

7 Letters

FROM HEAVEN



GEORGE AKALONU

7 Letters from Heaven: Interim Assessment of the Church
by Yeshua, Jesus



George Akalonu

Editorial Team

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Foreword

All saints who have been part of the process of birthing this Kingdom Culture resource are acknowledged in both the imprint page as well as the postscript. To Elohim is all the glory for release of His Grace, in 21 years, to apprehend His Heart and download same for distribution to the Kingdom Church!

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Use of Hebraic Names of the Most High

Yahweh, Elohim, Yeshua. During our walk with the Lord, we discovered by leading of Holy Spirit how fundamentally flawed was the intrusion of Rome into the gospel from 4th Century AD. Replacement Theology led Rome to take away all Hebraic/Jewish connections as root of what is now called the Christian Faith. What He has led us to do is to call our Father by the Name He revealed Himself to Israel which is Yahweh. In the same way, rather than call our Creator by the generic title God, we find it more appropriate to call Him by the Hebraic Name He revealed to humanity through Moses which is Elohim. The Name, Elohim properly conveys His Unity in Plurality as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! We also call our King the Name His Father gave Him, Yeshua as well as the Anglicized translation, Jesus derived from the Greek translation, Ioseus.

We do this as led by Holy Spirit, not as part of the so-called sacred Names movement. Neither do we subscribe to the legalistic methods of Judaizers intent on dragging saints into the dead works and rituals of Judaism. We do not condemn or malign those who have not yet caught this depth of revelation. Please feel free to call the Most High by what He reveals to you and what you are comfortable with.

Preface for the Kingdom Culture Series

We have tarried before the Lord for some time to receive a rhema concerning how to introduce the books in the series you are about to read. He directed us to share a little bit of how He ordered our steps over a 21-year period between 1996-2017. In 1996, the Lord called us out of denominationalism to serve His Body and Kingdom. As we resigned from a Pastoral calling and began to serve Him and the Body in a community in Africa (Owerri, Imo State of Nigeria), we held on to one critical vision He released beginning August 1996. At that time, we joined other saints to lament the sad state of Africa on almost all fronts of life. It was surreal to hear the Lord comfort us by saying He had appointed His Church in Africa as instrument of a quick work: Rescuing His Kingdom program in the earth realm from corruption in preparation for the return of King Yeshua, Jesus.

In August 2006, He directed us to relocate to London which as centre of the world would make our Acts 1:8 assignment more impactful on a global scale. Looking back, because we did not see it then, it is significant that it was 100 years after Azusa Street Revival that the Lord in 2006 birthed Global School of Ministry as a catalyst of Reformation, Restoration, and Revival. Again, we did not see clearly then how extensively it was to be used to rediscover Truths which were missed out by Martin Luther in the Protestant Reformation of 1517. Interestingly, the Lord used various means to make it clear what He was about to do was not raise a man or woman, like Martin Luther was raised prominently and publicly. But rather activate a company of saints worldwide with understanding of Him and the Church. A company of saints who embrace His Kingdom pattern and take their place as His sons who would do all His will. In this regard, the Lord made it clear the election of His Church in Africa was not for the purpose of building an 'African Cultural Church'. The wider and more strategic scope was to use it to use His remnant 'out

of the seed of Ham' to impact and connect His seed out of Shem and Japheth to constitute the fourth race which is the Elect Remnant or 'one new man' spoken of by Apostle Paul.

In other words, the focus of the Lord was simply to use the Global School of Ministry project to activate His elect remnant to walk in unity of the Faith. And, be empowered to represent Him and the Kingdom right where they are in various corners of the world where He preserved them from the claws of Babylon. It was then Holy Spirit provided illumination of this anchor scripture:

Romans 11:5 (KJV) 5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

There is a simple, yet grand key to understand the fundamental difference between the Martin Luther Protestant Reformation and the Kingdom Culture project. The Reformation of Martin Luther was designed to 'Protest' some of the dogma and practices of the Roman Catholic Church when he received revelation of their unbiblical origins. The Kingdom Culture project, on the other hand, is designed to take the Church back to what it was before the Roman Empire embraced the larger wing of the Church which was tired of persecution and martyrdom in the 4th Century. In other words, through the Kingdom Culture project, the Omega or End Time Church will be a logical conclusion of what had started in the Alpha or First Century Church.

Unlike other reformation projects before it, Kingdom Culture, through the Global School of Ministry and annual Master Class series of the Global Advanced Mentorship Program have two simple keys: Get the Church back into the 'School' Paradigm where Study of the Word is central to both congregational and general ministry. Second, to challenge all saints to receive the Four-dimensional work of Holy Spirit: He Is the Seal of redemption; He uses the Word to Transform Life of Believers from inside out, He Unites saints to live as one indivisible Body of Yeshua notwithstanding their locations or

sects; He releases Power through which saints are able to demonstrate the awesome powers of the Risen Yeshua, Jesus! These are accomplished when leaders and saints sincerely and diligently embrace the ministry of Holy Spirit and the Word through the T>T>E>A>R process. It is one where leaders are used by Holy Spirit to:

Teach saints the whole counsel of Holy Scriptures

Train saints to discover and take their places as effective members of the Body of Yeshua

Equip saints with what it takes to walk in victory through mentorship and support

Activate the Gifts and callings of Holy Spirit which may lie dormant in them

Release the saints into productive ministry. This may be by public ordination or Commissioning during ministry events.

500 years after the Protestant Reformation of 1517, the Lord Yeshua, Jesus is activating throughout the earth realm this framework. The framework through which Holy Spirit will undertake training of Reformers who will receive proper understanding of the Pauline Epistles and Master Plan of the true Kingdom Church contained therein, and build individual lives, ministries and congregations accordingly. This Kingdom Culture project involves release of 40 books on dedicated websites where all saints worldwide who desire to discover, pursue and fulfil their callings as the Royal Priesthood after the order of Melchizedeck can find the teaching resources to train in the comfort of their own homes.

On the other hand, these 40 books will put in the hands of the great company of elect ministers across the world who know the flock is not theirs but Yeshua's. These books are tools with which to systematically transform the operating systems of the ministries committed to their trust from 'Theatres' to 'Schools'. These books collectively make up the curriculum with which to launch their own Global School of Ministry project. The curriculum will ensure every two or three years,

fresh sets of fit for-purpose ministers of the gospel who will serve the Lord with all their hearts are produced.

All 40 books on the websites constitute what it takes to root out the leaven of Babylon derived from our various experiences with Christian Religion. They therefore constitute what we need to embrace and walk in true Kingdom Culture. It is through ministry of the Word that the Church will be prepared and made ready for return of her Groom:

Ephesians 5:25-27 (KJV) 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Please intentionally study this and the other resources in the series prayerfully under unction of Holy Spirit with your Bible to confirm all the points made. As you train, necessity is upon you to make your vessel available for Holy Spirit to use to transmit these empowering truths to other saints who yearn for empowerment!

Psalms 68:11 (KJV) 11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

2 Timothy 2:2 (KJV) 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

May Elohim, our heavenly Father make you the instrument of His Grace He designed you to be!

Chapter 1 Case Study of the 7 Churches of Asia Minor

Prologue: Backsliding and apostasies are normal tendencies in human nature!

Every kingly authority has a means of assessing its realm, dominion, and domain to see if life is lived in accordance to precepts of the constitution or governing document. In the natural, nations have what they call an Inspector General or Auditor General who assesses the finances, resources, and utilization of same to locate: Strengths and weaknesses thereof; opportunities for greater efficiency in resource allocation and utilization, threats to the nation and state; and recommendations on the way forward. In advanced nations like the United States, the independence, clarity of thought, and ability of the Inspector General of any department of State is a necessary facility for assessing how well governance delivers promises and expectations.

Natural kingdoms normally borrow from what is in operation in the spiritual realm! In the Kingdom of Yahweh, Yeshua Ha Mashiach, Jesus the Messiah, who happens to also be the Living Word, and by that measure the Constitution, is the basis on which everything will rise or fall. Well did Paul the apostle tell the people of Rome and Athens that Yahweh will judge every one by Yeshua whom he sent.

Romans 2:16 (KJV) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Acts 17:30-31 (KJV) 30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

If the principle of assessment is so regarding humanity in general it is more so regarding the church which is the Body of Yeshua, Jesus. This was why Paul exhorts us to be mindful with what and how we build the church:

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (KJV) 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The idea anyone claiming to be led of Holy Spirit can build whatever he or she likes and call it 'church' flies in the face of reality! The church is not a human or religious organization that can be built anyhow. It is not a personal estate one can structure anyhow. Those who are part of the New Covenant should learn from those who lived under the Old Testament. Though chosen as a kingdom of priests and peculiar people unto Yahweh, the stiff neckedness of Hebrews, who Moses and the Prophets led reveals an earful of divine wisdom: The merciful and compassionate Yahweh is also the just judge of all flesh! When his set patterns are flouted by humans, they should realize consequence of such iniquity can be devastating. In this regard, let us cast our mind back to what happened when they sinned against the Most High in the wilderness:

1 Corinthians 10:1-12 (KJV) 1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our

fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Context

These things have been written to lay a foundation that Holy Spirit will give utterance to build upon in the pages ahead concerning the assessment of the church by Yeshua, Jesus the head. It is a very necessary thing for saints to prayerfully read the whole of the book of Revelation and seek divine illumination. No excuse should be allowed to deter us from doing so. It is the only book specifically sent forth with a divine blessing!

Revelation 1:3 (KJV) 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

It is a book which offers a heavenly perspective to life on planet earth from the day it was written till the day when all things are consummated with the new heavens and new earth.

In this study, we will focus on how Yeshua, Jesus saw the church he redeemed barely 62-65 years after ascending to heaven. The revelations granted John, the beloved, are generally believed to be dated about AD 95, which means they fall within the first century or what can be called the Alpha Church. Several church writers and commentators believe this was about the time Emperor Domitian (AD 90-95) severely persecuted Christians in the Roman Empire. The response of heaven was not to stop the fire of persecution but to reveal the deeper meaning of life and the end of both the righteous and the sinners!

In Revelation chapters 1-3, Yeshua did not commit the assessment of the church to a human or angelic Inspector General. He did the assessment by himself! The words he spoke and context in which he spoke them must be studied and understood by all ministers of the gospel and indeed anyone who claims any kind of calling relating to the church. If generality of the church was already falling out of the narrow path and embracing the broad ways of the world within the first century of the church, our imaginations can fathom the depth of falling away that has happened about twenty centuries later. This trend did not take Yeshua by surprise neither should it take us. Well did Yeshua warn in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 7:13-16, 24-27 (KJV) 13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. 15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits.

Matthew 7:24-27 (KJV) 24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Within the same time frame in which the book of Revelation was written, Paul the Apostle was used to confirm the downward slope of the vast wing of the church which became careless with grace and tendency of the old man to rule, when given but a little chance:

1 Timothy 4:1-2 (KJV) 1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (KJV) 1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

John, the beloved, was also used to reveal the reality that backsliding from a vibrant relationship with Yeshua based on the truth and apostasy were already underway in the glorious Alpha Church of the first century:

1 John 2:18-19 (KJV) 18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Why do people backslide so easily?

The answer is simply found in the human nature! The human nature tends to rebellion because it was distorted at Eden to seek independence and non-accountability! As a matter of fact, that was the core of the temptation of Satan which got Eve, more than anything else, as can be seen when we read between the lines, especially verses 4 and 5 and its effect on her:

Genesis 3:1-6 (KJV) 1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Since that day, the heart of humans became a study in rebellion!

1. Humanity fell with Adam and Eve and the consequence was separation from Elohim.
2. By Genesis chapter 6, human nature had a total melt down on a global scale which necessitated the flood in the days of Noah.

Genesis 6:1-7 (KJV) 1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 3 And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

3. Even among the family of eight saved, the human nature cropped up not long after the Flood: Both Noah stumbled and Ham his son had a moral fall of epic proportions.

Genesis 9:20-22 (KJV) 20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: 21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

4. Even the patriarchs, prophets, and kings of Israel stumbled off the righteous path at various times, though massively blessed by Elohim: Abraham lied under pressure (Genesis 12:11-13); Moses missed the promised land for not sanctifying the Lord before Israel in his anger and disobedience (Numbers 20). In Exodus chapter 32, we see Israel backslide en-masse and got into apostasy despite the awesome visitations from their days in Egypt. David, the friend of Elohim, could not resist the allure of sinful pleasure with Bathsheba and to cover it up, had Uriah killed. In the New Testament, Peter stumbled at the thought of losing Yeshua to death and disrespected him (Matthew 16); The disciples ran away when Yeshua needed them most. In these and the myriad of instances in the old and new covenants, the problem can be located in three realms of the human nature and how they are wired in a default setting since the fall:

The Heart – wired to hide evil/negative motives, it is the engine on which life rotates.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 (KJV) 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? 10 I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

The Mind – this is the central processing unit where opinions and perspectives are formed. It tends to interpret truth either from past experiences or what is convenient. In the end, one can have a wrong understanding of something, be unwilling or unable to admit same, and act in a way which is wrong! That is why many people are sincerely wrong by clinging to their perspectives!

Proverbs 23:7 (KJV) 7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

The Will – this is the place from where humans make choices of what they want to do. If the will is not totally surrendered to Elohim to any degree, a believer or minister is apt to make decisions which will take him/her outside the will of Elohim. This is often the case when ministers try to build fancy religious ideas which are contrary to the holy writ and yet feel justified in what is clearly rebellion! This is also the case when ministers or brethren in a local congregation or network consciously or unconsciously try to re-configure a vision they are called into with their self-ideas, not realizing they are walking not in liberty but rebellion!

Yeshua succeeded in his earthly ministry because his whole heart and mind was transfixed on pleasing the Father in all things. He in effect surrendered his will to wholly embrace and do the will of the Father.

Hebrews 1:9 (KJV) 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. For this reason, he surrendered his will, ability to choose, entirely to Yahweh his Father!

John 5:30 (KJV) 30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

John 6:38 (KJV) 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

One scripture in the New Covenant warns saints against being conceited to the degree of thinking they are eternally secure, despite what they do:

1 Corinthians 10:12 (KJV) 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Eternity is not accessed by chance! It is by faith in Yeshua and abiding in him! Let us abide in him irrespective of the billows that seek to buffet us. Let us continue in the narrow way relying on his grace to live in righteousness, honouring

our heavenly Father with the choices we make and lifestyles that are irrefragable (John 15:1-8).

For those in leadership, let it be noted, without any equivocation, the onus is on us for making sure what substances we build ministry with, the structures we put in place, the motives that drive us, and the methods we employ are fully in consonance with his approved pattern. While deviations from the divine pattern may bring seeming success, fame, and money, let it be known without any shadow of doubt such can be illusory and even dangerous in the extreme! This is because, at the end of the day, the fire of Elohim will try every motive and substance with which spiritual work was done!

2 Corinthians 5:10 (KJV) 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

2 Timothy 2:19 (KJV) 19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

As we consider the 7 Letters from Heaven, it is needful to prepare our hearts to see what counts with the King and what has no value with him. The Utilitarian gospel teaches the semi-truth that we are to believe on Yeshua, Jesus and receive all we need. To merely believe on him and get stuck in using him to get what we want is cheap! There is much more than believing on him! We are also called to follow him as disciples who obey his word by his grace. Furthermore, we are also called to be like him, live like sons of Elohim in the earth realm just as he lived, occupying our allotments and spheres of influence, until he returns (Luke 19:11-27).

This holistic faith in Yeshua, Jesus produces a cutting-edge spirituality that is constantly pressing into the fullness of him, just like our brother who has gone into glory, Paul of Tarsus (Philippians 3:1-14). Once we see kingdom life as a journey

with an end, our passion to make it to his throne will take away any presumptuousness of having arrived at prematurely! May this course be used by Holy Spirit who inspired it to perfect all participants in the Master Class and brethren who are receiving the overflow!

Assignment:

(1). Please share with us, as briefly as you can yet with clarity at least 3 main things you learnt from this chapter.

Chapter 2 Background of the 7 Letters

Revelations chapters 1, 2, and 3 are the principal source materials for this course. Additional texts are taken from the Gospels, epistles granted to Paul, Peter, and John. This course downloads and presents the heart of the exalted high priest of the order of Melchizedeck in a way no other does. It is based on his personal assessment of his church within the first century after his ascension and outpouring of Holy Spirit. For those of us who live at end of the age, the assessment of the church within the first 100 years should cause us to pause, reflect, and understand the wider implications: What he did not accept in the past and rejected cannot be accepted and celebrated in the now! In chapters 2 and 3 of the Book of Revelations he unveils the nature of negative diversions that would combine to present the picture of an unfaithful wing on the broad way as well as what virtues made him to rate others as the faithful wing of those on the narrow way. One startling reality in this divine assessment is the long suffering and forbearance of Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah in relation to his body in the earth realm. We will see he was not in a hurry to destroy but rather extended grace to those out of the way just like the fresh manure which was applied to the barren fig tree of Luke 13:6-9.

One clear theme of the entire book is blast of the spiritual shofar that the king is coming, soon! In this course, He gives us a sneak peek into what he cannot accept in the ministries committed to our trust, what to repent of, and what he deems commendable. In effect, Yeshua, Jesus x-rays his church and announces the results publicly so those who have ears will hear what he is saying and make amends while there is still time! Those in the physical church but who are not really parts of his true church can only ignore his words to their own peril. Likewise, saints who have the habit of wanting to hear only what makes them happy should turn a new page!

Bible Reading

To properly understand the 7 Letters from Heaven, it is necessary to grasp some critical foundations in Revelation Chapter 1, because they provide much needed historical and spiritual context. But let us first read the whole of chapter 1.

Revelation 1:1-20 (KJV) 1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: 2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. 4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 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, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 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. 8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. 9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 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. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 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. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 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. 17 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: 18 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. 19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20 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.

Textual Analysis and Exposition

Let us now proceed to receive deeper understanding of what chapter 1 is saying.

Identity of key Characters

Let us dwell in the word, under unction of Holy Spirit, to ascertain the key characters in the passages which form the basis of this course of study. To do that successfully, the best approach is to simply break down the verses in order to understand clearly what the Lord is communicating to us.

Revelation 1 Verse 1-2

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant 2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Commentary: Right there in verse 1, more than a mouthful is communicated to us. Just as in Genesis, the first book of the bible (Genesis 1:26); the last book of the bible, the book of Revelation clearly presents a critical mystery of the nature of Elohim, creator of heaven and earth. The word says, a day will come when this mystery of the makeup and nature of Elohim is accomplished.

Revelation 10:7 (KJV) 7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Quarrels and arguments over his identity often ensue when saints stray outside the things which are revealed about him. This passage gives us a clue on how to respond to revealed and secret things concerning Elohim, our creator:

Deuteronomy 29:29 (KJV) 29 The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Throughout the book of Revelation, a mystery of the ages is unveiled: Manifestations of Elohim in divine personalities that in ordinary language have come to be accepted as Yahweh, Father; Yeshua (English form: Jesus), the Son and Holy Spirit! These references are not contiguous but are spread across the book in such a way only those who prefer to be blind can miss! Authorship is both spiritual and natural. The book is a Revelation of: Yeshua Ha Mashiach, Jesus the Messiah; As given by Yahweh the Father; About his exalted nature when he was clothed again with glory (refer to Philippians 2:5-11 for understanding of the exaltation which followed the abasement

that Yeshua suffered on the cross). It was also a revelation of things that would happen from that time to end of the age. The revelation was given to John, the beloved. There must be something about divine election of John as a principal instrument through which Elohim brought to the earth realm an understanding of the divinity of Yeshua:

Revelation 1:2 (KJV) 2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Though the human being with the most intimate relationship with Yeshua as indicated in John 13:21-27, John did not allow familiarity to breed contempt. He rather documented faithfully, the divine nature of the personality who walked the dusty streets of Galilee as Yeshua, Jesus the long awaited Messiah (Refer to the Gospel of John Chapter 1; Chapter 8; Chapter 14; Chapter 20:26-31, as well as 1 John 1:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3; 1 John 5:7; 2 John 1:7-11).

Revelation 1 Verse 3

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Commentary: As said in the prologue, this is the only book in the bible with a clear pronouncement of blessings on those who read, hear, and do the word! The notion that it signals end of the age is also emphasized. Let us be reminded the divine way of reckoning time is different from the natural way. Nevertheless, Elohim wants all saints to watch and pray and emulate the wise virgins of Matthew 25:1-13!

2 Peter 3:8-9 (KJV) 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Revelation 1 Verse 4-6

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 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, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary: Let us take note of these realities in the passage. The message was first sent to the seven churches of Asia Minor. The divine identity of Yeshua is re-emphasized with his presentation as he who was by his incarnation; Who is the reality of his enthroned status; and he who is to come, the soon coming King who would defeat the Anti-Christ and armies of the world at Armageddon in Revelation 17. The reality he was resurrected as a first fruit of what will happen to those who die in him was emphasized as well as the truth no one sits on any throne of authority in the earth realm without his approval as Romans 13:1-8 declares.

The reality of what he procured for us graciously: Redemption and the added benefit we shall function as kings and priests here on earth are emphasized. This sneak peek into the glorious destiny of saints on this side of eternity who will be co-inheritors and co-heirs of the earth realm with Yeshua during the manifest phase of the Kingdom to come is one truth Satan has tried to hide away from saints. These passages emphasize our future inheritance as royal priests with territorial authority over cities, states, and nations during the millennial reign of Yeshua (Romans 8:16-25; Revelation 5:9-10; Revelation 20:4,6).

Revelation 1 Verse 7-8

7 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.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Commentary: Several important concepts are packed into these two verses. The first is the reality he will return, and all eyes shall see him.

Acts 1:9-11 (KJV) 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

The return of Yeshua, Jesus will be completely different from his first coming! He was incarnated to be the lamb who would pay the price for sin. But, he will return as an all-conquering King to execute the ordinance of Psalms 2 against the recalcitrant kings of the earth realm! Revelation 17 shows Him in conquering mode. More importantly, His divine nature is emphasized as the Alpha (Beginning) and Omega (Ending). The reality He had existed in eternity past, eternity present, and in eternity to come is re-emphasized.

Revelation 1 Verse 9

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Commentary: Here John in his trademark self-effacing character establishes the reality that though given such deep and detailed revelations, he was just a brother to the hearers and their companion in the gospel. No matter how anointed or used by the King, his servants do not need to be placed on any pedestal! His glorification is their joy, not the adulation of other saints! He then established the principle that his

banishment to Patmos was an act of suffering for the testimony of Yeshua. Church history claims Roman authorities tried to kill John by dumping him into a pot of hot boiling oil, but he was miraculously delivered. In frustration, they banished him to the windswept, dry Isle of Patmos.

Revelation 1 Verses 10-11

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 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.

Commentary: Let us note, it was amidst this intense persecution and inclement environment the heavens opened to download into him an amazing, extended, and detailed Prophecy concerning end of the age! There are various interpretations of the phrase 'on the Lord's day' to mean any of these: On the day of worship, or on the Sabbath Day, or simply He saw far into the realm of the Spirit Who showed him end of the age. Arguments and quarrels of which interpretation is correct are totally unnecessary because none (of the three or even more interpretations) materially affects what the book is about!

The unique identity of Yeshua as the incarnation of Elohim is re-emphasized again in the title the Alpha (First) and Omega (Last). The primary audience in the day of John are also identified as the Churches in Asia Minor (Modern day Islamic Republic of Turkey!) namely: Ephesus; Smyrna, Pegamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. These were historical churches existing at that time. Just as the epistles were initially written to Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians but have application for saints of all ages, so also are the letters to the 7 Churches in Revelations chapters 1, 2 and 3. Those who argue the messages were for them alone

are guilty of sophistry! It is just like stating the gospels were only for people in the days Yeshua, Jesus lived!

Revelation 1 Verse 12-18

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 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. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 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: 18 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.

Commentary: The Majesty and Glory of the Risen Yeshua was a marked contrast to the lowly Lamb of Yahweh who John knew intimately. He was dazed by Who He saw and was as one dead! The descriptions of the glory of the exalted Yeshua are simply dazzling: From His hair to piercing eyes; from His feet which seemed like fine Brass to His Majestic Voice and radiant countenance all added up to awe John. We also see in verse 12 & 13 Yeshua walks in the midst of His Churches! In verse 16, we see Yeshua holds in His hands those He appointed ministers (not self-appointed wolves whose god is their belly as per their fruit and lifestyle (Philippians 3:18, 19 and Matthew 7:13-23). The point is this: No true leader takes the honour unto him/herself as Hebrews 5:4 says. In verse 18, Yeshua makes it clear following His defeat of Satan at the Cross, the keys of Hell and Death were now in His own hands.

Revelation 1 Verse 19

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Commentary: This verse has within it the Golden Key to unlock the mysteries of the entire Book of Revelation! John was charged to write:

- What he saw (of the Risen, Glorified Yeshua in Revelation Chapter 1). John who had known the Incarnate Yeshua and suffered much for His Testimony was given exclusive access to view the exalted Messiah so He could write with certainty to the Church.
- The things which are (State of the 7 Churches revealed to him in Revelation chapters 2 and 3). By this unveiling of the Interim Assessment by Yeshua, subsequent generations of saints who would live in the earth realm were to have a basic framework for knowing how well they are doing or to which degree they were on the pathway of backsliding and apostasy!
- The things that shall be hereafter (the end time events which would unfold from Revelation Chapter 4 to end of the Book). Here, John was given exclusive access to how the end of the age Yeshua, Paul, Peter and writers of the Old Testament spoke of would happen. To know and understand the Book of Revelation and to be governed accordingly is to get into a place of safety just as the presumptuousness of the hyper grace movement and stiff neck of those who deny the Divinity of Yeshua (whether Judaizers, Arianists, Preterists, and Pseudo-kingdom) drag many into certain damnation.

Many commentators of the Book of Revelation have led innocent saints astray because they did not grasp the import of that single verse!

Revelation 1 Verse 20

20 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

Commentary: Here, it is emphasized Yeshua walks in the midst of the 7 Golden Candlesticks, each representing the City Church, but holds in His hands: the visionaries/overseers/Pastors whose imagery is that of stars or angels of the congregations! In His hand as candlesticks through which His light radiates. The reality is the Church is His Own. Those who come against the Church (Governments, tyrants as well as aggrieved saints) are fighting Yeshua Who is the Head! In the same way, those who allow their emotions to get in the way of good judgement and raise their hands to fight vision holders, overseers, or Pastors He Himself put into office are certainly fighting Him!

Ephesians 4:11 (KJV) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Wise ministers do not resort to 'Bolekaja', (the popular phrase in Lagos, Nigeria by which people invite their opponents to come down from buses to brawl). If the Lord truly called you, He will protect you from evil attacks and take care of those who raise their hands to destroy you or the work, if you get out of the way and let Him take care!

Romans 12:19 (KJV) 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Hebrews 10:30 (KJV) 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense,

saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

Assignment:

(1). Please share with us, as briefly as you can yet with clarity at least 5 main things you learnt from this chapter.

Chapter 3 Background Information

Before we delve into the Letters addressed to the individuals Churches, let us gain a deeper understanding of the general lay out of the Audit Report conducted by Yeshua Himself and released to John for the Church. Because of attempts of various scholars to use their intellect, rather than illumination provided by Holy Spirit to interpret the symbols in the Book of Revelations, the enemy has used their various perspectives to sow confusion in Traditional Christian Religion. Because organized Christian Religion revolves around human interpretations and how their followers unquestionably cling to such perspectives, the spectacle of organized confusion is created in the Church.

Due to the work of various scholars, there are various interpretations of Eschatology or study of the End Times. According to Wikipedia, 'Most Christian interpretations fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Historicism, which sees in Revelation a broad view of history;
- Preterism, in which Revelation mostly refers to the events of the apostolic era (1st century) or, at the latest, the fall of the Roman Empire;
- Amillennialism, which contends the millennium has already begun and is identical with the current church age;
- Futurism, which believes Revelation describes future events (modern believers in this interpretation are often called "millennialists"); and
- Idealism, which holds Revelation does not refer to actual people or events, but is an allegory of the spiritual path and the ongoing struggle between good and evil.'

How Holy Spirit leads us: Linking the Past, the Present, and the Future!

We find all these approaches unhelpful because they create boxes in which saints are required to be hemmed in an 'either or' fashion. Our approach will be holistic, based on what Holy Spirit reveals the words and passages to mean. After all, it is part of His ministry to teach us all things and bring to our remembrance what Yeshua, Jesus said. Furthermore, we will also take into account the March of History since John wrote the Revelations, he received in the First Century. A combination of illumination and the facts of history will prove unbeatable!

Moreover, our general framework is the reality from Genesis to Revelation as one holistic record of Who Elohim Is, why He created Humanity as His assigns in the earth realm of His Kingdom, how humans lost their first estate, why Yeshua had to be incarnated, and what was accomplished on the Cross; the space of time from when He ascended to heaven which He assigned the Church to 'Occupy' until He returns; the reality that generality of humans do not want His Lordship; how the end of the age will unfold and His visible return to set up the manifest Kingdom and rule therein with saints who overcame. Thereafter, how Satan and all evil will be judged and taken away permanently so saints can enjoy endless eternity with their Elohim. This study therefore presents a vital thread linking the Past, the Present, and the Future! To that extent, it is of critical strategic import and needs to be approached with reverence of Elohim to hear, understand, and teach/disseminate what He is saying.

Numerology in the Book of Revelation

The Book of Revelation was written as received by John. His roots were Hebrew so it may be necessary to understand the Hebraic concept of significance of Numbers (what is called Numerology). The first indication of what is implied by the number 7 which gives us a fairly good idea of its significance is the reality that though Elohim could have created the world in one moment or hour or day, He chose to do it in 6 days and

rested on the 7th day. The implication therefore is the number 7 represents either Completion or Perfection.

The Book speaks 7 things

In the most significant Book of Prophecy which signals the end of the age, there are 7 things which are mentioned – each of which carries a significant message. In the first 3 chapters, we see the number 7 feature in terms of:

1. 7 Churches (1:4, 11, 20)
2. 7 Spirits of Elohim (Revelation 1:4; 3:1)
3. 7 Golden Candlesticks (1:12)
4. 7 Stars (1:16)
5. 7 Angels (1:20)

When all the things associated with the number 7 are considered, what we sense is all things are completed with nothing remaining at end of the Book! According to the webpage of Jaymack, these are much more instances of the number 7 in the Book of Revelation: “A unique feature of the book of Revelation is the number seven. There are:

1. seven churches (1:4, 11, 20).
2. seven Spirits (1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6).
3. seven golden lampstands (1:12-13, 20, 2:1).
4. seven stars (1:16, 20, 2:1, 3:1).
5. seven lamps (4:5).
6. seven seals (5:1, 5:5).
7. seven horns (5:6).
8. seven eyes (5:6).
9. seven angels (8:2, 6; 15:1, 6-8, 16:1, 17:1, 21:9) .
10. seven trumpets (8:2, 6).
11. seven thunders (10:3, 4).
12. seven thousand (11:13).
13. seven heads (12:3, 13:1, 17:3, 7, 9).
14. seven crowns (12:3).
15. seven plagues (15:1, 6, 8, 21:9).
16. seven bowls (15:7, 17:1, 21:9).
17. seven mountains (17:9).
18. seven kings (17:10-11).”

General Framework

Original Audience - The 7 Letters had an original Audience.

The 7 Letters were sent to specific Churches in certain cities clearly mentioned by the Lord:

Revelation 1:4, 10-11 (KJV) 4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 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.

Let us note all the 7 churches were in proximity to each other, in the same region of the world! Ultimately, only He knew why He chose 7 out of all the city Churches in the First Century to Inspect. But we can make some deductions based on various revelations:

1. They were in the line of a fire that would manifest in future that only Him as Omniscient and Omnipresent knew. In that sense, He was giving them scope to repent and get it right. The reality is about 1000 or more years after these Letters, the Islamic Religion conquered the region and began a systematic annihilation of all things pertaining to Christianity.

Today, the region is thoroughly Islamic! The relics of the Churches are now sources of massive income from Religious Tourism as Christians flock to the Islamic Republic of Turkey to pray and visit those cities.

2. In His Sovereignty, Yeshua had the Liberty to choose which of the Churches of that generation in the locations He preferred to address. That He

chose those particular 7 is within His Kingly authority.

3. We can best understand the 7 letters within a general framework outlined here:

3.1. Yeshua was addressing current issues and trends in the 7 Churches of those days and wanted solutions to be effected.

Comment: Like all other revelations in different parts of scripture, they are for edification of all saints in all generations thereafter.

3.2. The 7 Letters revealed broad features of how the gospel was faring in First Century.

Comment: Even if the letters were sent to the 7 Churches of Asia Minor, the contents clearly outline what Yeshua found unacceptable and what He found commendable. Because He is the same Yesterday, Today and Forever, Yeshua could not have suddenly modified and changed His standards. As indicated in the previous chapter, all the Epistles of the New Testament were written to specific City Churches or People groups (Romans; Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; Thessalonians; Hebrews) or to individuals such as Timothy; Philemon; Titus. Though written to specific audiences, the principles and practices of the Kingdom within them were for all saints of all generations.

3.3. The 7 Churches were indicative of how the slightest shift from the core requirement of Elohim (pure worship based on loving Him above all else) would lead the Body of Yeshua to an opposite end: love of self and accumulation of idols in the heart (Materialism).

Comment: The problems of the 7 Churches are shown to start with loss of first love (Ephesian) and end with Babylon: embrace of worldliness as a lifestyle (Laodicea)

3.4. The 7 Letters can also be understood in terms of a strategic Prophetic message: He Who knows the end from the Beginning was providing to His

remnant of all generations from the First to the Last Century the reality there was not and will never be 'Eternal Security'.

Comment: Though He saves and keeps people from falling (Jude:24), He does not interfere with the will of saints. They need therefore to make the right choices of using His Grace to remain and grow in Him or to receive it in vain and therefore backslide and apostatize. The issue of taking the Grace of Elohim in vain based on false assumptions that once saved, nothing, including a lifestyle of sinning could take away a 'believers' name from the Book of Life was used by Satan to deceive many. Paul addressed the matter in Romans 6:1-16; Hebrews 6:1-7 and Hebrews 10:28-31; 2 Peter 1:5-11 had also weighed in. It is obvious Yeshua wanted to show the Churches backsliding and apostasies were products of choice!

3.5. The Audit Report was for saints of all generations to know the mind of the Head of the Church! Even though leaders and brethren are not smitten immediately when they sin or stumble, it does not mean He condones such actions or tendencies. Therefore, each day should be seen by saints as an opportunity to utilize His grace to get it right with their thoughts, words, and actions.

3.6. Historical Dispensations – This is the view the 7 Letters simply speak of 7 phases of Church History from the First Century to the Last before Yeshua, Jesus returns to rule. There is great virtue in this interpretation because one can argue successfully the Alpha Church suffered loss of First love while the Last Church by the time of the end will have the features of Laodicea.

According to Wikipedia: "Some historicists typically interpret the seven churches as representing seven different periods in the history of the Western Church from the time of Paul until the return of Jesus Christ. [9] Scofield states "these messages by their very terms go beyond the local assemblies

mentioned." [10] He is of the opinion the letters have a prophetic purpose disclosing the seven phases of the spiritual history of the Church. Other writers, such as Clarence Larkin, [11] Henry Hampton Halley, [12] Merrill Unger, [13] and William M. Branham [14] also have posited the view that the seven churches preview the history of the global Church."

The problem with strict dispensationalist perspective

1. By trying to fit historical time frames into the Audit report of Yeshua, it can over generalize the message for each historical season. In the end, the boxes in which all those in Church are supposed to fit will be unrealistic because each saint is different, and people respond differently to things they encounter.
2. It does not account for the reality each generation has a significant remnant preserved by Grace (Romans 11:1-6). No matter the shakings and errors which have cropped up in each generation, Elohim has always found a sizeable number who refuse to bow their knee to Baal.

Spiritual Features of the Audit Report of the 7 Churches

1. Ephesus: Loss of First Love (Revelation 2:1-7)
2. Smyrna: Remnant that would suffer persecution with Grace (Revelation 2:8-11)
3. Pergamum: Opened door to a False Teacher (Revelation 2:12-17)
4. Thyatira: Gave room for Jezebel to control it (Revelation 2:18-29)
5. Sardis: Having a name to be alive but really dead spiritually (Revelation 3:1-6)
6. Philadelphia: Faithful remnant which endured patiently (Revelation 3:7-13)
7. Laodicea: Full blown backsliding through lukewarmness and false prosperity (Revelation 3:14-22)

General Exposition of the Messages

In each Audit, Yeshua, Jesus

1. Calls each Church by Name
2. Identifies Himself with a particular imagery of glory or description of His exalted status as Head of the Church
3. Outlines the Audit report on each particular Church
4. Reprove where they are in the wrong
5. Commend virtues or good qualities in them
6. Makes promises of reward or punishment that are appropriate
7. Urges them to hear what is being said by Holy Spirit

Having cleared the ground, we can now build on the solid foundation of truth as illuminated by Holy Spirit in Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

Assignment:

(1). Please share with us, as briefly as you can yet with clarity at least 5 main things you learnt from this chapter.

Chapter 4 Ephesus – The Church that lost its first love (Part 1)

In this chapter we now proceed to read the assessment and recommendations of Yeshua, Jesus concerning the Church at Ephesus. Let us take note, both individual saints, congregations, ministries and city/national churches can use the mirror of the word to assess whether what He said of the Church at Ephesus is their testimony in the courts of heaven or not.

Background of the Church at Ephesus

In order to fully appreciate the Audit Report of Yeshua concerning the Church at Ephesus, some background information is needful. This will enable us to appreciate better how greatly the Church had fallen by the time Yeshua came to inspect its works. This Community of saints came into being about AD 53. The Church at Ephesus received strong impetus with the apostolic ministry of Paul. Acts 19:1-41 is a beautiful summary of this powerful ministry at Ephesus so it is needful to read some passages therein.

Acts 19:1-7 (KJV) 1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

Ephesus was the theater of display of great grace in Paul with which the ground was decisively broken. This is where he spent more than two active years of preaching, teaching, and waging effective spiritual warfare. It was also here part of the dynamic apostolic ministry committed to him was fully manifested in signs, wonders, and miracles so much so handkerchiefs taken from his body became points of contact to transmit healing virtue.

Acts 19:8-12 (KJV) 8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

While the sons of Sceva tried to corrupt the gospel (Acts 19: 13-16), their efforts backfired and achieved the opposite:

Acts 19:17-20 (KJV) 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Ephesus was home of one of the great pagan religions of the ancient world: Worship of Diana of the Ephesians also called

Artemis by the Greeks. It was in this city devotees thronged from across the world. It is believed this same deity was known to some as the Queen of heaven! It is possible some who had converted from this idolatrous background did not let go of 100 percent of their past as their contemporaries did.

Acts 19:23-34 (KJV) 23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. 26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. 30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. 34 But when they

knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

Three other significant things concerning Paul and the Church at Ephesus:

1. **Ministry of Timothy.** Paul assigned his most trusted Protégé, Timothy to oversee the congregations in the city and gave him detailed instructions of how local assemblies and city Churches ought to operate including qualifications for placing people in formal leadership and general life of saints (See First and Second Epistles to Timothy). To understand the quality of grace in Timothy, let us see the testimony of Paul concerning him:

Philippians 2:19-23 (KJV) 19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. 20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. 22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. 23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

2. The Epistle to the Ephesians is perhaps the single most detailed explanation of the Kingdom Church with these clear features:
 - 2.1. Knowledge of who saints are in Yeshua, Jesus and Who He is in them as individuals (See Ephesians Chapters 1 & 2)!
 - 2.2. The Church imagery of saints who collectively are the House of Elohim and Body of Yeshua was expounded in Ephesians 2:18-20 and Ephesians 5:21-33.

- 2.3. It is also in that epistle Paul shows how intrinsic Unity is wired into the fabric of the Church (Ephesians 4:1-6).
- 2.4. He then makes a case that all saints are gifted to function as an organic whole by what every joint supplies (Ephesians 4:7-16).
- 2.5. In that same epistle, Paul articulates in utterance granted by Holy Spirit the truth that the Church of Yeshua is to be led by the fivefold of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers who work together to transition the saints from mere believers into the Royal Priesthood. (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- 2.6. It is also in this Epistle Paul gave a detailed treatise on spiritual warfare and how saints are to win through employment of the right spiritual tools (Ephesians 6:10-18).

First warning to the Church at Ephesus was by Paul

One day, our knowledge will be perfected. But for now, we can rely on the Truth of the Scriptures, rightly divided to gain an insight into the walk of saints of old with the Lord in order to guard against similar snares of the enemy. On his journey back to Jerusalem, Paul sent for elders of the Church at Ephesus to meet him in Miletus. Here is what the faithful soldier of the Cross told them which really paves the way for us to understand the significance of what Yeshua had to say to that same Church about a generation (40 years or so) later:

Acts 20:17-31, 35 (KJV) 17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed

you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

If you took careful note, the warning in verses 28-31 shows us the key to what happened to the Church in later years:

- i. The leaders had evidently failed to ‘take heed’ or be careful with the enormous responsibility of exercising oversight of the

- saints. Evidently, they may have been distracted from making the main thing of feeding the sheep, the main thing! This is often the case when love of money; prominence, or power interjects and sweeps eyes of leaders off the top priority!
- ii. Grievous wolves ravaged the flock. Perhaps, we assume, in the bid to hear exotic teachings, they opened the door to errors and apostasies by popular preachers of the day who had fallen out of faith.
 - iii. Within them, men arose teaching perverse doctrines designed to draw the hearts of saints away from Yeshua, Jesus and unto themselves. In other words, desire of leaders to draw devotees after themselves led to a state where saints were not built on Yeshua!
 - iv. Both leaders and saints failed to watch over their lives and that of the congregation! It was Yeshua, Jesus Himself Who admonished the Church to watch and pray as a Kingdom lifestyle. When saints refuse to watch, they may be unable to see spots and wrinkles as they come up until it is too late! Good or evil lifestyle starts with a thought which leads to actions. When 'regularized', actions lead to habits and when fully formed, habits become a lifestyle. When sin becomes a lifestyle, heaven nor the earth realm can help a saint whose ways are so formed!
 - v. There is an often-ignored key concerning the potential role of disunity and schisms in the fall of the Church at Ephesus.

Further, fruit of the ministry of Paul in Ephesus was recorded in Acts 18:24-28. It was here, Aquila and Priscilla companions of Paul mentored Apollos from the state of ignorance to become empowered with truth of the New Covenant. Apollos went on to become one of the great preachers in the Alpha Church so much so many compared him with Peter and Paul (1 Corinthians 1:11-13; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; 21-23; 1 Corinthians 4:6-7). For one who was not part of the Upper Room experience and was not personally called dramatically by Yeshua like Paul, it was no mean feat! Looking back, it is not clear that the people heeded the warnings of Paul concerning schisms and choosing which leaders they wanted to identify with!

The Ministry of John at Ephesus and resistance from within

It is believed that shortly before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70, John the Beloved relocated to Ephesus. It was from here he wrote some of the glorious epistles which emphasized love of Elohim and brethren as the twin pillars of Kingdom life. In other words, apart from Paul and Timothy the Church at Ephesus also had the privilege of receiving cutting edge ministry from John the Beloved!

But something John wrote in two verses of one of his epistles offers a clue about something that had begun to take root, even while he was alive:

3 John 1:9-10 (KJV) 9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and

forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

The name Diotrephes means 'nourished by Jupiter' (or Zeus). Most Gentiles in the Alpha Church had a good habit of changing their pagan names to reflect their new identity, but Diotrephes retained his. Nobody knows how much Diotrephes was influenced by the pagan culture of Ephesus, but he had somehow climbed up the ladder of leadership in the City Church and was in a position to commit these sins:

1. He loved pre-eminence or strove for exaltation. This was a function of pride and self-exaltation.
2. He did not receive the authority and person of Apostle John. By resisting a legitimate authority, Diotrephes set himself as an illegitimate authority with an agenda.
3. He spoke evil and malicious words against Apostle John. To malign and lie against the man Yeshua approved of while in His Incarnate state and while in His exalted state reveals a depth of depravity!
4. He was not hospitable and did not receive brethren who came visiting. This was clearly contrary to the principles of Kingdom leadership which require leaders to be hospitable.
5. He misused his authority to discipline saints who were hospitable and even excommunicated them!

Evidently, Diotrephes had forsaken the Kingdom concept of servant-hood in ministry and had followed the way of the Nicolaitanes! These were believed to be followers of Nicholas of Antioch, one of the men ordained as Deacon in the Jerusalem Church (Acts 6:5). This man was a pagan who converted to Judaism, may be as the in thing. From Judaism, he converted to be a follower of Jesus. It is within the realm of possibility he was an unstable man who began to devise ways to turn what was supposed to be pure worship and service into something else! A school of thought credits Nicholas with fostering two great evils in the early Church:

- Emergence of a professional clergy in exalted positions which 'ruled', rather than served the people regarded as a conquered 'laity'
- Compromise of the True faith in Yeshua (which produces holy, consecrated living free of evil) by inter-mingling it with occult rites and belief systems. The result of this mixture is a weak faith which could only unravel with time!

Please follow this link for a beautiful exposition of some of these issues: <http://www.lightsource.com/ministry/refuel-with-rick/articles/who-were-the-nicolaitans-and-what-was-their-doctrine-and-deeds--14510.html>

The reason why the Lord has given us this extensive background is to enable us to grasp how even a little leaven of sin – whether in thoughts, words, or deed – which are known or secret - can, if not repented of and decisively dealt with by Blood of the Lamb create bigger problems over a period of time and evil potentially lead to loss of eternal life.

Hosea 7:8-9 (KJV) 8 Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned. 9 Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 (KJV) 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

By sharing these truths with us, the Lord is revealing His awesome love. He wants to prepare us to occupy effectively by His grace and be properly prepared for return of our King! While we are alive, the wisest thing to do is use this glorious

opportunity to seek divine insight into how we are rated by heaven, not humans and make course corrections!

Psalm 139:23-24 (KJV) 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Assignment:

(1). Please share with us, as briefly as you can yet with clarity at least 5 main things you learnt from this chapter.

Chapter 5 The Audit Report by Yeshua on Ephesus

About AD 95 when Yeshua appeared to John (about 40-42 years after emergence of the City Church at Ephesus), here was His assessment of the same Kingdom community:

Revelation 2:1-7 (KJV) 1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7 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.

Dissecting the Audit Report by Yeshua concerning the Church at Ephesus

Revelation 2:1 (KJV) 1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Commentary:

- 1.1. Yeshua wrote to the Angel of the Church concerning its spiritual state. Yeshua introduced Himself as He Who holds the Seven stars (Pastors/Overseers of the Seven

churches) in His right hand. It shows the degree to which He holds those He entrusts leadership in the Church accountable for their mandates. Yeshua is concerned they be diligent and not careless. He Himself is the Spring and fountain of ALL Authority as Head of the Church.

Colossians 1:17-19 (KJV) 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

In the earth realm, He entrusts responsibilities as it pleases Him for those appointed to be vision holders in various Kingdom assignments or under-shepherds to the flock. He charges all those in leadership to emulate Him as the Good Shepherd rather than hirelings who do not care for well-being of the flock.

John 10:10-13 (KJV) 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

Acts 20:28 (KJV) 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

1 Peter 5:1-4 (KJV) 1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is

among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

In a world where rebellion is standard fare, it is also needful to note He Who holds leaders in His hands can sustain or condemn them all alone. In this process, He needs help from no one else!

1.2. Yeshua also introduced Himself as He Who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (the seven Churches).

The imagery of walking in the midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks shows His active presence in His Church. In ritual based Christian Religion <including the Pentecostal and Evangelical variety as well as Orthodoxy generally> this Truth is not often appreciated and practiced. The end result is Church officials and folks expend so much resources and exert so much energies in liturgies, lightings, sounds/music to, as it were, 'conjure the Divine Presence'. The sure word of the Lord is the Divine Presence is not to be conjured but is automatically activated when a simple principle of unity is effected:

Matthew 18:20 (KJV) 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

The Commendation First

Revelation 2:2-3 (KJV) 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Commentary: He started by commending them: Yeshua first commended The Church at Ephesus for some great qualities. He noted they were still active on several fronts:

- They laboured – they gave the work of ministry attention.
- They were patient – they were not rash in decisions but had grace to wait for right times.
- They had low tolerance for evil people – this is a commendable virtue any day.
- They exercised the capacity to discern false apostles – in a generation of many self-made apostles who sought to prey on the flock, this virtue was certainly commendable.
- They were full of forbearance – it is a good thing to be able to bear with difficult people for a long time.
- They did not faint in doing these good deeds!
- They laboured ceaselessly with much activity for His Name sake.

Revelation 2:4 (KJV) 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Commentary: In spite of all the commendation, the Church at Ephesus fell flat on the most needful quality in the New Covenant: Love of Elohim! But let us take special note of the core of His charge: They left their First Love. They had the degree of love that was required before but had given activities and rituals so much space to displace that central quality! In other words, the Church at Ephesus in simple language had backslidden from the core purpose of the elect of Elohim of all ages: Supreme love!

Matthew 22:35-40 (KJV) 35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with thy entire mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the

second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

By commenting on their 'Love deficiency', Yeshua was drawing attention to the reality the New Covenant was one of Relationship between Divinity and Humanity restored on the basis of His Incarnation, Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Love is the true basis and outcome of healthy relationship between mortal humans and an Immortal, Invisible Elohim Who first loved us by the awesome sacrifice of Yeshua, Jesus as a Sin offering at Calvary!

John 3:16-17 (KJV) 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (KJV) 21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

1 John 4:18-19 (KJV) 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us.

In effect, Elohim has done all the heavy lifting of paying the price to restore us to Himself! He withheld nothing of value in the process but rather invested all that was of value to Him: Yeshua in-order to restore us back as members of His family!

Intent on taking this model dynamic Church at Ephesus down the slope of backsliding, Satan went for the jugular: Attacked the very basis of their being in existence, which is to love Elohim with 100 percent of their heart! Elohim does not ask for anything less than 100 percent of the heart from those who would be in relationship with Him. The reason is any percentage of the heart withheld from Him would automatically be occupied by Satan or the Idol called Self!

When any degree of Self occupies a portion of the heart, it will create space for forbidden idols to gain entry. Those idols include:

- **Pre-eminence of Self Interest** which tries to use Elohim to obtain what it wants. Today, it is rare to see saints who place Elohim above self, family, and business interests! In this generation, Spirit-filled saints have been deceived into believing Elohim is wrong to demand priority above all else. Saints have been lured to think these scriptures are not real but allegorical:

Matthew 10:34-39 (KJV) 34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

For the sake of pleasing their spouses, parents, children, and friends, Spirit-filled saints are making choices and taking actions which clearly push Elohim down their priority ladder and comfort themselves that 'it does not matter'. This trend towards Self Idolatry has been fostered by years of Secular Humanism taught as truth in 'Family Life' and 'Marriage' conferences by popular speakers whose connections with the Throne of Grace is not verified. We are to love our spouses, family, and other people on the basis of our Love of Elohim. Any love of humans which is not derived from this foundation is suspect and may not count as real in the courts of heaven! How many saints venture out of their homes to chase business

prospects not from Elohim but which ambition has constructed? How many ministers and ministries today are building what the King of Kings clearly does not want, contrary to His express pattern and yet do not bat an eye lid? How can ministers and ministries claim Holy Spirit leading to preach, teach, and do things which clearly are contrary to what Yeshua instructed? The Word is clear Holy Spirit is not in the business of contradicting Yeshua, Jesus but rather affirming Him.

John 16:13 (KJV) 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

- **Love of the World**

Saints, we must beware of the spirit of the world which impacts negatively on our love for Yeshua. Once love of the world secures a beach head in the heart, the love of the Father departs. In the New Covenant, it is clearly stated saints need to be separated from the influence of the spirit which rules the world! Of that ruler-ship, we are told in clear language its chief tool is to gain access through Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the Eyes, and Pride of Life:

1 John 2:15-17 (KJV) 15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Popular preachers and ‘successful’ ministries have not only shunned these principles but have actually allowed carnality to be the central driving force of ‘kingdom’ life!

The crises of artificiality

One of the sad realities of modern-day life is the crises of fakery, arising from the need to project images of power, strength, and beauty. This has led many saints on a wild goose chase of artificiality. Both in terms of massive investments to make the physical body appear to be what it is not really (wrong paradigm of cosmetics) or using exterior features to hide internal realities in the spirit-man or hide wounded souls under the veneer of charismatic gifts, the outcome is the same: Saints are misled to make the minor major and the major, minor! The first victim in this process happens to be the very quality that is so needed: Supreme love of Yahweh which is the only true evidence of a vibrant relationship with Him!

Here is the crunch: Yahweh gave His all – Yeshua so through Him, we may be redeemed from the hands of enemies including Satan, Sin, The World, and Flesh or Self-nature. We are love breeds whose primary assignment, above all else is to manifest the massive love of Yahweh received in Yeshua by the work of Ruach ha Chodesh, Holy Spirit! We are to love Him above all else in heaven and on earth! We are to love to the dimension even if pouring out our very lives, sealing same in martyrdom or by imprisonment are instruments of activating strategic Kingdom Purpose or bring glory to Him, we should do so without batting an eyelid.

Mark 12:30 (KJV) 30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

Yeshua affirmed to the Scribe our love for Yahweh must be total: Spirit (heart); soul (mind, will, and emotions); and Strength (Body). This is love on all dimensions of our being. It is one that does not withhold anything from our heavenly Father. It is one that seeks first His Kingdom and His righteousness above any and every need (Matthew 6:19-34). It is one that is in spite of not because of. It is one which makes investment in the Great Commission a basic part of our lives as His saints in the earth realm. Our love for our Elohim is to

be without any pre-condition of what He gives us or does for us. The disposition of the saint who will love Him as prescribed is simple: He has already loved us with all He is and has by the propitiatory work of Yeshua on the Cross of Calvary. He first loved us, that is! Such love leads us to trust Him and His providence as a Good Father Who will take care of us beyond what we can imagine or do for ourselves!

1 John 4:19 (KJV) 19 We love him, because he first loved us.

Revelation 1:5 (KJV) 5 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,

Ephesians 3:20 (KJV) 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Danger of the Utilitarian Gospel

The modern-day Church is wired after Ephesus in the sense that popular preachers shout themselves hoarse on Television and Pulpits selling a deceptively packaged poison: the utilitarian gospel. The utilitarian gospel is one in which Elohim is presented as One who exists to service the needs of His children! In other words, Christians are the reason why He exists. This is not so obvious on the surface but when you analyse the messages that draw the crowds it is nothing more than this: 'come to our service/ministry so God will bless you through us alone'. The utilitarian gospel presents the anointing of Holy Spirit and the blessings the Father bestows as the motivation for people to 'come to church'. To suggest, even remotely, that Elohim exists to service our needs and make humans happy is simply IDOLATRY 101. In plain language and exact opposite of true worship:

Revelation 4:11 (KJV) 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

In some places, no one is preaching the type of true conversion that comes by conviction of sins, repentance, and change of heart that arises from embrace of Yeshua, Jesus. Some denominations have thrown the preaching of the Cross out of the window, claiming it is archaic and outdated. To reject holiness is to reject the love of Yahweh, period!

1 Corinthians 1:18 (KJV) 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

The Ephesian complex is thus fostered from ground zero as a foundational pillar of modern-day churching. It happens to offer the opposite of the true Gospel of the Kingdom as preached by Yeshua. In the gospel, He preached, people were challenged to pay the price for embracing discipleship! In Matthew 16:24-26, He required those who desired to be disciples to deny themselves, take up their crosses, die thereon so they can live His life, not theirs!

Matthew 16:24-26 (KJV) 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Galatians 2:20 (KJV) 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The reality that many people are thus sedated with smooth talking rhetoric that is presented as preaching and teaching to travel on the Broad way to hell cannot be lost on anyone who truly has discernment. In such environments, people marry and are given in marriage, changing partners as Kleenex; not battling an eye-lid. Ministers and workers shack

up (live together without marriage) as a lifestyle. No one preaches sin because it will ruffle feathers. Altars calls are for people to 'sow seeds' and receive 'the blessings'. This corruption of the gospel of Yeshua is sickening! Many who started well with total consecration are looking back, like Lot's wife to life in the flesh and justifying it with platitudes of what they will 'do for God'

Galatians 2:18 (KJV) 18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Consequences of loss of First Love

Loss of first love is evidenced in lack of passion for spiritual things and inability to see things from the perspective of the King. It also manifests as indifference and coldness towards the Great Commission and fate of sinners. It shows in distaste or boredom with Study of the Word; poor or self-centered prayer life and lack of passion and focus on the Kingdom! When loss of first love sets in, congregations tend towards multiplied activities to compensate for the emptiness in the heart. It is worse when such activities are done to foster growth of ABC <Attendance, Buildings, Cash>. To pray, fast, and do various programmes without love of Elohim as motivation simply leads to dead religion of rituals and forms!

The Church at Ephesus was truly active, doctrinally sound, and had many great things going for it as the previous chapter showed. It was evidently a Church that loved Yahweh and one another at a time but had allowed other pursuits to overtake it. The loss of its first love was a fatal flaw! Because love is so critical to the true spiritual health and worth of a Church, it is necessary we dwell on the subject matter and allow Him to baptize us afresh with the holy flame that ignites true love! From the cold testimony of history, the Church at Ephesus missed a golden opportunity to respond sincerely to the warning of Paul in Acts 20 concerning those who were afflicting them with strange fire of false doctrines. When Yeshua appeared 40 years later warning them to repent or be cast away, they did not take decisive, enduring action.

The result is the Church at Ephesus is now a footnote of history! That region was overrun by Islam and is now part of Turkey. The Candlestick was removed! Those who teach saints eternal security' and hyper grace are packaging them for the same fate. But this teaching note goes forth with a prayer from the heart: That all those who are appointed to ultimate salvation may be prickled in their consciences, do a reality check, and re-cover supreme love of Elohim. Please do not just read: Give this message space to challenge you to give Holy Spirit space to do His Work!

Assignment:

(1). Please share with us, as briefly as you can yet with clarity at least 5 main things you learnt from this chapter.

Chapter 6 The Audit Report by Yeshua on the Church at Ephesus Part 2

As shared in the previous chapters, the Church at Ephesus is believed to have been activated about AD 53. About AD 95 when Yeshua came to Audit its affairs in His capacity as Inspector-General, its beautiful report card was soiled by one entry: Loss of First Love. Within one generation here was His assessment of the same Kingdom community:

Revelation 2:4-5 (KJV) 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Though active physically and socially, they lost the central operating system of the Church which is primal love of Yahweh above all else based on intimate relationship with Yeshua, the Head.

Proof of Love of Yeshua: Obedience

More often than not, saints tend to forget Yeshua is more than a Saviour. He is King Who desires to rule as Sovereign over the hearts of the redeemed. Submitting to His Sovereignty out of loving trust in His goodness is a state of heart He desires from all who are called by His Name!

John 15:10, 14-15 (KJV) 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

In the Divine economy, this tendency fosters intimacy with Yeshua, just like His Own willful submission to the Father was greatly celebrated in the courts of Heaven.

Matthew 17:5 (KJV) 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Heaven has not much value for those who loudly express their love for Elohim but do not walk the walk, making hollow such claims:

Isaiah 29:13 (KJV) 13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Mark 7:6 (KJV) 6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Why Love? Because it is basis of sustainable relationship with Yahweh! The reason why Love was elevated in His Discourse is it is the key ingredient of true relationships. Elohim wants relationship with us, not our physical exertions in His Name! When we are invested in relationship with Him, we can truly enjoy His Fatherhood and take our place as members of His family in the earth realm. Proof of Love: Obedience of His commandments to love fellow humans

If saints claim to love Elohim, a spiritual, imperative snaps open: To love fellow saints and all humans created in His image for that matter! The Apostle John whose ministry was operated from Ephesus wrote extensively on the subject matter. Based on the extensive teaching He conducted on the subject matter, we can discern the Church at Ephesus may have initially been an embodiment of loving relationships between brethren but lost same at some point:

1 John 5:1 (KJV) 1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

1 John 2:10 (KJV) 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

1 John 3:10 (KJV) 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

Verse 14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

1 John 4:8 (KJV) 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

1 John 4:18-20 (KJV) 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

1 John 4:21 (KJV) 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

John was not caught up in a flight of fancy and idealism! He was simply echoing the Voice of His beloved Master and Friend, Yeshua, Jesus! It was Yeshua Himself Who referenced Love of humans as one sure proof of sustainable love of Himself. In detailing the Laws of the New Covenant which were to govern how saints should live in the earth realm, He placed an irreplaceable standard: Love!

John 13:34-35 (KJV) 34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Unity, which is a basic requirement for manifestation of individual saints as His corporate Body in the earth realm is impossible without love! Love is the unseen cord which binds saints together with Yeshua as Head and each other as parts of His organic Body! Let us take note of the quality of Love He spoke of in order to appreciate how the mighty Ephesians Church scored so poorly:

- Saints are to love one another, just as He loved us! This dimension meant true love should of necessity be SELFLESS! Selfishness and self-driven motives will always corrupt love and turn it into a tool of carnality.
- When saints are connected, and functioning as loving relatives who collectively manifest the nature of their King, the world around (which lives by the opposite paradigm of self-centeredness and hate) cannot but take note that Divinity is manifested! The reason is not farfetched: Elohim is Love manifested as 1 John 4:8 declares.

This is why Yeshua insisted Love by brethren will be proof of relationship with Him:

John 15:12-14 (KJV) 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

It is a sign of the times that many preachers and brethren find every excuse under the sun to take away the centrality of Love as the Core of Kingdom Life. A careful examination of 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 reveals clearly no matter what any group of saints or individuals achieve or are busy with, if they fail on the benchmark of Love/Charity, they have lost the true essence of why the Church is birthed in the earth realm.

Speaking of love, no saint is permitted to get into a victim mentality/attitude and demand to be loved or judge others for

not loving them enough. True love pours out and does not demand.

Acts 20:35 (KJV) 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Saints are encouraged to sow what they desire to reap: Love! This involves giving from a pure heart; sharing and making the well-being of others take precedence over ours. There is no limit to what can happen when saints place others first – as a lifestyle. This involves both saints as well as sinners as Paul exhorts.

Galatians 6:7-10 (KJV) 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Strangely, one of the sure signs of pride as a stronghold in the soul is inability or unwillingness to receive from brethren. The Kingdom Church is a living, loving organism which is sustained by what every joint supplies (Ephesians 4:13-16; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-33).

In the bid to undertake so many activities, it appears the Church at Ephesus allowed this Core of Kingdom Life to slip through the cracks. Ministry activities became mechanical, done without heart for Elohim and saints. It is also conceivable the Church may have looked inwards and followed the path of the Jerusalem Church. In the process, maintenance culture may have set where managing those inside took eyes off the congregation, one vital essence for why the Church was left to occupy in the earth realm: reconcile sinners to the Master, just as He prayed the Father. As we continue to be watchful and

prayerful, we must also avoid the trap of forgetting there are many lost souls assigned to our names as the bridges they are appointed to climb to re-connect with the Father! Let love of those appointed for salvation drive us to go forth everywhere, preaching the glorious gospel of Yeshua, Jesus and the Kingdom! After all, the Gospel is still 'Go Ye', not 'Come Here'!

Without Love, Churching is about gathering, not Fellowship!

Consciences of church goers get seared as Holy Spirit is absent from hearts that are impervious to His convictions. 'Ichabod' is masked by television ratings and surging crowds. In the midst of such crowds, saints are individuals, on their own. The exhortation is for saints to connect to the 'Church' and to the 'anointed set man'. There is no serious attempt to make saints connect effectively with Yeshua the Ultimate Head and with each other and bear one another's burdens. The Ephesian complex is thus fostered when church and churching is no more than gathering together of saints to 'receive the blessing' and never to make them distributors of blessings. Rather than fellowship and become organically united by love, people gather as individuals with their separate agendas. No one cares for others in the same church. Some have enough for three or four generations to come and in the same places some have no idea where the next meal will come from, how and when. Some have the latest dresses they will wear only once in order to maintain their images as successful and 'current' people while others scrap by with only five thread bare clothes all year long. At the end of services long into the night, some Christians enter their expensive cars and ride home alone while the vulnerable including single sisters, the sick and senior citizens hang out at bus stops exposed to potential abuses and assaults.

In so doing, the second most important commandment which Yeshua endorsed is broken with impunity.

Mark 12:31 (KJV) 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Well did Paul the Apostle issue the strong words of the centrality of Love/Charity in 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 13 (KJV) 1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Practical dimensions of love

To escape the snare of the Ephesian complex, we need to walk in the truth that Love is not just a core operating system of the Kingdom Church, but it is also practical! It is the poured-out life lived for the benefit of others, not self. When this hallmark of the redeemed life is returned as basis of all we do as Kingdom Citizens and Ambassadors, all men shall know we are His disciples and they shall bow!

John 13:34-35 (KJV) 34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

By the Spirit, Paul ties walking in love with the nature and lifestyle of our Elohim and Father.

Ephesians 5:1-2 (KJV) 1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

To escape the condemnation that awaited the active but loveless Church of Ephesus, saints are to take heed to the instructions and message of our King Yeshua. This is truly serious!

Matthew 25:31-46 (KJV) 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer

him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Responsibility of Love on the ‘First World’ Church

The Church in the so called First world must realize and walk in the truth that it has an obligation in Yeshua to support the Church in the so-called Third world to pass through the storms of life and have basic provisions to sustain life. This must be done in love as unto the King, not to man and requires a paradigm shift to understand this responsibility is a holy one which is committed to individuals, families, ministries, and congregations that can show love beyond borders as admonished by the Reformation, Restoration, and Revival Movement. We are not speaking of supporting the scam artists who use fake videos and photographs to make claims of what they are doing and therefore soliciting support on Facebook and other social media. There are rather faithful men and women serving Yahweh in ministry across the world who could do with a little help from their brethren in advanced countries, as led by Holy Spirit, not emotions.

Saints, let us love indeed, not utter mere plastic, empty words! Let us love even the seemingly ‘unlovable’. Let us bless those who curse, abuse, speak evil of us and those who try to take advantage of our love. Let us determine to be a blessing to those who do not ‘deserve’ it – for the sake of Yeshua! Let us love those who choose to be the thorn in our side who try to provoke us and espy our liberty. Their very presence is an invitation to draw strength from Yeshua by tapping into His Grace to overcome their negativities and let our love ultimately cover the multitude of their sins.

The Call to Repentance

Let these words spoken by Yeshua to the Church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:5 spur us to open the page of love and live there from!

Verse 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Commentary: It is exciting to note Yeshua did not throw away the Church at Ephesus, despite the significant failure of its core essence! He rather called for repentance. He called on the saints to return to their first works of passionate love for Yahweh and each other. Then He added the rider: Those who refuse to build all other Kingdom activities on Love are on their own and risk permanent falling away! One thing even the hard hearted and chronic sinners cannot argue against is to see saints aflame with the genuine love of Yeshua, Jesus in their hearts and their conduct. This may be what will dislodge their resistance! Let us just love! Let us wait on the King with just one request: That Yahweh will kindle the fire of His love in His saints once again!

Final Word on Love

There are three sides of Love we need to consider in order to appreciate why no one has any excuse to live a loveless life:

- i. True Love is a Fruit of the Spirit!

Galatians 5:22 (KJV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

A loving heart is evidence Holy Spirit is at work within our spirit-man using space and scope given to express the Divine nature and attitude towards blessing and empowerment of other people

Philippians 2:13 (KJV) 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

- ii. Love is also a choice! In all situations – including dealing with difficult people – there is a clear choice to

look beyond their bad attitudes, speech and actions to still love them and be a blessing. Though Holy Spirit will prompt us in this direction, He will not force us to let Him show up through our vessels. He requires us to say yes and cooperate with Him to love the unlovable, just as Yeshua demanded at the Sermon on the Mount!

iii. It is the Bond of Perfection. When love is at work, we do not focus on and cling to shortcomings of others!

Philippians 2:12 (KJV) 12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Colossians 3:14 (KJV) 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

1 Peter 4:8 (KJV) 8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Please note, instructions to love are not suggestions of humans but rather Constitutional Provisions decreed by King Yeshua (Matthew 5:38-48). Yet, we must live in Discernment of who to walk closely with!

It is necessary to also point out Elohim has also asked us to be discerning of people who try to come into our lives, starting with observance of fruit of their lifestyle and how much of the Kingdom is their core priority! He did not say to leaders He set in the Church that in the Name of Love, they should give everyone access to the spirit, soul, and body of themselves or the Flock. He has not asked leaders to treat the Pulpit as an 'open wall'! On the other hand, He demonstrated Kingdom leaders need to discern to what degree He allows certain people to walk in alignment with them. This way, we will know who merits being a confidant like John was to Yeshua, Jesus; who has been ordained to be in our Innermost Circle like Peter, James, and John were to Him; who is ordained to be in the Inner Circle like the 12 Apostles; who will do Kingdom work on another level like the 70 of Luke 10:1 or the 120 who

will be faithful to wait for instructions before proceeding on assignments unlike the 380 who would defile instructions. In other words, leaders should love all saints but be sensitive to discern from Holy Spirit who has been appointed to do what in the ministries committed to their trust. Ultimately, as Apostle Vance observed, it is saints who are faithful, available, and teachable that will walk in alignment for the long haul!

Another Commendation

Revelation 2:6 (KJV) 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

Commentary: Yeshua commended the Ephesian Church for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. In a previous chapter, we shared how a School of Thought credits Nicholas of Antioch who was one of the Deacons in Acts 6 as driving force of this movement which created an Episcopal/ecclesiastical order of Clergy to rule over the saints. Don Esposito of the Hebraic Roots Bible says the word Nicolaitanes is drawn from two words: ‘Nico’ which means ‘conqueror’ and ‘Laitan’ which means the ‘common people’. He then deduces the word Nicolaitans means a controlling, hierarchical structure over the people. This spirit is prevalent in both main line Protestant denominations which ‘owns’ their members; as well as independent Pentecostal and Charismatic ministries where ‘founders’ of ministries ‘own’ the saints and glibly call them ‘my members’

According to another commentator, ‘the Nicolaitanes were believers who compromised their faith in order to enjoy some of the sinful practices of Ephesian society. The name Nicolaitans is held by some to be roughly equivalent to the Hebrew word for “Balaamites”. Balaam was a prophet who induced the Israelites to carry out their lustful desires (See Revelation 2:14 and Numbers 31:16). Let it be considered for sure Yeshua HATES all dimensions of life of the Nicolaitanes! He wanted none of their compromising, worldly themed religious order which made leaders too important to serve the flock but rather demanded service from them! Yeshua

commended the Ephesian Church for hating what He hated! As saints, we are to love people but hate their evil deeds. It is the rejection of evil behaviour that drives saints to intercede and take action to save as many as can be saved. This was indeed a very balanced message!

Yeshua alone died for saints and they who are His. Leaders should point saints to Yeshua and encourage them to recognize the voice of their King and thus make life decisions by leading of Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:14 (KJV) 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

A syndrome of saints depending on leaders before knowing what to do in their personal walk of intimacy with Yahweh is very dangerous. Let us also take note saints are to be separate from the world and be holy unto Yeshua our redeemer. It is from our strength in Him we are to engage with the World as His Salt and Light. We are not to be like the world in order to affect sinners. It is in our being like Yeshua as sons of Elohim we can truly impact those who are outside the Commonwealth.

Verse 7 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.

Commentary: The promise made to overcomers is exciting: Access to the tree of life is guaranteed in Paradise (See Genesis 2:9). This is a powerful motivation that should drive saints to forgive those who offend; love the unlovable and seek ways and means to be a blessing to all. Overall, Yeshua was giving the Church at Ephesus a Second Chance to get it right. He who is alive at any given time has a glorious opportunity to make right any deficiency of love as a Kingdom Lifestyle! Unfortunately, there is no record the Church at Ephesus got it right in a sustainable way!

Assignment:

(1). Please share with us your summary of this chapter. What is the core message you received?

Chapter 7 The Seemingly Poor but Truly Rich Church of Smyrna

After addressing the Overseer and the Church in Ephesus, Yeshua Ha Mashiach, Jesus the Messiah turned His attention to the Church at Smyrna. Smyrna was in the proximity of Ephesus, barely 25 miles up north. Because of its good harbour on the Aegean Sea, some commentators called it the 'Port of Asia'. As we shall see in this exposition, the Church at Smyrna faced a different set of challenges from the Church at Ephesus. Yet the requirement for faithfulness to Yeshua, its head, was the same.

The Audit Report on Smyrna by Yeshua, the Inspector-General

Revelation 2:8-11 (KJV) 8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11 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.

Forensic Analysis of the Audit Report

As we will see, Yeshua used 4 verses to convey to the Church at Smyrna, outcome of His Audit on its affairs. By comparison, that of Ephesus took 7 verses.

Revelation 2: Verse 8

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write;
These things saith the first and the last, which was
dead, and is alive;

Commentary:

- Again, Yeshua wrote to the angel of the Church – the human minister who was given the privilege of oversight. That reinforces the truth that heaven has an exceedingly high esteem of vision holders and legitimate authorities <leaders He placed in office, not self-made ones>. To strive against a visionary in that which he or she received from above is therefore a dangerous practice. On the other hand, for visionaries to hold what is entrusted to them carelessly is to potentially risk eternal damnation.
- Yeshua also continued the practice of introducing Himself. He described Himself as the First (Alpha) and Last (Omega). That title establishes His Divinity and was understood as so by those He wrote to. Yeshua was no Prophet as Moses and the others were. He was no Servant as humans are. He was the incarnation of Elohim Who came to pay the sacrifice no human or animal could pay to redeem humanity from the foundational sin of Adam and Eve.

Yeshua also described Himself as He who was dead and is alive. The Divinity of Yeshua is also hinged on this very factor: Death could not hold Him captive! He arose to seal the deal of redemption! This truth scared Jewish religious leaders to no end and as a solution; they bribed Roman soldiers to claim His dead Body was stolen by His disciples! This was after they made carnal efforts to prevent the resurrection from happening in the first place.

Matthew 27:62-66 (KJV) 62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the

first. 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

Matthew 28:11-15 (KJV) 11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. 12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, 13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. 14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

That Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant is dead as well as all the Prophets and Kings, waiting for the day of resurrection puts Yeshua well above their pay grade and this truth unsettles all Judaizers who will have saints transfixed on Old Covenant rites and rituals. He arose from the dead for justification of all who believe. Not leaving anything to chance, He fellowshipped with His disciples in the resurrected Body, asked Thomas to touch the hands and sides that were pierced, ate food and drank with them (John 20:14-31; John 21:4-25). To make assurance doubly sure, knowing this was a critical pillar establishing His divinity, Yeshua allowed 500 to see Him in the post-resurrection state. Please read 1 Corinthians 15 entirely to understand the importance of this issue.

In Acts 1:9-11, Luke records the public bodily ascension of Yeshua in the glorified resurrected Body and the statement of the angels that He will return in like manner. Today, Yeshua is seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for us as High Priest of the Priestly Order of Melchizedeck and New Covenant, waiting for the day He will return to make all enemies His footstool, in fulfilment of Psalms 2. This mind-boggling revelation is one Judaizers of all types and those who

hate Him fight tooth and nail to negate. Unfortunately, they blow hot air for He Who is to come will surely come on the appointed day and time known only to the Father! Knowing the Divine identity of Yeshua brings great comfort. Knowing who we are in Him and Who He is in us brings real assurance, releasing in and through us the ability to face whatever storms come our way. He is our Life and our security! Knowing He will surely return one day fires in us the blessed expectation and inspires a lifestyle that is 24/7 ready for His return!

The Commendation - Verse 9

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Commentary: Yeshua states emphatically 'I know'. Let that phrase be burned into the consciousness of all saints because it changes the dynamics dramatically. In the midst of fire, many saints inadvertently open a door for the enemy by allowing their minds and emotions to run riot. He who is the Center and Circumference of our lives is emphatic that 'I know'. He Who says He will never leave or forsake us says, concerning what you are passing through: 'I know'. Saints, we need to come to a place of knowing He knows all we are passing through!

What did Yeshua know or see concerning the Church at Smyrna?

1. He knew their works. The way they lived (and by extension we) were naked before He Who we have to do with. Let no imagination confuse you. Yeshua knows our thoughts and our imagination; what we do in the secret and what we do in the open. He Who is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient knows the motives behind whatever we say or do.
2. He knew their tribulation. The saints in Smyrna were faced with a pincer attack by the enemy.

- 2.1. On the one hand, Judaizers and Jews who rejected Yeshua because of the veil of Moses were strongly opposed to their faith and new life in Him.
- 2.2. On the other hand, the Gentiles in the city who were loyal to Rome supported Emperor worship and persecuted them. The consequence was a life of tribulation.

The influence of Babylon on the end time organized Church is evident in the way Believers are programmed to hate adversity! Saints going through are sneered at by their brethren who live in compromise to avoid persecution. The true gospel of the Kingdom is guaranteed to cause offence to those who hate righteousness. They will always hate those who live right and preach righteousness and holiness! Yeshua was our Pathfinder of the rejection, suffering, and persecution which comes from just living right and preaching what is the Kingdom message! From the prophecies in Isaiah 53:1-12 to His own words and those of his disciples, suffering is guaranteed! It is significant to note, all the Apostles suffered greatly. Except John who lived to a ripe old age, all of the original 12 (except Judas of course) sealed their testimonies in Blood! Paul who was beheaded for his faith by Rome when he was generally believed to be in the mid-60's shared these immortal realities:

Acts 14:22 (KJV) 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

2 Timothy 3:10-12 (KJV) 10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

3. He knew their seeming Poverty. Because of the choices they made to embrace and live in and by Yeshua, the saints at Smyrna were denied some benefits of citizenship. It is believed some may have been ostracized by their neighbours and friends and thus denied opportunities for upward economic mobility. Unlike humans who counted these things as negative, Yeshua deemed their suffering for His sake a great asset.

Lesson: The Word is very clear concerning attitude of saints to the wealth and comforts of this world when they are offered in lieu of our faithfulness to Yeshua. If we truly love Him, we should be willing to go through poverty, lack, pain, and suffering for His testimony. Those who do so have the promise of true wealth from above in this world and in the world to come (Matthew 6:33).

Matthew 19:27-29 (KJV) 27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? 28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

If the worst came to the worst and saints do not 'enjoy' the good of this world but rather suffer for His Name, the assurance of eternal wealth is a glorious and secure one.

2 Timothy 2:12 (KJV) 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

4. Yeshua also knew the blasphemy of those who claim to be Jews but were not. From a spiritual point of view, true Jews receive and celebrate Yeshua. Since Jerusalem was restored as Capital of Israel in 1967, it

is estimated more Jews have embraced Yeshua as the Mashiach than all the years since Calvary combined. This is because the timing is right as the end of the age received an impetus with miraculous establishment of Israel as a homeland for the Jews in 1948. Since that flag event, Holy Spirit has found more space to do the work of exalting Yeshua before them. Some who do not know much about Him take the counsel of Gamaliel and leave Yahweh to prove if He is with them or not (Acts 5:33-40).

Those who are bitterly opposed to Yeshua, hate and persecute those who believe in Him clearly serve the purpose of Satan, whether they know it or not.

Revelation 2: Verse 10

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Commentary: In closing His exhortation to this remarkable Church in Smyrna, Yeshua gives some very important prophecies and words of exhortation. They are these:

1. Trouble was coming for which He gave advance notice but told them clearly 'Fear Not'. This is a reassuring word that should be planted deeply in our psyche as the nations of the world, including former bastions of Christianity, prepare to persecute saints who refuse to live by their unjust laws. Saints, trouble is coming!
2. Yeshua also alerted saints some would experience unjust imprisonment inspired by Satan, not Yahweh
3. Another tribulation is they would be tried and have tribulation for 10 days. The number 10 stood for a finite number or limited period of time. Here Yeshua was demonstrating one of the ways the Statute of Limitation works: Yahweh at times allows His saints to go through

certain situations but for a limited period. He undertakes to preserve His Own as they go through.

4. Yeshua made an unbeatable offer to the congregation at Smyrna and to all who will receive the same truth: Those who are faithful to death will receive the crown of life. Yeshua was saying though saints may suffer and even be killed because of their faith in Him, their eternal glorification is assured. To that end, ultimately, all things truly work together for good of those who are in Yeshua.

Verse 11

11 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.

Commentary: Yeshua never forced any one to take His words. He always gave His hearers the choice to exercise their will and power of choice the way they were persuaded. That is still the case today. Those who are able to hear should look beyond what they see with outward eyes and hear what Ruach Ha Chodesh is saying to the Church in the now. Secondly, Yeshua repeats the truth He had expressed before: Those who overcome shall escape eternal damnation which comes with the Second Death. Yeshua was by this note encouraging the saints to deem very highly the end of their Faith: Eternal bliss with Him in the hereafter. He was drawing their attention to the Blessed Hope of all saints in Him. Let us be reminded saints will not suffer the same faith as those who refuse to receive the Father's love in Him:

John 3:16-19 (KJV) 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the

only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Fate of Sinners

Babylon has tried to also intimidate saints from preaching about the eternal consequences of rejecting the love of Yahweh in Yeshua. The reality however is when they die, those who refuse His love will face punishment certain judgement and eternal damnation in the hereafter with no hope of remedy!

Revelation 20:14 (KJV) 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Revelation 21:8 (KJV) 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Revelation 21:27 (KJV) 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 22:15 (KJV) 15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Fate of the Righteous who overcame:

Saints who are in Yeshua however have the sure promise they will be resurrected before the Millennial Reign and never to die again or be separated from the Presence of Elohim. Let us see these clear promises for those who were redeemed and remained connected till the day of either physical death or the rapture of saints:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (KJV) 13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring

with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (KJV) 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Final Word and Applications

When saints do not read the Scriptures, they can clutch at errors and misinterpretation. There are many saints who repeat the clear lie that only one Church, Philadelphia, was found faithful when Yeshua assessed the Churches at Asia Minor. Considering the letters and intent of the Word, the

Church at Smyrna scored an A Grade with Yeshua! From a heavenly perspective, it was a rich Church! Because His value system differs from that of the world, Yeshua counts highly a relationship with Him that is grounded on faithfulness, even in the face of trouble.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (KJV) 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

If you are going through persecution, jeering, and torments for His Name sake; if you have faced situations where the enemy tried to intimidate you to renounce your identity in Him and compromise a little, please take time to reflect on how highly Yeshua deemed this Church which faced the billows of trouble but held on to Him! Finally, let us learn the virtue of resting in Him while He takes over the battles to which persecutors invite us:

2 Thessalonians 1:3-9 (KJV) 3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; 4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: 5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: 6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Assignment:

(1) Please outline the main things you have learnt from the message of Yeshua to the Church at Smyrna.

(2) Which (if any) of the points made in the chapter resonate with your heart as a personal message from the Lord to you?

Chapter 8 Letter #.3. To the Church at Pergamos

After addressing the faithful Church at Smyrna, Yeshua turned His attention to the Church at Pergamos. Let us get some background of this city as stated by a commentator: "The City of Pergamum was a highly advanced one as a center of Greek culture and Education. It even had a 200,000, volume library of various works. A natural fortress, Pergamum was built on a hill which stands about 1000 feet above its surrounding countryside. Unfortunately, it was also home to four major cults and rivalled Ephesus in idol worship. Their chief god was Asclepius, symbolised as a Serpent and regarded as the deity responsible for healing. The account goes on to say people came from all over the then known world to seek healing from this god.

The Audit Report on the Church at Pegamos by the Inspector General

In 6 verses of Scripture, Yeshua, Jesus laid out the audit report on the Church:

Revelation 2:12-17 (KJV) 12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 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.

Forensic Analysis of the Audit Report

As Holy Spirit provides illumination and as scripture is compared with Scripture, we will examine verse by verse what Yeshua had to say to the Church in this great city.

Revelation 2 Verse 12

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Commentary: As in previous Letters, Yeshua began with two signature remarks:

- i. He wrote to the angel of the Church. The case has been well established that He was not referring to angelic spirit beings who serve Elohim but rather to the vessels He committed oversight of the City Church.
- ii. An introduction of Himself so there would be no doubt of His authorship.

He then referred to Himself as the One with the ‘sharp sword with two edges’. A number of things can be drawn from this phrase. The first is Yeshua is the One that has the final responsibility for Authority and Judgement of inhabitants of the earth! This dual role is because by His incarnation, He obtained legal right to function on earth (Psalm 115:16); By His self-abnegation unto death, all power over all creation has been granted Him and all things created will bow to the authority of His Name (Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:5-11). The truth needs to be stated, all things were created through Him and for His pleasure. For this reason, all things on earth will be judged through just one major standard: The Person of Yeshua Ha Mashiach as Paul told the Athenians in Acts 17: 31.

As the Living Word, Yeshua is the frame of righteousness in the eyes of Yahweh. The sin of Israel and Judaizers as well

as that of the end time Gentile-themed Church is the tendency to neglect or forget this reality and attempt to employ self-effort and a host of rituals and religious activities to try to please Yahweh (Romans 10:1-21).

Verse 13

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

Commentary: This Church had a mixed bag of results in the Audit, some positive and some negative, just as the Church at Ephesus. Let us note He started the audit by stating unequivocally: 'I know thy works'. He Who is of purer eyes to behold iniquity; He Who is Omniscient and Omnipresent will never relent in reminding saints as individuals and congregations that everything in the earth realm: Thoughts, Words, Motives, Attitudes, and Deeds whether done in secret or in the open - are known to Him! The Church will certainly be a better place if saints live in the reality of this truth.

Positives

1. Yeshua recognized the Church dwelt amidst an evil operating environment. Its world - from which it was to be separate but not isolated - was thoroughly ungodly. He called it 'where Satan's seat is'. This is because Pergamos housed four major deities used by Satan to deceive the masses and control their lives away from His saving grace. The deities were Zeus, Dionysius, Asclepius, and Athene. In addition, Emperor worship was rife. This was certainly a harsh operating environment to be in.
2. This terrible environment notwithstanding, the saints at Pergamos stuck to public and private worship of Yahweh. They withstood terrible affliction and persecution and still stood strong.

3. He especially commended them for not cowering in fear when a faithful disciple, Antipas was martyred. That Yeshua could call out a translated, faithful saint out of multitudes by name is a testimonial of how much He is connected to His sheep! His relationship with those who are faithful is real and personal.

John 10:14-15 (KJV) 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

John 10:27 (KJV) 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Psalms 116:15 (KJV) 15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

Negatives

On the other side of His scorecard were some serious negative entries. Let us break them down as Holy Spirit leads us into deeper waters of the Word.

Verse 14-15

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

Commentary: While commending their positive quality of withstanding persecution and operating in a negative environment, Yeshua did not excuse their sins and errors! Saints, difficulties and problems cannot excuse sin and error. Saints are to be who they are and even more so in times of difficulty because the real nature of humans shows up in the midst of fire. If we truly met and are in Him, tough times will reveal the purity and strength of our walk. After commending them, Yeshua had these charges against the Church in Pergamum:

1. The Church tolerated some apostates and backsliders who held the doctrine of Balaam. In the days of Israel, Balaam, who was out of faith due to covetousness, gave Balak the secret of how to destroy Israel: Cause them to commit idolatry and he even induced them to immorality (Numbers 22,23,24 and Numbers 31:16 with 2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 1:11). These two sins destroy individual saints as well as congregations.

Today, major ministries have literally thrown open their assemblies to the spirit of lust. Whether through so-called liturgical dances with very suggestive moves and dresses which conceal little; whether lowering standards of marriage from Union to relationship of convenience that can be broken at whim; or opening saints to the Entertainment industry from where Hollywood (USA); Cannes (France); Nollywood (Nigeria) and Bollywood (India) have invaded Christian homes with pornographically themed 'entertainment', there is a sense in which the spirit which ruled Balaam is at work in this generation! In the end time Church purveyors of these same tendencies are everywhere. They include preachers and teachers of the pseudo-kingdom who encourage saints to go for all things on earth, no matter what compromises they make in the process; since, according to them, the end justify the means. So saints steal from their employers, do sharp business practices and all manner of malfeasance in order to 'make it' live well, pay big tithes and be honoured for 'sponsoring the gospel' with their filthy lucre. These also include hyper grace preachers and teachers who encourage saints to remain where they are spiritually – in the flesh of sinful living because 'Grace covered their sins past, present, and future'. That is truth which is distorted to encourage saints to be irresponsible, not even exercising basic discipline over the sinful impulses in their bodies. Hyper grace denies the truth in Romans 6:1-16 that people cannot live in sin and claim to be saints.

As in the Alpha Church period, there are today, those who teach saints whatever they do in their physical bodies are not imputed to them - including immorality - because their spirit-man is secure in redemption. This contradicts the clear truth.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (KJV) 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Ultimately, these purveyors of a dangerous twist of eternal security are also into the doctrine of and Balaam.

2. They also tolerated the preachments of Nicolaitanes which Yeshua hated with perfect hatred.

The central failure of doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is the corruption of the gospel from inside out. It re-defined leadership away from the Yeshua model of service to that of lordship over the flock. By so doing, leaders were placed in a dangerous pedestal of being alternates to Yeshua in terms of demanding submission from Blood-washed saints in an ungodly sense. In other words, Nicolaitanes do not point people to Yeshua but to themselves! They do not empower saints to know who they are in Yeshua and who He is in them but use their preaching skills to give followers milk of 'promises' so they get addicted to same and remain babes. In this, the words Holy Spirit released through the Book of Hebrews strikes a chord:

Hebrews 5:12-14 (KJV) 12 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. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full

age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

By so doing, denominations and their leaders capture the hearts and souls of Christians who grow into them as personal sons and daughters but not into Yeshua as sons of Elohim as prescribed in the Word! No wonder denominationalism and party spirit thrives in the Christian community with saints finding it difficult to walk in unity with others – because they are in Human leaders more than they are in Yeshua, Jesus!

1 Corinthians 3:1-5 (KJV) 1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

The Nicolaitanes have especially manifested in the dangerous tendency of Pentecostal, Evangelical, and Charismatic ministers and ministries to borrow the ecclesiastical structures of Rome in episcopacies of dubious religiosity where Bishops and Archbishops literarily demand veneration of Christians they call their ‘members’ who reverentially bow or prostrate full length and call them ‘your Lordship’ as a form of salutation.

The Office of Bishop is a Biblical one for Elders who desire same for Administrative convenience but the Roman themed one is an import with no biblical basis! The Biblical office of Bishop is not a gift released by Yeshua like the Fivefold. It is based on desire for administrative excellence of multiply ministries. Desire for the office is personal, as the word clearly states:

Ephesians 4:11-12 (KJV) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

1 Timothy 3 (KJV) 3 This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

In the modern Church, those who insist on building the Church as a religious organization structured hierarchically, where humans are founders of churches and own fellow saints as their ‘members’ are into the Nicolaitanes’ tendency. When saints are in Church as in a building or organization rather than being the Church or called out people, this tendency is at work. When large framed pictures of ‘founders’ of ministry are placed in the sanctuary and hallways leading therein, a Nicolaitane tendency is at work. When saints have no real relationship marked by access to those who are their Pastors, cannot call them on phone, cannot visit their homes, and cannot engage in Facebook conversation because leaders are placed on shelves, out of reach of the saints, the Nicolaitane principle is at work. When those ministers call mentors are just demi-gods they tithe into and carry their names as badges to seek identification with no relationship, the doctrine of Nicolaitanes is at work!

Where the human vessel to whom the vision of ministry is committed but there is an appropriation of the title ‘Founder’ needs to be seen for what it is: Though done in innocence in most cases, to project ‘ownership’ and foundation of any part of the Church of Yeshua, Jesus which was purchased by His Own blood is not something to encourage. It is true, we do some of these things ignorantly but once Holy Spirit beams the Light of Truth on any practice or tendency, the safest way forward is to give up anything which miss-represents King Yeshua, Jesus or detracts from His supremely exalted status! The lesson here: No saint should ever think because a good

deed or two are done, other requirements of righteousness which are flouted will be excused!

Regarding physical consumption of food sacrificed to idols, the Kingdom principles are laid out in Romans 14 and should be understood by all saints.

Revelation 2 Verse 16

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Commentary: No matter how low the Church fell, Yeshua did not write it off as irredeemable. He did not throw them away. He however was direct and blunt by saying the only way out is repentance. Repentance is a concept which the apostate Church in Europe and North America is afflicting on the world. People are encouraged to ‘avoid condemnation’, even when in sin. People are encouraged to avoid the guilt of owning up on their sins or the healthy spiritual habit of being ashamed to mess up. The result is a hardness of heart which drives the secular-humanistic theologies that are now based on psychology, not the Word; according to the mood of human preachers, not that of Elohim.

But the King is clear: If anyone in Him falls or stumbles, they should run to the Father, not away! This can only happen when they are open to the convicting power of Holy Spirit; take responsibility for their actions by going to the Father in brokenness and godly sorrow which produces true repentance. When this is done, sin is wiped away! There is just no other way!

2 Corinthians 7:10 (KJV) 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Psalms 66:18 (KJV) 18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

Proverbs 28:13 (KJV) 13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

1 John 2:1-2 (KJV) 1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. True preachers and teachers of righteousness have no option than to elevate the concept and power of repentance so saints who stumble will make their way right with Elohim while they have time. Life is like a vapour and eternity should not be joked with.

Ecclesiastes 9:4-6 (KJV) 4 For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. 6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Isaiah 55:6-7 (KJV) 6 Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

It is by lovingly reprovng people when they err that we will be showing them true love! In any case, all leaders need to ensure they are free of the blood of those assigned to them, just like Paul exhibited to the Ephesians.

Acts 20:26-27 (KJV) 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

To condone sin in the congregation or ministry is to be a partaker in evil. What a tragedy this will be.

Verse 17

17 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.

Commentary: Yeshua exhorts the Church to hear what He is saying by Holy Spirit. That charge is especially relevant in our end time generation when people are busy running to and fro, distracted by the loud noises of activities and religious rituals. We need to come to a place, by waiting on Yahweh so Ruach Ha Chodesh can speak to our hearts

Isaiah 40:31 (KJV) 31 But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint

Isaiah 26:3 (KJV) 3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

He promises to give a number of blessings to those who overcome. These blessings can be expected by saints of our generation who are going through:

Hidden Manna: Nourishment for the soul which cannot be seen physically is the portion of those who are faithful. Yeshua is the Bread of Life that sustains the saint much more than physical food John 6:51. Israel had physical manna for sustenance while in the wilderness (Exodus 16:13-18).

White stone with a new name written: The details of this stone are not provided, and speculations are unhelpful as we do not have a particular revelation of it as at today. This truth falls in o category of revelation that should be treated with care:

Deuteronomy 29:29 (KJV) 29 The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Please if the Father gives you a revelation of what the White Stone is, kindly share it with us here on the conversation thread. We will appreciate you!

Assignment:

(1) Please outline the main things you have learnt from the message of Yeshua to the Church at Pergamos.

(2) Which (if any) of the points made in the chapter resonate with your heart as a personal message from the Lord to you?

Chapter 9 Letter #.4. The Corrupted Church at Thyatira

Operating Environment of Thyatira

Unlike the cities mentioned so far (Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos), Thyatira was a secular city without strong attachment to any deity. Rather, it was a commercial city having many guilds for different trades such as pottery, cloth making, and dyeing based on its famous wool produce. Located about 30 miles south east of Pergamum, Thyatira was also a military city. The first convert of Paul in Philippi, Lydia, was a merchant from Thyatira as Acts 16:11-16 asserts. In His role as Inspector General, Yeshua also conducted an audit through a clinical assessment of the Church in this city in one of the letters sent through John. There were positive as well as negative qualities He identified. As with the other city Churches, He called for repentance, rather than shut the door against them. He also made specific promises to overcomers that should motivate us also.

The Audit Report on Thyatira

The Lord used 12 verses of scripture to present His audit report on the Church at Thyatira:

Revelation 2:18-29 (KJV) 18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; 19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of

their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. 24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. 25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Forensic Analysis of the Audit Report

As we received Light and Illumination from Holy Spirit and the testimonies of various scriptures, here is a forensic analysis of the Audit report on a verse by verse basis.

Revelation 2:18 (KJV) 18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

Commentary: Yeshua began again with His trademark introduction style:

- i. He wrote to the vessel appointed as His under-shepherd to oversee the Church. So far, we have seen He holds them in His hands and esteems their assignment in the earth realm seriously. It is also necessary to emphasize however He did not give such leaders a free pass to live carelessly or in sin! He rather set a very high bar of holiness, consecration, love of Him and the brethren, and the reality they should model and represent Him before the people (Matthew 20:20-28; John 13:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

Those who fall short of these high standards will invariably lose the moral authority to truly lead. When leaders break the hedge, the serpent bites them! Leaders studying this course should in any way be under any illusion they are on 'untouchable pedestals' to do whatever they please and live any how or that they are not accountable. They are in office to do His will, not theirs as Yeshua modelled in John 5:30 and John 6:38.

If a leader is overtaken by sin, elders of the ministry should implement Biblical principles for spiritual discipline. This may include inviting whoever is his/her covering to administer repentance and supervise the process of restoration in the length of time deemed necessary. In special cases where matters are not so clear or where the sinning leader does not have a functional person or board he or she is accountable to, any Elder minister in the universal Kingdom Church who is not connected with the ministry can be invited to bring a fresh, impartial insight into the disciplinary or reconciliation process. At all times, the larger strategic interests of King Yeshua and long-term spiritual health of His Church should prevail.

Where crimes like certain types of sexual abuse such as rape or pedophile related matters are involved, there may be statutory demands to report to Law Enforcement agencies promptly for the ministry to escape sanctions by appropriate governmental agencies who can shut down the ministry if found guilty in the law courts for complicity (for cover up). For chronic predators, a conviction in the Law Courts and possibly a stint in prison, may be the divinely appointed method to break the hold of besetting sin and pride so their souls may be saved on the Last Day. For this reason, it is a safe practice to be accountable to a spiritual covering so one does not operate like a vagabond (Romans 13:1-8). This is also why ministers should embrace the safety net offered by minister' networks. Lone ranging leads to a false sense of popishness!

- ii. An explanation of Who He Is so authorship would be certain. Here, He calls Himself:
- **Son of Yahweh.** This was the redemptive posture of Yeshua when He was incarnated. It meant One begotten specially by the Father through Ruach Ha Chodesh Holy Spirit to have the legal right to operate on planet earth which is given to humans to manage (Revelation 2:15; Psalm 115:16; Luke 1:35).
 - **Has eyes like Flame of Fire.** This speaks of the piercing and penetrating gaze of Yeshua on His Church that never blinks for a second. His eyes that are ever open and know instinctively whatever transpires in the heart and mind of those who are redeemed by His Blood and indeed all humanity. This imagery is like the description in Daniel 10:6. It is this fire that stokes every revival when declension sets in.
 - **His Feet are like fine Brass.** This speaks of the Majesty of His glorified state. This was part of the Divine Persona John saw in Chapter 1 verses 14-17 and was slain in the Spirit because of the sheer glory He exuded.

Lesson: People can speak glibly of He who was the meek Lamb of Elohim in the earth realm. It is only when they catch a revelation of the glorified Being Who will return as the Lion of the tribe of Judah that their perceptions change dramatically. That is why one critical requirement for serving as an Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, or Teacher is to truly know Him, not just know about Him!

Philippians 3:10 (KJV) 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

An experiential encounter with the glorified Yeshua is still one of the greatest insurance policies against the tendency to preach to others and become a cast away at the end of the day.

Do you really know Him? Did you have an experiential encounter with Him which altered the course of your life? Have you come to that place of encountering Him in the Word and with your spirit-man which humbles and inspires worship?

Positives for Commendation

Verse 19

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Yeshua then proceeded to commend the Church in Thyatira for six wonderful qualities. He knew them and also knows all of us intimately!

1. They had good works. We are saved by Grace through Faith only and not by works or religious activities. However, true salvation should produce good works as we abide in Him. To claim to be saved and produce works of the flesh as a lifestyle is a contradiction in terms. The entire Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5, 6 & 7 show the quality of life saints should live in the earth realm as Kingdom citizens (See also John 15:1-8; Galatians 5:16-22).

Titus 3:8 (KJV) 8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

2. They had Charity. This is a central operating system of the Kingdom as John 13:34-35 and 1 Corinthians 13 shows. That heaven took note of their Charity speaks volumes.
3. They knew how to render service. This is another critical Kingdom pillar as Yeshua taught and demonstrated in John 13:1-17. Those who serve well are good leaders (Matthew 20:20-28).

4. They had Faith. This is a critical Kingdom Pillar. Saints are to live by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).
5. They had Patient Endurance. This was another very important quality. It gives saints the ability to withstand all kinds of fire.

2 Timothy 2:3 (KJV) 3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

6. They made progress in their walk with Yahweh. The Church at Thyatira was not static but rather made improvement such that Yeshua noted their last was more than their first.

Negatives

Despite all the accolades, the Church in Thyatira had a major Achilles heel which Yeshua spotted:

Verse 20

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

Commentary: All the good deeds of this Church was negated by one grievous sin! Yeshua did not excuse them because of their good deeds but gave a robust denunciation of the one sin which corrupted their testimony! The Church tolerated a hijack of leadership by a definite person. This woman exercised undue and controlling influence which negated the authority of the valid overseer or Pastor set over them. Jezebel may have been her real name or John was using a well-known nickname derived from the evil Queen Jezebel who controlled King Ahab, the legitimate authority in Israel.

To execute her wicked enterprise, this woman presented herself as a Prophetess. It was either she was a backslidden one or was merely a diviner at this stage because heaven had no record of her as a true Prophetess!

From the elevated pedestal, she placed herself, Jezebel began to teach and practice perversion which was intended to destroy the Church from inside out:

1. She taught the saints to commit fornication. There are two interpretations of this statement.

1.1. Physical Immorality: The first was this person let loose the spirit of physical immorality in the Church. Immorality destroys a congregation or fellowship like nothing else. It is one sin that destroys the individual practitioner whose body is temple of Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:12-20) and destroys the spiritual health of congregations, takes away the cover of holiness and opens the door to legal satanic and demonic oppression. That is why strong disciplinary measures are prescribed for serial adulterers and fornicators who refuse to repent. This includes, in extreme cases where the perpetrator is unrepentant, dis-fellowship, and handing their bodies over to Satan to torment through sickness (Sexually transmitted diseases) or other oppressions (1 Corinthians 5:1-13).

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 (KJV) 1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1.2. Spiritual Fornication: The second interpretation is this person led the Church at Thyatira to be unfaithful

to the Lord by embracing worldliness. The sin of Jezebel may have been a combination of both. In the Bible, the terms Fornication and Adultery also connoted unfaithfulness of Israel to Elohim (2 Chronicles 21:11; Isaiah 23:17; Ezekiel 16:15, 26, 29).

When Church leaders – male or female take to the world to import ideas, concepts, fashion styles they knowingly or unknowingly open doors for the spirit which rules the world: Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the eyes, and Pride of Life to become standard fare. When leaders model worldliness in lifestyle or fashion and actively promote same as the gold standard, they lead saints to sin. Worldliness is deemed by heaven as marriage to spirit of the world even while Yeshua is retained as nominal spouse of the Church! Once the spirit of the world sets into a Church, one of its crippling effects is to make saints to love themselves more than they love Elohim! With this self-love, they open their hearts for all kinds of idols to creep in and have residences – where Yeshua would have had sole affection and rule!

2. She may have herself seduced some of the saints into actual practice of immorality. In the eyes of heaven, it does not matter whether herself involved or others slid into sin at her encouragement.
3. She also encouraged overt idolatry. By nudging saints to eat food sacrificed to idols, this woman was leading them to sin against Yahweh. Spiritually, the act of leading saints to take carnal decisions without hearing from Holy Spirit or dabbling into forbidden practices such as gambling is deemed as eating food sacrificed to idols.
4. Let us also take note, as far as heaven is concerned, any attempt to allow anything, including love of money or the world to take pride of place in the heart of saints, adultery is deemed to have taken place! It may well be that this was partly the problem in Thyatira.

Lessons: Jezebel was obviously on assignment from Satan to destroy the Church at Thyatira from inside out. No matter how well intentioned, the moment any one – including spouses (male or female) of visionaries or other well gifted saints operating as say Prophets try to wrest power from the back door, Jezebelic tendencies ensure. A spouse who tries to usurp authority granted to marriage partner and rule from behind him or her is engaged in Jezebelic control. Whether this is done by physically usurping the decision-making process or through emotional blackmail, the end result is bad.

Husbands whose wives have received and hold visions from the Lord should behave like Joseph and lend them to Elohim as vessels of honor. He saw them and yet called their wives so they should be no basis for carnal pulling of rank! Wise women who the Lord has committed visions and ministries need to be proactive in wisdom by submitting to their husbands at home as unto the Lord yet not allowing them to hijack the decision-making process in the ministry. Holy Spirit will supply wisdom and grace to walk this thin line with great balancing.

We should also take note of the fact the spirit of Jezebel is let loose when those who operate in office of the Prophet stop being conveyors of messages from above to become human executors of those messages. The Jezebel spirit will make a Prophet seek to impose fear of repercussions on those who do not take their words. The desire to control lives of other saints through the prophetic mantle is a very danger. Many people who come to congregations are at formative stages of their spiritual lives. What they hear from the pulpit may influence how they grow, stagnate, atrophy, or die spiritually. Those who teach the Church to embrace the world and all it has to offer including seductive fashions which expose naked flesh to the opposite gender or cleavages which are best covered are into this scheme – knowingly or unknowingly!

Verse 21

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Commentary: Yeshua did not just condemn Jezebel. He gave her space to repent! Unfortunately, she hardened her heart.

Verse 22-23

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Commentary: Yeshua pronounced her judgement as thus:

1. Yeshua said He would cast Jezebel into a sick bed. Physical ailments can be occasioned by immoral living. When people persist in abusing their physical bodies through immorality (outside the holy confines of a valid marriage) or consumption of drugs, abusive substances or engagement in activities which exert tolls on the human mind, they open the door to oppression. Even in this day and age sexual activities of all types – including pornography are still sins that saints should desist from! The House of Elohim is ordained to be pure.

Spiritual adultery leads to spiritual death or state of life which lacks virtue and the divine presence. Those who live by rituals rather than relationship are often filled with worry and anxiety in trying to be like the Joneses. Consequently, they lose the virtues of Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in Holy Spirit and become anxious for acquisition of material substances and how to ‘dress to impress’ others which can mask an emptiness within (Isaiah 26:3).

2. Those who commit adultery with Jezebel are to face great trouble, except they repent. The scope of these troubles is obviously great.
3. Her children will be killed. This has three dimensions. The first is physical death which is logical end of those who continue in evil. The second is spiritual death which is eternal separation of those who die in their sins and refuse the life-line which is Yeshua. In the third

dimension, those who persist in sin cut themselves off from the divine presence and become spiritually empty. Though they cling to Church offices, they cannot transmit the virtue which comes from His Presence!

4. The breadth and scope of Judgement executed by Yeshua against the recalcitrant Jezebel and all persistent sinners will cause the Churches to remember He is Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent. Those who live in sin do so because they take their eyes off this reality. When certain types of judgement are executed, people have godly fear again. The Judgement of Ananias and Sapphira was a case in point (Acts 5:1-11).
5. Saints in Thyatira were to be reminded, Yeshua rewards people according to their works, not intentions. Evil is evil and will be punished, if it not repented of while there is time.

Verse 24

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

Commentary: Yeshua also made some additional observations. He promised to put no other burden on saints who:

1. Do not have the doctrine of Jezebel. These are saints who did not succumb to the false teachings which promoted immoral living; compromise with worldliness or engagement in idolatry.
2. Those who have not known the depths of Satan. These are those who did not fall for the bait of seeking esoteric knowledge. It is believed some of the so called 'deep truths' were promoted by cults who initiated curious people seeking for more spirituality. In the process, they missed the basic doctrines of Yeshua in favour of head knowledge which puffs up. In a certain denomination in

a major American city, there was a time over 40 percent of the ordained clergy were reported to belong to the occult, seeking secret knowledge. In Africa today, some ministers in search of 'power' to do 'miracles' have embraced the occult and are deceiving multitudes desperate for solution to their problems.

Verse 25-28

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.
26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star.

Commentary: Yeshua had great promises for those who were not corrupted.

1. He urged them to hold fast what they had. That is the message He sends to us today. As the storms rage with various winds of doctrine some of which open doors to permissiveness, He tells us not to be among those given to change. In the face of the pseudo-kingdom gospel which denied Yeshua pride of place as Center and Circumference of the Kingdom, the Lord is looking for saints who will hold fast.
2. Those who overcome are promised the nations as an inheritance to rule and reign over. This is the blessed hope of saints in the earth realm. A day is coming when at fulfilment of Psalm 2 and Jude verses 14, 15, Yeshua will rule the world to come – the physical dimension of the Kingdom – from the Throne of David in Jerusalem. Faithful saints will be assigned to be Kings and Priests in the cities, states, and nations of the world on His behalf. That is why He is called King of Kings! For this reason, Satan will be chained for a thousand years with all his demons and there will be no other influence on earth outside the Holiness of Yeshua and the glorified

saints! (Revelation 1:6; Revelation 5:9-10; Revelation 19:11-21; Revelation 20:1-6)

3. The Morning Star is another reward promised to the faithful. Yeshua Himself is the Morning Star! He promises Himself and His glory as the ultimate reward for the faithful. To partake in His eternal glory and not having to walk in darkness of any sort is indeed a great reward!

Revelation 22:16 (KJV) 16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Verse 29

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

Commentary: Yeshua does not force His views on any one. He delivers the Word as it is and leaves those who have an ear to hear what Holy Spirit is saying by the hearing of their inner ears. As was with Him, let it also be so with us! We cannot force any one to hear or receive the truth we are sent to preach or teach. As Post men, let us deliver the message and allow hearers to open their packages. They will stand before the King to account for their responses!

Assignment:

- (1) Please outline the main things you have learnt from the message of Yeshua to the Church at Thyatira.
- (2) Which (if any) of the points made in the chapter resonate with your heart as a personal message from the Lord to you?

Chapter 10 Letter #.5. The Seemingly living but spiritually dead Church of Sardis

So far, Yeshua had addressed the Church that lost its first love at Ephesus; the seemingly poor but truly rich Church at Smyrna; the Church which dwelt at the seat of Satan at Pergamum and the Corrupted, Compromised Church at Thyatira. In each case, Yeshua, Jesus introduced Himself by aspects of His glorified state so authorship of the messages would be doubtless ascribed to Him. Each City Church had unique qualities to be commended; unique challenges to be warned against; certain sins to be identified and repented of, and promises of rewards for those who held fast.

The Audit Report on Sardis by Yeshua, Jesus as Inspector General

When it came to the Church at Sardis, there is a piercing assessment which pulls no punches as we shall see shortly. Let us again break down the message, delivered in the first six verses of Revelation chapter 3 in order to understand His assessment fully.

Revelation 3:1-6 (KJV) 1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before

his angels. 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Forensic examination of the Audit Report

As with the other Audit reports by Yeshua, let us now rely on Holy Spirit to break down each item so comparing scripture with scripture, we can obtain a fuller understanding of what the King is saying about the Church at Sardis

Revelation 3:1 (KJV) 1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Commentary: This first verse contains five main issues:

1.1 Yeshua again addressed the angel of the Church – the vessel He placed as over seer

1.2 The letter was addressed to the Church located at Sardis Sardis was a very wealthy city located about 30 miles south east of Thyatira. It was at one time the capital of the province of Lydia. According to one commentator, the city was in two locations. Initially built on a mountain top, a newer section extended to the valley below when the population expanded greatly. In this city, there was a pagan religious system centered on worship of the reigning Caesar of Rome and Artemis the goddess of fertility. The Church lived in the midst of this operating environment.

1.3 Yeshua introduced Himself by His glorified state.

Yeshua called Himself the One who 'hath the seven Spirits' of Yahweh. This refers to the fullness of Ruach Ha Chodesh. In biblical numerology, the number 7 stands for complete or perfect measure. If we recall, Yeshua received a limitless measure of Holy Spirit during the baptism of John:

John 3:34 (KJV) 34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

When Isaiah prophesied on Yeshua, this is what He had to say concerning the measure of Holy Spirit He would operate in:

Isaiah 11:1-3 (KJV) 1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: 2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; 3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

Luke was to record the several dimensions of the Messianic ministry Yeshua would fulfil because of the limitless measure of Holy Spirit in Him:

Luke 4:18-19 (KJV) 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Lesson: No saint should be satisfied with any measure of success that is beneath this measure of fullness of Holy Spirit. There is no basis for boasting over little manifestations of spiritual gifts when there is a direct promise of Yeshua we would be used of Holy Spirit to do greater works and unlock the blessings of heaven in the earth realm through effectual prayers by totally surrendered vessels:

John 14:12-14 (KJV) 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

When saints lower this high bar set by Yeshua, the door is opened for the Sardis syndrome to set in. May we not rest on

oars of yesterday manifestations of Holy Spirit in and through us but rather be challenged to go the whole hog in Him. May we not boast of past exploits and rest on the oars of History when the Present and Future beckons us to die to self totally; dig deeper into the word; soar higher in the realm of spiritual growth and be used of Him to widen the Kingdom as we go ye to uttermost parts of the earth far beyond our localities according to the frame work of Acts 1:8.

1.4 Yeshua also introduced Himself as He who has the seven stars. He simply was stating a theme early declared: He is the center and circumference of the lives and ministries of visionaries, Pastors of Congregations, and other ministers. As One who holds them, He requires saints to trust Him to uphold, commend, judge, or punish as He deems right. This is a difficult thing for the Church in the earth realm to grasp. Romans 14:1-14 is a very useful scripture that can help us process this reality that human perspectives may vary from divine ones. Where leaders err, they are to run to Him for repentance.

Where the sins are beyond personal malfeasance but involve breach of trust, lack of ethics, or crime, appropriate disciplinary measures should be put in place supervised by leaders with appropriate spiritual authority. In all cases, the clear goal will be to lead the sinning leader to come to a place of taking ownership of the sin, brokenness, confession, repentance, and restoration of relationship with Elohim and the flock who were injured. It is when the sinning leader refuses help that he can be deemed to be unfit to lead the flock of Yeshua by due process.

1.5 His assessment of the state of the Church. This was blunt and straight forward with no punches pulled! “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead”.

This Church had the following features:

- **It had works.** This means the Church was deceived by the scope of its activities. Unfortunately, any

works not done out of abiding in Yeshua, Jesus is mere dead works of religion and rituals without spiritual value. By the works of the flesh can no man please Yahweh outside of what is done in, with and through Yeshua Ha Mashiach, Jesus the Messiah.

- **They invested in reputation.** As with the modern-day Church, they seemed to have believed their own lie packaged in commercials and photo-shops that covers ongoing disobedience and iniquity. Packaging can be deceptive if it covers spiritual death!
- **The investment in Public Relations and Advertising notwithstanding; heaven was not fooled!** Heaven saw through the smokescreen and declared with finality: Thou 'art dead'.

Verse 2

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

Commentary: There are three admonitions Yeshua gave this Church:

- 2.1. **Be watchful.** Watchfulness is one of the virtues Yeshua commended to His Church. Watchfulness is what makes saints able to detect attitudes, thought patterns, dispositions that tend to sin and ungodliness. Most sins are first cultured in thought patterns before they manifest in actions. Some are manifested in attitudes that a sensitive saint should detect early and deal with in prayers. When saints are watchful, they will detect issues like damaged emotions arising from past encounters with evil done by humans or situations which caused bruises that fester, eating out their spiritual lives from within. They should acknowledge such and prayerfully seek help from those who are anointed to minister Inner Healing.

2.2. Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die. Ever looking for redemptive qualities and opportunities, King Yeshua, Jesus urged the Church in Sardis to take urgent action to identify traces of spiritual life and value which can be strengthened to produce acceptable spiritual results.

2.3. Their works were not found perfect before Yahweh. Works cannot please Yahweh when done by human reasoning, ideas, or strength. Works of religion are deceptive because they supplant the redemptive value of Calvary and offer their practitioners a false sense of security. The good works saints are called to do are not those derived from self-effort but rather those that are outcomes of our abiding in Yeshua and His Words abiding in us! In other words, saints are called to manifest the redemptive work done by the change of allegiance from Satan to Yeshua, Jesus!

Verse 3

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Commentary: Here Yeshua told the Church at Sardis a few home truths designed to convict and bring repentance. In so doing, we see again His default position is not to cast away or write off but to see ways in which sinners can come to real repentance in Him.

3.1. He reminded them what they received and heard and asked them to hold fast to such. They had received the pure gospel but had corrupted it. He was therefore calling them to re-discover the ancient land-marks or timeless truths they first received. In this day and age when humans are given to change in order to make the 'Church more contemporary', it is needful for saints to get back to the basics: Righteousness; Peace; Joy in the Holy Spirit;

Holiness; Love; Seeking first the Kingdom and righteousness; Separation from the world and its allurements; Service; occupying our allotments in the consciousness that King Yeshua, Jesus may return on a day and time known to no one; necessity to be thoroughly invested in the Great Commission of reconciling sinners to the Father, discipling the saved and training disciples to walk in their Melchizedek Priesthood.

3.2. He called them to repent of any falling away. Yeshua was always interested in the repentance of sinners! Repentance changes the paradigm of life flow and dynamics of relationship with heaven.

3.3. He warned if they failed to be watchful, He would come swiftly, without notice, to execute judgement for sin. This message is also relevant to the Church of this age. The return of Yeshua will be swift and in the twinkling of an eye. No one, except the Father knows the day and hour of His return so the question of last minute emergency redress may be out of the question.

Matthew 24:27, 36, 42-44 (KJV) 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Verse 4

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Commentary: In the midst of this dead Church, Yeshua spotted a remnant! HalleluYah. This is how He described them:

4.1. A few names. They were small in number, relative to the population in Sardis and were personally known to Yeshua. In all generations, the remnant have always been a very tiny minority who enter by the straight gate and walk on the narrow way while their counterparts 'enjoy life' on the Broad way.

Matthew 7:13-14 (KJV) 13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

4.2. They did not defile their garments. Saints are to wear Yeshua as a garment. This happens first when His righteousness is imputed into and received to be the basis of a new walk with the Father (2 Corinthians 5:17). However, the crunch lies in deliberately paying the price of yielding to Him on a 24/7 basis. Those who live in the consciousness of His imminent return will deliberately invest in spirituality end up wearing Him as a garment on a 24/7 basis – He becomes their identity!

Romans 13:11-14 (KJV) 11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

4.3. They shall walk with Him in white. White stands for purity of those who walk with Yeshua. White is the color of the garments the redeemed wear before Him.

Revelation 7:13-14 (KJV) 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

4.4. They are worthy. Yeshua makes His remnant worthy, not by their own abilities but by His glory they share!

Verse 5

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Commentary: Yeshua went on to motivate the Church of Sardis to change its ways. Let us see what He promised them:

5.1. He promises those who overcome there was still room for them to be clothed in white raiment – His righteousness.

5.2. Yeshua promises those who repent will not have their names blotted out from the Lamb's book of Life. This is the list of all those who have received the gift of eternal life on the basis of the propitiatory work of Yeshua on the Cross. To be on the list is the most prized possession in the earth realm, greater than any other blessing including anointing and spiritual gifts as Yeshua told His disciples

Luke 10:20 (KJV) 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

That the name of a saint who backslides or apostatizes can be blotted out or taken off the Book of Life debunks the theory of eternal security! Those who backslide into sin or apostatize

into error ultimately, by so doing, walk out of the security that is Yeshua, Jesus. Yahweh is not willing that any perish or live in sin for which His righteousness is provided in Yeshua.

5.3. Yeshua promises to confess the names of overcomers before Yahweh and the angels. This was a reaffirmation of what He had told the Church during His days in the Body.

Matthew 10:32-33 (KJV) 32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Paul spoke of this by the Spirit to encourage saints to be faithful even in the midst of their fires:

2 Timothy 2:11-13 (KJV) 11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: 13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

Verse 6

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

Yeshua ends this epic letter to the Church in Sardis like He did in others: A call to hear with the inner ear what Holy Spirit is saying to the Churches. It is significant that His call is for saints to factor in all He is saying to all the Churches, not just the Church at Sardis.

Matthew 18:8 (KJV) 8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

Assignment:

(1) Please outline the main things you have learnt from the message of Yeshua to the Church at Sardis.

- (2) Which (if any) of the points made in the chapter resonate with your heart as a personal message from the Lord to you?
- (3) Briefly share in what way this is message relevant to the Church of this generation.

Chapter 11 Letter #.6. The Small but Faithful Remnant Church of Philadelphia

At this stage in examining the assessment of Yeshua of the seven Churches of Asia Minor, we come upon another breath of fresh air! It is His assessment of the Church at Philadelphia which He deems as faithful, found no fault with, and made superlative promises to in time and eternity. There is no doubt the way the saints lived pleased the Head, Yeshua so much He had only praises for them with no word of rebuke! It is truly remarkable these seven Churches were contemporaries and existing within the same geographical region yet exhibiting characteristics and lifestyles that were unique. The 100 percent Clean Audit Report Of all the 7 Churches, only the Church at Smyrna and this one at Philadelphia were found in a state that can be called 'Clean' or 'Pure'. In other words, there was nothing negative Yeshua found in both of them. Here is His audit report on the Church at Philadelphia:

Revelation 3:7-13 (KJV) 7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more

out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Let us rely on Holy Spirit and other parts of the Word which are divided by His illumination and leading to understand what the King was saying and how it applies to His expectations of us in this Omega Chapter of the Church.

Revelation 3:7 (KJV) 7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Commentary: These things are covered in this salutation/introduction.

1. **Addressee:** the letter is addressed to overseer of the Church in Philadelphia. We have emphasized this point enough throughout this Course concerning how highly Yeshua esteems those He places in leadership. Their roles as His under-shepherds is truly weighty and should not be handled lightly. In classical spiritual terms, they are to feed the flock with nourishment provided by Yeshua like He told Peter in John 21:15-17. They are to do so aware of the reality they are not lords but rather examples to the flock as 1 Peter 5:1-4 says. They are to watch over souls of saints and give account to King Yeshua as Hebrews 13:17 says. Those who are leaders will do well to die to self, so the divine purpose is fulfilled. In a world where ambition is projected as vision and where the need to accumulate wealth and 'own' as many 'members' as possible through Charismatic witchcraft and unhealthy soul ties has been elevated through Babylonian precepts into a high art, those who are of the elect remnant must

intentionally refuse to be part of the game of trading in the souls of those entrusted to their care (Revelation 18:13).

2. It is His audit report on the spiritual health of the Church.

The name Philadelphia meant 'brotherly love' in Greek. Its location was about 40 miles southeast of Sardis. A commentator asserts Philadelphia was founded by the citizens of Pergamum as a frontier city to the central plateau of Asia Minor. Citizens of Philadelphia were reportedly given to learning and so drove out the Barbarians in favour of Greek language and culture. The city was reportedly destroyed by a major earthquake in AD 17 with aftershocks that were so strong many preferred to live outside the city limits. This assessment by Yeshua must have been about 78 years after this earthquake. It was in this environment Yeshua found a called-out people – ekklesia – which truly reflected values of the Kingdom culture He introduced on earth. Let us get into the word and see what He had to say of them.

3. Yeshua started by introducing Himself. This has been His trademark. He did not want anyone to question His authorship of this vital document. In the introduction, Yeshua described Himself as:

- 3.1. **He that is holy.** His nature, thoughts, words, and actions are holy. For that reason, all who are redeemed by His Blood are called to be Holy. Holiness is not an option or suggestion. It is not a dogma some denominations preach while others reject. It is the lifestyle of the redeemed that should be lived out in the earth realm.

1 Peter 1:15-17 (KJV) 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

Any doctrine or assumed theology which negates holy living or encourages saints to live like the world is clearly not of Yeshua and will lead to consequences that are too bad to contemplate. The call to live differently from the world around us is clear:

1 John 2:15-17 (KJV) 15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

3.2. He that is true. Yeshua was transparent and real. There was nothing in Him that needed to be covered up. We too are called to be transparent and sincere, speaking truth in the inward parts of our minds and hearts. The world we live in thrives in make believe and we must beware lest their ways affect our lifestyle. Saints are to walk in the newness of life, not the oldness of the letter. What saints are on Facebook should be what they are in 'real life'. What saints are within 'church' buildings on Sundays and mid-week services should be what they are Monday to Saturday at home, in their offices, and among those they regularly interact with! The Blood dealt with the old nature and took away the past (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Even when saints stumble, they should be open to be convicted by Holy Spirit and repent promptly so the accusations of Satan carry no weight. If sins were truly dealt with, saints should walk ever justified in the sight of Yahweh who releases His righteousness in Yeshua. No saint should therefore walk in fear of yesterdays that were truly dealt with by the Blood because they cease to exist! There is no record of any sin blotted out by the Blood in heaven! (1 John 2:1-2).

3.3. Holder of the key of David to open doors no man else can shut and shut doors no man can open. This was a promise of irreversible breakthrough! They were past the realm of limitations!

Why use the name of David? David was the most outstanding King of Israel. Yahweh rated him so highly that promises were made that the Messiah would be from his lineage. Zion was called the City of David. The keys of David signified ultimate authority in the Kingdom. It is through Yeshua alone, from Him and by Him alone the door of the Kingdom is opened for people to come in. Those who strive against Him will miss entry into the Kingdom, their good deeds notwithstanding.

He is the Head of all Principality and Power. Ultimately, the governments of this world and all authority are in His hands. They are thus covered by the statute of limitation: What door He opens, no man can shut and what He shuts, no man can open! Saints who are in Him are truly secure and have absolutely no need to seek satisfaction in anything else.

Colossians 2:9-10 (KJV) 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: **Verse 8** I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Commentary: Having introduced Himself, Yeshua went on to assess the Church at Philadelphia and to announce their rewards.

- 1. Divine Knowledge.** From heaven, Yeshua knew the works of this faithful remnant Church. In His Omniscience and Omnipresence, this was an easy thing to do. It will help the remnant Church of today to know He knows everything about us: Our thoughts, our motives; the tiny impulses of our hearts. What we do in the secret as well as what we do in the open are all naked before He who we have to do with! He knows! If

we know that He knows, let saints be transparent with Him and open to the convicting work of Holy Spirit or His warnings when things have gone wrong or are in danger of going wrong.

- 2. Faithfulness.** The Church in Philadelphia was commended because of its faithfulness. Though it had little strength, it held on to Yeshua, kept His Word and did not deny His name in the face of issues of life. This should be our portion in this day and age also. There are many peculiar challenges we face in our respective estates of life. However one of the greatest activators of the grace to stand firm for the King is the attitude of Paul the apostle which we too can take on board.

Romans 8:35-39 (KJV) 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When our minds are wired this way, His grace sustains us unto the rewards He decorates us with. To suffer with Him in this life, if need be, is a choice with rewards that are mind boggling!

Romans 8:17 (KJV) 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 (KJV) 11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny

him, he also will deny us: 13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

Saints, the dazzling glory of the world to come and other blessings stored up for the faithful are simply too much to miss!

Romans 8:18 (KJV) 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

In the Kingdom, though many are called, few are eventually chosen because they respond to the King. Among the few chosen, fewer still will be faithful till the Day of days when the manifest Kingdom shall come to pass in the earth realm:

Matthew 22:14 (KJV) 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

Revelation 17:14 (KJV) 14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Verse 9

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Commentary: Here in verse 9, Yeshua had harsh words for some residents of Philadelphia who did not only reject Him but referenced on their claim to be Jews. He was addressing one of the most inconvenient question of the ages: Can any human, Jew and Gentile, alike claim because of affinity to any religious group by whatever name called, salvation by Grace that is in Yeshua is not necessary?

While saints must robustly reject Replacement theology which falsely claims Yahweh is through with the Jews and is now dealing with Gentiles only, they must also reject the opposite which is the claim Jews do not necessarily need the salvation freely offered in Yeshua but have a free pass into heaven based on the promises made to Abraham.

For those who rejected the gospel because of their assumed Jewishness, He simply called them the synagogue of Satan. This concept was addressed in His days in the flesh when Yeshua told some obstinate Jewish religious leaders:

John 8:44 (KJV) 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Paul took this theme further and asserted by the Spirit that those who claim to be Jews and on that basis reject Yeshua are doing themselves a disservice. He further proclaimed as far as the Kingdom is concerned, Jews have no advantage over Gentiles who repent and turn to Yahweh, receiving His grace in Yeshua.

Romans 2:17-29 (KJV) 17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, 18 And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; 19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, 20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. 21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? 22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? 23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. 25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. 26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for

circumcision? 27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? 28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Yeshua promised to humiliate such proud persons who reject the gospel and cause them to bow before the faithful remnant Church at Philadelphia! This rebuke also applies to non-Jewish Religious leaders of Christendom who torment the faithful remnant that refuse to partake of their table of compromise with the world. In due course, the Lord will make them see the folly of their compromise. They will be abased when He exalts the faithful remnant.

Verse 10

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the entire world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Commentary: For keeping His Word, Yeshua went on in Revelation 3:10 to make powerful promises which some theologians have twisted variously to justify their perspectives on end time events that are about to be. Let us consider them:

1. Preservation from the coming evil that would shake inhabitants of the earth. The divine principle of preservation of the righteous from fate of the wicked is a settled case law in the Kingdom. This principle was practiced in these instances:
 - Preservation of Noah and his family (8 persons) when all the then known world perished (Genesis 6, 7, 8).
 - Deliverance of Lot and family when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed in Genesis 19. Abraham the friend of Yahweh had produced His

cause before Yahweh concerning this concept of not destroying the righteous with sinners in Genesis 18:24-25.

Those who use this passage to violently argue their respective positions about Pre-Tribulation or Post-Tribulation rapture are not doing the Head any service. Yeshua has made a firm and reliable promise His remnant will not suffer the same fate as those who live carelessly or those who reject Him altogether. Whether preservation comes in the form of being taken out of the way before the Great Tribulation starts or a special preservation from the troubles coming upon the whole world during the Great tribulation should not be the basis of brethren abusing each other, tearing others down, and giving Satan room to rejoice. Let the remnant who He has ordained to preserve be ever ready, watchful, and prayerful!

2. Tribulation would come upon the earth realm at end of the age

The reality that severe trouble lies ahead at end of the age is another truth Satan has fought consistently to blur or hide. In Matthew 24, Yeshua Himself spoke about evil days no saint should experience. The main book of Revelation from Chapters 4 to 19 reveal events that will take place in the earth realm culminating in reign of the anti-Christ and manifestation of the False Prophet. Saints who are in bitter verbal debates with each other about whether the rapture will occur before, in the middle of, or after the Great Tribulation miss the point. Those quarrels are not as important as living the life which is ready for the Lord on a 24/7 basis.

Verse 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Commentary: Three truths were presented in verse 11 that we should note:

1. Imminence of His return. Yeshua wants the Church to live in the consciousness that His return can be at any moment. The Church and saints who live this way will not and cannot miss His coming! They will not give

room for any sin or leaven of evil to creep in and take hold. The parable of the wise Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 deals with this reality as well as the Parable of the talents in Luke 19:11-27. The Great Olivet prophecy of Matthew 24 has this concept ingrained within it. The point is well made in Hebrews 9:28 that Yeshua will return principally for those who are in earnest expectation of Him!

Christians who forsake this requirement often let their guards down, begin to look to the world for examples to copy; seek its validation/approval and in the process become lukewarm, cold, backslidden or apostate!

2. Admonition to hold on to Him and eternal life, in spite of challenges. Yeshua knew that the Kingdom life is not a rosy one. He knew it was a narrow way filled with thorns and briars. They were therefore encouraged to be steadfast until the end. Paul made this same point in 1 Corinthians 15:58.
3. No one should be given room to take the crown of saints! The remnant should not give room for family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, governments or indeed any one to take their Crowns. The Crown of life is worth all the trouble we can ever go through in the earth realm. Saints, let us not forget that Yeshua did not come to patch up this disjointed world. Political leadership and economic management skills have not and will not save the world but can only make things easier for a little while as the march of history reveals. He rather came to request that saints give up their ambitions and agendas and submit to His Sovereign rule in the now as the basis of enjoying His Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit while in the Body and inheriting the Kingdom to come when there will be universal wellness. For those who would embrace His Sovereignty, circumstances may occasion a sword of separation to the

degree rejection, persecution, or separation may start from home (Mathew 10:34-39).

Lesson: The Crown stands for the Royal Authority granted to all saints as a reward for their faithfulness in holding on to the new life in Him. Again, Yeshua was clearly making a case against the doctrine of eternal security. The crown of life can be lost! 2 John verse 8 instructs us to take heed that we do not lose what we have.

Verse 12

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Commentary: In verse 12, Yeshua went on to make additional promises to those who will overcome in Philadelphia. He is a perfect motivator, offering rewards that are beyond bread and butter! May so called motivational speakers and purveyors of the Utilitarian gospel should take heed and adjust their ways:

1. **Pillar in Temple of His Elohim.** The pillar is a strong and stable object which holds up a house. Those who will overcome are likened to pillars in the eternal sanctuary of Elohim. The imagery of the Church being a building of Elohim was asserted in Ephesians 2:15-22. Implied here is in the coming phase of the Kingdom, those who are faithful till the end are assured a place of prominent service as Priests and Kings (Revelation 1:6; Revelation 5:9-10).
2. **Will go no more out.** It is those who hold on till the end and breast the tape at the appearance of Yeshua that enjoy eternal security! Those who get to this point will not suffer the second death! (Revelation 20:4-6).
3. **The Name of Elohim will be written on them.** This is a sign of perpetual divine ownership. In other words,

overcomers will have the privilege in all of eternity to be branded with the Name of Elohim. What a privilege!

4. The name of New Jerusalem will be inscribed on overcomers. The New Jerusalem, not this blood stained present one, will come out of heaven. This will be the center of global governance in the world to come (Revelation 21:1-4). This means overcomers will be stakeholders with Yeshua in ownership of the eternal things to come. Saints, these precious promises are worth waiting for.

5. The new Name of Yeshua will be unveiled at the appointed time. At the present time, we see through a dark glass but will see things clearly at end of the age, including some things about Yeshua (1 Corinthians 13: 9-10, 12). There is no need speculating on some of these things because they will be fully manifested in due course. The principle in Deuteronomy 29:29 establishes the prerogative of Yahweh to hold the secret things until that day.

Verse 13

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

Commentary: Yeshua calls on the saints to hear with the inner ear what He is telling them. Beyond that, He calls attention to all the things He has said so far to all the Churches.

The fact the Church in Philadelphia surmounted the odds of Hellenistic culture with its pantheon of gods; a political culture dominated by imperial Rome and its Caesars who were worshipped and corruption arising from wealth offers hope that the remnant of this day and age can also make it. The truth is the true remnant have no excuse to live otherwise. For the remnant, sin and sinning is just not an option. The consciousness of right standing with the Father in Yeshua does not remotely allow a saint to open door to Satan to solicit neither is there proclivity for iniquity he can easily 'turn on'.

For the remnant, Satan, Sin, and Death were decisively defeated at Calvary and the strength to live in that victory is released by the Grace of Yahweh in Yeshua.

Assignment:

- (1) Please outline the main things you have learnt from the message of Yeshua to the Church at Philadelphia.
- (2) Which (if any) of the points made in the chapter resonate with your heart as a personal message from the Lord to you?
- (3) Briefly share in what way this is message relevant to the elect remnant within the larger Church of this generation

Chapter 12 Letter #.7. The Lukewarm and Proud Babylonian Church of Laodicea

In this chapter, we will be examining what Yeshua had to say of the last of the seven Churches He assessed. It is significant the Church of Laodicea was assessed last. The first and last things/people to be evaluated in any project always offer interesting insights into a matter.

Background

The city of Laodicea was located about 45 miles to the south east of Philadelphia and 90 miles east of Ephesus. It was obviously a very wealthy city more prosperous than the other six cities we have examined so far. Some commentators believe the city was famous for its thriving banks, manufacturing industry (based on its wool) and a Medical School which produced a well-known eye ointment in those days. The city was reputed to have a chronic water problem for which an aqueduct was built to channel water from the hot springs that were a distance away. Unfortunately, by the time the hot water reached the city, it become tepid and lukewarm – neither hot nor cold! This made the water disgusting to drink.

The Audit Report

Revelation 3:14-22 (KJV) 14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with

eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The Forensic Analysis

The Master Preacher and Teacher, Yeshua, decided to use imagery drawn from what the people knew and experienced to render His assessment of the Church in Laodicea.

Revelation 3:14 (KJV) 14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

Commentary: Verse 14 contains two broad messages.

- 1.1. The addressee of the letter was the overseer of the Church in Laodicea. As the authority who heaven vested with the vision, Yeshua always addressed him/her first. He who is the spring and circumference of all authority always validated and fostered authority in the earth realm. Liberty and Order are like two wings of the Kingdom Bird. Without any, the Bird will crash, unable to fly. Those who want liberty without the order necessitated by presence of leadership often slide into license. On the other hand, those who desire Order without liberty will regress into dead works and rituals of religion. True leadership is used by Holy Spirit to create the enabling atmosphere for the balance provided by both wings to be in place so sons of Elohim can flourish and soar.
- 1.2. He introduced Himself. As we saw in previous notes, Yeshua deemed it needful to define Who He is so His audience would look beyond the vessel who brought the

message to focus on Him and His word. Look at how He described Himself:

- i. **The Amen.** This means He is the True One and the conclusion of all things in His Church.
- ii. **The Faithful and True Witness.** This is a self-evident truth about Himself. He is faithful to the Father who sent Him and faithful to all His saints. He is also faithful to His Words, watching over them to perform. What He sees of His Church and what He says are true and cannot be contested.
- iii. **The beginning of the creation of Elohim.** Some people have seized upon this word to validate their claim that Yeshua was a created being and therefore not divine. What they failed to realize is the message Yeshua was conveying in what He said. Those words simply mean:
 - Yeshua is the One who begins the Creation of Elohim. This interpretation is consistent with the Truth Holy Spirit presented to the Laodecian Church in the letter Paul wrote to the Colossians. The epistle to the Colossians contains exposition of the divinity of Yeshua.

Colossians 1:12-19 (KJV) 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the

firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

- Yeshua is Head of all things in the sense that they are subject to Him. This thought is validated in this scripture:

Colossians 2:8-10 (KJV) 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

It should be noted, Paul by the Spirit instructed the epistle to the Colossians should also be sent to the Church at Laodicea so they must have been fully aware of the Divinity of Yeshua as articulated above.

Colossians 4:16 (KJV) 16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

Let us read the additional testimony of John, a man who understood Yeshua in a deep way:

John 1:1-3 (KJV) 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Please take time to read these other passages on the subject matter of the Divinity of Yeshua: John 8:58; Philippians 2:8-11; Titus 2:13. In the Book of Revelation, He is called the Alpha and Omega.

Verse 15

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Commentary: The Church in Laodicea had acquired the norms of their host city! The operating environment had

become their operating system and worse still, they were oblivious of their true state. Yeshua used the imagery of what brethren in Church experienced daily (Lukewarm Water supply) to address their true spiritual condition.

2.1. He knew their works. From His elevated position in heaven, all things are exposed to the eyes of Yeshua. Whatever actions and the motives behind them are known to Him and it amounts to self-deception for any saint to think otherwise!

2.2. The Church was Lukewarm. Yeshua preferred they were either Cold or Hot. Water which is cold is refreshing and quenches thirst. Water which is hot is medicinal, cleansing the intestines and fighting cold at source. But when water is lukewarm, it serves no positive purpose but becomes an irritant, even upsetting the system of some who consume!

Drawing from this imagery, Yeshua was in effect saying they were an irritant to Him!

To be hot means to be passionate in relationship with Yahweh; fervent in Spirit and zealous in His Kingdom business (Matthew 6:19-34)! That is the state He wants us to be in 24/7 leaving no room for the flesh, the world or Satan. To be cold is to be lifeless, lacking the vibrant presence and power of Holy Spirit. To be lukewarm is to be so ineffectual because of mixture of both spiritual and carnal properties in life and ministry, lacking the sharp cutting edge of true zeal based on Grace and Truth. It is to be in a state of Secular Humanism in which principles of the world drive Church decisions, policies and practices. It is to come to a place where neither Elohim nor Satan can lay full claim to the life and focus of a minister.

Verse 16

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Commentary: Verse 16 contains a serious indictment: Yeshua said their lukewarmness would lead to total rejection! Just as people spew out lukewarm water when it riles their

taste buds, the lack of spiritual fervency and inability to live out the Kingdom culture made the continued stay of this church on earth untenable. In Matthew 5:13-16 Yeshua had laid out the principle that when Salt loses its savour, it becomes only fit to be trodden under foot!

Matthew 5:13 (KJV) 13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Yeshua clearly also debunked the dogma of eternal security in this passage. That a saint or Church can be spewed out means rejection is possible at the end of the day. Hebrews 6:4-8 and Hebrews 10:26-30 spells this principle out more clearly.

Verse 17

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Commentary: Verse 17 gives us an insight into why the Church at Laodicea descended too low:

3.1. The Church boasted in the wrong things! It was set up to manifest the King and His Kingdom, but it got drowned in the filthy lucre of Babylon! Babylon absorbed them and her values so re-configured their mindset to the degree they were actually glorying in their shame, boasting about material possessions they had stacked up. In effect, this Church made the main things minor and majored on the minor things. They turned Matthew 6:19-34 upside down and thought the King would be impressed. This same spirit has run amok and is ruling the Church of the end times!

Matthew 16:26 (KJV) 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

3.2. What Yeshua saw of this Church which it failed to see of itself was it was wretched, miserable, blind, and

actually naked! It was a mockery to the Cross and a shame to heaven! This same tendency is replicated world-wide today as Churches abandon preaching, teaching, and lifestyles of Holiness unto Yahweh; Love; Unity; Service; Empowerment of saints to function as Royal Priesthood in favour of secular humanistic sound bites and the utilitarian gospel. Consequently, multitudes flock to Church not to seek the heart and face of Yahweh but to get more 'blessings'. They do not go to seek ways to love Him more in pure worship but to receive new strategies of how to use Him to get what they want!

Verse 18

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.

Commentary: In spite of its wretched estate, Yeshua did not close the door of mercy! He provided them a window of opportunity to find redemption. It consists of these:

- 4.1. He counselled them to get true riches which come from Him alone.
- 4.2. He also counselled them to get His righteousness which is the only acceptable raiment of the Kingdom. It is His righteousness alone which covers the nakedness of its emptiness.
- 4.3. Eye salve – because they suffered from spiritual glaucoma, Yeshua was calling on the Laodiceans to seek from Him, the eye salve could heal their sight.

Verse 19

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Commentary: What a loving King our Yeshua is!

1. He rebukes from a heart of love, not willing any should perish. That is why He calls for repentance which makes people to walk in the justification which comes from His Blood.
2. He rebukes and chastens (disciplines) those He loves (Hebrews 12:4-11).
3. Divine Exaltation was promised to those who received and walked in His counsel. The greatest privilege in all eternity is to be exalted to sit with King Yeshua on His Throne. If we pay the price to emulate Him, it will come to pass, just as He was exalted after His passion (Philippians 2:5-11).

Verse 20-21

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

1. It is significant to note, Yeshua was once secure on the Throne of the heart of the Church at Laodicea. Unfortunately, in Revelation 3:20, He was now standing outside the door of their hearts, so to say. Their preoccupation with wealth had pushed Him out and self-had taken His place. How sad!
2. He expressed willingness to enter any heart which opens up to receive and enthrone Him afresh! He promised new beginning of fellowship based on the grace of Justification. He does not gate crash into lives of humans against their will!
3. He also promised the status of co-heir with all who would overcome present challenges. This is consistent with some scriptures which offer us insight into awesome privileges of the redeemed in the hereafter.

Romans 8:12-20 (KJV) 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if

ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

Galatians 3:29 (KJV) 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Titus 3:7 (KJV) 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Verse 22

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

Commentary: Yeshua called upon the Laodiceans to hear what Holy Spirit was ministering to them through the letter He sent. There is no record His warnings were heeded. According to G. Davis Dean, Laodicea was devastated by an earthquake towards end of the 5th Century AD. He also averred between 1049 and 1190, Laodicea was overrun by the Byzantines; Turks, Crusaders, Christians in the City began to emigrate en masse. By the 1800's nothing more was left. Neighboring communities had turned Laodicea into a stone quarry!

Saints, please prayerfully continue with us on this journey of discovery of the mind of Yeshua concerning His Church. This is one journey you cannot lose but will rather gain by knowing what He desires to see and what offends Him. Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 should be basic reading for anyone who bears the burden of Yeshua for His Church!

Assignment:

- (1) Kindly summarize what Yeshua had to say concerning the Church at Laodicea?
- (2) What adjustments do you need to make as a saint, in the light of this message?

Chapter 13 A Strategic Overview of Key issues in the Letters of Yeshua to the Seven Churches

Let us bear in mind as Head of the Church, Yeshua wants us to not only take our places effectively as organic parts of His Body in the earth realm, He also wants us to persist in being functionally aligned with and to Him till the very end! He is able and willing to uphold us in this regard – if we let Him!

Jude 1:24 (KJV) 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

True leaders, who He upholds and esteems highly, are to have that same mind and be invested in watching over the flock. To feed them with appropriate food and watch over their souls and thus make same ready for eternity and His return is a sacred responsibility not to be taken lightly! Paul the Apostle captured the essence of Kingdom responsibility of leaders when he wrote to saints in Galatia and Corinth:

Galatians 4:19 (KJV) 19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

2 Corinthians 7:1-5 (KJV) 1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. 3 I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you. 4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. 5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.

A Strategic Overview of Key issues in the Letters of Yeshua to the Seven Churches

Now that we have completed exposition of each of the 7 letters from Heaven letters to the Churches, let us proceed to do a strategic overview of this Kingdom assessment Yeshua found necessary to conduct on His Church within the first century of its existence in the earth realm.

The 7-part letters.

A quick overview is best when we see the letters are generally divided into seven parts: The Bible Reference; Name of the Church addressed (and in each case, He cited relevance of the vessel to who He committed oversight); Introduction by Yeshua of Himself; Commendation (or not from Yeshua); Rebuke (or not) from Him; Recommendation on the way forward and Promise to those who take heed to His words and overcome. In this chapter, we shall present this overview in a single volume designed to help those who wish to dig deeper to do so.

#.1. Bible Reference Revelation. 2:1-7

Letter to the Church at Ephesus

Introduction of Yeshua

Revelation 2:1 (KJV) 1 “he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;”

Commendation

Revelation 2:2 (KJV) 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Revelation 2:6 (KJV) 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

Rebuke

Revelation 2:4 (KJV) 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Recommendation

Revelation 2:5 (KJV) 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Revelation 2:7 (KJV) 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;

Promise

Revelation 2:7 (KJV) 7 To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

#.2. Bible Reference Revelation. 2:8-13

Letter to the Church at Smyrna

Introduction

Revelation 2:8 (KJV) 8 These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Commendation

Revelation 2:9 (KJV) 9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Rebuke - None

Recommendation

Revelation 2:10-11 (KJV) 10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11 (a)He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;

Promise

Revelation 2:11(KJV) 11 He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

#.3. Bible Reference Rev. 2:12-17

Letter to the Church at Pergamos

Introduction

Revelation 2:12 (KJV) 12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Commendation

Revelation 2:13 (KJV) 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

Rebuke

Revelation 2:14 (KJV) 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Revelation 2:15 (KJV) 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

Recommendation

Revelation 2:16 (KJV) 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Revelation 2:17 (KJV) 17 (a)He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;

Promise

Revelation 2:17 (KJV) 17 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.

#.4. Bible Reference Rev. 2:18-29

Letter to the Church at Thyatira

Introduction

Revelation 2:18 (KJV) 18 These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

Commendation

Revelation 2:19 (KJV) 19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Revelation 2:24-25 (KJV) 24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. 25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

Rebuke

Revelation 2:20-23 (KJV) 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Recommendation

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

Promise

Revelation 2:26-28 (KJV) 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star.

#.5. Bible Reference Rev. 3:1-6

Letter to the Church at Sardis

Introduction

Revelation 3:1 (KJV) 1 These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;

Commendation

Revelation 3:4 (KJV) 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments

Rebuke

Revelation 3:1 (KJV) 1 I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Recommendation

Revelation 3:2-3 (KJV) 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Revelation 3:6 (KJV) 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Promise

Revelation 3:5 (KJV) 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

#.6. Bible Reference Rev. 3:7-13

Letter to the Church at Philadelphia

Introduction

Revelation 3:7 (KJV) 7 These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Commendation

Revelation 3:8 (KJV) 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Rebuke - None

Recommendation

Revelation 3:11, 13 (KJV) 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches

Promise

Revelation 3:9-10,12 (KJV) 9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the entire world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

#.7. Bible Reference Rev. 3:14- 21

Letter to the Church at Laodicea

Introduction

Revelation 3:14 (KJV) 14 These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

Commendation - None

Rebuke

Revelation 3:15-17 (KJV) 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Recommendation

Revelation 3:18, 22 (KJV) 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Promise

Revelation 3:19-21 (KJV) 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any men hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 To him that over cometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

The sketch above is designed to help us have in one single volume the overview for purpose of further study and waiting on Elohim. Let us receive it with gratitude and take additional time to prayerfully locate which of these Churches reflect the reality of our lives as His saints in the earth realm.

Assignment:

(1). What are some of the issues that strike you concerning any or some of these seven Churches of Asia Minor?

Chapter 14 Digging Deeper into context of the Letters of Yeshua, Jesus to the 7 Churches

The number 7 stands for completion. In essence, we can deduce Yeshua was using His strategic knowledge as the Omniscient and Omnipresent One to show His elect remnant of each generation a complete picture of the Church that was; is and will be. In so doing, there is an obvious message to the faithful to endure till the end and be over comers by governing themselves accordingly. In other words, the 7 letters from heaven have within them revelation which when embraced and internalized will help the remnant to escape the snares of the enemy on the one hand and on the other hand grace is released for them to deny the human nature opportunity to overtake their walk with Him. What this means is we may find within this assessment, the following potential applications:

- 1. Mirror Paradigm:** The Seven Profiles offer each saint and each Congregation or Ministry a valuable tool with which to locate itself by the mirror of any or some of the Churches He assessed. In this regard, it is recommended this evaluation take place now that there is still time
- 2. Dispensations:** The Seven Churches can also be seen in terms of dispensation of time from the Day of Pentecost when the Church was birthed to its state shortly before intervention by Yeshua to prepare her for His return and to consummate its destiny. In this case, one will do well to see how they progressed or digressed starting from the Ephesian complex of being active in multiply good works but lacking in the relational basis of Kingdom life which is love; through the various profiles of Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis to the Laodicean complex of boasting in accumulation of wealth while oblivious of lukewarmness that is offensive to the Head defined their nature.

- 3. Minority Remnant within the Majority of Iniquity.** We can also see just as the Churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia represented a Minority remnant of 2 amongst the Majority 5 on the Broad way, so can we expect there to be a minority elect in these last days.

Between the three applications above, a number of facts stand clear:

1. Yeshua legitimately expects certain fruits from His Church. The Church is not a religious organization people 'join' or a religiously designed building people 'go into' at certain hours on certain days of the week! It is His Body in the earth realm, made of the same substance as Him. As He is, so is His Body supposed to be in the earth realm.

Fruits expected

From the Seven letters, it was obvious Yeshua does not buy into the concept once people believed in Him, they had the liberty to live any how! Rather, what we see clearly is He desired and still desires fruit! Arising from our relationship with Him, these fruits should be evident: Fruits meet for repentance – The righteousness saints receive freely in Him by Grace through Faith demands a response. When saints engage with the love of Yahweh for them in Yeshua, holiness unto Him is the fruit. Holiness is not a dry doctrine or dogma of 'Holiness churches'. It is the very life of Yeshua given free course to manifest through the vessels of grateful saints who willingly separate from all evil and consecrate their all to Him.

Matthew 3:8 (KJV) 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

All the fruit we can ever bear as saints can be broadly summed up as Love and Holiness:

- . Fervent love for Elohim and for the brethren. Love should be both the root and offspring of genuine relationship with Him

- Holiness is therefore the true evidence of new life in Him
2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV) 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
- The fruit of the Spirit becomes the outcome of abiding in Yeshua John 15:1-8.
Galatians 5:22-23 (KJV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

A life based on Love replaces the old life of religiosity and dead works based on self-efforts to please Yahweh described in Galatians 5:17-20

Galatians 5:17-20 (KJV) 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

Contrary to all the suggestions of Satan that Yahweh is a hard task master who requires us to live holy amidst an unholy world, the uniform testimony of Scripture is true holiness is not designed to be a struggle with an impossible list of things to accomplish in order to please Yahweh!

Five things make holiness a practical lifestyle:

1. Abiding in Yeshua and giving His Word space to abide in us
John 15:1-4, 6-7 (KJV) 1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have

spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

To allow His word to abide in us implies that we do not seek to change or modify it to suit our whims, ideas and preferences. Fidelity to the Word is a mark of true discipleship as Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3, 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Colossians 3:16 reveal. Every Church rebuked by Yeshua sought to change the Word to suit their lifestyle or preferences!

2. Walk in the Spirit and allow Holy Spirit to lead us in all things. That way we are always in the center of the will of Yahweh with no room for the flesh.

Galatians 5:16 (KJV) 16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Philippians 2:13 (KJV) 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Walking in the Spirit demands deliberate submission of the core of our beings – the will with its power to make choices – to the Supreme will of Yahweh. This was a critical secret which enabled Yeshua to function optimally and effectively in the earth realm. He was in a place that the will of the Father was embraced as His Own:

John 5:30 (KJV) 30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

John 6:38 (KJV) 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

This is what drove Him to a life of constant prayer so there was no room for presumption. For true Kingdom saints,

therefore, the core of their motives in prayer is not to seek to force their ideas and needs on a complacent Yahweh but to simply posture to know, align, and do His Supreme will. In other words, prayer is likened to spiritual mid-wifery.

Romans 8:14 (KJV) 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

3. A deliberate acceptance of the reality that though we are in the world, we are not of it and should therefore incline our hearts and minds to walk separately from it, by His grace. This means rejecting worldly culture whose nature is from Satan and whose operating system is Sin. This is why worldly culture – whether in terms of fashion and lifestyle or music genres loosen the flesh, tends to words of sensuality; glorifies sexuality, seductiveness and fosters desires for amusements which feed the soul with poison! Look at what Yeshua prayed to the Father concerning our separation from the world:

John 17:14-16 (KJV) 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

The charge to live an opposite life could not be clearer than what John said here:

1 John 2:15-17 (KJV) 15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

4. Engagement with the Kingdom purpose for which we are planted in the earth realm

One of the most powerful instruments that keep saints holy unto Yahweh and constantly refreshed is the entire consecration of all they are and have, to focus on and pursue fulfilment of the purpose for which Yahweh left us in the earth! After we are saved the best option for reaping our souls would have been to take us 'home'. But Yahweh has far more reasons for keeping us in the earth realm. It is for this reason spiritual gifts and natural talents as well as other resources are given to saints so that we can effectively fulfil the divine purpose in the earth realm.

Luke 19:13 (KJV) 13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

Those who make it their sacred duty to discover, pursue, and fulfil the divine purpose often leave no room for the Flesh, The World or Satan to deflect or pollute them. To respond to the call to serve as a priest after the order of Melchizedeck is not an option! It is our reasonable service which gives Yahweh great pleasure as He bears much fruit through our yielded vessels:

John 15:16 (KJV) 16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John 15:8 (KJV) 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

The higher dimensions of this purpose include these specifics:

- 4.1. Instruments of saving all who we are assigned to world-wide. To each saint is assigned a certain number of sinners
 - as primal instruments of witnessing Yeshua, or
 - watering the souls of those who had been previously ministered to or
 - reap their souls into the Kingdom.

1 Corinthians 3:6-8 (KJV) 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

If we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, He will lead us to such people (Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

4.2. There is a quantum of impact Yeshua has ordained to make on the world through the vessels of His yielded saints. In effect, saints are Ambassadors of Yeshua, His Salt and Light in the earth realm (Matthew 5:13-16).

1. Exercising the will in submission to Sovereignty of Yeshua, Jesus!

A matter of choice!

Life in the earth realm is therefore a matter of choice! In the days of Moses, the question was 'who is on the Lord's side'. The prompt response of Levites to Him secured for them a seal of their election as a tribe of Priests who ministered to Adonai. In the days of Yeshua, He totally submitted His will to that of the Father as John 5:30 and John 6:38 states clearly. This was based on His love of Right standing with the Father (Righteousness) and hatred of iniquity (Hebrews 1:9). In the present time, this same battle cry for being totally submitted to will of our heavenly Father sounds in the Spirit realm. This time it sounds in a clear fashion: Who will walk by the Spirit and who wants to remain in the Flesh, making self-decisions to gratify the soul and body at the expense of the spirit-man? The consequences of this choice should not be lost on any. This scripture boldly presents the alternatives of Spirit-led (Romans 8:10-16) and Flesh led living (Romans 8:5-9)

Flesh-based living

Romans 8:5-9 (KJV) 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally

minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Spirit-led living

Romans 8:12-16 (KJV) 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness

Conclusion: Let us use the framework above to give Holy Spirit right of way to evaluate us on a deep, personal level! The love of Yahweh has been manifested in release of the truths we have studied so far. By giving us these truths, His supreme objective is we be set free from the lies of Satan and deception of worldly culture.

John 8:32,36 (KJV) 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

The intense word we received in this epic download can therefore be seen from the prism of the ongoing sanctification of the Church by Yeshua.

Ephesians 5:26-27 (KJV) 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Assignment:

- (1) Please share to what extent these 7 Letters from heaven and the chapter of today impacted you on a personal level?
- (2) What should we do with the revelations and expositions the Father graciously released through this Course/Series?

Chapter 15 Overcomers

We need to realize that ultimately, the Church which was birthed at Pentecost is ordained to walk in a Kingdom lifestyle here in the earth realm as a dress rehearsal for eternal bliss with Him.

The 10 P's of the Overcomer

In the letters Yeshua wrote to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor, He repeatedly called for them to be overcomers. This demand was consistent – to both the faithful and wayward churches. This guidance note will help all saints who are determined to respond to the Supreme Love of Yahweh in Yeshua to have a compass that will enable them to be overcomers at the end of their pilgrimage on this side of the Kingdom. Your Past and Present do not matter, if you lay hold of the revelation of Truth the Lord has graciously supplied to us as instruments of making it till the very end. In the light of the Divine assessments of the Churches at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7); Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11); Pergamos (Revelation 2:12-17); Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29); Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6); Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13) and Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22), it is needful we receive and run with the vision of how to function as overcomers in the earth realm.

There are 10 simple and uncomplicated things required for those who would overcome. They are summed up as

1. Promise;
2. Purpose;
3. Past
4. Plan
5. Persistence
6. Perseverance
7. Prayer & Spiritual Warfare
8. Power
9. Passion
10. Pass it on.

Let us look at them in detail.

#.1. Promise to overcomers must be known, understood, and received personally.

Many saint live and walk without consciousness of the overarching promise! The ultimate Promise is those who overcome (successfully finish their life race on this side of eternity) have a Crown of Righteousness awaiting them. The Promise therefore is that of eternal relationship with Elohim with attendant blessings in the world to come. This Promise implies overcomers will not suffer the punishment of spiritual death or eternal separation from Yahweh. It is significant that the necessity to overcome was a consistent demand from Yeshua from all the Seven Churches – including the faithful ones of Smyrna and Philadelphia! If He used the same word in making a demand from each of them, the implications are clear: This is indeed something of critical interest to all saints!
Revelation 2

Revelation 2:7 (KJV) 7 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. (To Ephesus)

Revelation 2:11 (KJV) 11 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. (To Smyrna)

Revelation 2:17 (KJV) 17 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. (To Pergamos)

Revelation 2:26-28 (KJV) 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be

broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28
And I will give him the morning star. (To Thyatira)

Revelation 3

Revelation 3:5 (KJV) 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (To Sardis)

Revelation 3:12 (KJV) 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. (To Philadelphia)

Revelation 3:21(KJV) 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (To Laodicea)

Concerning this Promise, there are two critical promises that enable us to overcome

1.1. The abiding Presence of Yeshua with us at all times. He will never leave us alone but is with us always

Matthew 28:20 (KJV) 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Hebrews 13:5-6 (KJV) 5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

1.2. The Promise of His Grace to power our lives. This Grace is available 24/7 waiting for us to tap into by Prayer and Faith

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (KJV) 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

It is this Grace which Holy Spirit releases to enable us desire and do those things which are pleasing in His sight which could not have been done in our natural strength!

Philippians 1:6 (KJV) 6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Philippians 2:13 (KJV) 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Let us trust Elohim with our future and surrender our will to Holy Spirit! If He guides our mind and decision making process as Romans 8:14 declares, we will live like sons of Elohim and therefore 24/7 overcomers! Let no one miss this vital key! Stop planning your life without His direction and then expect him to rubber stamp those carnal decisions! (Romans 8:5-9)

#.2. Purpose

The first response of true saints to this glorious Plan is to purpose with all our hearts to experience it's fulfilment. This is what drove the remarkable life and ministry of Paul as recorded in 2 Timothy 4: 6-8

2 Timothy 4:6-8 (KJV) 6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I

have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

It is this purpose which will enable a saint to:

- 2.1. Count the Costs. Yeshua at no time promised a rosy journey for those who follow Him. On the other hand, He laid out the costs!

Matthew 16:24-26 (KJV) 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

- 2.2. Determine nothing can be allowed to separate us from possessing the Promise.

Romans 8:35-39 (KJV) 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- 2.3. Make the main thing the main thing: Which is to seek first the Kingdom and it's righteousness, trusting Yahweh to provide all needs and decorate with material blessings in His time (Matthew 6:19-34).

Matthew 6:33-34 (KJV) 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

The voice of purpose comes out clearly in what Paul said to the Corinthians

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (KJV) 24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

For our purpose to endure, what motivates us and what drives our service must be Love rendered in sincerity and holiness not to be seen, known or gain advantage! We therefore must allow Holy Spirit to engraft the love of Yeshua and His love for all humans in our hearts. This will make the critical difference in the context and content of our service.

#.3. Past: Deal with the Past and Leave it behind. One sad reality is many saints tend to want to carry baggage of besetting sins and weaknesses of their past lives into their Present, justifying same with secular-humanistic concepts which suggest that sin is still default lifestyle of saints! Nothing could be further from the truth!

In dealing with the past, one sure way forward is to release past hurts, forgive offences by real or assumed offenders and let go of issues which caused damaged emotions in the first place. Saints should learn to forgive themselves for past moral failures –whether before Salvation or after and accept the

Justification freely offered by the Father for all sins that are brought to the Blood.

In addition, the past is dealt with when due restitution is made. Whether in such simple issues as restoring stolen goods/money as done by Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). In advanced cases, it may involve restoring marriages that were broken out of pride, anger, character issues, or offences, unforgiveness or pressure from family members who hated a spouse and pressured one to separate or divorce. The idea is once grace is truly received, saints cannot clutch at anything which will give Satan room to accuse – whether in truth or in false hood. To hold onto the lawful spouse of another person is not worth the potential torment of eternal damnation.

#.4. Plan

Each individual should prayerfully receive and walk on a divinely revealed plan to make it. The plan may be received in a moment of time or over a lifetime. Sometimes, it takes a study like this course for a saint to begin to grasp the full scope of life in the now and hereafter on a heart level. When such a grasping takes place, grace is received to intentionally purpose to walk in divine purpose alone. When in place, such a plan will enable a saint to see progression on these levels:

- 3.1.** From a servile relationship to that of intimacy with Yeshua. This arises from a life of obedience of the Word by His Grace even in 'small' things. This is the stage where a saint communes with the Saviour as an act of intimacy to see, know His heart rather than to heap requests of what to get (John 15:14-15).
- 3.2.** By consistently embracing the dealings of Holy Spirit through what He allows. When saints embrace things allowed by the Lord without complaining, they mature well

Philippians 2:12-16 (KJV) 12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God

which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. 14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

By also digging deeper into the Word, not looking for 'blessings' but to know and to do the will of the King, there is maturity that is imbued. As one takes on responsibility for our Father's estate in the earth realm, there is a transition from friendship with Yeshua to become, as it were, a son of Yahweh, just like Yeshua was, in the earth realm. He came that the Father may have more sons (Hebrews 2:9-14; John 20:17)! Sons live by the will of their Father and are led by Holy Spirit (Romans 8:12-16). Many saints remain babes and are ignorant of the deeper truths concerning the Kingdom that now is and which is to come because they spent most of their time drinking Milk of the Word!

Hebrews 5:12-14 (KJV) 12 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. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

#.5. Persistence.

Persistence is the attitude of mind and attendant actions which press forward in spite of what one sees, hears, perceives, or feels. A persistent spirit will energize the soul and quicken the body to line up with what Yahweh is saying and doing. Persistence of the spirit-man will enable saints to press forward when all the senses suggest to stop, back down, or

remain static. Persistent people win their prizes because there is a dynamic energy released that makes them to soar above circumstances. In these last days, this is a needful attitude. It is persistence that will enable a saint to successfully undertake a course of study such as this or even the entire Master class program in spite of challenges!

- 4.1. Those who persist do not slack or reduce their acts of doing good to both Elohim and fellow humans (Galatians 6:7-10).
- 4.2. Persistent saints press on until the prize is finally won after they successfully breast the tape (Philippians 3:12-14).
- 4.3. Persistence includes continuing in doing what is right and good, even when others do otherwise! In effect, it is about remaining on the road less travelled!

#.6. Perseverance.

In the midst of storms that will seek to buffet the Christian life on earth including persecution, evil speaking, misunderstandings, and attempts to shut saints down in various spheres, the grace of perseverance will keep them. Perseverance is endurance in action. It is a state of heart and attitude of mind which is not moved by external stimuli but causes a fixed heart. The grace of perseverance releases the tendency to proactively discern and embrace all fires we are appointed to pass through.

Acts 20:23-24 (KJV) 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

In perseverance, there is a clear purpose to overcome and win the prize which drives the life of the saint. This was the secret of the overcoming life of Yeshua, Jesus Himself.

Hebrews 12:2 (KJV) 2 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.

Those who persevere avoid the dangerous trap of comparing themselves with others who live on the Broadway. They realize at end of the day, this is a personal race and everyone should be persuaded in their own hearts how to respond to the upward call of Elohim!

#.7. Prayer & Spiritual Warfare.

When saints are wired as described here, their prayer life shifts dramatically! They do not spend too much time in tears or fasting seeking material blessings. Their prayer life is for a higher purpose: To seek, know, and do the will of the Father in all circumstances (Matthew 6:10; John 5:30; John 6:38). In effect, they, like Yeshua become spiritual midwives aligned with the Father to birth His will, not theirs in the earth realm (John 5:30; John 6:38). They spend time interceding for manifestation of His purpose and for perfection of the saints. In prayer, they also bring their hearts, minds, emotions, and wills before Yahweh seeking the sanctifying power of the Blood and Word to do a deeper work as they grow in grace. The outcome is greater degrees of fruit of the Spirit and better attitudes to life.

In Spiritual Warfare, saints take on the responsibility of sons to keep the estate of the Father free of Satanic influence by enforcing the ordinance of Calvary in the domains assigned to them to exercise Kingdom dominion. This calls for putting on the whole armour for effective warfare against Satan and his evil cohorts (Ephesians 6:10-18). Satan wants saints to be drained of spiritual and physical energy trying to 'make it'! Unfortunately, that is the exact opposite of Kingdom Life as Matthew 6:19-34 shows. The Lord wants end time saints to reverse course and spend quality time in His Presence because the days are evil. He wants to reveal things that are present and things to come – if only His saints will draw near and

spend time with Him in prayer and the Word. He wants us to emulate Yeshua, Jesus Who started the day in prayer (Mark 1:35) and committed all things to His Father. It will be great to see Leaders of ministries and even saints giving the Lord a Tithe of their 24-hour day in prayer, communion in the word! Even saints who want to stand tall before giants should form the holy habit of developing warm prayer lives! Let us pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)!

#.8. Power

True saints are aware of the limitations of the flesh and dare not trust in themselves to make it. Therefore, they hunger to walk in the fullness of Holy Spirit. This is the degree of in filling of Holy Spirit in which all dimensions of His Presence are evident.

8.1. He Seals them into Yeshua for which they are assured that at His appearance they will make it. They are constantly experiencing His transforming power through the word and grow from glory to glory.

8.2. He releases Grace for inside out Transformation – from glory to glory!

8.3. He releases grace for saints to walk in unity. This makes them to rightly discern the Body and feel free with saints called out of other races, cultures; mix with saints of all gender, age, and socio economic status and political persuasions. This is the simple secret of Kingdom projects like DayBreak with the King and the Master Class.

8.4. He releases the power by which saints demonstrate the Risen Yeshua in signs, wonders, and various miraculous manifestations (Acts 1:8).

#.9. Passion. Saints who will make it need to be passionate about the things of the Spirit! When a saint is Passionate about the Kingdom and his/her specific role therein, zeal is released to focus on the main things that matter while all of the being is consumed with the heavenly vision received. Passionate people emit virtue and the aroma of His holy

Presence which draws in, 'infects' and influence all those within their spheres of Kingdom expression. The Church at Laodicea was rebuked for lacking Passion which is another term for Lukewarmness.

Romans 12:11 (KJV) 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

#.10. Pass on

The kind of saint described here will be imbued with a sense of mission to pass on the baton of revelation and holiness to as many people as he/she is assigned to. This will lead to a life of:

8.1. Personally, buying into the Great Commission and actively continuing the Yeshua habit of seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10).

8.2. Disciple and empower those who are saved but yet in the flesh. In this regard, they discern, identify, challenge with their sold-out lifestyle and pass on all the truth they have received to other saints so the agenda of Yeshua in the earth realm is perpetuated.

2 Timothy 2:2 (KJV) 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Overwhelming desire of all true Preachers and Teachers

The Overwhelming desire of true Preachers and Teachers is to present the saints under their charge (or those they are assigned to) faultless before King Yeshua, Jesus at His appearance. Whoever is not imbued with this deep expression of true Love is doing a disservice to Yahweh, the saints concerned and him/her self.

2 Corinthians 11:2 (KJV) 2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Galatians 4:11-19 (KJV) 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. 12 Brethren, I

beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. 13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. 14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. 15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. 16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? 17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. 18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. 19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

It is this heartfelt commitment which will bring the laser focus on Yahweh to receive Light on what to feed them with, pray for them with passion, and see beyond the facade people wear. With this framework, the faithful minister is enabled to persist until the saints 'get it' Yahweh is able to uphold – if saints give Him right of way!

Jude 1:22-25 (KJV) 22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Assignment:

- (1) Which of these P's represents personal revelation/message for you?
- (2) On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the practical application/usefulness of this chapter?

Chapter 16 Common Denominator: Falling Away from Truth

A common denominator for the Churches that were reproved: Falling away from the Truth in Yeshua! In Chapter 15, we saw one factor common to all churches was the Promise Yeshua made to overcomers. In each case, the Promise had to do with obtaining rewards of eternal value. For balance, the King wants us to take note of another common factor or denominator in all the Churches that were reproved: Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea. Each of them experienced a falling away from the pure gospel or truth to certain degrees that were peculiar. Ephesus lost its first love. Pergamos opened the door to Balaamites and Nicolaitanes. Thyatira tolerated Jezebel and her lewd ways. Sardis had a reputation before men but was dead. Laodicea boasted in wealth while empty, naked, and blind.

The Church of Yeshua stands on two pillars that are in Him which John the beloved captured in his epic gospel.

John 1:17 (KJV) 17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Yeshua, Jesus brought two things from heaven to earth as basis of restoration and fostering of the relationship between Yahweh and humanity to pave the way for restoration of His Kingdom in the earth realm. Let us examine them in greater detail.

- Grace – This is the life of Yahweh freely released through Holy Spirit to all who are in Yeshua. It is the divine capacity to live a holy ‘other worldly’ life that is simple, uncomplicated, and free of the pressures to ‘achieve’ which drives the world. As Paul explained in Romans Chapter 6:1-16, Grace is not and cannot be a license to continue in Sin! We come into the Kingdom by Grace and are sustained therein by Grace. For this reason, we are called to grow in Grace (2 Peter 3:18).

- Truth – The Truth about Elohim and His relationship with humanity is embodied in Yeshua. John 1:1-3 bears testimony of this. Some people want to cling to Moses and his writings. Other prefer Isaiah while others prefer certain eloquent scriptures which appeal to them especially the Wisdom books. Unfortunately, Elohim twice declared with finality Yeshua is the only medium through which He deals with humanity – at the Baptism of John (Matthew 3:17) and on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-6). It is for this reason the writer of Hebrews made the ground-breaking revelation:

Hebrews 1:1-3 (KJV) 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

In effect, Yeshua is Grace and Truth personified! As is the Head, so is the Body! What He is and what is in Him is also what the Church is and should be known for. As His Body in the earth realm, The Church should be a literal manifestation of the Grace and Truth of Yahweh in Yeshua! As was noted before, one common thread that ran through all the five Churches which received some rebuke from Yeshua (Ephesus, Pergamon, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea) is they fell away from truth to one degree or the other. It is also evident they continued in their error until Yeshua appeared because they consciously or unconsciously took His grace to mean license to live however they wanted!

This same tendency has been the norm over the years as men and women arose in different dispensations of time to lead saints into their personal perspectives rather than the

simple, undiluted Truth of the Word. This is one of the roots of the Denominations that have given Christian Religion a bad name.

This tendency to re-define truth has been a recurring theme since Eden when Satan preached error to Eve (Genesis 3:1-7)! The same spirit which deceived Aaron to build the Golden Calf (Exodus 32) and which caused Jeroboam the son of Nebat to build a high place as an alternative to the real Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 12) is actively at work seeking to divide the Church of Yeshua into camps of 'anointed' ministers who are busy, striving to foist their personal, soulish perspectives as truth on their followers. Today, great ministries are springing up world-wide, built not on the fullness of revelation of the Word that is Yeshua but rather around men and women who have chosen to interpret scripture to suit their fancies and give their adoring fans the license to continue in their preferred lifestyles so grace may abound. If denominations were negative, these religious corporations owned by individuals and families have taken the principles imparted by Nimrod the son of Cush in Genesis 10:8-10 (ownership and control of fellow humans away from the divine purpose) to a whole new level. Even among saints who one would expect to be the most serious, the temptation to accept, exalt and cling to the aspects of truth they love is too great to miss.

Once anyone in the Church – whether a leader of any sort by whatever title called or simply any brother or sister seeks to redefine Grace and distort Truth to any degree, the logical consequence will be a falling away. Initially, the falling away may not be so evident in a leader. The reason is he or she may still preach powerfully; teach with seeming authority and do miracles, signs, and wonders. When misuse of grace or its transition into license to live in sin and distortions of truths begin to manifest, many are blindsided by the outward manifestations of power of Holy Spirit. What many Christians have not been schooled to understand is the gifts and callings

of Yahweh, once released to a person are not withdrawn, even if that person falls away!

Romans 11:29 (KJV) 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Rather, when those who knew and lived right fall away, the double-edged sword of Elohim comes into the mix. The anointing that was given without repentance to be used as an instrument of fulfilling destiny, when misused to serve the purpose of Satan and Flesh, becomes the basis of Judgement! The gifts given to reconcile humanity to Him and build them up to the fullness of the stature of Yeshua, when misused to trap the souls of saints in the pew as a dormant laity conquered to serve the ambitions of 'smart and strong' leaders, becomes an instrument of fiery judgement. The reality that people can be anointed and yet fall away is as real as every truth we know!

Hebrews 6:4-8 (KJV) 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. 7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

Hebrews 10:26-31 (KJV) 26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose

ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

These things are not surprising. Yeshua was clear about the attractive broad way which would seem enticing to multitudes. He was also clear saints should put on discerning hats when dealing with or receiving ministry from anointed vessels. He never asked saints to swallow what preachers and teachers say, hook, line, and sinker. Rather, these were His clear warnings:

Matthew 7:13-23 (KJV) 13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. 15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I

profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Admonitions by the Apostles

Paul was used of Holy Spirit to warn about the falling away from Truth which would mark the end times:

1 Timothy 4:1-3 (KJV) 1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

2 Timothy 3:1-3 (KJV) 1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

2 Timothy 4:3 (KJV) 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

The reason some are justifying their new doctrines and preferred lifestyles is they doubt if Yeshua will return!

2 Peter 3:1-4 (KJV) 1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep,

all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

A gradual Process...

It is important to note the falling away of a congregation or ministry does not just happen suddenly! There is always a starting point when a door is opened to erroneous teachings from outside and the effect of striving brethren who want to carve out their own spheres of influence over some saints. This was the point Paul sought to warn Elders of the Church of Ephesus.

Acts 20:29-30 (KJV) 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Yeshua's assessment of the 7 Churches was based on Truth.

The assessments which Yeshua conducted on the Seven Churches of Asia Minor were not done in a vacuum but based on revealed truth they all had access to. By AD 95 when He spoke to John the beloved, virtually all the books of the New Testament had already been written. The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, for instance was written about AD 60 to 62. The epistle to the Colossians which Paul instructed them to send to the Laodiceans (Colossians 4:16) was written about AD 60. What Yeshua did therefore was to weigh the lives of the Seven Churches against the Truth they knew!

As we finally go down the wire on this epic download on the interim assessment Yeshua conducted on His Church in the first century, the Father ministered to our hearts to give the issue of Truth more space. There are those who use eloquent speech to confuse Christians. One of such manner of speech is the exotic declaration or insinuation that Yahweh does not have any Laws for Kingdom citizens to keep again. Such people advance the strange notion that Laws or rules of behaviour are archaic and represent Religion.

This is simply a continuation of the original lie of Satan to Eve at the Garden of Eden. Let no one confuse saints with any sweetened word on this reality: The Kingdom of Elohim, right from its inception in the earth realm at the Garden of Eden had and will always have His Truth as rules until we transit to the perfect state in the world to come. His Truth or Rules of behaviour is that they simply govern behaviour by citizens of the Kingdom. In any case, He brings them into His Kingdom entirely by Grace, not works (Ephesians 2:1-8). He also personally enables His citizens to live out or bear fruits of the gift of Righteousness by giving them Grace to relate with Him from a place of loving obedience, not the works of their fleshly abilities! On the other hand, Christian Religion imposes rules and rituals through which ‘worshippers’ try to earn acceptance and approval of a God they do not have a personal relationship with.

Why is it so?

Every Kingdom has these integral elements. None of them can be omitted or else the Kingdom is incomplete:

1. A Supreme King or Sovereign Ruler – Elohim, manifesting in the earth realm as Yeshua, Jesus
2. A Domain or physical/geographical sphere of influence – the universe generally
3. A Dominion or citizens/subjects over whom the King exercises authority – saints are His sheep!
4. Ambassadors who represent the King in the courts of other Kings. (Saints, who grow in Him, mature as sons of Elohim and who accept responsibility to represent Him to the world).
5. A Constitution or rules – written or oral.

Constitution of the Kingdom over the years

Let us look at these simple truths to establish how the Kingdom has always had laws that are to be kept.

- 5.1. In Eternity past. Satan fell because there were rules in the eternal Kingdom which he breached in eternity past. His pride and vaulting ambition to transit from

one who worshipped Elohim to one who desired to be exalted is well documented in the revelations in Isaiah 14:12-19 and Ezekiel 28:11-19.

5.2. In the Garden of Eden. In Genesis, Elohim gave man dominion over His entire creation (domain)

Genesis 1:26-29 (KJV) 26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. 29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

To exercise this dominion however, Adam and Eve were required to keep the Laws Elohim put in place to preserve His creation from corruption.

Genesis 2:15-17 (KJV) 15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Adam and Eve fell into sin when they disobeyed Elohim and flouted His Constitution!

Genesis 3:1-7 (KJV) 1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God

said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

In so doing, they simply made Satan their new master because they came under his dominion!

Romans 6:16 (KJV) 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

The Old Testament

The Plan of Elohim for Israel was to make them a peculiar people among all the nations of the earth. For this to happen, they needed a Constitution or special rules to set them apart. On Mount Sinai, He gave Israel the Torah. This Body of Truth was to be observed strictly by Hebrews and proselytes (converts from Gentile nations). Whenever Israel did its part, it obtained the promise and became a holy nation of Priests to Elohim

Exodus 19:5-8 (KJV) 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words

which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.

Whenever Israel flouted His Law, it became renegade and suffered judgement!

Laws and the New Covenant

Yeshua was emphatic that He did not come to abolish the Torah and warned saints to desist from giving the impression that this was His mission.

Matthew 5:17-20 (KJV) 17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 20 of Matthew Chapter 5 is a very strong statement! It is emphatic that the righteousness which comes by internalizing holiness and living by the Spirit who empowers, leads, and guides in all things will result in obedience that does not come by oppressive observance of rules and regulations! Yeshua came to fulfil the Law on our behalf and give us strength (Grace) to live over and above it! In other words, Yeshua came to do what Israel and indeed all humans could not do by self-effort: keep the Torah! He came to fulfil the Torah and release strength for all who receive His Blood

sacrifice; abide in Him and in who His words abide so they can receive His Grace to live out the provisions of the Torah without oppression of fleshly endeavor. This grace that He releases is so necessary because trying to fulfil the Torah was something humans always came short. By offering up Himself as the ultimate Lamb of Elohim for the sins of all humanity, Yeshua fulfilled the Law and became sin for us so that we can be the righteousness of Elohim in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Part of why Yeshua came therefore, was to take away all the hand writings of the ordinances that were against worshippers which they could not fulfil because of weakness of the flesh.

Galatians 4:1-6 (KJV) 1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Colossians 2:14-18 (KJV) 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. 18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into

those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

The Laws of the Kingdom (New Covenant) which are lived out by Grace are far superior than those of the Old Covenant which Israel could not fulfil by self-effort as Yeshua's Sermon on the Mount in Matthew Chapters 5, 6 and 7 clearly reveal! Let us take a sampling:

Matthew 5:20 (KJV) 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Kingdom standard for Purity Versus the Law of Moses

Matthew 5:27-28 (KJV) 27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Kingdom standard for Divorce versus the Law of Moses

Matthew 5:31-32 (KJV) 31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

This same standard is repeated by Yeshua in Matthew 19:1-12. It is sad Ministers and Ministries have used secular-humanistic thoughts to make of no effect such profound thing as Word of the King with absolutely no fear of the consequences. With the 'delay' in his return, such systematic supplanting of His Words for the words of humans is now standard fare. Truth is now subject to the whims of preachers and their emotional states.

Yeshua is the Truth of the New Covenant

John 14:6 (KJV) 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Yeshua came to inaugurate the New Covenant which effectively restored relationship between humans and the Father as His Truth (Law) is inscribed in their hearts rather than on scrolls and stone. Based on the work of Holy Spirit as He sealed saints into Yeshua, the spiritual operation of a new heart which knows the Word intuitively with a activation of a lively conscience is the basis of the New Creation spoken of in 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Hebrews 10:15-16 (KJV) 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them

With this paradigm shift, saints are able to live out the whole counsel of Yahweh by the strength He gives in Yeshua which is called Grace!

Philippians 4:13 (KJV) 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

This grace is dispensed by Holy Spirit who leads saints into all truth and guides their daily walk in righteousness! Holy Spirit does a special work of Grace when He seals us into Yeshua and automatically writes the Laws of the New Covenant into our consciences which are quickened on the day of redemption!

Upshot: Kingdom to Come must be Highly esteemed!

There can be no true preparation for the manifest phase of the Kingdom than to allow the Spirit and Letters of the Word of Truth to govern every aspect of our lives! Whatever that does not line up should be identified, rejected and renounced! Yeshua did not mince words when He told saints to esteem the Kingdom to come very highly and pay whatever price required for gaining entry!

Matthew 5:29-30 (KJV) 29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is

profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

The Five Churches of Asia Minor which refused to heed the warnings of Yeshua are no more. How much more shall those who allow His Word to fall on the ground fear for their eternal state? As long as there is life, there is hope of change. If we do not harden our hearts but rather fall on His Word seeking His mercy, He will not cast us away!

Acts 17:30 (KJV) 30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Assignment:

- (1) Please present a summary of this chapter.
- (2) Explain two truths which particularly ministered to you

Chapter 17 The Lost Truth: Judgement Days are coming + Eternity of Bliss or Damnation!

If we look intently at the letters of Yeshua, Jesus to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor which are also for our instruction, there is an obvious reference to the reality life of individuals and the collective does not end on this side of eternity. There is a glaring reference to the day of ultimate assessment or Judgement which will determine on what side of the divide people will spend eternity. Let us examine the statements many often ignore which form the basis of this chapter:

#.1. Indications of Judgement to the Church at Ephesus in Revelation 2:5 and 7

Revelation 2:5 (KJV) 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Commentary: This is an indication if they refused to repent, there will be judgement that separates them from Elohim permanently.

Revelation 2:7 (KJV) 7 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.

Commentary: This is indication that if they repent and have a changed life, they will enjoy bliss with Elohim forever.

#.2. Encouragement of eternity to the Church in Smyrna in Revelation 2:10, 11

Revelation 2:10 (KJV) 10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Revelation 2:11 (KJV) 11 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.

Commentary: This is a clear indication if the Church continues to overcome in faithfulness to Yeshua, they will receive the Crown of life and will not suffer the Second Death which is eternal damnation with Satan in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

#.3. Indications of Judgement to the Church in Pergamos in Revelation 2:16, 17

Revelation 2:16 (KJV) 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Commentary: Those who refuse to repent have terrible Judgement ahead.

Revelation 2:7 (KJV) 17 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.

Commentary: Those who overcome have the promise of a better judgement which will lead to an outcome of eternal bliss. Those who keep His Covenant have a perpetual inheritance from Him. The most exciting part of this truth is Yahweh commits Himself to supply grace which will keep those whose hearts are right in Him (Jude Verse 24-25).

#.4. Indications of Judgement to the corrupted Church of Thyatira in Revelation 2:22-23, 26-28

Revelation 2:22-23 (KJV) 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Commentary: Two dimensions of Judgement are indicated: Tribulation in time and eternal damnation in the future.

Revelation 2:26-28 (KJV) 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star.

Commentary: For overcomers, there is promise of eternal rewards after they are evaluated.

#.5. Indications of Judgement to the Dead Church of Sardis in Revelation 3:3-5

Revelation 3:3 (KJV) 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Commentary: The reality there will be Judgement of this Church is emphasized and swiftness of His return!

Revelation 3:4-5 (KJV) 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Commentary: A good outcome of eternal bliss will be the judgement of over comers.

#.6. Indications of Judgement to the Faithful Church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3:11-12

Revelation 3:11 (KJV) 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Commentary: Yeshua found it necessary to warn the faithful remnant Church of Philadelphia not to rest on its oars. The Judgement ahead will not respect past achievements but present state of their lives.

Revelation 3:12 (KJV) 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Commentary: Yeshua found it necessary to motivate the faithful Church of Philadelphia with graphic pictures of the outcome of a good judgement: eternal blessings!

#.7. Indications of Judgement to the boastful Church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:16-17; 20-21

Revelation 3:16-17 (KJV) 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Commentary: The Judgement ahead would lead to eternal damnation if they remained Lukewarm.

Revelation 3:20-21 (KJV) 20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Commentary: Eternal rewards are presented as the prize for overcoming. Despite their present state, Yeshua did not give up but hoped for the best with a promise of promotion for overcomers.

The uniform testimony of the presentation above shows there are two Judgements ahead, one for saints who overcame and the other for sinners who refused His love. Let us see what the Holy Scriptures further teach on the subject matter and leave it for you to make the decision you want.

A. Judgement for saints and Eternal Rewards in 5 phases

The modern Church has been assaulted by suggestions the rewards people should earnestly seek for are mainly at the present time. For this reason, many deploy all their energies to release faith and great exertions of strength in prayer seeking to obtain the blessings. Consequently, they miss the glorious truths that are presented in Matthew 6:19-34. Yahweh can and often blesses saints with rewards in time as Yeshua told Peter in Matthew 19:27-29. Paul however was used of Holy Spirit to warn saints against being short sighted:

1 Corinthians 15:19 (KJV) 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

A day is coming when faithful saints who laid hold of the grace of Yahweh in Yeshua to overcome the odds posed by Satan, Sin, the World, and motions of their own flesh and who discovered and used their spiritual gifts, callings, and natural talents and all resources committed to their trust to serve the interests of the King and His Kingdom will come before Him to be rewarded.

The Fruit of Obedience and Consequence of Disobedience

Let us briefly consider five Ultimate Blessings awaiting saints who take the Word seriously and hear what Holy Spirit is saying in the now about need to be made ready for the world to come:

Ultimate Reward #.1.The Rapture of saints

It is unfortunate Satan has made the subject of what Yeshua provided to save His Church from the wrath to come the subject of intense strife to the degree many saints are hung up on the rightness of their personal perspectives as opposed to the principle of preservation which is the essence. It is the plan and provision of Yeshua to preserve His saints from the Great Tribulation and Reign of Anti-Christ that is the essence of their catching away or rapture. Those who dismiss the rapture have no valid excuse to do so because the Word is clear of what is involved and why:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (KJV) 13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Ultimate Reward #.2. Participation in the Judgement Seat of Yeshua, Jesus

After the rapture of saints and First Resurrection from the dead, the righteous who overcame will be presented to the Judgement Seat of Yeshua, Jesus for assessment of the quality of work committed to their trust. It is instructive to note only saints who overcame this world will appear before the Judgement or Mercy Seat of Yeshua!

2 Corinthians 5:10 (KJV) 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

At the Judgement Seat of Yeshua, the fire of His glory will screen every thought, intent/motive, word, action to determine their purity. This is where evaluation will produce much pleasant surprises. Many unknown but faithful saints will receive great commendation while many loud and prominent preachers who maintained their faith in Yeshua till the end but did not labour in accordance to pattern will be stripped of

their earthly glories to become ordinary citizens of the Kingdom in the world to come.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (KJV) 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Ultimate Reward #.3. Participate in Marriage Supper of the Lamb

From a careful comparison of scripture line upon line and precept upon precept, the Judgment seat of Yeshua is followed by the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. It is here the Crowns and other rewards, in accordance to degrees of faithfulness will be celebrated. This is where the Church will be presented, as a Bride, to its Groom at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb! For this reason, Yeshua, the Groom is committed to get the Bride ready for Himself through ongoing final sanctification by the ministry of the Word as anointed by Holy Spirit!

Revelation 19:6-9 (KJV) 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine

linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Look at other ways the Holy Scriptures picture this Judgement and its outcome:

Matthew 24:44-47 (KJV) 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. 45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

May all of us be found worthy to partake of this epic feast of the ages!

Ultimate Reward #.4. To rule and reign on Planet Earth with the victorious King of Kings, Yeshua Ha Mashiach in the manifest phase of the Kingdom.

This is when the earth realm will experience what the Garden of Eden was like before the Fall. There will be no diseases, crises, need for 9-5 jobs, neither will there be wars or any kind of evil as the Devil will be bound for 1000 years so Yeshua and His Righteousness will be universally pervasive! Overcomers will teach peoples of the nations the ways of the Kingdom and rule them in righteousness, reporting to King Yeshua Who will reign from Jerusalem as Supreme Global Potentate, after defeating the armies of the nations, mobilized by Anti-Christ at Battle of Armageddon. These are the awesome truths embedded in the Book of Revelation which Satan has craftily made a dark subject many saints cringe at. Satan has also inspired thousands of interpretations which confuse saints to the degree they feel justified to ignore the Book of their Inheritance!

Revelation 20:1-6 (KJV) 1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit

and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

It is instructive to note before the Millennial Reign of Yeshua, the nations of the earth and all those who rejected the mercy and love of The Father in Yeshua will be on their own: Reaping the full measure of His indignation. It will be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an Elohim Whose time of mercy is up with the unrighteous (Revelation 16; Revelation 19:11-21).

Ultimate Reward #.5. To live forever with Elohim in bliss and eternal joy.

By this time, the Mystery of His exactness would have been accomplished (Revelation 10:7). This eternal inheritance of being with our Elohim forever and ever is worth all the troubles we can ever encounter in this present life for the sake of His testimony. A sneak peek is provided in Revelation chapters 21 and 22. For now, we see and know Him in part and must relate with Him by Faith. A day is coming when our understanding of Him will be complete (1 Corinthians 13:9-12).

The way forward: The Remnant are to be ever ready!

Let us give ourselves to transparent and sincere dealings of Holy Spirit and the Word so there will be an inside out preparation for our mind, hearts, and bodies to reflect the glory of the risen Yeshua who redeemed us with the precious price of His Own blood. Our Father is willing to keep and present us faultless before Himself on the Day of Judgement. Let us release all our beings to Him and live this life for His glory and Kingdom purpose! Rather than tear each other apart with arguments of when the rapture will take place <Pre; Mid or post>, the most needful thing is to live in such a way His coming will not take us by surprise! The series on the 7 Letters from heaven were designed to make us conscious of Truth; open to His Process and be ever-ready for Return of our King!

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (KJV) 1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness . 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. 11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-13 (KJV) 1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 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. 3 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; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

B. Judgement for Sinners

Those who reject the love of Yahweh in Yeshua remain in their sins. Outside of Yeshua, no human can attain unto the secure righteousness of the Father. This includes those who

entirely rejected the gospel message and remained in their sins. It also includes those who formerly embraced Yeshua but later backslid or apostatized (believed errors which took them out of a relationship with Yahweh). To remain in sin is to miss the mark of safety. If anyone dies in that state, there is no remedy but to face certain judgement on the appointed date and the pains of the second death.

It needs to be emphasized all those who rejected the Mercy of Elohim starting with those who backslid from the truth and died in sin or apostasy will face the Judge of the whole earth at the Great White Throne Judgement in Revelation 20:11. After their condemnation, they will suffer eternal torment (Hebrews 6:1-8; Hebrews 10: 28-32; Revelation 20:12-15).

Revelation 20:11-15 (KJV) 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

There is a false argument raised as to how a 'good God' who asked people to forgive those who do evil against them will allow people to be confined to eternal torment. For those in the flesh and those using natural senses to comprehend spiritual truth, this seems illogical and unfeasible. But as the scriptures explicitly stated, there is eternal damnation for Satan and his cohorts for being evil. Those who allow him to deceive them and rule their lives in effect rejected the lifeline a loving Elohim prepared for their Salvation!

John 3:16-19 (KJV) 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Matthew 24:48-51 (KJV) 48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49 And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What the Lord has done with the 7 Letters from Heaven is basically to warn us - on whom the end of the age has come - to take our eyes off pull of the flesh and present challenges and to rather focus on Him. He has shown us what He commends and what He condemns so we can give Holy Spirit and His Word space to govern us accordingly. In this way, we can make the right choices which will enable us to be presented perfect before Him at His appearance!

Assignment:

(1). Kindly share 5 major insights you gained from this chapter

Chapter 18 The mindset and lifestyle which overcomes

In the light of what we have learnt in this ground-breaking course on 7 Letters from Heaven, let us conclude with some guidance from the Word showing how saints are to live on the cutting edge of eternity daily. Realistically, this will be a function of the strong choices we make in the consciousness of the Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Omnipotence of Elohim.

1. Sincere evaluation of our motives, thoughts, words, and actions

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 (KJV) 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

2 Corinthians 13:5 (KJV) 5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

2. Avoiding presumption in our relationship with the Father.

1 Peter 1:17 (KJV) 17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

Philippians 2:12-16 (KJV) 12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. 14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 16 Holding forth the word of life;

that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Presumption is such a dangerous flight of fancy! It is terrible to assume a certain relationship with Elohim which He does not recognize and confirm. That is why the call to the pool of the Blood is one of the safest things to respond to. No one can make that response except there is conviction of Holy Spirit who then reveals the cleansing power in the Blood of Yeshua!

3. Dying Daily to Self as we submit our will, the power to choose, to Him as our Sovereign

Our will is the capacity to choose. The greatest victory in the Kingdom walk lies in the simple act of dying daily like Paul the apostle:

1 Corinthians 15:31 (KJV) 31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

When this is so, just as Yeshua demanded in Matthew 16:24-26, our will is fully surrendered to Him, just as Yeshua did with the Father in John 5:30; John 6:38. In this way, Holy Spirit leads us 24/7 in ALL things. This is what qualifies us to be His sons in the earth realm, not loud professions of same!

Romans 8:14 (KJV) 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

4. Consciousness of Judgement Day will drive us to make the right choices

Nothing pleases Satan more than when saints walk about and presumably work for the Lord without consciousness of the brevity of life and eternal destination of those who disobey Him. The Lord wants us to live 24/7 in the consciousness that our thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions have a direct bearing on eternity and prove whether His Grace is held in contempt or gratitude! Accordingly, He wants us to take decisive action regarding the things with capacity to deny us entrance into our blessed inheritance.

Mark 9:43-47 (KJV) 43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed,

than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

5. We prove our love for our King by obedience, not mere words

Often, saints are prone to fall for the 'Love' deception. Some loudly claim to have a relationship with Him while in active, continuous disobedience to His express instructions on how to live. Such claims belie reality!

Titus 1:16 (KJV) 16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

John 14:15 (KJV) 15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John 14:21 (KJV) 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Verse 23-24

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

John 15:10-14 (KJV) 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might

remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

6. As we walk in our relationship, let us trust Him with our future!

Most of the falling away some saints experience have their roots in not trusting the Father with their future. In anxiety, they make the wrong choices. Some are unable to repent and therefore remain on the diversionary path until perdition. But the Lord has surely promised to be with us and for us!

Hebrews 13:5 (KJV) 5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Jude 1:24 (KJV) 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

Lift Up your eyes!

As the world descends into gross darkness of living outside the Laws of Elohim, He calls us not to despair and certainly does not want us to burn our fingers in cultural wars, trying to argue with or fight those who have not seen their need of His saving Grace. The expanded camp of those who no longer believe the Bible should regulate life in the earth realm simply reveals we are truly in the end of the age and therefore offers the greatest opportunity for two things to happen:

7. Saints by righteous living which contrasts with the gross sins of the world can offer a stark contrast which decorates the gospel and makes it more attractive to those appointed to Salvation but are yet in darkness of unbelief:

Isaiah 60:1-3 (KJV) 1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross

darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. 3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Matthew 5:13-16 (KJV) 13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 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. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Philippians 2:12-16 (KJV) 12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. 14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

1 Peter 2:9-12 (KJV) 9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas

they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

8. Preaching the gospel with everything in us, knowing that time is short and Discipling the saved

Knowing there is now gross darkness upon humanity on a global scale is sure proof we are now in the Last Days. This reality should inspire saints to invest their all: Spirit, soul, body, and material possessions/finances in systematic, passionate preaching of the gospel. It should be the hallmark of saints to communicate the love of Yahweh in Yeshua to those who are in sin. To wage cultural wars only hardens their hearts. To engage in 'Bolekaja' (rowdy quarrel) with any kind of sinner or identifiable group of sinners is to hinder the gospel.

Matthew 24:14 (KJV) 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

If we believe He is returning soon, let us launch out in various creative ways to communicate the Father's Love to all who need to hear. If it involves going out to Parks and Public places in the hot Summer sun to hand out free cold water which will open opportunities to share on He who gives Living Water, let us be diligent to do so! If it means utilizing the various platforms of social media to transmit His love for sinners in wisdom and with great grace, the time has come to saturate Facebook; Twitter; Periscope; YouTube; Google; Wikipedia and others with the Word of Life!

With the same fervor, let us invest in making disciples of all saints, feeding them with the Word that renews their minds and transforms their hearts. As the Lord releases the Word in the Global Advanced Mentorship Program, let us be invested to distribute same across various Facebook groups to ensure the widest possible number of people are empowered to know the Truth and walk in freedom!

Psalm 68:11 (KJV) 11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

Overwhelming desire of all true Preachers and Teachers

The Overwhelming desire of true Preachers and Teachers is to present the saints under their charge (or those they are assigned to) faultless before King Yeshua, Jesus at His appearance. Whoever is not imbued with this deep expression of true Love is doing a disservice to Yahweh, the saints concerned, and him/her self. This was the attitude that enabled Paul to fulfil his awesome ministry with great results:

2 Corinthians 11:2 (KJV) 2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Galatians 4:11-12, 19 (KJV) 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. 12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. 19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

It is this heartfelt commitment which will bring the acute focus on Yahweh to receive Light on what to feed them with, pray for them with passion, and see beyond the facade people wear which in turn enables the faithful minister to persist until the job is done! Yahweh can do it, if saints give Him right of way!

Acts 20:28 (KJV) 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Jude 1:22-25 (KJV) 22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25

To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

All ministers must give heed to the words spoken through the writings of Paul that there is no profit in helping others to make it into the eternal Kingdom and be missing in action on that day!

1 Corinthians 9:27 (KJV) 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

It is sad in our generation, very little is preached about eternal things of the hereafter. But scripture is very clear misery is the lot of those who are besotted with the present life only!

1 Corinthians 15:19 (KJV) 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

Assignment:

- (1). Kindly share 5 useful insights you personally gained from this chapter.
- (2). Overall on a score of 1-100 percent, how would you rate the helpfulness of this Course (7 Letters from Heaven) to enhancement of your spiritual walk with King Yeshua, Jesus?

Postscript

This download from the Throne Room is made available, free of charge as the King instructed us for training those He will use to reform His Church and make her ready for His soon return. There is no Babylonian copyright restriction to limit your ability to use the material to study, pray it in and apply it in your life and ministry. This will enable you to build according to the Master Plan of the King so you may be bold at His appearing! 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. Please share this and all materials of the Global School of Ministry freely with friends, family and other saints. Please do not use them to print books! The right to do so has been granted to Kingdom agency.

How to be involved

If you would like to be part of the elect who Elohim will use to impact and transform the Church worldwide with this revelation, there are various ways you can be involved, depending on your skills:

- Promote these revelations to the wider Body through Electronic or Print means or via Facebook and other Social Media;
- Be part of those who will use revelations in this course to train other leaders and saints within your loop of Kingdom influence - on and off Facebook;
- You have the skills/capacity to edit or proofread these materials iv. You can support in any other way: financially or otherwise;

Please send a note to: visionarymail7@gmail.com

Masterclass Curriculum

The curriculum includes 41 courses and is divided into five modules consisting of basic and advanced courses. The basic courses are foundational Christian doctrines and beliefs, based entirely and completely on the bible as well as practical principles and practices concerning Ministry and how to fulfil same.

Module 1: Christian/Kingdom Foundation – 8 Courses

Course 100: Constitution of the Kingdom – The Holy Scriptures as sure foundation of our Faith

Course 101: Understanding Elohim

Course 102: Understanding Yeshua Ha Mashiach, Jesus the Messiah

Course 103: Holy Spirit: Who He Is and What He does

Course 104: The 16 Fundamental Glorious Truths

Course 105: The 9 Fundamental C's (responses of the Truly Redeemed)

Course 106: The Ultimate Three: Faith, Hope and Charity

Course 107: Grace

Module 2: The Kingdom and the Church – 10 Courses

Course 108: The Church

Course 109: Kingdom Oriented Church Growth

Course 110: The Church of His Vision

Course 111: The Kingdom of Elohim

Course 112: The Ascension Office – Gifts (Fivefold Leadership Gifts)

Course 113: Spiritual Gifts: What, Why, How

Course 114: Leadership in the Household of Faith

Course 115: Authority

Course 116: The Great Commission

Course 117: Ministerial Ethics

Module 3: Kingdom Citizen and Ambassador – 9 Courses

Course 118: The Call, Cost, and Rewards of Discipleship

Course 119: Ministry: Discover, Pursue and Fulfilling

Course 120: Personal Spiritual Growth and Maturity

Course 121: Market Place Ministry

Course 122: Women in Ministry

Course 123: Rewards of the Faithful

Course 124: Christian Marriage & Family Life

Course 125: Finances and Stewardship in Elohim's House

Course 126: Introduction to Christian Counselling

Module 4: Dominion Mandate of the Redeemed – 4 Courses

Course 127: Signs, Wonders, and the Miraculous

Course 128: Understanding the Human Nature

Course 129: Critical Adversaries

Course 130: Prayer & Spiritual Warfare

Course 131: Dispensations, Seasons and Times

Module 5: Digging Deep – 9 Courses

Course 132: Doctrines of the Bible

Course 133: All that Yeshua, Jesus Said and Did

Course 134: Apostasies, Heresies, Errors and the Pseudo-Gospel

Course 135: Priesthood and the Kingdom Church

Course 136: Divine Perspective of Purpose

Course 137: 7 Letters from Heaven

Course 138: Legacies of Yeshua

Course 139: Completing the Unfinished Reformation

Course 140: Strategic Kingdom Leadership

The curriculum is released free of charge to saints worldwide who are willing to utilise the courses to empower other saints by training them to function as the Royal Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. In some parts of the world, Bible Schools have requested and received the curriculum which they use for training. A great company of saints have been trained and ordained through the process worldwide and serve as mentors to saints participating in the Master Class.

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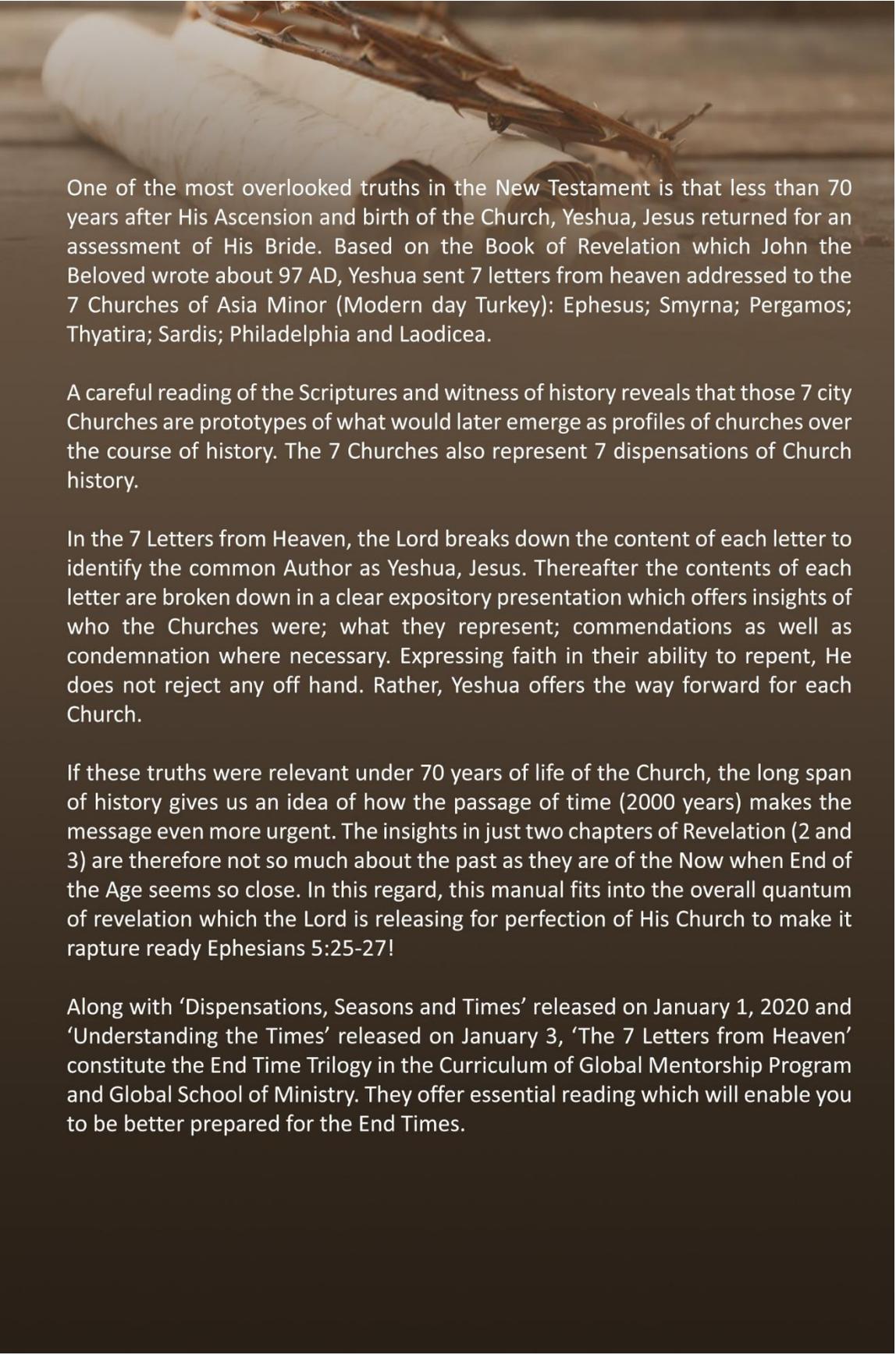
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Prayer & Spiritual Warfare
All that Yeshua Jesus Said and Did
Kingdom Oriented Church Growth
Constitution of the Kingdom: The Holy Scripture as Sure
Foundation of our Faith

About the Author



Apostle George Akalonu and his wife, Pastor Grace Akalonu were called out of denominational Christianity in 1996 and set apart by the Lord to be instruments of connecting, manifesting and empowering saints to function as His one single Body and Kingdom Church held together by Love. They are visionaries of the Global Advanced Mentorship Program (Annual Master Class series). Global School of Ministry, Global Missions Board and Arise Metropolitan Assembly. From their base in Hornchurch, London, England where they live with their five children: Favour, Elect, Arise, Praise and Destiny, they are vessels through which Holy Spirit empowers countless saints and ministers worldwide through the unique Teach, Train, Equip, Activate and Release process committed to their trust. They also serve as International President of International Ministers Fellowship worldwide. They co-labour with a dynamic army of Principal officers, mentors and other volunteers across the globe.



One of the most overlooked truths in the New Testament is that less than 70 years after His Ascension and birth of the Church, Yeshua, Jesus returned for an assessment of His Bride. Based on the Book of Revelation which John the Beloved wrote about 97 AD, Yeshua sent 7 letters from heaven addressed to the 7 Churches of Asia Minor (Modern day Turkey): Ephesus; Smyrna; Pergamos; Thyatira; Sardis; Philadelphia and Laodicea.

A careful reading of the Scriptures and witness of history reveals that those 7 city Churches are prototypes of what would later emerge as profiles of churches over the course of history. The 7 Churches also represent 7 dispensations of Church history.

In the 7 Letters from Heaven, the Lord breaks down the content of each letter to identify the common Author as Yeshua, Jesus. Thereafter the contents of each letter are broken down in a clear expository presentation which offers insights of who the Churches were; what they represent; commendations as well as condemnation where necessary. Expressing faith in their ability to repent, He does not reject any off hand. Rather, Yeshua offers the way forward for each Church.

If these truths were relevant under 70 years of life of the Church, the long span of history gives us an idea of how the passage of time (2000 years) makes the message even more urgent. The insights in just two chapters of Revelation (2 and 3) are therefore not so much about the past as they are of the Now when End of the Age seems so close. In this regard, this manual fits into the overall quantum of revelation which the Lord is releasing for perfection of His Church to make it rapture ready Ephesians 5:25-27!

Along with 'Dispensations, Seasons and Times' released on January 1, 2020 and 'Understanding the Times' released on January 3, 'The 7 Letters from Heaven' constitute the End Time Trilogy in the Curriculum of Global Mentorship Program and Global School of Ministry. They offer essential reading which will enable you to be better prepared for the End Times.