

The Book of Revelation (Part 2 – The Seven Assemblies)

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1. Introduction

There are many, many interesting questions and topics associated with the Seven Assemblies. Two questions that might be at the top of the list are: why seven assemblies and who are the messengers depicted as seven stars? The answers to these questions are both very complex and yet, very straightforward. It is unfortunate that in this day and age, such questions cannot be answered without extensive study; but as a result of the study, overall knowledge of the Bible is increased and this in turn adds to the pool of information on which answers are based. When an answer is found, it is invariably simple and always consistent with the theme of the Bible.

This paper attempts to reveal some of the facts and information hidden in the letters to the seven assemblies. It is not possible to cover every aspect of the letters, but hopefully sufficient information is provided for you to do some of the study.

Of necessity, the material in this paper summarises a considerable amount of work and hence the topics are covered only briefly – much of the detail has been omitted. The topics have been arranged in the following order:

- a. Several important basics are reviewed: the difference between the terms *church* and *assembly*, the racial mix of the population in the wilderness and, the terms and conditions for occupancy of Palestine. These topics have to be fully comprehended before Revelation can even begin to become clear.
- b. The basis of having seven letters and assemblies rather than 12 letters and assemblies is explained.
- c. The principles of how to read time by God's clock are explained.
- d. The identity of the messengers and assemblies is revealed in terms of the foregoing topics.
- e. Some significant features of the seven letters are highlighted.

1.1. Milk Versus Meat

A proper study of the Bible and of Revelation in particular is greatly impeded by our normal religious education. Man's religions have no perception of the Bible and its central theme – Bullinger goes so far as to say that all man's religions are corruptions of the truth (Companion Bible, Appendix 42 ^(A)). All religious interpretations are based on the conviction that:

- a. The Greek word *ekklesia* means "the Church"
- b. "The Church" has replaced Israel
- c. "The Church" is the inheritor of all God's promises and all men are potentially eligible to be members of the Kingdom of God.

The Hebrew and Greek Scriptures do not support such views. The true theme of the Bible and the proof of its veracity constitute the only milk on which our spirits can grow.

As newborn babes, (you should) desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. 1Pet 2:2.

I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 1Cor 3:2.

For when by this time ye ought to be teachers, ye (still) have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God: and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who through having their senses exercised can discriminate between good and evil. Heb 5:12-14.

The topics presented in this paper are at odds with popular religious views.

1.1.1. Churches versus Assemblies

The English word *church* owes its origin to the Greek word *kuriakos* which literally means pertaining or belonging to the Lord. This word was borrowed by the Gothic nations and became the German *kirche*, the Anglo-Saxon *cyrise*, the Dutch *kerke*, the Scottish *kirk* and eventually the English *church* (Finlay ^(B)). *Ekklesia* was translated *congregation* by Tyndale, Coverdale and Whittingham but in 1560, *church* was used for the first time and in 1570, *church* appeared in the Great Bible.

The term *ekklesia* is the combination of two Greek words, *ek* – out of, or from, and *klesis* – to call. *Ekklesia* simply means an assembly: any assembly of people who are *called out* from other peoples and from which all aliens and slaves have been excluded (see Ellicott's comments on Matt 16:18 ^(C)). Hence it is used of the whole nation of Israel as distinct from other nations. For those who claim that trying to limit *ekklesia* to Israel is a biased view, please read Dr. E.W. Bullinger, D.D. ^(D), from whom these notes are summarised.

The Greek word *Ekklesia* occurs 75 times in the Septuagint Translation of the Old Covenant; it is used 70 times to translate the Hebrew word *cahal*, from which we have our English word, call. *Cahal* means *to call together, to assemble or gather together*, and is used of any *assembly* gathered together for any purpose. *Cahal* occurs 123 times in the Hebrew text, and is rendered:

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Congregation, | 86 times |
| Assembly, | 17 |
| Company, | 17 |
| Multitude, | 3. |

But nowhere in the AV translation of the Old Covenant is it rendered *church* (Strong lists 160 occurrences of *cahal* which covers all its forms).

Bullinger states that *cahal* is used of worshippers; those *called out* from Israel and assembled before the Tabernacle and Temple and in this sense is usually rendered *congregation* (however he omits any reference to the *mixed multitude*, which we will discuss in the next section). He also states that when Jesus said, *Upon this rock will I build my ekklesia* (Matt 16:18), Jesus did not use the word in any narrow sense but in the older and larger sense found in the Hebrew, which would embrace *the whole assembly* of His People. According to Bullinger, the word *ekklesia* took on its exclusive application for the church only as a result of the events in Acts 28:25,26, where, he claims, the Kingdom was rejected by the Dispersion. This is the basis of the claim that the church has taken over the promises from Israel ¹.

1 Paul was speaking to Judeans in Rome (Acts 28:17). Bullinger's reference ignores the fact that in verses 26 and 27, Paul is quoting Isa 6:9,10 and he does not finish speaking until verse 28. Verses 26-28 read: *Go to this people and say, You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never* Footnote continues overleaf ...

But there is more to Matt 16:18 that Bullinger does not mention. When Jesus draws His disciples' attention to the Rock, He is referring to the forgotten Rock that formed Israel (Deut 32:18) and identifying Himself as the Prophet, Priest and King whom God promised to Israel at the first assembly in Sinai (Deut 16:18,19, Ps 110:4, Zech 6:12,13). He declares emphatically that upon that Rock (that is, Himself as God their Saviour) He would establish His *ekklesia* (His called-out Ones). According to God's Law, Israel could be redeemed from death only by a Kinsman-Redeemer, so if Jesus is the Kinsman-Redeemer of Israel and He is going to build His *ekklesia* on the fact that He is the one that formed Israel, where does that leave Bullinger and the church's claims to Israel's promises?

1.1.2. The Mixed Multitude

The early occurrences of the Hebrew word *cahal* in association with the Exodus are most instructive. When the Israelites were in Egypt their camp contained other peoples, besides Israelites, and these people formed the mixed multitude that left Egypt with Israel (Ex 12:38). In Ex 12:3 Moses instigated the Passover and he addressed the whole encampment which was called the *edah* – Israelites and the mixed multitude. But in verse 6, he commanded that only the *cahal* (called out ones) of the *edah* of Israel were to kill Passover Lambs. As the Exodus had not physically begun at this point in time, it cannot be claimed that *cahal* was applicable only to those that came out of Egypt ².

Some other examples are:

- a. In Ex 16:1-3, the *edah* were murmuring against Moses and Aaron and accusing Moses of leading the whole *cahal* to starvation in the Wilderness. Subsequently the whole *edah* was given quails to eat (verse 13).
- b. In Num 8:9, the whole *edah* was to be assembled, but only the *cahal* were to place their hands on the Levites.
- c. In Num 10:2, trumpets were used to notify the people that they were about to move camp, hence the *edah* would hear the trumpets, but only the *cahal* were required to assemble before the tabernacle to receive instructions concerning the move.

The population of Judea at the time of Jesus also contained a mixed multitude.

perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing and their eyes they have closed; lest they should perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn for me to heal them. Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles (nations); they will listen, hear and understand. The last sentence hardly supports Bullinger's claims that the Dispersion rejected the Kingdom and that it was passed to the Church – when was a church ever a nation? When did a church ever listen to anyone outside of itself?

- 2 The process of "calling out" the Israelites began when God called Abram out of Chaldea; it continued with the changes of Abram's and Jacob's names (the latter excluded Esau) and it was completed when Moses was told to announce the terms of that calling-out to Israel. Those terms became the Articles of the First Covenant.

1.1.3. Terms and Conditions of the Old Covenant

When Israel was told (Ex 19:4-8) what God intended for them and that they were to obey the Law, the people answered *everything the Lord has said, we will do*. This was their first love. Then they proceeded to murmur against God and, amongst other things, they made the Golden Calf. All of their shortcomings are summarised in the early chapters of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy was spoken to the people in the Plains of Moab, on the eastern side of the Jordan. Deut 1:21 recounts the events leading up to their reluctance to enter the Promised Land for fear of the Amorites. In verse 35, God condemns them for their disbelief, saying, *not one of these men of this evil generation will see the good land* and they were told to turn back to the wilderness. (Notice that those too young to know the difference between right and wrong were not excluded from entering the land at the appointed time.) In response to their punishment, the people instantly recognised they had sinned and decided to go and fight the Amorites in accordance with God's original directive. In verse 42 they were warned *go not up, neither fight, for I am not among you, lest ye be smitten before your enemies*. But again the people would not listen and went off to fight anyway. When they had been soundly beaten, verse 45, says, *and ye returned and wept before the Lord; but the Lord would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you* (that is, He would neither listen nor take any notice of them). In the words of Rev 2:5, their lamp stand was moved out of its place. But there is more to be gained from Deuteronomy that is relevant to the 7 Letters.

In Deut 4:1, Moses said *hearken* (pay strict attention) *O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that you may live and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth to you*. They are warned not to add to nor take away from the Laws that are given to them.

In verses 9 and 10, they are warned to *take heed to thyself* (be on your guard) *and keep thy soul diligently* (stay awake on our spirit-side) *lest thou forget the things which thy eyes have seen* (the miracles that God has performed) *and lest they depart from thy heart* (you cease willingly doing them) *all the days of thy life; but teach them to thy sons and thy sons' sons* (make them known to your children and grandchildren) *especially that day thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb ...*

Through Chapter 4, Moses is prophesying their future. He calls heaven and earth to bear witness that they have been told they will corrupt themselves and will perish out of the land. But, he says, if they seek the Lord, they will find Him and in verses 29-31, *when you seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation and all these things* (described in the previous verses) *are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God and shall be obedient unto His voice ... He will not forsake thee neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He sware unto them*.

The Law is presented in Chapters 5 through 28, but there are some interesting bits along the way that must not be overlooked.

In Deut 9:6, Moses reminds the people that they gain possession of the land not because of any righteousness they possess, because they are a stiff-necked people. Moses reminds them again that they stirred the anger of the Lord in the desert and that from the day they left Egypt they have been a rebellious people. Here we see the great difference in emphasis between the Old and the New Covenant. The Old Covenant had its major emphasis on the nation. The New Covenant has its emphasis on the individual within the nation; the individuals gain eternal life through their belief (as demonstrated by their actions).

From Deut 12:29 to the end of Chapter 13, Moses tells Israel what they are to do with respect to those who try to lead them after false gods. The injunction is clear and precise – do not try to understand how other peoples worship their gods. Is it not strange that we warn our children not to corrupt their bodies with drugs of addiction, but we do not warn our children about corrupting their minds with alien religions? In fact, we openly encourage them!

In Chapter 28, Moses tells the people that if they obey God, 7 types of blessings (28:1, 3 (2), 4, 5, 6(2)) will come their way and their enemies will flee 7 ways before them (verse 7). From verse 15, Moses presents 7 curses for not obeying God (28:16 (2), 17, 18, 19 (2), 20) and tells them they will flee from their enemies 7 ways.

Chapter 29 starts, *these are the words of the covenant* – in effect, the terms and conditions of the covenant. This covenant concerned their occupancy of the Promised Land. All the blessings and cursings associated with the covenant related to the peoples' physical lives. In Chapter 30 Moses tells the people again that when they have experienced all these blessings and cursings and they return to the Lord and listen to His voice, He will restore their fortune and gather them from among the peoples where He has scattered them.

In Chapter 32 Moses presents his song – the prophecy of the next 4000 years. Revelation presents the finale – the fulfilment of the song. This is why the song is referenced in Revelation.

1.2. Seven Versus Twelve

If 12 tribed Israel is so central to the Bible, why does Revelation speak of seven assemblies rather than 12 assemblies? If Israelites were already established in places, such as those mentioned in Acts 2:9-11, why are none of the letters in Revelation addressed to Media, Parthia, Egypt, Libya or even to Rome? The answers to these questions are derived from two sources: the significance of the number, seven (and how it is used in Revelation) and God's "clock" which shows the *signs and seasons*. But before we discuss these two aspects, it is worth noting the political situation into which Revelation was delivered.

As a result of the Apostolic missions, Acts 19:10 states that all who dwelt in Asia (Minor) had heard the word of the Lord Jesus Anointed, both Judeans and Greeks. By the time Revelation was written, all the Apostles (except John) were dead, Jerusalem had been destroyed and the people of Judea had been sold or deported to countries all around the Mediterranean Sea. As far as Israelites were concerned, the seven cities mentioned in Revelation were still at the forefront of education and religious instruction. The whole area was to remain one of the most politically stable regions until the Islamic invasions³. However, the most significant point is that at the time Revelation was written, a whole generation had passed away since the Resurrection and there was little to encourage anyone to believe that all that had happened then was anything more than a spectacular moment in history. At this crucial time, the only living person with impeccable credentials, the last living Apostle, wrote a document that contained unmistakable and irrefutable proof that the promises made by the prophets and by Jesus were still valid and still applicable and were still directed squarely at Israel. These points will be expanded in the remainder of this paper.

3 Prior to the fall of Constantinople, there were few Greek scholars anywhere west of Rome. With the Islamic invasion, refugees from Asia Minor brought Greek and Greek manuscripts to Europe. The first Greek texts began to appear in Europe in the 16th Century. The work of translating the Greek texts reached its highest standard in the 19th Century – just as Israel was emerging from its 2520 years of punishment (Ellicott, Volume 6 ^(C)). Until this time, all the English versions of the Bible had been based primarily on the Latin Vulgate – this is why there are so many translation errors in the AV.

From about this time, Israel was in the process of re-gathering as a nation in the Isles of the Sea. But as part of the process of coming together, successive waves of Israelites who invaded the Isles burnt and destroyed everything in their path. The result was that the infrastructure of society and the centres of learning were repeatedly built up and destroyed. Romans, Angles, Saxons and Normans all inflicted the same kind of destruction – not to mention the Roman Catholic monks who burnt anything that did not come from Rome itself. By this means any reasonable and systematic knowledge from earlier times was obliterated and/or hopelessly confused beyond recognition. Consequently, Israel completely lost its identity. The magnitude of what has been lost can be appreciated after reading the remarks in the *Commentaries of Julius Caesar, Volume IV* – Caesar said he was amazed at the number of populous cities, the architecture, universities of learning, the numerical population of England and particularly at their religion with its belief in the immortality of the soul.

1.2.1. The Symbolism of Seven

The Hebrew word for seven is *shebah* and it means seven. It is used most commonly as a cardinal number. What makes the word more interesting are the contexts in which God uses it.

The first occurrence is in Gen 2:2,3 where we are told that the Elohim desisted from their work of the previous 6 days and sanctified (set aside for sacred use) the 7th day. From that point on, we find seven is used over and over in association with the concept of separation⁴. The following examples can be added to those listed in the first paper in this series^(E):

- a. God had set apart the clean beasts that were fit for human consumption. Noah was told to take the clean beasts by sevens but only two of the unclean beasts.
- b. The Passover was a part of a period of seven days that were separated from all the other days of the year by the eating of unleavened bread.
- c. Aaron and succeeding High Priests were consecrated for seven days to mark their separation to the service of God.
- d. God cast seven nations out of Palestine to mark that the land was separated for His nation of Israel.
- e. The period of harvesting was marked by the Feast of Seven Weeks and this was followed by the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days. These periods were separated for rejoicing and remembrance that Israel had been captive in Egypt.
- f. Israel was told that if they kept the laws and statutes, their enemies would flee before them seven ways. If Israel did not keep the laws, they would be smitten and flee from their enemies seven ways and be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.
- g. Every 7th day was a sabbath. The 7th month of every year was a sacred month. Every seventh year was a sabbatical year. After 7 times 7 years, the Jubilee year was held (the first year of the next 49 year period). The Feast of the Passover, with the Feast of Unleavened Bread began 14 days after the beginning of the first month and lasted 7 days. The 7th month contained the Feast of Trumpets on the first day, the Fast of Atonement on the tenth day and the Feast of Tabernacles from the 15th to 21st days. There were 7 days of Holy Convocation – 2 at the Passover, 1 at Pentecost, 1 at the Feast of Trumpets, 1 at the Day of Atonement, 1 at the Feast of Tabernacles and 1 on the following day (the 8th day)^(F).

4 Seven is also associated with covenants and oaths – Gen 21:27,28. Hence the Hebrew word *to swear* is derived from *shebah*. This aspect of seven is not included in the discussion.

Seven is used in a similar special way in the New Covenant. When Jesus fed the 4000 men, He gave them seven loaves and a few fishes and the disciples collected seven baskets of *the abounding fragments* ⁵.

Therefore, the symbolism of seven, according to its context, is that it stands for things that are separated to God.

1.3. God's Great Clock

This section will try to summarise a little of the background knowledge that relates to the manner by which progress of time is revealed in God's word. It is a discussion that touches on geometry and the meaning of *kairos* versus *chronos*.

The most fundamental form of mathematics is geometry. Everything that is circular is fundamentally and universally subdivided into 360 degrees. The Sun's orbit across the background constellations is circular and is divided into 360 degrees. While there is no absolute proof, there is good reason to think that prior to the Flood, the calendar year was of 360 days duration. If the year was exactly 360 days in duration, the Sun would return to the same point relative to the fixed stars and we could divide the year into 12 months of exactly 30 days duration each. Furthermore, the Sun's orbit across the background constellations could be divided into 12 corresponding divisions of 30 degrees each.

Relative to the seasons of the year, we are used to the calendar year beginning at the same time – in the middle of summer, (in the Southern Hemisphere), but relative to the fixed stars, this is not so. Our Solar year is determined by the time it takes for the Sun to return to the same equinoctial point in its orbit. But the equinoctial point, relative to the very distant or *fixed* stars is not in exactly the same place each year – it moves backwards by approximately 1 degree every 71 years; in fact it will take approximately 25,000 years before it returns to exactly the same place, relative to the fixed stars. Hence each Solar Year starts a little bit further behind relative to the previous year and after 2000 years it will have moved back through one whole sign of the Zodiac. This annual regression is called the *Precession of the Equinoxes* and, as we shall see, it is an important factor in understanding God's Great Clock and we will return to this point later.

5 Jesus fed the crowds on two separate occasions (5000 – Matt 14, Mark 6, Luke 9 and John 6; 4000 – Matt 15 and Mark 8). The clue to understanding these events is in Mat 16:9-12 (where the loaves are seen to refer to the doctrine of Jesus, that is the word of God) and John 6:12 (where He tells the Disciples to gather all the broken off pieces *so that not anything (worth account) is lost*). The 5000 men represent the people of God (5 being the number of the Spirit of God). The two fishes are also the people of God, which had been divided into two parts, "official" Israel in Judea and the cast-off Israel of the Dispersion. The 5 loaves are the words of God being fed to the spirits of these people. *And they (the Disciples) lift up 12 baskets full of the abounding broken off pieces* – that is, as a result of hearing the words of God and responding to them, the 12 tribes are lifted or raised up into covenant relationship with God once again. The 4000 men represent the peoples of the nations of the earth. The *few diminutive fishes* (a different word from that used in the feeding of the 5000) represent Israel as the scattered few amongst all the peoples of the Earth. The 7 loaves are the words of God that have been **separated** for His people (that is, delivered only by Israel's prophets and contained in Israel's Law) that the Disciples spread through the nations (represented as the sea elsewhere) where Israel has been scattered. *And they (the Disciples) lift up 7 baskets full of the abounding broken off pieces* – that is, despite the whole earth hearing God's word, only the separated people of God respond and are lifted up out of the nations – like fishes from the sea – where they have been scattered. Jesus told the Apostles in Matt 16:9-11 that if they did not recognise the significance of the numbers, they would have trouble comprehending the whole purpose of His coming. It was only after the incident of Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10) that the Disciples finally realised the full import of these miracles.

1.3.1. Astronomical Symbols

Before we go any further, try this little quiz. In the following table, write down who or what you think is identified by each phrase.

| | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|---|
| This one cometh to rule | = | The branch | = |
| The king | = | Who bruises | = |
| The son who cometh | = | Who shall come down | = |
| The price which is deficient | = | The price of the conflict | = |
| The holy altar | = | A beast | = |
| A royal crown | = | The shining | = |
| The conflict | = | The attack of the enemy | = |
| The wounding of him that cometh | = | The perverse | = |
| The accursed | = | The reptile | = |
| The serpent enfolding | = | The serpent held | = |
| The head of him who holds | = | Treading underfoot | = |
| The head of him who bruises | = | Contending | = |
| The sin offering | = | An eagle | = |
| The one who rules, subdues and governs | = | | |

Does it surprise you that these are the English translations of Hebrew and Aramaic words? Does it surprise you that these are the ancient Hebrew and Aramaic names of just a few of the stars in the sky? Does it also surprise you that the Bible refers to several of the stars in the sky? For example:

Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and seaeth up the stars. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, (Hebrew: aish = the Great Bear or Ursa Major; R.V. = the Bear), Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. Job 9:7-9.

Canst thou bind (control) the sweet influences (the orbits) of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth (the Zodiac) in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus⁶ with his (Hebrew = her) sons? Job 38:31,32.

Seek him that maketh the seven stars (the Pleiades) and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name: Amos 5:8.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day (the stars) uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the

6 The Sconcinco translation refers this to Aldebaran and the 6 smaller stars of the Hyades in the sign of Taurus, rather than Ursa Major in the sign of Cancer. Either way, the 7 stars in Ursa Major are referred to as the Seven Brothers and the ancient Jewish commentators interpreted *aish* as referring to the 7 stars of Ursa Major. The names of other stars in Ursa Major are: *the assembled together, the flock, purchased, numbered, she goat, separated, protected, small, lamb, daughters of the assembly, sheepfold, many assembled*. So, in addition to the 7 stars in the Hyades and the 7 stars in Ursa Major, we also have the 7 stars that form the Pleiades and all three star clusters have highly significant names.

Three of the verses quoted above also refer to Orion which is associated with the sign of Taurus. It is the most brilliant of all the constellations and is visible to all the habitable world. Names of the stars in Orion are: *the coming branch, dividing, the foot that crusheth, treading on, quickly coming, swiftly destroying, the wounded one, bruised, who bruises who breaks*. The hilt of his sword is in the form of the head and body of a lamb and in his hand is the head and skin of a roaring lion. Flowing from Orion's feet is a river (the constellation of Eridanus) which tradition has always regarded as a river of fire (that is, a river of wrath) and has the star names *the going forth, mouth, bent down, the after part of the river*. To complete the constellations in Taurus we have Auriga, (The Shepherd) which has the star names *a shepherd, a she goat (held in his arms), chain of the goats, a flock of goats, wounded or slain, wounded in the foot*.

earth, and their words (names) to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. Ps 19:1-6.

The reference to the Sun going forth and his circuit of the heavens is the same as the reference to Mazzaroth – it refers to the passage of the Sun through the signs of the Zodiac.

The term *Zodiac* is familiar to most of us only because of Astrology but this aspect is not relevant to the Bible. *Zodiac* is from the Greek *zodiakos* which in turn is derived from a primitive root through the Hebrew *sodi*, which in Sanscrit means a way and it denotes a way or step and is used of the way or path in which the Sun appears to move against the stars in the course of the year ^(G). There are 12 steps or signs in the Bible Zodiac, called *the stars* in Gen 37:9, and these mark the steps in God's Clock. A person looking up to the sky at the same time every night will see a different sign overhead during each 12 months of the year.

The names assigned to individual stars within groups of stars in each portion of the sky served to identify or conjure up the pictures which identify each sign – not the other way around. The idea that a group of stars suggests a picture is a modern invention that is used to embrace all the stars in a region of the sky. This is not the ancient method.

Given that God named and numbered the stars in the heavens (Ps 147:4) and saw fit to make reference to some of the constellations and stars, perhaps we should pay more attention to those ancient Hebrew and Aramaic names. For example, the star named Arcturus, which is used incorrectly in the AV verses quoted earlier, is in the constellation of Bootes. The names of other stars in Bootes mean: *the branch, treading underfoot, coming forth as an arrow, the preserver, guarding, who separates, who bruises*. The constellation is depicted in the ancient Zodiacs as a great man striding forth with a spear in one hand and a sickle raised in the other. Arcturus is located in his left thigh, towards or at the knee. Who do you know who is described as having a sickle in his hand, poised to reap the earth and who has a name on his thigh? Try Rev 14:17-20 and Rev 19:16.

1.3.2. Signs and Seasons

When the Elohim created the luminaries and set them in the firmament, they said *let them be for signs and for seasons*, Gen 1:14. The Hebrew word for signs is *oth* and means to mark, to designate, to describe and is used of signs, tokens and symbols. The word is used with the Hebrew preposition, *le*, which, in this context, has the meaning *as if it were* (note: *le* is used in association with the word for days but not with the word for years). In other words, the luminaries were to form the basis of a system of signs and symbols that would point to events in God's Great Plan. The Hebrew word for seasons is *moed* which means to point out, to define, to appoint, a set time, a point in time. It is used in connection with annual events and festivals and with a space of time or appointed time. It is the same word that is used in Dan 12:7, *for a set time, times and a half*. It too is used with *le* and hence gives the overall meaning that the luminaries were the basis of a system of chronology that would point to the progress of God's Great Plan. Collectively, the expression *for signs and for seasons* is saying that the sun, moon and stars are for signs of things to come and for cycles of appointed times.

The LXX translates *oth* as *semeion* and *moed* as *kairos*. *Semeion* is used of that which distinguishes one person or thing from others; of a sign of warning or admonition (the sign of the prophet of Jonas, Matt 12:39); of miraculous acts as tokens of Divine authority and power (the Judeans asked for signs, 1Cor 1:22) and in some other variations of this basic theme.

Kairos is used of a season, a time, a period possessed of certain recognisable characteristics and is distinctly different from *chronos* which denotes a space of time, whether long or short (as in *all the time*). Vine ^(H) states that *chronos* expresses the duration of a period, *kairos* stresses it as marked by certain features – *It is not for you to know* (to understand completely) *times* (*chronos*; the lengths of

the periods) *or seasons* (kairos; epochs characterised by certain events) which *The Father set within His own authority*, Acts 1:7. These words were spoken to the Apostles at the time of Jesus' ascension in reply to their question concerning the restoration of the Kingdom. The Apostles were about to embark on the major work of their lives. If they had clearly understood that the Kingdom was still 2000 years in the future, they would have been severely demotivated and their message would have failed to attract the attention of the dispersed Israelites – even Paul thought the Kingdom was just around the corner. This is probably why John was kept alive for so long before he witnessed the Revelation – by the time he wrote Revelation, he would have realised that the Kingdom was not on the doorstep. The fact that he asked for so few explanations of the things he saw in the visions indicates that he had spent a great deal of time studying the Old Covenant Scriptures and hence was able to understand the visions and to accept them without reservation or despondency.

One example of how the stars and the Zodiac provide us with information about God's Great Plan can be seen in their use for defining the Pyramid's date-time system. Davidson ⁽¹⁾ shows there are actually three Zodiacs and each one has a special purpose. The technical aspects of how to use the Zodiacs with reference to the Pyramid are beyond the scope of this paper, but there are one or two matters that are relevant to the 7 Letters and 7 Assemblies.

Davidson shows that the Pyramid's date-time system (the one inch to the year scale we are most familiar with) is based on a once-in-25,000 year alignment of two stars. One star is Alcyone (*the centre*) which is in the middle of seven other stars which together comprise the cluster called the Pleiades in the sign of Taurus. The other star is the ancient Pole Star, *Alpha Draconis* in the constellation of the Dragon ⁷. Furthermore, Davidson shows that the messages contained in the Pyramid are intended for Israel in the time following the end of the Seven Times Punishment. The proof is based on the date of the Great Step – midnight on the 25/26th January 1844 AD in the Northern Hemisphere. This is consistent with Isa 19:19,20 *In that day shall there be a monument (the Pyramid) to the Lord in the midst of the land of (two) Egypts and a statue (the sphinx) at the border thereof to the Lord.* The fact that the Pyramid's message is for the Latter Days is just one of the reasons why none of its secrets came to be revealed until modern times – until after 1844.

Thus we see that both the Bible and the Pyramid make reference to the Pleiades and because the Pleiades are located in Taurus, the sign of Taurus is also intimately involved. It defines the sign at the commencement of the solar year for the Pyramid's chronology. Taurus, always depicted as a bull, takes on more significance when we realise that Joseph is likened to a bull (Deut 33:17) and that his horns, representing Ephraim and Manasseh, *shall push the peoples together to the ends of the earth.* This is the origin of colloquial references to Israel being the bull race. Even more significant are the names of the stars in Taurus: *coming, ruling, belonging to the judge, the leader, centre, foundation, turned on (or rolled around).* The Greek name of the seven stars forming the Pleiades means *congregation of the judge* and the Greek name of the seven stars forming the Hyades, also in Taurus, is *the congregated* ⁽⁶⁾.

If you look on a map at the location of each of the 7 cities addressed in Revelation you will find they form a circular pattern – just like the Pleiades – which gives more interest to the name, *congregation of the judge.* Hence John's vision in Rev 1 is a composite symbol that depicts Jesus standing in the centre of the 7 assemblies. The circular pattern formed by these cities and used in association with *stars*, points us to the circular Pleiades cluster which consists of 7 stars in a circle with a bright star, Alcyone, in the centre. Hence, the Pleiades are significant because, not only are they referenced several times in the Old Covenant, they are intimately linked with the Pyramid's chronology and are located in the neck of Taurus, the Bull, which directs us to the bull race, Israel.

7 Star names in this constellation are *the subtle, the long serpent, the dragon, the head of the subtle, the punished enemy, who is to be destroyed, the reptile, the fraudulent, the bowed down.*

Another example of the time by God's Great Clock is the movement of the starting point for each Solar Year. During the last 6000 years, due to the Precession of the Equinoxes mentioned earlier, the starting point has moved backwards through the signs of Taurus, Aries and Pisces.

From 4000 BC to 2000 BC, the Sun commenced the Solar Year in the sign of Taurus (the Bull). During this time the Bull race was selected and the nation of Israel was established. From 2000 BC to 1 AD, the Solar Year commenced with the Sun in the sign of Aries (the Lamb)⁸, which was the time of the Levitical Law and the training of the sacrifices which led up to the Advent of the Lamb of God. From 1 AD to 2000 AD, the Sun starts the year in the sign of Pisces (the Fishes)⁹, which is the time of the Elect. That is, the fishes caught by the news of the Gospel message who accept Jesus and do what is required to participate in the First Resurrection¹⁰.

In summary, the Precession of the Equinoxes, the Signs of the Zodiac and the Pyramid's date-time system are the components of God's Great Clock. None of the components make proper sense if studied in isolation and the clock itself cannot be fathomed without the Bible.

1.4. The 7 Stars And The 7 Assemblies

In Rev 1:20 we are told in the AV that the 7 stars are *angels* of the 7 assemblies and that the 7 lamp stands are the 7 assemblies. But what is the significance of the number, 7, in this context?

Firstly, there is a difference between the explanation of the 7 stars and the 7 lamp stands. Compare the explanation closely:

| <u>Symbol</u> | <u>Explanation</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>the 7 lamp stands are</i> | <i>the 7 assemblies</i> |
| <i>the 7 stars are</i> | <i>"angels" of the 7 assemblies</i> |

The 7 lamp stands are equated to exactly 7 assemblies, but the 7 stars are equated to an unspecified number of "angels". This means the "angels" belong to all 7 assemblies – they do not belong to just this assembly or just that assembly.

Secondly, we can substitute separated for the number, 7 in the explanation: the 7 stars are "angels" of the separated assemblies and the 7 lamp stands are the separated assemblies.

The next question is, who or what are the *separated assemblies*?

8 Star names: *the lamb, the bound, the sheep (gentle, merciful), wounded, slain, the bruised, the wounded, the pierced.*

9 Star names: *the united, the upheld.*

10 From Pisces the Sun moves into Aquarius, in which a Waterbearer is seen pouring water into the mouth of **one** fish. The Hebrew and Aramaic names for the stars in this sign are *the waterurn, the record of the pouring forth, who goeth and returneth, the mouth of the fish, who carries, who causeth to overflow, the water.* All these names attract our attention when we consider that Jesus identified Himself as the source of living water; Israel is promised an overflow of blessing when she returns to God and the Millennial visions include descriptions of *a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb* (Rev 22:1). The Lamb is, of course, the *one who goeth and returneth.*

1.4.1. The Identity of the 7 Assemblies

The 7 Assemblies do not represent the former Kingdoms of Israel, for they disappeared into captivity. They do not represent the nation in Judea at the time of Jesus – the official Israel of that day, because by the time Revelation was written, it too was gone. The 7 Assemblies do not represent the Isles of the Sea, because relatively few of dispersed Israel had reached there. This leaves only the immense multitude of the Dispersion that was living in the general region of Asia Minor and Eastern Europe.

As pointed out earlier, the seven named cities are relevant because they form a circular pattern which draws our attention to the Zodiac. It is also apparent that the whole Dispersion in Asia Minor and Eastern Europe were spread far beyond the limits of these seven cities. Alford ^(M) in his introduction to Revelation states *The fragment of the Canon called by the name of Muratori, and written about 200, says “And John in the Apocalypse, though he writes to seven churches, yet he speaks to all ...”*. Therefore, the 7 Assemblies are representative of the whole Dispersion and indeed, of the whole separated nation of Israel.

Each letter commences by addressing *the (assembly)*. The name of the city is not important in its own right, because as we have established, these cities are representative of the whole nation. But the *city*, or rather, the Assembly, is important because it receives one-seventh of the total message – *listen to what the spirit says to the assemblies* (plural). The Definite Article is pin-pointing that this is just one of the separated assemblies and that this is one-seventh of the total message.

The 7 Letters are addressed to *the separated Assemblies*, that is, the Dispersion, because they had shown they were responding to Jesus’ Ministry (John 12:20-23 ^(J), Acts 19:10, Acts 28:28). Hence, in line with the words of Moses, we have a composite image of Jesus walking in the midst of Israel to bring them into their new land where they were to be established as a new nation, kept safe from their enemies and from there they will return *one of a city, two of a family* (of cities), Jer 3:14, to occupy the Holy Land again (but with its borders extending to the Euphrates River and the Persian Gulf).

Just as Moses had set forth the terms and conditions of the Covenant for occupancy of the Promised Land, so the Risen Lord Jesus was addressing the Dispersion and setting forth the terms of the Covenant for entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. The 7 Letters set forth 7 blessings and 7 curses consequent on accepting or rejecting Jesus. The blessings and the cursings relate to each person’s spirit. Note: in contrast to the conditional occupancy of the Promised Land in Moses’ day, there are no conditions for living in the Kingdom – only terms; we either meet the spirit-based requirements (gained from study and practice of God’s word) or we do not.

1.4.2. The Identity of the Angels

The “*angels*” of *the separated assemblies* are not heavenly angels (as stated in the AV) because:

- a. There is no record of God using human beings to give or send messages to angels or other Heavenly beings.
- b. The letters are addressed to terrestrial cities where Israelites, not angels, were living as a component of the local population.
- c. An angel is dictating what John is to write in the scroll and there is no record of angels sending messages to other angels through mortals.
- d. As the lamp stands are identified as human assemblies, so the beings associated with them must be human.

The Greek word in Revelation that has been translated *angel* is *angelos* and it means messenger (from *angelo*, to deliver a message). It is used of men in Luke 7:23 – *the messenger of John*. In particular, it is used of the messengers of God, such as prophets and angels. In Revelation, the use of the Genitive (messengers of the separated assemblies) shows these are human messengers – therefore it is referring to people within the assemblies. That is, those who have accepted the commission of Jesus – *believe Me and believe God* and are proving it by their works ¹¹. The message they carry is the Age long message of the Gospels and God’s Word.

A similar example is given in Acts 20:28-31 where Paul warns the elders of Ephesus:

take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which The Spirit, The Holy, places you overseers (watchers, guardians) to shepherd The assembly The (one) of God which He is acquiring through The blood of His own The (Son or body). I know that after The departure of me, grievous wolves will come among (into) you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be alert ... ¹²

In Rev 1:4, John commences his letter to the separated assemblies – *John to the seven assemblies which are in Asia*. The letter has exactly the same style of opening address as all the other Epistles written in the Bible. John is writing the letter in response to the direction he received in Rev 1:11; he was told to write what he saw in a scroll (singular) and send it (the whole scroll) to *the separated assemblies*. Although there are seven separate messages contained within the scroll, they must stay in that one scroll so they can be read by all the assemblies – each message contains the command to *hear what the spirit says to the assemblies* (plural) – that is, all the assemblies. However, the 7 Letters do not discuss or describe anything that John has seen in any part of the book of Revelation (except for the descriptions of the One authorising the contents of each letter).

Each letter contains a reward for individuals who are overcomers. Each reward can be bestowed only on resurrected beings – which means they are applicable only to individuals with an appropriately developed spirit life. Furthermore, the individual is commanded to *hear and understand and act (on) what The Spirit says*. This command will be discussed in more detail later, but for the moment, the important point is that only our own spirit is capable of hearing, understanding and acting on what The Spirit is saying. Therefore, as this command is addressed to the spirit and the rewards are applicable only to those who are resurrected, it follows that the *messengers of the separated assemblies* are not angels, but Israelites, for they are the only ones begotten of water and begotten of spirit.

Each letter is addressed to *the messenger*. In this instance, the Definite Article is being used to highlight the type of messenger, rather than a particular messenger ¹³. When we realise that the verb, *send*, in Rev 1:11 does not refer to a one-off action but to a continuing action, we can see that the messenger cannot be a particular individual. Rather, the messenger is representative of all those who will hear, understand and obey the message of God’s Scripture in every generation during the remainder of the Age.

Rev 22:18,21 confirm that this Unveiling is directed to one people:

18. *I, Myself, declare to the whole of the One People hearing (and understanding and doing) the words of the prophecy of this scroll ...*

21. *The Grace of the Lord Jesus (is) with all the Set Apart Ones.*

Who are called the Set Apart Ones throughout Scripture?

11 This expression should not be confused with 2Co 8:23 which refers to *apostles of assemblies*. The Apostles were far more than mere messengers.

12 Moses gave the same warnings to Israel in the Wilderness.

13 The same construction is found in Eph 2:20.

1.5. Significant Features Of The 7 Letters

This section highlights some of the important aspects of the 7 Letters and thereby helps to explain the function and purpose of the 7 Letters. Every aspect of the 7 Letters is, of course, significant and no detail can be overlooked or dismissed as irrelevant. But for the purpose of this paper, there are three features that need to be highlighted and discussed:

- a. The three-four structure of the letters
- b. The expression, *ear to hear*
- c. The association between the title at the start of each letter, the rewards and the content of the letters.

1.5.1. Three-Four Groupings

The 7 Letters are clearly separated into a group of three letters and another group of four letters. The demarcation comes in the Thyatira letter where the statement *he that hath an ear ...* comes after the reward or promise that is contained in the body of the letter. In the previous three letters, the statement precedes the details of the reward. We find this same three-four or four-three pattern occurring elsewhere in Scripture, such as in the Kingdom parables and in the Grand Gallery of the Great Pyramid.

The division into the three-four or four-three pattern arises because Israel always has two parts – the Dominion (representing the physical aspects of Israel) and the Sanctuary (representing the spirit component of Israel ^(O)). All Israel's history is presented with these two aspects in mind (Kings and Chronicles, for example). All Israelites contain two life forces – that which is of water (natural, physical life) and that which is of spirit (as inherited at birth with the same force and measure that was inherited by Isaac). Because of this duality in the nation and in the people, many of the things in Scripture specifically address the Dominion and the Sanctuary. One pointer to such dual messages is the occurrence of seven things together.

1.5.1.1. *The Seven Kingdom Parables*

One of the most fundamental things to understand about the parables is that Judea contained a mixed multitude, just like Israel when it was in the Wilderness. It contained many foreigners who called themselves Israelites but who regarded their own laws (the Torah) as taking precedence over anything which God had set down for His People. Members of this mixed multitude controlled the temple and the administration of the Judean province.

Only scholars could read the original Hebrew Scriptures, but of His original 12 Apostles, only Luke the Physician and possibly Matthew the tax-gatherer had academic qualifications; the rest were fishermen, farmers and the like. For the common man, scriptural knowledge was obtained primarily through attendance at the synagogues (which were in the hands of the largely non-Israelite priesthood).

It was into this low and conflicting spirit-related background of a community filled with a mixture of Israelites and aliens of many races that Jesus began His exposition of the truths of the Old Covenant. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John used only those aspects of what Jesus said and did that were pertinent to the purpose for which each gospel is intended – Matthew's gospel presents Jesus as the King of Israel; Mark presents Him as the ideal subject and servant (of the King); Luke presents Him as the ideal Israelite; John presents Him as Israel's God.

When asked by the Apostles why He spoke to the multitude in parables (Matt 13:10) Jesus replied in verse 11:

unto you (Israelites) it has been given (by God) to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of the Heavens. But unto them (those of the mixed multitude) it has not been given ¹⁴.

Because His words were to be a matter of public record, Jesus presented His message in parables – whether in the presence of the mixed multitude or alone with His disciples. The difference between the mixed multitude and the Disciples is that the Disciples were sometimes given a personal explanation of some parables. Later, when the Gospels were published, these explanations also became public. Anyone, Israelite or otherwise, can study Jesus’ words but the meaning of His message was and still is hidden from those who are not of the spirit carrying people (begotten of water and of spirit).

In Chapter 13 of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus, speaking as the King, presented seven parables which explain the status of the Kingdom as it was at that time and how it would be until the end of the Age ¹⁵. Matthew calls it the Kingdom of the Heavens because God brought it into being, its laws are those of Heaven and its king will come from there. Mark, Luke and John refer to it as the Kingdom of God for that suits the purposes of their respective gospels, but it is the same kingdom in each case.

The seven parables can be divided into two groups. The first four parables are linked together by the Greek word *allos* which means another of the same kind. The last three are linked by the Greek word *palin* which means again. These numbers are also significant. Four is the number of the Earth which means the four parables refer to the Dominion (the political and physical realities of the Kingdom). Three is the number of Divinity which means that the three parables refer to the Sanctuary (the spirit aspects of the Kingdom). Of the seven parables, only two are explained in detail. Each explanation has seven subdivisions and in both cases the subdivisions can be grouped into threes and fours.

Of the seven parables, four were given in the presence of the mixed multitude and three were given to the Disciples only. Mark and Luke refer to three of the parables but John does not mention them at all. Therefore, the seven parables deserve our closest attention if we wish to understand what the Kingdom of The Heavens is all about. The fact that there are seven parables indicates, at once, that the information refers to God’s separated people and no-one else.

The first four parables are:

1. The Sower
2. The Tares
3. The Mustard Seed
4. The Leaven

The last three parables are:

5. The Treasure in the Field
6. The Pearl of Great Price
7. The Net cast into the Sea

14 Far too many people stop right there, but Jesus went on to say (verse 12): *for to him that hath (been given understanding) shall more be given (if they use that understanding) and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not (doth not use it) from him shall be taken away even that (which) he has.*

Mark 4:24,25, in the RSV states: *take heed what ye hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get and still more will be given to you. For to him who has will more be given; and to him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.*

The importance of our Lord’s admonition is not only to hear and understand what we hear, but to do something positive and productive in terms of working on what we have heard. Without that result, what you hear will, in effect, fall on stony ground. In other words, you can not learn about the Bible and grow spiritually on the basis of listening to someone else or reading another man’s work. You have to set about doing some concrete work for yourself and sharing your knowledge – that is, doing something positive for Israel. The *works* mentioned in Heb 4:10 refer to acts done on Israel’s behalf – not to Creation!

15 Mat 13:52 is often referred to as being the eighth parable. While it may be a parable, it does not have a link (*allos* or *palin*) into the preceding seven parables and hence is a separate matter from our discussion.

1.5.1.1.1. The Four Parables

In the parable of the Sower, the sower is the Son of Man, the seed is the Word of God and the field is the Kingdom ¹⁶. The four classes of people hearing the Word of God are depicted as:

1. The pathway – those who heard the Word but Satan destroys their belief.
2. The rocky ground – those who receive the Word with joy and believe it for a while but yield to temptation and the difficulties of life.
3. The thorns – those who hear the Word but as they go through life, their belief is choked by cares, riches and pleasures so that they bear no fruit.
4. The good soil – those who hear and understand the Word and act on it – they yield 100, 60 and 30 fold. (That is, after hearing the Word, they go and work with it and increase their knowledge and skill in the application and use of the Word.)

The parable summarises the personal actions of people within the Kingdom who, in any generation, at sometime of their life, will hear the Word of God and how they will react to it.

The parable of the tares deals with the Kingdom as a national entity. On the spirit side, the sower is the Son of Man, the field is the Kingdom and the good seed are the sons of the Kingdom (descendants of Abraham, born of water and of spirit). On the dominion side, the enemy is Satan and the tares are the sons of Satan; interlopers who seek to either destroy the Kingdom or steal it for themselves. The harvest is the end of the Age and the reapers are the angels of God who separate the people within the Kingdom ¹⁷.

The third parable deals with the physical dimensions of the Kingdom. Like the mustard seed, the Kingdom is small to begin with but its influence will grow throughout the Age and many people of the world would benefit simply by its very existence in the world.

The fourth parable deals with the spread of God's Word within the Kingdom. The woman is the Israel race and the leaven is God's Word ¹⁸. The three measures of meal indicate the progress of the Throne through the three kingdoms prophesied by Ezek 21:27. The knowledge (or doctrine) of God's word would accompany the throne and fill each of the kingdoms.

1.5.1.1.2. The Three Parables

The three parables were addressed only to the Disciples. No explanation of the parables was provided by Jesus and none was asked for by the Disciples. This indicates that their own knowledge of the Scriptures and the explanations of the first two parables given by Jesus were sufficient for them to follow the parables (although they had not yet realised that He was to die in order to make the parables possible).

The first parable refers to the redemption of the people of the Southern Kingdom. The man (Jesus) found the field in his homeland, therefore the field represents the nation of Israel as it existed in Judea at that time. The treasure is the remnant of the House of Judah, Benjamin and Levi that returned from Babylon. The man sold all that he had in order to buy the field – Jesus had no worldly possessions, but He gave His life (all that He did have) in order to pay the purchase price of their redemption.

16 The field cannot be the "world" as all popular translations try to make it because a field is a fenced or distinctively marked enclosure separated from all other land around it.

17 The wheat and the tares are identified as different kinds of seed. Hence the parable is pointing to differences in the origin of the people (Esau versus Jacob) rather than differences within one group of people – that is dealt with later.

18 Leaven is the symbol of doctrine, teaching or words. Consequently, the leaven of the Pharisees refers to their doctrine, teaching and words and it is their leaven (their doctrine) we are warned against.

The second parable is similar to the first but it deals with the people of the Northern Kingdom. The fact that it is represented as a pearl indicates that it refers to a different kingdom that the merchant had to cross the seas to find (the developing kingdom in the Isles of the Sea). Again, the merchant (Jesus) gives all that he has to redeem the pearl for Himself. While these two parables showed the Apostles that both Houses of Israel would be redeemed, the Apostles did not yet appreciate the scope of the parables (as evidenced by the incident of Peter and Cornelius).

The third parable deals with the people who will be the subjects of the restored Kingdom. The kingdom is like a drag net that is being cast into the sea and gathers every descendant (of Abraham)¹⁹ and when it is full, it is drawn ashore. The good are sorted from the bad²⁰ and the bad are thrown away. The Southern and Northern Kingdoms have been redeemed but where are they? They have become the people of the Dispersion and are scattered amongst the people of the earth. They have to be gathered again. The casting of a drag net takes time. The net is the Scriptures and the casting of the Scriptures started with the Apostles going to the Dispersion. The casting is continuing to-day in the form of the message which goes forth from the Bible. The message will continue to go forth until the moment of the Second Advent. The separation of the catch within the net does not take place until the net is full and landed on the shore of the Kingdom, that is, at the Second Advent. It refers to the separation of Israelites (at the Second Advent) into those who are acceptable to Jesus and those who are not²¹.

In summary, the first four parables deal with the Dominion – the nation, its development and the people within the nation. The last three deal with the Sanctuary – redemption of that nation and the resurrection of the people in it.

There is no sequence of elapsed time indicated by any of the parables. The Gospels and these parables are as fresh to-day to the seeker for the truth of God's Word as they were when Jesus presented them. Thus their application is constant and true for every generation since then. While there are implications of both past and future events within the parables, there are none which any student of the Bible who knows the Old Covenant cannot readily recognise (see also Adams^(K)).

19 The Greek word is *genos*. Dunbar says *genos* means the relation in descending order (as in the children and grandchildren) whereas *oikia* means the relation in ascending order. *Genos* comes from *ginomai* (to come into being) and means: offspring, progeny, family, kindred, lineage, race, nation, people, kind, sort, species. Liddell and Scott: race, descent, a descendant, a child. A race in regard to number or time, a generation, an age. Kind (genus) – opposite of *eidos* (species). The Concordant Publishers: breed, a species of animal or language, a race of mankind, a native. The key point is that each word indicates a relationship. The individuals are all related in a genetic line. This meaning precludes the word from applying to "races" in general. The most appropriate English translation is a *descendant*.

20 The Greek words for good and bad in this verse are *kalos* and *sapros*. The more common Greek word for good is *agathos*. *Agathos* is that which is of good character; that which a person does for a neighbour to help him rather than hinder him. *Kalos* is that which is intrinsically good; that which is well adapted to its circumstances. It is used of a tree and its fruit. The two words occur together in the explanation of the parable of the sower (Luke 8:15) where the one who is represented by the good soil is described as having heard, holds it fast in an *agathos* and *kalos* heart. That is, a characteristically good and productive spirit. The more common Greek word for bad is *kakos* – the opposite of *agathos* – that which is bad in character; those qualities lacking in a person or thing which should be possessed. *Sapros* is that which is corrupt and rotten and expresses that which is of poor quality. It too is used of a tree and its fruit. In other words, Israelites who are *sapros* are of no use to Jesus because their spirits are rotten to the extent of having produced nothing of spiritual value.

21 Later, in Mat 25:32, we read of the separation of the sheep and the goats. The AV implies this is a separation of sheep and goat nations but the Greek text shows it is a separation of the **people** within *all The nations* (that is, Israel). This agrees with the separation of the good and bad presented in this parable.

1.5.1.2. Seven Courses in The Grand Gallery

The Grand Gallery in the Great Pyramid contains seven courses of masonry (see Figure 1). This is the only obvious structural feature involving the number seven and therefore it requires close attention.

We know from Davidson's monumental work on the Great Pyramid that its passageways both measure the stages and symbolise the state of the Israel people for four thousand years of their history, past, present and what is still future. But in view of the emphasis and importance of the conditions in the Kingdom that Jesus explained in the seven parables of Matt 13, it is surprising that no commentator has identified any relationship between the parables and the stonework of the Pyramid's passageways.

Pyramid commentators acknowledge the symbolism of the Grand Gallery as representing the Christian Era from the crucifixion till the beginning of The Great Apostasy in 1844²². It is vividly depicted by the sudden change from the first ascending passage which is less than 4 feet in height and width to the 28 feet of height and nearly 7 feet of width in the Grand Gallery.

Davidson has attempted to record the fact that the Seven Times punishment of Israel still applied during the Christian Era and to illustrate this geometrically. But no commentator has done more than give passing mention to the outstanding constructional details in the Grand Gallery which appear to illustrate both the continuation of the Seven Times punishment and the state of the nation throughout the whole time period which the Gallery represents.

The structural features (see Figure 1) of the gallery are:

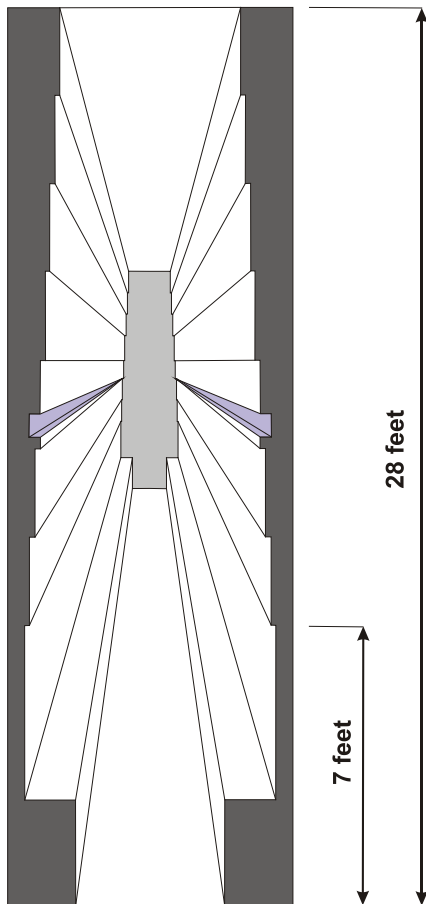
- a. 7 courses of polished limestone running the full length of each side wall.
- b. Each succeeding course is corbelled out 3 inches further than the surface below it, thus narrowing the width of the gallery from 82.2 inches at floor level to approximately 40 at the ceiling.
- c. Just above the beginning of the 3rd corbel, a groove is cut into the 3rd course of limestone; it is 6 inches wide and 0.75 inch deep and runs the full length of the gallery.

The sudden increase in height of the ceiling after the first ascending passage portrays the tremendous change in the spirit-related and political life of Israel. The change dates from the day of the crucifixion and represents the redemption of Israel from the effects of Adamic Sin and the opportunity for all Israelites who believe, to become the Sons of God again. The increase in width is not as spectacular as the change in the height because Israel was still undergoing its Seven Times punishment which was not due to end until 1800 AD (for the Northern Kingdom). Thus the change in its political freedom bore little comparison to the enormous spirit-related improvement.

We are told that the height of the gallery is 28 feet and that the first corbel occurs seven feet above the floor. Therefore the upper 21 feet is taken up by the Seven Courses of corbelled limestone. None of the books give any further vertical measurements for the Grand Gallery and we are left with trying to deduce information from the diagrams supplied mainly by Davidson. We do know that decimal portions are common in the measurements of the Pyramid and therefore precise measurements would be needed to confirm the key points in the following discussion.

We know from Davidson's work that the scale for the floor-line chronology of the ascending passageways is one Pyramid inch for each calendar year of elapsed historical time. If the length of the Grand Gallery represents the Christian Era from the Crucifixion to The Great Apostasy in 1844, then what of the height of the ceiling in the Gallery?

22 The Gallery does not end until it reaches the first low passage beyond the Great Step. This corresponds to 5th August 1914.



We know from the Bible that a *time* represents a period of 360 years on the inch to the year time scale. It would appear from Davidson’s diagrams that the seven courses are all the same size – 36 inches. Therefore, if the height of the seven courses of limestone represents the Seven Times Punishment of Israel, each course represents 360 years of elapsed time on a scale of 10 years for each vertical inch.

The first corbel begins seven feet above the floor of the gallery and we know from history that the Northern Kingdom began its period of Seven Times Punishment when it was taken captive to Assyria in 721 BC. Therefore, the first corbel would mark 721 BC and the beginning of the third corbel would mark the end of BC times and the First Advent of our Lord. None of the readily available books state the distance between the beginning of the third corbel and the beginning of the 0.75 inch groove. A close examination of Davidson’s plates, XXXII, XXXVI and LXV(c) suggest the groove begins approximately four inches above the third corbel and is approximately six inches wide. On the 10 year to the inch time scale, the groove appears to mark the years 40 AD to 96 AD – the period covering the lives and teaching of the 12 Apostles up to the death of John shortly after he wrote the Book of Revelation.

Figure 1 – Grand Gallery: seven courses with corbels (not to scale)

At the ceiling of the Grand Gallery, the narrowing caused by the corbelling reduces the ceiling width to approximately 40 inches. This number is indicative of Trial and Tribulation and may be indicating that following the end of the Seven Times Punishment, the time of Jacob’s Trouble will commence. (It does not follow that the 10 year to the inch or 1 year to the inch scales are applicable to the ceiling or that the ceiling is relevant.)

In the other direction, from the first corbel to the floor, is a distance of 84 inches. This places the floor at 1561 BC (721 + 840 years). Israel entered the Promised Land in 1446 BC and Moses was 120 years old when he died in that same year. Thus 120 years added to 1446 BC provides the date of 1566 as the date of his birth – very close to the measured date, 1561, (which indicates the need for some precise measurements to clarify the dates). Moses was a type of the Messiah in Old Covenant times. He was the outstanding leader of Israel, he codified the law and put it in writing, he presented the terms and conditions for occupation of Palestine to the people and he made broad prophecies covering the future history of Israel for the next 3500 years.

The seven courses show a Three-Four relationship, in a similar manner to the seven parables. The first three courses cover the Sanctuary aspect and the last four cover the Dominion. The period covered by the first three courses sees the close of the era of prophecy. All those who had been eyewitnesses to the acts of the Apostles had gone and the Dispersion in Asia Minor had also gone (moving westward through the nations of Europe). The last four courses cover the period of the scattering and re-gathering – the political/secular activities of dispersed Israel.

The Bible has no record of any events in Northern or Southern Israel during the whole of the Seven Times Punishment, except for that short period of existence of the Judean Kingdom from circa 421 BC to 70 AD. Hence the seven courses of masonry are also featureless, except for that short interlude when the Gospels and teaching of the Apostles were given to the Dispersion in the 1st Century AD. No further information is provided by the Pyramid until Israel emerges from its Seven Times

Punishment. This raises interesting questions as to what period of history is covered by the events portrayed in the rest of Revelation ²³.

Like the Kingdom Parables, the seven courses of limestone do not indicate any progressive change, for better or for worse, with increasing height (that is, between the floor and the ceiling). Furthermore all changes that are seen in the vertical direction are constant over the whole time-length of the gallery. This means the events represented in the vertical direction are the same events that are applicable for every generation covered by the horizontal time-length of the Gallery. In other words, the effects of the Seven Times Punishment and the message of the Gospels are constant throughout this time. Similarly, the 7 Letters to the separated Assemblies do not refer to 7 stages of past history nor are they a forecast of 7 future states or stages of Christianity.

Virtually every commentator on the Book of Revelation points to the Laodicean Assembly as being symbolic of the apostasy and disbelief of God in the Western World today and claims this is proof of the sequential, historical symbolism of the 7 Letters. This is incorrect. The existing state of apostasy was prophesied by Paul in 2 Thess 2:3 and by Jesus. Jesus states in Matt 24:37-38, that the situation and state of Israel just before the Second Advent would be *as the days of Noe were, so shall also the (days of the) coming of the Son of Man be, for as in the days that were before the Flood, they were eating and drinking ...* Jesus does not mention any of these things in the letter to the Assembly of Laodicea, therefore there is no prophetic connection involved in the placing of this letter as the last of the 7 Letters. The seven courses of polished limestone indicate by their unchanging condition throughout the whole length of the gallery that there would be no easing of the Seven Times Punishment during the Christian Era ²⁴.

1.5.1.3. The 7 Letters

The position of the expression *he that hath an ear* clearly divides the 7 Letters into a Three-Four structure. The first three letters present the “rewards” of the Sanctuary:

- a. To eat of The Tree of The Life
- b. To be unaffected by the second death
- c. To eat of the hidden manna.

The last four letters present the “rewards” of the Dominion:

- a. e.To have power over The nations
- b. To be clothed in white raiment (that is, a priest-king)
- c. To be a pillar in the Temple of God
- d. To sit with Jesus on His Throne.

23 The actions associated with the Seals, Trumpets, Thunders and Vials have to be distinguished from the visions of the Dragon and the Woman, for example. The Seals, Trumpets, Thunders and Vials are episodes whereas the visions are age-long.

24 Similarly, the reference to *10 days tribulation* in the letter to Smyrna, is incorrectly ascribed to Diocletian persecutions of 10 years duration. Christian persecution has been a constant feature of history before and after Diocletian. The use of 10 in this manner is a Hebraism, similar to the idiomatic use of the English words *couple*, *several* and *constantly*; that is, an indefinite quantity that points to the certainty of the event or thing without quantifying it. Therefore, the *10 days of tribulation* indicates that tribulation will be a fact of life in every generation until the Second Advent.

The Three-Four grouping of the 7 Letters is the opposite of the parables. The Dominion was presented first in the parables so people could recognise that the Kingdom, as a political reality, was to continue and had not been forgotten by God. Once that was understood, the Sanctuary could be presented and its application to both houses of Israel followed on naturally. In the 7 Letters, the Sanctuary is first because Revelation is concerned only with the spirit. The rewards of the Dominion follow because the Dominion, as a political entity, is the least important aspect of the 7 Letters.

1.5.2. An Ear to Hear

To appreciate what is being revealed in the 7 Letters, we need to understand the meaning of the phrase *he that hath an ear*. The phrase occurs in Revelation and a related phrase occurs in the Gospels. Before researching such an expression, we need to understand the basis of the “differences” between the Gospels.

The Gospels are often criticised as being “inaccurate” because of what appears to be inconsistencies between the accounts of the same or similar events. The differences usually fall into three categories:

- a. Descriptions of two events that are confused as being the same event.
- b. Descriptions of a sequence of events that are claimed to contain minor errors of detail.
- c. Conversation / speeches that are claimed to be imprecise because of differences between the Gospel accounts.

The first case is typified by the accounts of the feeding of the crowds of people, which were discussed earlier in this paper.

The second case is typified by the account of the events on the morning of the resurrection. If the accounts in each Gospel are carefully aligned, it will be seen that in John’s gospel, the sequence differs from the sequence in the other three Gospels. The “problem” is caused when the writer has to describe several events that occurred during a particular period. Rather than trying to describe each step in each event as it occurs, the writer describes one event from start to finish, before describing the next event from start to finish. This is a common feature of the Bible accounts and is an important factor in Revelation.

The third case is typical of speeches that are recorded in the Gospels. Because, as noted earlier, each Gospel presents Jesus from a different perspective, the grammar often changes to suit who is speaking or who is being addressed. A given speech is recorded differently according to whether the King is speaking or the Servant. With this in mind, it becomes obvious that the actual words Jesus used may or may not be precisely recorded. When two or more Gospels record the same speech and the grammar is seen to be different, there is no way of knowing what was actually said. Such conversations have to be interpreted according to the style of Gospel in which they appear. This case is relevant to investigating the phrase *he that hath an ear*.

Two verbs are used in the Greek text for hearing; *akoe*, denoting the physical sense of hearing and *akouo*, denoting the faculty of perceiving with the mind, understanding and knowing what was heard (unless this is negated by the context in which it is used). As *seeing* is metaphorically associated with belief and conviction, so *hearing* is associated with understanding, perception and the response of the hearer.

The expression *ears to hear* occurs seven times in the Gospels. This immediately alerts us to the fact that its usage is particularly important as something set apart for our attention. *Akouo* is used in each instance but there are only five separate occasions on which it is used (one of these is reported in two other Gospels, making seven in all). Five is the number of the spirit and hence it draws our attention to the fact that something of significance to our spirit life is being stated.

The five separate occasions are:

- a. Matt 11:10-15 – speaking to the crowd concerning John the Baptist. Jesus is saying that if people had recognised what John was saying, they would have realised he was an Elijah-type and they would have understood the time in which they were living – the time of the First Advent. If they hear and understand and act on what He is saying, they will follow Him.
- b. Matt 13:9, Luke 8:8, Mark 4:9 – at the conclusion of the parable of the Sower. Jesus is saying that if people are committed to serving God, they will hear, understand and act on the word of God. As a consequence, they will be attuned to events in relation to the Scriptures. There should be no doubt in anyone’s mind that such knowledge is readily available in the Old Covenant Scriptures – Zacharias (father of John the Baptist), John the Baptist, Apollos and the “Ethiopian” eunuch are just a few examples of people who fully understood the texts.
- c. Matt 13:43 – spoken to the Disciples at the conclusion of the explanation of the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Jesus is saying that if people recognise that Edomites have infiltrated and corrupted Israel’s kingdom, they will be able to understand the significance of other things that He says – such as why He speaks in parables. Furthermore, such understanding is essential to perceiving the meaning of the parables.
- d. Mark 4:23 – after giving the Disciples the additional explanation about those who hear, understand and act on God’s word. Jesus is saying that if someone has heard, understood and acted on God’s word, how can they do anything else but shine forth in Israel. This is the physical proof that they have believed God. (This occurrence is followed by the verses concerning *he who hath will more be given* discussed earlier in this paper.)
- e. Luke 14:35 – after discussing the use of salt (the spirit) for flavouring food (the Word of God). Jesus is saying that if a person chooses to leave their spirit in an idle state, they will be of no use when it comes to understanding the Scriptures. Those who hear, understand and act on what He is saying will be of great worth because they will be able to interpret the Scriptures accurately.

In summary, each occasion on which *ears to hear* is used, Jesus is alerting the people to use one ear to listen to what He is saying concerning the physical and political realities of the world around them and to use the other ear to listen to what He is saying to their spirit concerning their need to believe and obey Him. If they understand both aspects of what He is saying, they will recognise the season of God’s Great Plan. For unless they do respond in this way, they will be unable to comprehend what is happening in the world and the events of the Age will pass them by.

The expression *he that hath an ear, singular*, occurs eight times in Revelation. Eight is the number of resurrection, renewal and regeneration. Resurrection is something that happens as a result of what one has heard, understood and acted upon.

The phrase occurs in each of the 7 Letters and is associated with the rewards of the overcomers; this is an important factor in appreciating to whom Revelation is addressed. The rewards in the 7 Letters are applicable only to spirit beings – not spirits. At the beginning of Revelation, John tells us he was *in spirit* in the Lord’s Day. We know that a spirit, *per se*, does not have a mouth and tongue for articulating words, therefore God’s spirit speaks to our own spirit via the medium of our minds. The emphasis on such spirit-related matters at the start of Revelation tells us that the whole of Revelation is addressed to our spirit-related intelligence. (Hence the necessity of being right-minded or righteous; if our spirit is to hear God’s spirit at all, our minds have to be attuned to God’s word in the first place.)

Each of the 7 Letters contains a directive that *he that hath an ear* (singular) should listen to what The Spirit is saying to all the Assemblies. This tells us two things. Firstly, that the 7 Letters are not 7 separate letters – they constitute a complete section that has 7 subdivisions and none of the divisions can be treated in isolation. Secondly, because *ear, singular*, is being used, the things that Jesus is saying are directed only at our spirit. If people who have *ears* have not come to grips with the

physical realities of the Kingdom presented by Jesus in the Gospels, they will not have the “ear” to comprehend the spirit-related realities presented in the 7 Letters.

1.5.3. Title, Reward and Content

As we know, each letter commences with a title or description of some aspect of Jesus as the Heavenly Judge in the vision in Rev 1. The title, reward and body of each letter is linked by a central theme. The remainder of this subsection shows the connection between the titles of the Letters and the manifestations of Jesus in the Old and New Covenants. The titles in each letter present Jesus in His seven manifestations to Israel:

| | | |
|--------------|------------|---|
| Ephesus | Jehovah | Who formed Adam and Israel. |
| Smyrna | Redeemer | Who was slain from (the) overthrow of the order and promised in Gen 3:15. |
| Pergamos | Provider | Who preserved Israel in the desert; He fed them and their clothes did not wear out for more than forty years. |
| Thyatira | Judge | Who gave them the Law. |
| Sardis | King | Who led them into the Promised Land. |
| Philadelphia | Son of Man | Who, as the Second Adam, opened the door for reconciliation with God. |
| Laodicea | Truth | Whose very presence as the Risen Lord proves the power and authority of the Almighty God. |

In the letter to Ephesus, the title describes Jesus as the God of Israel (Jehovah of the Old Covenant). The AV says He *holds* the seven stars, but the Greek word is *kratos*; strength, power, might, force and, by metonymy, a display of might or power. In other words, by His own power He holds fast the messengers of the assemblies.

A good example of the meaning of this word is seen in Luke 24:16, where Jesus meets the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. The two disciples clearly knew Jesus by sight, but were unable to recognise Him because their minds were held fast. Jesus held their minds in this manner while He expounded to them all the Scriptures, starting with Moses, that referred to Himself. Such a revelation would cover a staggering amount of information, but by concentrating their minds on what He was saying, they could absorb it easily. Hence *kratos* refers to a deliberate act of personal power by the individual.

Kratos is also used in:

- a. Rev 2:14: referring to the people holding fast to the teaching of Balaam.
- b. Rev 2:25: telling those not influenced by Jezebel to hold fast to what they have until He comes.
- c. Rev 3:11: telling those He will keep safe to hold fast to what they have until He comes.

From the description in the letter, we see that Jesus exerts such power on the messengers of the assemblies, but in the other three verses, the individuals are exerting the power over their own spirit-related beliefs. Only Jesus can exert such power over the minds of human beings and hence the

description of Him in the letter to Ephesus presents Him as the Saviour-God (Jehovah) of His Chosen People (that is, the people represented by the lamp stands and stars).

The reward described in the letter – the restoration of access to The Tree of The Life – shows us that God’s Sovereignty over the earth is re-established (by Jesus rectifying the sin of Adam). The emphasis in the body of the letter is on deeds ²⁵, labour, works (way of life) and repentance (to turn around completely from our former works). The injunction to remember *from where you have fallen* is a reminder that our present condition arose from failing to believe God ²⁶. Not only does the injunction remind us of Adam’s fall and Israel’s cast-off state but it also reminds us of our own failings.

In the letter to Smyrna, the title describes the Redeemer. The reward – not to be hurt by the second death – is the reward of people resurrected when Jesus returns. In contrast to the second death, Jesus offers The Crown of The Life. The emphasis of the body of the letter is on tribulation, suffering and the inevitability of physical death. The word *Jews* in verse 9 should be translated *Judeans* – this a direct reference to John 8:25-59 and John 10:25-39 where Jesus unmasks the Edomite interlopers. In the letter to Smyrna He shows that the activities of these interlopers is well known to Him and will not go unpunished in the fullness of time. Mentioning them in this letter sets the contrast between the deeds of the Pharisees with their Traditions of the Elders and those who obey God. The same Judeans are named again in the letter to Philadelphia.

In the letter to Pergamos, the title describes the Word of God and hence is presenting Jesus as the Provider. The reward – to eat of the hidden manna – is the provision. The body of the letter discusses doctrines, that is, teachings or “words”. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is the direct opposite of the Word of God – the churches have no idea of the place of Israel in the Word of God and have no understanding of Jesus as the Kinsman-Redeemer. They claim Israel’s place for themselves and teach that all men are equal before God. Compare this with the deeds of the Nicolaitanes (setting themselves over God’s people – see footnotes for the letter to Ephesus) and Jesus’ own classification of the Pharisees.

In the letter to Thyatira, the title describes the Son of God as the Judge. This is the first of the four letters in the Dominion section. The reward – to rule The Nations with a rod of iron – shows the overcomers ruling with Jesus. The emphasis of the letter is on false religion. The reference to Jezebel presents the archetype of false religion. Jezebel openly encouraged false worship (fornication, in

25 The identity of the Nicolaitanes has always been obscure – because of our traditional religious upbringing. Bullinger ^(D) makes references to the etymology of the word, *nikos* (conquer) and *laos* (people) and says that because history knows nothing of a people of this name, it is better to leave it to “that day” when events will make its meaning manifest! Knoch ^(L) recognises that the basic meaning of the word is *conquer-people*. Although he ascribes the letters to stages in the Church’s history, he concludes that the conqueror is the beast of Rev 11:7 and the Nicolaitanes are Israelites who worship the beast. Rev J.H. Allen (in an old *Destiny* magazine) shows the word is a compound of *nikos-laos-ton* (the latter being the Genitive case ending which belongs to *laos* to give *laiton* – the laity). He states: “Therefore, we have, without the legal Greek construction, the English hyphenated word *nikos-laos-ton*, but which, with its lawful elisions and constructions, becomes the English name: Nicolaitanes, the full meaning of which, in its native tongue and in its ekklesiastical setting, is that the bishops and prelates of the Church have gained a triumphant victory or conquest over the *laiton* – the laity – until they have been compelled to submit to the arbitrary dominion of men who have become that thing which God hates “*Lords over God’s heritage*.” The latter being a reference to 1Pe 5:1-3 (the word *oversight* in 1Pe 5:2 is an appropriate translation of *episkopos* which occurs only 5 times – the number of the Spirit of God – and is translated *overseers* in Acts 20:28 and mistranslated *bishop* in Phi 1:1 , 1Ti 3:2 , Titus 1:7 and 1Pe 2:25.

26 For those who are firmly convinced that the one who was crucified is Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, please note that He is capable of **hate**. The Greek word is *miseo*, to hate, regard with ill-will, to detest, to abhor. This puts the followers of the Nicolaitanes in the same category as Esau (whom God **hated** before he was born). If deeds have nothing to do with resurrection, why does Jesus make such a statement about the deeds of the Nicolaitanes? If all men are equal before God, why did God hate Esau while he was still in his mother’s womb?

God's sight) and none acted as Moses directed, according to the Law. Those who *sufferest* (that is, tolerate) false religions are in direct opposition to the discipline and unwavering obedience demanded by God – hence the need for a rod of iron.

In the letter to Sardis, the reference to The Seven Spirits of God is a new term that was not part of the vision seen by John. But before we discuss the title, we need to look at the word *hath* in verse 1. The Greek word is *echo*, to hold, to possess; to keep, to hold fast, to hold tight; to direct to, to guide, to steer; to hold in, (to check or stop); to guard, to keep safe; to have power or the means to do a thing. The title shows Jesus as the possessor of the 7 stars in His right hand and the possessor of The Seven Spirits of The God.

The phrase, *The Seven Spirits of The God*, occurs only in Revelation. In Rev 5:6 we see that The Seven Spirits of The God are an integral part of the Lamb and that the spirits are stated as those *having been sent off* (with a commission) *into* (to dwell as Emmanuel – God with us) *the whole of (the) earth* (this is the *earth* that God made in Gen 2:4 ^(N)). This occurred at Jesus' Baptism when the Spirit of God descended upon Him like a dove. These are the same spirits described in Isa 11:2-7. They were the attributes that Jesus exhibited during His Ministry and hence formed another of the signs by which He could be recognised as the promised Messiah.

Therefore, the title of the letter is describing Jesus as the possessor of all powers and hence He is presented as the King. The reward – to be clothed in white – is to be clothed as priest-kings and therefore accepted as Sons of God. This fulfils the prophecy that Israel will be a Kingdom of royal priests ²⁷. The emphasis in the body of the letter is on spirit-based growth – *remember how* (by what means) *thou hast received and heard*. This points directly to the birth of Isaac (born of the flesh and of the spirit) and the discussion with Nicodemus: unless a man is begotten of water and begotten of the spirit, he cannot perceive (comprehend with the mind) the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus says *thou hast a name that mankind honours* (that is, materially rich and famous) *but thou art dead* (in God's sight). *Remember how* (via the spirit) *you heard and repent*. In other words, cast out the material honours and superficial observance of spirit-based standards.

In the letter to Philadelphia, another new term is introduced that was not part of John's initial vision – the Key of David. The terms used in the title of this letter occur in Isa 22:22:

And the key of the house of David will I lay on his (Eliakim) shoulder; so shall he open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open.

Hezekiah was a King of Judah and he followed Ahaz to the throne. Ahaz desecrated the House of the Lord, Hezekiah restored it. Hezekiah obeyed God to such an extent that he is described as being the greatest King in Judah's history (versus Israel's history). However, both Kings were guilty of misusing the Lord's Treasury (the gold and silver in the Temple) and ultimately it was taken away by the Babylonians. To protect the treasury from further misuse while Judah was still a Kingdom, God appointed Eliakim (*who God sets up*) as Hezekiah's chief minister. He had the same kind of power as Joseph had in Egypt. Eliakim was a prototype of Jesus in His role of the Son of Man – a man appointed by God to protect His treasure ²⁸, Israel (Ex 19:5 and Deut 7:6), from wanton misuse and ultimate destruction.

Hence the title describes Jesus as the Son of Man. He opened the Word of God to our understanding. Then He opened the door for Israel's reconciliation with God. He closed the door on the Levitical priesthood. No man is able to reverse any of these actions. The reward – to be made a pillar in the Temple of My God – is to be given a position of high status in the Kingdom of Heaven. The

²⁷ See also Rev 1:6.

²⁸ The same Hebrew word, *segullah*, is translated *peculiar* and *special*. It refers to valued property which is chosen and taken to one's self. It is used of the gold and silver of kings.

emphasis in the body of the letter is on preservation. Those who, like Hezekiah and Eliakim, preserve the Word of God and adhere to it despite all circumstances, will also be preserved. In contrast to those who will be a pillar in the Temple of God, are those of the Synagogue of Satan – people whose actions are to denigrate and degrade the Word of God in every way possible. Jesus accused the Pharisees of *shutting up the Kingdom of the Heavens*. He told them they will not go in themselves and that they try to prevent others from doing so by making their proselytes twofold more the child of hell than themselves. Jesus, on the other hand, having opened the door for Israel’s reconciliation is The Way and The Truth and The Life – for those who believe and obey Him.

The letter to the Laodiceans presents Jesus as Truth. The term *The Amen* is a transliterated Hebrew word, but its meaning is given in the title – The Trustworthy and True. Its use in the Old Covenant is seen in Deut 7:9, *know therefore that the Lord thy God is God, the “faithful” (True) God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations* and Isa 65:16, which refers to *the God of Truth*. Its association in Deut 7:9 with *keeping His covenant*, that is, fulfilling His promises, should not be ignored.

The reward – to sit with Jesus in His Throne – is given to those who have heard, understood and acted on the Word of God. The emphasis in the body of the letter is on active belief versus indolence. Jesus totally and utterly rejects those who, through indifference, have neglected God and make a joke of His Word. They have ignored the evidence of His own personal actions and so, like the generation of people that came out of Egypt, they are rejected and left to perish in the wilderness. This letter should dispel completely any idea of “gentle Jesus” who loves all men – He spues out those who ignore Him.

At this point, the conclusion of this study, it should be obvious that the 7 Letters are an integral part of the one scroll – as stated in Rev 1:11. Calling them “letters” is a misnomer because they cannot be sensibly separated. The whole purpose of limiting the number to seven and addressing them to 7 *assemblies* is to draw attention to the secrets of the Kingdom hidden in Scripture.

1.6. Further Study

This paper, like the first one in this series, has merely scratched the surface of the subject it covers. There are a number of key words and phrases that need further research, such as *patience*, *labour* and *the last (works) to be more than the first (works)*.

There is a great deal of information still hidden in the 7 Letters but the full significance of each letter will not be elucidated by anything less than a thorough analysis of the Greek text.



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