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Seven Churches

Light For Seeing, Ears For Hearing

As we move into these difficult times at the end of the age, I think it meet we begin to discuss the state of the Church. It is John's Revelation that talks extensively about the end time system, the judgments of God and the final act of redemption of those who place their full and unreserved faith in Christ. That book begins with seven letters to the Churches of Asia. It is as if Christ were giving each Church a preview of itself in Judgment before the things that were to come to pass, actually came to pass upon them and the whole earth. Christ gave his servants and future bride a 'trial run' at the Judgment seat of Christ to let them know where they stood.

Now we all know that the Lord has taken his time about coming back as he many times alluded to and hinted at in his parables. Over and over again he gave us some broad hints that he was coming at a time when we thought not, and talked about those who would take advantage of the fact that '*my lord delayeth his coming*'. But we who know know our God (let the reader know to whom he belongs!) would not be caught unawares, as will the lost and backslidden. The opening chapters of Revelation are key to understanding both the role of the Church and the consequences of continued disobedience after having been warned.

For many reasons, scholars have long believed that each of these Churches represented a definitive epoch in the Churches history. This interpretation appears to be sound, if one also keeps in mind that they also refer to the different states of different individual Churches, denominations and

assemblies that exist at any one time, including the present. But before I start with this let me say this. This is not an authoritative work, rather this is a simple piece that helps put these rather important and somewhat neglected chapters in Revelations in a perspective that is accessible to ordinary lay Christians in a way that effects and applies to them, personally.

Each Church was different and each had its own problems and reasons for the Lord's praise. Only two were without any rebuke from the Lord, The other five and issues that the Lord had to address. What I think many miss is that each message was directed, not to the Church but to "the Angel of the Church of..." The word Angel here is the word.

Strong's word number 32: ánggelos – properly, a messenger or delegate – either human (Mt 11:10; Lk 7:24, 9:52; Gal 4:14; Js 2:25) or heavenly (a celestial angel); someone sent (by God) to proclaim His message.

In the Lord's kingdom, everyone has a specific function and John's job was to relay this message specifically to the Angel/Messenger of each specified Church. Each had a message and who these messengers were is not clear. But some have surmised that each Church's messenger was actually the person who preached Gospel to that Church. This may or may not be the case as the book of Revelation was probably written shortly after some of these early Evangelists had gone to be with the Lord. Who these Angels are is a kind of mystery to me, but I tend to think of them as those who have charge of the Church at the times appointed. They are the men who are anointed by God to deliver the divine Message to the assembly (pastors/Bishops, etc). So this message was to be sent to the Churches by this divinely appointed (even if human) messenger.

I only expound upon this point in that we fallible humans, when given an office by God have a duty and responsibility to carry it out - all the way without murmurings and complaining. One thing anyone who serves God will tell you, he does not hand out easy jobs, but that even in difficulty, God gives us the ability and grace to carry them out. These messengers (angels) were charged, not with creating a message out of their own hearts (as is the habit of too many today), but to take the specific message given by Christ and the Holy Spirit to the applicable Church. Who are these stars? They

could be the Pastors, or as mentioned earlier, the original evangelist or apostle who preached the gospel and converted the Church. The word Angel here is again, better translated messenger but we should also keep in mind that like Angels (who are ministering spirits). If one looks at other passages in Daniel we see that those who turn many to righteousness will shine as the brightness of the firmament.

I think it also meet that we make this clear as a matter of the timing of this most important divine revelation. It was given just before about 200 years of severe Church persecution and was meant to guide each Church in its particular geographic location. Let us keep in mind that each church is listed in Revelation and by the Lord by a place name, not a time frame. Given the fact that today, persecution has risen to a feverish pitch and that more Christians have been martyred for their faith in this and the last Century than in all the others and that Christ warned us that it will only grow as the time of his return draws near, we need to be mindful of the exhortations found in these passages.

Before we go onwards here, I think it most important that we understand that the Book of Revelation is full of apocalyptic symbols and those symbols have meaning in the scheme of man's redemption. As we look at the imagery we need to go back to the Old testament and discover what each of these symbols meant. For example, the candlestick or lampstand. This signifies the Holy Spirit, or rather, the oil that is in the lamp is symbolic of it. Christ here is viewed in his glorified state and is ministering to John. Leaving little room for interpretation, Christ interprets much of the symbology for us.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they

*burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, **I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.** Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; **The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.***
(Rev 1:10-20)

There were seven Churches and seven distinct messages that went to seven distinct Churches. In other words, the message that went to Ephesus was not meant for Sardis, nor was Laodicea's message to be taken as a 'word from the Lord' for the Church at Smyrna. Here it is not hard to see the same kind of imagery that Zechariah saw in his apocalyptic vision in Chapter four, where we also had one Candlewick but with seven bowls on top of it and seven lamps.

*And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold **a candlestick** all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his **seven lamps thereon**, and **seven pipes to the seven lamps**, which are upon the top thereof:*
(Zec 4:1-2)

We find the term candlestick used quite a bit especially in the New Testament. The word here is menorah in the Old Testament.

H4501 מנורה / מנרה menôrâh Total KJV Occurrences:40

candlestick, 34

[Exo 26:31-35\(8\)](#), [Exo 30:27](#), [Exo 31:8](#), [Exo 35:14](#), [Exo 37:17-20\(6\)](#),
[Exo 39:37](#), [Exo 40:4](#), [Exo 40:24](#), [Lev 24:4](#), [Num 3:31](#), [Num 4:9](#),
[Num 8:2-4\(4\)](#), [2Ki 4:10](#), [1Ch 28:15\(3\)](#), [2Ch 13:11](#), [Zec 4:2](#), [Zec 4:11](#)

candlesticks, 6

[1Ki 7:49](#), [1Ch 28:15\(2\)](#), [2Ch 4:7](#), [2Ch 4:20](#), [Jer 52:19](#)

This is the same word that we use today for the Jewish Candlesticks used during Hannukah. Candlesticks are symbolized by their ability to give light. In the new Testament, we find the word used here is

G3088 *λύχνος* *luchnos ookh'-nos* From the base of G3022; a **portable lamp** or other *illuminator*(literally or figuratively): - candle, light.

It is also found in

Matthew 5:15. Mark 4:21. Luke 8:16; 11:33. Hebrews 9:2. Revelation 2:5. candlesticks

Revelation 1:12, 13, 20, 20; 2:1; 11:4.

These versus denote the light for example, here is a teaching about the Luchina (Lampstand) as found in Matthew

*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a **candle**, and put it under a bushel, but on a **candlestick**; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

(Mat 5:14-16)

Here, we see that the lampstand (candlestick) is to give light to all. We Christians are called to be the light of the world. So when Christ talks about our candlestick before God, this is almost certainly the same principle. The Light of our righteousness is key in the interpretation of the lampstands (candlesticks) and the threat to take away of that candlestick is no small matter. Christ is depicted as having the Seven Stars in his hand as he walks among the lampstands. Christ is looking for the light in our lives, both individually and among his Churches. These lampstands represent the light that the Church is supposed to be. Many have stated that the Spirit of God is the oil of our lamps. If so, the threat of losing our candlestick is a very serious one, in that if the lamp is not burning, the spirit is missing. A man without the spirit of God is none of his, so when Christ threatens to take

away the candlestick, this is a very serious threat and represents much more than a simple loss of blessing.

What happens with the light of the world dims or is non-existent? The world goes into darkness. I believe this is one of the reasons and signs of the approaching tribulation. When the Church no longer gives her light because of apostasy, lukewarmness, sin or because many have been martyred, the world will slip into a kind of chaos that it has never seen before and tribulation that will bring an end to this age. Why? The light is gone and darkness will rule. Is this not one of the plagues in Revelation. Not just a physical darkness but a spiritual one.

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

(Rev 16:10-11)

But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

(1Jo 2:11)

The result of a Church that no longer gives its light is a world that slips into spiritual and literal darkness. Let us all keep in mind that the Apostle Peter warned us that the day of the Lord would not come until the great falling away (Apostasy) came to pass.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

(2Th 2:1-3)

The point here is an important one as Christ asked a key question about the end of this age “When the Son of Man Cometh, will he find faith in the

earth” The answer to that question is no, except in those who have been able to maintain it in trying and tribulatory times. Yet even so, in this most important book (Revelation) we see the incredibly great reward has for those that maintain that faith that Christ has for us in a message that comes directly from the presence of Christ.

*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.
(Rev 1:5-7)*

For those of us who wish to see our salvation consummated in becoming a son, king and priest of God, we must be dutiful and obey our Lord and savior, keep our faith and not let the world spot and soil our garments. We must never let the pleasures of this world veer us off track. We must not let the clever marketing, cheapness, lusts and vanity of our present age get us to be like Lot's wife... and look back. Brothers, hear me on this, this walk of ours is very likely to get more, not less difficult in the years ahead. I see a hue and cry against Christians and our ever dwindling numbers in our world becoming more evident. This is already happening in many parts of the world. Watson's Web publishes many stories on Christian Persecution around the world. The danger is growing, not abating and given some of the questionable characters that now are in power in Washington and their antichrist agenda, you can be fully assured that plans are well underway to further undermine, mock, financially destroy and otherwise undermine Christians in America.

It is taking the devil more time here because there are still millions of nominal Church going Christians. But because we Christians are destined for severe persecution in the last days, we can be assured that the devil will, at least for a short time, get his evil way. I see a time when many of those we know; friends and even family will laugh at us mock us severely as a vast media campaign against Christians is very carefully waged. It won't be a hue and cry, but we will see even more of what we have been seeing. More TV

programming that glorifies everything from sodomy, to witchcraft. Large budget productions that emphasize only the most negative aspects of Christian history, duly exaggerated for psychological effect. This is done to reinforce a distinct anti-Christian bias that will be used at a later date. This is propaganda. This is how it works. What our elite and Hollywood in particular is doing is preparing the groundwork against their political and spiritual enemy, that being Christians. The antichrist bent in Hollywood is deep. I can remember one major Hollywood star regaling his audience about how the producers of one of his hit movies demanded that he take out certain scenes that took place in a Church. Apparently, the scene did not have the negative connotations about Churches that Hollywood has been putting in their movies regularly so they demanded it come out. The Star balked, paid for the film himself and the movie was a major hit.

What I am telling you here is that powerful satanic forces are working overtime to get rid of Christianity to be followed by Christians. Be ready for it, because it is coming and the politicians that far too many Christians voted for (because they were deceived by the prince of this world.. let the reader take heed) and supported with time and money are the number one people pushing it.... secretly.

Here in we can discern clearly the works of darkness and deceit that are targeting the Children of light, that being those of us who have determined in our hearts to walk in the light, to repent of the works of darkness and press onwards to the mark that is Christ Jesus. It does not and will not matter how much we mind our own business or even remove our selves from the political debate in America. The devil is running this show and he is our ultimate enemy, not his unwitting servants who are just clueless stooges in a spiritual game that they refuse to understand.

I say these things because just like the Seven Churches of Asia to whom these chapters were written, we too, the 'Seven Churches of the last days' are also going to experience severe persecution. The Orthodox Church, The Catholic Church, the Baptist Church, the Episcopal Church, The Methodist Church, the Charismatics, The Chinese Church as well as those scattered throughout the world. God had a message to his Church then and the message essentially has not changed today.

Christ had high praise for some of the Churches and did not raise a single word of rebuke at them. Others he did not have a single good thing to say about them and straightly charged them that they were about to be ejected from the body of Christ (Rev 3:16 cf 1Cor 12:27). Others were told to hold fast, still others were told to repent. Others were threatened with death if they did not. There is a harshness with God that many people fail to comprehend after only listening to the 'Jesus loves me' side of the Gospel year in and year out. God does **not** tolerate sin. He will forgive it, but only if there is genuine remorse and repentance. God is not unmerciful to such as these. But no mercy will be shown to the unmerciful nor to the unrepentant, not to those who blaspheme and mock God or his servants. Such are in much deeper trouble than they know when they engage in these things. God will not be mocked.

While this article may not be in keeping of what many would call 'prophetic' I assure you that it is. Many would like me to spend more time talking about the antichrist and the rising system satan is building on earth. I spend a lot of time on that. Too much maybe, but the signs are all there for anyone with an honest heart, an open bible and a humble spirit to see.

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.
(2Ti 2:15-16)*

In these times we need more believers who will just spend more time in the scriptures measure them up with our times and stop looking at everyone else's sins and concentrate on rooting out their own. So that they can

*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:
(2Pe 1:10)*

But brothers, take this from your brother in Christ who has long walked this walk, in difficulty, persecution being mocked and laughed at by many a soul. **Don't waste your time arguing religion with backsliders and apostates.** When they try and start arguments about it, shut them down... politely but firmly. Tell them point blank that God rejects such people and

that if it is ever **possible** for them to repent (in most cases it isn't - Heb. 6:4) and that repentance is evident you will receive them back a gain as a brother, but until then, you will not cast your pearls before the swine nor give that which is holy unto the dogs. If they want to mock Christ let them do it outside of your presence. I will tell you now, there are some people I know I will never be in the same room with as I know the spirit that now guides them. I can see it just as clearly as I can see the summer sun. They once professed Christ but have backslidden or embraced that new version of religion that jettisons the holy scriptures and makes light of sin, and even encourages it!

Save your pearls for those that will hear them. Do you remember the phrase that Christ uses to each and every Church when addressing them? He used it seven times for each of the seven Churches.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.
(Rev 2:7)

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;
(Rev 2:11-12)

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.
(Rev 2:17)

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.
(Rev 2:29)

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

(Rev 3:6)

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

(Rev 3:13)

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

(Rev 3:22)

The key here is that there are some who no longer had an ear to hear and that is a very dangerous place to be. The Apostle warned the Hebrew Believers about becoming dull of hearing and being spiritually immature when they should have moved on to being teachers. Instead they were still in swaddling clothes, spiritually speaking.

Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

(Heb 5:11-12)

Christ warned us during his earthly ministry about those who had the oracles of God but had become dull of hearing and indeed could no longer receive the things of God.

Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

(Mat 13:13-17)

My point here is a very important one so lay hold to it – hearing these things is a great privilege that many men of God in Old Testament times longed to hear and were not able to because Christ had not been revealed. Today, we have Christ's words and his exhortations and must be mindful of them, giving full heed to them, lest we fall short of the mark and become as deaf men to Christ's teachings.

*While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.
(Heb 3:15)*

Hearing God is of the utmost importance and this is why the admonition to hear what the spirit says to the Churches is uttered seven times and to each and every Church. Hearing God is not optional, doing what he says is demanded if we want to see life eternal.

So I see these first three chapters of revelation as being lessons in light (lampstands) and hearing. In the times that are coming we will need to be able to truly hear our God in difficult times and not be blinded by false light or taken off the path by listening to the wrong voices, who will become ever more deceptive and enticing as the days pass.

We must have our lamps full and shining and our ears attentive to the words of the Holy Spirit. Those who fail in these things are not likely to see life eternal. Remember the parable of the 10 virgins? What was the key ingredient missing from those who were lost? Oil for their lamps (Matt 25:7ff).

Our lights? What did Daniel the prophet say about those who turned many to righteousness in the last days? Did he not prophesy...

*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise **shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;** and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.
(Dan 12:2-3)*

So brothers, our light both now and future are of the greatest apocalyptic and prophetic importance. Far more so than the rising antichrist systems and the technological beast system that is now arising. This is one of those prophecies that **you** by **your** actions can fulfill. How? By letting your light shine, your righteousness being a testimony to your God, your holiness deep and sincere and your love of God and your brother to guide your every action.

Brothers and sisters in Christ. This is Christianity, to be born again and to live your life as a testimony to him who died on the cross and gave his life for you. To such a one he will call you brother and you shall be handed a throne to sit beside Christ as he rules over the nations in righteousness and you shall not be hurt by the second death.

To The Called Faithful and Chosen

This is for the very few, handful of believers who know God and have been tested by him, sometimes severely and have maintained your faith, walk in Holiness and have kept your lips from uttering perverseness, lies and kept your hands from every wicked work. This is for those who have chosen to live a truly humble life in Christ. If this truly describes you, this short message is for you.

Brothers, fear not. Do not let your hearts be overtaken either with the cares or pleasures of this world, nor let it be overcome with fear. God is with his people. He is going to look out for you as long as and only as long as you are obedient to him and do the things he tells you. Christ has laid out his commandments in scripture. It is your job to fulfill them if you want his continued protection and entry into the kingdom. God has a plan. Your job is to yield yourself to his plan, rather than insisting on your own. Let not your soul be deluded by the devil's illusions in this world. They can and have enticed many a soul into serious, even soul-stealing error. Let God and his Holy Spirit be your guide in all things. Are you tempted to go out and buy Gold because of the shutdown? Ask God first. He does not have much good to say about those who hoard it in the last days (James 5:3). Are you afraid for your bills and obligations? Bring them before God. He knew about this

shutdown long before you were even born, so do yourself a big favor, **lay your cares on the Lord shoulders**. He knows the end from the beginning.

*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: **Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*
(1Pe 5:6-9)

*And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time **your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life,** and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*
(Luk 21:34-36)

So brothers, get in your prayer closets seek and obey God in all things (including little things) and he will guide you.

Don't let family and false friends misguide you and take you off the path brothers. Line up your relationships most carefully and jettison the ones that have become weights and hindrances to your walk. Weights and hindrances are not necessarily sin. But if they get in the way of your walk you need to set them aside. Bad relationships in particular.

Are you a twenty something dating an unsaved person? You need to back out of it. Are you dealing with an adult child that is dealing dope in your house? Get control of that situation ASAP. Are your 'buddies' all a bunch of drunken football fanatics with foul mouths and constant foolish and foul talk? **Be ye NOT unequally yoked with them.** Find some godly friends or just spend more time at home with the family. Do you have a spouse that is sleeping around on you? Take **concrete** steps to fix the situation, including

having a medical examination done on yourself because whatever disease *their* sex partner has, you probably now have too. Don't sleep with your spouse again until the situation is completely resolved and yes - this is one instance, you have **solid** biblical grounds for divorce. Keep yourself pure.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

(Heb 12:1-2)

Brothers, the time when men will betray us Christians is not far off. So prepare your hearts for it. Brother will betray brother unto death, and your drinking/football 'buddy' will be the first one to turn you in when Christians are called 'extremists' by the state for our faith in Christ.

And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

(Mat 24:10)

Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

(Mar 13:12-13)

May God grant all who take this message to heart and truly love him grace, peace **and unusually high favor** when they enter their prayer closet.

Pray for the persecuted.

Pray for Church leaders.

Pray for your Political leaders.

Pray for God's anointed teachers, watchmen and prophets.

And always give thanks for the things he has already done for you.

By,

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Sept 2013