

Seven Letters to Seven Churches

Comfort for us today

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 Jesus Christ, through the apostle John, writes to seven churches. These seven letters have several levels of meaning, but what is relevant here is that they clearly 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.

There is always hope for the individual 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, clerics, traditions, good works or belonging to any church or religion.

The church of interest here is **Philadelphia**, 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

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	

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

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 it will be Raptured to heaven by Jesus Christ before the Tribulation, ending the Church age.

These two lessons should be of great comfort to true Christians, 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

Also, Jesus said: “...*upon this rock [Jesus himself] I will build My church; and the*

gates of Hades will not overpower it.” Matthew 16:18 This may seem to contradict: “*It was also given to him [the beast] to make war with the saints and to overcome them...*” Revelation 13:7, but these future saints will not be part of the Church.

The increasing problems of this age are very evident, and according to many prophecies 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 action 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.

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 the 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: "...he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way". 2 Thessalonians 2:7 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 flu¹, AIDS², 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^{3,4,5}, 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. "...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.

Most important of all, the **salvation of your soul** is personal between you and God and does not depend on rites, clerics, traditions, good works, or belonging to any church or religion: "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works...*" [Eph 2:8-9](#) No matter what kind of person you are or what you have done: "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*" [1 John 1:9](#) Pray to-

day to put your faith in Jesus Christ alone: "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" [John 3:16](#) Then study the Bible to live pleasing to God: "...if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" [2 Cor 5:17](#)

Please pray like this with all sincerity: "Dear Lord Jesus, I confess I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died to forgive my sins and rose from the dead. I trust and follow you as my Lord and Savior. Please guide my life and help me to do your will. In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

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