

The Jewish Final Solution to the World's Problem - Revelation, Part 6-Letters to the Seven Churches, Part 2

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[0 : 00] turn to the book of Revelation to chapter 2. And this morning we'll be looking at verses 8 through 17 in Revelation chapter 2.

And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, The first and the last who was dead and has come to life says this, I know your tribulation and your poverty, but you are rich, and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil was about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days.

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. 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. And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write, The one who has the sharp two-edged sword says this, I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is.

[1 : 45] And you hold fast my name, and did not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas, my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality.

So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent, or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone, which no one knows but he who receives it.

And that comprises the information that John is instructed to write, and the revelation, and it has to do with churches numbers 2 and 3.

[3 : 35] We began this series about six sessions ago, when we decided to undertake the revelation, and it will be the capstone of our Jewish final solution to the world's problems.

And we spent the first couple of sessions in just introductory material. So anyone who has come to this study, and has not had the benefit and the advantage of the first five sessions, will not be able to appreciate this, the sixth session, perhaps nearly as much as they would if they were to avail themselves of those first five.

And they are all available on the table that is on the rear, and you will note that they are numbered, and they are also recorded there according to the date on which they were given. So feel free to avail yourself of them, of however many and whichever ones you need.

Complimentary copies to you. They are all free of charge, and they have been provided through the generosity of Grace People, who established some time ago the Barbara Wiseman Memorial Fund.

And that is the basis for underwriting those, so we are able to make them available to you and to others free of charge. So avail yourself of them as you will. During earlier introductory remarks that I just mentioned about the book of the Revelation, we did point out some important features that are contrary to the positions taken by most when it comes to interpreting this book.

[5 : 06] Number one, we emphasize and insist upon the intense Jewishness of this entire book. You will not find a book in all of the New Testament.

And I said New Testament, not Old. You will not find a book in all of the New Testament that is more Jewish than the book of Revelation, except for the letter to the Hebrews.

That, of course, is totally Jewish. We insist, because the Bible makes it so very, very clear, that this is primarily a Jewish book.

Christians lose sight of that. And they see the Old Testament as Jewish and the New Testament as Christian. There is nothing that is essentially Christian about the New Testament except the letters that Paul wrote to the churches.

Everything else on either side of Paul's letters are very, very Jewish. Just look at the language and look at those to whom the writer says they are addressing their letters.

[6 : 19] That ought to suffice right there. So there is the intense Jewishness of the entire book. Secondly, the extent and the future of the book, including the letters to the seven churches, we take to be all future.

And these seven churches are actually Jewish assemblies. The mistake is made when we assume that we read something like the letters to the seven churches.

Well, these are obviously Christian churches. No, they are not. And the word that is used in the original for the word church does mean church. It also means assembly.

It also means congregation. It means a number of things. Ekklesia. It refers to a people, a group of people called out for a particular purpose.

They may be Jewish. They may be Christian. They may be pagan or heathen. As you examine the account the apostle Paul gives or that Luke gives about him in Acts chapter 19, when they have an unruly mob that is descending on this common meeting place, and they are referred to, of all things, as a church, an ekklesia.

[7 : 34] Well, how can that be? You see, we are so locked in to our usage of the word church and our definition of it that we just do not see the expansive way that the Bible often uses the word church.

And we could say the same thing about baptism, but I won't go there now. So this is an intensely Jewish thing. And these assemblies, these letters to the seven churches are going to be to seven Jewish congregations who will be believing Jews during this time of tribulation.

And many of these will have become believing Jews because of the efforts of the 144,000 that will surface shortly after the 70th week of Daniel begins.

There is going to be a huge revival among Jewish people, many of whom will come to faith in Yeshua HaMashiach as their Savior. And they are those who will comprise these churches that will exist in Asia Minor.

So we are saying that all of the revelation, not from chapter 4 on, but all of it, is future. Three, we noted that there will be a proliferation of supernatural events that are not at all common to our day and time.

[8 : 58] During the 70th week of Daniel, which is exactly what the revelation is going to be about, there's going to be a proliferation of the supernatural, the likes of which this world has not seen since the time Christ was on this earth 2,000 years ago when he provided many supernatural displays.

So up between that time and this time, we are living in an age that could be considered quite ordinary when it comes to displays of the supernatural. What we see all around us are displays of the natural, not the supernatural.

Once in a while, heaven breaks through and does something of a supernatural nature, but not very often. And when he does, it always gets everyone's attention.

So the revelation, the 70th week of Daniel, is going to be a time of extreme supernatural occurrences. And there will be a proliferation of supernatural agents.

There will be angelic activity, both good and bad, both unfallen and fallen, during this time as well. Four or five, there will be a proliferation of symbols used by John.

[10 : 17] And you are urged to look for all of these indicators as we wind our way through Revelation, verse by verse. They are going to appear time after time after time.

And we'll see the pattern develop as we go through it, so that each of these points that I have made will be verified as we come to them. And I think it will be quite obvious. Someone has said, the book of the Revelation is not as hard to interpret as it is hard to believe.

Why would that be? Well, just read it. When you do, you see all of these really bizarre things happening, developing.

Things that this planet has never seen before. Because we can only identify with what our personal frame of reference includes.

By way of past experiences and phenomena that we have recognized and seen. But we can't identify with the things that are going to be taking place in the Revelation.

[11 : 30] They are otherworldly. They really are otherworldly. They don't belong in this sphere of our activity. But they are going to be commonplace then.

And it is going to be absolutely astounding. Recurring time and time again. In Revelation chapter 2, we're looking at the letters to these assemblies.

And they are referred to as unto the angel right, unto the angel right. And I must confess that previously I took the standard party line that these angels, the word of which in the Greek, angelos, means messenger.

So it seems only logical that these letters are being addressed to the messengers or to the pastors of these seven different churches.

But I've reconsidered that. And I beg to differ. I have changed my mind. These are letters to the angel of each individual church.

[12 : 38] Don't ask me who the angel is. Not identified. I assume that there are seven different angels, seven different churches. I don't understand their sphere of activity.

I don't understand their connection with the church, what they are supposed to be doing. I do know they are going to be functioning during a supernatural time frame, the likes of which the world has never seen.

And I think when we look at the context of Revelation, we must go to chapter 1 and verse 1, and we see right here, it is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his bondservants, the things which must shortly take place, and he sent and communicated it by his angel to his bondservant, John.

Now, pastor just doesn't fit there. Just does not even come close to fitting there. But angel does. And if the word angel here really means pastor, then this would be the only place in the Bible where it does.

And I am satisfied if the sacred record meant to say pastor, it wouldn't have any difficulty using the word pastor. But it's angel. An angel is a supernatural being.

[14 : 02] And I take it that all areas of, what shall I say, all entities, all entities of intelligence are being involved.

Because in verse 1, it begins with the revelation of Christ, which God gave him. That is, God the Father is providing this revelation, that is to come, of Jesus Christ to show to his bondservants, that is, believers, the things which must shortly come to pass.

And he sent and communicated it by his angel to his bondservant, John. Why are all three involved? Because these constitute, in my thinking at least, the three intelligent entities of existence.

First, you have deity. That is, God the Father and the Son. Secondly, you have supernatural beings in the case of angels, angelic beings.

And thirdly, you have human beings, such as John, who was called upon to write this. So here is the whole spate of intelligent existence being brought into play in connection with this final time on earth.

[15 : 21] It is, I think, very, very significant. In chapter 1, we noted the angels of Ephesus were informed and that they had, people had left their first love.

We pointed out to you that the key to returning is always repentance. It is always the same way. Repentance is always God's silver bullet for restoration.

Always has been, always will be. It is repentance that is in order for the unbeliever who, before he can believe on Christ and be saved, he has to repent.

That is, he has to change his mind and dismiss what it was that he always believed previously because it is wrong. And when he changes his mind and reverses himself, he sees the truth as it is in Christ and that's what enables him to make an intelligent decision.

But you have to turn your back on the wrong one first before you can embrace the right one. That's what repentance is. It means change your mind. And the reason you have for changing your mind is because you are provided with information that requires you to change your mind.

[16 : 40] It is information that debunks what you previously believed and it establishes what is true and you embrace that. when Jonah was sent to Nineveh, that great and wicked city with the message, yet 40 days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

He really didn't expect the people to repent. Didn't think they would. Matter of fact, he didn't even want them to. But they did. Now that's a twist. That's a twist.

Preachers are used to delivering messages that people are not going to believe. After all, Noah did that for years. Prophets in the Old Testament did that for years.

But it came as a shock to Jonah to deliver a message that the people bought wholesale. They repented. God spared the city. They simply changed their mind. And each of these churches, with one exception, and the exception will be the very last one, or the church at Philadelphia, I'm sorry.

The church at Philadelphia will have no need for repentance. But all the others will. Because repentance is activated only when one is convinced that what you believe is wrong.

[17 : 57] And it doesn't necessarily have to do with salvation. It could do with anything. I don't know how many times I've repented theologically and doctrinally as I've studied the Bible over the last 60 years.

I've changed my mind a lot. And each time I did, it was because I had received additional information that I didn't have before. And that caused me to rethink my position.

And you know something? That's a tough thing to do. Because nobody likes to think, could I have been wrong all that time?

About that? Me? Wrong? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. A lot of times. And sometimes intellectual integrity comes knocking at the door and says, okay, buster.

You've heard this new information now. Are you going to be willing to go with it or not? And I say, but what will people think?

[19 : 07] How is that going to come across? And then the thought occurred to me, well, Marv, they never did think you were perfect. Gee, they didn't, did they?

Maybe there is room for repentance. Yeah. Repentance, nothing will keep the mind cleansed like repentance. That's called by changing it often.

But you have to have a reason to change it. Don't change it quickly. Don't change it easily. You need to be convinced. And then when you are, you throw in the whole thing.

This is it. Like Martin Luther said, God helping me, I can do no other. Here I stand. Let come what may. You know, that ought to be our attitude toward the truth.

It's so easy to fudge around the edges and flirt with the truth without really embracing it. And that's what we need to do. Because the embracing of truth will lead to the revelation of more truth.

[20 : 19] and hearing truth and shutting it out because it doesn't comport with what I've, but that's not what I've always believed. How many times have we heard that?

Well, let's get along here with this letter to Smyrna. And by the way, these people, the Nicolaitans, they are going to surface a number of times. And the Nicolaitans seems to have been, and this is something we have to take with a grain of salt because we can't really establish it as well as we'd like.

But the Nicolaitans seem to be those who were advocates of the conquering or the conquest of the people. And they seem to have been involved with the establishment of a clergy sect that was prioritized over the common people, an elevation, a special kind kind of privilege and position for those in high office.

And they are referred to as the Nicolaitans. It was the establishment of the clergy group as opposed to the common, ordinary man. And they were elevated above.

And this is why during the Dark Ages, it was virtually the clergy alone that constituted the educated segment of the population that could read and write.

[21 : 41] The common people couldn't. And those who can read and write enjoy a position of power and influence certainly over those who cannot. And these Nicolaitans seem to have surfaced a number of times.

And by the way, I'm sure you're probably all familiar with the logo, the sporting goods logo. You see it on sneakers and you see it on sweatshirts and hoods and everything else.

And it's called Nike. N-I-K-E. It comes from this word in the Greek. And it means to conquer or to gain the victory over. And isn't that what sports was all about?

To be on the winning team and they well named that. You know, this is Nike. That's their logo. And it's taken from this Nicolaitans which has to do with the conquering. This angel of the church of Smyrna is going to be the recipient of this information.

And apparently, it is going to be this angel's responsibility to dispense this message to the congregation at Smyrna. I don't know why this is other than what I suggested earlier as to why God uses angels.

[22 : 50] But do you realize that the law and the commandments that came to Moses came through an angelic source?

that God revealed these things to angels and the angel communicated it to Moses? And in Acts chapter 7 where Stephen is stoned, there again, Stephen refers to the truth, the law of God having been committed and coming through angelic beings.

And why that is is simply left to the wisdom and discretion of God. I don't know why it involves angels other than the fact that they are somehow going to be intelligently involved and instrumental in the dispensing of the law for Moses and in what Stephen was talking about in Acts chapter 7.

And both of those, make no mistake about it, refer to angelic involvement. And I think that's why these are angels and they are not pastors but they have some kind of special relationship and connection with each of these churches and they are called upon to be involved in this.

The word Smyrna is the word from which the original comes as myrrh, M-Y-R-R-H, myrrh, and it has to do with a mixture of perfumes and aloes.

[24 : 15] When they came to anoint the body of Jesus, they came with a mixture of myrrh and aloes. These were salves and ointments that were designed to preserve the body and to decay to retard the rapidity of decay and also to hold down the odor of the body that was decaying.

So it's talking about funerals and death and decay, the name given to the church of Smyrna. And we are told that this is one of two churches that the risen Christ has nothing against.

only two. Five out of the seven are not going to fare so well. But these two, Smyrna and Laodicea, there will be no need for repentance.

There is nothing against them. And, in verse 9, we read, And I know your tribulation and your poverty, but you are rich.

Now, he simply means they are poor insofar as this earth's goods are concerned, but they are rich in the things that matter. And the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

[25 : 36] Now, right here in this verse, we have, just creeping into our attention, a little hint up front. This sounds Jewish, doesn't it?

That's because it is Jewish. It is Jewish. It has to do with the synagogue and it has to do with those who say they are Jews and are not.

What does he mean by that? We've told you that the Bible is its own best interpreter. No one is really competent to interpret the Bible on our own. We must allow the Bible to interpret itself.

And when we do, we're reminded of a verse that the Apostle Paul referred to back in Romans chapter 9 and verse 6 and we won't go there for time's sake but it's on the record and you can look it up if you want.

Where the Apostle said, they are not all Israel that are Israel. What do you mean by that? They are not all Israel that are Israel. He means not all who claim to be the seed of Abraham really are the seed of Abraham.

[26 : 44] Oh, they've got the genetic connection. They're in the bloodline. They are direct descendants of Abraham. But remember when the Jews confronted Jesus and they said, we have Abraham to our father.

And Jesus said, you don't have Abraham as your father. If Abraham were your father, you would do the works of Abraham. Now, what's he talking about there?

Abraham was their father. Physically, genetically, he was their father. They could trace their genealogy all the way back. They were in that bloodline. Abraham was their father.

But spiritually, Jesus is saying, you're not anything like Abraham. Oh, you've got the genealogy, but if you were really Abraham's seed, you would do the works of Abraham.

Abraham, and what they were doing was just the opposite. So, it was one thing for someone to claim to being a Jew as opposed to being a real Jew. Do you see any parallel there with Christians?

[27 : 58] Do we not all know that it is one thing to claim to be a Christian, and it's another thing to actually be one? Can we not appropriately say, they are not all Christians that are Christians?

That is exactly true. there are a lot of people who wear the label, but they are not true believers at all. And that's the point that's being made here. There are those who say they are real Jews, spiritually and physically, but they are not.

In fact, they are a synagogue of Satan. By the way, that same passage in John 8 ought to trigger something else here. when Jesus said, you are of your father the devil.

Do you not see a connection between that and John 8, and this in Revelation 2? I think the connection is undeniable.

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days.

[29 : 09] Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. This is talking about the intensity of persecution that is going to be taking place during the tribulation period.

And Asia Minor, which is present-day Turkey, is going to be right in the thick of it. They are going to be involved. These are going to be Jewish believers, and this is just a Wiseman opinion, and I could be as wrong as all get out, but I don't think I am.

These who are going to comprise these Jewish assemblies are going to be recipients of the ministry of the 144,000.

It's going to be responsible for a huge influx of Jewish people into the true faith, of true Judaism, and as I've said before, true Judaism and true Christianity is nothing more than Judaism come full circle.

Christianity is the fulfillment, the end game of Judaism. That is its logical consequence, and that is precisely the way the Bible presents it.

[30 : 21] Christianity is a fulfilled Judaism. Now, many do not see that, and of course, there are many that do not believe it, but I am satisfied that it is absolutely true.

These ten days, we are not given a clue as to what it may involve. Apparently, there is some special period of time that is marked out for intense persecution during this time, and they are admonished to be faithful unto death.

Even though it costs you your life, do not renege on your faith. and that's precisely what is going to happen to some, and that is what has happened already to some in the Mideast.

There are numbers of true believers who have literally been beheaded by ISIS and the likes of them, simply for being believers in Jesus Christ who would not renounce their faith.

And the same is going on right now as we speak in North Africa. I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

[31 : 35] That's included in every one of these seven messages. Each message to the seven churches is concluded with this same thing. He that hath an ear to hear. It simply means, let the one who is available and open to the truth, let them hear.

Let them hear. Let them give this a real serious hearing. Their mind is already made up. Don't confuse them with anything else.

Minds are bolted and locked shut. They won't hear. Their ears are deaf. But what this text is saying is, if one is open to the truth and really wants the truth, then let them hear.

hear. And they will hear the truth and be able to respond to the truth. He who has an ear, let him hear. What the Spirit says to the churches, he who overcomes, and this is he who is victorious, shall not be hurt by the second death.

And the second death, of course, is that eternal death of which the scriptures speak. And then, to the angel of the church of Pergamum. Some render that Pergamos, but it's the same in either language.

[32 : 51] And we've got apparently a different angel here. We do not have names for any of these angels. They are not identified as such, but they obviously know who they are. And at the beginning of this, as well as at the beginning of all the letters, there is some descriptive word or two about the person of Christ who is sending the message.

The one who has the sharp two-edged sword says this, that is Christ, of course, I know where you dwell. And each of the seven churches begins with that as well.

I know, I know, I know. And it simply indicates that the one who is sending the message knows full well the circumstances that the recipient is facing and is totally aware of it.

Nothing escapes him. I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Now, when we come to Revelation, Revelation 12, I believe it is, and trust me, we will eventually get there if the Lord doesn't come first.

We will see Satan cast out of heaven. Right now, he has access to heaven. If I were God, I wouldn't give him access to heaven. I would have kicked him out permanently, but I'm not God, and he knows best.

[34 : 09] So Satan has access to God, and he is there accusing the brethren day and night. But the time is going to come when he gets the boot, and he will no longer have access to heaven.

He will come down to the earth, and the text will say, and he knows that he has, but a short time. So he's going to do as much damage as he can possibly do, and he is involved here, because this is not a demon.

This is Satan himself, and he is going to be involved here in ancient, in the ancient Mideast, and this will be modern-day Turkey, where Satan's throne is.

This is going to be the center of activity here in Pergamum, so far as Satan and his minions are concerned. And you hold fast my name, and did not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas, my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

That's very telling. But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality.

[35 : 32] This refers back to the incident regarding Balaam in Numbers chapter 22 through 24, and the prophet Balak was the king of Moab.

I'm sorry, the prophet was Balaam, and Balak was the king of Moab, which is, by the way, today modern Jordan. And he was put upon to deliver a curse upon the children of Israel, but he refused to do so, and each time he did, it came out to be a blessing.

But the corruption that is primarily the object of criticism here has to do with corruption by intermarriage, and the acts of immorality, and all that is involved with that, the teaching of Balaam, this is something that is going to be part and parcel in that generation at that time, and the acts of immorality are going to go along with it.

Thus, you also have some who, in the same way, hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. And there we have that word surfacing again. These are those who oppress and suppress those who are under them.

These are the hoi polloi. These are the high and the mighty. These are the ones who take advantage and manipulate and use the masses to their own benefit and credit.

[36 : 54] These are the Nicolaitans, and they apparently are going to become quite expert at that. The formula is the same as it always is. Repent, therefore.

You need to reverse yourself regarding this or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.

And what is that? It's referred to time and again, and it will surface again in Revelation 19 in connection with the second coming.

And it will be no difficulty at all for us to see what the symbol is. What is this sword in Christ's mouth?

It's very simple. And the rest of Scripture will tell us what it is. That sword that goes out of his mouth is nothing more than the spoken word of God.

[37 : 51] This is the same one that called everything into existence. And it is referred to as a sharp two-edged sword. The word of God cuts both ways.

The word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

That's the word of God, and it is depicted here as a sword. And you know, in the accoutrements of battle and of warfare that are given in Ephesians chapter 6 about taking the whole armor of God, all of the accoutrements that are mentioned are all defensive.

There is the helmet, salvation, there is the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod, all the rest. These are all protective devices, armor. There's just one offensive weapon, weapon, and that is the sword, the word of God.

That's the one offensive weapon. That's the only one that is needed. Christ said, the words that I speak unto you, they are truth and they are life.

[39 : 07] This is the same one who uttered the words, let there be light, and there was light. And that's the sharp sword that proceeds from his mouth.

It's identified time and again accordingly. Repent. I'm coming to you quickly. I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, that is, the one who prevails, to him I will give some of the hidden manna.

I have no idea what that means. We know what the manna is in the Old Testament, miraculously provided by God to sustain the children of Israel when they were in the wilderness. I don't understand the significance of this hidden manna, and you're going to find me saying I don't understand this or that a number of times as we go through the revelation.

But that does not give us license to say, oh, I don't understand any of it. No. We can understand a lot of it. We just don't get all of it. And let me tell you this. The more of it you get, the more you will be able to get.

[40 : 24] The more dots you are able to connect, the more dots you will be able to connect as you go on with further study. Because line upon line and precept upon precept, we are building a case of understanding in our minds and hearts.

And I will give him a white stone. Gee, just what I've always wanted. The white stone. What I couldn't do if I had a white stone.

What in the world is this all about? I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. I cannot inject myself back into the culture and time of these people to understand the significance of the white stone.

Now, I'm not real sure that there's a parallel here, but there may well be. And the parallel is this. There are some organizations, societies, clubs, whatever you want to call them, secret this or that or something, that when people apply to for membership, all of those who are members are given a white marble.

And a black marble. And there is a receptacle set up on the table. And each member is called forth to vote on this person who is applying for entrance into their club.

[41 : 55] And if you want to gain entrance, you have to have just white marbles. If somebody doesn't want you in that group, they drop in the black marble.

And then when the container is empty, if there is a black marble in there, you have been blackballed. Now, whether it works the same way with the stones or not, I don't know.

Maybe they didn't have marbles back in that day. Maybe they just had stones, white stones, black stones. I don't know. But the possibility is there. And I don't think it's too much stretching the imagination because it obviously is a favorable thing to receive the white stone.

It would indicate blessing, acceptance. At least that's what I'm reading into it. You may have a different idea. But I think it indicates acceptance, receptivity, and a new name written on the stone, which no one knows, but he who receives it.

And this new name business is also very significant. But it doesn't carry much weight with us because we just don't go around giving new names to things all the time.

[43 : 19] And yet, it's common in the Bible. Because when someone is given a new name, the one who is giving the name is acting from a position of ownership or superiority over the one whom they are naming.

Remember when the three Hebrew children were taken prisoner and led away to Babylon? I can't even remember what their Hebrew names were.

But I do remember the king of Babylon gave those three boys all different names, changed their Hebrew names, and gave them Babylonian names.

And he called them Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And what that does is it implants a psychological factor in the minds of the ones receiving that name that they now belong to someone else, not to the one to whom they belonged before.

Now, to whom did they belong before? The God of Israel. And they were going to demonstrate their faith in him when it came time for that fiery furnace. Because they went in it.

[44 : 37] And even though the king of Babylon may have changed their name, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, I don't think they considered themselves names changed at all. And that's why God honored them and preserved them through that fiery furnace.

And what they were saying in effect was, you may change our name, Mr. King of Babylon, but you don't own our heart and our loyalty. It remains with the God of Israel.

When you read in Genesis, the name Abram, A-B-R-A-M, surfaces again and again. Until you get a few chapters into the life of this man, and then his name is changed from Abram to Abraham.

Might even lead you to think it's two different people. Same guy. But God changed his name from Abram to Abraham. Abram means a father.

Father of many. Abraham means a father of nations. And God is going to do this. You see, God is claiming ownership for Abram.

[45 : 48] And he changes his name from Abram to Abraham. And he's saying, hey boy, you're mine now. I own you. And in that relationship, he did.

And he's going to say the same thing to his grandson, whose name will be Jacob. And when Jacob wrestles with the angel, God is going to change his name from Jacob to Israel, which means prince of God.

And God is telling Jacob, you're no longer old crooked Jacob. Now you are mine. I own you. And thereafter, he is referred to as Israel.

Other name changes throughout the Old and New Testament are plenty. And they are there for the same reason. It indicates the ownership that is placed upon the one whose name they are changing.

And it is a really significant thing that frankly is lost on our culture because we just can't identify with that. We don't go around changing people's names. But in this day and age, it was standard procedure.

[46 : 57] So we're going to consider these first three churches as having been dealt with. And I have no qualms about it. No, they have not been dealt with in their entirety.

There is a lot that could be said yet about them. But we need to hasten on because I want to try and limit this to a year or two years at the most before we get through the revelation.

And I think we'll find it profitable, extremely so as we move along. I will defer questions and comments, but I will invite you to write out any question that you may have and drop it in the offering box on your way out.

And we'll do our best to treat it next week. So would you stand, please? Father, we want to thank you for information that we have received regarding this passage.

And we are painfully aware that we are lacking in our understanding. But we do believe that the understanding that we have is adequate enough for us to act upon it.

[48 : 01] And especially, is that true regarding this item of repentance? That is the theme throughout Scripture, Old and New Testament. How that we are to be open to the truth.

We are to have ears to hear. And then we are to embrace that which we know to be true. And allow you to expand upon it and enlarge it in our minds and hearts.

Thank you for the privilege of being able to be open to truth, available to truth. And by the Spirit of God, we trust you will enable us to understand the implications that are behind it.

Thank you so much for the word that you've given and for those who are here this morning to receive it. Anything that is offered of the flesh, may it pass away and come to naught. And what has been from your spirit, would you seal it to our spirit?

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[49 : 08] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.