

## 4. CHURCHES

### 4.1. LETTER TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

*It is written:* The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. (Revelation 1:1-6 NIV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (Ephesians 1:3-6)

[ ] Do you know that the time is near for His second coming?

### 4.2. Ephesus, loveless

*It is written:* “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have

persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent. But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. (Revelation 2:1-7)

[ ] Do you know what to overcome to eat from the tree of life?

[ ] What cause (fallen from the first love—obey) you to do His works in your way?

#### 4.3. **Smyrna, persecuted**

It is written: "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days.

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death. (Revelation 2:8-11)

[ ] Do you know how to obtain the crown of life and not be hurt by the second death?

#### 4.4. **Pergamum, compromising**

It is written: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in

which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." (Revelation 2:12-17)

[ ] Do you keep the Word of God pure and undiluted by the doctrines of man?

#### 4.5. **Thyatira, corrupt**

It is written: "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and

keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelation 2:18-29)

[ ] Are you keeping yourself pure from defilement and sexual immorality?

[ ] Do you know the rewards of maintaining purity?

#### 4.6. **Sardis, dead church**

It is written: "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars:

"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelation 3:1-6)

[ ] Do you know how your work will be found perfect in the Lord?

#### 4.7. **Philadelphia, faithful**

It is written: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens": "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are

Jews and are not, but lie indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God.

And I will write on him My new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 3:7-13)

[ ] Do you want your name written in the New Jerusalem?

#### 4.8. **Laodicea, lukewarm**

It is written: “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 3:14-22)

[ ] Are you satisfied with your church's culture?

- [ ] Did you see repentance of sinners in your church?
- [ ] Are you proud of your church?
- [ ] Do you find that you need to repent?

## 5. PROPHET

### 5.1 Prophet is without honor

*It is written:* When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed.

“Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?” they asked. “Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.” And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith. (Matthew 13:53-58)

- [ ] Are you aware you will offend the people you know well when you speak the truth?
- [ ] Are you aware of the preconceptions working against the truth because it is not of this world?

### 5.2 Prophecy interpretation

*It is written:* So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye witnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God

the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:12-21 NIV)

[ ] Do you know why the church must be built upon the Prophets and the Teachings of the Disciples?

[ ] Do you know why prophecy must be interpreted by the Spirit?

### **5.3 FALSE PROPHET**

It is written: The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so.

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire any more, or we will die." The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.

If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death.

You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken

presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:14-22 NIV)

And if the prophet is enticed to utter a prophecy, I the LORD have enticed that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel. (Ezekiel 14:9)

For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and those who are led by them are destroyed. (Isaiah 9:16)

- Do they proclaim "in the name of the Lord be fulfilled"?
- Did they require money or offering for their own gain?
- Are gifts of seers confused with prophecy?
- Do all people speak well of that person?
- Did you know God could deceive prophets into destruction?

#### **5.4 Checklist to determine if a prophet is questionable**

Prophecy is given as directions to return and find pathways or instruction from the written word of God. If a prophecy or teaching is not from the written word of God do not associate with them. The following checklist can verify the false or contaminated prophets.

Do their primary goals reveal that they are interested in gaining?

- Money
- Fame
- Authoritarian rule
- Things for personal gain
- Sensual fulfillment

Are they:

- Setting a time or date of the Second Coming of Christ
- Living a luxurious lifestyle
- Not living as they teach
- Immoral or unrepentant
- Prophesying unfulfilled prophecies
- Promoting prophecy over the written word of God
- Claiming sole truth
- Proud and arrogant
- Greedy