

Seven Churches

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[0 : 00] We're talking about seven churches, seven churches and looking at the book of Revelation.

! Revelation is really the name of this book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The Corinthians of John and seven special letters from Jesus to the churches.

Letters of counsel, letters of comfort, letters of love. And they're telling us what would Jesus say to our church. Seven churches, we're going to look through them.

Seven literal churches located in modern day Turkey. Seven church areas you could say.

Commentators have perceived a pattern here in these seven churches in Revelation.

It's not spelled out in detail. And some of this is somewhat man's understanding that you could see seven kinds of churches.

[1 : 10] And you could see these seven kinds of churches as like a pattern through church history. I'm not saying that's gospel, that that's a definite thing. But we can see some of that line up.

And seven is very important in the Bible. It's the perfect number. The number for God means completeness and universality. So you could, in a sense, understand that these seven churches cover what the church across the world and across history has been in one way or another through time.

And through these verses we see the message of Jesus. We see his word and we see the qualities that the Lord looks at in a church. Some which he condemns, some which he praises.

Two of the churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia, have no criticism. Two, Sardis and Laodicea, have no praise. So we see that I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet saying, I am Alpha and Omega the first and the last.

And what thou seest write in a book. It's interesting the word book in the Greek is *Biblion*. *Biblion*. Write in a book. So we see that there's a writing in a book.

[2 : 28] And send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia. So we see these seven here. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.

Verse 12, And I turn to see the voice that speak with me. And we don't draw pictures of Jesus or have such things because people can misunderstand and the word tells us not to make such images of Jesus.

But we see that John turned and he saw seven golden candlesticks. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed, earth, where they garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

So he had this special clothing upon him. And it says that his head and his hairs were white like wool, and white as snow. And his eyes were as a flame of fire. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.

And his voice as the sound of many waters. Now it's interesting isn't it? The apostle John would have seen Jesus in the flesh. And now he saw Jesus glorified. And verse 16, And he had in his right hand seven stars.

[3 : 37] And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. Now we can see through other scriptures that this may refer to the word of God. The word of God is spoken of in these terms as a sharp two-edged sword.

For example, Hebrews 4 verse 12 it says, For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

So we see this sword, this sharp two-edged sword coming out of the mouth of the glorified Lord.

And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And verse 17, And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, for I am the first and the last.

I am here that liveth and was dead. And behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death. And he says, verse 19, three things that John was commanded to do.
[4 : 46] He says, Write the things which they have seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. The things which they have seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

Verse 19. Then we go to verse 20, The mystery of the seven stars. The Lord explains to John, the meaning of the seven stars. That thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. He says, The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. Now angels can be messengers. So we could understand, it could be those representatives of those particular churches, those messengers or leaders, those angels of the churches.
And the seven candlesticks which thou saw, are the seven churches. So we see lots of sevens here, don't we? We see seven churches, seven angels, seven letters.
Each church is addressed as the Lord says, I know. He knows the church. He knows each assembly. Each church receives a word of praise, of warning, some, less warning, some more praise.

[5 : 58] Each church is called on to hear, and each church receives a promise. So we're going to go through these seven together. We'll go through as best as we can, really just scratching the surface, but it bears greater study.

So the first church, Ephesus. Ephesus. Ephesus. The word Ephesus, I'm told, means first or desirable. After the first century ended, it was estimated to some six million Christians across the world, even in that first century, those first hundred years.

And it could speak to us, Ephesus could speak to us of the apostolic age. There's some features which could mirror the state of the apostolic church, because as much as it was the church founded by the apostles, it became a back-splidden church.

A back-splidden church. It goes on from verse 1 of chapter 2. As the angel of the church of Ephesus writes, 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 hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars.

[7 : 19] Even in those early days of the church there were some who called themselves apostles and were not. And this church was commended that they had withstood these false teachers openly, and the Lord had commended them for that.

He praised them for that. They had recognised these ones, the Nicolaitans, who advocated spiritual compromise with worldly practices. And so, likewise for us too, we can learn from Ephesus how he should stand against false teachings and teachers.

It goes on, verse 4. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because they have left thy first love. As much as they had orthodoxy, they had a loveless orthodoxy.

They left their first love. Not just lost their first love, but actually left their first love. So, the church at Ephesus, as much as it had praiseworthy things, as much as it appears to have persevered, they had some lack.

They had left their first love. And so, verse 5. The Lord says, Wherefore, remember whence they are fallen, and repent, and do the first works.

[8 : 31] Else I come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. So, this church was put on notice by the Lord.

Verse 6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. We'll talk about them a bit later. And then it says, Let him that has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

To him that overcometh, while I get to eat, of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. The first time the tree of life is mentioned, is in Genesis 2, verse 9.

And now it's mentioned again, right at the back of the book. There's a promise there, for the faithful Ephesians, that they will see a reward. Number 2.

The second church, Smyrna. Smyrna, it means myrrh, or bitter, or fragrant when crushed. As we know, the myrrh was used to mark that morning.

[9 : 40] And there was a bitterness to this fragrant item when it was crushed. And the place called Smyrna, Smyrna was a place which was one of the most vile cities on earth of its day.

They had a huge stadium, and they didn't go down there to watch the footy. They went down there to watch gladiators cut themselves to shreds and kill them. They went down to the stadium to enjoy the blood sports of beasts tearing humans apart and believers amongst them too.

Imagine that. That was the entertainment of the day. Savage beasts and believers executed. And it speaks, if you like, you could compare Smyrna with the suffering church of those early stages of church history from, say, AD 100 to 313 when Constantine came on the scene.

In this time before Constantine, the Roman emperors fearfully persecuted the church of God. And it was a great time of tribulation and martyrdom. And some have said there's some 2 to 7 million Christians were martyred during this period of church history.

I know thy works and thy tribulation and poverty, but thou art rich. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. So we see then that we see the lions and the believers in these stadiums across the Roman Empire.

[11:19] And verse 10, Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days.

Now some people take this verse in verse 10, which talks of ten, that it talks of ten major periods of persecution. In fact, there was ten principal pagan persecutors.

Ten Roman emperors who were known for their persecution. So you could see perhaps a parallel there. Perhaps there's some relation to that there. And it was also a time of much poverty because during this time the Christians were torn from their homes, from their places of employment, and often had to lend hand to mouth during these periods of persecution.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Now it's interesting that one of the leading early Christians of this time was Polycar.

Polycar was the Bishop of Smyrna at one time. And he was arrested on the charge of being a Christian. It was unlawful to be a Christian. And the Roman magistrate said to Polycar, Look, all you have to do is offer a little bit of incense on the altar.

[12:36] Just say Caesar is Lord, and you can go home to your family, and just get on with your life. But Polycar responded, So Polycar was one of the last of those personally taught by the Apostles.

He would have known the Apostle John, potentially some of the other Apostles. He would have known them personally, likely. And he was burnt alive at the stake in AD 155.

Polycar, the Bishop of Smyrna, was faithful unto death. Verse 11, He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

He that overcometh shall not be heard of the second death. And what is more? Being burnt at the stake or being burnt in the second death. Friends, we've got to get serious now. Church number 3, Pergamos.

Pergamos verse 12, And to the angel of the church of Pergamos write, These things saith he which hath the sword, the sharp sword with two edges. Again, speaks of the strength and power of God's word.

[14:05] Pergamos. Pergamos, this word it means mixed marriage. It can speak to us of a church settled in the world. A corrupt church.

Pergamos was a corrupt church. A corrupt church. It was marked by deception, by false doctrines, by pagan practices and spiritual compromise.

Where Satan dwells. And we see, here's a picture of the religious mitre hat from Babylon and the priest of ancient Dagon.

Interesting isn't it? That these mitre hats, a fish's mouth as it were looking upwards, was the same on the priest of Dagon's hat, the fish god Dagon, and the hat of the Pope of today.

And we see Pergamos could be representative of this period from 313 to 538. It was an era of corruption. What happened in 313 was Constantine claimed to have some kind of vision.

[15:12] And then, suddenly everything changed. And the Roman Empire became the Holy Roman Empire. And they took on this persona of this state supported religion and compromised.

And when Emperor Constantine had this vision, then he was baptized or sprinkled and his whole army was then sprinkled and supposedly Christianized.

And the whole Roman army, the whole Roman Empire supposedly joined the church. Joined the church. This is what happened through church history. And it's as if Satan couldn't destroy the church by persecution, so he corrupted it by popularity and worldly practices.

And so pagan practices and beliefs came into the church and started to hold sway. And verse 13 talks about Satan's seat. And it says, But thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my fame. It goes on, verse 14, I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them there that hold the doctrine of Balaam. Now, Balaam is a picture of a lack of separation from the world.

[16:28] Again, it's kind of a blending, a mishmash, a mixture, a mixing together of good and bad. And basically the bad overtakes it. As we know, a little leaven leavens the whole lump.

And so what happened through this period in early church history, when Constantine started to run this paganized, Christianized kind of mishmash mixture, that there was an adoption of all kinds of things that came back from ancient pagan Rome.

Things such as prayers to the dead and veneration of relics. And all of these things were adopted that had formerly been part of pagan worship.

And Nicolatianism is another unbiblical doctrine of those early times. And Nicolatianism means to conquer the people.

Conquer the people. Laos means people. Nicol means victory. And so we see that there was a conquering of people. The Nicolatians is one of the unbiblical doctrines.

[17:39] What does it mean? Some have understood that it means the kind of unbiblical, hierarchical kind of structures within churches, where there's bishops and archbishops and bishops above the archbishops and such things as that.

Some kind of hierarchical structure. Instead of the local autonomous self-governing church, some kind of a hierarchical thing. And this is what's prevalent in many places today, where there's this unscriptural exaltation of men over the churches.

And this kind of clergy and laity kind of idea. Where there's an unscriptural authority by the church leaders. We know there's a biblical place for authority in the church.

But this is taking it to that place where there's all kinds of unbiblical authority. And Nicolatianism was one of the problems of that time. That people had a territorial bishop and then an archbishop, a metropolitan, a cardinal, and ultimately the pope, who was called the head of the church.

Of course we know who's the head of the church. Jesus. Jesus our Lord. The Lord Jesus is the head of the church. No pope or other elevated kind of bishop. But the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church.

[18:59] And he goes on, verse 16, repent. He tells the church to repent again. And verse 17, he that has an ear, let him hear. It goes on, church 4, church 4, thyatira.

Thyatira. This word thyatira, it means sacrifice. And as much as there's dates here that kind of illustrate, we can't be precise about dates. And this is really just to draw a kind of parallel.

Again, we're not being hard and fast about this. But there is that sense where through the dark ages of church history, the church went into idolatry. More and more they took all this paganism, all this worship of idols and statues and icons, and it became lax and corrupt.

And like a kind of spiritual Babylon. And the dark ages prevailed over church of that time. There was the remnant church right through, persecuted and suffering and mocked and scorned.

And not popular, but the way big, majorly popular church of that time was the age of the papacy. The age of the papacy.

[20:09] And verse 18, it says, To 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.

I know thy works in charity, and service in faith, and thy patience in thy works. He commands them for their works, their charity, their service, their faith, their patience. But then it goes on, verse 20, Thou sufferest a woman, Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess.

So teach and seduce my servants. So commit fornication. He's talking about a kind of spiritual fornication. There was this kind of mixture. And we see that in the Mariolatry, the worship of Mary, In the Roman Catholic Church.

And we see that. It's just an example of the Jezebel spirit, if you like. And it's quite noteworthy through church history. And we're not blaming females for this, But it just seems to be that there were certain trends through church history, Where amongst the mountainous, they had a prominence of women prophetesses and preachers.

And then there was the female prophetesses and Catholic mystics through the dark ages. And then there was women prophetesses through the Irvingites in 19th century England.

[21 : 31] And then women preachers through the holiness movement and such things. And it just seems like, then we see in the founding of movements like the Shakers and the Seventh-day Adventists And Christian signs that women featured prominently there.

And then through the history of Pentecostalism too. Female prophetesses and female preachers were very evident. So we see that there was this trend.

And we see, as it were, this pagan kind of thinking. We see here the Pope here. Can you see that? He's got the secret hand gestures of the Iphorus.

Of course he was probably acting the fool here. But we see some of these things were more than just coincidental. Some of these things were more than just incidental. That there was this taking over.

A kind of, the church got hijacked through some of these things. Where Jezebel speaks to us of Babylon. Speaks to us of that kind of corruption that entered the church through those times.

[22 : 34] And it says that the Lord gave space to repent. But she repented not. She repented not. It goes on that we see, verse 25, the Lord says, hold fast.

Hold fast till I come. Father Jesus is coming back to planet earth. And he's looking for a people who will hold fast until he comes. He says, verse 23, that he searches the reins in the hearts.

He's looking still. He's looking at the church. And he's seeing these kinds of churches. And you could say really these churches are still prevalent and evident on planet earth today in different ways, in different measures.

It goes on to the fifth church now. The fifth church, the church at Sardis. The church at Sardis. The church at Sardis. We go to chapter 3 and verse 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.

Sardis. Sardis. I'm told means remnant. This church is spoken of as dead, yet having a believing remnant. And we could see that this church is represented in the period of the Reformation.

[23 : 40] The Reformation. When suddenly men of God and women of God stood up and spoke for the truth of the Bible. Men like Luther as he printed the Bible in the German tongue.

Which is substantially the same as we hold today. The Bible was printed and we see God raised up great spiritual leaders in the midst of these dark ages.

Suddenly a light shone. The light of the Reformation. As error was exposed and apostasy was overturned. We see people like Wycliffe and Huss. People who suffered persecution and went to the estate and were martyred and killed for their faith.

People like Swingley and Knox. It says, I know thy works that thou hast a name and that thou livest and art dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die.

We know through the Reformation there was still a lot of paganism. And in the Reformation they only extracted themselves so far. They were still baptising so called babies and such things.

[24 : 47] Those things they were hanging onto that they hadn't let go of. Because it was so endemic in that time, in that culture. But yet we see that they still had life. They had spiritual life even though death prevailed spiritually.

And so we see, at that time we see the Bible was printed. He has a picture of a Bible being printed.

And so it was mass produced. The Bible was spread far and wide throughout the civilised world.

And people have lights again. In these dark ages the light of God's word shone brightly again. He says that he's going to come like a thief.

And verse 3, Thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. He says that there's still a few names in Sardis. People have not defiled their garments.

Who shall walk with me in white. They are worthy. They shall be clothed in white raiment. He says that there's still a remnant. There's still a godly people even in these dark times.

[25 : 48] Then we go to church number 6. Church number 6. We're getting to the end now. The church number 6 is Philadelphia. And verse 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.

Philadelphia. The word Philadelphia, it means phila meaning love, friendship, and delphia meaning brethren.

So it means brotherly love. Philadelphia, brotherly love. What a beautiful picture. What a beautiful name for a church, isn't it? Brotherly love. That's what we want to know and have in our fellowship together.

When we assemble together, there'll be brotherly love. We'll love one another as brothers and sisters. And it speaks to us, if you like, this kind of church of Philadelphia, speaks to us at that time in church history, when we see the church in revival.

We see men like Wesley and Whitfield, and various others, who preached in the open air, and many came to flock to hear the word of God. They left the taverns and their sinful ways, and they flocked together in this evangelistic movement.

[27 : 06] And then we see later the missionary church, as missionaries were sent out all across the globe. And you could, in a sense, see from the mid-1700s, that this church will go right through to the rapture.

And God helping us will be part of such a church. A church as it was a church of Philadelphia. A faithful church. A church where there's an awakening, where there's a spiritual fervour and life. And the Lord says much to this church, and He doesn't condemn this church. There's all words of praise to this church, and none of condemnation. He says in verse 8, I know thy works. Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man shall shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

This church was commended for many things. They've got strength, they've got the word of God, they've not denied His name. We see here a picture of missionaries reaching out.

[28 : 07] And this was a picture of these times of revival, of awakening, and of the spreading of the gospel. When Bible societies were formed, and princes went out, and ministered, and God moved in great power.

We see that they kept the word. And verse 11, God says, Hold fast whence thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

There's a crown promise for this church. It goes on, verse 12, Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God. Hear that have an ear to hear, letting hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Now think of that kind of church. Don't we want to mirror, and mimic, and copy, and imitate that kind of church? I pray that we will. But then lastly, we see the seventh church.

The seventh church. The church of Laodicea. Verse 14 of chapter 3. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith thee, Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

[29 : 16] Laodicea speaks of human rights, of the rule of the people. The rule of the people, the rights of the people. Human rights, you could call it. Human rights. Now, we could think, that's pretty much a feature of present times, isn't it?

It's a lot of call for human rights. And we know there's a lot of good things about human rights. Everyone should be treated fairly and honestly, but we should do unto others as we'd like them to do unto us. And so we know that there's that principle of human rights is based many times on good godly truths, caring for people.

But this is the sense of the rule of the people, the rule of the people, the rights of the people, the rights of the people. And we see that in this kind of catering to the flesh, to the appealing to people's wants, and tending to a lukewarmness and a self-centeredness and a self-preoccupation.

This is the kind of picture of this kind of church. And the Lord says, I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I work that thou art cold or hot.

And he says to us, as individual believers, make a stand. Either you want to be cold or hot. But these people are sitting on the fence.

[30 : 52] And some Christians are like that, aren't they? They just want to straddle the fence and be comfortable with the world and the things of the world and the flesh and the devil and still kind of have a Christian kind of show.

Lukewarm. Lukewarmness is something that God is against that. And we should know that something that we should be challenged about. And the Lord challenged this church.

He said, verse 17, it says, Thou sayest, I am rich, increased with goods, have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched, miserable, poor, and blind, and naked. God saw right through him that smoke screen of all of thee, showed of the prideful ways, and saw right at the very heart of that church.

And he still looks at churches like that today. And he sees right to the very heart of what a church is about. And it goes on in verse 18, I counsel thee.

[31 : 58] He says there are some things that he wanted to counsel this church about. He talks about three things. Verse 18, he talks about gold. We see in gold, gold is a picture of divine character.

It's very much a picture of God, and of purity. A picture of God. And it also represents God's word as well.

It's like fine gold, pure gold. And the true riches for us today is finding that gold. The gold to find him, to find our Lord, to have that love for him, that faith that is gold standard faith.

Gold quality faith that will go through the faith fires, as it were. It will go through the times of testing, and that you can come forth your faith as pure gold.

We see, and God's word is called as of gold as well. We see, secondly, it talks about white raiment. We could consider that as the robe of righteousness that the Lord Jesus gives to us.

[33 : 06] His righteousness that clothes us and covers us, and projects his righteousness. Not a self-manufactured kind of righteousness, but a righteousness that's his free gift to us.

Our friends here today, you might be a very religious person, but unless you're covered with his robe of righteousness, you're not righteous.

You're lost. Our only hope is to come and know him, and be clothed with Jesus as a clothing, as a vesture, as something we wear.

He envelops us and consumes us, and he enters us, and we enter him. We are joined with Christ and identified with Christ, such that his righteousness he gives to us.

He exchanges our unrighteousness with his righteousness. We've got to come to that place of an exchange. An exchange.

[34 : 13] So instead of us coming and thinking, I'm going to really try hard to be a Christian, and you know, oh, I messed up again, I'll try my heart next time, and it's all about works, works, works.

Instead of trusting. Exchange your righteousness for his. Be identified with him. Receive him. Receive him.

That's the white raiment, the white clothing. His robe of righteousness. We read of that in Isaiah 61 verse 10, for example. And then thirdly, it speaks about eye salve, or eye anointing.

And it's got that sense of having our eyes clear. Having that, getting rid of the blurry vision. And we see clearly. Having our eyes open so we can see and discern.

And how we need discernment in these days. How we need discernment to understand God's word. To be led by God's spirit. So we see these strings. The gold. God's character.

[35 : 12] And of his word. Of the white clothing. His righteousness. And of that eye ointment. That helps us to discern. To be able to see clearly.

As the Holy Spirit gives us that clear vision. It goes on. As many as I love. I redeemed and chastened. Be zealous therefore and repent. That's verse 19.

He says to these churches. Numbers of times. Repent. Repent. Repent. He could see it was blank. And he called on them to turn around. And then it goes.

Behold. I stand at the door and knock. Verse 20. A familiar one. If any man hear my voice. And open the door. I will come into him.

And sup with him. And hear with me. Now imagine that picture as it were of a door. We're on the inside as it were. He says open the door.

[36 : 09] Open the door. Open the door. Of course we know some use this in all kinds of ways. But nevertheless there is that picture of a door closed. And of Jesus outside this church of Laodicea.

What a sad picture. That the Lord Jesus the head of the church should be outside of that church. Of that assembly. He was shut out of this church.

That Jesus wants to come in. Jesus wants to enter in. To enter into our assembly. To enter into our lives. And to fill us with his way. With his truth. With his life.

So in closing think now. What kind of church are we? What kind of church are we? Will we be like Ephesus?

Orthodox but left their first love. What a shame. What a tragic, tragic, terrible lack and loss. To leave your first love.

[37 : 06] When you had that relationship of fervour. And of zeal. And of deep adoration of your Lord and Saviour.

Yet it's grown dear. Let's revive it again. What of Smyrna? A faithful church. Through suffering. We don't know what lies ahead. Brothers and sisters. Be faithful as they were.

Through suffering. Pergamos. They had challenges of doctrinal compromise. And we need to be aware of that danger.

Of doctrinal compromise. And then of moral compromise in Thyatira. And then Salamis. We see the danger of spiritual deadness. As form and ritual and tradition.

Just overwhelmed. And took over. And it became empty. And void. And dead. And then we see Philadelphia. Philadelphia. The blessing of holding fast.

[38 : 07] They held fast the faithful word. They held fast. And they soldiered on. And they had that zeal restored. And then we see the church of the end times.

As it were. The church of Laodicea. Represents the danger of lukewarmness. Friends. We can all suffer. That threat of spiritual lukewarmness.

Where we get casual. We get careless. And we get just blasé about spiritual things.

So that it just becomes humdrum. And becomes just playing the game of church. And missing the reality. The tangible reality.

What kind of church are we? If the Lord Jesus would look down as he does. In those. With those spiritual eyes that penetrate. With those eyes as it were.

[39 : 05] As a flame of fire. As it were. As he tries the reins and the hearts. The very sinews and tendons of the heart. The very core of our being. And as he searches and penetrates.

Deep within. With that x-ray vision. And he asks us. What kind of church are you? Are we a church? Obedient. To his word.

Faithful. Enduring against opposition. Sound in doctrine. Courageous. Even if it be in the face of death. As Pollock. Motivated by his love.

Drawn by his spirit. Trusting in him. Pure. Holy. Fervent. Refusing to tolerate. False teaching.

Dealing with sin. Zealous. And stable. Seven churches. Seven churches. Friends. What kind of church are we? We've been talking through this passage. I know it's somewhat rushed.

[40 : 04] There's much more we could say. There's some common things. Some common themes.

Some common themes. We've been talking through this passage. I know it's somewhat rushed.

There's much more we could say. There's some common themes. Some common themes. There's warnings. There's warnings.

For most. And there's praise. For some. Will we be amongst the number that were praised? Will we have those qualities of an assembly, of a gathering together, of God's people that were praised and encouraged?

Or will we be amongst that number that were not praised? And there was a word of warning and caution about danger.

What about you now? What about you now? Let's boil it right down because the church is about individual people. The church is about you and you and you and you and you.

It's about us individually. It's about taking that thought back. It's about taking that thought back.

About those things that we've talked about.

[41 : 11] What does the Lord want? Do we have these things? Do we have these things? The word, endurance, sound doctrine, courage, love, faith, holiness.

It's an individual question for every one of us here today to individually consider. How do I stand? Will I hear what the Spirit of God is saying to his church?

Will I hear his voice and act upon it? I've been speaking really to Christians here tonight. I urge you, each one, really I'm urging each one here today, trust him.

Trust him as your Lord and Saviour. Follow him, love him. Maybe he's not even your first love because you're not even saved yet.

You don't even know him. You're going through the religious rituals, you're going through the motions and deep, deep within you know Christ isn't in you. You're not saved and if he was to speak to you, if it was judgment day today, he'd say, I never knew you.

[42 : 20] Even for some who go through all the religious pattern and performance. He says, I never knew you. Never. What a shame. What a tragic shame that would be.

If you are such that would come and fellowship and hear God's word week after week, maybe mid-week and still miss heaven because you're not saved.

You know, the Bible says of a time when the harvest has passed and time's up and we are not saved. There's a time when reaping time will come.

There's a time when the chapter will close and we'll be in the last of the book where we see thrones and judgment seats and judgment.

And friends, I urge you tonight. Woe be to me if I don't urge you today to earnestly seek God and find him.

[43 : 21] Find him now. I pray. I would hate to think that if this were the last sermon I preached and for whatever reason I pass away or you pass away and you're not saved would be such a tragic thing.

I pray for you. I pray that you will trust him. I know many here have. But friends, only you can answer that question for yourself. And the church is made up of individual people.

And I pray that you'll be amongst those who are counted faithful. Let us pray. Let us pray.

Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray.