

## C & C: The Church of Philadelphia

Connections and Comparisons is an ongoing weekly series that deals with many scriptures in the Bible, some of which are not commonly addressed. The purpose of this series is to examine the scriptures at hand comparing what is said and looking at the connections within.

Let us begin to examine what was spoken to the Apostle John in the book of Revelation concerning the seven Churches.

### **Revelation 1:4**

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;

### **Revelation 1:9-11**

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.**

Notice carefully that the Apostle John has stated to the seven Churches that he is their brother, and companion in tribulation. There was tribulation taking place among the Churches. The Apostle John himself being placed on the isle of Patmos.

### **Revelation 1:19**

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

What things which are??? This is a very important verse of scripture in regards to the book of Revelation. The only information provided in the book of Revelation that is things which are, is the information given to the seven Churches. This is very crucial to understand. Apostle John was to write the things which he has seen, **and the things which are**, and the things which shall be hereafter. That which he wrote that pertained to things of his present time of which would be things which are, was that which he wrote to the seven Churches **concerning their present state with the Lord.**

### **Revelation 2:1-7**

**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.

Notice that everything spoken to the Church in Ephesus was things which are. Also they were instructed to repent, and do the first works of which they had fallen away from there first love. The first works is the first commandment, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut 6:4-5). The Church in Ephesus had left their first love.

The statement, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches", is directly speaking to those literal seven churches in Asia. However, we must remember that there is only one Church the Body of Christ. So when we read the statement, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches", we know that Jesus is speaking to those Churches which were at that present time. This doesn't mean that we can't benefit from what is said, but **we shouldn't conclude** that there are seven Church ages from these writings **nor should we conclude** that the Body of Christ must be the Church of Philadelphia somehow today and not one of the other Churches like the Church of Smyrna which was highly commended by God. The Church is the Body of Christ and the Spirit was speaking to these seven Churches in particular at that present time which all made up the one Church the body of Christ.

### **Revelation 2:8-11**

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.

The Church in Smyrna had already been in tribulation and was told that they were rich!! Yet Jesus lets them know that more tribulation is coming and gives them hope!! "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." This was speaking to the Church in Smyrna of things that are and continuing to let them know that some of them would be cast into prison and tried, that there would be a tribulation of ten days, and to be faithful unto the death.

This was spoken to a Church that was rich!! No one is teaching that we today are the Church of Smyrna and we will suffer tribulation unto the death? Yet we must not forget that the Church in Smyrna was part of the Bride of Christ. They were commended by Jesus Christ and yet some of them suffered tribulation unto the death.

### **Matthew 10:28**

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

### **Psalms 116:15**

**15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.**

We tend to forget that there is nothing greater than laying down your life as a martyr for Jesus Christ and the Gospel's sake.

### **Revelation 2:12-17**

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.

Again we see the Churches suffering tribulation even as the Apostle John wrote that he was their brother and companion in tribulation. Notice also that these have held fast the Lord's name, and has not denied the faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was the Lord's faithful martyr. For many who hold to the belief system that the Church of today is representative of the Church of Philadelphia and that one of the reasons they were going to be spared the tribulation to come was because they had not denied the Lord's name fail to see that the Church of Pergamos also didn't deny the Lord's name. And we also just read about the Church of Smyrna being rich. Would a Church be rich that denied the Lord's name?

Again there are two points that many are failing to see. 1) All seven Churches are the one Church the body of Christ. 2) To those committing error, Jesus gives to them the chance to repent of these errors they were committing.

It is also important to take notice that the rewards given to the seven Churches, if they overcome,

will be given to all of the Churches. Not 'you' Church in Pergamos will receive a white stone, and in the stone a new name written and 'you' Church of Smyrna that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death. None of the Bride of Christ will be hurt of the second death. These rewards for the seven Churches that were spoken then are also for you and I today, because all of us are the Church of the Living God.

However, we must not forget that the Apostle John was to write the things which he has seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. That which he wrote to the seven Churches concerning their present state with the Lord were things for the time then present making them the things which are.

### **Revelation 2:18-29**

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.

Because the words "great tribulation" were used here, does that suddenly make this a futuristic prophecy of the great tribulation spoken of in the book of Matthew 24? "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." **The answer is no.** The Lord said this would happen if they didn't repent of their deeds. There were persecutions and tribulations at that current time and here in verse 22 it says "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, **except they repent of their deeds.** Verse 23 continues and says, "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." This specifically was saying that the rest of the seven Churches would know that it is God which searches the reins and hearts because it was just spoken to them prophetically. They would know when they saw this tribulation come upon those in the Church of Thyatira who were committing these offences if they did not repent of their deeds. Once again showing that this was things that were happening at the present time for that people even as the Apostle John was to write of the things which are, as well as the things which shall be hereafter.

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.

### **Revelation 3:1-3**

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.**

Verse 3 is speaking of the coming of the Lord, or the catching away of the saints. “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” (1 Thess 5:2, 4) “**Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 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. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.** (Mt 24:42-44)

Jesus has told the Church of Sardis, “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.” This tells us that if they were watching that day would not overtake them as a thief. Since we see a catching away of the saints spoken to the Church in Sardis this would not suddenly make the Church of Sardis the Church of Philadelphia, as the common teaching is that the Church of Philadelphia will be caught away by the Lord before the tribulation of the last days making the Church of Philadelphia the Bride of Christ alone. Verse 3 is a clear reference to the catching away of the saints being told to the Church of Sardis to remind them to watch for the coming of the Lord. And we must not forget that each of these seven churches were part of the Bride of Christ and as the Bride of Christ they were all being instructed by God so that they would be ready for his coming. Not just the Church of Philadelphia.

### **Revelation 3:4-6**

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.

### **Revelation 3:7-13**

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.

When we read that which was spoken to the Church of Philadelphia we should not conclude that this is a futuristic statement for the bride of Christ. There are three main points of discussion here that I would like to concentrate on.

First and foremost is verse 3:9 spoken to the Church of Philadelphia is directly connected to the time frame of the Church of Smyrna from verse 2:9.

“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.**” (Rev 2:9)

**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.** (Rev 3:9)

This verse was spoken just after verse 8 which says “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.” This without a doubt shows that this was speaking to the people for the time then present telling them that those people who were claiming to be Jews and were not but are the synagogue of Satan would come and worship at their feet. Remember all the Churches were in tribulation and the Lord was warning them of more tribulation to come. After telling those of the Church of Philadelphia that those false Jews would worship before their feet (this did not say they would be worshipping them) the Lord continues at verse 10 saying “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.”

The second point I would like to discuss is to keep one from something, such as tribulation, doesn't call for their removal from the Earth. For instance the children of Israel were kept from

the ten plagues of Egypt.

### **John 17:14-16**

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 words keep and kept from Jn 17:15 and Rev 3:10 are both from the same Greek word Strong's number G5083. So when it says, "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", this does not mean that they will be taken out of the world, but rather since they kept the word of his patience and didn't deny his name they would not suffer the tribulation that Smyrna and possibly some of the other Churches would suffer. This doesn't mean that Smyrna denied his name nor didn't keep his word. Jesus told Smyrna "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich)... Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer". We must remember that God does things by election.

Romans 9:11

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God **according to election might** stand, not of works, **but of him that calleth;**)

God is at liberty to do what he chooses to do. The Church at Smyrna was highly commended to be told by Jesus Christ that they were rich.

Which brings me to my final point concerning that which was written to the Church in Philadelphia concerning their present state with the Lord. Both the church in Smyrna and Philadelphia are promised a crown. "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.** (Rev 2:10) And the Church of Philadelphia "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev 3:11) Again this showing God calling things according to election.

The main reason that the teaching of the Church of Philadelphia by many teachers has come to represent the Bride of Christ for the time of the catching away of the saints is because these teachers believe in a pre-tribulation point of view of the catching away of the saints. This Church is then used as a means to support this view. But as I have shown in this lesson there are many problems with this view point and the Church of Philadelphia should never have been taken as a futuristic event, but rather like the other 7 churches this was what the Apostle John was to write concerning things that are in his present time even as the scripture says, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;" (Rev 1:19)

### **Revelation 3:14-22**

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.