

FOUNDATION MINISTRIES (UK)

Apostolic Ministry to the Body of Christ

EXPOSITORY & INSPIRATIONAL TEACHING & SERMON NOTES

Subject: - The Character of God

Study: - 936. I am Alpha and Omega

Bible Reading: - Revelation 1:1-20

Text: - Revelation 1:8 *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."*

We have here recorded for us by John the Apostle in the last book of the New Testament, being the book of Revelation, those hidden things of GOD given to Jesus Christ, who then gave it to His angel to show John, of which he is instructed to write down these things and to send to the seven Churches. Jesus reveals that He is the Alpha and Omega, in other words He that is from eternity to eternity, the Almighty God, the all-powerful Creator of the universe and the source of all knowledge and wisdom.

There are a further three references to this title, **I am Alpha and Omega**, in the book of Revelation, and these are;

- **Revelation 1:11** *"Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."*
- **Revelation 21:6** *"And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."*
- **Revelation 22:13** *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."*

I am Alpha and Omega the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, as is stated in the closing words of this prophecy, **Revelation 22:13** *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last,"* reveals to us that Jesus Christ is saying to the churches as, **I am Alpha and Omega**, as I am alpha the author the cause of all things; so I am as omega the end of all things; the destroyer as well as the establisher of all things, and **α** alpha is the first letter or the beginning of the Greek alphabet, as **ω** omega is the end or last letter.

Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is therefore the first and the last, and when speaking to His disciples about those events and tribulation of the last days before His return, He says, **Matthew 24:35** *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."*

The book of Revelation brings to us the judgement and destruction of this world along with its god, who is Satan, **2 Corinthians 4:4** *"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"*. The world of which Satan is god is that of wealth and greed, of which Jesus describes as serving Mammon, i.e. being riches, wealth etc. being anything in which a man confides and trusts, other than the one and only eternal and everlasting God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ, **Matthew 6:24** *"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."* Mammon is represented in the book of Revelation in the personage of the Harlot, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots which has corrupted the earth, **Revelation 17:3-6** *"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."* We read of the fall of Babylon the great and the judgement of God upon her, because she has corrupted nations, governments and

the merchants of the earth with her sorceries and they have committed fornication with her, in that they embraced her ways, her merchandise with abundance of delicacies, which have enslaved the peoples of the earth, **Revelation 18:1-5** "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Today and in our time, and before our very eyes, we are seeing the fall of Babylon the Great, with the collapse of the world's financial systems to which governments have no answers.

Further the book of Revelation brings to us the judgement and destruction of the beast and the false prophet which make up this tri-union by which Satan has maintained his power in the earth and these are cast into the lake of fire, **Revelation 19:19-20** "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone," along with those whose names are not written in the book of life and have received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image, they are judged, and the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works and cast into the lake of fire, **Revelation 20:10-15** "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire".

The book of Revelation brings to us also the new beginning when a new heaven and a new earth are revealed by God, when He makes all things new and all the pain and misery are passed away and death will be no more, **Revelation 21:1-7** "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

The title, **I am the Alpha and Omega**, I am from eternity to eternity, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, being how God announces Himself here to the seven churches in the book of Revelation, and this expression of His personage is not a new characteristic of His nature, for He is the eternal God that has always existed, and who owes His existence to none, and by whom all things exist, and when Moses asks God who shall I say to the Elders of Israel who has sent me when they ask, what shall I say unto them, **Exodus 3:13-15** "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM

hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."

The description by which God announces Himself as I AM - the Alpha and Omega, to the seven churches is because He needs them to know and understand that His standards do not change, the standards and morals of the world in which they find themselves as His witness continually change, yet He does not, for He is;

- ❑ self-existent having no dependence upon any other for He is self-existent and self-sufficient,
- ❑ eternal and unchangeable being always the same, yesterday to-day and for ever and will be what He will be and what He is,
- ❑ and faithful and true to all his promises, unchangeable in his word as well as in his nature, and not a man that he should lie.

God is the beginning and the end of all things, **Genesis 1:1** *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"*, for He is the Everlasting Father who gives the seed of life to all, **Isaiah 9:6** *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"*. He is the LORD God of the fathers of Israel, the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their children, He is the beginning of the nation of Israel, so He will be end, for all Israel will be saved, **Romans 11:25-27** *"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."*

We read in the book of Revelation of the servants of God being sealed in their forehead and the number of those sealed being 144,000, twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, **Revelation 7:3-4** *"Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."* The number twelve in the scriptures represents the Eternal Will and Purposes of God, for the twelfth letter in Hebrew Alpha-Bet, Lamed ל is majestic for it towers above all the other letters and from its position in the centre of the Hebrew Aleph- Bet and symbolises the King of Kings, the Supreme Ruler. Further it embraces the teaching of God's divine Will and Purposes to mankind, for the twelve apostles who being the foundation of the Church, were charged by Jesus Christ the Chief Cornerstone, to teach all nations, **Matthew 28:18-20** *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* and in teaching His Word we reveal His the Eternal Will and Purposes which have been settled in heaven before the beginning of creation, **Psalms 119:89** *"Lamed ל, For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven"*. It is God's Eternal Will and Purposes as already stated that all Israel shall be saved and the number of those sealed totalled 144,000, the one hundred and forty four thousand are symbolic of all Israel, their fullness or completeness, 12,000 x 12,000 = 144,000, confirming the words of Paul the Apostle to the Church in Rome when he speaks of all Israel shall be saved.

John opens his writing of the book of Revelation with a greeting to the seven churches which are in Asia, being the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, today this region is known as Western Turkey, **Revelation 1:4-5** *"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth."* John's greeting to these seven churches is with the grace and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, being Jesus Christ, and from the seven spirits which are before His throne. The seven spirits here are the representation of the very essence of God's being, His presence,

and Seven is symbolic of God's Spirit, the very essence of His being and presence, He who is Omnipotent (all-powerful), Omniscient (all-knowing), and Omnipresent (always present everywhere), just as He is and has always been, and will always be, as He cannot change. Nothing is missed by God's all-seeing eyes and His all-revealing Omnipresence in His Church. In the scriptures we find many examples;

- Naaman was instructed to dip seven times in the River Jordan by Elisha, in order that his leprosy might be healed, and his obedience brought the presence of God into the equation and he was healed on the seventh time he dipped into the water.
- The children of Israel in obedience to God's word encircled the fortified city of Jericho for seven days and on the seventh day as they blew the trumpets the walls came falling down and God's presence in all its fullness, is expressed by the figure seven, seventh day, seven times, seven priests with seven trumpets compassed the walls along with the children of Israel, the trumpets were blown on the seventh time and the walls came down.
- Delilah cut seven locks of Samson's hair and the abiding presence of God departed from him, and finding he was weak he was taken captive by the Philistines.

These seven churches are symbolic of His presence and represent the Body of Christ here on earth, His abiding presence and witness in an evil and perverse world. John continues his greeting to the seven churches which is from Jesus Christ who is;

- the faithful witness,
- the first begotten from the dead,
- the prince of the kings of the earth,
- He that loveth us and washed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priests

Revelation 1:5-6 "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

John being instructed to write in a book the things he has seen and the things which are and the things hereafter and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia. When John turns to see the voice which spoke to him, he sees seven golden candlestick with Jesus standing in their midst, **Revelation 1:11-13 "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."** We are told by John that the seven candlesticks are the seven Churches, **Revelation 1:20 "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."** As mentioned earlier the seven Churches represent the Body of Christ on this earth and the Son of man is seen in the midst of His Church, and Jesus Christ is head of the Church, His Body, **Colossians 1:15-19 "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;"** There is nothing unseen or hidden in the Body of Christ that our LORD God is not aware of, for He is in the midst and He is aware of its members and their misdeeds, deceit and iniquity.

John also saw the seven stars in the right hand of Jesus of which we are told are the seven angels of the seven Churches. **Revelation 1:20 "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."** The right hand is the place of authority and counsel, and we are being shown that it is Christ who is directing and counselling the ministry of the angels to the seven Churches,

therefore John is instructed by Christ to write unto the angels of the Church to make them aware of the situation within the Church over which they have been appointed.

The Angels of God are created beings and are dependent upon the LORD God for their instructions in order to carry out His will for His Church, **Hebrews 1:13-14** *"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"*

The angels are not able to see what is the state of the believers hearts in the Church, they can see the outward appearances and actions, and now you understand why Paul writes to the Church at Corinth about the women covering their heads when they pray or prophesy, **I Corinthians 11:10** *"For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels."* It was custom for women to cover their heads as a sign of submission to their husband and the reason being that the women's hair is given for their glory (beauty, that which brings them praise and adoration), **I Corinthians 11:15** *"But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."* The wife in covering her hair is showing that their heart is joined to and in submission to their husband. The married women by covering their heads avoid confusing the angels and show the angels who cannot read their hearts that their hearts are in submission when they pray or prophesy.

We clearly see the role of angels over God's people for when Daniel was praying in accordance with the word of God, in order to see the release of God's people from out of the captivity of Babylon as the completion of the seventy years of captivity, as spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, had now been accomplished. There is a battle in the heavenly by the angel of Israel against the powers of darkness ruling the Persian kingdom and Michael the archangel came and gave assistance to defeat the evil host, **Daniel 10:11-14** *"And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days."*

Revelation 1:4 *"John to the seven churches which are in Asia:* The Asia here mentioned was what is called Asia Minor and the seven Churches were those of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. They were the only Christian Churches then in Asia Minor as there were several others then in Phrygia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Pontus, and Cappadocia. Those seven named were those which lay nearest to the apostle John, and were more particularly under his care, although the message was sent to the Churches in general and throughout the whole Christian world. These seven are representative Churches being an eclectic and complex group which embody the chief spiritual characteristics of the Church, whether as faithful or unfaithful, in all ages.

Ephesus (Ephesus this was a city of Ionia, in Asia Minor, situated on the shore of the Aegean Sea, about fifty miles south of Smyrna.)

In the address to the church at Ephesus, **Revelation 2:1** *"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:"* there is reference is to the fact that He who speaks to them, holds the seven stars in his right hand, and walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, being the LORD Jesus Christ.

The Church at Ephesus which is intolerant to evil and false prophets is firstly commended in;

- ❑ That they are patient.
- ❑ They could not bear those who are evil and who preached the doctrine of the Nicolaitans who being a sect proclaiming licentious doctrine and lewd practices.
- ❑ They tried those who claim a mantle of authority in the Church, yet preach a corrupt doctrine.
- ❑ They laboured and had not fainted

They were rebuked because they had lost their first love, they had become complacent and if they did not repent God would remove their candlestick, i.e. church would close. Yet if they will listen to what is being said to them and overcome then, **Revelation 2:7** "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Smyrna (Now called also Izmir, was the largest and richest city of Asia Minor. It is situated about one hundred and eighty-three miles west by south of Constantinople, on the shore of the Aegean Sea).

In the address to the church at Smyrna, **Revelation 2:8** "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive:" there is reference to the fact that He who is speaking to them is the first and the last, who was dead and is alive, being the LORD Jesus Christ.

The Church at Smyrna is a church suffering persecution and in much tribulation yet are encouraged not to fear any of those things which they are to suffer;

- ❑ Being stripped probably of all their temporal possessions, because of their attachment to the Gospel.
- ❑ Spoken falsely against with blasphemy by those which say they are Jews, giving the outward religious pretence of Judaism yet they were of the synagogue of Satan.
- ❑ They were cast into prison and they might stand trial and be falsely accused.
- ❑ But they rich are in faith and heirs of the kingdom of Christ.

They are encouraged to be faithful unto death and they will receive the crown of life, **Revelation 2:10-11** "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Pergamos (Now called Pergamo and Bergamo, the farthest north of the Seven Churches, a city once the capital of the kingdom of Pergamos, which was great and flourishing when John wrote)

In the address to the church at Pergamos, Jesus reveals himself as he who has the sharp sword with two edges, **Revelation 2:12** "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write: These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;" representing the power of His word which is sharper than a two-edged sword.

The Church at Pergamos found itself in a city where paganism was rampant and there was Caesar-worship, sadly there had been the martyrdom of Antipas the faithful witness of Jesus Christ, making Pergamum indeed a very throne of Satan. They suffered tremendous occult opposition to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ for it was here that;

- ❑ Satan dwelt and a principle area of his rule, for here was his seat of authority, **Revelation 2:13** "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is:"
- ❑ There were those who held to the doctrine of Balaam- being tempters, fornication and idol-meats;
- ❑ Held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans who being a sect proclaiming licentious doctrine and lewd practices.

The church is counselled to repent as there were those who had become tainted by occult practices and the promises to them that overcome is to eat of the hidden manna and a new name written, the old person and there sin gone forever, **Revelation 2:16-17** "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Thyatira (A Macedonian colony bordering upon Mysia on the north and Lydia on the south, and is about fifty miles from Pergamos. It appears to have been the Papal Church in the first half of the middle ages; like "Jezebel," keen about its so-called sacrifice of the mass, and slaying the prophets and witnesses of God.)

In the address to the church at Thyatira, the LORD Jesus Christ through his servant speaks to them of His consuming fire, for His eyes will search out those responsible for the wickedness seen in the church and with His feet of Brass He will break into pieces those who have dishonoured His name, **Revelation 2:18** "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; & Revelation 2:27 "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels

of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."

The church is firstly praised for its love, service, faith and works which had grown greatly in recent times, **Revelation 2:19** "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." Yet sadly there were those amongst them in the fellowship, as Jude says in his epistle, that were spots on their love feast and clouds without water, they were intent on evil and the church had allowed them;

- ❑ To bring occult teachings into its midst which brought great depths of wickedness such as the doctrine of that woman Jezebel, to teaching that fornication was acceptable, as was eating things sacrifice to idols, therefore many had known the depths of Satan. Such people are unrepentance as was Esau concerning his manner of life although he wept tears, yet he found not place of repentant for there was no Godly sorrow in his heart, **Revelation 2:21** "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."

Jesus says through his servant John that He will put no other burden upon them and that which you have to hold fast till I come, **Revelation 2:24-26** "as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:"

Sardis (Sardis was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, one of the provinces of Asia Minor, a town about forty miles east from Smyrna)

In the address to the church at Sardis, the LORD Jesus Christ speaks as He that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars, **Revelation 3:1** "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Jesus warns that He knows their works for they are but a Christian Church in name only, therefore warns them to be watchful for they were a church sliding into decline and death as it appears that they did not faithfully confess Christ, **Revelation 3:2** "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

- ❑ They are called to remember how they had received and heard the gospel and to hold fast and to be vigilant and watch.
- ❑ A remnant in the Church had been faithful and not soiled their garments, **Revelation 3:4** "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."

The promise to those who are faithful is that they will be clothed in white garments and their names will not be blotted out of the book of life, **Revelation 3:5-6** "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Philadelphia (Philadelphia being some twenty-eight miles south-east of Sardis, in Lydia, in wine-growing district with Bacchus as the chief deity, the chief opposition to the faithful little church is from the Jews).

In the address to the Church at Philadelphia, Jesus speaks of Himself as He that is Holy and has the keys of David, **Revelation 3:7** "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;" Jesus encourages them in that He knows their works and faithfulness and therefore has left before them an open door for they had little resources of themselves, **Revelation 3:8** "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

- ❑ They are told that they who opposed them will be brought bow at their feet in submission, **Revelation 3:9** "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."
- ❑ Because they have kept the word of God Jesus assures them that he will keep them, **Revelation 3:10-11** "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation,

which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

The promise to them that overcome is that they will be made a pillar in God's temple, in other words they will occupy a place of importance, **Revelation 3:12-13** "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Laodicea (A town of Phrygia on the river Lycus, Forty miles south-east of Philadelphia and some forty miles east of Ephesus, and seat of large manufacturing and banking operations, especially of woollen carpets and clothing and seat of a medical school).

It is the last of the seven churches to be addressed and in the address to the Church at Laodicea, Jesus refers to Himself as the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of creation, **Revelation 3:14** "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God:" Here was a Church which had not been faithful in its witness and was indifferent and appeared to roll over and compromise itself with the doctrines of man and it would appear that the issue of creation was a point of debate. Because of their lack of fervour in defence of God's Word, they were lukewarm and passive because they gave in to political correctness of the day, being unprepared to stand for God's truth, and compromise themselves for material wealth, **Revelation 3:15-17** "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:"

They are counselled to;

- ❑ Invest themselves in God's Word, which is more to be desired than Gold, **Psalm 19:10** "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold:"
- ❑ To anoint their eyes and see their nakedness and shame and repent.
- ❑ Open the door of their hearts to Him that He might share with them.

The promise is that if they will do these things then they will sit with Him in His throne, **Revelation 3:20-22** "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

We need to have an ear and hear what God is saying to the Churches in these final days of time.

Prepared by Pastor Colin Wilkinson