SON)

Ephesus (G2181) means "Permitted"

Church Period: "Apostolic"

Dispensation: Age of Innocence (Untested Holiness)

Parable Character: The Sower & The Seed  
33 AD – 431 AD



"Ephesus" (modern Efes) which means "permitted"

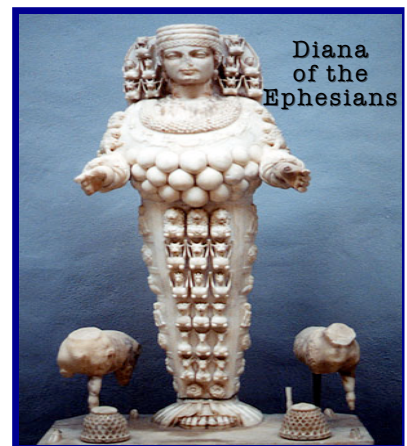
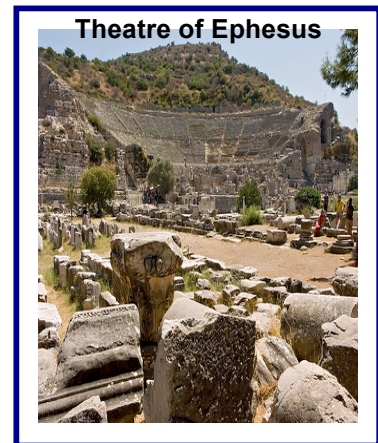
was located 60 miles northeast of the Isle of Patmos where John was exiled and held a population of 200,000 people. It was the most important city of Asia at the mouth of the Cayster River (an important commercial and export center for Asia Minor). Chartered as a free city by Rome, it contained temples to three (3) Roman emperors. **The Temple of Artemis (Diana) was four times the size of the Parthenon of Athens and was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world.**

The church, itself was established over a period of 23 years but on Paul's third journey to Ephesus, he taught his followers the details of the true gospel during a two-year period. His relationship with the locals started to deteriorate when he preached that "gods made by human hands are not gods at all" (Acts 19:23-34). Angry citizens of Ephesus rioted, led by Demetrius, a leader of the silversmiths who made silver shrines for the goddess Diana (Artemis).

Ephesus contained a theater that seated an estimated 25,000 people. A main thoroughfare, some 35 meters wide (105 feet), ran from the theater to the harbor, at each end of which stood an impressive gate. The thoroughfare was flanked on each side by rows of columns 15 meters (50 feet) deep. Behind these columns were **baths, gymnasiums, and Famous Hebrew Israelites and proselytes who lived and ministered in Ephesus included Aquila and Priscilla, Paul** (Acts 19:8-10), **Timothy** (1 Timothy 1:3), and **the Apostle John** (*the Revelator*). John is said to have moved to Ephesus with his mother, Mary, the mother of Yahshua, around 40 A.D., according to the city's history. After exile, John presided over the churches of Asia in the later years of his life, and the church of St. John (that was raised in his honor) sits on top of his grave on Ayasuluk Hill. (*Unfortunately, this is in violation of the commandments since a so-called holy church should never be erected on the same grounds where the dead are buried*). Both John and Mary are said to have lived there until their deaths.

To make matters worse for Ephesus, it was the site of the third ecumenical council in 431 A.D., **The Council of Nicea called by Constantine**. Here the question of the Virgin Mary being the mother of God was debated. In this council it was decided that Christ had a double nature as God and man, and the Virgin Mary was 'theotokos' (god bearer). With this history of '**pagan mother-goddess worship**', it becomes much easier to see how 'Mary-worship' replaced the worship of Artemis (Diana).

Beginning with Revelation 2:1, the letter to Ephesus is addressed "to the angel" (star) **who stands at the door of the church during holy convocation**. While the word 'angel' means messenger (Greek: *angelos*, Hebrew: *malik*) a deeper meaning is given here since the Greek word used in Revelation 2:1



for messenger is (Strong's G32 – Abiyhayil), meaning: **Possessor of Power**. The **prevailing spirit** of the church of Ephesus is aware of their activities and deeds (Leviticus 26:11-12) endowing believers with power who remain true.

**Ephesus, was the first church that "permitted" Gentiles to enter as 'Spiritual Israelites'** shortly after the door of the church was opened to the Gentiles by the mission given to Paul. **Ephesus, 'the loveless' or 'backslidden church' represents "True Hebrew Israelites" (of the true faith) who abandoned the love (the Law) they had at first.** Over time, iniquitous (erroneous) and cold Hebrew Israelites replaced the fervent, contagious works (deeds and love) which once characterized the vibrant church (Matthew 24:12-14). If the church continues to forsake the 'truth and light' (Urim and Thurmin) it was given, Yahshua will remove their lampstand from the community. (Isaiah 42:6-7; 49:6).

**Verse 6** makes it plain that the body of this church is comprised of "true servants of Yahshua" versus "deceivers who teach lies in Yahshua's name". **"Nicolaitans"** were a party that rose to power and led Hebrew Israelites and proselytes to compromise their holy standards by encouraging involvement with sacrifices to idols and other immoralities condemned by the law (2:6, 15, 20-21). Remember, this was the prevalent idolatrous culture of Ephesus and surrounding pagan cities as noted by their ancient worship of Artemis (Diana of the Ephesians). But not only this, once we understand the significance of the meaning of the word '**Nicolaitan**', *the way Ephesus lost their first love becomes clear*. **Nicolaitan (Strong's G3531) means "destruction of the people; to overthrow the laity (people)".** **However, the church of Ephesus did not allow the "deeds" of the Nicolaitans to overtake their foundation of truth.** (See the church of Pergamos where the Nicolaitans were prevalent, for more detail).

**Parable of The Sower and The Seed**  
(Mark 4:3-9, 13-29; Matt 13:3-23; Luke 8:5-15)

*The character of four (4) kinds of believers are identified in the world and the church of Ephesus, (the True Hebrew Israelite faith):*

- 1). *The seed (the WORD) is sown, but fell by the wayside (fell on deaf ears and not the heart); produced no fruit (the WORD eaten up by fowls).*
- 2). *The seed (WORD) fell upon a rock (stony heart) and sprang up but lacked moisture (was not watered by another) and withered away.*
- 3). *Seed (WORD) fell among thorns (cares of life) and both (the word and cares) sprang up, but the cares of life choked the word and it withered and died.*
- 4). *Seed (WORD) fell on good soil (good heart), sprang up and produced fruit 100 fold.*



The deeds of the Nicolaitans were hated as much by the 'true believers' of Ephesus as well as Yahshua. They put false prophets to the test and found them to be liars. Those who fell into iniquity were commanded to repent, then do the "first works" they'd done at first. Their original works, labor and patience were highly praised. All who remained true to the foundation, and overcame the deeds of these false teachers (**by producing abundant fruit in truth**), are promised to **"eat the fruit of the tree of life in the paradise of Elohim."** (The tree of life is connected to the Law). Paradise comes from a Persian word for a "pleasure garden or park." (See Genesis 2:9, 15; 3:22-24; and Revelation 22:2). Paradise symbolizes the final state of eternal life of righteousness in the Kingdom where Elohim and man are restored to that perfect fellowship which existed in the Garden of Eden, *where Elohim walked*, before the entrance of sin into the world. Eating the fruit is symbolic of eternal life (Genesis 3:22).

**Church Period: "Apostolic".** The dispensation of innocence (or untested holiness) where false Apostles begin to appear alongside of Yahshua's Apostles.■

Part Two

## THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA (2:8-11)

(THE ANOINTED SON OF PERSECUTION)

Smyrna (G4667, G4666) means "Anointing Oil"

Church Period: "The Caesars"

Dispensation: Age of Conscience (Testing)

Parable Character: The Wheat and Tares

60 - 313 A.D.



**Smyrna** (modern Izmir) is one of the oldest cities of the Mediterranean world and is only one of the seven

cities that is still inhabited today. Excavations of Smyrna indicate settlements contemporary with that of the first city of Troy, dating from 3000 BC. The famous geographer Strabo tells us that the Amazons founded Ephesus. Lydians conquered and devastated the city in the 700 B.C. In 100 B.C., Ionians (Greeks) occupied the city. The city was re-established after Alexander the Great expelled Persians from Western Anatolia. Then the control of the city was shifted to Pergamum and finally to Rome at which time a number of majestic buildings were erected in the city. Thereafter, the city developed into one of the wealthiest areas of the region, vying with Ephesus and Myletus for the title "[first city of Asia](#)". At the time when Polycarp became its bishop, the city's population was 100,000 people. John's letter in the Book of Revelation shows that there was also a synagogue in Smyrna in the first century.

The famous bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, served in Smyrna between 115 to 156 A.D. He and eleven others from Philadelphia were burned at the stake in 156 A.D for refusing to worship Caesar as "Lord" during heavy persecution of Hebrew Israelites. He was a good transmitter and faithful follower of the early traditions of the Hebrew Israelite 'true' faith. **Years later, in 178 A.D., a major earthquake destroyed nearly every building in the city.**

Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius reconstructed Smyrna, however, its strong allegiance to the pagan state of Rome resulted in great persecution for Hebrew Israelites and proselytes until 300 A.D. John's letter circulated from 96 A.D. until the start of the Barkukba



Revolt in 135 A.D. This beautiful city was larger than Ephesus, with a population of about 300,000. The worst time in the history of the city was when the Arab raids started in the 7th century. The Seljuk period and Gentile Christian Crusaders followed this. Finally, in the 15th century Ottoman Turks took over and the commercial activities flourished again. The city was considered as an important port-city of Asia Minor during the Ottoman period and attracted many European traders. Now, it is still one of the most important port-cities of Turkey.



Beginning with Revelation 2:8, the angel (**Possessor of Power**) is addressed by the one who stands in the midst of the church (Yahshua), who is described *this time* as "**the first and the last, which was dead and is alive**". He recognized their works, persecution (trials), poverty and the blasphemy of false Jews in their midst. "**A synagogue of Satan**" (literally & symbolically) describes a community of so-called Jews [(Esau, early Israeli roots) and Gentile prostelytes]. Not true

followers of YHWH Elohim spiritually **nor of the natural Israelite seed**, they are identified as serving their father the devil (John 8:44) that led them to destroy Elohim's true people. This is consistent with the prophecies of Esau, Jacob's brother, who swore to destroy the true Israelite seed (Jacob) and regain his birthright position by force. (Read Obadiah and Ezekiel 34:1-10). In addition, Gnostic and anti-Law Gentiles infiltrated Smyrna from 176 to 191 A.D. (Gnostics believed the soul/spirit was

separate from the body and the soul was not responsible for the wicked deeds of the body. This led to a license for sin without consequence).

The Church of Smyrna saw itself as poor (small and weak), but Yahshua praised them as being **"rich" (endowed with true strength)**. **THERE WAS NO CRITICISM FOR SMYRNA!**

**Parable of The Wheat and The Tares**  
(Matthew 13:24-30)

Here is a common example of husbandry with which all Israelites were familiar; planting, harvesting, and sorting the good fruit from the bad. The message to Smyrna believers is this:

- 1). Weeds can spoil and even kill a good harvest if they are not separated and destroyed at the proper time since uprooting them too early can destroy the wheat in the process.
- 2). Just as nature teaches us patience, the message is patience which also teaches us to guard the word he has planted in our hearts while it grows; (and meanwhile, to beware of the destructive force of sin and evil which can destroy it).
- 3). The Word of Elohim brings life, but Satan seeks to destroy the good word of life which has been planted in the hearts of those who have heard Elohim's word.
- 4). Elohim's judgment is never hasty, but it does come and with vengeance.
- 5). Elohim will reward each believer according to what they have sown and reaped in this life in the day that he separates the evil from the good.



**Yahshua, had only encouragement for Smyrna:** "Fear none of those things which you shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days. **Be you faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life**". Though the believer may be martyred (physically and/or spiritually), his prize is eternal life, not the second death (Revelation 20:6, 14; 21:8), that is, eternal punishment. Here the **'resurrected Yahshua from death to everlasting life'** has promised **those who might suffer death as he did, everlasting life**. (Smyrna and Philadelphia are the only two churches to which Yahshua offered praise with absolutely no criticism).

**Church Period: "The Caesars"**. This is the dispensation of conscience wherein the church came under persecution by the pagans leading to persecution by the Caesars. ■

**Part Three**

**THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS (2:12-17)**  
**(THE REBELLIOUS SON OF COMPROMISE)**

**Pergamos (G4010, G4444)**

**means "Height/Elevated (Stronghold)"**

**Church Period: "The Papacy"**

**Dispensation: Human Government**

**Parable Character: The Mustard Seed**

**100 - 1000 A.D.**

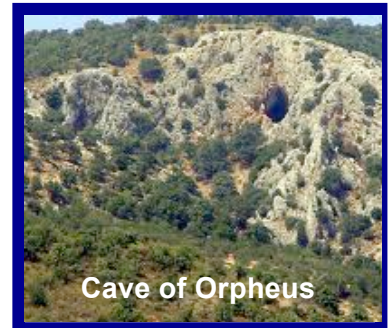


"**Pergamos**" was the capital city of Asia, built atop a 1000-foot cone-shaped hill; thus, the meaning of its name, elevated/stronghold. In early history, Pergamos became a **city-state**, much like the Vatican, then a **powerful nation** after Attalus I (241-197 B.C.) the Hun defeated the Gauls (Germanics). Pergamos stood as a symbol of Greek superiority over the barbarians where great buildings were erected; including **a library containing over 200,000 items**. The Egyptians, concerned with this library, which rivaled theirs at Alexandria, refused to ship papyrus to Pergamos. As a result, a new form of writing material, Pergamena Charta, or **parchment**, was developed. It also produced **ointment, pottery, cotton, wool, opium, valonia (algae) and leather**. In the days of Roman dominance throughout Asia Minor, Pergamos became the capital of the Roman province of Asia. In a gesture of friendship, Mark Antony gave the Pergamos library contents to Cleopatra; and its volumes were moved to Alexandria's expansive library.



Pergamos was a **government center** with **three imperial Roman temples for Caesar worship**, but it was also the site of the **Temple of Dionysus (Greek) and Asclepius (Roman)** who were the gods of medicine and healing. Erroneously, the pagan Gentiles often associated the true Hebrew Messiah, Yahshua, with their false healing gods. Their healing temples led to the development of **a medical center** where the '**pagan physician**', Galen worked (about A.D. 160). The influx of the infirmed to this medical center for healing resulted in many instances of fraud and deception to the migrating sick. There also was a **Temple to Athena (Diana)** and a **Temple to Zeus** with an altar showing Zeus defeating snake-like giants. These temples were all equipped with (female) temple prostitutes.

Pergamos (*called Bergamo in modern Turkey*) was the **chief city of Mysia**, near the Caicus River in northwest Asia Minor. (*The Romans were so taken with Pergamos, that a city called Bergamo can also be found in Italy*). Pergamos was situated just opposite the island of Lesbos near the Aegean Sea. Lesbos was originally the name of the people of Lydia who inhabited the island, but **became associated with female-to-female sexual relationships** due to the **female poet, Sopho** who wrote and recited love poems to other women. In addition, the **female Oracle of Orpheus divined and gave her prophecies** on the island of Lesbos. This culture drew a frequent circle of females who would become known as the **Cult of Sophia**. This cult could also be found just northwest of Pergamos in **Sofia, Bulgaria**. It is here that the connection of the city of Pergamos is adversely attached to Bulgaria which is identified in Revelation 2:13 as "**the seat of Satan**". The epistle (letter) states that Christ, *this time*, stands in the midst of the church of Pergamos as one "**who has a sharp two-edged sword**".



"I know thy works, and where thou dwell, even where **Satan's seat is**: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, **even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells**". Rev 2:13

The word 'seat' (referring to Satan's seat) is rendered "**throne**" according to Strong's, which is a place of royal (**wicked**) authority. **Thrones are closely associated with 'dominion' and 'governmental ruling**

power'. This is a reference to **Satan's stronghold in the city of Pergamos and Bulgaria** due to **Roman Emperor (then Papacy) worship**. Antipas was martyred in Bulgaria, which was proclaimed as **"the drug trafficking capital of the world"** for several centuries. Drug turf wars still rage in Bulgaria at epidemic proportions fueled by large quantities of opium. Modern Bulgaria presently has an enormous problem with drugs among their youth. It was in this area that the word **"slave"** originated from the Slavs (Yugoslavians) who were subjugated into slavery. (In 800 A.D., the not-so-Holy Roman Empire split in two: the Eastern (Greek) Orthodox Church and the Western (Latin) Holy Roman Empire with its seat in Germany. The growing difference in doctrine (**who was the real Pope**) caused the Great Schism in 1054 A.D., which ran through the center of Yugoslavia in the Serbian versus Croatian wars where it all began under the ancient name of Byzantium, renamed Constantinople). Both **World Wars I and II** originated in the area of Bulgaria who allied (*of course*) with Hitler's Germany through both wars.



While the kidnapping capital of the world has been identified in Arizona (USA), it has been confirmed that **this "kidnapping ring" is operated from Bulgaria** to fuel its **underground black market slave trafficking** (*Jan 2011*). Thus, it should not come as a surprise that just 1,050 miles northwest of Bulgaria is modern day **Brussels, Belgium** where the headquarters of the **European Union (EU)** is located; **the modern seat of Satan**.

**2:14 "The teaching of Balaam (foreigner) who taught Balac (devastator/spoiler) to cast a stumbling block (a trap to make one fall) before the children of Israel."** See Numbers 25:1-3 with Numbers 31:15-16. Balaam's sin involved taking a job for **'hire'** (hiring) to curse the children of Israel who had already been blessed by Elohim. Balaam suggested intermarriage with foreign women, eating food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality as the method to destroy Israel. Balaam's doctrine is **"to combine the things of Elohim with the ways of the world – syncretism"**. This was happening in Pergamum where the church was permitting practices of the pagan Greeks to be introduced into the church.

**2:15 "Also hast thou them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate".**

According to Acts 6:5 (*and all the early church fathers like Irenaeus*), the **Nicolaitans were followers of Nicolas, a Gentile convert from the church at Antioch**. He was one of the seven first **ordained as a Deacon** by the Apostles. They led lives of unrestrained indulgence, taught indifference to the practice of sexual freedom [to indulge in their pagan temple worship that included female (temple) prostitutes], and continued to practice their pagan culture (eat things sacrificed to idols called **Asherah** worship). During this church age at Pergamos, paganism was allowed to be part of the Church, becoming a corruption of the truth. His teaching would later become known as **Gnosticism**. This teaching taught that the flesh (and the earth) was separate from the spiritual realm and therefore the deeds of the flesh would remain separate from the individual's spiritual walk, so it was ok to indulge the flesh.



Another of the doctrines of Nicholas (Gnosticism) was the teaching that the Church (Israel) had been cast off forever and was replaced by the *new* Church (*Christians* which now included Gentiles). This is called **Replacement Theology**. Remember, Nicholas was a Gentile convert from Antioch were the Jews were first called Christians. **This position took away the literal meaning of scripture and replaced it with 'allegory', which was and is a Christian (pagan) doctrine**. Thus, Christians have embraced scripture with a different Messiah (so-called Jesus) rather than the true "Hebrew Messiah, Yahshua" and fail to recognize the Jews were cast off only for a time before being fully graphed back into their own tree. According to author Dan Brown, The Jesus of Gnosticism was married to Mary Magdalene a Temple prostitute and had a child named Sarah. He presents this as fact in the Da Vinci Code, and many Christians are embracing this book. The same was occurring at Pergamos. While the Church at **Ephesus refused the Nicolaitans to be part of their leadership** or teachers, **Pergamos not only embraced their doctrines, they allowed them to lead**. What was "deeds" at Ephesus became "doctrine" at Pergamos. These very issues (sexual freedom, gay rights, lawlessness, banqueting during holidays (unholy days) plague the church today.

**2:16 "REPENT", or else I will come unto you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth**

**(judgment by the Word).** The church as a body is commanded to repent for allowing this doctrine to be taught in their midst, and in particular repentance is commanded for those who committed the sin. Otherwise, he will fight all those unrepentant with the Word of God (described as a two-edged sword at his second coming in Rev 19:15) in which he will strike down the nations in judgment.

**2:17 "The hidden manna."** See Exodus 16:32-34; Hebrews 9:4. The overcomers will partake of the manna hidden in the heavenly temple (11:19) and will be given a white stone and on the stone a "new name" written which no man knows except for he who receives it.

**Parable of The Mustard Seed**  
(Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19)

The mustard seed (food) is just like the word (spiritual food). The mustard seed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the **greatest among herbs** (Matthew 13:32) and then over time, grows into a strong tree providing a habitation in which the birds dwell. Since Pergamos was defiled by eating 'food' sacrificed to idols, the reward of repentant saints would be to eat of the '**sacred food**' (heavenly manna). It was worldly bread (the compromised word) that corrupted them, so it would be heavenly manna, the bread of life (Christ now hidden from men) that would be their reward.



**2:17 "A white stone with a new name which no man knows except him who receives it"**

Alchemists sought science and discipline to build themselves perfection - actually attempting to become the 'white stone' by which they could possess all knowledge and wisdom by some other means other than as prescribed by scripture. It is said in Hebrew culture, a white stone was given to a man who had been forgiven great sins. **However, the Holy Spirit intended an even deeper meaning than that. 'To him who overcomes will I give a 'perfected soul'.** Every true believer is in the process of being transformed into the likeness of Yahshua the Messiah. Also, remember Elohim told Moses "he could raise up stones" to serve him and by the time of the New Testament (1 Peter 2:5), true believers are referred to as "lively (living) stones" in a spiritual house (the New Jerusalem).

**"You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Elohim by Yahshua the Messiah".**



All who held to the foundation they originally received, even at the threat of death, would receive a new name in the kingdom (just a Christ would be given a new name that no men knew except he who had the name). In Pergamos, excavations have uncovered rows of white stones in the back of the Temple of Telesphoros (one of its ancient healing temples). The lower portion of the building served as a place for patients to sleep while awaiting **dream diagnosis**. Recent excavations found some human bones buried beneath the building, which were probably bodies of patients who died here. *The doctors buried the dead bodies here secretly so that the reputation of the healing complex would not be affected!* In the courtyard we saw rows of excavated **white standing stones** – these were contributions from the patients who inscribed their names and the ailment from which they were healed on these stones to honor their false god. Isaiah 62:2 indicates that Elohim's people would be given **a new name**. In Revelation, there are references to the new Jerusalem (3:12, 21:2), a new song (5:9, 14:3), a new heaven and new earth (21:1); and in 21:5 Elohim said, "Behold, I make all things new". The new song could only be learned by those redeemed from the earth and the new name is part of ones reward for remaining faithful to Yahshua while on the old earth. Note the parallel that Sarai, Abram and Jacob all were given a new name to denote a change from their old life to a life after each experienced a revelation from Elohim (Gen 17:5, 15, 32:28).

**Church Period: "The Papacy"**. The dispensation of government where the Roman Empire takes over the church, which began with Constantine and the Council of Nicea at Ephesus. With the Papacy instituted, the truth is lost and those who have the truth are persecuted. ■

**Part Four**

**THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA (2:18-29)**  
**(DAUGHTER OF EVE WHO BREAKS WEDLOCK)**

**Thyatira (G2363)**

means "Odor of Affliction"

**Church Period: "The Dark Ages" (Universal Church)**

**Dispensation: Promise**

**Parable Character: The Leaven**

**90 - 1520 A.D.**



**Thyatira** that means "odor of affliction" according to Strong's is **the name of the modern Turkish city of Akhisar** ("white castle or citadel"). After Alexander's death, one of his generals, Seleucus I, established the state of Pergamum in 282 BC. It was at this time that **Thyatira** became the eastern flank of Seleucids' kingdom as a **military outpost**. Also spelled, **Thyateira**, in the post-Classical Greek (Ionic) language, "Thya" indicates that a settlement already existed there before Seleucus re-fortified it. Excavations confirm the Hittites who were prominent in iron works during the Bronze Age settled the land. Archaeological evidence indicates that Thyatira frequently changed hands between Pergamean and Syrian rule. **This meant that no lasting growth was ever possible during this time of its history like that of the cities of Ephesus and Pergamum.** Thyatira's sole purpose was to act as the first line of defense in front of a hostile advancing army, to hinder their movement while the kingdom's main forces were mustered deeper behind the battlefield. Thyatira was not a jewel worth fighting for except in the sense that it could be employed to hinder an advancing army. The garrison stationed there would have been composed of the more guerrilla-like warriors who would be less concerned with winning a war than with throwing the enemy into disarray and hindering its speedy onslaught. Thyatira fell to the Romans in 190 BC and became first part of the Pergamean Kingdom and then part of the Province of Asia. When, in 133 BC, Thyatira gave itself wholly into the hands of the Roman Empire, an era of both peace and prosperity was ushered in.



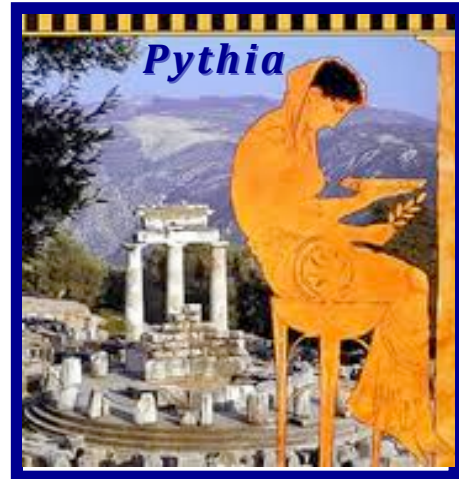
During Roman control, Thyatira derived its strength and wealth from being in a central place for **communications, manufacturing and marketing**. Archaeology has turned up many Thyatira coins indicating a thriving commercial system. Inscriptions found mention numerous types of workers in **wool, linen, leather and bronze; also potters, tanners, bakers, slavers and dyers**. The home of Paul's benefactor **Lydia, was a seller of purple goods (Acts 16:14)**. It was one of the places where 'purple' was manufactured so that kings and nobility would come from miles around to purchase it. 'Purple' in the ancient world was a sign of high rank because of the very high cost involved in obtaining the dye. Most 'purple' dye was extracted from oysters, but the dye used at Thyatira was extracted from the roots of certain plants, which resulted in a redder-purple product).

Thyatira's numerous trade guilds were inseparably entwined with pagan religious observances posing a special problem for both the spiritual and economic well being of Hebrew Israelites and proselytes. Each industry had its specific guild that was connected with the idolatrous practices outlined in John's letter to the city. Their formation would be closely paralleled today by the Masonic organizations, a worldly (pagan) organization with the body. **In the guild's fellowship meals, food was first sacrificed to idols and, after the meals, orgies were frequent. There has been more trade guilds identified as existing in Thyatira than in any other Asian city of its time.** For proselytes, coming to Christ meant the loss of their livelihood and financial resources if they abstained from the communal pagan feasts, but participation would be to renounce the faith that they had come to receive and to deny Yahshua who had suffered and died. Jezebel managed to work out a pseudo-theology that compromised faith in Christ with continued participation in the trade guilds for continued financial prosperity and material wealth.

In Thyatira, YHWH and Yahshua, the son of GOD (Elohim), came into direct competition with the local 'pagan' son of god, Apollo (son of Zeus, the Greek's high pagan god. Apollo was also a twin of Artemis/Diana).

With Thyatira under complete Roman control since 133 B.C., the Caesars and the Popes also demanded worship as the 'son of god incarnate' made to dwell on earth. In this Cult of Apollo, Apollo's medium (prophet) or mouthpiece on the earth was actually **a local woman, 'a Pythia' (python), over 50 years of age who delivered oracles** under Apollo's (supposed) inspiration. The word is used in **Acts 16:16** where the slave girl is said to have '**a python spirit**' which is '**a spirit of divination**' by which she prophesied (**'a false prophetess'**). *If this slave girl was a Pythia, then she would have been a leading figure in the city of Philippi.* This is the same spirit of Jezebel, called 'a prophetess', in the city where Apollo was worshipped.

**2:20** Because Thyatira "**tolerated that woman Jezebel**" allowing her to compromise the truth with paganism (2:14), this put her in the same **spiritual place as Jezebel of the Old Testament** (1 Kings 16:29-33 and 2 Kings 9:30-37). *Note: Any doctrine or belief not supported by scripture is paganism.* Jezebel's **Baal Cult** was idolatry and ritual



temple prostitution. This 'sect' was allowed to teach and seduce Hebrew Israelites and proselytes to accommodate the heathen practices of the trade guilds so that refusal to conform to the trade guild's paganism could mean **social isolation and economic hardship**. Contrast "the elect lady and her children" (2 John 1, who "love in truth") verses Jezebel (the harlot church) and her harlot daughters (Protestantism).



**2:22** "**Those who commit adultery with her....**" John is using adultery (a woman who breaks wedlock) as a direct indication of her role in encouraging others in religious compromise (which is '**spiritual adultery**'). The real problem of the spiritual adultery in Thyatira was not so much Jezebel, the strong-willed self-proclaimed authoritarian, but the root cause of the spiritual adultery was the weak-willed believers who allowed themselves to be led into sin by her and the weak-willed leadership who allowed themselves to be dominated by her.

"**Eyes like a flame of fire**" suggests two things: (1) His blazing anger toward men due to their sin; and (2) the penetrating power to see through Jezebel's *seductive teachings* (including the burning power to strip away disguises and see into a person's inner most heart).

**2:23** "...and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works". In this manner, all the churches shall know that in the Melchisedek Priesthood of Yahshua (High Priest/King/Deliverer), the thoughts and intentions deep within the heart (that motivates our decisions) will come under close scrutiny for righteousness. Each person shall receive **compensation or a recompense** from Elohim according to that evaluation.

"**Feet like burnished bronze**" conveys the idea of righteousness, mercy and justice since he gave Jezebel '**space to repent, but she repented not**'. Thus with YHWH's mercy taken for granted, the unrepentant misses the opportunity to repent, the door is closed and condemnation (the implacable indisputable judgment of Christ) ensues (justice) according to righteousness.

**2:24** "...But unto you and unto the rest in Thyatira, **as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak** - "...**"The depths of Satan as they speak"**, refers to the false teaching of teachers/priests (Satan-like men), **who were pretending to offer deeper spiritual understanding through their false doctrine.** *They spoke evil about deeply spiritual things* (which they did not understand - Jude v10), speaking words which **seemed impressive spiritually, but were very superficial** - Jude v16; (i.e., twisting YHWH's word).



**The Parable of The Leaven (Yeast)**  
(Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20-21)

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven,  
which a **woman** took,  
and **hid** in three (3) measures of meal  
until the whole were leavened.



The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven

because it starts from the smallest or most simple beginnings in the hearts of men and women who are receptive to Elohim's word. Leaven is another powerful agent of change that works unseen changes and causes a transformation from within. Dough left to itself remains **unleavened dough and** when baked becomes **Unleavened Bread**. However, because **leaven largely represents sin in scripture**, when sin is mixed into the unleavened dough, a transformation takes place, which produces an **airy (puffed-up)** bread when baked. While this is the typical staple of life for humans (naturally), the Kingdom of Heaven produces a transformation in those who receive the new life, which Yahshua offers via the *unleavened (plain, sincere) bread of his Word*. **(The message is do not tolerate sin in your midst because it will eventually leaven the entire lump. This is how blood touches blood).**

**2:24-26** I will put upon you none other burden, but that which ye have already, hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, **and** keepeth my **works** unto the end, to him will I give:

- 1) power over the nations, to rule with a rod of iron; and
- 2) the morning star.

**2:26 "Power over the nations." Overcoming believers shall share rule with the Messiah** (5:10; see Psalm 2:8-9) using the **rod (WORD) of iron** (*strict justice*), because the curse is only partially removed from nature. As righteousness begins to reign in the earth, sin is still manifest to some degree, so righteousness has to be enforced until Christ no longer needs to reign with a rod of iron because sin will have been fully eradicated. **"The morning star"** is a reference to Yahshua giving them 'himself' as the Son of Elohim since he proclaimed himself to be "the morning star" (Rev 22:16).

**Church Period: "The Dark Ages" of lawlessness under the Universal Church.** This is the dispensation of promise where believers (hold onto the promise of the coming kingdom that would grow like a seed) while undergoing mass persecution during the Dark Ages of Papal Supremacy. It continued on into modern history by the infamous Inquisition.

**The longest letter, of all 7 Churches of Asia Minor, was written to the Church at Thyatira!! ■**



Part Five  
**THE CHURCH AT SARDIS 3:1-6**  
(THE SLUMBERING "DEAD" SON)

Sardis (G4554)  
means "Red Ones" (Luxurious)  
Church Period: "Reformation"  
Dispensation: Law  
Parable Character: Treasure in the Field  
90 - 1402 A.D.

"Sardis" (modern Sart), was the capital of famous kingdom of Lydia. Lydians were powerful and creative leaders in the fields of commerce and economics. Sardis was ruled by Persia in 546 B.C., Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C. and then by the Roman Empire in the 2nd century B.C. The Synagogue is from the 300 AD and once was a part of the gymnasium and was restored to be a synagogue. **Sardis has the largest known ancient synagogue. Its size and grandeur are a testimony to the prosperity of the Jews in Sardis during Roman times and to their eminent position in the city.** It faces the direction of Jerusalem and the entrance is also from the same side through three gates, which open from the courtyard into the main assembly hall. At the opposite end of the hall there is a semicircular apse with three rows of marble seats, which were thought to be for the elders. The floors were mostly covered with mosaics.

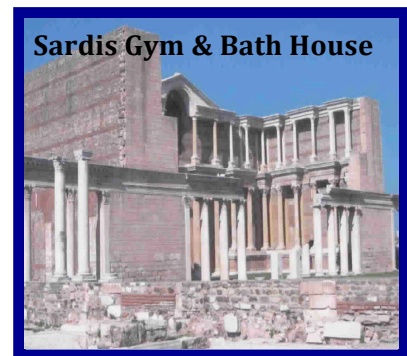
There was a temple dedicated to goddess Kybele (Cybele) during the time of King Croesus, which was destroyed by Athenians during their revolt against Persian rule. In fact, only the temple of Kybele was destroyed, not the spirit of this important Anatolian goddess, who continued to live on in the form of Artemis (Diana)! The king Croesus was the wealthiest man of his time and **Sardis became the richest city of antiquity.** The famous wise man of Athens, also the reformer, Solon, came to see this great city and its famous king. **It is thought that the famous storyteller Aesop was a Phrygian who lived in Sardis during the reign of king Croesus.** The city was destroyed by Tamerlane (Asian Mongols) in 1402.

Sardis was once a powerful city that had declined greatly by the time John was writing. Yet, it was still rich and famous, lying at the western end of a great caravan route from Susa, Mesopotamia (where most of the Jews remained in exile after the Persians took control of Babylon). The Jews had so fully compromised with the pagan environment that the church was Hebrew Israelite in name only (that is it became, "nominal" Hebrew Israelites and "mostly" Christian). **Sardis was "a perfect model of inoffensive Christianity";** but the people were Jews and Gentile proselytes who were all commanded to labor to become "**Spiritual Israelites**".

"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and **strengthen the things, which remain, that are ready to die:** for I have not found thy works perfect before Elohim. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent". **Revelation 3:1-3**

Christ knows **their works and that they are famous and rich, but they are 'spiritually' dead!** Speaking as the one who has **the seven Spirits of Elohim, and the seven stars (Possessors of Power)**, he can easily *discern* that Sardis is like whitewashed tombs. Their synagogue was beautiful and luxurious on the outside, but inside contained dead men's bones.

**3:4 "Soiled their garments."** Many believers had soiled their white garments. Inscriptions in Asia Minor indicate that soiled clothes disqualified the worshipper and dishonored the elohims (gods) and because their paganism was cultural, this was a statement that pagans could not have misunderstood!!



The warnings:

1. **Be watchful** (Awake!!) **and strengthen the things that remain** (*before it, too, dies*);
2. **Remember how you received and how you heard;** and
3. **Hold fast (obey the law) and Repent**

The Rebuke:

**"I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee"** (and will blot your name from the Book of Life).

**3:4 "White garments."** Sardis had a few names that had not defiled their garments; and are promised to walk with Christ in white being worthy.

**3:5 "For overcomers."** (See 3:18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:14). White garments portray justification by Christ (7:13) by which we are clothed in the appropriate garment for the wedding feast and therefore, will not have their name **"blotted out of the book of life."** See Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 69:28; Daniel 12:1. When a criminal's name was removed from the civic register of an Asiatic town, he lost his citizenship.

**The Parable of The Treasure In The Field & Pearl of Great Price**  
(Matthew 13:44-46)



"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then **in his joy** he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it". Matthew 13:44-46

Sardis, which means 'red ones' denotes the richness of a gemstone that could also be found in the breastplate of the High Priest of Israel called a "sardine or sardonyx" stone. It is a red-brown stone, which easily represents the parable of the **treasure in the field** and likened unto the **pearl of great price**.

As we protect jewels and valuables by locking them in safes, in antiquity, the best way (and place) to hide valuables was to bury them in the earth. The man in the parable **"went in joy"** to sell everything he possessed because **he found a treasure worth possessing above everything he owned**. He did not, however, have enough to buy the unseen treasure, *but he only needed enough to buy the field*. Elohim offers us entrance into His kingdom as an incomparable treasure but at a price we can afford! We are all unable to pay the **'great price'** for life (eternal life of righteousness), but when we exchange our lives for the life which Elohim offers, we receive a treasure beyond measure.

The pearl of great price gives us the same lesson. Pearls in the ancient world came to be supremely valuable. As scripture commands us **'not to cast our pearls before swine'** (Matthew 7:6), a merchant would not sell everything he owned for a pearl of minimal value. He was attracted to what he thought was the greatest treasure he could ever possess. Discovering Elohim's kingdom is like stumbling across hidden treasure and **finding the one rare pearl of great price**. Selling our possessions to obtain this 'incomparable treasure' could mean many things -- our friends, jobs, lifestyles, money, and what we do with our free time. **Treasure has a special connection to the heart, the place of desire and longing, the place of will and focus**. This is what Yahshua was trying to explain in the Parable of the Rich Young Man (Matthew 19: 16-26; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:18-30). The thing we most set our hearts on is **our highest treasure**. However, the rich can buy virtually all they desire (without sacrificing existing possessions to obtain the new one). Then, is there a true longing of the heart for this new treasure when one possesses so many others?? **Salvation without sacrifice is not known in scripture!! Spiritual things cannot be purchased with money or gifts of compromise (bribes) but with great desire, longing and attachment of heart.** The Parables refer to the Kingdom of Elohim in all its aspects, but in a special way, Yahshua himself is the treasure we seek. *If the Adonay is your gold and your precious silver, then you will delight yourself in the Almighty (Job 22:22-25).*

Christ will **"Confess his name** (the overcomer) **before Elohim and his angels"** (See Matthew 10:32-33 and 10:21-22); thereby **verify his "good name" and his "status as a citizen of the Kingdom of Elohim"**.

**Church Period: "Reformation"**. This is the dispensation of Law - to remember the foundation. Its first test came when Yahshua came to earth as the embodiment of the law and offered the Jews the Davidic Kingdom, fulfillment of the promise. Israel refused, so the fulfillment of the kingdom promise was postponed (**The Reformation**). Roman Catholicism then rose only to be split and **reformed** into (paganistic) Protestantism that spread its multiple doctrines of apostasy around the globe.

**The Church of Sardis received the most severe denunciation of all the seven churches because they'd "spiritually fallen asleep" (i.e., died) in their sins. ■**

**Part Six**

**THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA (3:7-13)**  
**(THE FAITHFUL SON OF TRUE LOVE)**

**Philadelphia (G5359, G5361)**  
**means "Brotherly Love"**

**Church Period: "Reformation"**

**Dispensation: Grace**

**Parable Character: The Good Samaritan**  
**100 - 1520 A.D.**



**"Philadelphia"** (modern Alasehir) is named by the Greek word for **"brotherly love."** On a major trade route, its economy was based on **agriculture and industry**. It was known for its many **pagan temples and pagan religious festivals**, with **the worship of Dionysus as the chief pagan cult**.

(Dionysus was the son of Zeus and the 'god of healing' and the "Greek god of wine", that Greeks often identified as being the same with Christ. The Roman god of wine is **Bacchus**). The city was in the middle of grape country and thus, it becomes easy to see why **earthquakes often devastated the city!!**

In 481 BC, the Persian king Xerxes I traveled towards Sardis on his way to Greece. Philadelphia was founded by Attalos II Philadelphos of Pergamum (159-138 BC). He was given the title of Philadelphos because of his love for his brother Eumenes, who was the previous king of Pergamum. The objective of Attalos II in founding a city here was probably to establish a gateway to Phrygia and to Hellenize its inhabitants who spoke their own Gallic tongue. The church that has been named after John **was a rectangular building of six pillars of reused stone material and an upper structure in brick.**

Three of the pillars have survived, with the fourth half buried in soil. The westernmost pillars are under modern buildings. On the pillars that are exposed, some eleventh century paintings can barely be distinguished.



Philadelphia is about 50 miles to the east of Smyrna (**Izmir**). It was the least important city of the ones mentioned in the revelation of John. The city was located on the eastern edge of the Ionian civilization, but it had the most difficult task of spreading the Christian faith to the east, outside the Ionian region.

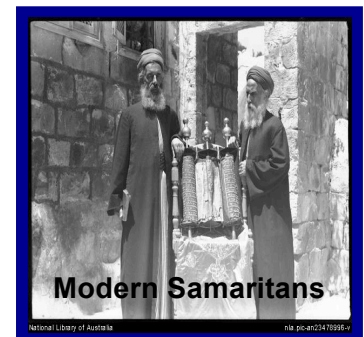
**Philadelphia, together with Smyrna, was considered as one of the distinguished churches out of the seven churches of Revelation about which John mentioned nothing bad.**

In 19 A.D., the native language (Lydian) had ceased and only the Greek language was spoken, so, the most respected god was Dionysus. (He was the Greek god of wine and merriment). The regional town center of Alasehir still continues the tradition of harvesting grapes.

**"Says, He who has the key of David."** See Isaiah 22:15-25 and Rev 1:18. The key means Christ has absolute power to control **entrance to eternal life** – opening the door for some that will never be shut and shutting the door for others that will never be opened.

**The Parable of The Good Samaritan**  
(Luke 10:25-37)

"Yahshua replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Yahshua said to him, "Go and do likewise."



In this parable, **the supposed villain**, the Samaritan who was despised, emerged as the merciful one -- as an example for the conscious Hebrew. The priest probably didn't stop to help to prevent the risk of ritual impurity if he helped a bloody victim. **His piety got in the way of love.** The Levite approached close to the victim, but stopped short of helping him. Perhaps his fear of being ambushed prevented him, and the **Levite's personal safety got in the way of his love** (because he placed his safety above the personal safety and health of his neighbor). When you encounter others truly in trouble, especially with people you need to occasionally avoid, would you not try to help, especially if it meant saving his life??!! This is the true model of a servant who will risk himself to protect or help someone else, **doing all that he can while it is in the power of his hands to do it!**

**3:8 "I know thy works; BEHOLD, I have set before you an open door** and no man could shut it because the believer had a little strength in holding on. **It does not matter if the door to the synagogue/tabernacle is closed to you; the door to the messianic kingdom remains open!!** However in light of Acts 14:27; 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 4:3; John may be referring to a greater opportunity to be a witness in and beyond their city.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth".

**3:9 Because the word of Yahshua's patience was kept without compromise, and did not deny his name, those "Who say they are Jews but do lie" will be made to bow before the believer's feet.** See notes on 2:9 above. The church is now the "Israel of Elohim" (Galatians 6:16). See also Isaiah 2:3; 45:14; 49:23; Zechariah 8:20-23.

**Smyrna and Philadelphia are the only two churches of the 7, which Yahshua did not rebuke.** Once again, **the two also have something else in common: the blasphemy of false Jews in their midst.** "A synagogue of Satan" (literally & symbolically) describes a community of so-called Jews who were outward Jews only. Not true followers of YHWH Elohim because "all Israel is not Israel" though many profess to be.



**3:10 "Those who dwell upon the earth"** refers consistently in Revelation to the enemies of Elohim's people, not to the church. See 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:8.

**"I will keep you from the hour of trial...."**Rapture theorists see this verse as implying "the rapture of the church before the time of trouble", The Great Tribulation. But rather than removal from trial, **the emphasis here and elsewhere in Revelation is on keeping, preservation, and spiritual protection on earth in the midst of trial** (John 17:15; Revelation 6:9-11; 7:1-3, 14; 12:6) **just as Noah was kept in the midst of his. Hold on tight to what you have so that no man takes your crown.**

**3:12 "Make him a pillar in the temple"**, conveys the idea of stability and permanence in the truth (see Galatians 2:9; 1 Timothy 3:15). In a city where earthquakes were common, this stability would be easily identified and the permanence would be extremely comforting.

**Church Period: "Missionary".** This is the dispensation of the missionary age of grace (Acts 2; Rev. 19), where the bible is disbursed and studied and a light once again shines out of darkness. The test of this age is for spiritual Hebrew Israelites to live obediently by the spirit of the law in grace and shine their lights for others to see as well. However, the failure of the majority of men is predicted to be the apostasy of the Institutional Church through its mis-teachings under the *so-called* civilization of society through democracy and capitalism. ■

## **THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA (3:14-22)** (THE 'LUKEWARM' SON OF COMPLACENCY)

Laodicea (G2992, G2993, G1349)

means "Justice of The People"

Church Period: "Evangelical"

Dispensation: Kingdom of Elohim

Parable Character: The Net

60 - 1920 A.D.



"Laodicea" (justice of the people) was the wealthiest

city in Phrygia. Its modern name, **Eskihisar**, was famous for

**the manufacture of clothing from soft, glossy black wool, a banking industry, and a medical school. One of its best-known medicines was an eye salve made from "Phrygian powder" mixed with oil.** Laodicea is thought to have been founded by the Seleucid King Antiochus II Theos (261-246 BC) and named after his wife Laodice as an honor to the King. The name of the river Lycus (Çürüksu) near which it was founded was attached to the name of the city to distinguish it from the other settlements of the same name. The Lycus River poured into the Meander River whose water has been a major source of the region's agricultural wealth. As usual the spot chosen for the new city was on the most important trade and military route from the Aegean coast to the interior of Anatolia.

Laodicea was on the crossroads between the important Ionian cities of that time. This helped the city become wealthy because of its high volume of **commercial activity** in the region. **There was a rich and influential Hebrew community long before the doors of the church opened to Gentiles. But, most of the locals worshipped Zeus more than any other god.** During the time of John, the church of Laodicea was one of the seven most important churches of the Apostolic period.

The city had a profitable business from the production of wool cloth and when an earthquake destroyed it **in AD 60**, the citizens declined assistance from Rome to rebuild and rebuilt itself from their own resources without outside help. It had a **widely known medical school that produced an eye-salve it was famous for.** Laodicea got its water from hot springs almost 6 miles away and by the time it got to Laodicea, the water would have been lukewarm. **It was also a centre for banking.** The church lived within this **affluent society** and the attitudes of its citizens rubbed off on the church.



Christ is speaking to the Church of Laodicea as the "**Amen**", **the true and faithful witness, the ruler of Elohim's creation.** "**Amen**" is a transliteration of the Hebrew verb *'aman*, "to confirm, support, be faithful, to agree to be true" [See Isaiah 65:16 ("the Elohim of the Amen") and 2 Corinthians 1:20]. "Amen" expresses "strong affirmation of what is stated", the acknowledgement of that which is **valid and binding.**

**"Faithful and true witness"** reminds Hebrew Israelites and proselytes that *Yahshua declared truth in spite of persecution and is our example of a faithful witness in the face of danger and pressure to compromise.*

**"The beginning of Elohim's creation"** (Colossians 1:15-18 and John 1:3). The Greek noun *arche* can mean "one with whom a process begins, beginning" or "ruler, authority"). Yahshua is the beginning of the new people of Elohim, the Hebrew Israelite Community, the New Jerusalem, etc.

### **3:15 "Neither cold nor hot."**

Hot is the equivalent of being fervent in faith (**zealous**) while cold would be indifferent and even openly antagonistic. The fact that Christ *preferred that the members be cold or hot rather than lukewarm* had much to do with the Laodicea's local water supply and conditions. **Cold water of Colossae** refreshed their neighbors while **the hot water springs of Hierapolis had healing properties.** Lukewarm water at Laodicea could not claim either. *Lukewarm is an ambiguous, in-between-place* of indecision, straddling the fence, and, thus Christ is

ready to spew these lukewarm Hebrews from his mouth.

**3:17 "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.**

The remedy is shown in verse 18 in which **he counsels them to buy gold, white clothes and salve.** Their material wealth had blinded them to their true spiritual bankruptcy supported by the fact that it's frequently noted that Laodicea prided itself on three things: **financial wealth, an extensive textile industry, and a popular eye-salve which was exported around the world.** The church thought it was rich (in her own eyes), but in the eyes of Christ, it was poor and wretched. **Comparing the Laodiceans with the church in Smyrna, they were exact opposites. The Smyrna believers were afflicted and poor but in Yahshua's eyes, they were rich, while the Laodiceans believed they were rich, Christ said they were wretched, pitiful and poor.** The attitude of the people in this church was similar to that of the Pharisees; who thought they were healthy but were in fact sick (Mat 9:10-13). They thought that they could see, but were blind (John 9:40-41, Mat 15:14). While they were not Pharisees, Laodicea's spiritual condition was the same as the Pharisees (**hypocrites**), which is why they were rebuked. **Their condition is even more dangerous because they do not realize it.**

**3:18** In any case, Christ is nauseated by the church's indifference, nominal profession, and materialistic complacency. The church needed to recognize its own needs and turn to Yahshua for help. Yahshua counsels them in three (3) parts while alluding to Laodicea's famous **banking, clothing, and medicine industries:**

- (1) **banking:** to buy gold so that is refined in the fire so they become rich instead of being wretched, pitiful and poor. The refined gold represents faith in Yahshua. They can only get this gold from Christ since their material wealth will not follow them after death, but their wealth for their labor in Yahshua would follow them (14:13). This is gospel is without price (Isa 55:1, Rev 21:6), true riches without price, i.e. salvation that is free. In 22:6 Elohim offers freely to the thirsty to drink from the spring of the water of life. In 22:17 the invitation to the thirsty is given by the church to take the free gift of the water of life.
- (2) **clothing:** to buy white clothes to cover their nakedness (*judgment*). The Laodiceans trusted in their own resources rather than Yahshua's, which made them shamefully naked. Originally Adam and Eve were naked but felt no shame (Gen 2:25), but **then after they sinned they were ashamed of their nakedness** and sewed fig leaves to cover their nakedness (Gen 3:7). In 16:15 at the second coming Christ, he said blessed is 'he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.' *In 3:4-5 those in Sardis who had not soiled their clothes will walk with Christ in white because they are worthy. Those in Laodicea didn't even have any clothes; they were naked and had to come to Christ to get clothes to cover their sins.* Joshua the high priest was dressed in filthy clothes in Zec 3:3-4, but he was given new rich garments after his sin was taken away. These clothes are the white clothes of righteousness (Isa 61:10). Throughout Revelation white garments stand for righteousness (6:11, 7:9, 7:14, 19:8, 19:14).
- (3) **medicine:** to buy salve for their blind eyes so that they can see. (These spiritual hypocrites were selling salve for healing natural eyes). They didn't realize their own blindness and needed their 'spiritual eyes' opened so that they could see their own condition. Laodiceans **needed to buy their eye salve from Yahshua for spiritual sight.**

**The Parable of The (Drag) Net**  
*Matthew 13:47-50*

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; when it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad. **So it will be at the close of the age.** The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous,



and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

The two most common ways of fishing in Yahshua's time was with a casting-net (or hand-net) which was thrown from the shore and the dragnet or trawl which was let down or cast into the waters from a boat. As the boat moved through the waters the dragnet indiscriminately took in all kinds of fish. Just as a dragnet catches every kind of fish in the sea, so the church acts as Elohim's instrument for gathering in all who will come. Just as the dragnet does not or cannot discriminate, so the church does not discriminate between the good and the bad, the useless and the useful. Elohim's kingdom is open to all those whom "YHWH draws near"; if he will accept Yahshua, believe and walk by his word (i.e., *decent and in order*).

**3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous (hot) therefore, and REPENT!"**

**3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock."** Here, speaking to self-sufficient nominal Hebrew Israelites and proselytes, Christ requests permission to enter and establish fellowship or re-establish it for the repentant.

**But there will come a time of separation**, at the *close of the age*, when the angels will send the good and the bad to their respective destinations since all men will be judged by the fruit they bear – **you know them by their fruit**. Our duty is to proclaim the Word so that "he who has an ear" will hear and come.

**3:20 "I will come in and sup (eat) with him and him with me."**

Israel was constantly reminded to show hospitality to strangers and sojourners because they were once sojourners in a foreign land and needed hospitality. This was often expressed in offering travelers something to eat and drink. In many lands the sharing of a common meal indicates a strong bond of affection and companionship, and becomes a symbol of the intimacy to be enjoyed in the coming messianic kingdom (Luke 22:30; Revelation 19:9).

**3:21 "To him that overcomes, will I grant to sit with me in my throne"**. Overcomers will judge men and angels.

**Church Period: "Evangelical"**. This is the dispensation of the Kingdom of Elohim (Rev. 20), and the coming thousand-year period. It's the close of grace ending at the time **most men have followed church organizations and other men, rather than Elohim**. This period will end in a final rebellion against the true doctrine, leading to the judgment of Elohim upon the earth and the inauguration of the Kingdom that will birth a "new heaven and new earth."

### **The Parable of The (Drag) Net continued**

Restating Matthew 13:49-50, the parable closes **by telling us that the end of an age will also close upon the church upon reaching its final stage (the Laodicean stage of Apostasy)** that will usher in **the separation of the wheat and the tares within the church**.

*Matthew 13:49-50*

**So it will be at the close of the age.**

The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous,  
and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

But, the key to understanding the parables of Matthew 13 in connection with the seven churches is summarized in the last few verses of the parable of the Net (Matthew 13:51-52) where **Yahshua summarizes a true disciple's growth and progression through this 'matrix'** in the last few verses:

"And Yahshua said unto them, Have you understood all this?" They said to him, "Yes."

And he said to them, "**Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.**"

And when Yahshua had finished the parables, he went away from there". Matthew 13:51-52.

See the Conclusion of the Letters To the Seven Churches ■

## LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES (Conclusion)



All seven parables (Matthew 13) are key parables, but the first (The Sower) introduces the entire series of parables ending with the last, (The Net). This introduces the conclusion of the Letters to the Seven Churches in the final verses of the last parable (Matthew 13:51-52).

When Yahshua finished the seven parables, He asked His disciples, "Have you understood these things?" They replied, "Yes." So Yahshua emphasized their responsibility as **scribes** (instructed on the subject of the Kingdom of Heaven) by comparing the scribe to the householder. Yahshua's summary is concluded in a final parable, but let's first understand the scribe.

A scribe was a "person trained in writing and used to record events and decisions (Jer. 36:26; 1 Chron. 24:6; Esth. 3:12). During the Exile in Babylon, educated scribes became skilled in Elohim's written word, copying, preserving, and teaching it. By New Testament times, they were experts, most being Pharisees (Mark 2:16). They interpreted the law, taught it to their disciples, and were experienced in cases where people were accused of breaking the Law of Moses. However, the majority were hypocrites and led the way in a plot to kill Yahshua (Luke 19:47). His rebuke of them is in Matthew 23). **However, Yahshua's point about scribes is not about their history, but about a scribe's responsibility unto the Kingdom.**

A normal scribe would have an understanding of the Law of Moses (Old Testament), but a *scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven* would have a clearer vision of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven due to a 'spiritual understanding' (via the parables). Fundamentally a scribe was a "disciple who teaches" and the word 'scribe' itself also means a "learner". Every 'disciple/teacher or leader' has both old and new treasure. The old (Old Covenant) is truly enhanced with the final revelation of Elohim's will through Yahshua who magnified the 'old' in the new (New Covenant). Things written in the New Testament are a confirmation of things written in the Old Testament. (Remember, it is the fuller revelation provided by the New that helps to explain the "mystery" of the Old (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47). **This is the type of scribe who is like a householder (Elohim) and the details are unveiled in this final parable:**

### The Parable of the Vineyard/The Householder (Matthew 21:33-41)

**"Hear another parable: There was a certain householder (Elohim/Israel), which planted a vineyard (the people of National Israel), and hedged it round about (protected by Elohim), and digged a winepress (for dominion and subjugation) in it, and built a tower (strong/altar for a defense which is WORD and name, Israel), and let it out to husbandmen (Leaders/Pharisees of Israel), and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near (the former rain before the harvest), he sent his servants (the prophets of Israel) to the husbandmen (Leaders /Pharisees of Israel), that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen (Leaders/Pharisees of Israel) took his servants (the Prophets of Israel), and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants (Minor Prophets of Israel) more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son (Yahshua), saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen (Pharisees/Leaders of Israel) saw the son (Yahshua), they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance (the rulership of The Kingdom). And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard (outside Jerusalem on Golgotha Hill), and slew him (crucifixion). When the lord (master) therefore of the vineyard cometh (Elohim of Israel), what will he do unto those husbandmen (Pharisees/Leaders of Israel)? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men (Pharisees/Leaders of Israel), and will let out his vineyard (remove the people of Israel) unto other husbandmen (the disciples/scribes/sower of seeds of the True Gospel), which shall render him the fruits in their seasons" (the 'early rain' of the church era before the harvest of the church; and then at the 'latter rain', during the Great Tribulation before the harvest of the world).**

This reminds of us of the destruction that pastors, priests and organized leadership have brought on the church:

**"Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness." Jeremiah 12:10**

While some have not intentionally brought about spiritual destruction, they believe they are teaching the true

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Gospel but in actuality **Satan is using them to further his work**. The phrase "trodden my portion under foot" identifies with "the Great Tribulation when the sanctuary is trodden under foot" in the secular world:

**"...And another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" Daniel 8:13**

This indicates that Elohim's days of allowing 'organized *so-called* religion' to represent His kingdom is coming to an end (The Church Era of Grace). By moving his disciples into position, the Holy Spirit, *which is sealed within each disciple*, also moves according to Elohim's purpose. (Remember, the Law is Spirit).

**"Bind up the testimony (*precepts/customs*); seal the law (*teaching/statues*) among my disciples (*scribes*). I will wait for YHWH, who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob" (judgment)". Isaiah 8:16-17**

While churches still exist, at the end of this age, the word will be disseminated by **his election (the elect of his choosing)**. This judgment and harvest of the church era is simply a small model (*shadow*) of what is about to come upon the world, full blown. This is confirmed when we read that the householder (Elohim) allowed briars and thorns (bad fruit) to grow in the vineyard (Israel) and they (the leadership) represent that which has been rejected by Elohim (for failure in redeeming the time to do the former work necessary within).

**"For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them (*the laborers*) by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."** Hebrews 6:7-8

The Bible speaks of the briars and thorns as being 'so-called spiritual Israelites' among the 'true spiritual Israelites' (those baptized and **born again**; and those baptized, but **not really born again**). **Each group will be known by the fruit they have produced just prior to the harvest separation.**

**"And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house."** Ezekiel 2:6

This indicates that it was His plan to allow the good and evil to coexist in the churches throughout the **Early Rain** (from the period of 33 AD) **to the dry spell** (just prior to the Great Tribulation). Elohim has commanded the clouds to not rain upon the vineyard (Israel) during this "**dry period**". Isaiah chapter 10 directly addresses the situation in the church of our day. Elohim indicates that He will send famine among His people and will ultimately destroy "his thorns and his briars". ***They are said to be his thorns and briars because these are not secular people of the world but those who say they are Elohim's people (baptized) but are not necessarily "born again" in character or nature:***

**"Therefore shall YHWH, the Adonay of Hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle burning like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day".** Isaiah 10:16-17

Romans chapter 8 describes the entire **earth in a picture of labor** waiting for **the Sons of Elohim to be made manifest**. The Sons are identified: **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of Elohim, they are the sons of Elohim"**. (Romans 8:14) Those Elohim foreknew (*before the womb*), Elohim also predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son (*Yahshua*) so that he (*Yahshua*) might be the firstborn among many brethren that would come forth after him. (Romans 8:29)

**Scripture states: "be in pain and labor to bring forth"** (*the precious baby, the fruit of righteousness*).

"In that day," says Yahweh, "I will assemble that which is lame, and I will gather that which is driven away, and that which I have afflicted; and I will make that which was lame a remnant, and that which was cast far off a strong nation: and Yahweh will reign over them on Mount Zion from then on, even forever. You, tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion (**Judah**), to you it will come, yes, the former dominion will come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem. Now why do you cry out aloud? Is there no king in you? Has your counselor perished, that pains have taken hold of you as of a woman in travail? **Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail**; for now you will go forth out of the city, and will dwell in the field, and will come even to Babylon. There you will be rescued.

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There Yahweh will redeem you from the hand of your enemies". Micah 4:6-10.

"But you, Bethlehem (*house of bread*) Ephrathah (*fruitfulness*), being small among **the clans of Judah**, out of you one will come forth to me that is to be ruler in Israel (*Yahshua*); whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. **Therefore he will abandon them until the time that she who is in labor (Judah) gives birth. Then the rest of his brothers will return to the children of Israel!**" Micah 5:2-3

*Elohim is gradually molding the remnant of true believers via a **scourging** (the labor pains my teacher, the Late Elder Priest YaChov Ben Israel, always said would come). Organized church leaders, including those of the true Hebrew faith, are included in YHWH's displeasure with their leadership described in Ezekiel 34:1-8. He continues the description of how the scourging will take place in verses 16-22 below:*

"I will seek that which was lost, **and bring again that which was driven away**, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Adonay Elohim; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats... Behold, I, even I, **will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad**; Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle". Ezekiel 34:16-22

*....And the reason for the painful scourging of National Israel (her labor pains) are identified in Isaiah 65:6-9*

"Behold, it is written before me: **I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together**, saith YHWH, which have burned incense upon the mountains (doctrine) and blasphemed me upon the hills (doctrine); therefore will **I measure their former work into their bosom**. Thus saith YHWH, As **the new wine** is found in the cluster and one saith, **Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants' sakes that I may not destroy them all**. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains (pure doctrine); and **mine elect shall inherit it**; and my servants shall dwell there". Isaiah 65:6-9

Elohim sent Isaiah to foretell the ruin of his people and since prophesy is dual in its fulfillment; time has never been shorter as this age nears its end. Many hear the sound of Elohim's word, *but cannot operate in the power of it*. Elohim, in righteous judgment, will give men up to blindness of mind, because they will not embrace the love of truth to receive that **power**. (And the Angels, the Spirits of the 7 Churches, are **'The Possessors of Power'** who oversee the management of their power in the churches, one by one; and in its members, one by one). But no humble disciple of Yahshua, need fear this **spiritual judgment** that will cleave onto those who still hold fast to their sins and the motives thereof.

Let every one pray for the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, that he may perceive how precious are YHWH's divine mercies, by which we may be secured against this dreadful danger. YHWH's final word is that **He will preserve a remnant, like the tenth, which is holy to him and lead them by his Spirit**. The election is for that remnant inside the remnant:

**"Behold, I send an Angel before you, to keep you in the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him". Exodus 23:20-22**

"You are come unto Mount Zion, and unto **The City of The Living Elohim, The Heavenly Jerusalem**, and to an **innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven**, and to Elohim the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Yahshua the Mediator of the New Covenant...". Hebrews 12:22-24

While He still preserves his church, Isaiah foretold that visible churches and some members thereof, will be lopped off as unfruitful (**pruned**), so the holy seed will shoot forth (**bud**) from all the **numerous branches of righteousness** that shall sprout.

**"Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without (outside) the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come"**. Hebrews 13:13-14

This is the (*pure*) conclusion of The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, and all of Yahshua's disciples of the shepherds of all ages, who are led by the Holy Spirit. May YHWH have mercy on us all! ■