

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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[Unless in brackets, all of the message is by Bertrand L. Comparet.] I will tailor my subject for today to fit the particular day we have. I am going to drop you right into something deep from the start; that's the Book of Revelation. I decided I'd better speak on it, if I am going to because, while some of it is prophesy of the future, it is developing into an accomplished fact very rapidly these days. So I want to be able to say, a little later when, after some of these things have happened: "You see, I told you so." We all like to brag a little. It's a different book than any other in the Bible, although it's closest to the Book of Daniel. Daniel received, you know, a number of prophetic visions, and they were largely symbolic. In fact, you can say they were all symbolic. On the greater part of them, the meaning of this symbolic message was explained to him at the time. There were a few that were left to be explained by the circumstances as they came about, and those tie in with the Book of Revelation. So here was Daniel in the period from, oh, say 605 B.C. to 535 B.C., in Babylon receiving these revelations, and of course he didn't know what John was going to receive in visions around 94 to 96 A.D. But, we'll see as we get into them how these prophesies tie into each other. First of all, in this Book of Revelation, the Revelation that was given to John by Yahshua the Christ [the Anointed]. And lest there be somebody who has been at some time misled by the common "church" doctrine of the trinity, that we have three separate and different Gods (just like the pagans, you know; they have a few more than we). But no, don't be misled by that. Some of the preachers take that view, yet the Bible makes it clear that Yahshua the Christ, son of Yahweh, is at the same time Yahweh, Elohim, the Father Himself, and this is one of the places where He tells us so in unmistakable words. [See note #1 at end of lesson.]

John begins on the revelation of this thing: "I was in the Spirit on Yahweh's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last ..." So he said he turned to look and see who was speaking to him, "I saw seven golden lamp stands." Your King James version says candlesticks, and the word used in the Greek does not mean candlestick at all, but a stand on which a lamp was placed, and we will see the reason for it. The lamp in ancient times looked very much like a modern teapot, except they were very shallow. You put oil in the center pot of the thing, and there was a lid that fitted over it, and there was a cloth wick in the spout which absorbed the oil, and you set fire to the wick, and that burned the oil that gave the light. Thus, these were stands on which a lamp could be set; a pedestal. "I saw seven golden lamp stands, and in the midst of the seven lamp stands, one like to the son of man." Now you will notice that is the title Yahshua the Christ used of Himself many, many times in His ministry. And John says, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

You know, that is the most triumphant statement ever made, the complete conquest of all evil and its consequences. And, that is something for all of us to observe with joy. Who was it that was the first and the last? Well, as always, we turn for confirmation to the Old Testament. Isaiah 44, verse 6: "Thus saith Yahweh the King of Israel, and his redeemer Yahweh of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is no Elohim.*" So, when Yahshua the Christ is also able to say "I am the first and the last", you know who He is! Again in Revelation 1, verse 8, He says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith Yahweh, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Couldn't make it plainer! – could you?

We're going to touch later on this thing – really not today – I give you fair warning, I'm going to talk to you about this for more than one day. It's a big subject, and we can't skip over it lightly. As we get into latter portions of it, we're going to show where some of them dovetail perfectly into Daniel's prophesy. A number of things were left unexplained in Daniel, as we read in Daniel 12, verses 4, 8 and 9, the angel said to him: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: 8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my master, what *shall be* the end of these *things*? 9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end." They weren't to be understood in his day, but the fact that we can understand them now tells you something about where we are in Yahweh's calendar. We've reached the time of the end. Now on the contrary, John was told not to seal up the Book of Revelation. I don't know how many different "churches" you've gone to, but in most of them you've probably heard the preacher say he couldn't understand the Book of Revelation; it was a sealed book to him. Not because John or the angel sealed it, although it is the most difficult book in the Bible, being all in symbols. Revelation 22, verse 10: "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."

When John wrote this book – scholars have estimated the time to be 94 A.D. – some have placed it as late as 96 A.D., but it is within that period. Hence, what John was told was, in effect, in his day, and would continue on thereafter clear up to the return of Yahshua the Christ, and indeed, a little beyond. Now the first revelation that Yahshua the Christ gave to him was in the form of a message to seven different "churches" [more properly Ekklesiae, or "Assemblies"]. At that time there were a large number of cities in Western Asia, and – oh, as far away as Rome, which had flourishing Christian "churches." And yet, out of all these, seven were singled out by name: Ephesus – Paul wrote an epistle to the Ephesians, you remember – Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

Now no mention was made of Rome. Despite the Catholic "Church's" claim that they are the original "church", they are not mentioned by name. And since the Catholic "Church" claims that its founder was Peter – note that this vision was not given to Peter, it was given to John. No mention was made here of the "churches" at Corinth, Galatia, Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica, to all of whom the apostle Paul wrote epistles which we still have in our Bible. No mention of the "churches" which were in Jerusalem, Miletus or Troas, which are all mentioned in the Book of Acts. But seven have been singled out for special treatment here, and therefore there must be a reason for the selection of these seven. The literal language of the book talks of "churches" situated in seven different cities of Western Asia, and yet we have no record, either in history or in the writings of the early "Church" fathers, to indicate that the conditions which it speaks of here were particularly noticeable in the "churches" of those particular cities, because you'll find no two of them the same here. Thus, it is evident that instead of Yahshua the Christ giving a special message just to seven cities, which were only just a few among the many with Christian "churches" that these were only representative in type. Remember now, a symbol is never the thing that it is literally stated to be, but it is always a representation of it.

These “churches” are representations of seven different periods in the development of the Christian “Church.” [See note #2 at end of lesson.]

That is not a new idea though. The earliest writers, whose works are still in existence, way back in the 3rd century B.C., had already given that explanation of it. Looking for confirmation in other parts of the Bible, and to more thoroughly explain the symbolism used, let’s go back over that opening passage. John said (Revelation 1:12-16): “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden lamp stands; And in the midst of the seven lamp stands *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine bronze, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.”

We pick up familiar things here which help to tie this in with the rest of the Bible. That two-edged sword going out of His mouth – turn to Hebrews 4, verse 12: “For the word of Yahweh *is*, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The word of Yahweh, out of his mouth, has more power than any sword. Now it speaks of his face shining bright as the sun. In Matthew 17, verse 1, we read of that: “And after six days, Yahshua taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” Hence this is Bible symbolism clearly identified, and again, making clear His authority to give it. Here were things that were symbolic: He held in his right hand seven shining stars, and He stood among these seven lamp stands. He explains these things to John in Revelation 1, verse 20: “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden lamp stands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands which thou sawest are the seven churches.” The Bible indicates that not only has Yahweh an enormously great number of angels who can be assigned to whatever task comes up, but also that there are certain special guardian angels who are put full time, you might say, on certain jobs. You’ll remember that one of the prophecies given to Daniel at 10:13 was given to him by an angel who explained he’d been delayed getting there because the angel of the Kingdom of Persia fought with him and delayed him, and said, the great prince, Michael, who stands for thy people came to my aid, and so here I am. We’re told that the guardian angel of the people of Israel is this, perhaps greatest of all the angels, Michael. In fact, his name in the Hebrew is *me-kaw-ale*: “Who is like El [Yahweh].” The ancient Hebrew didn’t have a lot of the punctuation marks like we have today, and whether that is a statement of fact or whether there should be a question mark after it (Who is like El [Yahweh]?), we don’t know. But at any rate, he was one to whom Yahweh gave enormously great power. Now it indicates here that the Christian “Church” has certain angels assigned the job of guardian angels to the “Church”, and that during these different periods of this development, with the different conditions coming up, seven of the angels had been assigned to carry this out.

These lamp stands – is that something new? No, everything has its roots in the past. The New Testament has its roots in the Old Testament, and for an explanation of these lamp stands, let’s go back to the Old Testament – the 4th chapter of Zechariah: “And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all *of* gold, [here again, that should be lamp stand] with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon,

and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which *are* upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right *side* of the bowl, and the other upon the left *side* thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What *are* these, my master? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my master. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, ..." – And before I go into that, let's take a moment to examine the scene in which this came. A little handful [of captives of the House of Judah, Benjamin and a remnant of Levi] had come back from the Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem – they were rebuilding the city; rebuilding the Temple – you'll remember the priests Ezra and Nehemiah were among them and also the prophet Zechariah prophesied there in that time. But the man who was the political and military leader of them was named Zerubbabel, and he was the one directing the building of the city and the Temple. So the angel said, "... This *is* the word of Yahweh unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith Yahweh of hosts."

Again, nothing new, you'll remember: "... except Yahweh keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain." It doesn't matter what armies you've got, or other weapons. If Yahweh is leading and guarding you, fine. Otherwise, "... Not by might, nor power, but the spirit of Yahweh ..." [we shall triumph]. "And I answered again, and said unto him, What *be* these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden *oil* out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these *be*? And I said, No, my master. Then said he, These *are* the two anointed ones, that stand by the Sovereign of the whole earth."

Yahshua the Christ picks up that same theme and develops it in the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 11, verses 3 and 4, He says unto John: "And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two lamp stands standing before the Sovereign of the earth." Therefore we know what our symbolism is. We are going into the matter of the two witnesses in further detail at a later time, when we see the historical fulfillment of it.

But after these witnesses – you'll remember in many places, especially Isaiah, in the 43rd chapter, Yahweh had told the nation Israel "... Ye *are* my witnesses ..." They were to be witnesses to all the nations of the world that Yahweh was the only true Elohim, and that His laws were so true and righteous, that the nation which would follow them would receive the blessings which Yahweh had promised. Thus, the nation of Israel was supposed to witness; but how could the nation understand and be a witness unless somebody furnished them the necessary information? You had the "Church" of the Old Testament, the Temple and its Aaronic and Levitical priesthood, who were to be those who gave light to the whole nation – hence represented by light. But now, your lamp isn't going to burn unless it has oil in it. And to enable this "Church", whether it be the ancient Temple, or the modern Christian "Church", to give out light you have to first add the oil to it. Hence the prophets and Apostles of the Bible, and those who today are true ministers of Yahweh (and there's a lot of the other kind); but those who are the true ministers of Yahweh, these are the olive trees which give oil unto the lamp.

Thus, Yahshua the Christ goes on with this revelation to the apostle John, receiving the messages to be given to each of these seven "Churches", in Revelation 2, verses 1 to 7: "Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from

whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy lamp stand out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of Yahweh.”

This symbolic message was to the “Church” of Ephesus. What do we know about it? Well, Ephesus was in Asia Minor. Today, Asia Minor is Turkey. Ephesus was at one time a city controlled by the Hittites, was taken over by the Greeks about a thousand and eighty-seven years B.C., later was conquered and ruled by the Persians, was recovered again by Alexander the Great, and finally taken over by the Romans, who made it the capital of the province of Asia in the year 6 B.C. It became the third largest Christian city after Jerusalem and Antioch. The name Ephesus means desirable. [*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* has Ephesus so defined. – Also see note #3 at end of lesson.]

Incidentally, if you will get the writings of, say, half a dozen or eight or ten people who have written on the Book of Revelation, you will achieve complete confusion, because no two of them reach the same conclusion on much of anything. There’s too much wishful thinking going into it. Having decided what they think it is, they will then endeavor to interpret things to fit their own ideas; and in the names, the meanings of the names of these seven cities, you will find that to a great extent. I’ll try to give you the literal meanings of it, and that is why I think each ought to be called “representative of an age.”

You’ll remember in the 19th chapter of the Book of Acts, it tells how Paul and some of the other apostles were in the city of Ephesus, and there was a great riot stirred up against them. In the city of Ephesus was the great temple of the pagan goddess, which your Bible wrongly translates as Diana, which was the source of great business prosperity because pilgrims were always coming to worship at this temple and paying liberally for the privilege. It says that Demetrius (a silversmith) was getting quite rich making little silver shrines of this goddess to be sold to these people, and a number of the other silversmiths were doing the same. So he called the silversmith guild together, and he said, “Now look, these people are preaching a different religion, and if you let them go on and make converts, that is going to be bad for business. No follower of Yahshua is going to be buying any of these shrines of Diana from us.” So they stirred up a great riot there. Well, this temple – curious thing, if you were expecting to find things were different in those days, you won’t. The evil has been the same from the early chapters of Genesis right down to today. The more it changes, the more it is the same; and these temples became extremely wealthy, and also very powerful banks. Historical records show that they made loans at high rates of interest to many kings, and in fact they had their depositors who, in addition to the money they gave the temple, deposited money with them at interest, just like you can open a savings account in the bank today. So all these conditions existed then. Now it is wrongly translated Diana. Diana, in the first place, was a Roman goddess, and like the Grecian goddess Artemis, was a goddess of hunting and a virgin. The goddess to whom this temple was dedicated would certainly not come under that latter category. The Ephesian goddess – the Greeks sometimes called her Artemis and tried to merge that worship into the worship of the Grecian Artemis, but it remains definitely and repugnantly Asiatic. She was a completely Asiatic mother goddess; goddess of the sexual instinct and fertility. Before coming to Ephesus, the cult had developed in Babylon where she had been called Ishtar and Cybele.

[Note: If one will check most references on the Greek goddess Artemis, one will find almost without exception that it is the same goddess as the Roman Diana. But there is also some confusion concerning the identity of the Ephesian Diana. Alexander Hislop, in his *The*

Two Babylons, on page 30 says: "In general, Diana was depicted as a virgin, and the patroness of virginity; but the Ephesian Diana was quite different. She was represented with all the attributes of the Mother of the gods." Hislop then directs his readers to figure 8 on page 29, showing an illustration of "Diana of Ephesus" as a many-breasted god. This is also shown in the 1981 *Collier's Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, page 267. Comparet failed to give us his sources on this. – See also note #4 at end of lesson.]

Ishtar was the same goddess, or closely related to Astarte, which was the same as Ashtoreth, or as the Bible calls her, Ashtaroth, the female deity of Baal, the cult brought to the nation Israel by Jezebel. If they wanted to take a Roman goddess to make an analogy here, the translators should have taken Venus, because that would have been the counterpart of that. Hence at the temple, this so-called temple of Diana, you have the evil debauchery which is characteristic of so many of the Asiatic and Hindu religions. They have their temple prostitutes, and they have their celibate priests forbidden to marry – and, you don't have to go back 2000 years to find that. You don't have to go back two seconds to find that today. You see where it originated, in the priests of the Babylonian Mysteries and the priests of these other pagan religions. Well now, this "Church" at Ephesus – the first one named – is representative of the earliest "church" during the brief period when it was free from very serious persecution. In other words; the period begins with the resurrection of Yahshua the "Christ" in the year 30, and when it ends people have taken two different dates. There are some instances here where a certain period so clearly begins or ends with some specific thing for which you can assign a year, or even a particular day of the year, you can say, that is the beginning or ending of that period. But for many of them, the beginning or ending cannot be given an exact date, because the conditions that the earlier period represents were gradually phasing out over a period of years, while the new conditions were gradually phasing in. So you pick what seems to be sort of the middle dates for that period as indicating when you can say that the earlier period was no longer the leading one, and the other had taken over. Some have said the end of this period would be the year 64 A.D., which was when the first serious persecution of the Christians by the Roman Empire began, with a decree from Nero starting persecution. Up until that time, all the persecution had come from the Jews. You need to read the Book of Acts through, from beginning to end, and it lists a dozen or so instances of persecution of the Christians. You will find in every instance it was the Jew who instigated it. In some cases, they weren't numerous and powerful enough to make that much trouble themselves, and in those cases, by lying propaganda to the pagans, they got the pagans so stirred up that the pagans carried out the actual rioting. But it was always the Jews who started it. Just as today, it's Jew agitators who have gotten the Negroes to do the rioting – no change. Others have estimated the close of this period of this "Church" of Ephesus as about John's own time, about the time he wrote the book, say from 94 to 100 A.D. But it is, at any rate, the period in which the "churches" were growing without any serious opposition.

Starting this message to the churches, Yahshua the Christ identifies Himself as the head of the "churches." He says, "[I am He] that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands." He mentions to them, among their good qualities, for which He praises them, that they had tried the various people who came to them as apostles and found some of them were false and then rejected them. You'll find *that* in the Book of Acts too; although not with reference to this one particular city, but as an indication of that period. Remember that the meaning of the Old Testament religion had become completely lost; Judaism, based on the Talmud, had taken over. Now, all the law and the religious ritual of the Old Testament were Christianity from start to finish. All the religious ritual was symbolic of Yahshua the Christ and the work He would do. But as always happens, when you get a

professional priesthood, the religious part of it is lost. They like to – this is human quality – magnify their own importance. And if the religion is explained to you so that you understand it as well as they do, then they [the leaders] don't stand out so greatly. But if they can make it a mystery which you can't understand, and say, "Now look, you're going to burn in hell unless you come to me, and let me, as a sort of magician, go through the particular ritual that will get you out of it. Unless you do so, it's too bad." They can make themselves seem important. And it's only a minority of them who have ever had the character to resist that temptation. Hence, at the time of Yahshua the Messiah's ministry, all of that was forgotten. You remember how often He rebuked them for not knowing the Scriptures? He wasn't saying "You're to blame because you don't know the things that are going to be written by the Apostles for 30 to 40 years yet"; He said "You're to blame because you don't know what's in the books you already have – search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and it is they which prophesy of Me." Well He taught His disciples, which you'll remember, that getting back to the original fundamentals was a difficult job, even with the twelve Apostles.

The Bible records several times that, in the last few weeks before the crucifixion, He told them He was going to be taken by evil men and killed, and He would rise again on the third day; and yet, when that came to pass they were stunned. They didn't remember, He told them all about it in advance. But at any rate, when His resurrection came, and they saw the reality of all this, they started out with tremendous enthusiasm – but there weren't enough of them to go around. There were needs that they teach people who could add to the number of teachers. And a lot of them started teaching before they knew enough about it. Now remember, this didn't get its start among the pagans. What could you say to somebody who was a worshiper of Baal, of Molech or of Venus to get him interested in Christianity? You and He had no common ground to talk about. This started among the people who had the religion which had been perverted into Judaism, because to them you could talk in terms of the symbols that they recognized. Even if they didn't understand, you could explain it to them. But some of these people who had not gotten the full message, instead of going out to preach that this is what the Old Testament was about; that the animal sacrifices and keeping the law and all of that were simply symbols telling you to expect that your Savior was going to come and pay the penalty of your sins; they didn't have that – they didn't understand it. Therefore, they went out and taught the way to get salvation was to go back to the Mosaic law, and keep the law, and no matter how rotten your character or conduct may be, if you never eat one of the prohibited foods, and you always keep the right religious holidays, your sin will be forgiven and you will have salvation regardless. Thus the Book of Acts tells how the real apostles had a lot of trouble getting these things straightened out and getting these false teachers weeded out. Hence, Yahshua the Christ says to this "church" at Ephesus: "You have tried the various apostles, tested them, and you have rejected the false ones." Nonetheless He criticizes, though. He said: "You have left your first love."

By the year 94 their faith was weakening. Now He said: "You hated the deeds of the "Nicolaitans." And who were the Nicolaitans, or what? There is no record either in the Scriptures, the writings of the early "Church" fathers, or the writings of any historian [of them]. There is no record of the existence of any such sect as the Nicolaitans. Neither is there the record of the existence of any leader called Nicholas from whom the name might have been taken. So therefore, when He talks about the Nicolaitans, we're not looking for a religious sect among them, or the followers of any particular leader. So what are we looking for? Well, the key is in the meaning of the word itself. It is derived from two Greek words which mean "to triumph over the laity." Hence, already in the first century you found the assumption of priestly authority coming in. Here were the beginnings of a class of people who didn't consider themselves the

teachers of Yahweh's word; they considered themselves people who had been made lords over the congregation, the same thing that was to ripen a few centuries later when the evils had become so great in the Roman Catholic "Church." Here was a class of clergy triumphing over the laity of the "Church" approximately from A.D. 30 to, let's say, A.D. 100 perhaps. Consequently, we had the condition of the "church", where they had rejected these false teachers, they had patiently endured trouble and they had kept the correct faith. However, they were weakening in their enthusiasm and dedication, but at least they were rejecting the attempts that were being made to set up a priestly class. [See note #5 at end of lesson.]

Then it goes on to the next of these "churches", the "Church" at Smyrna: "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Judah, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Thus, this obviously symbolized the "churches" during a period of intense persecution. This had already begun by the time John wrote the Book of Revelation, and it ended sharply at a well defined date, A.D. 313. As I say, the persecution up to 64 was from the Jews only. From 64 on, you had a period of persecution from the pagan Roman Empire, and for a different reason. The city of Smyrna was founded by Greeks about 1100 B.C. on the coast of Asia Minor. It had a fine harbor, it was on important trade routes, it became and remained a rich commercial city, and it was the faithful ally of the Roman Empire. Now in the year A.D. 26, by that time the Roman emperors had decided to be worshipped as gods. And so in A.D. 26, in Smyrna, there was built a temple to the emperor Tiberius. The pagan Romans had no reason whatsoever to persecute the Christians merely because they were another religion. Remember, the Roman Empire included many lands with many different religions, and in the city of Rome itself, you could find about as many pagan gods and their temples as you wanted, and to the Romans, one more or less wouldn't have meant anything. But it had reached the point, under the emperors, where it was decided that an emperor, even during his life time, was to be worshipped as a god. The people who already worshipped a number of pagan gods, which you'll remember, that all these pagan gods were people of no moral character, whatsoever, according to their religion; and anyone who could worship anybody that was as evil as these pagan gods were said to be, would have no qualms of conscience about worshipping another, even if he knew it was nothing but a man, but the Christians wouldn't. To refuse any worship to the emperor – this wasn't a matter of religious difference, this was a matter of disrespect for the political and military authorities of the empire; and the Romans who were dedicated to creating and holding an empire by force and brutality were not about to see somebody upset it. Not a religious dissent, but a political dissent, they didn't require any elaborate worship in the temple of the emperor; they didn't require regular attendance like we attend now at "Christian Churches." Once a year, no doubt, would have been sufficient, and all a Christian had to do to escape martyrdom, was to toss a little pinch of incense on the altar in this temple to the emperor, and that was sufficient to show he was respecting the authority of the emperor who was not only head of the army but was divine, and that was that. If he spent the rest of his time worshipping in his own religion, the Romans didn't care. [In like manner today we pledge allegiance to a flag which represents the state, albeit "under" some poorly defined "God" when in truth our only allegiance should be to Yahshua Christ. *W.R.F*]

But that concession was one that no Christian could make. He had to recognize one God only, not the emperor of Rome, and therefore these Christian martyrs were killed in the most horrible, cruel way because they would not compromise with their conscience. That is the explanation for the pagan persecution of the early Christian "Church." Now you'll notice at the beginning of this message to the "Church" at Smyrna, Yahshua identifies Himself as "the first and the last, which was dead and is alive." The "Church" was going into a period of persecution which brought death to a great many of them. And He was saying "Look, I have conquered death, I have risen from the grave, and I can do the same for you. Therefore, while I warn you in advance, you're facing martyrdom. Don't be worried about it. I gave you life to begin with; I'll give you life again."

The name of this city, Smyrna, means myrrh. It is a bitter aromatic gum which was used in compounding perfumes and ointments, and it is still used that way to this very day. In the 30th chapter of Exodus, verses 22 to 33, the formula is given for making up a special oil or ointment with which the priests and the furniture of the tabernacle were to be anointed, dedicated to Yahweh, and one of the ingredients in this was myrrh; hence here, the name myrrh is an indication that this was specially dedicated to Yahweh. As I say, the taste of myrrh was very bitter, and the experience of this would be bitter, but it was their dedication to the highest degree. So He said, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." Continuing, He said "... you will have tribulation ten days." Well in prophesy, as you know, a day is symbolic of a year. So you will have tribulation ten years. Now how are you going to interpret those ten years? Are you going to say "it is a block of ten consecutive years", or are you going to say "it is ten periods of persecutions, each of which begins in a specific year?" As a matter of fact, you can say either one and be right, because both are true; a double fulfillment. Persecution of the Christians by the Roman Empire was based upon ten separate edicts against them by ten different emperors. The first by Nero in the year 64, the second by Domitian in the year 95, the third by Trajan in the year 107, the fourth by Hadrian in the year 127, the fifth by Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 165, the sixth by Emperor Septimius Severus in the year 202, the seventh by the Emperor Maximus in the year 235, the eighth by Emperor Decius A.D. 249, the ninth by Emperor Valerian A.D. 257, and the tenth, and most vicious of all, by the Emperor Diocletian in the year 303. Now it doesn't mean, that for those years only, they were persecuted. That was the year a specific law went into effect which required, thereafter, an obedience to that law or they should be persecuted.

Hence you had a constant period of persecution, but these last ten years were especially vicious. It began with the edict of Emperor Diocletian in 303, and it ended in the year 313 when the new Emperor Constantine gave his edict that the "Christian Church" should thereafter be tolerated. Now he didn't overthrow paganism, but he said that the "Christian religion" should be recognized as lawful on an equal footing with any other religion in Rome. Yet they still had a temple dedicated to Constantine, and they still burned incense to him there, and they had their temples of Jupiter and Venus and the rest of them, but the Christians were no longer persecuted. Thus here is one time when we can say that from about 100 to, definitely and exactly, 313 is the period covered by the second phase by the "Church", the "church" at Smyrna. [See note #6 at end of lesson.]

The Roman Empire went through several stages of disintegration. At the start, succession to the throne was by lawful inheritance. Then we reached a period which was pretty common in ancient monarchies, when there was somebody else who stood a little farther down the line, but he would inherit the throne if you died. A good many ancient kings were even murdered by their own sons who wanted to take over the throne. And if he wasn't quite that closely related to you, he definitely had no scruples about getting somebody to put a little

poison on your breakfast some morning. Then there came a period when there was a scramble to seize the throne by military power. As an emperor died, usually by assassination, the one who could get the support of a sufficiently large percentage of the army was the one who was able to take the throne. Then it reached the point where the army saw (and since they were the ones who made emperors anyway – and in fact they deposed one or two also, getting dissatisfied – but they didn't need to wait until they found some ambitious person wanting their support) they could pick their own emperor and put him on the throne. It was during this last period, when it was a general scramble for power – with intrigue going on within the army to see who could wean away the loyalty of the army from somebody else in the general scramble for power – that Constantine was one of those seeking, by army support, to gain the throne.

Well, he had about a half a dozen or so competitors. You've been told before, of course, that the most vigorous growth of the Christian "Church" has always been during a period of persecution. Those who were in it only to go along for the ride, didn't have what it takes, and they dropped out. The ones that had the courage and the enthusiasm were the ones that made up the "Church", and they were able to attract enough like themselves to keep it growing. Hence, by Constantine's time it was estimated that not too far below half of the population of the Roman Empire were at least nominally Christian. Now Constantine was not a man of great religious fervor, but if you could get support of one single block who would represent almost half the population to begin with, in addition to whatever breaks you could get by political methods, you were in a position to gain power, weren't you? Still having support of the portions of the army who were loyal to him because he was a great general, he suddenly announced he had seen a vision – that against the clouds of the sky he saw there a cross, and over it the motto; "In this sign conquer." So he was a Christian, and therefore: "Lend your support to me, you Christians." Well, they did. He certainly couldn't be worse than any of the others, and probably not as bad, so they backed him; and He did gain the throne. And he immediately published this edict of toleration, that Christians could not be persecuted for their religion, in 313 A.D. Though he remained a pagan, (a sun worshipper) for some time after that. In fact, it wasn't until about 330 A.D. that he became Christian enough to attend Christian religious services. At that time, he issued another edict which made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Hence with Constantine, the persecutions came to an end.

Now we come to the third "Church" in this series, the "Church" at Pergamos. By the way, if you start looking it up in encyclopedias and histories and so on, you find some variation in the spelling of it. In your Bible it is Pergamos – P-e-r-g-a-m-o-s. In some encyclopedias and histories it is called Pergamum – P-e-r-g-a-m-u-m – but it is the same place whichever spelling they use. Revelation 2, verses 12 to 17: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's throne *is*: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*."

You really need to know something about your ancient history to understand this one. The city of Pergamos was not of great importance. In ancient days, each individual city was apt

to be a kingdom by itself. Instead of a mayor, it had a king. Even when it was swallowed up in an empire, the heads of these subordinate cities were normally tributary kings. They had to pay their tax tribute and furnish an army when needed and so on, but they still held the title of king as a general rule. Thus Pergamos, while a kingdom, was not one of any great importance or territorial area until their first king of any great importance. Attalus the 1st reigned from 241 to 197 B.C. The Gauls began their expansion from Gaul, which is the territory that today we call France. From Gaul there came an expedition of Gauls landing in Asia Minor. Now we know, of course, that in studying the history of the migrations of the Israel people from the time they were settled around the southern end of the Caspian Sea, their name became changed to Scythians. But they came in a series of waves north into the Balkans, and then angling up north and west across Europe. One of the earliest of these waves had gotten as far as France where these people were known as Gauls, but they were [actually] Scythian-Israel. And some of them decided they were going back home, and they started an expedition to go back and retake Palestine. On their way they landed in Asia Minor, intending to march the rest of the way and see if they could pickup allies as they went. King Attalus of Pergamos defeated this invasion of Gauls about 235 B.C., and compelled them to move away from his own city and settle in Galatia, a region in central Asia Minor, and called Galatia because of the Gauls that had settled there.

Remember that Paul wrote an epistle to the Galatians, which is in your Bible. It has been generally supposed by many that it was written to these particular Galatians who were settled in the interior of Asia Minor, but a great many of the best Bible students have said “No, the particular Gauls that he was writing this to were not the Gauls from Asia Minor, they were the Gauls settled in France, in the nation of Gaul there.” But anyway, this king Attalus the 1st was the one responsible for the settlement in Galatia, as he stopped an invading army of Gauls. Now his son Eumenes, who reigned from 197 to 159 B.C., greatly increased their size and importance as a kingdom by an alliance with Rome. The Roman Empire was still expanding, and every time the Romans came through with an army marching out to make more conquests in Asia, he raised some troops and went along as an ally. As a reward for that, he was given some portion of the additional conquered territory. So with this, he built up a kingdom here of considerable importance. In the city of Pergamos, he built a great altar 40 feet high dedicated to Zeus the savior. But there is another reason for calling this the throne or capital “city of Satan” at that time, as we’re soon going to observe. [See note #s 7 & 8 at end of lesson.]

The third important king, Attalus the 3rd, who ruled from 138 to 133 B.C., at his death, by will, bequeathed to the empire of Rome (it was still a republic you remember) his kingdom, and one more thing: his title as Pontifex Maximus. Let’s find out something about these things. On the fall of Babylon, when it was conquered by the Medes and Persians, the priests of the Babylonian mystery religion who had tremendous control of things in Babylon knew they were going to have quite a rough going under these new conquerors. So they moved out– they fled – they took with them their religion, and they settled for their headquarters in this town of Pergamos.

There was one reason perhaps for selecting it. Pergamos already was famous for certain things. It was a center of worship of Asclepius, the healer. They had their shrine to him, and a school of medicine, and the serpent was the emblem of Asclepius. You note, that today the emblem of the medical profession is the staff with the two serpents entwined around it. You will find that, from the earliest times in the pagan religions, one who was especially a healer was Asclepius, whose emblem was the serpent. The worship of Asclepius was conducted with orgies, so common in Asiatic religions. So the priests of the Babylonian mystery religion knew

they would be quite at home there, and they would find a people among whom they could readily make converts. [See note #9 at end of lesson.]

This matter of the title of Pontiff. That was the title of the more important priests of Babylon, and when they came to Pergamos, they brought the title with them. Subsequently, when the king bequeathed the title of Pontifex Maximus, the greatest of the Pontiffs to Rome, that title passed to Rome. They organized there a college of Pontiffs – four in number, presided over by a Pontifex Maximus. Later the number was increased to fourteen' plus a Pontifex Maximus. Among the pagan priests in Rome, the two highest out of the four highest classes of priests were the Pontiffs and the augurs. We know from the study of ancient history how much importance was attached by many of the pagans to try to predict the future through augury. The priests were supposedly able to predict the future by recognizing certain omens which were favorable or unfavorable. In some instances, they would watch the birds flying overhead. A bird flying east might have a very different significance than a bird flying southwest for example. A flock of birds staying compactly together had a different meaning than a flock that scattered. And, hardly ever did a king start out on a war without going to the priests to determine whether the omens were favorable or not. Another way of determining this, was to cut open a sacrificed animal and to examine the entrails, or the internal organs, to see if there was any peculiarity of their appearance, which would indicate a good or a bad omen. In fact, in the ruins of Babylon they have found close models of the liver carefully marked off into a series of squares, and on each written the significance of any particular irregularity found at that particular place. If there was a wrinkle or a bump or something at that particular spot on the liver, why, it had a certain significance. Hence, the augurs were one of the two highest classes of priests, and the Pontiffs were the other.

The Pontiffs were the theologians, the ones who reduced their religion to systematic doctrines and taught all the lesser priests. They supervised the calendar, determined when the religious festivals were, and were the officiating priests at the dedication of new temples and other important ceremonies. The Pontifex Maximus, the greatest Pontiff, could be, and sometimes was, a king. King Attalus the 3rd, king of Pergamos, was Pontifex Maximus, when the Roman Empire came along. The Roman emperors (well, in fact earlier than that, Julius Caesar, who never got to be emperor – you will remember they cut his throat before he could carry out that ambition), but Julius Caesar was a Pontifex Maximus for at least 20 years of his life, and thereafter, beginning with his nephew who became the first emperor under the title of Augustus – for several generations the emperors all took the title of Pontifex Maximus. Thus, you had here the combined character of priest and king. I told you before, for every genuine thing that Yahweh has provided in his word, Satan has made a deceptive counterfeit. You'll remember that Yahweh said to the people of Israel "ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." You will remember how Yahshua the Christ combined in one person, the two functions of priest and king. The Book of Hebrews goes into that in some detail. Yahshua the Christ was born out of the Tribe of Judah, the royal tribe from which, up to that time, no priest had been taken. But He was the true High Priest, of which the earthly high priest in the temple had been nothing but a symbol. Thus here, we have Satan providing his deceptive counterfeit, a priest-king of a very evil pagan religion.

When Julius Caesar exercised his authority at these ceremonies as Pontifex Maximus, he appeared in a scarlet robe. He wore on his head a mitered cap as priest of the pagan god Dagon, the fish god – that tall cap with the top cut into the image of a gaping fish mouth – and he carried keys of the pagan god Janus and the Pagan goddess Cybele. Cybele was the same one, whose temple it was in the city of Ephesus, that caused all the rioting against Paul. The keys, the keys to the mystery of their religion, were an important pagan emblem. So, who is it

that today wears the scarlet robe, the miter of the priest of Dagon, and says, "I have the keys"? And here is where it began. [See note #s 10, 11 & 12 at end of lesson.]

Julius Caesar claimed that he was a descendant of the Roman goddess Venus. And you know, of course, that Venus can be traced back to the Babylonian Ishtar, who can be traced back, in turn, to Semiramis the wife of Nimrod. Hence, you can see where all of this has its roots. The Emperor Gratian was the first one who refused the office of Pontifex Maximus, and in fact he abolished it by decree. But about 378 A.D., the office of Pontifex Maximus was claimed by the Pope. From the earliest origin of it, it had never been anything but a pagan high priesthood. [See note #s 13 & 14 at end of lesson.]

Well, getting back to our city of Pergamos for a bit. The Romans reorganized the kingdom of Pergamos into the Roman province of Asia, about 130 B.C., and Pergamos became its capital city. The authority of Rome was everywhere manifested by the sword, it was, above all other things, the favorite weapon of the Roman troops, and that was their authority; they ruled by the sword. Thus you notice here, that in addressing the "Church" at Pergamos, Yahshua the Christ identifies Himself as "He that has the sharp sword with two edges; if you think that Roman might is something to fear, they're nothing compared to me, I've got the real sword." He mentions there, "Antipas, My faithful martyr." There is no record, either in any of the sacred writings, any of the writings of the early "Church" fathers, or any historical records of any martyr named Antipas, either in the city of Pergamos or during the period of "Church" existence which was symbolized by the "Church" at Pergamos. Thus obviously it is not speaking then of some one individual; "Antipas ... my faithful martyr", is therefore representative of a group or class. And who were they? Well, we are going to have to find that out by studying the meaning of the name. It is derived from two Greek words: anti, opposed to; popis, father, Pope. You see, the Pope took over, as part of his title he called himself "the holy father." Now the only place you'll find that mentioned in the Bible is that Yahshua the Christ, alone, prayed to His Elohim as Holy Father; and He warned specifically, "... call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." So these were the martyrs who were martyred for resisting the increasing power of the Pope. [See note #15 at end of lesson.]

Christianity had been tolerated from 313 A.D. and became the official Roman religion in 330, starting this period of the "Church" of Pergamos. This was a period of the consistently growing power of the priestly hierarchy. You can say that this reached its climax under Pope Gregory the 3rd, Gregory the Great, who was Pope from 590 to 604 A.D. It is said that somebody once asked Satan, "Suppose you found a truth so tremendously great and clear and obviously true that you just couldn't fight against it, what would you do?" He said, "that's easy, I'd organize it." At that time the "Church" was undergoing no persecution. It was now the official religion of the empire; it received its money subsidies out of the public treasury. It became the fashionable thing to be a "Christian", and you got a lot of people into it who were only nominal "Christians." But none the less, it wasn't taking over the empire fast enough. There were lots and lots of pagans that remained pagans even though "Christianity" had become the official religion. Now, how to get them into the "church"? As I say, the more it changes, the more it is the same. You have your evangelists running around all in a dither today: "How can we get more people into the 'church'?" – it doesn't matter whether they believe, it doesn't matter whether they are "Christian" in their character and conduct, it doesn't matter at all except you have big congregations. And it doesn't matter in the least, whether there are doctrinal differences as great as between two Christian denominations, as between Christianity and paganism – get them all together in one big "church." If doctrine is separating us, then abandon the doctrine! bring it together into a political organization. So what's going on today? same thing as back then: how to bring in the pagans. If you preached true "Christianity" to them, what

attraction do you have for a man who finds the worship of Venus very satisfactory to him, because they maintain the temple prostitutes there for his use. You're not competing along that line. You don't have what he's interested in. You're calling him to something that is tough; you're calling him to give up whatever evil qualities he had and whatever bad conduct he had. You're calling upon him to do his utmost, and the painful utmost to live up to his own highest principles, and you don't get those kind of converts very fast.

This thing was brought to a climax under Gregory the 1st, he enforced it; they said, "look, we are making it hard to get the pagans in because we are emphasizing differences between paganism and 'Christianity.'" They're telling these people, "you've got to give up everything you ever thought was holy if you want to become a 'Christian.' That is not good salesmanship; emphasize the similarities, show them it doesn't take much of a change. You can come into a 'Christian church' and be quite comfortable there; you have your own pagan holidays, so the 'church' will adopt the same thing as an official 'Church' holiday, and instead of your going to the temple of Jupiter, on that day, you come to the 'Church', and instead of calling him Jupiter, you call him St. Peter, and worship him; instead of worshipping Venus as the queen of heaven and the mother of God, you come to this 'church', and you just change her name to the Virgin Mary, and you go right on with your same worship and you can be part of this big, rising, popular 'Christian Church.'" And that is what they did. You will find in the writings of a number of the early Christian followers their bitter condemnation of that fact. But whereas the pagans were mostly faithful to their religion and they weren't adopting any ceremonies or Christian holidays of the followers of Yahshua, rather the "Church" was adopting pagan holidays and pagan rituals right and left. Well you had that tremendous drive, as I say, to bring in the pagans, and bring, if need be, pagan worship in order to do it.

So what is the condemnation given of this "Church" at Pergamos? "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak [Balak] to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication", exactly what was being done here. You'll remember the enemy, after trying to defeat Israel many times by military force and failing, found all they needed to do was induce the Israelites to become apostate from their religion, and then Yahweh's protection was withdrawn. That is what Balaam taught to Balak. He said, "You've asked of me to curse this people Israel. I can't, Yahweh has blessed them. However, if you will just deprive them of Yahweh's protection (and the only way you can do it is cause them to worship idols), that will do it; they will be cursed." I think some 30 thousand, or something like that, of the Israelites died there as a result of it. [At this point, Compartet omits the most important peril of Balaam's advice which cursed Israel, and that was race-mixing with Balak's women.] Then He mentions "them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." This is the period when this was really rising to its great power. Pope Victor the 1st, who was Pope between A.D. 193 and 203, – remember, he was bishop of Rome; and you had the "Church" in much greater size, the Eastern "Church", in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor and Greece – that was more important; in size, number of congregations, and all that, than the one in Rome. But Rome was the capital city of the empire, and the Pope, as the bishop of Rome, felt that he should have importance commensurate with that of the city of Rome. So probably, you know that even today, the Eastern "Church", the Greek and Russian Orthodox "churches", do not follow the same calendar that we do. They have the old calendar under which Christmas and Easter come several days different than what we have on our calendar. Pope Victor the 1st demanded that the eastern "churches" adopt the Roman calendar at religious festivals under penalty of excommunication. Well they told him to "go ahead, excommunicate us; you have no authority over anything but the 'church' in Rome and we aren't members of the 'church' of Rome." Hence,

he didn't get far with them, but he tried. By the time of Pope Leo the 1st, between 440 and 461, he had very well developed power over both the Eastern and Roman "churches" and he wielded that power ruthlessly. Gregory the 1st was not a theologian, a man of religion, he was primarily an administrator over the enormous property holdings of the "church", and as administrator, he was forcing upon the entire Catholic "Church" complete uniformity in all respects. Thus during this period, which you can say extends up through the reign of Pope Gregory the 1st in 604, he had the "Church" developing a priesthood, the Nicolaitans; a professional priesthood triumphant over the laity in setting up their layers of the cake, one above the other with their greater authority, and the doctrine of Balaam teaching the people of Israel to adopt pagan gods and worship [and to commit fornication and to marry those of other races]. As you can see, this was then centuries in the future from when John wrote this (if this was not inspired, he couldn't have stated the character from that period and indicated just what it would be). And you notice, that it came as the third stage in the development of the "church." Just as in the Book of Revelation, this was the third mentioned of the "churches." [See note #s16 & 17 at end of lesson – End of Comparet's Lesson #1.]

CRITICAL NOTES ON LESSON #1

Comments by William Finck initialed *W.R.F.*

Comments by Clifton A. Emahiser in brackets in lesson text as "your transcriber" or initialed *C.A.E.* in critical notes.

Note #1: This note has reference to Comparet discussing the approximate date that John wrote his revelation in the opening paragraph of this lesson. The following documentation gives evidence to that date:

Ante-Nicene Fathers, volume 5, ch. XLIX, par. 3: "John, again, in Asia, was banished by Domitian the king to the isle of Patmos, in which also he wrote his Gospel and saw the apocalyptic vision; and in Trajan's time he fell asleep at Ephesus, where his remains were sought for, but could not be found."

Ante-Nicene Fathers, volume 7, ch. X, par. 11: "He says this, because when John said these things he was on the island of Patmos, condemned to the labour of the mines by Caesar Domitian. There, therefore, he saw the Apocalypse; and when grown old, he thought that he should at length receive his quittance by suffering, Domitian being killed, all his judgments were discharged. And John being dismissed from the mines, thus subsequently delivered the same Apocalypse which he had received from God. This, therefore, is what He says: Thou must again prophesy to all nations, because thou seest the crowds of Antichrist rise up; and against them other crowds shall stand, and they shall fall by the sword on the one side and on the other."

Conclusion: Domitian's reign was 81 to 96 A.D., and if John was released from prison after Domitian's death, that gives us evidence concerning the time period when John had his vision. Once one understands the dating of John's vision somewhere between 81 to 96 A.D., how can anyone agree with the Praeterists' theory that all prophecy was fulfilled by 70 A.D.? *C.A.E.*

Note #2: Are the seven churches seven different periods? Comparet's relating of the earlier churches to different historical periods is more convincing than his relating of the latter. All of the major criticisms of the seven churches are still a problem in the world today, and have been all through time.

The Ephesians left their first love, i.e. true Christianity. Those of Pergamos and Thyatira are criticized for fornication. Those of Sardis were imperfect in their deeds, and had already

defiled their garments! Those of Laodicea were “lukewarm” and sought material wealth. Only those of Smyrna (“ointment” used for Anointing) and those of Philadelphia (“brotherly love”, no fornication!) were not criticized, and only those of Ephesus and Pergamos were haters of the Nicolaitans, or “people conquerors” – organized “religion.”

Is it meet to take these seven “churches” and find them in organized religion? I’m not so sure that organized religion can ever represent the people of Yahweh, the elect, Israel in the flesh, and especially in the word of Yahweh itself! While I may not have a better answer at the moment, I think that Comparet’s assessment of the seven churches, especially the latter ones, puts too much emphasis on what is happening to organized religion, rather than on what is happening to the people of Yahweh.

Comparet states in lesson #3 that “these early Protestants had followed the advice of Revelation 18, verse 4: ‘Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues’.” And also, “As long as the ‘Church’ kept the spirit of the rise of Protestantism, the conditions which exist today, testing to see whether anything is fit to remain, couldn’t grow up. While the Spirit of Yahshua is in them, they’ll have the power to put down all these other things.” Yet he does not suppose that these remarks conflict with his own account of the murder of millions of Huguenot Protestants? Or with the fact that so many Germans in Bavaria and the Rhineland were killed in the 30 Years’ War by forces loyal to the pope, for daring to leave the “Church”? These two ideas are in direct conflict with each other. Also, Comparet didn’t even mention the 30 Years’ War!

So, while I am not in complete disagreement with Comparet concerning the seven “churches”, his explanation is found wanting, and the latter “churches” will require further study on my part. *W.R.F.*

Comment by Clifton A. Emahiser: While I see no harm in correlating the seven Asia Minor churches to seven different church ages, I have to agree that we have had all the attributes of all the seven churches with us in every age since the Passion, the Israel Identity movement being no exception! I also agree that further study on the subject is always in order. But the greatest quality of Comparet’s presentations on the Book of Revelation is his linking of it to historical events. Once we understand that mode of study, we can very carefully reach out on our own. While Comparet did well in most areas, he did make errors, and I will endeavor to identify those errors as we go along. In fact, I know of no other that did as well as he! But that is no reason we can’t make corrections and build on his work!

Note #3: Was Ephesus a Hittite city? Surely, like Troy itself, it was under tribute to the Hittites during the power of the Hittite empire – as was all of Anatolia, the Levant, and parts of Mesopotamia – yet that doesn’t mean it was a “Hittite city”! Recounting a myth, Strabo says “At any rate, the founding of cities and the giving of names to them are ascribed to the Amazons, as, for instance, Ephesus and Smyrna and Cymê and Myrinê ...” (11.5.4), and, “And there are certain cities, it is said, which got their names from the Amazons, I mean Ephesus, Smyrna, Cymê and Myrina” (12.3.21); but here it is also showing that the myth is disputed by some writers. Later Strabo says: “The city of Ephesus was inhabited both by Carians and by Leleges, but Androclus drove them out and settled the most of those who had come with him round the Athenaeum and the Hypelaeus, though he also included a part of the country situated on the slopes of Mt. Coressus ...” So evidently Ephesus was inhabited by Carians and Leleges – who, as it can be shown elsewhere – were people from the islands of the sea, related to the Trojans and Phoenicians, who settled western Anatolia before being pushed out by the Ionians and Dorians and Aeolians, the Greeks. Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus are silent on the founding of Ephesus.

Comparet says that “the name Ephesus means desirable”, which is surely possible (see Liddell & Scott, *epheis* II. (ephiemai), *appetite, desire* ...), yet Strabo never stated this in his own discussion of the name. *W.R.F.*

Note #4: Cybele is a local Phrygian name, apparently originating in the town of Cybela (Strabo 10.3.12-13; 12.5.3) for a goddess called by the Greeks “the great mother” generally, but also “the Idaean mother” or “the Isodromian mother” et al., depending upon the area where she is being identified, and is equated by Strabo and others with Rhea, the Greek “mother of the gods” and wife of Cronus, father of Zeus. Nowhere is Cybele ever related or equated with Artemis, the virgin huntress (so naturally connected to the “Amazon” myth) and sister of Apollo! Comparet makes a great error here.

While I haven’t presently the resources to investigate Comparet’s equation of Cybele to Ishtar, it is clear that the Greeks made no such equations. As it has been shown in my pamphlet (*Broken Cisterns*, #'s 1 & 2) that the Greeks did equate to Ashtoreth, or Astarte, their own Aphrodîtê – and neither Rhea nor Artemis – and that Astarte is the Ishtar of the Levant.

There are always gray areas when the comparisons of these idols of different cultures are made, since not the same attributes are given to various idols by different cultures. One culture may have a “mother goddess” associated with fertility, and then a separate “love” goddess; while another culture may have a “mother goddess”, and a separate “love” goddess associated with fertility! So not even among the Greek writers do we find agreement when equating their own idols with those of other cultures. Yet Cybele is clearly a “mother goddess” associated with Rhea, and while Ishtar is associated with fertility and love, Artemis bears none of these attributes! A temple existed at Ephesus before the Greeks got there, but it was surely the Greeks who built the famous temple of Artemis that was there in Paul’s time (Strabo 14.1.22). *W.R.F.*

Note #5: Comparet is correct in his assessment of the word “Nicolaitans”, which I would translate “People-Conquerors.” Thayer wrongly connects the word to the “doctrine of Baalam” and defines it “destruction of the people.” *W.R.F.*

Note #6: If Comparet’s general view of the seven “churches” being seven periods is correct, and I don’t disagree with it totally, the Smyrna period had to begin in the times of Nero, who persecuted the Christians and who is even listed in the list of 10 persecutions given by Comparet, and not with Domitian. There is no fault in having the Ephesus period and Smyrna period overlap. Additionally, the first edict outlawing Christianity in the empire was issued by Claudius I and also outlawed Druidism, about 42 A.D. See the account described by E. Raymond Capt in his Commentary in *The Lost Chapter of Acts of the Apostles*. *W.R.F.*

Note #7: At one time I, too, believed that the opinion that Paul wrote “Galatians” to the Gauls of France was quite tenable. Yet in the context of the events in Acts, statements of Paul’s, such as that at Romans 15:19 (note Acts 16:6, 18:23) and, although the epithet “Galatian” is applied to all the Kelts in Gaul, Anatolia and elsewhere, its general use in reference to the district of Anatolia, I can not support the idea that the epistle to the Galatians was directly intended for the Galatians of modern France, and “the best Bible students” who think so are only thinking wistfully. *W.R.F.*

Note #8: The Eumenes mentioned here is actually Eumenes II, the son of Attalus I. Eumenes I was the father of Attalus I and reigned at Pergamos 263-241 B.C. *W.R.F.*

Note #9: Diodorus Siculus writes of Asclepius as if he were a man, and not a ‘god’, who lived in the generation before the Trojan War, who’s father was a ‘god’, Apollo, and repeats a myth that Asclepius was slain by Zeus. The three most famous temples of a deified Asclepius were at Triccê in Thessaly, where the man was allegedly born, Epidaurus in the Peloponnese, and on Cos. (Strabo 8.6.15, 9.5.17 et al.) Strabo also mentions a “grove of Asclepius” in

Phoenicia, and a temple in Carthage (16.2.22, 17.3.4), though I have no source which provides the Phoenician name for the idol. There were other places with temples or statues of Asclepius, though Strabo mentions none at Pergamos. *W.R.F.*

Note #10: It should be noted that while Caesar indeed filled the role of pagan priest-king, he also was a descendant of Judah-Zarah, if indeed he was a descendant of Aeneas the Trojan, and so of Darda the Hebrew – and the prophecy stands, then Caesar by right of birth held the scepter. *W.R.F.*

Note #11: Evidently the mitered cap was employed by many of the pagan cults of the east, and not only those of the fish-idols, Dagon of the Philistines or Dercetto of the Syrians (mother of Semiramis, as alleged). But not only that, while I have not the Greek available for comparison with the other historians, Whiston's rendering of the description of Jerusalem's high priest in the time of Alexander, by Josephus in *Antiquities*, says: "... for Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance, in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen, and the high priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head having the golden plate on which the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high priest." (11.8.5 [11:331]). The English word "mitre" appears 13 times in the O.T. (*Strong's*) and the account of Josephus should be compared to Exodus 28:37 and Lev. 8:9. This subject requires further investigation in the Greek as well as the Hebrew! *W.R.F.*

See comment by Clifton A. Emahiser below, after William Finck's in Note #12.

Note #12: While it is clear that Attalus III, who died in 133 B.C., did indeed bequeath his kingdom to Rome, and that became the province of Asia "by the same name as the continent" (Strabo 13.4.2), the history of the title "Pontifex Maximus" is not so clear. Writing of a time that, while shrouded in myth, can not be ignored, Diodorus Siculus discusses the struggle for the throne between Iulius, a son of Ascanius the son of Aeneas, and Silvius, a son of Aeneas "by Lavinia, the daughter of Latinus", and says of its outcome that "Iulius, however, though he lost the supreme power, was made *pontifex maximus* and became a kind of second king; and from him we are told, was sprung the Julian gens which exists in Rome even to this day" (Diod. Sic. 7.5.8.). Of course, Julius Caesar was a descendant of this Iulius and a member of the Julian gens (family). So while Pergamos was a part of ancient Troy, and the title *pontifex maximus* came from that place, it may have come not in 133 B.C., but much earlier, as early as 1185 B.C. with the Trojan colonists who later became Romans. *W.R.F.*

Comment by Clifton A. Emahiser: For everything genuine that Yahweh has, Satan has a fraudulent counterfeit. Therefore, if Yahweh's priests wear a mitered cap, it is only reasonable that Satan's priests wear a mitered cap. For this I would refer to Achan, who was also a descendant of Zarah Judah. When the Israelites crossed Jordan, Yahweh explicitly commanded all the firstfruits of the conquest of Jericho to "become a thing of destruction; ... it belongs to Yahweh." All silver and gold were to be given to the treasury of Yahweh. Achan, however, upon finding a "Babylonish garment" and a 50 shekel gold bar worth some 7,000+ dollars, and 200 silver shekels, buried them beneath his tent. It is somewhat obvious that Achan had found this garment and money in a pagan temple, as the ordinary man of Jericho didn't wear such expensive attire, and such gold and silver was usually deposited for safekeeping in the temple-bank. Evidently, Achan had ideas of starting his own temple-bank with the usual prostitute patronage. But, for this, Achan and his entire family were destroyed. No doubt, with the "Babylonish [priest's] garment" was also a pagan mitered cap. Undoubtedly, the original pagan high-priest of Satan was Cain. It appears this matter of the title of Pontifex Maximus and the mitered cap is quite serious. It's amazing sometimes where some of the

apparel we wear has its origin. For instance, the tuxedo worn by men at our most solemn wedding ceremonies is designed after the African witch-doctors' attire!

Note #13: The ancient poets told the tale of Aeneas being the son of Anchises, a Trojan Prince and descendant of Darda, and Aphroditê (aka Cytherea), for which see Hesoid's Theogony lines 1008-1010. Strabo tells of a painting by Apelles which was at Drecanum on Cos in a temple called "the Asclepieium ... exceedingly famous and full of numerous votive offerings", saying: "And Aphrodite Anadyomenê used to be there, but it is now dedicated to the deified Caesar in Rome, Augustus thus having dedicated to his father the female founder of his family" (14.2.19). Venus being the Roman equivalent of Aphrodite, such beliefs were common among the Romans as well as the Greeks, where most families were believed to be descended from some god or goddess, or even several along the way. These stories were numerous in Greek and Roman histories as well as poetry, for which reason Paul tells Timothy: "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies" (1 Tim. 1:4), and Titus: "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies ..." (Titus 3:9). [See also note #18 below.] *W.R.F.*

Note #14: Gratian became emperor in 378 A.D. "Pope" was not yet an official title at the time, and "bishop of Rome" is more nearly correct. It is evident from Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History) that at his time the bishop of Rome was claiming a title of "pope", and also claiming authority over the other bishoprics, but also that most other bishops rejected these notions of Roman supremacy over their local "churches." It was some time yet before an official "papacy" and consolidated Roman power over a "Catholic Church" evolved. *W.R.F.*

Note #15: "Antipas" cannot mean "against the Pope." There is no word "popis" in Greek, there was no "pope" in the days of the martyrs, and the syllable "pas" can not be connected to the word "PATER", or "father" in Greek! Anti can mean "instead, in the place of" or, more often in composition with other words, "against, in opposition to", and PAS means "all, the whole", and so I would interpret the name to mean "one who stood against all" opposition, in this context, one who kept the faith even unto death. *W.R.F.*

Clifton A. Emahiser's comment: It should also be pointed out that the Antipas at Rev. 2:13 should not be confused with the family of Herod Antipas. Evidently Comparet went to *Strong's*, where Antipas is the Greek word #493, and according to Strong, Anti means "in place of" and the "pas" is a derivative of #3963 meaning father or parent. Because the modulation on the tape was so poor, Comparet may have said "pas" rather than "popis." I have to agree with Finck that there were no popes in the days of the early martyrs, and I would have to give an educated guess that this would be "one who takes the place of his father." Yet Finck (far superior at the Greek than I) advises me "While Strong connects 'pas' to 'father', I find no such etymology in Greek or in the other lexicographers."

Note #16: I would not call Victor I a "pope" under any circumstances, which is sort of like calling Simon Peter "pope", if not as horrible! Was Peter Stuyvesant a "New Yorker"? Victor I was rather only "bishop of Rome." *W.R.F.*

Note #17: Unmentioned by Comparet, "Pergamos" was the citadel of ancient Troy, which the later city of Pergamos was built around. The word came to be used of any citadel. *W.R.F.*

Note #18: As seen in note #13, Lesson #1 (above), Venus (Aphroditê) was said to be the mother of Aeneas, who fought in the Trojan War. The Greeks, though, believed Semiramis and Ninus, and the founding of Babylon to be of much greater antiquity. Diodorus Siculus places the life of Semiramis 21 generations before the Trojan War, where he says: "For when Teutamius, they say, was ruler of Asia, being the twentieth in succession from Ninyas the son of Semiramis, the Greeks made an expedition against Troy with Agamemnon, at a time when the Assyrians had controlled Asia for more than a thousand years" (Diodorus Siculus 2.22.2). In the Greek mind, Semiramis was an ancient Assyrian queen, and a mortal, while Aphrodite was an

ageless goddess, thus two very distinct personages somehow confounded by Comparet.
W.R.F.