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The Book of Revelation

Chapter 1

- 1 The revelation (from who, to whom, through who).
- 2 The revealer
- 3 the seven churches

Why Prophecies?

The goal of the prophecy is to show that the message sent is from God. As some of the prophecies are fulfilled, people must believe all the other prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled.

The Bible is a complete book that complements itself as one integrated unit. As will be shown later, the book of Revelation carries the same spirit as those of Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and all the other prophets. If the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, then the rest of the prophecies, and those of the new testament, will be fulfilled soon. We should believe that all the events described in the book of Revelation are going to happen as the Lord planned and most important is His second coming and the End of the World.

Overview:

In this Chapter, St. John describes how he received this revelation. He also describes the image of the Lord as he first saw Him.

The first vision introduced in this chapter is the vision of the seven churches that represent all the churches through out history and can be seen as describing your life and mine.

The First Revelation

Rev 1:1 A Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to declare to His servants things which must shortly come to pass. And He signified it by sending His angel to His servant John,

Revelation:

αἰ ποκαλύψις

apokalupsis

ap-ok-al'-oop-sis

From G601; *disclosure*: - appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation¹.

To reveal, to announce, to make known what is hidden².

When a person reveals certain information, for it to be information it has to be something new and not known before to his audience. Also, the audience may believe it or may not and may understand it or not. So when God reveals this information to us, it has to be new and not known to us and it may be difficult for us to understand.

¹ Strong's Dictionary

² Miriam Webster Dictionary

Christ is the Hypostasis of knowledge. He is the one that reveals to us everything. We knew the Father through the Son. Lord Jesus Christ. So Christ makes known to us the will of the Father and his love for us.

***Mat 11:27** All things are delivered to Me by My Father. And no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son will reveal Him*

This message is part of this revelation and made known to us to show us what is prepared for us at the end of the world.

With revelation there is no discussion about the content, we just need to accept it as delivered.

Jesus Christ: Christ received this revelation as the head of creation and on our behalf (Jesus = Savior, Christ = The chosen one) Jesus is the chosen one to be the arch-priest, arch-prophet, and a savior.

Which God gave to Him: Here the Lord Jesus received the revelation on our behalf from the Father as the head of the Church and as the groom on behalf of His bride, the church.

To His servants: It shows that no matter what we do (love Christ as John Did, or suffer for Christ sake, as John did) we are still servants. So are the angels.

Shortly come to pass: The whole time is all in front of God as one painting, a day for the Lord is like a thousand year and a thousand year is like a day. It also means that these events are sure to happen no matter how long it takes.

sending His angel: It shows the roles of Angels in delivering to us the good message, and their care in obeying the Lord and for our salvation

His servant John: Here John makes His name known so that every one would know the source of this revelation (same as the old testament prophets)

***Luk 17:10** So likewise you, when you shall have done all the things commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, for we have done what we ought to do.*

Order in sending the message

The order of the message is from the Father, to Christ, to the Angel and then to St. John. This shows the order by which the Lord delivers His message: Angels, Apostles, and then the people. That is why He chose apostles and gave them the authority so they can teach and help others. This strengthens the concept of the church and the priests.

Rev 1:2 who bore record of the Word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ and of all the things that he saw.

Here John declares his role as a witness and that what in this revelation is something real that he saw and not a dream or fantasy that he came up with.

** Are you a witness to God and to His message to all humanity? At least to your immediate family and friends.

Rev 1:3 Blessed is the one who reads and hears the Words of this prophecy, and the ones keeping the things written in it, for the time is near.

It is important to know the prophecies and not to predict what do they mean.

1) Example Isaiah 7:14

Isa 7:14 So, the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, the virgin will conceive and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel.

How people understood “the virgin will conceive” before St. Mary? not possible

2) A prophecy about the resurrection

Hos 6:1 Come and let us return to Jehovah. For He has torn, and He will heal us; He has stricken, and He will bind us up.

Hos 6:2 After two days He will bring us to life; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.

Hundreds of prophecies exist in the Bible that could not be explained until they happen. Studies specifying the second coming and so on are not correct. We should not do that, or we should not predict who is the Anti Christ or what a specific event will mean in the future.

However, we receive blessings every time we read it. How can that happen with something we don't understand

- Strengthen the faith that the Lord is in control
- Make us more familiar with Heaven
- Understand that the world is a difficult place and there will be a lot of trials and tribulations. So we are prepared.

Our role is to memorize the prophecy so when it happens it will be clear to us.

Similar to what happened in Matthew 24 and the Lord prophesizing about the destruction of Jerusalem. The prophecy was not clear. However, when the Romans entered and put their insignia on the Temple.

Mat 24:15 Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand).

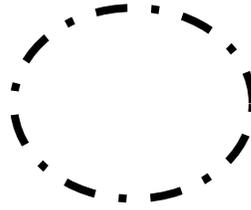
Mat 24:16 Then let those in Judea flee into the mountains.

The Christian knew what the Lord said and escaped Jerusalem and were saved from total destruction (year 70 A.D.)

** Also, we keep the faith and the tradition given to us even if we don't understand it or appreciate it.

Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia. Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who *is* coming; and from the seven spirits which are before His throne;





1) The Mediterranean Sea



2) Asia Minor

John: Here the Apostle identifies himself as all other prophecies in the Old Testament.
Seven Churches: Seven is a complete/perfect number. The world was created in 7 days. The week is 7 days. Through the Bible a lot is based on the number 7. So, the 7 Churches are a representation for all the churches (more discussion later).

Grace and Peace: Grace comes first from the Lord and the Peace follows. We can't live in peace without God's grace. Note, that peace is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, we receive the Holy Spirit through the Grace of the Son.
(The Love of God the Father, the grace of the only begotten Son, and the fellowship and gift of the Holy Spirit)

** Where is one of God's greatest gifts to us His peace? Do we enjoy it?

from Him who is and who was and who is coming: Same expression used in the Gregorian liturgy. Stands for God's eternal existence. This is similar to the expression used to describe the Father. Can stand for Christ who is alive now, was alive with the Apostles on earth before, and will come in the second coming

the seven spirits which are before His throne: This is the Holy Spirit represented by its complete action in us. The Holy Spirit works differently in each one of us, but the way it work in us is perfect. This is the most logical since also the greetings from Jesus follow this greeting. **Before the throne,** to mean that God's care about humanity is always before Him.

Rev 1:5 even from Jesus Christ the faithful Witness, the First-born from the dead and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

Even From Jesus Christ: This makes the greeting and the gift of Peace from the trinity.

Faithful witness: Christ is the faithful witness to the Father, to the truth, and to righteousness. Christ witnessed for Himself when people did not believe the acts he did.

Joh 18:37 Pilate then said to Him, Are you a king then? Jesus answered, You say it that I am a king. To this end I was born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.

The Son testified to the Love of the Father to all Humanity, to His Holiness, and to God's victory over sin.

First born from the dead: He is the first one to resurrect and overcome death on our behalf. Not like Lazarus and all those who were raised from the dead before Him and died, He rose and never

Ruler of the kings of the earth: Christ rules over all creatures. He is the King of kings. He allows everyone the freedom to act but still within His control and power. No one can do something that Christ does not allow. Despite the evilness of some rulers, God still uses them for His glory.

Who loved us: St. John's constantly focusing on God's love no matter where he is or what is happening to him.

** Is God's love the focus of my thinking, even during the time of trouble?

Washed us from our sins in his own blood: We are reconciled only through the blood of Christ. We cannot get into heaven without His blood.

Rev 1:6 and made us kings and priests to God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Made us Kings and Priests: There are two types of priesthood, general and particular, similar to being kings. There are those who are called to be Kings and rulers, but we are all called to be kings in the sense of inheriting with the Son and to rule over our Bodies and our desires.

Being Priests is in the sense of offering a sacrifice of praise, offering my body as a sacrifice. This does not cancel the special priesthood in our Church.

The same concept is there from the OT. Despite the existence of Aaron's priesthood, God called them a kingdom of Priests

Exo 19:6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words, which you shall speak to the sons of Israel.

Types of sacrifices that we all can offer:

- **Sacrifice of praise** *Heb 13:15* *By Him, then, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, confessing His name.*
- **Broken spirit:** *Psa 50:17* *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.*
- **Our bodies as a living sacrifice:** *Rom 12:1* *I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.*
- **Prayer:** *Psa 141:2* *Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*
- **Good deeds:** *Heb 13:16* *But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

We are only made kings and priests after being washed by His blood.

Those who want to eliminate (or eliminated) priesthood do they also eliminate kings from this world?

** Are we priests in the above spiritual sense? Are we offering any of these sacrifices? Are we kings over our desires and thoughts?

Rev 1:7 Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, and those who pierced Him will see Him, and all the kindreds of the earth will wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Comes with the Clouds, the clouds are high and light. The clouds can mean multiple things

- 1) The glory. Always during God's appearances there are clouds (Appearing on Mt. Sinai, Appearing to Elijah, Transfiguration)
- 2) Mystery: clouds make it hard to see what is contained in it. God is covered from those who do not know him
- 3) The Saints. God is always surrounded by His Saints.

St. Paul refers to the saints as "The Cloud of Saint" (Heb 12:1).

Cloud is the result of water evaporating in the heat of the sun. So are the saints, they are exposed to Christ, the Sun of righteousness and He makes them ascend to Heaven. The cloud is above the earth, so are the saints.

The cloud pours rain on earth, so do the saints with their intercession.

Christ' second coming will be visible by everyone, nothing secret as Jehovah's Witness say or the heresy of the rapture promotes.

We need to think about this reality even if it does not happen during our life time. But it helps us be ready for the heavenly life.

There are those who are waiting for Christ's second coming joyfully and those who are ignoring it and will regret it later on.

The church reminds us with God's presence every time there a service by using incense to represent the clouds and God's presence

** What is your position when the Lord comes again? Are you going to rejoice or wail?

Those who pierced Him: Not only the Jews and the Romans 2000 years ago, but even today we do that with our sin and arrogance

Rev 1:8 I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

These expressions (Alpha and Omega, Beginning and Ending) are expression used by God in the Old testament.

Isa 41:4 Who has planned and done it, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah, am the first and the last; I am He.

The priest writes on his clothes ☩☩ as a constant reminder to us of the presence of Christ. Even the Korbana has the same letters on it.

The Alpha and Omega: These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This means that every thing that is needed to explain God is contained in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the language by which we know God. It is through His love that we know how much God's love is. Through Christ's humility, sacrifice, wisdom, ... that we knew God' humility, sacrifice, wisdom,...

The Beginning and the End: If Christ is not one with the Father He cannot say that He is "The Beginning and the End", the same expression God said about Himself in the Old Testament. This shows to the modern heresies the equality of the Son to the Father.

The only one we need is Christ, He starts our lives and He ends it. Through Him, we know everything. He is the one that started the Universe and He is the one who will judge the world.

Isa 9:6 For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be on His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Almighty:

pantokratōr

pan-tok-rat'-ore

From G3956 and G2904; the *all ruling*, that is, *God* (as absolute and universal *sovereign*): - Almighty, Omnipotent.

Note, some like to twist things and attribute parts of this verse to the Father and other parts to Jesus so they can deny the divinity of Jesus Christ. Here the verse starts and ends with attributes of God, the whole verse must be describing God and not two different persons.

** Who is the beginning (or purpose) of everything in your life? Who is the goal (the end) of everything in your life?

Rev 1:9 I, John, who also am your brother and companion in the affliction, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the island that is called Patmos, for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

John, the disciple, the one who ordained bishops and patriarchs, one of the 3 pillars (as St. Paul describes them Gal 2:2) calls us his brothers. He learned from His master who called His disciples "My brethren".

He is also under the same suffering as everyone else, being close to God does not mean you are excluded from tribulation and suffering.

He does not refer to his own suffering or tribulation and the reason behind him being in Patmos. Here he also relates the suffering to the kingdom of God.

Testifying to the word of God is not free. It comes with a price that you have to pay.

** You can't get to the kingdom of God without the suffering. The way to the resurrection is the cross. Are you as humble as St. John was despite all what God gave you that made you special?

Rev 1:10 I came to be in the Spirit in the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

In the Spirit: This is one stage of spiritual growth, later St. John will ascend to a second stage. St. Paul also experienced the same thing

2Co 12:2 I know a man in Christ fourteen years before (whether in the body, I do not know; or outside of the body, I do not know; God knows) such a one was caught up to the third Heaven.

In the day of the Lord: Sunday. John got to meet the Lord.

Heard behind me: Though he was in the spirit but still was not expecting to see such things. There is a gradual revelation, first he hears the Lord, and then he sees Him.

The Trumpet was used for warning and for declaring wars. God's voice is warning of troubles and tribulations. For announcing feasts: This revelation announces the best feast ever, the banquet of the Lamb and His bride the Church.

Also trumpet is used during travel, to declare that our life in this world is short.

** What do we do in the Lord's day? Are we in the spirit or are we in the world?

Rev 1:11 saying, I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. Also, What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.

Again, Christ declares who he is.

What you see, write: Some revelations are given to be public and others are private. This is a public one with specific orders to write and to send to the seven (all) the churches.

Here St. John restates that what he wrote is an actual thing that he saw and not just imagination.

Description of the Lord Jesus Christ

Rev 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me.

Gradual revelation. First he hears and then he sees. We cannot all the of the sudden become face to face with Jesus Christ. It requires growth and preparation.

Rev 1:13 And having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the seven lampstands I saw One like the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and tied around the breast with a golden band.

The 7 golden lampstands are the 7 churches (Rev 1:20). The church is the light of the world **Golden** because they are heavenly and Lamstands because they are light to the world.

And in the midst: The Lord is in their midst. The Lord is always with His church. This gives assurance that despite what happens, the Lord is always in the middle of His Church.

One Like the Son of Man: The Lord calls Himself the Son of Man because of His love to Mankind, The Gospel of St. Luke that portrays the Lord as a Man and uses the expression “The Son of Man”. Also the expression, Like the Son of Man is used before to describe the Lord. He resembled us in everything except sin.

Eze 1:26 And from above the expanse that was over their heads was a likeness like a sapphire stone, the likeness of a throne. And on the likeness of the throne was a likeness looking like a man on it from above.

Dan 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

This way God appears to us as a son of man, but this does not limit His glory and honor. People also see Him as a Son of God.

Dan 3:25 He answered and said, Behold! I see four men loose, walking in the middle of the fire, and there is no harm among them. And the form of the fourth is like a son of the gods.

The cloth means the following

Long garment: This is what the priests wear, the Lord is our Arch-priest

Golden band around the breast: Sign of judges, also he is bringing us to the bosom of the Father. Daniel’s vision with almost identical except were Christ had the band.

Dan 10:5 then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man was clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz.

In Daniel, the Band at the loins, because Christ was ready to work and be incarnated. In Revelation, it is at the breast as a judge who is ready to give everyone according to their deeds.

Golden: Stands for the heavenly. The Lord Judges based on heavenly laws and commandments

Rev 1:14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And His eyes were like a flame of fire.

Head and Hair like wool, white as snow: indicate the old age, because Jesus is eternal The hair represents the Church that surrounds the head and is attached to the head. Our virtues are given to us when we are close to Christ.

Psa 133:2 It is like the precious ointment on the head that ran down on the beard, Aaron's beard, that went down to the mouth of his garment

Eyes like a flame of fire: Our bridegroom that does not slumber and sleep. His eyes penetrate the hidden and darkness.

Fiery eyes can be seen as a scary thing if we are not righteous or can be seen as an assurance that God is capable of taking care us.

Fire illuminates the darkness, burns the imperfections in precious metal, and can burn down and destroys everything in its path.

Rev 1:15 And His feet were like burnished brass having been fired in a furnace. And His voice was like the sound of many waters.

Feet like burnished brass: To crush the devil and those who stand in His way. God walks and comes close to us through the two testaments. It also represents the mix of the divinity (fire) and humanity (brass).

His voice like the sound of many waters: Many waters can be a lot blessings for those who are thirsty and can be devastating flooding for others.

Some of the fathers also say that since we are all in Christ, the “many waters” stands for the many nations that believed in Christ and are praising Him constantly.

Rev 1:16 And He had seven stars in His right hand, and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. And His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

His Right Hand: Position of strength. Similarly, the Incarnate Son sat at the right hand of the Father.

Seven Stars: are the seven bishops of the seven churches. They are stars because they shine in the darkness of this world by reflecting God’s light (in Arabic it is translated as planets).

Sharp two edged sword: the word of God, one side is for removing sin and evil and the other side heals and protects.

Also, God’s word can be comforting to those who need or brings condemnation to those who disrespect it.

His face was like the sun: The Lord is the Light of the world and he shines on us, this is only part of His Glory. The Sun gives life to all those who are living. Similarly, Christ is the source of our eternal life. It is out of His mercy that we do not see this glory every time we come to church and approach the sacraments.

Heb 4:12 For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

** God is like a policeman, the righteous will welcome his presence and the evil will hate him. How do we see God.

Rev 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, Do not fear, I am the First and the Last,

No one can see God in His full glory, not even in partial glory. Daniel, Ezekiel, and the disciples all fell when they saw God is some form of glory.

God’s appearance to us corresponds with our state and spiritual level.

John was “as dead”, so the Lord tells him, I was dead, to assure him of His power and His ability to grant life.

That is why we also bow down “in fear and trembling” when the priest prays for the Holy Spirit to descend on the bread and wine to transfer them to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

That is why also we do not sit down during communion as we are in the presence of God.

Isa 44:6 So says Jehovah, the King of Israel, and His redeemer Jehovah of Hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides Me there is no God.

Another proof of Christ's equality to the Father. He has the same attributes as the God of the old testament.

Rev 1:18 and the Living One, and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for ever and ever, Amen. And I have the keys of hell and of death.

The Living One: I live of my own (Yahweh)

I became dead: Only the incarnate Christ is the one that died and resurrected. Another proof of His divinity and that Christ who dies is also Yahweh of the Old Testament.

Amen: All the saint (St. John, St. Paul, St. Peter) can't hold themselves from praising God.

I have the keys for hell: God has the authority on everything even on Hell if he wants to close it or open it. Same way He did with the Devil and the story of Job.

Rev 1:19 Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be after this,

Things which are: Parts of this revelation is related to the time of St. John and the time he was given the prophecy.

Shall: These events are sure to happen, whether we like it or not.

Rev 1:20 the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

The messenger's job is to write and do what the sender wants. The whole Bible is divine and inspired on God. This book is different as it is being dictated by God or God shows John things to see and write about, more than other prophets.

Here it shows that when God wants to explain a prophecy He does that clearly. When He does not, we should not push our guessing and turn our speculations into facts.

** Do we tell others about God in the same way He wanted or our own version of the Bible like a lot of the people are doing today?

Chapter 2

- 1 The Message to the churches.
- 2 The Church of Ephesus
- 3 The Church of Smyrna
- 4 The Church of Pergamos
- 5 The Church of Thyatira

WE NEED people to keep track of the following:

How the Liturgy copies the book of revelation
Arguments against the heresies
Ways the Lord appeared
Comforting promises

The churches

The message to the churches can be seen in different ways

- 1) Literal: Actual churches that existed and went through these problems
- 2) Timely: The state of the church at different times of history
- 3) Symbolic: It represent any church at any time
- 4) Personal: Represent my spiritual state at some time of my life.

Church	Meaning	May Represent
Ephesus	Beloved	Early Church
Smyrna	Bitter	Period of persecution
Pergamos	Marriage	Church and State
Thyatira	Theater	Showing off, external appearance
Sardis	The remainder	people leave the church due to weakness
Philadelphia	Brotherly love	unity in the church
Laodicea	Rule of the people	follow the will of the people

In this Chapter the Lord addresses specific problems these Churches are going through. For every church, the Lord appears in a manner suitable for the problem the church is having. The promised reward is also related to this specific problem. We need to examine our lives with every church and learn the weakness we are going through and how to over come it.

The Church of Ephesus

The main problem of this church is the loss of the first love. The Bishop of this church is an excellent worker and servant but did not keep his first love. The Lord appears as holding all of the bishops in His Hand and the reward is to be receive the Lord Himself.
The Bishop might be Timothy the disciple of St. Paul

Rev 2:1 To the angel of the church of Ephesus write: He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, says these things.

The Angel: The Bishop of the Church is seen by God as an Angel. His main job is to carry the message from God to the people.

Write: Clear instructions for St. John to convey the message as given.

He who Holds the seven stars: The Lord appears as walking between the churches and He holds the bishops in His right hand. Signifies His constant presence among His people. God is taking care of the church and LOVES the church.

Stars: Some translations (and the Arabic one) writes it as Planets. This is more appropriate since we have no righteous or honor of our own but merely reflecting what God gives to us.

His right hand: He holds the Bishops in a place of strength and righteousness.

The goal is to remind the bishop of this church is that Christ still cares and loves him, He is still protecting him, and still the one who controls everything.

Who is the real human who can hold in his right hand 7 stars (planets)? Again, this is an indication that this vision is symbolic and not real.

Golden: The Church is golden as it is heavenly

Rev 2:2 I know your works and your labor and your patience, and how you cannot bear those who are evil. And you tried those pretending to be apostles, and are not, and have found them liars. Rev 2:3 And you have borne, and have patience, and for My name's sake you have labored and have not fainted.

I know your works: Before we start arguing with God, He indicates that He knows everything we have done. No need for us to tell Him: I have fasted or I have served. He already knows. God mentioned this first to eliminate the Bishop's defense that he had worked hard for the sake of Christ.

This also indicates that deeds are important, as they are the ones that manifest our faith.

Jam 2:14 My brothers, what profit is it if a man says he has faith and does not have works? Can faith save him?

You cannot bear those who are evil: This is a righteous bishop who defends the faith and hates sin. He has tolerated persecution and defended the church against false prophets.

This is a great servant who knows the faith, who defended the faith and worked really hard for God's sake, BUT....

Rev 2:4 But I have against you that you left your first love

What does it mean to leave the first love. The strong emotions that can drive a person to do anything for the person they love. The intense love and feel of need for God.

Who is my first love? Is it another person or a friend? Is it the world's lust? Or is it Christ?

If I don't love Christ as a young person, it will be harder to commit my life to Him when I grow up. I will lose a lot of time not knowing Christ.

Also, shows that deeds alone can not lead to an eternal life.
If the deeds are done for the sake of the deeds, they are not useful
If the deeds are done as a result of faith and love, they are useful.

1Co 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I have become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

1Co 13:2 And though I have prophecies, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so as to move mountains, and do not have charity, I am nothing.

1Co 13:3 And though I give out all my goods to feed the poor, and though I deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am profited nothing.

Charity = Agape = Love without an expected reward.

Why do people loose the first love to Christ?

Obligations, occupation with service, with the people we serve for their sake (or mine) and not for the sake of Christ. The desire of material (or emotional) things, other than Christ.

This also shows that loosing the first love can happen to all of us even if we are in the middle of the church and its service. We need to be diligence about maintaining our first love to Christ.

Rev 2:5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent.

Remember from where you have fallen: The solution is repentance and trying to follow the same spiritual routine that you had earlier.

Examine yourself and know why don't live your first love for Christ any more. What is occupying your heart? What caused you to change? We need to get rid of the root cause of us loosing the first love.

Do the first works: Also the first acts of repentance are more effective. Repentance is a life long task and is not finished in the early part of our life when we first commit our life to the Lord Jesus.

I will come quickly: We do not know the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come to judge everyone. Do not delay your repentance.

Will remove your lampstand: The punishment is the removal of the church, which did happen in reality.

Conclusion: No love leads to less attachment to Christ and less adherence to His path, which leads to complete separation from Christ.

Joh 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you.

Rev 2:6 But you have this, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Christ still remembers the good deeds. He is surrounding the rebuke between kind words.

The teaching of the Nicolaitans: is attributed (by some) to Nicolas one of the seven deacons. It is said, that when he became a Deacon he abstained from marital life, but then he could not keep his vow. He later turned and encourage adultery. Also, some say that he was promoting that the soul is more superior than the body, so who cares if the body sins.

Even hating sin is a virtue.
Do we hate sin or are we lukewarm to sin.

Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

He who as an ear: Same expression the Lord used after His parable. God is asking for active listening and not passive. To hear and to act (as in the litany of the Gospel) is what the Lord looks for.

The Church emphasizes this every liturgy and vespers when the angels shouts: Stand up in the fear of God and LISTEN to the Holy Gospel.

Also on Bright Saturday Night, the Church sings this statement every times instead of reading it to emphasis the importance of acting what we hear.

How often the Holy Spirit talks to us and we don't listen?

To him who overcomes: we are in a constant war and victory is a must.

This gives hope for anyone that Christ is expecting us to be victorious and He is preparing for us a reward.

How can we overcome if we have already lost our first love and the main catalyst for our relationship to Christ. Are our acts sufficient to make us good again?

God is waiting for us to start moving toward His direction and then His grace will help us overcome our laziness and lack of love.

I will give to eat of the Tree of Life: The Tree of Life was mentioned in Genesis

Gen 3:22 And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man has become as one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever,

Gen 3:23 therefore Jehovah God sent him out from the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he had been taken.

Gen 3:24 And He drove out the man. And He placed cherubs at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

The Lord Jesus is the source life

Joh 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by Me.

The ultimate reward for a person who loves someone is to be loved and to be united with the person he loves. This is the reward for the first love is to achieve the ultimate reward by being united with Christ himself.

The Church of Smyrna

Smyrna: Bitter

The problem facing this church is persecution, so the Lord comforts them by reminding them with His crucifixion and resurrection.

Believed to be St. Polycarb

Rev 2:8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The First and the Last, who became dead and lived, says these things:

The Lord reminds the Bishop that He also suffered, crucified, and of course resurrected from death, to let the bishop and his people focus on Christ and His ultimate victory over Satan and death.

Rev 2:9 I know your works and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich), and I know the blasphemy of those saying themselves to be Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

I know your works: The Lord starts by describing the good side of every person.

Poverty but you are rich: The bishop is poor in material things, but he is rich with his faith in Christ and refusing sin, contrary to what appears from the outside

2Co 6:10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

They were poor because of persecution and their money taken away. This has been happening for 2000 years and will continue to happen.

But are the synagogue of Satan: The Jews after they rejected Christ became the synagogue of Satan. What a contradiction from being named after God (Jehovah) to being called synagogue of Satan.

****What are we being called by God? Rich, Poor, Synagogue of Satan, or what?**

Rev 2:10 Do not at all fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the Devil will cast some of you into prison, so that you may be tried. And you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Do not fear: mentioned 365 times in the Bible

The Devil will cast: The real mover behind persecution is the Devil and his hate for Christ and every thing that is good.

The Lord knows the suffering that we will face. He warned us about it.

Joh 16:33 I have spoken these things to you so that you might have peace in Me. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

Ten Days: Represent a complete suffering that is preparing us for heaven (10 is a heavenly number). Some fathers saw the "Ten days" as the rule of 10 Roman rulers during which the church was persecuted. It can be 10 kings, 10 generations, 10 eras, and not only limited to 10 kings.

Crown of life:

Jam 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation, because having been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

The reward of this bishop is the crown of life. Corresponds to the situation of the church that was perceived to be poor and for the persecution that will lead to death. Christ is the life of the world, receiving the crown of life is receiving Jesus himself.

Rev 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

Martyrdom is rewarded by not dying a spiritual death. Which should we choose, physical or spiritual death?

What is the second death? Eternal death.

First birth is the natural birth.

Second birth is the spiritual birth from baptism and sacrament of Mayroon

First death is the natural physical death that we all go through.

Second death is the condemnation to eternal hell.

Another way to view that is that First death is the death of sin and the first birth is repentance. The second birth is the resurrection and the second death is eternal condemnation.

The Church of Pergamos

Pergamos: Marriage which stands for the marriage of Church and state

This is a church that lives very hard time "Where Satan's seat is". However, the teaching of the church is not pure, that is why the Lord appears with His sharp sword with two edges. In this Church, the wrong teaching is from the outside.

This bishop might be Kerios who was mentioned by Eusebius.

Rev 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write: He who has the sharp sword with two edges says these things.

The Lord appears with a sword (His word) to combat the wrong teachings that is being spread in this church.

The two edges of the word of God are: First edge cleanse and comforts, while the second rebukes and condemns.

This also shows the severity of heresies and wrong teaching. It requires the Lord to come fighting Himself. Who can stand in front of Jesus Christ. No wonder that even though St. Athanasius seemed to be by himself, he overcame the Arian heresy which was followed by kings and bishops. It was Christ fighting and St. Athanasius was the "front image".

Rev 2:13 I know your works, and where you live, even where Satan's seat is . And you hold fast My name and have not denied My faith, even in those days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells.

Again, the Lord mentions work as the first thing for each person. However, work alone is not enough. First comes the faith and love to Christ, then work that proves that the faith is alive.

** God knows where we live. If He stops by what will He find in our rooms and our homes

Where Satan seat is: Even in this horrible city where Satan seat is, there are still saints and martyrs. Don't think you are the only righteous one, or that there are no righteous people in the world. During the time Egypt's faith was not strong, the Lord sent rain to Egypt because of Anba Rewis' prayer. God always have few knees that do not bow to Baal.

During Rehab and Elizabeth, where idol worship was widespread, still God had his faithful witnesses.

1Ki 19:18 Yet I have left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which has not kissed him.

Rev 2:14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the teachings of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.

Few things: Strange how God expresses His dissatisfaction with our attitude. Instead of blasting this Bishop of not opposing those evil ideas, He puts it as “few things”. The warning shows the severity of these heresies, but God magnifies our small good deeds and is kind when mentioning the bad deeds we do.

Balam: is a gentile prophet that appeared in Numbers 25:1,2 – 31:16. He taught Moab how to seduce the Israelites to fornicate and worship idols.

Eat things sacrificed to the idols: to participate in idol worship even by eating what is offered to the idols. Even if this is done as social thing without believe.

The Lord starts by accounting for eating first and then fornication. Adultery usually is a sin that comes after pride and for those who are well fed and focus their attention on material lust. If you are fasting and hungry, your body will not think of this sin as much as it is used. Here the Pastor did not sin like Ephesus for example. But his problem is that he allowed strange teachings in his church. That is why the priests are responsible for the teaching and activities in their church

Rev 2:15 So you also have those who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Again, hating sin is a virtue but we should fight it at all times and not just hate it.

Rev 2:16 Repent! But if not I will come to you quickly, and will fight with them by the sword of My mouth.

Who can stand to fight the Lord. The best way to fight evil is to use the word of God. We need to be careful with false teaching, as the Lord does not tolerate them. Even if it appeared that the whole world has believed in the heresy and only one person left with the correct faith, God will stand next to that person and help him overcome the world. That is why St. Athanasius was able to overcome the Arian heresy.

Here the bishop does not have a problem of his own, but rather his people. He still held accountable for the sin of his people.

Can the bishop control what the congregation is doing? Can he prevent them from sinning?

Eze 3:17 Son of man, I have made you a watchman to the house of Israel. Therefore hear the Word of My mouth, and give them warning from Me.

Eze 3:18 When I say to the wicked, You shall surely die; and you do not give him warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked one shall die in his iniquity; but I will require his blood at your hand.

Eze 3:19 Yet if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

Eze 3:20 And when the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and when I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.

Eze 3:21 But if you warn the righteous so that the righteous does not sin, and if he does not sin, he shall surely live because he is warned; also you have delivered your soul.

Why did not the bishop of the church rebuke those external teachings?

Some say he depended on the external sources, the king or the ruler of the place that is why he was not able to rebuke him for this wrong teaching. Whenever we depend on external factor instead of depending on God, it controls us and we become servants to it instead of the freedom that God gives us.

That is also why this Church is called Pergamos, which represents the marriage of the Church and the External authority. During some time of the Church history, the Church depended on the kings and rulers to help it. Later, the same rulers interfered in the affair of the church and no could stop them as the dependency was too much. However, in the previous church (Smyrna), the church was free and strong despite the persecution.

So is our life, when we depend on an external factors such as people, jobs, cloths, or anything we become enslaved to it.

Rev 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give to him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows except he who receives it .

The hidden Manna: The Manna was food from heaven sent daily to feed God’s people during the wondering in the desert. They kept a kettle of the Manna in the Holy of Holies and in the ark of covenant to remind them with God’s love and support during their wonder in the desert.

No one was allowed to be in the Holy of Holies except the arch-priest when he enters once a year to raise incense in front of God.

The Hidden Manna mentioned here is The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the word of God. For us to qualify to come close to him and receive Him we must be Holy and sanctified.

In eternity, there is no communion. However, this means we will be fed and satisfied by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The white stone: It was given to the winners in races and competitions. White is for purity.

The new name is an indication of the virtues that people have and the renewal that we go through to get to the kingdom of God. Some also say that the white stone was given to those who were cleared (justified) in trials to show everyone their innocence. So if the bishop fights using God’s word he will be justified and be cleared from any wrongdoing.

** What do you think your new name will be? What is the virtue that God knows about you?

Will that name be “The Kind”, “The Gentle”,.....

The Word of God is the best medication to help us repent.

The Church of Thyatira

Thyatira means theatrical.

This church suffers from superficial religious activities, that is why heresies and evil ideas are spread in this church. The Lord appears with His fiery eyes. The victorious is rewarded by overcoming sin and crushing the evil heresies.

Though this church sounds similar to the previous church (Pergamos) but there is a significant difference, or else the Lord would have mentioned them together. Here the problem is from within while for the church of Pergamos the problem was coming from external sources.

Pergamos	Thyatira
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He who has the sharp sword with two edges says these things.	The Son of God, He who has His eyes like a flame of fire and His feet like burnished metal, says these things:
you have there those who hold the teachings of Balaam	because you allow that woman Jezebel to teach
who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.	she saying herself <i>to be</i> a prophetess, and to cause My servants to go astray, and to commit fornication, and to eat idol-sacrifices.
False ideas are introduced first and then followed by committing sin	Wrong practices and ideas that seem to be good were introduced first and then sin and open idol worship.

The Bishop believed to be St. Ireneaus the disciple of St. Polycarb.

Rev 2:18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, He who has His eyes like a flame of fire and His feet like burnished metal, says these things:

Thyatira means theatrical. Here the Lord appears with the emphasis on his strong vision and strong feet to crush sin. So God can see through our theatrical actions and we can not fool him.

Eyes like a flame of fire: Sees through darkness and burns the ashes (Sin).

Feet like burnished metal: As mentioned before, two feet are the two testament (Old & New) that God uses to come close to us. God's word is powerful enough to expose our lack of depth and lack of strong faith. He can also crush His enemies with His strong word.

Rev 2:19 I know your works and love and service and faith and your patience, and your works; and the last to be more than the first.

The importance of Faith that translates into action. Here the acts of the bishop and his service is increasing and not decreasing. Again, the bishop

Rev 2:20 But I have a few things against you because you allow that woman Jezebel to teach, she saying herself to be a prophetess, and to cause My servants to go astray, and to commit fornication, and to eat idol-sacrifices.

Again, this church is faced with false teaching that appeals to people by promoting fornication and eating.

Jezebel can be a true person that lived in that church at the time of writing the prophecy,

a group of people represented by this symbolic person,

Can be the wife of the bishop,

Or some false teacher.

But she also represents the evil teaching and the people who persuade others to commit sin. The first Jezebel mentioned in the Bible was the wife of Ahab the king of Israel (1King 16). She was the one who challenged Elisah and taught the people of Israel the worship of idol.

The people of Thyatira followed this false teacher because of the superficial way they worship God and any new idea managed to penetrate the church.

Here the bishop is being rebuked because he allowed the false teaching and did not attach it with the proper teaching.

Rev 2:21 And I gave her time that she might repent of her fornication, and she did not repent.

Every one is warned and given LIMITED time to repent, if we don't listen to the warning we are doomed.

The main purpose of the trial imposed on us is to repent. This theme is from the beginning of the Bible and will continue to the end of Revelation.

Some times when we see sinners living freely without punishment we think the Lord does not care or He is approving them (God forbids). We do not realize that God is giving them a period to realize their wrong deeds, similar to Saul (Paul), Moses the Black, and millions others (including you and I).

Rev 2:22 Behold, I am throwing her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great affliction, unless they repent of their deeds.

If you participate with sinners you are punished with them. Sin carries its own punishment.

When David the prophet sinned, even when he repented, the wage of sin is death, and the child of sin died. Other examples, Smoking and health problems, homosexuality and aids.

The purpose of the punishment is to lead us to repentance and not just punishment.

Same theme is found in Jeremiah and all of the other old testament prophets.

Jer 15:5 For who shall have pity on you, O Jerusalem? Or who shall weep over you? Or who shall turn aside to ask your welfare?

Jer 15:6 You have forsaken Me, says Jehovah; you have gone backward; therefore I will stretch out My hand against you, and destroy you; I am weary with repenting.

Jer 15:7 And I will winnow them with a fork in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of sons; I will destroy My people, since they do not turn from their ways.

Rev 2:23 And I will kill her children with death. And all the churches will know that I am He who searches the reins and hearts, and I will give to every one of you according to your works.

Kill her children: The wage of sin is death.

Do we learn from others that fall and get punished or do we just gloat?

He who searches the reins and hearts: God knows the depth of our thoughts and our heart. Even if we pretend to be Holy and righteous, the Lord knows what we really think.

What God asks for is our Heart

Pro 23:26 My son, give Me your heart, and let your eyes watch My ways.

I will give to every one of you according to your works: The church took this verse in the liturgy to remind us that our action is a manifestation of our faith. Do people see our actions and glorify God? What happens if we are to give an account for our actions NOW?

Rev 2:24 But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put on you no other burden.

The devil lures us to know sin and experience it. We should not listen to the temptation and refuse to go along with sin to any level.

A common attitude in our families is to let people gain “experience” by trying out different things. How can we guarantee that we are not going to be dragged in to the depth of sin. Once we are dragged it is almost impossible to come out.

This difficulty is presented by the method the Lord Jesus used to raise people from the death.

With Jairus daughter was raised by a simple command.

The son of the widow of Naieen was raised by a touch of Christ to the coffin.

When it came to Lazarus, Christ had to yell with a loud voice

Joh 11:43 And saying these things, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, Here! Outside!

It is more difficult for a person who sin is manifested outside to be raised than the person who is still concealing his sin.

Rev 2:25 But that which you have, hold fast until I come.

No matter the little amount of faith we have left or little good deeds we do, we must keep and increase.

Rev 2:26 And he who overcomes and keeps My works to the end, to him I will give power over the nations.

Power over the nations: To over come sin and the desires those are in our hearts.

Psa 2:8 Ask of Me, and I shall give the nations *for* Your inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession.

Psa 2:9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

The real victory is over ourselves, our desires, and the temptations we go through and not other people.

Rev 2:27 And he will rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter they will be broken to pieces, even as I received from My Father.

Vessels of potter: our bodies are like vessels of potter that hold treasures in them

2Co 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us;

When our vessels are broken, the treasure inside us (that is the Holy Spirit) is declared to other people.

As I received from My Father: Here The Lord Jesus speaks as the incarnate Jesus and not as the Logos. The Honor given to us by receiving the victory and righteousness due to Christ's incarnation. He is the first born, and because of that we receive all these benefits.

Rom 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be *the* First-born among many brothers.

We get to be victorious similarly to Christ.

Rev 2:28 And I will give him the Morning Star.

Christ is the morning Star as He shines on our lives, He make the darkness of evil go away.

Rev 2:29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Our obedience to the Holy Spirit help us to follow the God's commandment and that leads us to a spiritual life.

St. Mary Coptic Church
East Brunswick, NJ

The Book of Revelation **Chapter 3**

Continue the message to the churches.

- 1 The Church of Sardis
- 2 The Church of Philadelphia
- 3 The Church of Laodicea

The Church of Sardis

Sardis means the remainder

This church is different than the other Churches, as the bishop is not commended on any good work. Because of the little faith there is no real love or work.

This is a church of the remainder or the few who are left in the faith. (Rev 3:4). The Lord appears as the one giving the Holy Spirit the life giver.

Said to be St Melito

Rev 3:1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars says these things. I know your works, that you have a name that you live, and are dead.

Seven Spirits: The Holy Spirit depicted as “Seven Spirits of God” to represent the complete and various ways it works in people and in their hearts. The problem of this bishop and his church is that they are spiritually dead. The role of the Holy Spirit is to give life. That is why the Lord appeared as the one who has the source of life. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives that can change us back to love God and maintain our relationship. It is not the words of speakers or our works that will make give us life.

Seven stars: The Lord appeals to the bishop by reminding him that Christ loves him and is keeping him in his hand, despite his current situation.

I know your works that you have a name that you live and are dead: Here the Bishop has works and may be famous (you have a name). This might be due to old deeds or pretending to be good. However the Lord sees him as dead. Usually what is dead is the spirit and not the deeds.

** Does the Lord see us dead or alive ?

How does the **world** see us versus how does the **Lord** see us? Not always the same view. Most of the time we care about what people are saying about us versus what God is saying about us. Do we focus on the internal deeds (fighting sin, lust, self) or on the deeds that make us famous and popular.

Rev 3:2 Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. For I have not found your works being fulfilled before God.

Be watchful: To be watchful and to care of the little things. Don't hold a treaty with the devil on a neutral zone. We need to examine ourselves constantly and watch from the external effects.

and strengthen the things which remains: Don't stop practicing the acts of faith and righteousness even if it is little. Work on making it stronger.

This gives each of us a ray of hope. The Lord is asking us to strengthen what we have even when we seem dead. A dead person usually has nothing to offer to those who are still alive. God still sees some good in each person.

This also should be our attitude towards the others, to strengthen them even if they seem to be dead to all. Moses the Black was dead to all and the Lord went after him and made him alive again. So is Mary the Egyptian.

Do not listen to the Devil when he tells you, Stop praying because your prayer is not strong or you can't go to church and still be thinking these thought. Fight the sin and still continue to strengthen what you are doing from acts of righteousness.

For I have not found your works being fulfilled (perfect) before God: We should never be satisfied with what we are doing and say. I am doing enough. We always should ask ourselves, is our work perfect before God and not before men.

Rev 3:3 Remember then how you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

Remember then how you have received and heard: Remembering God's grace and His gifts and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. That is why the Lord appeared as the one who has the 7 spirits.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said to you.

Here the Lord is asking HOW he received versus what he received. The Lord gives generously and abundantly more that what we think or need.

Hold fast and repent: Be watchful and strengthen what you have from faith and actions

I will come upon you as a thief: The Lord will come as a thief in an unexpected hour. He did not feel embarrassed to call Himself a thief in order to warn us and make us realize that if we are busy with the world we will not recognize when he is coming. Later we will see the many signs that precedes Christ's second coming, however those who are busy with the world and are dead spiritually will not realize his coming and will be surprised of his coming.

During the first coming, those who were watching (Simeon, Hanna, the Magi, the shepherd) knew of his second coming. However, those who were busy with the world did not even realize that he was in Bethlehem even when they are told so.

Rev 3:4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments. And they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

You have a few names: Here we get the key of the message to the church.

As we see in the progress of the churches, the previous church's faith (Thyatira) was more theatrical than it was real. This leads to a loss of faith. Also following heresies leads to spiritual death.

Walk with me in white: White is a sign of purity. The Lord appeared wearing white on Mt. Tabur during the transfiguration. Also in the church, the priest, the deacons, the newly baptized all wear white as a reminder of the purity we should achieve to approach the sacraments.

** A few remained faithful. Are you one of them.

For they are worthy: Despite the state of the church there are people whom the Lord see as worthy. Our spiritual life should not depend on the outside even if it is the state of the church. Here there are people who are alive and are "Worthy" and their bishop is "dead".

Rev 3:5 The one who overcomes, this one will be clothed in white clothing. 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.

The one who overcomes: Still even if our faith is little, the Lord is encouraging us and he is willing to support us (sanctify us, fill us) to overcome sin.

this one will be clothed in white In Church the priests and the deacon wear white to remind us that when we are in Church we are in heaven. (In some African and Indian churches everyone wears white). Also, the newly baptized wear white as a sign for being purified by baptism and sacrament of Mayroun.

I will not blot out his name of the book of life: Two rewards: Wearing white, sign of righteousness. The second is our Names will no be blot out of the Book of Life. When we are baptized (and receive the Holy Spirit) our name is written in Heaven, in the book of life. Our job is to keep it there and not to get it blot out. i.e. It is not our deeds that will get us in heaven, The Lord Jesus has paid the price for us to get us there. Our deeds and our actions make sure we are following the path that the Lord wants us to follow an to keep our name written in the book of life.

Which also addresses the problem if we guarantee salvation. If Salvation is guaranteed, why is the Lord saying: "I will not blot out his name". If we are saved, our name can not be blot out. We need to be watchfull.

I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels The Lord Jesus confesses our name in front of the Father and the Angels is a direct reaction to us, confessing His name in front of people.

A dead person does not confess of Christ love. He does not demonstrate God's love by his life.

From chronological order, This church comes after the church of Pergamos which relied on external sources other than God and the Church of Thyatira which was very shallow in faith and attacked with Heresies. If my faith is only on the surface and there is no depth to it, I will end up dead.

The Church of Philadelphia

Philadelphia means brotherly love.

The problem of this church is Little Strength. To counter the weakness and the slackness in this Church the Lord reminds this Bishop of His Holiness. If we remind ourselves with God Holiness we can't be lazy and relaxed.

Believed to be Bishop Cordanos.

Rev 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts; and shuts and no one opens, says these things:

Since the problem of this Bishop is little strength, almost giving up, the Lord is reminding him that He is capable of working through any person to spread the faith and to defend it. It is not the Bishop's strength but rather God's holiness.

The reason our faith is weak, the reason we think we can not have an impact on the world around us is we look at ourselves and not to God.

It is God who opens the way and no one shuts. When He opened the way to the disciples, not even the Roman empire was able to shut it down. When He opened the way to the Jews out of Egypt, neither Pharaoh nor his army could stop them.

If we always see God and His holiness we will always know who is the capable person and our attitude about life and our ability changes.

Rev 3:8 I know your works. Behold, I have given before you an open door, and no one can shut it. For you have a little strength and have kept My Word and have not denied My name.

Given Before you an open door and no one can shut it. Heaven is open in front of us, God is in control and He gives us what we can handle. Nothing more, nothing less. If the door is open are we going to go in or stay outside.

God has the key of heavens and He gave this authority to the church to use it against those who sin. He also is reminding the Bishop that God is the one who will decide who will go to Heaven.

Have little strength: This is the main problem of the Church. Little strength because if derived out of itself and not from God.

Have kept My Word and have not denied My name: This bishop is faithful and must have faced persecution or hard times and may be that is the cause of him feeling "of little strength"

Rev 3:9 Behold, I give out of those of the synagogue of Satan, those saying themselves to be Jews and are not, but lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

Synagogue of Satan: It is said that the Jews pretended to worship the idols to stir the king against the Christians. Those who once were called God's people (Jerusalem is where God dwells with His people) now became a synagogue of Satan because they rejected Christ.

Worship before your feet: Sign of respect and honor and not sign of worship. May also indicate the return of the Jews to the church and believing that Christ came.

to know that I have loved you: The key thing is our Love to Christ and how do we feel His love in our life. Despite the situation of this bishop, God still loves him.

This is a very comforting thought for all of us even if we feel we can't do anything, what will strengthen us is that God still loves us.

Also if the Jews believe they will know how much the Lord loved His church and protected through out the ages despite the attempts of some of them to destroy it.

Rev 3:10 Because you have kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation which will come upon all the habitable world, to try those who dwell upon the earth.

This is an indication on the hard times that will come at the end.

If this church is seen as the period before the end times, the Lord is promising the bishop that he will be spared from the trouble of the end days.

All the habitable world: Which indicates that the trouble of the last days will impact everyone. No rapture, no one will be spared this last temptation.

Maintaining our faith and our commitment to the Lord has a lot of rewards. Even if we do not see it now.

We are not aware of the amount of trouble we are spared or protected from.

Rev 3:11 Behold, I come quickly. Hold fast to that which you have, so that no one may take your crown.

Again, we are crowned when we receive God's gifts, can we keep them? The Lord will come soon, whether it is at the end of my life or the end of the world. If we are enjoying His presence we are not going to feel as if we are wasting time. If we are not careful and wasting time His coming and the end of our life will surprise us.

No one may take your crown: We have a crown waiting for us, our job is to work on keeping it and not to lose it. Which means to guaranteed salvation unless we struggle for it (who overcomes).

Rev 3:12 Him who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will go out no more. And I will write upon him the name of My God, and the

name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of Heaven from My God, and My new name.

I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God: A pillar is something important in a building. Two reasons for pillars: load carrying, or decorative. We can be load carrying in the Church of God, a sign of our great work and contribution in building the church. We can also be a pleasing sight for God by our actions and our deeds. God does all the work and then attribute it to us. Similarly, the Saints who perform miracles. The true healer is the Lord, but He let's the Saints be glorified for the miracle.

Gal 2:9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars

He will go out no more: After we die there is no change in our status. Once we are pillars we are pillars.

I will write upon him the name of My God: When we write our name on something, it means it is our property. Though God is our creator and we are all His property, He does not want to force us to be His. He has given us full choice and freedom to choose. It is only by our choice we become His.

Jerusalem which comes down out of Heaven from My God: This contradicts the heresy of the millennium reign that the Lord will rule here on earth in an earthly Jerusalem.

Our goal and object is heavenly and not earthly. Our rewards are also heavenly and not earthly.

And My New Name: Jesus' new name is an indication on us knowing new attributes about Him that we did not know before. When He writes This New Name (attribute) on a person, that person is known by this attribute. Example: St. Mary and holiness, St. Abram and loving the poor, and a lot more.

What is Jesus' new name to me. Could it be the Lamb? Could it be that we will each know God in a unique way: Lover of mankind, the mighty, the kind, the humble,

My God: The Lord Jesus is speaking here as the one who reconciled the Father to all Humanity. Without Him we would not receive any of these rewards and would not be allowed to heaven. He took our humanity to enter into heaven with it and take us inside with Him. Repeated 3 times to emphasis the importance of the salvation given to us through Christ and that it is only through Him we enter into heaven.

Act 4:12 And there is salvation in no other One; for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Rev 3:13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The Church of Laodicea

Laodicea the rule of the people

This church is the last church and represent the worst spiritual state. The Lord could not find something nice to say about them. As the church seeks to please the people and follow their desires it forgets the truth of God and tries to define itself as the people want. The feeling of being satisfied and in no need of anything including God leads to be rejected by God.

Believed to be Eurelius or Spharios the Martyr.

Rev 3:14 And to the angel of the church of the Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Head of the creation of God, says these things:

The Amen: The truth that is Christ who is faithful and true witness to the Father and to His love to us.

I do not feel that I need God as I have found other truths in the world. The faith dwindles and disappears and I feel content and satisfied with where I am even if it is with the pigs. Only focusing on the Lord Jesus, the truth, I can see the inequities that are in me. As I keep focused on the world and on myself I will think that everything is great as I seek more and more illusions.

A sign of me focusing on Christ is to see His purity and my in filthy life.

Christ was described before as the The Amen by St. Paul

2Co 1:20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Faithful and true witness: True Martyr

The Lord witnessed to the Father by words, actions, love, and the Cross.

The Head of the creation of God:

αρχή

archel

ar-khay'

From G756; (properly abstract) a *commencement*, or (concrete) *chief* (in various applications of order, time, place or rank): - beginning, corner, (at the, the) first (estate), magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule.

Arius misused the expression of Arche here to claim that Christ is the first creation, i.e. He was created by the Father. While the true meaning is that Christ is the Chief, First Power, First Principality, and first ruler.

To remind the Bishop that instead of following other rulers and other sources of authority it is Christ the true authority and leader of the Church and His word should be followed and not Satan of the will of the people.

Also, Christ as the head of the creation can not accept that part of His body is lazy and lukewarm.

If we always see what Christ has done and how he lived we can not be lukewarm, but in constant fire in our relationship to Him.

Rev 3:15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were cold or hot.

From Fr. Tadros' book

What does He mean by cold, hot and lukewarm?

The first opinion:

The cold is the unbeliever who is immersed in evil, and the hot is the believer who is inflamed with the fires of God's love, but as Bishop Victorianus says,

[The lukewarm is neither an unbeliever nor a believer, he is all things to everyone. He lives without principle, cold with the cold and hot with the hot.]

The second opinion:

The cold is the one who refrains from sin for fear of punishment.

The hot is he who refrains from sin for his love to the Lord.

As for the lukewarm, he is empty of both, fear and love.

The third opinion:

Cassian believes that the lukewarm is the hesitant between virtue and vice. He wants virtue but is coward to struggle, and he hates to strive for it.

The forth opinion:

The cold is he who deep down perceives his weakness and his fallings as the adulterer woman, the tax-collector, the thief, St. Moses the Black, and Mary the Egyptian. This kind gets inflamed quickly by God "the consuming fire" and becomes warm in spirit.

As for the lukewarm, he snores in deep sleeping. He thinks in himself that he is virtuous, a disciple of the Lord and faithful. That he himself is in need of nothing but to preach others without humbling to listen, to accept advice and to accept blame. How poor is this man because he is deceived!

Summary

Cold: Can be the people that never knew Christ.

Hot: to be filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit and to feel the warmth of God in our lives.

What is lukewarm? Our actions are neither cold: i.e. we are far from Christ so we do not feel like repenting, nor we are hot: always repenting and coming closer to Christ.

We feel we are o.k. with what we are doing, we are great where we are.

Common theme, what else you need from me? I come to church and I don't steal or cheat. That is enough

Rev 3:16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

The problem of being lukewarm is we don't feel we need God nor we need to repent. God already is keeping us close to Him and in Him. By our Lukewarmness we expel ourselves from Him.

Vomit: What a strong statement said by the Lord.

Out of My Mouth: The Lord is containing us inside Him where we are protected.

Rev 3:17 Because you say, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

What a miserable state we are in and we do not know it.

I am rich: We feel that we are rich, we have done a lot and have a plenty of knowledge

Have need of nothing: No need for salvation, no need for repentance, no need for the advice, no need for the wisdom of the church. Why any of these things, I am rich and have enough of my own.

Do not know: That is the result of being in sin and following the desire of the people. We do not know how miserable we are. We kept believing that the illusions of the world are richness.

Wretched and miserable: No matter what the world offers from lust and what appears to be fulfilling we are left miserable. Look at all those who do not follow God but follow their desires, they claim to be happy but are miserable.

Poor: Lack the true Gold and true richness that is the Lord Jesus.

Blind: God is the light of the world. If we do not have Him we can not see and we act as blind loosing our way.

Naked: We are clothed with God's grace and love. The devil lures us to commit sin in hiding and once we commit it he exposes us to everyone or makes us feel exposed and naked.

Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire, so that you may be rich; and white clothing, so that you may be clothed, and so that the shame of your nakedness does not appear. And anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see.

I counsel: The Lord is constantly advising us for own good.

To buy from me: How can we buy if we are poor and have no money. Again, God's gifts are for free, no one of us is worthy to get anything from Him. This is called grace.

Also notice that if we want to change we need to act and take an active action. The change is great between being poor and being rich, and it is all for free.

Christ is the only source of salvation. We can not receive any gift from any other source.

Gold purified by fire: Gold is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Fire stands for the trials, tribulation, and the cross that the Lord endured on our behalf.

White cloth: Purity and sanctification.

Eye ointment: are God's words to keep our eyes open and has good vision.

Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; therefore be zealous and repent.

God is explaining His reason behind rebuking this bishop and trying to justify His chastising. What a kind loving God.

Love is the main motive of God rebuking us. If He gives up on rebuking us, He will punish us but this is a very late stage.

Pro 3:12 for whom Jehovah loves He corrects, even as a father *corrects* the son *in whom* he delights.

God treats us with Love even during tribulation. There is a purpose behind all the problems we go through even if we don't understand the reason. It is because of God's love that He allows these problems to shape us properly.

Be zealous and repent: If I am zealous to God's way and to His love, I will not allow other gods in my life. I will keep myself pure and not follow my desires or the desires of the people. Repentance is a key to reconcile with God.

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him and he with Me.

I stand at the door and knock: Though God is calling but He does not force Himself on us. It is our choice to open or not.

Son 5:2 I sleep, but my heart is awake. *It is* the sound of my Beloved that knocks, *saying*, Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled; for My head is filled with dew, My locks with the drops of the night.

Son 5:3 I have put off My coat; How shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

Son 5:4 My Beloved put in His hand by the hole *of the door*, and my heart was moved for Him.

Son 5:5 I rose up to open to my Beloved; and my hands dripped *with* myrrh, and my fingers flowing *with* myrrh on the handles of the bolt.

Son 5:6 I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had left. He passed on. My soul went out when He spoke; I sought Him, but I could not find Him. I called Him, but He did not answer me.

If anyone hears My voice: Our problem is we are not tuned to God's voice. A lot of signals coming our way and we seek all of them except the correct one. We need to tune our receiver to receive God's word. This also means that God is constantly talking to us, do we listen?

Joh 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

I will dine with him and he with Me: What a great honor and privilege to get the Lord to eat with us. He invites to his banquet every time for communion, do we approach it? Do we have our lives prepared that He can come or are we too busy?

Rev 3:21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and have sat down with My Father in His throne

Our prize is limitless. The honor we will receive is beyond our understanding. We will be given to sit with the Lord in His Throne. However, the road to overcoming is through the same path that the Lord has followed.

Humility, Service, the Cross, Death to the world, and Resurrection.

Summary of the Churches

Church	Problem Facing Church	How Christ Appears	Remedy	Warning	Reward
Ephesus	Return from first love	Holding 7 lamps in His hand	Remember from where you fell	I will move the candlestick	Eat of the fruit of the tree of life
Smyrna	Persecution (none of their own)	This who was dead and now is alive	Be faithful until death	none	The crown of life
Pergamos	Heresies and wrong ideas in church	Has the sharp sword with two edges	Repent	will fight with them by the sword of My mouth	I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give to him a white stone
Thyatira	Evil lusts Depending on external Forces. Heresies are external	His eyes like a flame of fire and His feet like burnished metal	hold on to what you have	Sickness and death	Power over the nation. Give him the Morning Star
Sardis	Hypocrisy/little faith left. People leave the church due to weakness. Heresies are internal	Has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars	Watchful, strengthen what is there, Remember the God's gift and teaching.	The Lord Attacks as a thief	White robe Name not blot out of the book of life. Christ will confess him in front of the Father.
Philadelphia	Laziness at work	Holy, has the keys of David	unity in the church	Not to loose his crown	Becomes a pillar in God's temple. Write the name of God on Him
Laodicea	Lukewarmness / Spiritual Attitude	Amen, Witness. the Head of the creation of God follow the will of the peoples	buy from Me gold purified by fire, and white clothing, And anoint your eyes with eye salve.	vomit him	Grant to sit with me in my Father's throne

Chapter 4 Vision of Heaven

- 1) Open door to heaven
- 2) The throne and the one sitting on it
- 3) What is around the throne

Open door to heaven

This chapter transfers us from earth to heaven. The previous vision was on earth related to the church on earth.

To know what will happen till the end of the world we can't be tied to the earth but must be focused on heaven and be in a spiritual state that allows us to receive such revelations. Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and all the other prophets were focused on heaven and on God, that is why God revealed to them what must happen later on. The reward of the last church was to sit on the throne of God. Here God describes His throne.

Rev 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *was* opened in Heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you what must occur after these things.

After these things: Indicates a new vision. Whether it happened in the same day or a different day no one knows.

A door was opened: As the last vision on earth ended with the Church of Laodikia and its door was closed for God, we see the exact opposite in heaven. Even if our door is closed, heaven's door is always open. Heaven is always open in front of us if we are in the right spiritual level to feel it.

John was exiled and for sure felt that the world was shut to him. Now he sees the heaven opened.

Were of a trumpet: Trumpet was used for feasts, celebration, and declaring war.

The first time we heard the trumpet to declare God's warning to the churches. This time it is to prepare us to hear Christ, for heaven as well as to prepare us for the war against the church.

Come up here: A type of spiritual uplifting or elevation is needed to get into the heavenly. This does not come at once. It is a gradual process. Requires the relinquishing of what relates to the world and earthly matters and to live a spiritual life (not material life).

St. Paul is describing it as:

2Co 12:2 I know a man in Christ fourteen years before (whether in the body, I do not know; or outside of the body, I do not know; God knows) such a one was caught up to the third Heaven.

I will show you: St. John actually saw the events of the future. It shows God's power over time and His willingness to share this knowledge with those who are worthy. We should not seek to know our future (or secure it) through other people. God is the only one who knows the future.

What must occur: These events are going to happen sooner or later.

The Lord is willing to share with us His plans if we are ready to receive them and on that spiritual level.

God shared His plan with Abraham before destroying Sodom and Gomorrah

Gen 18:17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

Similarly with Daniel, the Lord told him everything about the return to Jerusalem, His First and second comings (Daniel 7-12).

Rev 4:2 And immediately I became in the spirit. And behold, a throne was set in Heaven, and *One* sat upon the throne.

Immediately: Some of us respond to God immediately and others take them a life time.

I became in the spirit: Which means a spiritual state that the Body does not hinder the spirit. The fathers consider this as a higher state than what he was in Rev 1:10

Rev 1:10 I came to be in *the* Spirit in the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Eze 3:12 And the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a sound of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed *be* the glory of Jehovah from His place.

2Co 12:2 I know a man in Christ fourteen years before (whether in *the* body, I do not know; or outside of *the* body, I do not know; God knows) such a one *was* caught up to *the* third Heaven

A throne was set in heaven: God is not limited. He is not limited to a certain place or certain spot.

This is only to explain to us that the Lord is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and that He is worshiped by all the heavenly creatures.

A throne is a place where majesty and dominion is declared. Heaven is God's throne because in Heaven His word and will are done.

** Are we thrones for God?

In heaven: there are 4 heavens

First heaven is the heaven of the birds

Second heaven is the heaven of the planets

Third heaven is the paradise (Where St. Paul was taken)

The Fourth is the heaven of heavens (God's throne).

A throne was seen before by

Isaiah **Isa 6:1** In the year that King Uzziah died I then saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.

Eze 1:26 And from above the expanse that *was* over their heads *was* a likeness like a sapphire stone, the likeness of a throne. And on the likeness of the throne *was* a likeness looking like a man on it from above.

Eze 10:1 And I looked, and behold! In the expanse over the head of the cherubs was seen the appearance of the form of a throne, like a sapphire stone, above them.

Dan 7:9 I watched until the thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days sat, whose robe *was* white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool. His throne *was* like flames of fire, and His wheels *like* burning fire.

One sat upon the throne: St. John could not describe the way the Lord appeared. This is a much glorified vision than that of Rev 1:13 and any of what the other prophets saw as this vision is in heaven and not on earth

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The church reminds us with scene by putting the picture of the Pantocrator in the bosom of the Father inside the altar. So when we are in the Altar we remember we are in heaven.

Rev 4:3 And He who sat there looked like a jasper stone and a sardius. And a rainbow *was* around the throne, looking like an emerald.

He who sat there looked like: Again, this is an indication that what St. John is describing is totally symbolic, as it can't be expressed with human words. Similar to what Ezekiel described in 1:26.

Jasper and Sardius: Red to represent the blood that was shed on our behalf. They are also the first and the last stones on the High Priest's vest as a reminder to the Lord of the 12 tribes of Israel. Which means that Christ as Our High Priest always remembers and keep us in Him.

It is said that the High Quality Jasper is very transparent, to indicate God's purity and holiness. Sardius is red in color, represents the blood that was shed on the cross to save us. The only one who will still carry the signs of his martyrdom in heaven will be the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rainbow: To remind us with the promise God made of not destroying Man again. So God's promise is always before Him to remind us that He does not forget. The rainbow is a continuum of colors to show us God's complete Mercy on us.

Like an Emerald: Emerald is green, is rainbow green? Again to show that all of these description are symbolic. The Emerald is green, which represents life. We can not live without green plants.

During the prayer of the third day (for those who passed away), the priest puts green plants and bread to indicate that those who departed are alive and are not dead.

Rev 4:4 And around the throne *I saw* twenty-four thrones. And on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white clothing. And they had crowns of gold on their heads.

ELDER = Presbuteros = Priests

πρεσβύτερος

presbuteros

pres-boo'-ter-os

Comparative of πρέσβυς presbus (*elderly*); *older*; as noun, a *senior*; specifically an Israelite *Sanhedrist* (also figuratively, member of the celestial council) or Christian "presbyter": - elder (-est), old.

Same usage as in 1Pe5:1 which is usually referred to as priests.

1Pe 5:1 I exhort the elders who are among you, I being also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

Who are these 24 priests? They are heavenly creatures that represents priesthood in both the old testament (12) and the new testament (12).

Number 12 stands for God's people.

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12 = 4x3 = people in all corners of the world X the trinity, those people who are in the world and God is in them are considered to be God's people.

There were 12 tribes in the old testament, there were 12 disciples in the new testament.

Note priesthood of the new testament includes all those who acted as priests from the time of Adam till the Priesthood of Aaron.

These heavenly creatures have their own thrones. They are the closest to God's throne.

clothed in white clothing. And they had crowns of gold on their heads. That is why the priest wears white and a crown on his head (Talasanah) to remind us of how those priests in heaven are wearing.

God's love to humanity is above all other creatures and that is why those 24 priests are the closest to God. He also allows them to have thrones and crowns in His presence.

The Church remember them with Doxologies and a special feast day.

Rev 4:5 And out of the throne came lightnings and thunderings and voices. And seven lamps of fire were burning in front of the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

This describes the awesome presence of God. Moses and Isaiah saw lightning and thunder before they saw God.

We are privileged to be in God's presence every time we approach communion without this awesome sight or else we would be scared as the people of Israel at Mount Sinai and never approach communion.

Lightning: represents God's actions that are seen and are amazing

Thundering and voices: God's promises and warnings

Seven Lamps of fire ... which are the seven spirits of God: This is the Holy Spirit with its complete action in each one of us and in all humanity.

Rev 4:6 And a sea of glass was in front of the throne, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind

Sea of Glass: The fathers see this sea as the water of baptism. Where the Holy Spirit is sent from God to us, where we receive in the sacrament of mayroun and that is the one that carries us back to heaven.

It is Glass as it is pure and reflects God's glory on us.

Daniel saw that see as fire, the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples as tongues of fire.

In Rev. 15:2 also St. John sees a see of glass and fire.

When Solomon was building the temple, he built a sea of brass outside the temple for washing.

The priests washed once completely before starting his service at age of 30.

Wash hands and feet every time before going to the temple.

And in the midst of the throne and around it: God dwells in the midst of His people.

Physically how can they be in the midst, around, and under the throne? Again each one of these descriptions is symbolic.

were four living creatures: These are the Cherubim as Ezekiel saw in Eze. 10:1
full of eyes in front and behind: Stands for Knowledge

Rev 4:7 And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle.

1) They can be the 4 gospels:

Mathew = Man, talked about the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ

Mark = Lion, talked about the strength of the Lord Jesus. His Gospel started by “Voice crying in the wilderness”

Luke = Luke, talked about the sacrifice offered by Christ as well as started by the story of Zachariah the priest.

John = Eagle, talked about the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is written so that you would believe.

This means I can be God’s throne if I know Him through the Gospels.

2) Christ redeeming act of salvation:

Man = His incarnation and taking a body

Calf = His suffering and crucifixion. He was offered as a sacrifice on our behalf.

Lion = His glorious and powerful resurrection

Eagle = His ascension to the heavens.

I can be a place for God to rest only if I accept His redeeming work and salvation. I must share with Him the cross, the life of the resurrection, and live in the heavenly and not the earthly.

3) Stands for Me as a human:

Man = My intellectual abilities and my thoughts

2CO 10:5 taking every thought captive in order to obey Christ

Calf = My body, my desires, and my emotions

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

Lion = My physical strength and energy

Eagle = my spiritual capabilities

Luk 1:46 And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord,

If I, as a person, use all my thoughts, emotions, strength, and spiritual abilities to serve God and to know Him from all of my being, I can be His Cherub or His throne, where He comes and dwells in me and finds comfort in my heart. I can’t leave something out of serving God.

4) Acts of Intercession:

The Man intercedes and prays on behalf of humans

The Lion on all the wild beasts

The Calf on behalf of all the domestic animals

The Eagle on behalf of the domestic animals of the field

No one to intercede on behalf of the snakes and the fish, as the serpent was one of them.

** Am I a throne of God? Do I use all my energies to serve Him?

Rev 4:8 And each one of the four living creatures had six wings about *him*, and within being full of eyes. And they had no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was and is and *is* to come.

Had six wings: two wings to cover the face from the glory of God.

Two wings to cover their feet as honoring God.

Two wings to fly with and execute God's will.

And within being full of eyes: Knowledge is not just of external things but also internal, i.e. spiritual.

General observations:

- These are spiritual creatures. We do not know what is the shape of the spirit but we know they do not have a body.
- IF they don't have a body, then they do not have wings. Wings are a symbol of a natural thing that allows the creature to be elevated from the ground a sign of them being heavenly.
- Covering one's body as a sign of respect, tells us that our body has to participate in the worship and signs of respect to God.
- The Devil was one of the Cherubim (Eze. 28:14). So knowledge alone is not sufficient, Love surpasses knowledge.

And they had no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty:

Praise is continuous because they see who is the glorious God. Out of this knowledge comes the reason for praise.

** Is your knowledge for God good enough to let you praise Him?

Holy, holy, holy: The Church adopted the praise of angels into our daily prayer. Repeated three times to indicate the complete holiness.

who was and is and *is* to come. : They praise Him on who He is.

Rev 4:9 And whenever the living creatures gave glory and honor and thanks to Him who sat on the throne, who lives forever and ever,

Rev 4:10 the twenty-four elders fell down before the One sitting on the throne. And they worshiped Him who lives for ever and ever, and threw their crowns before the throne, saying,

Everyone participates in the praise. The priest prays, and the people and deacons respond.

In front of God there is no glory or honor. The elders fall down and worship God. That is the same as we do in the church. They take off their crowns as a sign of respect. When the Gospel is read, the priests take off their crowns (especially when wearing their royal robe).

Rev 4:11 O Lord, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You created all things, and for Your will they are and were created.

Here they glorify God for His creation. Later we will see different reasons for glorifying the Lord. Note, the creation is completed. No more creation, i.e. no more new species.

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