

False Prophets and the Churches of God

Beware of philosophy and vain deceit!

Fred R. Coulter—July 5, 2025

Today we're going to talk about:

- false prophets
- the Churches of God
- what we are doing right now

I've been talking with Richard Gonzales, who is an ex-SDA minister, and he's in touch with a lot of Seventh-day Adventists. And the Seventh-day Adventist Church is now being overwhelmed with the Jesuits and going through the same experience that we did coming out of Worldwide Church of God, because there are false prophets snuck in unawares and bringing false doctrines.

The first one that we find that was of substantial was in Acts 8—Philip went down and was preaching in Samaria. Now remember Jesus was there earlier and He stayed there many days at the request of the people there and it all started out with the woman at the well.

John 4—this is important because this is what we need to understand and keep in mind and always do every day. Because being in the Church of God ***is NOT a religion! It is living by every Word of God, the Truth of God, with the Spirit of God!***

Here Jesus is talking to the woman at the well. Now she gave him water to drink and He also told her that she had five husbands. Sound a little like today's world of sex? *Yes indeed!*

Verse 20—*she said*: “Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, but You say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem.”

Now that has changed because we're to go to all the world and ***wherever the people of God are gathered together in the name of Christ on the Sabbath Day***:

- studying the Word of God
- knowing the Word of God

that's where God is! He's not any place on Sunday. He's not any place on the holidays of this world.

Verse 21: “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem **worship the Father.**’” *That's Who we worship:*

- with our heart
- with our mind
- with our spirit
- with our being
- with our lives

- how we live according to the Word of God

Verse 22: “You do not know what you worship...”—*and that is absolutely true today!*

Now in talking with Richard Gonzales, that SDA minister, there is a great leaving from the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, because it's being moved over to Sunday *just exactly as it was in Worldwide Church of God!*

The people don't know what to do because the only thing they have is the Sabbath and a little understanding of the Bible. We're able to give to Richard Gonzales our publications. We've sent him Bibles, we've sent him other books that we have and I'm going to send another batch of books to him, but especially because what they are bringing in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church is, first, the Trinity.

Now the New Testament, we know, shows only Jesus Christ and God the Father. Think on this. Jesus said:

Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Who was Jesus? *He was the Word!* So, everything that He says—inspired to say, and is written down for the New Testament—is important.

So, religion and exterior things *mean nothing!* Let's see what it's to be; just exactly like Lyall said in his message {*The Body of Christ #5; The Church #2*}

Verse 22: “You do not know what you worship. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.”

It came out from Judea but was to go to all the world, in all languages and in all peoples. That's why on the Day of Pentecost Acts 2 that they heard everyone speak about God in their own language in which they were born.

Now that ought to make us wise concerning sacred names. ***We don't need sacred names, but we won't get into that.***

Verse 23 is important because it's not just gathering together in a group, which can be when there's several Christians that need to worship together.

But the Sabbath is the key and important day to start. That's what's wrong with the SDAs. We'll get into that a little bit later.

Verse 23: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when **the true worshipers...**”

- What does that tell you? *There are people who are false worshipers of God!*
- Who are they worshiping? *Satan the devil but they think that that's God!*
- Why? *Because he's the 'god of this world'!*

Remember this: **Satan always brings benefits to confirm the lies that they believe!**

Verse 23: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when **the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth...**”

It is **the Truth of God**, and this is what we need to always follow in everything that we do. **The Truth of God!** That's why! Now I mentioned last week, I'll mention it again this week, booklet: *New Testament Scripture Comparisons* by Joseph Ackermann showing all of the errors in the modern translations, 26 of them. *Satan has been busy!*

Now that's why we have *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* because we stick to every Word of God—Old Testament and New Testament.

“...shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner” (v 23).

If we seek God, we'll find Him! But we have to seek God:

- in Spirit and in Truth
- in repentance
- in coming to Him

This is what the SDAs are going through right now.

“...for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God is spirit, and those who worship Him **must...** [obligatory] **...worship in Spirit and in Truth**” (vs 23-24).

That's with God's Spirit within us! We repent and are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. In Truth because we live by every Word of God, and:

- every Word of God is Truth
- every Word of God is righteousness

This is the whole basis on everything that we do!

Acts, 8 is the first encounter of a great false teacher in Samaria. Now think about this: At the very time that Jesus went down to Samaria, the one called Simon was a sorcerer there. He was the great religious figure at that time. Let's see how Satan inspired him to come and be baptized. Now that brings you close, *supposedly*, but there's a **false** baptism and there's a **true** baptism.

Acts 8:5 “Then Philip went down to a city of Samaria *and* proclaimed Christ to them; and the multitudes listened intently with one accord to the things spoken by Philip when they heard and saw the signs that he did” (vs 5-6).

At that time they did a lot of signs and wonders and healing. Many, many more than we have today.

Verse 7: “For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many of those who had *them*; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.” *We have the same thing today:*

- we have demonic spirits
- we have totally evil spirits
- we have nice sounding religious spirits, which are demons

You find those in the Catholic Church and the other churches of the world!

Verse 8: “And there was great joy in that city. But *there was* a certain man named Simon...” (vs 8-9).

This is the Simon that went to Rome; ***it was not Peter the apostle!*** Now that's another whole subject.

“...who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery...” (v 9).

What is sorcery? *Sorcery is witchcraft!* There are many forms of witchcraft. Today there are more witches than there are Presbyterians in America. But the basic heart and core of everything that the Catholic Church does is a form of witchcraft, and they believe in a trinity.

Like I told Richard just this morning because they're trying to get the Seventh Day Adventist to really lock into the trinity. The Bible reveals that there is the Father and the Son. We have the book: *The Holy Spirit—The Power of God—A Scriptural Perspective*.

It is the power of God, but let's think on it this way. Who is the ‘god of this world’? *Satan the devil!* Called ‘theos’ in 2-Cor. 4:4^[transcriber's correction].

So, if you believe in a trinity you're elevating Satan to the level of God Who is the True God. Who is the one who is trying to keep people from coming to the true God? *Satan the devil!*

Think on that, because that's one of the things that they do and that's exactly and as I would told Richard what they were going through that's exactly what happened with Worldwide Church of God. They changed a little here a little here a little more here a great deal here add more to it. What came out of Worldwide Church of God?

- they had kept the Sabbath

- they had kept the Holy Days
- they had kept the Passover of God
- they had understood a great deal of Truth

Now they are Grace International Community:

- Sunday-keeping
- Christmas-keeping

Coming out of the Church of God!

Verse 9: “But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself **to be some great one**”—*the religious leaders!*

Verse 10: “To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’”

First encounter with the Church; v 11: “Now, they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the Gospel—the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself also believed; and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip; and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed” (vs 11-13).

Notice what happened, and this becomes important, because this is the Simon who later after this encounter with the apostles in 42^{AD} went to Rome. You can read this in the Biblical Encyclopedia. He had a companion with him: Helen, always a woman involved whom Simon named the ‘holy spirit.’

Verse 14: “Now, when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; Who, after coming down *to Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit, for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit” (vs 14-17).

Notice that this is what always happens. Someone comes along smooth, powerful, interesting, ***but of the world and of Satan!*** Remember that Satan always appears as ‘an angel of light’ and his ministers appear as ‘ministers of righteousness’ (2-Cor. 11:15^[transcriber’s correction]), ***but they’re not!***

We need to keep this in mind, because the current pope is going to work big time to try and bring as many into the Catholic Church as possible and they’re working right now the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a very big and dynamic way.

Verse 18: “Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, **he offered them money.**”

I want you to think about that. I want you to think about this relationship to Worldwide Church of God: Who was at the last Passover in addition to the apostles? *Satan!* Satan always comes to take away. Judas was the one that Satan possessed. What was Judas’ function with the 12 and Christ? *He carried the bag and the bag was the bag of money to buy the things that they needed as they were doing whatever they needed!* ***So, he was the treasurer!***

Now let’s think of Worldwide Church of God:

- Who betrayed the Church more than anybody else and deceived Herbert Armstrong more than anybody else? ***Stanley R. Rader!***
- Who was what? ***The treasurer!***

Let that sink in for a while!

What we see is what we read here. *What has happened in the past has been repeated over and over again as we get to the seven Churches!*

Now notice Peter’s answer to Simon after Simon said; v 19: “...‘Give this authority to me also, so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit.’”

Verse 20: “But Peter said to him, ‘May your money be destroyed with you... [you can’t buy the gift of God] ...because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. **You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.** Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you; **for I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of unrighteousness**” (vs 20-23)—*exactly where Satan wants to bring you!*

Now notice what Simon did. ***He didn’t repent!*** Why? *Because Satan convinced him that he was right!* However, if he could change the pagan religion to make it look like Christian then this is what he wanted to do, ***and this is what he did!***

Verse 24: “But Simon answered *and* said, ‘You beseech the Lord on my behalf, so that none of *those* things, which you have spoken, may come upon me.’”

No! No one can repent for anybody else! He didn’t repent.

Let’s see that Satan and false prophets, just like Jesus said, are always there wanting to change the Gospel. This is right after Saul who became Paul and Barnabas were ordained as apostles.

Acts 13:2: “And as they were ministering and

fasting to the Lord, the Holy Spirit said... [that is the voice of the Holy Spirit and the power of God] ... 'Separate both Barnabas and Saul to Me for the work to which I have called them.'

Verse 3: "And when they had fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them *and sent them out*. So then, after being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed away to Cyprus. And when they came to Salamis, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they also had John... [that is John Mark] ...*as* an assistant with them. And when they had gone through the island as far as Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer... [just like Simon (Acts 8)] ...a false prophet, a Jew whose name was **Bar-Jesus** (vs 3-6)—*meaning the son of Jesus! Amazing!*

Verse 7: "He was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, who called Barnabas and Saul to *him*, desiring to hear the Word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so was his name interpreted) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith" (vs 7-8).

That's what all the false prophets try and do, ***turn people away from the faith of God!***

Verse 9: "But Saul, who *was* also *called* Paul, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him, *and* said, 'O full of all guile and all craftiness, *you* son of the devil *and* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the straight ways of *the* Lord?'" (vs 9-10).

And that's exactly what happens every time false prophets, false teachers come into the Church. We'll see that in the seven Churches here in a little bit.

Verse 11: "'And now behold, *the* hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.' And immediately a mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking someone to lead *him* by the hand. And after seeing what had happened, the proconsul believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord" (vs 11-12).

Now that's an amazing thing! Well today we're facing the same thing. We'll look at it and then we'll look at the seven Churches!

Let's come to 2-Peter 1. This becomes very important because everything that is centered around the world's version of the Bible and translations of it is that 'nothing was written down until after 200 years of oral tradition,' ***which is a lie!*** Because as we have seen in the first part of Revelation, Jesus said, "Write..."

We find in Acts 6 that the apostles said, 'we can't wait on tables because we have to give ourselves to the ministry of the Word.'

What is "the ministry of the Word"? ***Writing down the things that Jesus taught, and the Gospels and the whole New Testament was complete by the time the Apostle John died!***

Now Peter in his last days wrote 2-Peter. We will see the progression of what he writes here and he comes to false prophets again.

2-Peter 1:15: "But I will make every effort *that*, after my departure... [his death] ...you may always have ***a written remembrance*** of these things *in order* to practice *them* for yourselves."

That's what they were doing, writing it down. Is this not an epistle by Peter? *Yes!* This could not have been a verbal, oral tradition. ***That's a lie from the Catholic Church to introduce their philosophies!***

Verse 16: "For we did not follow cleverly concocted myths *as our authority*, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His magnificent glory."

That's when he took Peter, James, and John up on the Mount of Transfiguration and Jesus was transfigured before them. This made a great and life-long lasting impression on their minds. The importance of the Word of God.

Verse 17: "Because He received glory and honor from God *the* Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, '***This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I am well pleased.***' And this *is* the voice from heaven that we heard when we were with Him on the Holy mountain. We also possess the ***confirmed prophetic Word...***" (vs 17-19)—***written down! The things that were taught by Christ, amplified by Him, telling us:***

- what we need to do
- how we need to do it
- what we need to believe
- what we need to avoid
- what we need to practice
- how we need to live

"...to which you do well to pay attention..." (v 19).

Now how can you pay attention to it if it's not written down? *You can't do it!*

...as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and *the* morning star arises in your hearts" (v 19). *That's talking about the return of Christ and resurrection!*

Verse 20: "***Knowing this first...***"

This is what we need to understand in everything. And that's why you have works like Joseph Ackermann comparing the 26 New Testament

Scriptures. Because they changed key parts of the New Testament *so that it could conform to their traditions!*

Verse 20: “Knowing this first, that **no prophecy of Scripture**... [anything that God wanted written down] **...originated as anyone’s own private interpretation.**” *In other words, from what they thought:*

- I think this
- you think that
- you think the other thing

That’s philosophy! We’ll talk about philosophy here in a little bit.

Verse 21: “Because **prophecy was not brought at any time by human will...**”

This is why we need to understand with the Word of God. This is why we have *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order*.

- it’s not because we’re great geniuses
- it’s not because we’re smarter than anybody else
- it’s not because we think we’re better than anybody else
- it’s not that we do it for our own profit

It is for the Truth of God, the Truth of God, and nothing but the Truth of God!

This is what is missing in the Churches of God and the Seventh-Day Adventist.

Verse 21: “Because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, **but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**” *That’s important for us to understand!*

2-Peter 2:1: “But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies...”

That’s how they do it, ***stealthfully, deliberately, with determination!***

“...personally denying *the* Lord who bought them... [with His sacrifice] ...and bringing swift destruction upon themselves...”

This is what happens: *People like to be told how good they are!* Here’s something to remember:

- God ***is*** Love
- God ***is*** Truth

But:

- Truth ***is not*** God
- Truth ***is not*** a god

Truth comes from God, because God Himself is true! Do we understand that?

- that’s why the Word of God is so important
- that’s why we need to follow the Word of God
- that’s why the thoughts and philosophies of men mean nothing
 - ✓ doesn’t matter how many degrees that they have
 - ✓ it doesn’t matter what colleges they went to
 - ✓ it doesn’t matter how long they may have been in the ministry in the church in the world

Verse 2: “And many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; **and because of them, the way of the Truth will be blasphemed.**”

That’s what we have going on. That’s exactly what I saw when I watched the Pentecost celebration of Pope Leo XIV there in St. Peter’s Basilica Square. *An amazing thing!*

Verse 3: “Also, through insatiable greed they will with enticing messages exploit you for gain; for whom the judgment of old is in *full* force, and their destruction is *ever* watching. For if God did not spare *the* angels who sinned, but, having cast *them* into Tartarus, delivered *them* into chains of darkness to be kept for *the* judgment; and *if God* did not spare *the* ancient world, but saved Noah, *the* eighth, a preacher of righteousness, when He brought *the* Flood upon the world of *the* ungodly” (vs 3-5).

And then it talks about Sodom and Gomorrah. You read the whole chapter there.

Let’s come to Acts 17 and see what the Apostle Paul did when he was brought before the philosophers. Then we will see what he writes about that a little bit later. Now this is a tremendous thing that happened. On Mars Hill was the Parthenon, and in the Parthenon was Athena, Zeus, and Nike.

They had their discussions out there. All the philosophers were like Socrates and some in the past. They weren’t all there at that time. But they followed the teachings of Socrates, Pythagoras, and all of the other famous philosophers. So, when you go to any Catholic college, the first year in a Catholic college, you have Philosophy 1 & 2. First semester and second semester. ***Not the study of the Word of God!*** Think on that! I know because I went and had to withdraw.

Acts 17:16: “But while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he saw *that* the city was wholly given to idolatry, *and* his spirit was sorely moved within him.” *Idols everywhere, statues everywhere.*

- Doesn’t that sound like Rome?
- Doesn’t that sound like the things that people follow?

Even Donald Trump, when he visited Rome, he visited the pope, and the pope gave him a rosary carved from olive wood from the Mount of Olives. What kind of deliverance can that bring? *No!*

Verse 17: “Because of this, he reasoned earnestly in the synagogue with the Jews and those who worshiped *there*, and daily in the marketplace with those who met with *him*. Then some philosophers of the Epicureans and the Stoics encountered him. And some of *them* said, ‘What will this babbler have to say?’” (vs 17-18).

Isn’t that what they say when they’re high exalted doctors of philosophy today that men and women have? That they think of this, and they think of that and they think of the other thing and exchange everything back and forth, ***but they don’t know right from wrong, good from evil!***

“...And some of *them* said, ‘What will this babbler have to say?’ And some *said*, ‘He seems to be a preacher of foreign gods,’ because he was preaching to them the Gospel of Jesus and the resurrection” (v 18).

That went against everything of the pagan religion and philosophies.

Verse 19: “And they took him and brought *him* to Mars Hill...”—*right there at the very center of the philosophical discussions of the time!*

“...saying, ‘May we know what this new teaching *is* that is spoken by you? For you are bringing certain strange things to our ears. So then, we desire to know what these things mean’” (vs 19-20).

Verse 21: “Now, all *the* Athenians and the strangers sojourning *among them* spent their leisure in nothing other than to tell and to hear something new.”

- Why are we here?
- Where are we going?
- What is life?
- What is heaven?
- What is hell?

All the things that they have covered in philosophy and religion. So, here’s Paul. Now notice what he said:

Verse 22: “Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars Hill *and* said, ‘Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very reverent to deities’”—*or demons!*

Now that tells you ***that’s what’s behind every religion in the world:*** demons; Satan the devil! Now, remember this: *A liar always has a bit of truth so that it sounds authentic!* But it never is. It may be persuasive to some people. They may think, ‘Oh,

that’s quite a saying that you said.

Just like the other day there was a woman complaining about something, about kissing a baby, and she was making a big deal over that and how she was offended with it. I looked at her and I said, ‘Remember this: ‘Not every grain of sand becomes a mountain.’ *Because she was making a big deal out of a grain of sand!* And she said, ‘I never heard that before.’

Well, that’s the way that philosophers do. They show off their thinking, their logical determination, and their conclusions of it, and they think, ‘Oh, we’re super elite!’

Verse 22: “Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars Hill *and* said, ‘Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very reverent to deities; for *as* I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration, I also found an altar on which was inscribed, “***To an unknown God.***”’” (vs 22-23).

Now, all of the Athenians and the philosophers thought that they knew everything about God. ***But just in case, they had this one devotion to ‘the unknown God,’ which tells you they knew nothing about God!*** So remember this: everything in the Roman Catholic Church is based upon philosophy, and the Bible is merely secondary at best.

“...So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance *is* the One *that* I proclaim to you. He *is* the God Who made the world and all things that *are* in it. Being *the* Lord of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by hands” (vs 23-24).

Paul was saying, ‘right in back of me, right here in Mars Hill,’ where the Atheana standing in it, all decked out and gold and carved and all of that work. Remember what it says in Isa. 66? ‘*Where is the house that you’re going to build for me,*’ God says, ‘*for all these things my hand has made*’?

Are you going to make something out of what God has created, and then tell God, ‘God, you’ve got to come here’? *Never happen!*

“...He does not dwell in temples made by hands; nor is He served by the hands of men, as *though* He needs anything, *for* He gives to all life and breath and all things” (vs 24-25).

Paul is telling them, there’s a Creator God, Jesus Christ, His Son. He made everything that there is, and with purpose and with understanding.

Verse 26: “And He made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling; in order that they might seek the Lord...” (vs 26-27)—*seek the true God!*

Now, where did we start? *John 4!* God is looking for those who want to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth! This becomes a thing that we need to do in the Church constantly:

- lest we fall victim to philosophy
- lest we fall victim to false doctrine
- lest we fall victim to our own vanity

Verse 28: “For in Him we live and move and have our being; as some of the poets among you also have said, ‘For we are His offspring.’ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead *is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the imagination of man*” (vs 28-29).

That’s exactly what you have in the world today in all religions.

Verse 30: “For *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance, He now commands all men everywhere to repent.”

That’s the continuous message going out from the Word of God to the world, to people, to men, to women, young, old, *that they repent*. That’s what we have today. That’s what’s missing today.

- they have these sweet little counterfeit prayers
- they have a false Christ
- they have a false God
- they have false religion
- they have—in the Catholic Church—all of these
 - ✓ traditions
 - ✓ rituals
 - ✓ pagan things named with Christian sounding names so they appear to be Christian

Now, let’s see what Paul says of the Eucharist in 1-Cor. 10. This is just before he gets to the passage. Like I was explaining to Richard Gonzales, that what the ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church need to understand is the Passover. He’s going to send them *The Christian Passover* book, because I told him the first thing that these Seventh-Day Adventist ministers need to repent of is having the Lord’s Supper on the first Sabbath of every quarter.

Where do you find that in the Bible? *You don’t find that anywhere!* That’s *a tradition of men* or *a philosophy of men*! They come and they are so nice and they’re so dignified and they speak the words. Just like those Catholic priests that was I watching the pope do the ‘high mass.’ Can’t they do anything other than the ‘mass’?

When he raised that golden cup, I couldn’t help think about Rev. 17, *‘the woman on the beast with the golden cup, full of abominations!’*

Then they say the same words, and then they have the incense. That’s to bring all the demons in. Yes, because that is purely a sacrifice and altar to Satan!

Notice what Paul says before he comes to the Passover in 1-Cor. 11.

1-Corinthians 10:13: “No temptation has come upon you except what is common to mankind. For God, Who *is* faithful, will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able *to bear*...”

Now, keep that in mind when we come to the seven Churches.

“...but with the temptation, He will make a way of escape, so that you may be able to bear *it*” (v 13).

That means Satan is going to be after us. The world’s going to be after us. Our old sins and temptations are there.

- that’s why we need to keep the Sabbath
- that’s why we need to pray and study every day that’s why we need the Passover
- that’s why we need the Holy Days
- that’s why we need to live by every Word of God

Verse 14: “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”

When I was watching that papal Pentecost mass, I couldn’t help but think of it. Here are all these idols all around the obelisks and the crosses on all of their clothes and everything, and the golden cup and the round wafer, which symbolizes the sun.

Verse 15: “I speak as to those who are wise; you judge what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not *the* fellowship of the blood of Christ?...” (vs 15-16). *The Passover talks about it in 1-Cor. 11.*

“...The bread that we break, is it not *the* fellowship of the Body of Christ?” (v 16). *Yes! That’s the only one where we do it!*

Catholics do it. Some of the priests perform it many times every Sunday and during the week. One Catholic man, because they have Eucharist on Friday night, kind of thinks he’s keeping the Sabbath in a half way. Well, you can’t keep half way.

Verse 17: “For we, being many, are one body *and* one bread, because we are all partakers of the bread. Consider Israel according to *the* flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

What then am I saying? That an idol is anything, or that which is sacrificed to an idol is anything?" (vs 17-19).

Can't be! Can't be! And that's what they do. They hold up the wafer to the idol. They pray to the virgin Mary, who is actually Semiramis. But that which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons. ***That's what it is!***

Verse 20: "But that which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, not to God; and I do not and I do not wish you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink *the* cup of *the* Lord, and *the* cup of demons...." (vs 20-21).

There is the one Passover. There is the one wine. There is the one bread. There is the one foot washing. On one day, one night, in the year, Passover, 14th day of the first month, and everything else there in the New Testament springs out from that.

If you change it like the SDAs have done, like the Catholics have done, like the Protestants have done, ***and think that they are taking the blood and the body of Christ is blasphemous!***

Verse 21: "You cannot drink *the* cup of *the* Lord, and *the* cup of demons. You cannot partake of *the* table of *the* Lord, and *the* table of demons. Now do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" (vs 21-22). ***No! Can't do it!***

Rev. 2—Christ is in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.

- the lampstands are the Churches
- the seven stars are the seven angels to the seven Churches

EPHESUS

Revelation 2:4—because we need to talk about this. Because you have *at the beginning*:

- those who were zealous
- those who worked hard
- those who did what they should do
 - What happens after a period of time? ***People let down; they don't do what they need to do!***
 - What happens? ***A little sin here, a little sin there!***
 - Why is the Feast of Unleavened Bread important? ***So that we understand a little sin breeds more sin! Just like a little leaven leavens the whole lump!***

Revelation 2:4: "Nevertheless, I have *this* against you, **that you have left your first love.**" *This is in the Greek:*

- 'protos'—primary

- 'agape'—love

This is where we need to be. Loving God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, with all our being, and living by every Word of God.

Or you can reduce it down to what I've said many, many times:

- you ***believe*** God
- you ***obey*** God
- you ***love*** God
 - How are we to love God?
 - What is the primary love?

To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and being. What happens here? They get involved in doing 'goody-goody-two-shoe' works for human beings.

There are a lot of people that have a lot of need. I mean, even Satan has things that he does for the poor so that people will believe that that religion is a good religion.

Verse 5: "Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works..." ***Christ is active in our lives:***

- with His Spirit
- with His Word
- with His Truth

What do we do?

"...for if *you do* not, I [Christ]... [that of the Church, as Lyall pointed out] ...will come to you quickly; and I will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent" (v 5).

- Have we not seen that? ***Yes, we have!***
- Did not that happen back there? ***Yes!***

Verse 6: "But this you have: that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans... [the hierarchy was instilled at a later time, and that's what this is, the Nicolaitans. The hierarchy!]

"...which I also hate. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches...." (vs 6-7).

We need to always **listen to the voice of Christ** through the Word of God as led by the Holy Spirit that's within us.

"To the one who overcomes..." (v 7)—***means we need to be working to changing and overcoming every single day!***

"...I will give *the right* to eat of the Tree of Life that is in *the* midst of the paradise of God" (v 7).

SMYRNA

Verse 8: “And to the angel of the Church of the Smyrneans write:

Now the Church of Smyrneans didn’t have all the doctrine that they needed to have. But they had one thing. They loved God with all their heart, mind, and soul, and being, and stood and were killed and imprisoned. How many people will do that today? It’s coming again.

“...These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead but is alive.’ “I know your works and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy of those who declare themselves to be Jews... [that means true Christians] ...and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan””(vs 8-9).

A synagogue! There are many synagogues of Satan.

Verse 10: “Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a Crown of Life.”

So, doctrine is important! Especially when you have the time:

- to learn it
- to know it
- to live by it
- to analyze it
- to understand it
- to see it in action in the world
- to see it in action in your own life

But there comes a time that your love of God has got to be so great. that if they kill you, **you know you are going to be in the resurrection!** Now we know there is a martyrdom of the saints coming as we see there in the fifth seal (Rev. 6).

Verse 11: “The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.”

PERGAMOS

Now Pergamos is a very interesting situation here because we have similarities of that today. Let’s look at it this way. We used to understand the seven Churches as separate spaces of time in history. Well, how about if they all existed down through all the history of the Church?

That’s probably more true. So, it applies all the time. So let’s look at Pergamos, let’s see what happened here, **because this tells you very definitely what Christ will do if you apostatize and bring in false doctrines!**

Verse 12: “And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos, write: ‘These things says He Who has the

sharp two-edged sword.”

What is that sharp two-edged sword? *It is the Word of God!*

Heb. 4—this is true and always true and will always take place.

Hebrews 4:11: “We should be diligent, therefore, to enter into that rest... [Sabbath-keeping] ...lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.”

There it is! Now, what happens when you have disobedience like with Pergamos as we are looking at right now?

Verse 12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...”

So, it’s the Word of God that God is going to come and fight against the Church in Pergamos. Meaning,

- He’s going to bring correction
- He’s going to bring devastation
- He’s going to try and bring them to repentance

“...piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart. And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account” (vs 12-13).

Now, let’s just look at it this way. You cannot fool yourself and think you can fool God. ***You cannot live in sin and know you need to repent, but say that God understands!*** He understands alright! So, let’s see what he says he’s going to do here:

Revelation 2:13: “I know your works and where you dwell...”

Now, think about this for a minute. When he says, “I know your works...”—*let’s apply that to ourselves.*

- What are our works?
- What are our thoughts?
- What do we do?
- What is it that we are doing?
- How are we viewing things?
- How do we live?
- How do we react to the Word of God?
- How do we use the Spirit of God?

All of those things!

Verse 13: “I know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan *is*... [right there, the great throne of Zeus.] ...but you are holding fast My

name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.”

Now, we are living in a satanic world today! Is it not hard to live in a satanic world? You look at everything going on, on television. You look at all of the movies that are coming out now. ***They are all introductions to satanism and demonism!*** All of the things that have suggestive things to them in the advertisements and in what is done, that suggest different versions of sex. You need to understand that.

They are even showing perfume for male homosexuals advertised on television. You don't believe it? *Look at the ad.* Where is it going? ***So we got a lot of things to fight! We have a lot of things to overcome! They were faithful at that time!***

Verse 14: “But I have a few things against you because you have there *those* who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.”

Now, that is describing not only the time back then, but what we just read about the table of demons and the drink of demons. That is what they have. Whenever you change the Passover to the Lord's Supper—which by the way, Paul said, ***it is not to eat*** the Lord's Supper—so why do you call it the Lord's Supper? Have you ever had supper at 10 o'clock in the morning at church? No, you haven't! Same thing here.

Verse 15: “Moreover, you also have *those* who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.”

Notice what he says; this is important. That is why what Lyall Johnson just brought out:

- about the Body of Christ
 - about how it will never die out
- about how we need*
- to yield to God
 - to have His Spirit
 - to grow and overcome

Because if you don't:

Verse 16: “Repent! For if *you* do not *repent*, I will come to you quickly, and will make war against them...”

Now, think about that! Those who supposedly have the name of God the Father and Jesus Christ on them become so paganized that now Christ has to come and make war:

“...with the sword of My mouth” (v 16).

In other words, the Word of God is going to judge you and be activated by Christ Himself. That's

what's important. Living in this modern age, we have so much of it crushing in upon us in ways that have never been done in past history. It comes into our minds:

- through our eyes
- through our ears
- through advertisement
- through the world that is out there

So, we need to take this to heart!

Verse 17: “**The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.** To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the hidden manna; and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows except the one who receives it.”’

Now, that's a natural break right there, which we can take. But this is what we are doing. Let's just finish up by going to Col. 2. Very important here, *because all of this comes under the guise of philosophy. Religion and philosophy are virtually the same thing!*

Now, Paul was bringing this out and you read through it that if you go along with the religions of this world and philosophy, ***you end up worshipping fallen angels or demons!***

Colossians 2:1: “Now, I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and *for* those in Laodicea...”

By the way, The Seventh-Day Adventists call themselves Laodiceans. As I told Richard Gonzales, you need to let them know the only thing they have left is the Sabbath. Everything else has been taken away. So, what are you going to do?

“...and as many as have not seen my face in *the* flesh; that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding... [notice what we are to attain to]: ...all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto *the* knowledge of the mystery of God, and of *the* Father, and of Christ” (vs 1-2).

- no Holy Spirit
- no trinity

Verse 3: “In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Now, this I say **so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech**” (vs 3-4).

- it may sound logical
- it may sound good
- it may sound appealing to people

But remember, Satan brings benefits! God brings blessings!

Verse 5: “For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet, I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him” (vs 5-6).

- walk in the way of Truth
- walk in the way of love
- walk in the way of understanding

Verse 7: “Being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”

Now, *all of that said, notice v 8 and we’ll finish here: “**Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy...**”*

Philosophy has been cemented into the Roman Catholic Church as doctrine. St. Thomas Aquinas, different ones of the philosophers.

“...philosophy and vain deceit...” (v 8).

It looks wonderful. Oh, it’s beautiful. What a wonderful thing that that is.

“...according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power” (vs 8-10).

Now that brings us through what we need to understand how God works with the Churches and how important it is today.

- that’s why we have the whole Bible
- that’s why we do what we do
- all of these things are to preserve the Truth
- all of these things that we have to give out
 - ✓ the Bible
 - ✓ the books
 - ✓ the things that we have done

is so that people can come

- to the knowledge of the Truth
- to hold fast to the Truth
- to believe God
- to obey God
- to love God

That’s the whole lesson of the seven Churches in Revelation! We’ll finish it up next week, hopefully.

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 4:20-24
- 2) Acts 8:5-24
- 3) Acts 13:2-12
- 4) 2-Peter 1:15-21
- 5) 2-Peter 2:1-5

- 6) Acts 17:16-30
- 7) 1-Corinthians 10:13-22
- 8) Revelation 2:4-7, 8-11, 12
- 9) Hebrews 4:11-13
- 10) Revelation 2:13-17
- 11) Colossians 2:1-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 2
- 2-Corinthians 4:4
- 2-Corinthians 11:15
- Acts 6
- Isaiah 66
- Revelation 17; 6

Also referenced: {**truthofGod.org**}

- Message: *The Body of Christ #5; The Church #2* by Lyall Johnston
- Booklet: *New Testament Scripture Comparisons* by Joseph Ackermann
- Book: *The Holy Spirit—The Power of God—A Scriptural Perspective*

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