

## 7 Churches Tour – 2019

### Introduction

The Four Visions of Revelation	Message about Christ
“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” <b>Rev. 1.10.</b>	Christ as the Light of the Church.
“At once I was in the Spirit” <b>Rev. 4.2.</b>	Christ as the Lord of History.
“So he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness <b>Rev. 17.3.</b>	Christ as the Friend of the Oppressed.
“And in the Spirit he carried me away” <b>Rev. 21.10.</b>	Christ as the Light of the New Jerusalem.

- 1.3. The first of the 7 blessings: blessed are those who read (1.3); are those who die in the Lord (14.13); is awake during the final plagues (16.15); who participates in the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection (20.6); who keeps the words of this book (22.7); and who washes his robe in Christ’s righteousness (22.14).

### Jesus Among the Lampstands

- **1.10-12.** The Lord’s Day – the Sabbath (Mk 2.28). God wishes to communicate to His churches. Even though is alone and in exile, John can still do something for Jesus.
- **1.13-16.** Jesus appears to John, walking among the golden lampstands. Titus had just destroyed the Jerusalem temple, and taken the 7-branched candlestick to Rome in triumph. The imagery of the 7 candlesticks indicates that even though the Temple is destroyed, God’s relationship with humanity hasn’t ended. God is still with His people, as the *shekinah* was with ancient Israel. “I will walk among you” (Lev. 26.12). c.f. Matt. 28.20.
- Lamps give out light, and also soot / smoke, yet Jesus walks among them. For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, whether a church emits light that guides our eyes or smoke that stings one’s eyes, Jesus does not abandon His Church. Light, soot or smoke – He still walks among His people.
- **1.19.** The messages are to the contemporary 7 churches, and to the churches to come in the future.
- **1.20-21.** Jesus holds 7 stars in his right hand. The ancients believed the stars directed human destiny, hence the popularity of astrology across the ancient Middle East as a means for predicting the future. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that there is “A God in heaven who reveals mysteries” (2.28) – i.e. God controls the heavens and the stars, and thus He controls human destiny. Job expounded on this in Job 38.31-33.
- 7 churches. Across ancient cultures, 7 represented totality and perfection. Under the influence of Pythagoras, number symbolism became very popular, especially relating to the number 7. In Revelation, we find 7 candlesticks, 7 stars, 7 seals, 7 spirits, 7 angels, 7 plagues, 7 trumpets, 7 horns and 7 mountains.
- Each message contains standard ingredients: a description of Jesus; what Jesus knows; a commendation; a rebuke; counsel; warning; a characteristic of the church; and promised rewards. Each message has both a prophetic and a pastoral dimension.
- However, the messages to the 7 churches are not for the local members only. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” indicates a universal audience throughout time. The messages are also for us, if we have ears that will listen.

### Conclusion

- The Revelation of Jesus Christ begins with “grace to you...” (1.4) and ends with grace (22.21). c.f. Rom. 1.7; 1 Peter 1.2; 2 John 1.3. Grace, God’s unmerited favor to fallen sinners, is the first and the last gift of God to His people (1.4). No matter what each message to each church specifically says, each message is surrounded, embedded, nestled, circled about with God’s grace to His people.
- Reflect – when was the last time we experienced God’s grace?
- If we have not experienced grace, we cannot pass it on. Pray for an experiential walk with God that is bound and based and built and bordered and brokered and blossoming with grace!