

*Seven Letters to Seven Churches-A

Eschatology: Study of God Developing People in His Image
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*Overview



*Where in the World?

*** John Sees Jesus**

John exiled on Patmos for Gospel
 in the Spirit on the Lord's Day (Sunday)
 He hears Jesus speak to him
 Turning he sees the glorified Jesus
 He swoons, is strengthened, then obeys



Stars

- * Represents Christ (Rev 24:15-19)
- * Balaam, under the Spirit, speaks of the "Star from Jacob" with the Scepter
- * Stars are the Pastors (Bishops) of the Churches

Lamp Stands

- * Represents Christ's body (Mt 5:14-16; 2Pe 1:19-21)
- * Churches are the light of Christ shining in the dark
- * Light is the Word shining from believers together

*** Church Leadership - Pastors**

- * The word for angel (ἄγγελος) actually means messenger and can refer to people
- * The context informs the reader how to interpret the word
- * Christ has NO need to write letters to angels, they are in Heaven with Him, pastors are not in Heaven and need His instruction for their churches, and ours; then and now and future until He returns

*** Angel Only Means Messenger**

- * Many theories have been advanced to explain why these seven churches were chosen (Correlation)
 - * Covers church history from Pentecost to Rapture
 - * Covers the birth and demise of each church
- * Each theory depends on one's worldview (<http://www.be-ready.org/seven.html>)
- * I propose a different view but first, the churches

* Why These Seven Churches?

* The Churches

- * Means - City of the Goddess
- * Home to Temple of Artemis (Diana)
- * Important Library and School of Philosophy
- * Paul and John ministered here



* Ephesus

- * Nicolaitans - Church Leaders or Something else
 - * Nikos - Victory
 - * Laos - People (Laity comes from this word)
- * Ireneus and Hippolytus (Early Church writers)
 - * Deacon - Nicolas of Antioch (Ac 6:5)
 - * Proselyte to Christian to Deacon to Gnostic wisdom
(<http://www.lightsource.com/ministry/refuel-with-risk/articles/who-were-the-nicolaitans-and-what-was-their-doctrine-and-deeds-14510.html>)

* Jesus Hates the Nicolaitans

- * Believers are lost people who are saved
 - * We bring our worldviews (beliefs) with us
 - * Christian maturity is replacing our (pagan) worldview with Christ's (spiritual) worldview
- * Paganism, early forms of Gnosticism, becomes the "real gospel" persecuting non-believers

* False Gospel - Paganism

- * The Nicolaitans are mentioned in only two of these cities, both centers of "gnosis" (γνώσις): merging of knowledge and corrupt faith
- * Christ begins His message stating He "hates" gnosticism which Christians are to also *hate*
- * The true gospel alone is the Tree of Life

* Paganism is Gnosticism

- * Means - Bitter (Ru 1:20)
- * Christ does not criticize this church
- * Tribulation is bitter yet yields hope
- * Tribulation is unavoidable



* Smyrna

- * Small, persecuted church about to suffer more
- * First mention of the "synagogue of Satan"
 - * Synagogue (bring together) is a Jewish form
 - * They are called Jews, but Christ says they are not Jews (Jews would follow Him to salvation)
 - * Today they are called Judaizers, Talmud followers, haters of non-Judaizers and Gentiles

* Synagogue of Satan

- * Blasphemy defined - Denys Christ, defames God
 - * All who reject Jesus are blasphemers
 - * All who follow a false gospel are blasphemers
 - * All who reject the Bible are blasphemers
 - * The lost are blasphemers until saved (us)
- * Judaizers (Talmudists) are blasphemers

* Judaizers Blaspheme Jesus

- * All who hold to the true gospel receive the "Crown (στέφανος) of Life (all who are saved)
- * You will (You cannot stop these):
 - * The World will impoverish you (Mark-Buy/Sale)
 - * Have Tribulation (θλίψις)
 - * Have Testing (πειρασμός)

* Crown of Life

- * Means: Acropolis (City on a Hill)
- * Home to Temple Complex of Greek Gods (Zeus, Athena/Diana) and Emperor worship (Augustus, Trajan)
- * Competed with Ephesus for honors



* Pergamos - Pergamum

- * Satan's Throne -Merging of all knowledge
 - * Paganism - Gods/goddesses, man's image
 - * Hellenism - Worldly secular knowledge & power
 - * Romanism - Emperor worship binds all to power
- * This is Gnosticism giving allegiance to the power of Rome (False Prophet {Second Beast} pointing to Antichrist {First Beast})

* Satan's Throne

- * Nicolaitan's Doctrine defined (think Balaam):
 - * Immorality
 - * Physical - Join non-believers accepting their gospel
 - * Spiritual - False gospel yields no salvation, no hope
 - * Brings us back to Balaam's sin and prophecy (Nu 24) where we started from in our study

* Nicolaitan's Doctrine

- * Gnosticism infiltrates early churches through its "believers" who are not maturing in the true word/Word but holding to the worldview they had while lost and by lost (wolves)
- * Christ fights against them, their beliefs, with His Word (Bible) which we should also do

* Hate Gnosticism

- * Hidden Manna - Word of Christ the World cannot see, cannot accept and must be renewed *daily*
- * Stone with a new name no one knows
 - * Stone is Jesus, the Rock, complete with each of us
 - * He gives each believer a unique, intimate name
 - * No one else has this name, each person's relationship with Jesus is intimate (Marriage - Husband/Wife relationship)

* Hidden Manna - New Name

* Next Week - Other Churches