

# THE REVELATION OF YESHUA HA MASIACH

## Lesson 1 – Preparing the Church

### I. Historical Background

- Writer – Yochanan/John (the Beloved), brother of Yakov/James sons of Zavdai (Zebedee)
- Date of writing – late 80s to mid 90s AD  
Roman Emperor in Power – Domitian
- Audience: 7 churches in Asia (Minor) today Turkey
- Location – Patmos Island off the coast of Turkey (at that time practically uninhabited).

Why was John there?

- Purpose of writing: Revelation – Greek “apokalupsis” unveiling or revealing

A revelation of Yeshua first and foremost Revelation 1<sup>1</sup>

A revelation of things which are to come: to warn the church of the things which were about to take place so that they would be prepared.

Revelation 1<sup>3</sup> God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and **obey** what it says, for the time is near. NLT

All this is in addition to the things that Yeshua taught while He was still on the earth (Matthew 24, Mark 13 & Luke 21)

- What it should do for us

Not to give us an escapist mind-set.

To encourage us to work and save as many as possible 2 Peter 3<sup>9</sup>

- Keys to the book “in the Spirit” – Revelation 1<sup>10</sup>, 4<sup>2</sup>, 17<sup>3</sup>, 21<sup>10</sup>

John sees things while in the Spirit, i.e. visions, does not mean he is moved physically. Important to note for chapter 4 with reference to pre-trib rapture.

- Central verse of the book – Revelation 11<sup>15</sup>  
Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" NKJV

### II. Opening Greetings (V4 – 8)

- A. John introduces himself and says he is addressing the seven churches (seven actual congregations in Asia Minor).



- B. John introduces Yeshua as
- The one who is, was and is to come – eternal God
  - The resurrected one who rules over the kings of the earth – to encourage the believers that Yeshua is greater than the Roman emperors.
  - He reminds us that God has a purpose for us.(thus the warfare against the church)
  - He reminds us that Yeshua is returning in the clouds
  - He quotes Yeshua saying He is the eternal, almighty one.

He does this is to encourage Christians who were living under great persecution to endure by seeing the finish line.

### III. John's Vision of Yeshua

- A. The Lord's Day (V10) – A Roman holiday where people were ordered to go before a statue of Caesar to offer incense and declare "Caesar is Lord (kurios)"

- B. A different Yeshua

He sees a glorious Yeshua so different from whom he knew that he fainted.

We need a "kingdom paradigm"

The Bible is about the Kingdom:

1. Adam was a vassal king

Genesis 1<sup>26-28</sup>

Satan took the kingdom by deceiving man; Yeshua and Paul referred to him as prince of this world (John 12<sup>31-33</sup>, 14<sup>30</sup>, 16<sup>11</sup>, Ephesians 2<sup>1-3</sup>)

2. Israel was created to be God's kingdom on earth. Exodus 19<sup>5-6</sup>

3. The gospel that John the Baptist and Yeshua preached – "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3<sup>2</sup>, 4<sup>17</sup>)

4. Angel's declaration: Revelation 11<sup>15</sup>

5. Our reality:

- i. We moved house: Colossians 1<sup>13</sup>

- ii. We were once controlled by Satan: Ephesians 2<sup>1-2</sup>

- iii. We are citizens of heaven: Philippians 3<sup>20</sup>

- iv. We are in a war zone: Ephesians 6<sup>12</sup>

The story of the Bible is the story of the struggle between the kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of God. The Book of Revelation describes the culmination of that struggle.

- C. 7 Spirits, 7 Stars, & 7 Menorahs



## 1. Yeshua describes Himself

- He is the first and the last – no other saviour (Isaiah 43<sup>11</sup>)
- He was dead but now lives – the Resurrected Messiah

There are several occurrences of the number 7 in the book of Revelation. In Biblical numerology this number represents completion; we see a few examples here.

## 2. Seven Spirits of God - Revelation 1<sup>4</sup>, 3<sup>1</sup>, 4<sup>5</sup>, 5<sup>6</sup>

There are two possible interpretations:

- The Holy Spirit – 7 = completion or perfection, thus speaking of the perfection of Him also 7 characteristics of the Holy Spirit found in Isaiah 11<sup>2</sup>
- Seven angelic beings that are before the throne of God

Could be both depending on the context

## 3. Seven Angels

Greek – “angeloo” means messenger: supernatural beings as well as church leaders

## 4. Lampstands

Menorah that stood in the Tabernacle/Temple in the presence of God

Represents the church – designed by God not man

Yeshua has the blueprint for His church – Matthew 16<sup>18</sup>.

The menorah in the Tabernacle/Temple shone in a dark place, – Matthew 5<sup>16</sup>.

## IV. Divine Realignment (Revelation 2 & 3)

They were “circular letters”

Each letter was written to “the church” but ends with hear “what the Spirit says to the churches”.

So these letters were first read in one congregation and then passed to another in the city. So Yeshua was speaking to the whole church in the city.

Each letter also contained a promise to those who would overcome, God created us to be conquerors (Overcomers), Romans 8<sup>35-37</sup>

To overcome or conquer one needs endurance, Paul told Timothy to endure hardship 2 Timothy 2<sup>12</sup>

Not seven stages of the church through the ages but these traits can be found of the church in every age.



God has rewards for His people who build correctly – 1 Corinthians 3<sup>12-15</sup>

### A. Ephesus

Plenty of good works Endurance Sound theology (rejected false apostles and teachers) They hated the works of Nicolaitans	Lack of intimacy with the Lord Stagnant (fell from the heights where they used to be)
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Warning: Return to doing things they used to do otherwise they would lose the ministry (menorah removed)

Yeshua was speaking to a church/city what are the things they were supposed to do?

They had many good works but were neglecting their primary function – making disciples (Matthew 28<sup>19-20</sup>)

Nicolaitans – refer to Rev 2<sup>15</sup>

### B. Smyrna

No bad traits only good.

- They endured in spite of persecution and poverty
- They were slandered by fake Jews, this could mean:
  - Non-Jews who acted like Jews
  - Religious Jews – Romans 2<sup>28-29</sup>
- Synagogue of Satan: Greek – “Syna–gogeh”: a meeting place. “Satan a cryptic term for the Emperor”.

Caution: The “devil” (Roman empire) was about to throw some of them in prison

Encouragement: Be faithful until death and they will be given a reward.

### C. Pergamum

Political centre of Asia, rulings made there affected the whole of Asia Minor.

It had three major temples; for Caesar, for Athena (goddess of Athens) and for Zeuss.

Throne of Satan:

The last one had a huge throne-like structure, Antipas the bishop of Pergamum was martyred at this throne. In 1890 it was dismantled by German archaeologists and moved to Berlin where it sits in the Pergamum Museum. It is said that Hitler was inspired by this throne.

They were faithful and did not deny the Lord – Romans were forcing Christians to deny the Lord and declare Caesar to be Lord. Antipas was martyred because of this.	There were people who followed the teaching of Balaam  They also tolerated the Nicolaitans
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- Balaam was the false prophet who was employed by King Balak to curse Israel,
- God prevented him time and again. Finding that He could not curse Israel he taught Balak to entice the Israelites with Moabite women (Numbers 24 & 25).

Not only was there sexual immorality but they broke covenant with God by eating unclean food and worshipped Baal. All these were part of the Roman religious system. Balaam's motivation was money.

It is possible that Yeshua was judging this church for trying to tempt Jewish believers to break the dietary laws and become more Roman by eating meat sacrificed to idols and taking part in sexual immorality which was prevalent in Rome.

- Nicolaitans: false teachers who taught that there were "two gods"; an angry god who created a bad material world, who was the god of the Old Testament and a loving God who created a good spiritual world, the New Testament god. So what was material (fleshly) was evil and what was spiritual was good. What one did in the flesh was separate from the spirit. Thus no sin because the two are separate, making immorality acceptable This is known as Gnosticism.

#### D. Thyatira

Plenty of good works, in fact they were increasing in it.	There was a spirit of Jezebel in the church and some were taken by it.
In fact it would have been considered a pretty good church.	

Characteristics of Jezebel: manipulative and intimidating, leading people astray. People with a Jezebel spirit always try to control the church, especially the leaders. It can even lead to sexual sin.

Apparently this was strong in Thyatira and Yeshua was very angry about it and promised those who would stand against it a great reward.

#### E. Sardis

There was a remnant in the church that had not compromised and kept to the mission of God. He encourages them, saying they will walk with Him in purity.	They had a good reputation in the world but not in the eyes of God.  It was a church that was actually dying.  Remember what you have received and heard – they failed in their mission.  They had soiled their clothes; compromised with the world for the sake of reputation
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God always looks for the remnant that will not compromise with the world and would preach the true gospel.

#### F. Philadelphia

A good church, the Lord has no rebuke for them. He encourages them.

They were struggling, most likely under persecution. Yeshua commends them for standing under persecution.

He promises that He would avenge them.

He would keep or protect them from the hour of trial. This does not mean take them out: Greek word "terreo" means to guard, it gives the idea of a fortress, where people are safe within the walls.

#### G. Laodicea

<p>They only encouragement He gives is to tell them He is close by and those who were willing to "let Him in" would enjoy fellowship.</p> <p>This is a call to repentance and fellowship with Him.</p> <p>He also tells them that He is rebuking them because He loves them.</p>	<p>A wealthy church that thought they had no need for anything.</p> <p>They did not realize their spiritual state which was very poor.</p> <p>He called them to buy refined gold from Him.</p>
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"Neither hot nor cold"- John was speaking metaphorically and using the geography of the land to explain the state of the church.

To the north in Heirapolis there was a hot spring. In the south near Colossae there was a cold spring with refreshing water.

Laodicea received water via an aqueduct from the south, By the time the water reached them it was tepid and often polluted and undrinkable.

How did the church come to this state?

Most likely because they went with the flow of the Roman Empire.

Gold refined in fire – true faith that comes through trials. James 1<sup>2-4</sup>

If we take an overview of these seven letters we find what God dislikes and what He values. He dislikes worldly success and compromise but He values faithfulness particularly in difficulties. 1 Peter 1<sup>6-7</sup>

Works prove our faith – James 2<sup>18</sup>

Greek understanding of faith – a mental exercise,  
Jewish understanding – you do not have faith unless it is proven by action.

