

Day 49—Sabbath Before Pentecost

Fred R. Coulter—May 22, 2010

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to the Sabbath before the Feast of Pentecost.! This day is very important in prophecy; very important in understanding about Pentecost. Let's understand something very, very important concerning it: It is vital that we really draw close to God in these end-times because the next major events pictured in the plan of God will be day 49 and day 50.

Let's begin first of all by coming to Deuteronomy 16, because this is going to show us partly about counting. This time I want to count about *the weeks* and then tomorrow we'll talk about the 50th day on that day. Deuteronomy 16:9: "You shall count seven weeks to yourselves. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time you *first* began to put the sickle to the grain.... [that, of course, is on the next day after the weekly Sabbath after the Feast of Unleavened Bread.] ...And you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God according to the sufficiency of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give according as the LORD your God has blessed you" (vs 9-10). So, we do take up the offerings; we'll talk about that a little bit more tomorrow.

Now, let's understand something concerning the events leading up to Pentecost. We'll sort of bring these together to help us have understanding and knowledge of what we are going to do and how the things are going to be, etc. Here's a great lesson for us; the lesson that the children of Israel never really learned or understood because they did not have the Holy Spirit. Remember when God gave the Ten Commandments? What did He say? *He said, 'Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep My commandments always!'* And you know the story of what happened to the children of Israel. And you also can see the recent history of the Church of God. In that, God has separated the truly converted and the unconverted as well as the marginally converted. There are many people who believe but are not converted because they don't understand what is *true belief!* And because of that then they are unwilling to keep the commandments of God.

We are told in 1-Cor. 10 that which happened in the Old Testament are 'examples for us' that we don't do the same thing. Yet, we are going to see today that the Churches of God fell into the very same patterns as the children of Israel and caused great problems and great sins and has caused difficulty within the Churches of God! Satan is there to try and get us to serve him, and he brings many clever arguments!

Now, let me give you an argument that just occurred here a few days ago. Come to John, the fifth chapter, and I want to show you how the world's 'Christianity' interprets the Bible. Actually, they only need this one verse. They don't need anything else in the Bible. So, for one of my Church at Home programs I'm going to do up a dummy Bible and I'm going to have all of it blacked out except this one verse. And what they do with this one very, they say that this is all you need to do and if you do this then you'll be saved.

- they know nothing about a calling
- they know nothing about baptism
- they know nothing about the Truth of God

So here it is, and this is how the clever arguments come:

John 5:24: "Truly, truly I say to you, the one who hears My Word... [What is the Word of God? They misunderstand that! They reject most of it!] ...and believes Him Who sent Me, has everlasting life and does not come into judgment; for he has passed from death into life." That's the only verse they need. When you understand that, because of what they reject, you also understand that they're saving themselves. The key thing here is 'the one who hears My Word'—that's the whole message of Christ.

We also need to understand that concerning keeping the Holy Days. And the events leading up to Pentecost are very important, because these things are what give us understanding as to what God is doing. And the world doesn't know what God is doing because they don't keep His Holy Days. They don't believe in Jesus Christ—*but we do!* The question is this for us: How much do we believe? Are we really converted? *There are degrees of obedience and conversion even within the Churches of God!*

Let's come back to Deuteronomy 4, because here's part of the message that we were given. Here's part of the message of the Word of God, and Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.' My, isn't that a convenient verse to forget when the quote John 5:24? of the Word of God, and Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.' My, isn't that a convenient verse to forget when the quote John 5:24? *Yes, indeed!*

Deuteronomy 4:1: "And now, O Israel, hearken to the statutes and to the judgments which I teach you, in order to do them, so that you may live

and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers gives to you.” We can take the same thing and apply it to what? *The Kingdom of God?* Yes? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 2—very key thing, and we can apply it to the whole Bible: “You shall not add to the word which I command you; neither shall you take away from it, so that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal Peor...” (vs 2-3). What was Baal Peor? *That’s when the children of Israel were seduced into going to the children of Moab and mixing in with their religious events: committing adultery and fornication* (Num. 25). We’re going to see the same thing with the Churches of God. That is exactly what has happened.

I got an e-mail the other day from a man who said he’s left WCG because it is now totally Protestant! Remember the three things:

- Passover
- Sabbath
- Holy Days

vs

- Sunday
- communion, Eucharist, sacrifice of the mass (whatever you want to call it)
- holidays

Those are the three counterfeits to take away from God. One of the first things that they substituted was for the Passover, because *if you don’t keep the Passover you’re not in covenant with God*. You can take all the artificial things—Communion, sacrifice of the mass, Lord’s Supper and all that sort of thing—which are then counterfeits of the Christian Passover, and you’re not going to have salvation.

Verse 4: “And you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive, every one of you, this day.... [If we want to live and enter into the Kingdom of God, we’ve got to be faithful unto the end, whether of our life or whether to the resurrection—one of the two.] ...Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you should do so in the land where you go to possess it” (vs 4-5). When we enter the Kingdom of God are we not going to continue keeping the commandments of God? Are we not going to teach the people to keep the commandments of God? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 6: “And you shall keep and do *them*, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.’” For the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel today, you can’t say that. We are foolish! We are stupid! We are deceived! We

have left God! And we can say that of too many of those who have associated themselves with the Church of God. We need to understand that.

Just like we covered on the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, there is a Satan the devil who is the ‘prince of the power of the air’ and he does want to deceive, however he can, any one of us! So that’s why we need to remain completely faithful.

Verse 7: “For what nation is so great... [or we can say ‘what church is so great?—maybe small in number] ...whose God *is* so near to them, as the LORD our God *is*, whenever we call upon Him?”

- we need to look to God
- we need to have our prayers answered
- we need to have faith in asking about those prayers
- we need to understand the will of God in everything that we do

Verse 8: “And what great nation has statutes and judgments that *are* so righteous as all this law which I set before you today?... [And we can say for the New Testament Church, ‘the true knowledge of the true Savior.’ And the true understanding of the plan of God.] ...**Only take heed to yourself and diligently keep yourself...**” (vs 8-9). This is what we have to do everyday. Remember, in the end-time, we have so many things and devices and things that can take people away from God and keep them so busy, get them confused, and even in our own lives slack off on prayer and study and really yielding our lives to God. Everything is there working against our weaknesses. So, we need to be strong in the Lord! We need to be strong in the power of His might!

“...lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen... [and we can say, the knowledge that we have learned and understood; and the things that we have seen with the deterioration and scattering of the Churches of God. Need to learn a lesson there. We’re going to talk about the Churches of God because Day 49 actually pictures the finalizing of the seven churches.] ...and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. But teach them to your children, and your children’s children, to remember the day that you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will make them hear My words so that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and they may teach their children’” (vs 9-10).

We’re going to see the law was given on the day of Pentecost. That’s an important thing for us to understand. We will see the law was given on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was given on Pentecost, and we will see the direct connection between that and the resurrection.

Verse 11: And you came near and stood at the bottom of the mountain. And the mountain burned with fire up to the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.... [Yes, there was a whirlwind; there was a sound of the trumpet and all of that.] ...And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the voice of the words, but saw no likeness, only a voice.... [We have the same thing here. We have even better. God comes to dwell *in us* through the power of His Holy Spirit—sent on the day of Pentecost.] ...And He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform... [We have a covenant, too—don't we? *Yes, indeed!* That's why the Christian Passover. That's why the Feast of Unleavened Bread to put out sin, but also to put in righteousness. And we are to learn the lesson of putting in righteousness, which is 'a broken heart, a contrite spirit, living by every Word of God.'] ...commanded you to perform *even* the ten commandments. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments so that you might do them in the land where you go over to possess it" (vs 11-14).

"Therefore, take good heed to yourselves, for you did not see any form *at all* on the day the LORD spoke to you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a graven image, the likeness of any figure, the likeness of male or female, *or* the likeness of any beast on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flies in the air, *or* the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish in the waters beneath the earth; and *take heed*, lest you lift up your eyes to the heavens..." (vs 15-19). He gave this warning because that's what all civilizations of people have done. Satan is no different today than then.

Now, let's come back here to Revelation and let's examine the seven churches, because when the mission of the seven churches has been fulfilled, that completes the 49th day. Yet, there is more to come. We're going to do a survey of the Churches of God. We are going to see how God views His Church, and what we need to understand is this: Not only is this a prophecy of the Churches that were then, but let's see what it says in Revelation 1: After seeing the vision that John saw, it shows:

- Christ in His power
- Christ in His spiritual form
- His face shining like the sun in full strength
- His eyes as flames of fire
- His feet as brass burning in a furnace
- He was clothed with a garment and a golden chest plate

Magnificent glory! Now, brethren, we are going to

receive the same kind of body at the resurrection. We need to understand how great the promises of God are. That will inspire us, and that will keep us diligent, and that will keep us yielding to God. Remember, we have to take, as Jesus said, 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' So we have to take every day

- in prayer
- in study
- in yieldedness to God
- to walk in His ways
- to walk in His Truth
- let His Spirit lead us and help us to cleanse our minds

as we have seen through the 'washing of the water of the Word' that we are converted and remain converted! The separation between the world and God's people is going to get wider and wider and wider and wider.

Revelation 1:17: "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead; but He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last, even the one Who is living; for I was dead, and behold, I am alive into the ages of eternity. Amen.... [the firstborn from the dead] ...And I have the keys of *the* grave and of death'" (vs 17-18). He never gave those to Peter.

Notice the command in v 19, because I've read that some people say, 'Well, God never commanded to write anything.' Yes, He did! Because of the confusion of men, God wanted it written. That's what we have here. That's why John and the elders with him—probably Mark and Philip and maybe even Andrew—were there to finalize the New Testament. God wanted it written.

Verse 19: "Write the things that you saw, and the things that are... [The seven churches were 'the things that are.']. ...and the things that shall take place hereafter." Going from the seven churches, expanding that out in prophecy down through time and then coming up to the events where God intervenes in Rev. 6. That intervention is going to be something! That will be spectacular! This world will be caught absolutely off guard! Totally flatfooted! And they won't know what to do, because Christ is not coming back with some sort of 'rapture'; no, He's coming back in power!

Let's look at these prophecies here, v 20: "The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands... [The *lampstands* must have been in a circle because He was standing in the middle of them. These *lampstands* were separate lampstands, not the menorah that is normally shown in the temple.] (here is the *mystery*):...*is this*: the seven stars are *the* angels of the seven churches; and the seven

lampstands that you saw are *the* seven churches.”

Now, let’s see how the Church started, and let’s see something that people let up on after they are in the Church—and it causes problems.

Ephesus:

Revelation 2:1: “To the angel of the Ephesian church, write: These things says He Who holds the seven stars in His right hand, Who walks in *the* midst of the seven golden lampstands [churches].” [Christ is in the midst of His Church with the power of His Holy Spirit. He is the Head of the Church.

Revelation 5:6—this is also important for us to understand: “Then I saw, and behold, before the throne and the four living creatures, and before the elders, *was* standing a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes...” What are the horns? *Christ is the Head of the Church* (Eph. 1:21). And out of the head of the Lamb comes seven horns and these have to be the seven churches. The seven churches then show us and give us the equivalent of the warning that Moses gave to the children of Israel back in Deut. 4.

Revelation 2:2: “I know your works... [we’re all going to be judged according to our works; and we have been created unto ‘good works’ through the power of the Holy Spirit. God will work with us, mold us, and build His character and put His Word in us, and grant us the very mind of Christ.] ...and your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear those who are evil; and *that* you did test those who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles, but are not, and did find them liars.”

That’s why we are always to ‘prove all things; hold fast to that which is good!’ That’s what we’ve been doing with the series we’ve been undertaking *Bible Answers to the Evangelicals*. Brethren, what I want you to know is this: The worst sin that the Church of God ever did was go to the Protestants and say, ‘How do you understand these Scriptures?’ And they fell right into the trap! The way we understand Scripture is to ‘prove all things.’ We are to test all of those who claim to be servants of God by the Scriptures. If they do not speak according to this Word—that’s what we judge it by; that’s why we have to know the New Testament forward and backward; and also know the Old Testament very well—because we have to judge and test. We have to understand what is happening. Satan likes to come around and try and put a hook in us, however he can do it, whatever little entrance.

“...you did test those who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles... [put in your margin 2-Cor. 11] ...but are not, and did find them liars and *that* you have borne *much* and have endured, and for

My name’s sake have labored and have not grown weary; nevertheless, I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love” (vs 2-4). This becomes very, very important for us to grasp and understand. In the Greek the word *first* comes from the word ‘protos’—which means *primary, first*. And what is the first commandment of love? ‘*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your being.*’ That’s what we have to maintain.

What happened when they left that? *They became involved in doing social things! Doing works!* Helping the poor, helping the homeless and forgetting God. You really can’t help the poor and the homeless and those other exterior works that are out there. You say, ‘we’re loving our neighbor as ourselves.’ That’s true! But you’ve got to love God first, ‘with all your heart, mind, soul and being.’ So they became pre-occupied with this, rather than pre-occupied with loving God and letting the Spirit of God dwell in them and lead them and motivate them.

Notice, there’s a penalty for going against God. Just like the children of Israel when they came into the ‘promised land.’ Remember what happened? *Joshua brought them in, they conquered the ‘promised land.’* But they left off fighting the way that God said to fight—what was their first sin? *They didn’t get rid of the Canaanite!* So God said, ‘Since you didn’t do what I said—in getting rid of the Canaanites—I’m going to let them be a thorn in your flesh.’ And sure enough, it was so! That’s just like the Ephesians here. They didn’t continue doing what God said.

What happened to the children of Israel because they were left in the land? When Joshua died and then all the elders that served the Lord in Joshua’s generation died, and a new generation arose. What happened? *They went after Baal and Ashtaroth*—didn’t they? They forgot their first love. And the new generation always thinks ‘we’re better, we’re smarter, we’re wiser, we have greater understanding.’ And after all, ‘these people are pretty nice people when you really get to know them.’ So how can these things be so wrong?

Here’s what God says, v 5: “Therefore, **remember from where you have fallen, and repent...**” This is why every single day, when we pray, we are to repent and ask God to cleanse our minds, to wash our minds, and remember: part of that prayer says that we are to ask God to ‘forgive us our sins AS we forgive those who sin against us.’ We need to keep that in mind.

Verse 6: “But this you have: that you hate the works of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate....” And the Nicolaitanes we’ll read about that here in one of the coming churches. They embraced the

works of the Nicolaitanes, which then was from the religion from Satan.] (We find this through every one of the churches): ...The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches....” (vs 6-7).

- Do you have an ear to hear?
- Are you willing to look at your life?
- Are you willing to see what God wants of you?
- *Yes, indeed!*

“...To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the tree of life that is in *the* midst of the paradise of God” (v 7). Every one of these we have to overcome! We are a work in process of being converted more and more, growing in grace and knowledge more and more, yielding ourselves to God

- in thought
- in heart
- in mind
- in soul
- in ability

—and everything like that, so that we can be led by the Holy Spirit of God. That’s one of the weaknesses, get so involved in doing things that you forget the love of God.

Smyrna:

Now, I think that there is some church somewhere which calls itself the Church of Smyrna, but I haven’t seen one myself personally. But no one wants to be the Church of Smyrna because you’re going to give your life in martyrdom. No one wants to choose this. Everyone wants to be a Philadelphian. No one wants to be a Sardisite (we’ll see that a little bit later).

“And to the angel of the church of *the* Smyrneans write: These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead but is alive. I know your works and tribulation and poverty... [we’re about ready to experience a lot of poverty, because all the wealth that we think that we have is going to be taken from us. There are things that are going to come financially—as I have pointed out, and they are coming. It’s like being above the earth and you are watching tsunami wave start and it sweeps around the world! It’s going to wipe out everything financial. We need to be ready! We’re going to face poverty! We’re going to face difficulties!] ... (but you are rich)... [If you are *rich in Christ*—remember, that’s what was wrong with the Laodiceans] ...and the blasphemy of those who declare themselves to be Jews... [‘Oh, we’re Christians!’] ...and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan” (vs 8-9).

Satan’s way! Satan’s church! Masquerading

for the real thing! Yes, they have miracles. Yes, they have answered prayers, too. Don’t you think that Satan likes to answer their prayers? Don’t you think that he likes to give them false miracles? *Yes, indeed!* They’re there. Didn’t Jesus warn of it? Didn’t Jesus say that there shall arise false prophets and false christs, that if it were possible they would deceive the elect? *Yes, He did!* We’re seeing some of that right now.

Here’s what Jesus says: “**Do not fear...** [We’re not to fear anything. We are to be strong in the Lord, courageous in the Lord; doing what God wants.] ...**Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer....** [God is going to deliver us. Put in your margin Psa. 91—that is the ‘protection psalm’ when troubles come—*and troubles are coming!*] ...Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days.... [We can look back in history and see the time when that took place.] ...Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life” (v 10).

That’s where our faith needs to reside—*in God!* Remember what Jesus said, ‘Don’t fear those who can kill the body, but cannot kill the life. But fear Him Who can kill the body and the life in Gehenna!’ So that’s Who we are to fear. Don’t fear anything that any man can do to you. On the other hand, we’ve got to be ‘wise as serpents and harmless as doves’—don’t we? So we understand and know what we’re doing, and know where we’re going, and how these things are coming down. Some of you are going to be put in prison and so forth.

Verse 11: “The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches....” This is to all the churches. This is not only those seven churches that were there in the first century A.D., but this a prophetic projection of the Churches of God down through history, and also a prophetic projection of the attitudes and problems that we have in our lives as we are living our Christian lives in the world. And regardless of where we are, there will be different degrees of these things coming into our lives. All of the tests, all of the difficulties—which people really don’t want to go through—are necessary for us to learn the complete spiritual character and quality that God wants us to have. Brethren, ***He is preparing us for eternal life!*** We are being prepared *to rule with Christ* forever! So with all of these things that God wants us to do is to get our minds off ourselves and our problems and on God and Jesus Christ.

- He’ll open the way!
- He’ll open the door!
- He’ll provide the way!

Now, the next two churches Pergamos and

Thyatira have more satanic infiltration in them than any of the other churches.

Pergamos:

Pergamos was where there was a giant temple to Zeus, one of the most magnificent structures of the ancient world. You can liken that very much to what Rome is like today, only magnify it considerably more. There was a church there. If you think we're bombarded with Satanic influences—through television and this society—think of what it was like then. And, yes, they had a lot of public pornography all carved everywhere, painted everywhere!

Notice what He says to the Church of Pergamos ^[transcriber's correction]. He wants them to understand that God is not going to take these things lightly. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write: These things says He Who has the sharp two-edged sword.... [the Word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing asunder the thoughts and the mind and the soul and the spirit to lead us to conversion.] ... 'I know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is; but you are holding fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells'" (vs 12-13).

What happens? *A lot of persecution comes upon people.* What happens when they are warn down from the false doctrines around them? What happens when people—in this world today—go to the counterfeit Christian churches in this world and say, 'How did you worship God? What do you believe about grace? What do you understand about law?' Everyone of those things they don't understand, they don't have a clue, really. But it affected them. And notice the things that they did. They had two major sins that they did:

1. eating thing sacrificed to idols
2. organizing in the way that those in Pergamos organized

'Let's have a hierarchy, let's get organized' and sooner or later, one man came to the top—and we know what the result of that is today—don't we? Even in the Church of God. *Yes, indeed!*

(go to the next track)

It's very important for us to understand the parallelism between the seven weeks of the harvest, as we find concerning counting toward Pentecost and the seven churches having to do with the work that God is doing through the churches. We know in Matt. 13 that it talks about the harvest at the end of the age. So, this is the *firstfruit harvest*. We are part of the firstfruits. In going through Rev. 2 & 3, we are seeing the problems and difficulties that we have

within the seven churches with attitudes, spiritual problems, physical problems and so forth—those things which will keep us away or out of the Kingdom of God.

- God loves us
- God cares for us
- God has called us
- God has given us His Spirit

So, He's going to lead us and correct us and help us so that we can attain to eternal life. But Satan the devil is out there trying to divert our attention, trying to get us to accept his ways and his interpretations—especially as pictured by the church in Pergamos, where Satan's throne was. Let's see what God says. Let's see what Christ says as the Head of the Church to those in Pergamos:

Verse 14: "But I have a few things against you because you have there *those* who hold the teaching of Balaam... [What is the 'teaching of Balaam'? *The teaching of Balaam is to get the Israelites to come over here and participate in these pagan religions that are Satan's religions, inspired by him.* And once they participate and they have a feast, they will see how wonderful that these people are. They will see what a great thing that this is and, yet, at the same time, we are getting them to sin against God. That was his teaching. Balaam could not curse the children of Israel, so he taught Balak to come and participate in these religious events; and 'we'll get them to sin that way, then God has to correct them.

"...who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.... [exactly what happened with the children of Israel when Aaron built the golden calf while Moses was receiving the instructions of the Ten Commandments and the final instructions concerning the Sabbath Day. If you can get them into idolatry, you get them into sin. And today, not only do we have religious idols around us, we have idols of things, idols of self, idols of other people.

Verse 15: "Moreover, you also have *those* who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." God hates a hierarchy where a man is put in charge *between* the people and God. That's exactly what the whole priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church is all about. So when the Churches of God set up a hierarchy in the same way—what happened? What was the end result of that when it came to its full production of fruit? There was one man who was God's apostle, 'only apostle on earth,' and he was told by his 'advisor' that he had the office very similar to the office of 'his holiness'—so called—the pope. What happened when they exercised that authority? *They went against Christ!*

They caused fear. They set the groundwork for false doctrine to come in.

Notice what Jesus says, and this is what happened to that church, the biggest Church of God in the history, in our time. Verse 16: “‘Repent! For if *you* do not *repent*, I will come to you quickly, and will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.’... [through the Word of God! If there’s one thing you don’t want, you don’t want Christ fighting against you because you have sinned so much that you now have joined the enemy! Just like the children of Israel did, and the children of Judah did. God had to raise the sword of the Assyrians against the ten tribes and the sword of Nebuchadnezzar and his armies against the children of Judah and carried them off into captivity. So there are many, many lessons for us here.

We need to repent of that. That’s why, brethren, you will hear me say—and this is the important thing—*it is your relationship between you and God the Father and Jesus Christ*, and those of us who are elders and ministers and teachers to teach you the true, pure Word of God so that *you can increase in the intensity and in the degree of your relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ*. They’re the Ones Who are going to give us eternal life. No man! No doctrine of men! No structure of men! ***It’s going to be God the Father and Jesus Christ!***

Notice the warning that is given here, v 17: “The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.... [When we go through all of these things, all of these seven churches which pictures the harvest up to the day of Pentecost, let’s see the things that we need to repent of and that we need to change.] ...To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the hidden manna; and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows except the one who receives *it*.”

Now, correction came to those in Pergamos [transcriber’s correction], the church was scattered. Now then, the church comes back again, weakened this time.

Thyatira:

I think it’s very interesting that the Seventh Day Adventists go back and point themselves to this church at Thyatira, that that’s where they originally came from. If you have not seen the DVD we have put out by the Seventh Day Adventists, *Israel of the Alps*, be sure and write for it or e-mail us or call us and we’ll send it to you. There are many similarities with the Seventh Day Adventists. All you have to do is compare the Truth of God with the doctrines of the Seventh Day Adventists and you will see that they have mixture very similar to what we’re going to read here with the Church of Thyatira.

Verse 18: “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things says the Son of God, He Who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet *are* like fine brass. I know your works, and love, and service, and faith, and your endurance, and your works; and the last *are* more than the first.... [When you see *Israel of the Alps* you will understand what they had to endure. You will understand the works that they had.] ...But I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants into committing fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols” (vs 18-20).

Now, Jezebel was the daughter of the priest of Baal. That is like the Roman Catholic Church today. The Waldensians did allow the Catholics come in and they compromised with them to hold back the persecution and death against them with the Roman Catholic Church; and with the ‘sacrifice of the mass’; and with Sabbath-keeping. Not all of them, but they were persecuted. They were worn down for almost 600 years. Tremendous thing that they went through. They ended up being seduced by them.

Verse 21: “And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, but she did not repent. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their works” (vs 21-22). God does not want us getting mixed up with the religions of this world that profess Christianity. They will lead us astray. Their doctrines are not of God, though they use parts of the Bible. What it will do, it will put us into a situation where then we are going against God.

Notice what happens; notice what Jesus says, v 23: “And I will kill her children with death... [If you kill someone, they’re dead—right? Does this mean the ‘unpardonable sin’?] ...I will kill her children with death... [Let’s think on that for a minute.] ...and all the churches shall know... [this is what we need to realize] ...that I am He Who searches *the* reins and hearts... [to try us; to test us; to see. Go back in the Old Testament and the ‘reins’ have to do with the connection between you and God; and the ‘reins’ have to do with how can God lead you with His Spirit; and how do you yield to God and yield to His Spirit. He says, ‘don’t be like a horse or a donkey that needs a bridle’—and some donkeys need a two-by-four right smack in the middle of the forehead to wake them up. We’re not to be like that!] ...and **I will give to each of you according to your works.**”

We need to understand: What are our works? This is the Sabbath to examine our works, to examine ourselves, to compare ourselves with the seven churches and see where we stand before God

the Father and Jesus Christ. That's why this is important for us to go through on this last day of the seventh week. The seven churches picture the seven weeks of harvest.

Verse 24: "But to you I say, and to *the* rest who *are* in Thyatira, **as many as do not have this doctrine**, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak... [I don't know what it means for brethren to get into the 'depths of Satan' but if they get into the 'depths of Satan' they are certainly going to commit the unpardonable sin—would you not conclude? *Yes, indeed!*] ...I will not cast upon you any other burden, but hold fast what you have until I come" (vs 24-25).

And again, here's the warning to overcome, and it's to all the churches. So, if you take all of these overcoming statements and put them together, you will see the full picture that Christ is giving to all of His churches. But notice what it says here:

Verse 26: "And to the one who overcomes, and keeps My works unto *the* end, I will give authority over the nations." We are going to rule the world! *That's why we have been called*, and we need to keep that in the forefront of our minds. The problems of the world are not going to be solved politically. The problems of the world are not going to be solved through the religious efforts of men in their false Christianity or other religions getting together with them. The only way they're going to be solved, brethren, is through those who are faithful to the end and attain to the first resurrection and we receive the power and authority as He's promised here, over the nations.

"And he shall shepherd them with an iron rod... [Going to have the authority of Christ] ...as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces; as I have also received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star [eternal life]. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vs 27-29).

This is a time of examining ourselves, and this is the time of seeing where we are with God, with our lives, with our Christian character, with growing and overcoming.

Sardis:

This is the most difficult one of all, and it's almost incredible how those who are in this attitude, it's awfully hard for them to get up enough life to really do what they need to do.

Revelation 3:1: "And to the angel of the church in Sardis, write: These things says He Who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works, *and* that you have a name as if you are alive, but are dead.... [That's quite an

indictment! They can repent, because Jesus says, 'Repent!' They can strengthen the few things that they have, because Jesus tells them to.] ...Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which are about to die. For I have not found your works complete before God" (vs 1-2).

- We need to make sure that our works are complete.
- We need to make sure that they're based on the Spirit of God.
- We need to make sure that we are led of the Spirit of God.

"Therefore, remember what you have received and heard, and **hold on to this, and repent**. Now then, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you shall by no means know what hour I will come upon you" (v 3). That doesn't mean at the end, because Christ can come upon us for judgment at any time. All we have to do is look out and read and see the history of the Churches of God and what God has done with them. It's so important for us to realize and understand that God has called us to eternal life and to rule the world; and that we be zealous with that, we go forward with that. We look to Jesus Christ and God the Father all the time. This is what it's all about.

"You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white because they are worthy. The one who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments; and I will not blot out his name from the book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" (vs 4-5). [So they are right on the verge of losing salvation—right? *Yes, indeed!* There are some Churches of God who have been called Sardis by those of other Churches of God. They may or may not be, but, I'll tell you this: In virtually every Church of God that I know of, you find every one of these seven attitudes:

- you find those who are nearly dead
- you find those who compromise doctrine
- you find those who have those that have the wrong church structure
- you find those who have lost their first love

There are people today who are being martyred for the name of Christ; standing for His name in many parts of the world. How views all of that we'll look at another time. But, I tell you what, in the modern nations of Israel today, we have not suffered any of the things that we look at here in the seven churches, except to be dead, to bring in false doctrine, and to become lukewarm! All of those are here! And just because we haven't lived in an era where we have to go and produce everything that we use—plant our own food, harvest our own food and things like

this—that doesn't mean that we don't have the same kind of problems that we find here in the seven churches; we do! So we need to examine ourselves.

Verse 6: “The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Philadelphia:

Here's the church everyone wants to be! I tell you what, almost everyone who has called themselves Philadelphians have not been Philadelphian. You judge the ones who fill this according to what it is spoken of concerning the Church of Philadelphia; and Philadelphia means *brotherly love*. But you will also see that there is a deep love of God with the Philadelphians so they can love the brethren. Whereas with the Church of Ephesus, they got so busy loving the brethren and doing physical things for people that they left off the first love of God. The truth is, you cannot really love the brethren unless you love God first. So let's see the message to the church at Philadelphia.

Verse 7: “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write: These things says the Holy One, the One Who *is* true; the One Who has the **key of David**... [understanding of the Word of God, and the understanding of the relationship between you and God—David was a man ‘after God's heart’] ...Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens.... [God has done that. That's for all the churches. He's opened and closed doors of opportunity and preaching the Gospel to every one of the seven churches.] (notice the difference here): ...I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one has the power to shut it... [When God opens the door, we need to walk through it in faith, not on our own strength; in Truth, not on our own ideas.] ...because you have a little strength, and **have kept My Word and have not denied My name**” (vs 7-8).

That says a lot there—doesn't it? *Keeping the Word of God!* Brethren, that's why we always stress it's the *full* Word of God, *all* the Word of God; not like it was how the evangelicals read one verse—that's their whole Bible. They're actually in the business of trying to save themselves, rather than relying on God.

Notice what's going to happen because of those who are faithful to God. We understand the conspiracy that's going on in the world. We understand who is behind the political and religious forces of this world—and we virtually know who many of them are. But I tell you one thing: ***Fighting the conspiracy now is not what God wants us to do.*** We need to stay out of the way! We need to understand what's coming. We need to understand why it's coming.

Notice, in the final analysis: “Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who proclaim themselves to be Jews [Christians] and are not, but do lie... [that's why we are to ‘prove all things’] ...—behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet... [pay homage to you] ...and to know that I have loved you.... [Why does Christ love the Philadelphians? Perhaps more than all the others? He loves all of them, but just like with the 12 apostles, there was John, ‘the apostle that Jesus loved.’] (So likewise, the Philadelphia church, here's why He loves them): ...Because you have kept the word of My patience...” (vs 9-10).

Always keeping the Word of God. Always looking to what the Scriptures say. That's what's important. Not getting our own ideas. Not getting carried off in our own vanity. Not getting swelled up in thinking that we're so important. Let God use the way He wants, and in the way He wants, and how He wants it. Always remember this: ***The entire ministry of Jesus Christ, God manifested in the flesh, was only three-and-a-half years long.*** It's not necessarily what you do, but the quality and the spirituality of what you do. That's what it's all talking about here.

“I also will keep you from the time of temptation which *is* about to come upon the whole world...” (v 10)—the coming *mark of the beast* and there are provision within the Obama-care bill to put a chip in everyone who comes under Obama-care. Remember that! I've given a sermon on it! It is there! So we are living in times that we need to really pay attention to. Can they push that out? *Possible!* Can they repeal it? *Possible!* But that depends on the *degree of repentance* of those of the children of physical Israel in America to do what is right. As I have mentioned, the first thing they need to do is ***get right with God*** as they understand it. And then they need to get back to the Constitution as much as possible, because that is the judgment that God is bringing upon us, because that's what we declared that we would do if God would make us a separate nation—which He did.

So is it possible to push it out? *Yes!* Will it be? *We don't know!* Also it depends upon what the brethren in the churches do.

- Do we really want to serve God?
 - Do we really want to love God?
 - Do we really want to preach the Gospel?
- For the elders and ministers do we:
- Feed the flock?

All of those things are there. God's judgment is always upon us all the time. If we have the right relationship with God—in prayer, study, attitude, yieldedness to Him and loving Him and loving Christ and loving each other—then the judgment is

going to be for good and blessing. The judgment is going to be for protection and watching over us and strengthening us. **But if not**, the judgment is going to be, again, for scattering. It's going to come again—you wait and see—it is going to happen!

“...come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly; hold fast that which you have so that no one may take away your crown.... [there are carnal-minded, satanic people out there wanting to take your crown. I call them ‘crown-snatchers.’ Don’t let anyone take your crown!] (notice what a fantastic blessing here): ...The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out any more; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him My new name*” (vs 10-12). Three names from God the Father and Jesus Christ and where we will be stationed, which will be in New Jerusalem. That’s what we need to look forward to, brethren.

“The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (v 13). So it’s to all the churches, brethren. All of us! We all need to take stock. And one of the things that Jesus said in John 10: ‘My sheep hear My voice!’ We need to hear the words of Christ.

Laodiceans:

We know about because that’s probably us. So, what we need to do is be repenting Laodiceans!

Verse 14: “And to the angel of the church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God. I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth. For you say, ‘I am rich, and have **become** wealthy... [We saw that in the Church—didn’t we? *The wealthiest church in the history of the Churches of God!* Have they been spewed out of the mouth of God? *Yes, indeed!* Where is it now? *No longer exists!* Who would have thought? When people get corrupt and they look to themselves, and they trust in their ways, and are ‘rich and increased with goods’ and look to the goods and say, ‘well, we must be blessed of God’] ...and have need of nothing’; and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (vs 14-16). And that means you can’t see the Truth of the Word of God of your own attitude and things like this. You’re really not clothed upon by God.

“I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire so that you may be rich; and white garments

so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see.... [the salve you need is the Word of God. The washing needs to come from the washing of the Word of God to cleanse the heart; to cleanse the mind. We need to be repenting!] ...As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent” (vs 18-19). Now, there may be some of you out there who still need to repent. We have a lot of people who repent and come back. We can help you if that’s your situation. But you need to really be zealous for God and you really need to ask God to come back into your life.

He says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock....

1. It’s the door of your mind.
2. It’s the door of the return of Christ to this world

...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” That means there are many who are in the Church who were really never quite converted and we also have this phenomena, too: We have re-baptized a good number of people so that they would receive the Spirit of God so Christ would come in them completely. If you’re in that category, you ask for our Baptism book so you can understand about your calling, you can understand about the truth of the Covenant of Baptism that you need to be in. We have many, many people that we’ve been able to help that way.

“...I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me” (v 20). A relationship with God through studying the Word of God, which is ‘eating’ the Word of God; through yielding to God in prayer and spirit—loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and being. That’s how we overcome being Laodiceans—and we can! Notice, the reward is great, because you’ve been through the whole gamut of everything, from the low to the high; from the false to the Truth; from lukewarm to zealous!

“To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne... [We’re going to judge] ...even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (vs 21-22).

Revelation 4 & 5 have to do with the preparation and the opening of the seven seals. The timing of these things we don’t know. The events we can pretty well discern. What we are dealing with now is the setting of the stage of the beginning of the return of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 6—We have the first four seals come very quickly:

- First seal: gathering of the false religion of the world—white horse
- Second seal: war—red horse
- Third seal: famine and starvation—black horse

Know for sure, the terrible events that happen, we are going to be subject to famine, starvation and death very quickly!

- Fourth seal: one-fourth of the earth is devastated with war, famine, killing, all of that.
- Fifth seal: martyrdom of the saints

—when the world comes after us because they will say, ‘you are responsible for all of this that is going on. If we just get rid of the Christians we will be able to solve our problems—just like all authoritarian dictatorships have. This is going to be a worldwide one. He’s going to have authority to make war with the saints. Therefore, we’ve got to be strong in the Lord and in everything that we do.

There’s going to come a time during the Tribulation—and we will see tomorrow that that is approximately a full two years into the Tribulation—that an event is going to take place such as never happened in the whole history of mankind. This event is going to be absolutely awesome! This marks the end of man against man. Now, it’s going to be God and His angels against Satan, men and the demons. This event is going to be an absolutely startling thing! The whole world will know it! The whole world will understand something great and awesome and mammoth is taking place.

Let’s see what that is and we’ll pick it up tomorrow right at this same point. This is right after the martyrdom of the saints: Revelation 6:12: And when He opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as *the hair of sackcloth*, and the moon became as blood... [we are going to see awesome and fearful sights. It says in Luke 21 that men are going to be dying of heart attacks for the things that are taking place. It says that the ocean waves are going roar! That’s talking about tsunami waves because of the earthquakes.] ...and the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its untimely figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind” (vs 12-13). That’s going to get everyone’s attention! That sets the stage for the next event of the sixth seal, and it’s going to startle the world, and they are going to believe that the invasion from outer-space is going to happen. Even though it says here that they understand it’s from God and the wrath of the Lamb, it will be phrased differently in their own words. This is an alien invasion from outer-space! It’s going to be a sight to behold.

Notice what this is going to be: “Then *the*

heaven departed like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.... [It involves everyone in the world] ...And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the powerful men, and every bondman, and every free *man* hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains... [trying to get away. What is this going to happen in the heavens? What are they going to see?] ...and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, ‘Fall on us, and hide us from *the* face of Him Who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb because the great day of His wrath has come, and who has the power to stand?’” (vs 14-17).

We’ll see how that’s going to appear. We’re going to understand that the return of Jesus Christ is not just a sudden thing and here He is. They’re going to see it coming for a great, long period of time before it actually happens.

You come back tomorrow for the Feast of Pentecost and we will see how this event takes place.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Deuteronomy 16:9-10
- 2) John 5:24
- 3) Deuteronomy 4:1-19
- 4) Revelation 1:17-20
- 5) Revelation 2:1
- 6) Revelation 5:6
- 7) Revelation 2:2-29
- 8) Revelation 3:1-22
- 9) Revelation 6:12-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 10
- Numbers 25
- Ephesians 1:21
- 2 Corinthians 11
- Psalm 91
- Matthew 13
- John 10
- Revelation 4, 5
- Luke 21

Also referenced:

- Sermon: *Bible Answers to Evangelicals*
- DVD: *Israel of the Alps* (put out by the 7th Day Adventists)
- Booklet: *Baptism*

The document taken from the *Christian Biblical Church of God* website at: www.cbcbg.org