

Seven Letters to Seven Churches Comfort for Us Today

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Many Christians are concerned about the future, and with good reason. As the end of the age approaches, there indeed are already many dangers facing all of us every day, and few are aware. We should be prudent and reasonable in protecting ourselves and our loved ones from these dangers. But worrying and misallocating priorities is a mistake, because God has comfort for us in His prophecies and promises of the Bible. After discovering these and other truths^{1,2,3} from the Bible, I personally have felt much more peace when witnessing the deterioration of my nation and the world, and have been able to concentrate more on serving God in these last days.

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, Jesus Christ, through the apostle John, writes seven letters to seven churches. These letters have several levels of meaning, but what is relevant here is that the letters seem clearly to prophesy church history, as illustrated in the diagram. The first three churches exist in sequence, but for each of the last four, reference or allusion is made to the Tribulation, so that they start in sequence but then co-exist until the Tribulation.

Prophetic Significance of the Seven Letters			
Ephesus	Early Church		The Tribulation
	Smyrna	Persecuted Church	
	Pergamum	Compromised Church	
Roman Church		Thyatira	
Reformation Church		Sardis	
Evangelical Church		Philadelphia	
Ecumenical Church		Laodicea	

There is hope for the individual in every church, no matter what, for to each church Jesus says: *“He who overcomes, ...”*, indicating that salvation is a personal matter of faith between you and God, and is not dependent on rites, traditions, human effort or belonging to any church, religion or organization.

The church which interests us now is **Philadelphia**, which would correspond to the Evangelical church of today. Jesus says to this church: *“...Behold, I have put before you an **open door** which no one can shut...”* Revelation 3:8. The Apostol Paul wrote: *“praying at the same time for us as well, that God will **open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ...**”* Colossians 4:3. So, I believe that the open door is the freedom to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ until the Rapture. Even though there is today persecution of Christians in various

localities, nonetheless it appears to me that it will be impossible to institute a generalized world-wide tyranny and upheaval as long as no one can stop the open proclamation of the Gospel. This is a key point.

Jesus also says to this church: *“...I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth”* Revelation 3:10. In other words this church will be Raptured to heaven by Jesus Christ before the Tribulation.

These two lessons should be a great comfort to us, that we will be spared from the horrors of the Tribulation. Supporting this it seems clear that the Restrainer will be removed at the Rapture: *“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed...”* 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8

The increasing problems of this age are very evident, and according to many prophesies of the Bible we can only expect things to get worse with increasing rapidity and intensity, accompanied by hostility to true Christianity. I see no hope that things can ever return to the more benevolent society that existed in times past. It seems to me essentially futile and a waste of time to engage in political activity to try to turn the tide of increasing social and political ills. Furthermore, the most effective manner of improving society is winning souls for the Kingdom of God, which persons will be changed from the inside out by the Holy Spirit.

Likewise, if you are preparing for a siege much longer than a natural disaster such as a hurricane, you should prayerfully consider whether it is a waste of time and resources, which could be better spent in serving God and winning the lost before then end. However, **make your own decision very prayerfully** and with much study, because **I could be wrong** and I would not want to be responsible for anyone not being adequately prepared. I am sure there will be plenty of problems, but just not on an apocalyptic scale.

In view of the worsening world situation in recent years, I have thought the Rapture

must be very soon, and maybe so. But I may have overlooked an important factor: *"...he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way"*. 2 Thessalonians 2:7 Therefore, things can look very bad for a long time while God restrains evil and protects the free proclamation of the Gospel until the Rapture.

For example swine, bird and H1N1 flu⁴, AIDS⁵, and now ebola, and their vaccines, I believe are attempts by godless men to greatly reduce population. But, now there appear to be simple inexpensive cures for ebola^{6,7,8}, some of which world health authorities have strenuously opposed. So, I expect God to now restrain ebola also.

After the Rapture, we know that it will get very bad, because God supernaturally protects his messengers. *"...those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel"* Revelation 7:4 The two witnesses: *"And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, ... And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies..."* Revelation 11:3-5 And finally: *"And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people"* Revelation 14:6

There are many other scriptures admonishing us to be comforted: *"Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."* 1 Thessalonians 4:17 If we believed we had to go through great tribulation before the Rapture, would these words be comforting? I don't think so.

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- 1 harbingersoftheapocalypse.com/how-might-the-rapture-happen
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