

Title: Jesus' letter to us

Revelations 1:1-5;20;2:1-7

'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: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 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. 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; 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,

Rev 1:20 '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.'

'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; 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:And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 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. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 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.'

John is obviously well acquainted with these churches and cities; thus one of the reasons Jesus assigned him to deliver the letters to the churches.

Getting back to Revelations, John was instructed clearly by God in Revelation 1:19 to write:

the things which you have seen
the things which are
the things which will take place after these things.'

Jesus' first attention in the Book of Revelation is the church, which encompass us.

Again the phrase 'it is the last hour' is implied when Jesus told of the 'things which must shortly come to pass' and also the Book of Revelation is written because 'the time is at hand'.

The purpose of the letters are to show the developing problems of the church, the

spiritual needs of the churches and a call to faithfulness and godliness. And it too comes with a warning. The church will also be judged.

Revelation 1:3 say, 'Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.'

The Amplified Version defined blessings as 'happy, prosperous and to be admired'.

The NKJV add the word 'aloud' to 'He who reads.' So it actually means 'he who reads aloud.'

7 elements form my sermon outline today.

A. Jesus' common address "to the angel of the church.'

B. Description of Jesus.

C. Jesus' knowledge of the churches, both positive and negative.

D. Jesus addresses the individual churches and their cultural, geographical and spiritual opportunities.

E. Jesus speaks of His sudden, soon coming.

F. Jesus admonishes spiritual hearing and understanding, Jesus used "He who has an ear, let him hear" in the Gospels.

G. Jesus promises a reward for faithful followers.

1. Jesus's common address to 'the angel of the church'.

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

The Hebrew and Greek term for angel could refer to:

the unique spirit or character of the individual congregations

the pastor

the angel of the church

The Greek word for 'angels' is 'aggelos' and in Hebrew is 'malak'. Both terms can be translated as 'messengers' or 'angels'.

Rev 1:20 '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.'

2. Description of Jesus

Jesus is spoken of as ‘the One who holds the seven stars.’

The term ‘holds’ speaks of a firm, sure grasp.

‘In His right hand’ is an anthropomorphic metaphor (speaking of God in physical terms) for power and authority. ‘Walking among’ us is another anthropomorphic metaphor for God’s presence with us.

3. Jesus’ knowledge of the churches, both positive and negative.

The term ‘I know’ implies Jesus sees, understands, and cares for His churches.

When we persevere in our service, Jesus too know that we have taken a voluntary, active and steadfast endurance.

‘I know thy works’. When we are not idle, listless people but active, alert, open eyes to bring souls into the kingdom of Christ: he knows.

He knows our *labor*.

He also knows our ‘tribulation’. Another word is suffering. Yet another word is patience.

Jesus too has the knowledge of the negative aspect of the church.

One, it has left its first love. This is an active church but they have forgotten the priority of fellowship with Christ.

Two, the church has the problem of the deeds of the Nicolaitans

The name Nicolaus may be intended as the Greek equivalent of Balaam. The teaching of Nicolaitans are very similar to the teachings Balak and Jezebel, all mentioned among the 7 churches.

What is obvious is Nicolaitans are encouraging believers to participate in pagan worship practices which involved ritual sexual activity. Definitely it involves sexual immorality.

4. Jesus addresses the individual churches and their cultural, geographical and spiritual opportunities.

The word for church in Greek is 'ekklesia'. This Greek compound term *ekklesia* is a combination of two Greek terms, "out of" and "to call." It was used in the Septuagint to

translate the Hebrew term, '*qahal*', or "assembly of Israel."

The church is a center of light

Hence, we are composed of those who are the highest part of God's creation on earth—of those who are "born again," who are "being saved." Note further that we are likened to *golden* candlesticks

Two important truths concerning the church.

1. Churches have nothing to fear except from their own sluggishness and inaptness to meet the demands of their age.

2. There must not only be an overcoming on the part of a Church if it is to be continued, but also a personal overcoming on the part of each individual, if he is ultimately to share his Lord's victory.

Revelations 1:6 says, 'He has made us a kingdom of priests to His God'.

5. Jesus speaks of His sudden, soon coming

Rev 2:5 says, 'or else I am coming to you.' Another time He says, 'I come quickly'. Still another time He says, 'I come like a thief in the night.'

6. Jesus admonishes spiritual hearing and understanding, Jesus used "He who has an ear, let him hear" in the Gospels.

Revelations 2:5 says, '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.'

Repentance is crucial for a faith relationship with God. The Hebrew term meant a change of actions, while in Greek it meant a change of mind. Repentance is a willingness to change from one's self-centered existence to a life informed and directed by God. It calls for a turning from the priority and bondage of the self. Basically it is a new attitude, a new worldview, a new master. Repentance is God's will for every fallen child of Adam, made in His image. I said las week that when we walked in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ keeps on cleansing us from all sins and that we must go to him in confession.

7. Jesus promises a reward for faithful followers.

The lists of the promises are:

- a. The tree of life
- b. The crown of life
- c. The white stone
- d. Authority over the nations
- e. The morning star
- f. Dressed in white
- g. A pillar in God's temple
- h. The name of God
- i. The name of Jerusalem
- j. Sit on God's throne

Today as a Church and as an individual believer of Christ, are we like

* The Church of Ephesus - The Church and believers who have left our first love for Christ and His teachings?

* The Church of Smyrna - The Church and believers who are undergoing persecutions and yet trying to remain faithful?

*The Church of Pergamum - The Church and believers who compromise their beliefs?

* The Church of Thyatira - The Church and believers who follow false prophets?

* The Church of Sardis - The Church and believers who are spiritually dead?

* The Church of Philadelphia - The Church and believers who are patiently enduring despite weaknesses?

* The Church of Laodicea - The Church and believers who are lukewarm in their faith?

Yet now - NOW.....the very concern of Jesus is for His CHURCH AND THE BELIEVERS.

Know that 2000 years ago, Christ became the ALPHA of our salvation by

- * Dying for us on THE TREE OF DEATH so that in the OMEGA TIME you can have the TREE OF LIFE

- * Wearing the CROWN OF THORNS so that in the OMEGA TIME you can wear the CROWN OF LIFE

- * Becoming the REJECTED CORNERSTONE so that in the OMEGA TIME, you can be the WHITE STONE WITH A NEW NAME INSCRIBED ON IT

- * Being SUBDUED by evil men and Satan so that in the OMEGA TIME, you can have AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS AND SHINE LIKE THE MORNING STAR

- * Staining his life with the FILTH OF OUR SINS so that in the OMEGA TIME, you can wear HIS WHITE GARMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND

YOUR NAMES WILL NOT BE BLOTTED OUT
FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE

* Allowing sin and evil men to DESTROY HIS
HOLY TEMPLE - HIS BODY ON THE CROSS, so
that in the OMEGA TIME, you can become a
PILLAR IN GOD'S TEMPLE, WITH THE NAME OF
GOD AND THE NAME OF JERUSALEM WRITTEN
ON IT

* Leaving HIS HEAVENLY THRONE to come and
dwell among us, so that in the OMEGA TIME,
you can all SIT ON GOD'S THRONE.

