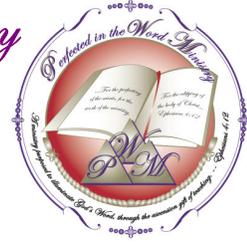




Perfected in the Word Ministry

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry,
for the edifying of the body of Christ."

Apostle/Bishop Stephen E. Parson, Sr., Ph.D.
Presiding Bishop & Chief Apostle



Bible Study

Tuesday, September 16, 2013

Bible Study: "The Seven Churches of Asia Minor"

- **Open Teaching & Discussion** (1.5 hours)
Topic & Scripture Reference to be discussed in detail.
 - **Revelation 1:11** ~ "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto **Ephesus**, and unto **Smyrna**, and unto **Pergamos**, and unto **Thyatira**, and unto **Sardis**, and unto **Philadelphia**, and unto **Laodicea**."
 - **Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus. [Revelation 2:1-7] Spirit of Criticism**
 - **Ephesus** ~ Greek: Ephesînos / Éphesos (ef-es-ee'-nos / ef'-es-os) "**permitted**" – a maritime city of Asia Minor, capital of Ionia and under the Romans, of proconsular Asia, situated on the Icarian Sea between Smyrna and Miletus.
 - **Revelation 2:2-4** ~ "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because **thou hast left thy first love**."
 - **Adam Clarke Commentary**
 - By **angel**, we are to understand **the messenger or person** sent by God to preside over this Church; and to him the epistle is directed, not as pointing out his state, but the state of the Church under his care. Angel of the Church here answers exactly to that officer of the synagogue among the Jews called sheliach tsibbur, the messenger of the Church, whose business it was to read, pray, and teach in the synagogue. The Church at Ephesus is first addressed, as being the place where John chiefly resided; and the city itself was the metropolis of that part of Asia. The **angel or bishop** at this time was most probably Timothy, who presided over that Church before St. John took up his residence there, and who is supposed to have continued in that office till a.d. 97, and to have been martyred a short time before St. John's return from Patmos.





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- **I know thy works:** The fallen or **backsliding** who have any tenderness of conscience left are easily discouraged, and are apt to think that there is no seed left from which any harvest can be reasonably expected. Let such be told that there is still a seed of godliness remaining, and that it requires only watching and strengthening the things which remain, by prompt application to God through Christ, in order to bring them back to the full enjoyment of all they have lost, and to renew them in the spirit of their mind. Ministers continually harping on *Ye are dead, ye are dead; there is little or no Christianity among you, etc., etc.*, are a contagion in a Church, and spread desolation and death wheresoever they go. It is far better to say, in such cases, "*Ye have lost ground, but ye have not lost all your ground; ye might have been much farther advanced, but through mercy ye are still in the way. The Spirit of God is grieved by you, but it is evident he has not forsaken you. Ye have not walked in the light as ye should, but your candlestick is not yet removed, and still the light shines. Ye have not much zeal, but ye have a little. In short, God still strives with you, still loves you, still waits to be gracious to you; take courage, set out afresh, come to God through Christ; believe, love, obey, and you will soon find days more blessed than you have ever yet experienced.*" Exhortations and encouragements of this kind are sure to produce the most blessed effects; and under such the work of God infallibly revives.
- **And thy labor:** He knew their works in general. Though they had left their first love, yet still they had so much love as excited them to labor, and enabled them to bear persecution patiently, and to keep the faith; for they could not tolerate evil men, and they had put fictitious apostles to the test, and had found them to be liars, pretending a Divine commission while they had none, and teaching false doctrines as if they were the truths of God.
- **Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee:** The clause should be read, according to the Greek, thus: **But I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love**. They did not retain that strong and ardent affection for God and sacred things which they had when first brought to the knowledge of the truth, and justified by faith in Christ.
- **Do the first works:** Resume your former zeal and diligence; watch, fast, pray, reprove sin, carefully attend all the ordinances of God, walk as in his sight, and rest not till you have recovered all your lost ground, and got back the evidence of your acceptance with your Maker.
- **And will remove thy candlestick:** Take away my ordinances, remove your ministers, and send you a famine of the word. As there is here an allusion to the candlestick in the tabernacle and temple, which could not be removed without suspending the whole Levitical service, so the threatening here intimates that, if they did not repent, etc., he would unchurch them; they should no longer have a pastor, no longer have the word and sacraments, and no longer have the presence of the Lord Jesus.

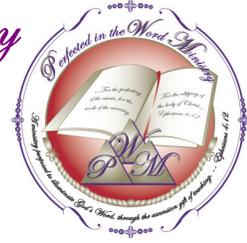




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- **The deeds of the Nicolaitanes:** These were, as is commonly supposed, a sect of the Gnostics, who taught the most impure doctrines, and followed the most impure practices. They are also supposed to have derived their origin from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons mentioned Acts 6:5 (“And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch.”). The Nicolaitanes taught the community of wives, that adultery and fornication were things indifferent, that eating meats offered to idols was quite lawful; and mixed several pagan rites with the Christian ceremonies.
- Gnostics /näs-tik/ ~ connected or associated with Gnosticism (näs-tə-si-zəm) : the thought and practice especially of various cults of late pre-Christian and early Christian centuries distinguished by the conviction that matter is evil and that emancipation comes through gnosis (nō-səs : esoteric knowledge of spiritual truth held by the ancient Gnostics to be essential to salvation).
- Other Religion (Eastern and Other) Terms ~ Zen (Japanese sect of Mahayana Buddhism that aims at enlightenment by direct intuition through meditation), antinomian (one who holds that under the gospel dispensation of grace the moral law is of no use or obligation because faith alone is necessary to salvation; one who rejects a socially established morality), avatar (the incarnation of a Hindu deity, an incarnation in human form, an embodiment (as of a concept or philosophy) often in a person), gnosticism, illuminati (any of various groups claiming special religious enlightenment; persons who are or who claim to be unusually enlightened, elite), ineffable (incapable of being expressed in words; indescribable; unspeakable; not to be uttered : taboo <the ineffable name of Jehovah>, karma (the force generated by a person's actions held in Hinduism and Buddhism to perpetuate transmigration and in its ethical consequences to determine the nature of the person's next existence), koan (a paradox to be meditated upon that is used to train Zen Buddhist monks to abandon ultimate dependence on reason and to force them into gaining sudden intuitive enlightenment), mantra (a mystical formula of invocation or incantation (as in Hinduism).

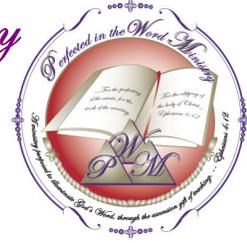




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Bible Study: "The Seven Churches of Asia Minor"

- **Open Teaching & Discussion** (continued)
 - **Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna. [Revelation 2:8-11] Martyr (The Martyr's Crown)**
 - **Smyrna** ~ Greek: Smyrnaïos / Smýrna (smmor-nah'-yos / smoor'-nah) "myrrh" – an Ionian city of Asia Minor, on the Aegean Sea, 40 miles (65 km) north of Ephesus.
 - **Revelation 2:9,10** ~ "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. **Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer**: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death**, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - **Adam Clarke Commentary**
 - **I know thy works**: I know all that ye have done, and all that ye have suffered. The **tribulation** here mentioned must mean **persecution**, either from the Jews, the heathens, or from the heretics, who, because of their flesh-pampering doctrines might have had many partisans at Smyrna.
 - **And poverty**: Stripped probably of all their temporal possessions, because of their attachment to the Gospel.
 - **But thou art rich**: Rich in faith, and heir of the kingdom of Christ.
 - **The blasphemy of them which say they are Jews**: There were persons there who professed Judaism, and had a synagogue in the place, and professed to worship the true God; but they had no genuine religion, and they served the devil rather than God. They applied a sacred name to an unholy thing: and this is one meaning of the word blasphemy in this book.
 - **Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer**: This may be addressed particularly to Polycarp, if he was at that time the bishop of this Church. He had much to suffer; and was at last burnt alive at Smyrna, about the year of our Lord 166. We have a very ancient account of his **martyrdom**, which has been translated by Cave, and is worthy of the reader's perusal. That account states that the Jews were particularly active in this **martyrdom**, and brought the fagots, etc., by which he was consumed. Such persons must indeed have been of the synagogue of Satan.

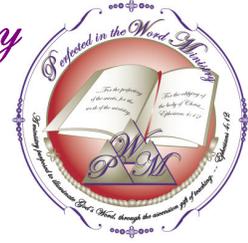




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- **Ten days:** As the days in this book are what is commonly called prophetic days, each answering to a year, the **ten years of tribulation** may denote **ten years of persecution**; and this was precisely the duration of the persecution under Diocletian, during which all the Asiatic Churches were grievously afflicted. Others understand the expression as implying frequency and abundance, as it does in other parts of Scripture. [Genesis 31:7,41 ~ “And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.” “Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.” – i.e. thou hast frequently changed my wages.] [Numbers 14:22 ~ “Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice.” – i.e. they have frequently and grievously tempted and sinned against me.] [Nehemiah 4:12 ~ “And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.” – i.e. they were frequently coming and informing us, that our adversaries intended to attack us.] [Job 19:3 ~ “These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me.” – i.e. ye have loaded me with continual reproaches.] [Daniel 1:20 ~ “And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.” – i.e. the king frequently consulted Daniel and his companions, and found them more abundantly informed and wise than all his counsellors.]
- **Be thou faithful unto death:** Be firm, hold fast the faith, confess Christ to the last, and at all hazards, and thou shalt have a crown of life - thou shalt be crowned with life, have an eternal happy existence, though thou suffer a temporal death. It is said of Polycarp that when brought before the judge, and commanded to abjure and blaspheme Christ, he firmly answered, “Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me wrong, how then can I blaspheme my king who hath saved me?” He was then adjudged to the flames, and **suffered cheerfully** for Christ his Lord and Master.

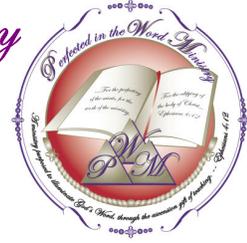




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Bible Study: "The Seven Churches of Asia Minor"

- **Open Teaching & Discussion** (continued)
 - **Unto the angel of the church in Pergamos. [Revelation 2:12-17] Idol Worship (Idolatry)**
 - **Pergamos** ~ Greek: Pérgamos / pýrgos (per'-gam-os / poor'-gos) "**height or elevation**" – a city of Mysia Minor, in Asia Minor, the seat of the dynasties of Attalus and Eumenes, famous for its temple of Aesculapius and the invention and manufacture of parchment. The river Selinus flowed through it and the Cetius ran past it. It was the birthplace of the physician Galen, and had a great royal library. It had a Christian church. [a tower; a fortified structure rising to a considerable height, to repel a hostile attack or to enable a watchman to see in every direction.]
 - **Revelation 2:13-16** ~ "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, **because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam**, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."
 - **Adam Clarke Commentary**
 - **Which hath the sharp sword:** See on Revelation 1:16 ("And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."). The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, cuts every way; it convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment; pierces between the joints and the marrow, divides between the soul and spirit, dissects the whole mind, and exhibits a regular anatomy of the soul. It not only reproveth and exposes sin, but it slays the ungodly, pointing out and determining the punishment they shall endure. Jesus has the sword with the two edges, because he is the Savior of sinners, and the Judge of quick and dead.
 - **I know thy works:** Where Satan has his throne – where he reigns as king, and is universally obeyed. It was a maxim among the Jews, that where the law of God was not studied, there Satan dwelt; but he was obliged to leave the place where a synagogue or academy was established.
 - **Thou holdest fast my name:** Notwithstanding that the profession of Christianity exposed this Church to the bitterest persecution, they held fast the name of Christian, which they had received from Jesus Christ, and did not deny his faith; for when brought to the trial they openly professed themselves disciples and followers of their Lord and Master.
 - **Antipas was my faithful martyr:** Who this Antipas was we cannot tell. We only know that he was a Christian, and probably bore some office in the Church, and became illustrious by his **martyrdom** in the cause of Christ.

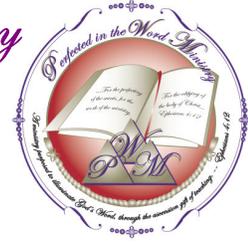




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There is a work extant called The Acts of Antipas, which makes him **bishop of Pergamos**, and states that he was put to death by being enclosed in a burning brazen bull. But this story confutes itself, as the Romans, under whose government Pergamos then was, never put any person to death in this way. It is supposed that he was murdered by some mob, who chose this way to vindicate the honor of their god Aesculapius, in opposition to the claims of our Lord Jesus.

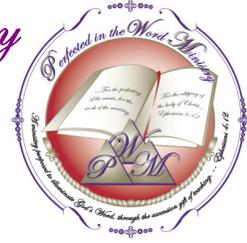
- **I have a few things against thee:** Their good deeds are first carefully sought out and commended; what was wrong in them is touched with a gentle but effectual hand. The followers of Balaam, the Nicolaitanes, and the Gnostics, were probably all the same kind of persons; but see on Revelation 2:6. What the doctrine of Balaam was, see the notes on Numbers 24:1 ("And when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.") through Numbers 25:18 ("For they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake."); and Numbers 31:1-54. It appears that there were some then in the Church at Pergamos who held eating things offered to idols in honor of those idols, and fornication, indifferent things. They associated with idolaters in the heathen temples, and partook with them in their religious festivals.
 - [NIV Disciple's Bible notes] Balaam explained the nature and manner of God's revelation to him and proceeded to speak about each of the nations affected. Apparently, Balaam was accustomed to using sorcery or divination to obtain the divine will. This would include casting lots or examining livers, hearts, or other interior parts of sacrificial animals. God did not allow such means to gain His will. God gave His prophets clear visions. They came only as God willed and could not be bought for a price. Israel's sexual sin probably involved participation in immoral religious fertility rites dedicated to the Moabite god. Because of the serious nature of their sin, God intervened and punished them. God can and does intervene in human life to punish sin. A moral foundation underlies history. At times immorality brings immediate historical judgment. Such judgment may be in the form of sickness or death. God is free to exercise judgment as He chooses. His judgment is not always as immediate.
 - God directed Israel to wage war to punish Midianites for leading Israel to sin. Explicit obedience to God's leadership and instructions was expected. Purity allowing all participants to remain qualified for worship was emphasized. God's dedicated religious leaders shared in the spoils of victory. Directions for God's nation Israel in a special time of gaining identity and space must not be taken over naively by a nation which was not directly chosen by God. The most we can learn theologically here about war would be that at special moments in history God allows human wars, uses them to accomplish His purposes, and expects obedience from His people in carrying them out.
- **Will fight against them with the sword of my mouth:** He now speaks for their edification and salvation; but if they do not repent, he will shortly declare those judgments which shall unavoidably fall upon them.



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Bible Study: "The Seven Churches of Asia Minor"

- **Open Teaching & Discussion** (continued)
 - **Unto the angel of the church in Thyatira. [Revelation 2:18-29] Spirit of Jezebel**
 - **Thyatira** ~ Greek: Thyáteira (thoo-at'-i-rah) "**odour of affliction**" – a colony of Macedonia Greeks, situated between Sardis and Pergamos on the river Lycus; its inhabitants gained their living by traffic and the art of dyeing in purple.
 - **Revelation 2:19-25** ~ "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, **because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.** And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come."
 - **Adam Clarke Commentary**
 - **I know thy works:** And of these he first sets forth their charity, their love to God and each other; and particularly to the poor and distressed: and hence followed their faith, their fidelity, to the grace they had received; and service, and ministration; properly pious and benevolent service to widows, orphans, and the poor in general.
 - **And thy patience:** Thy perseverance under afflictions and persecutions, and thy continuance in well-doing.
 - **Thy works:** The continued labor of love, and thorough obedience.
 - **The last to be more than the first:** They not only retained what they had received at first, but grew in grace, and in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. This is a rare thing in most Christian Churches: they generally lose the power of religion, and rest in the forms of worship; and it requires a powerful revival to bring them to such a state that their last works shall be more than their first.
 - **Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee:** There is an allusion here to the history of Ahab and Jezebel, as given in 2 Kings 9:1-10:36; and although we do not know who this Jezebel was, yet from the allusion we may take it for granted she was a woman of power and influence in Thyatira, who corrupted the true religion, and harassed the followers of God in that city, as Jezebel did in Israel. Thy Wife Jezebel; which intimates, indeed asserts, that this bad woman was the wife of the bishop of the Church, and his criminality in suffering her was therefore the greater. This reading Griesbach has received into the text.

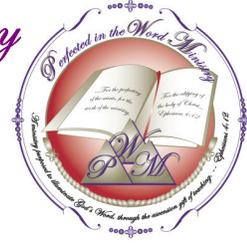




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She called herself a prophetess (i.e., set up for a teacher); taught the Christians that fornication, and eating things offered to idols, were matters of indifference, and thus they were seduced from the truth. But it is probable that by fornication here is meant idolatry merely, which is often its meaning in the Scriptures. It is too gross to suppose that the wife of the bishop of this Church could teach fornication literally. The messenger or bishop of this Church, probably her husband, suffered this: he had power to have cast her and her party out of the Church, or, as his wife, to have restrained her; but he did not do it, and thus she had every opportunity of seducing the faithful. This is what Christ had against the messenger of this Church.

- **I gave her space to repent:** This alludes to the history of Jezebel. God first sent Elijah to Ahab to pronounce a severe judgment upon him; upon which Ahab showed tokens of repentance, and so God put off his punishment. By these means the like punishment pronounced against Jezebel was also put off. Thus God gave her time to repent, which she did not, but instead of that seduced her sons to the same sins. See 1 Kings 21:1-29. According to the Mosaical law, the punishment of **idolatrous seducers** was not to be delayed at all, but God sometimes showed mercy; and now much more under the Christian dispensation, though that mercy is often abused, and thus produces the contrary effect, as in the case of this Jezebel. See Ecclesiastes 8:11 ("Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.").
- **Behold, I will cast her into a bed:** This again alludes to the same history. Ahaziah, son of Ahab and Jezebel, by his mother's ill instruction and example, followed her ways. God punished him by making him fall down, as is supposed, from the top of the terrace over his house, and so to be bedridden for a long time under great anguish, designing thereby to give him time to repent; but when, instead of that, he sent to consult Baalzebub, Elijah was sent to pronounce a final doom against his impenitence. Thus the son of Jezebel, who had **committed idolatry** with and by her advice, was long cast into the bed of affliction, and not repenting, died: in the same manner his brother Jehoram succeeded likewise. All this while Jezebel had time and warning enough to repent; and though she did not prevail with Jehoram to **continue in the idolatrous worship of Baal**, yet she persisted in her own way, notwithstanding God's warnings. The sacred writer, therefore, here threatens the **Gnostic Jezebel** to make that wherein she delighteth, **as adulterers in the bed of lust**, to be the very place, occasion, and instrument, of her greatest torment. So in Isaiah, **the bed is made a symbol of tribulation**, and anguish of body and mind. See Isaiah 28:20 ("For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it."); Job 33:19 ("He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain.").

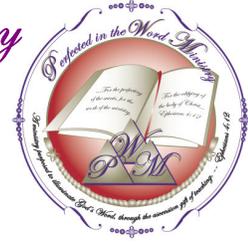




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- **And I will kill her children with death:** That is, I will certainly destroy her offspring and memory, and thereby ruin her designs. Jezebel's two sons, being both kings were both slain; and after that, all the seventy sons of Ahab (2 Kings 10:1 – "And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's children..."); in all which the hand of God was very visible. In the same manner God predicts the destruction of the heretics and heresies referred to (Revelation 2:16). It should seem by the expression, "I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts (Revelation 2:23)," that these heretics lurked about, and sowed their pernicious doctrines secretly. But our Savior tells them that it was in vain, for he had power to bring their deeds to light, having that Divine power of searching into the Evilly and affections of men; and hereby he would show both them and us that he is, according to his title, The Son of God; and hath such eyes to pry into their actions, that, like a fire, they will search into every thing, and burn up the chaff which cannot stand his trial; so that the depths of Satan, mentioned in the next verse, to which this alludes, (Christ assuming here this title purposely) shall avail nothing to those who think by their secret craft to undermine the Christian religion; he will not only bring to light, but baffle all their evil intentions. (Revelation 17:9 – "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.")
- **But unto you I say, and unto the rest:** But unto the rest, etc. This is the reading of the Complutensian, and seems preferable to the common one, as it evidently shows that the rest of the epistle wholly concerns the faithful, who have not received the former doctrine of error. "I will put upon you none other burden" is a commendation of the sound part of the Church, that they have no need of any new exhortation or charge to be given them, no new advice but to persevere as usual. (Romans 15:14,15 – "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God.") The expression of burden is taken from the history of Ahab, 2 Kings 9:25 ("Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him."): "The Lord laid this burden on him;" a word often used by the prophets to signify a prophecy threatening heavy things to be suffered. (Isaiah 13:1 – "The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see;" and Numbers 4:19 – "But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden.")

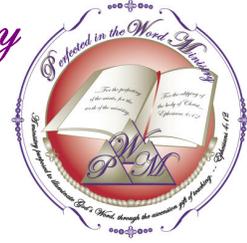




Perfecting in the Word Ministry

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It is worthy of remark that the **Gnostics** called their doctrine the depths of God, and the depths of Bythos, intimating that they contained the most profound secrets of Divine wisdom. Christ here calls them the depths of Satan, being master pieces of his subtlety. Perhaps they thought them to be of God, while all the time they were deceived by the devil.

- **That which ye have:** That is, the pure doctrine of the Gospel, hold fast till I come - till I come to execute the judgments which I have threatened.
- The Complutensian Polyglot Bible ~ is the name given to the first printed polyglot of the entire Bible, initiated and financed by Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517) and published by Complutense University). It includes the first printed editions of the Greek New Testament, the complete Septuagint, and the Targum Onkelos. Of the 600 printed six-volume sets, only 123 are known to have survived to date.
- A polyglot (also spelled polyglott) is a book that contains side-by-side versions of the same text in several different languages. Some editions of the Bible or its parts are polyglots, in which the Hebrew and Greek originals are exhibited along with historical translations. Polyglots are useful for studying the history of the text and its interpretation.

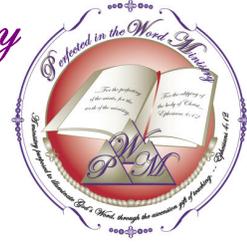




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Bible Study: "The Seven Churches of Asia Minor"

- **Open Teaching & Discussion** (continued)
 - **Unto the angel of the church in Sardis. [Revelation 3:1-6] A Dead Church**
 - **Sardis** ~ Greek: Sárdeis (sar'-dice) "**red ones**" – a luxurious city in Asia Minor, the capital of Lydia.
 - **Revelation 3:1c-4** ~ "I know thy works, that **thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead**. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."
 - **Adam Clarke Commentary**
 - **I know thy works:** Ye have the reputation of Christians, and consequently of being alive to God, through the quickening influence of the Divine Spirit; but **ye are dead** - ye have not the life of God in your souls, ye have not walked consistently and steadily before God, and his Spirit has been grieved with you, and he has withdrawn much of his light and power.
 - **Be watchful:** Ye have lost ground by carelessness and inattention. Awake, and keep awake!
 - **Strengthen the things which remain:** The convictions and good desires, with any measure of the fear of God and of a tender conscience, which, although still subsisting, are about to perish, because the Holy Spirit, who is the author of them, being repeatedly grieved, is about finally to depart.
 - **Thy works perfect:** Filled up. They performed duties of all kinds, but no duty completely. They were constantly beginning, but never brought any thing to a proper end. Their resolutions were languid, their strength feeble, and their light dim. They probably maintained their reputation before men, but their works were not perfect before God.
 - **Remember:** Enter into a serious consideration of your state.
 - **How thou hast received:** With what joy, zeal, and gladness ye heard the Gospel of Christ when first preached to you.
 - **Hold fast:** Those good desires and heavenly influences which still remain.
 - **And repent:** Be humbled before God, because ye have not been workers together with him, but have received much of his grace in vain.
 - **If therefore thou shalt not watch:** If you do not consider your ways, watching against sin, and for opportunities to receive and do good.
 - **I will come on thee as a thief:** As the thief comes when he is not expected, so will I come upon you if ye be not watchful, and cut you off from life and hope.

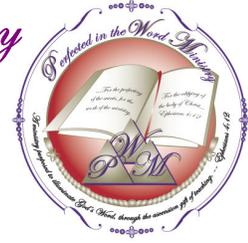




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- **Thou hast a few names even in Sardis:** A few persons, names being put for those who bore them. And as the members of the Church were all enrolled, or their names entered in a book, when admitted into the Church or when baptized, names are here put for the people themselves.
- **Have not defiled their garments:** Their souls. The Hebrews considered holiness as the garb of the soul, and evil actions as stains or spots on this garb. So in Shabbath, folio 152, 2: "A certain king gave royal garments to his servants: those who were prudent folded them up, and laid them by in a chest; those who were foolish put them on, and performed their daily labor in them. After some time the king asked for those royal robes; the wise brought theirs white and clean, the foolish brought theirs spotted with dirt. With the former the king was well pleased; with the latter he was angry. Concerning the former he said: Let those garments be laid up in my wardrobe, and let the persons go home in peace. Of the latter he said: Let the garments be put into the hands of the fuller, and cast those who wore them into prison." This parable is spoken on these words of Ecclesiastes (Ecclesiastes 12:7 – "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.").
 - Shabbath 152b [Shabbath, folio 152, paragraphs 1 and 2] ~ Rab Judah assembled ten men every day and they sat in his place. After seven days he [the dead man] appeared to him in a dream and said to him, 'Thy mind be at rest, for thou hast set my mind at rest.' R. Abbahu said: The dead man knows all that is said in his presence until the top-stone [golel] closes [the grave]. R. Hiyya and R. Simeon b. Rabbi differ therein: one maintains, until the top-stone closes [the grave]; whilst the other says, until the flesh rots away. He who says, until the flesh rots away. – because it is written, But his flesh upon him hath pain and his soul within him mourneth. He who says, until the top-stone closes [the grave]. – because it is written, and the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God. Our Rabbis taught: 'And the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it': Render it back to him as He gave it to thee, [viz.,] in purity, so do thou [return it] in purity. This may be compared to a mortal king who distributed royal apparel to his servants. The wise among them folded it up and laid it away in a chest, whereas the fools among them went and did their work in them. After a time the king demanded his garments: the wise among them returned them to him immaculate, [but] the fools among them returned them soiled. The king was pleased with the wise but angry with the fools. Of the wise he said, 'Let my robes be placed in my treasury and they can go home in peace'; while of the fools he said, 'Let my robes be given to the fuller, and let them be confined in prison.' Thus too, with the Holy One, blessed be He: concerning the bodies of the righteous He says, He entereth into peace, they rest in their beds; while concerning their souls He says, yet the soul of my Lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God. But concerning the bodies of the wicked He says, There is no peace saith the Lord, unto the wicked; while concerning their souls He says, and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling. [Reference: Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Shabbath]





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Shabbath is the first treatise of Mo'ed, the second Order of the Talmud. It contains 157 folios divided into 24 chapters, and is the second longest Tractate of the Talmud, being exceeded only by Baba Bathra, which runs to 176 folios. As its name implies, the Tractate deals with the laws and regulations of the Sabbath. It is obvious that an institution of such far-reaching importance, which is indeed one of the foundations of Judaism and for the violation of which Scripture prescribes the supreme penalty, had to be carefully defined, and its observance precisely determined. To this task the Rabbis devoted themselves in the present treatise.

- **They shall walk with me in white:** They shall be raised to a state of eternal glory, and shall be for ever with their Lord.
- **I will not blot out his name:** This may be an allusion to the custom of registering the names of those who were admitted into the Church in a book kept for that purpose, from which custom our baptismal registers in Churches are derived. These are properly books of life, as there those who were born unto God were registered; as in the latter those who were born in that parish were enrolled. Or there may be allusions to the white raiment worn by the priests, and the erasing of the name of any priest out of the sacerdotal list who had either sinned, or was found not to be of the seed of Aaron. In Middoth, fol. 37, 2: “The great council of Israel sat and judged the priests. If in a priest any vice was found they stripped of his white garments and clothed him in black, in which he wrapped himself, went out, and departed. Him in whom no vice was found they clothed in white, and he went and took his part in the ministry among his brother priests.”
- **I will confess his name:** I will acknowledge that this person is my true disciple, and a member of my mystical body. In all this there may also be an allusion to the custom of registering citizens. Their names were entered into books, according to their condition, tribes, family, etc.; and when they were dead, or had by unconstitutional acts forfeited their right of citizenship, the name was blotted out, or erased from the registers. (Exodus 32:32 – “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.”)





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Bible Study: "The Seven Churches of Asia Minor"

- **Open Teaching & Discussion** (continued)
 - **Unto the angel of the church in Philadelphia. [Revelation 3:7-13] An Open Door**
 - **Philadelphia** ~ Greek: Philadélpheia / philádelphos (fil-ad-el'-fee-ah / fil-ad-el'-fos) "**brotherly love**" – a city of Lydia in Asia Minor, situated near the eastern base of of Mount Tmolus, founded and named by the Pergamene king, Attalus II Philadelphus. After the death of Attalus III Philometor, 133 BC, it together with his entire kingdom came by his will under the jurisdiction of the Romans. (loving brother or sister; in a broader sense, loving one like a brother, loving one's fellow countrymen: of an Israelite; of a Christian loving Christians)
 - **Revelation 3:8-11** ~ "I know thy works: behold, **I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:** for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
 - **Adam Clarke Commentary**
 - **He that hath the key of David:** See this metaphor explained, Matthew 16:19 ("And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."). Key is the emblem of authority and knowledge; the key of David is the regal right or authority of David. David could shut or open the kingdom of Israel to whom he pleased. He was not bound to leave the kingdom even to his eldest son. He could choose whom he pleased to succeed him. The kingdom of the Gospel, and the kingdom of heaven, are at the disposal of Christ. He can shut against whom he will; he can open to whom he pleases. **If he shuts, no man can open; if he opens, no man can shut.** His determinations all stand fast, and none can reverse them. This expression is an allusion to Isaiah 22:22 ("And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; **so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.**"), where the prophet promises to Eliakim, under the symbol of the key of the house of David, the government of the whole nation (i.e., all the power of the king), to be executed by him as his deputy; but the words, as here applied to Christ, show that He is absolute.
 - **I know thy works:** I have opened to thee **a door to proclaim and diffuse my word;** and, notwithstanding **there are many adversaries** to the spread of my Gospel, yet none of them shall be able to prevent it.





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- **Thou hast a little strength:** Very little political authority or influence; yet thou hast kept my word – hast kept the true doctrine; and hast not denied my name, by taking shelter in heathenism when Christianity was persecuted. The little strength may refer either to the smallness of the numbers, or to the littleness of their grace.
- **I will make them:** Show them to be, of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, pretending thereby to be of the synagogue of God, and consequently his true and peculiar children.
- **I will make them to come and worship:** I will so dispose of matters in the course of my providence, that the Jews shall be obliged to seek unto the Christians for toleration, support, and protection, which they shall be obliged to sue for in the most humble and abject manner.
- **To know that I have loved thee:** That the love which was formerly fixed on the Jews is now removed, and transferred to the Gentiles.
- **The word of my patience:** The doctrine which has exposed you to so much trouble and persecution, and required so much patience and magnanimity to bear up under its attendant trials.
- **The hour of temptation:** A time of sore and peculiar trial which might have proved too much for their strength. He who is faithful to the grace of God is often hidden from trials and difficulties which fall without mitigation on those who have been unfaithful in his covenant. Many understand by the hour of temptation the persecution under Trajan, which was greater and more extensive than the preceding ones under Nero and Domitian.
- **To try them:** That is, such persecutions will be the means of trying and proving those who profess Christianity, and showing who were sound and thorough Christians and who were not.
- **Behold, I come quickly:** These things will shortly take place; and I am coming with consolations and rewards to my faithful followers, and with judgments to my adversaries.
- **Take thy crown:** God has provided mansions for you; let none through your fall occupy those seats of blessedness.
- **A pillar in the temple:** There is probably all allusion here to the two pillars in the temple of Jerusalem, called **Jachin and Boaz, stability and strength**. The Church is the temple; Christ is the foundation on which it is built; and his ministers are the Pillars by which, under him, it is adorned and supported. St. Paul has the same allusions, Galatians 2:9 ("And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas **the right hands of fellowship**; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.").
- **I will write upon him the name of my God:** That is, I will make him a priest unto myself. The priest had written on his forehead (**kodesh laihovah**), "**Holiness to the Lord.**"

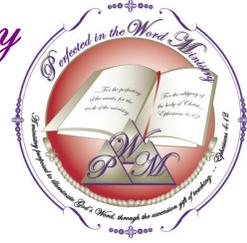




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- **And the name of the city of my God:** As the high priest had on his breastplate the names of the twelve tribes engraved, and these constituted the city or Church of God; Christ here promises that in place of them the twelve apostles, representing the Christian Church, shall be written, which is called the New Jerusalem, and which God has adopted in place of the twelve Jewish tribes.
- **My new name:** The Savior of All; the light that lightens the Gentiles; the Christ; the Anointed One; the only Governor of his Church; and the Redeemer of All mankind. There is here an intimation that the Christian Church is to endure for ever; and the Christian ministry to last as long as time endures: He shall go no more out for ever.

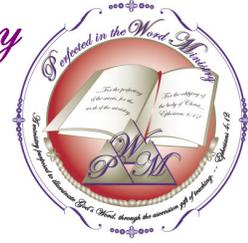




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Bible Study: "The Seven Churches of Asia Minor"

- **Open Teaching & Discussion** (continued)
 - **Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans. [Revelation 3:14-22] Lukewarm Christians**
 - **Laodiceans** ~ Greek: Laodikeús / Laodíkeia (lah-od-ik-yooce' / Lah-od-ik'-i-ah) "**justice of the people**" – a city of Phrygia, situated on the river Lycus not far from Colosse. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 66 A.D. and rebuilt by Marcus Aurelius. It was the seat of the Christian church.
 - **Revelation 3:15-19** ~ "I know thy works, that **thou art neither cold nor hot**: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."
 - **Adam Clarke Commentary**
 - **I know thy works: Ye are neither heathens nor Christians** – neither good nor evil – neither led away by false doctrine, nor thoroughly addicted to that which is true. In a word, they were listless and indifferent, and seemed to care little whether heathenism or Christianity prevailed. Though they felt little zeal either for the salvation of their own souls or that of others, yet they had such a general conviction of the truth and importance of Christianity, that they could not readily give it up.
 - **I would thou wert cold or hot:** That is, ye should be decided; adopt some part or other, and be in earnest in your attachment to it. If ever the words of Mr. Erskine, in his Gospel Sonnets, were true, they were true of this Church: - "To good and evil equal bent, I'm both a devil and a saint."
They were too good to go to hell, too bad to go to heaven. Like Ephraim and Judah (Hosea 6:4 – "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it passeth away.") They had good dispositions which were captivated by evil ones, and they had evil dispositions which in their turn yielded to those that were good; and the Divine justice and mercy seem puzzled to know what to do to or with them. This was the state of the **Laodicean Church**; and our Lord expresses here in this apparent wish, the same that is expressed by Epictetus, Ench., chap. 36: "Thou oughtest to be one kind of man, either a good man or a bad man."
 - **Because thou art lukewarm:** Irresolute and undecided.

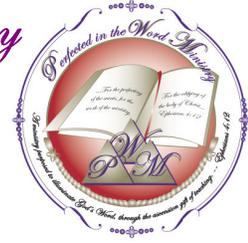




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- **I will spue thee out of my mouth:** He alludes here to the known effect of tepid water upon the stomach; it generally produces a nausea. I wilt cast thee off. Thou shalt have no interest in me. Though thou hast been near to my heart, yet now I must pluck thee thence, because slothful, careless, and indolent; thou art not in earnest for thy soul.
- **I am rich:** Thou supposest thyself to be in a safe state, perfectly sure of final salvation, because thou hast begun well, and laid the right foundation. It was this most deceitful conviction that cut the nerves of their spiritual diligence; they rested in what they had already received, and seemed to think that once in grace must be still in grace.
- **Thou art wretched:** Most wretched. "The word signifies," according to Mintert, "being worn out and fatigued with grievous labors, as they who labor in a stone quarry, or are condemned to the mines." So, instead of being children of God, as they supposed, and infallible heirs of the kingdom, they were, in the sight of God, in the condition of the most abject slaves.
- **And miserable:** Most deplorable, to be pitied by all men.
- **And poor:** Having no spiritual riches, no holiness of heart. Rich and poor are sometimes used by the rabbins to express the righteous and the wicked.
- **And blind:** The eyes of thy understanding being darkened, so that thou dost not see thy state.
- **And naked:** Without the image of God, not clothed with holiness and purity. A more deplorable state in spiritual things can scarcely be imagined than that of this Church. And it is the true picture of many Churches, and of innumerable individuals.
- **I counsel thee:** O fallen and deceived soul, hear Jesus! Thy case is not hopeless. Buy of me.
- **Gold tried in the fire:** Come and receive from me, without money and without price, faith that shall stand in every trial: so gold tried in the fire is here understood. But it may mean pure and undefiled religion, or that grace or Divine influence which produces it, which is more valuable to the soul than the purest gold to the body. They had before imaginary riches; this alone can make them truly rich.
- **White raiment:** Holiness of heart and life.
- **Anoint thine eyes:** Pray for, that ye may receive, the enlightening influences of my Spirit, that ye may be convinced of your true state, and see where your help lies.
- **As many as I love:** So it was the love he still had to them that induced him thus to reprehend and thus to counsel them.
- **Be zealous:** Be in earnest, to get your souls saved, They had no zeal; this was their bane. He now stirs them up to diligence in the use of the means of grace and repentance for their past sins and remissness.

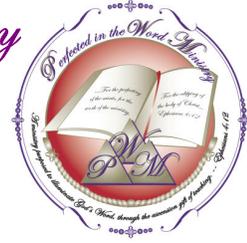




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- **Behold, I stand at the door and knock:** There are many sayings of this kind among the ancient rabbins; thus in Shir Hashirim Rabba, fol. 25,1: "God said to the Israelites, My children, open to me one door of repentance, even so wide as the eye of a needle, and I will open to you doors through which calves and horned cattle may pass." In Sohar Levit, fol. 8, Colossians 32, it is said: "If a man conceal his sin, and do not open it before the holy King, although he ask mercy, yet the door of repentance shall not be opened to him. But if he open it before the holy blessed God, God spares him, and mercy prevails over wrath; and when he laments, although all the doors were shut, yet they shall be opened to him, and his prayer shall be heard." Christ stands - waits long, at the door of the sinner's heart; he knocks - uses judgments, mercies, reproofs, exhortations, etc., to induce sinners to repent and turn to him; he lifts up his voice - calls loudly by his word, ministers, and Spirit.
- **If any man hear:** If the sinner will seriously consider his state, and attend to the voice of his Lord.
- **And open the door:** This must be his own act, receiving power for this purpose from his offended Lord, who will not break open the door; he will make no forcible entry.
- **I will come in to him:** I will manifest myself to him, heal all his backslidings, pardon all his iniquities, and love him freely.
- **Will sup with him:** Hold communion with him, feed him with the bread of life.
- **And he with me:** I will bring him at last to dwell with me in everlasting glory.
- **To sit with me in my throne:** In every case it is to him that overcometh, to the conqueror, that the final promise is made. He that conquers not is not crowned, therefore every promise is here made to him that is faithful unto death. Here is a most remarkable expression: Jesus has conquered, and is set down with the Father upon the Father's throne; he who conquers through Christ sits down with Christ upon his throne: but Christ's throne and the throne of the Father is the same; and it is on this same throne that those who are faithful unto death are finally to sit! How astonishing is this state of exaltation! The dignity and grandeur of it who can conceive? This is the worst of the seven Churches, and yet the most eminent of all the promises are made to it, showing that the worst may repent, finally conquer, and attain even to the highest state of glory.

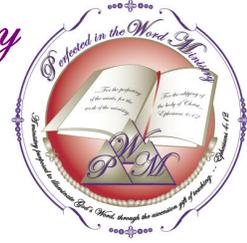




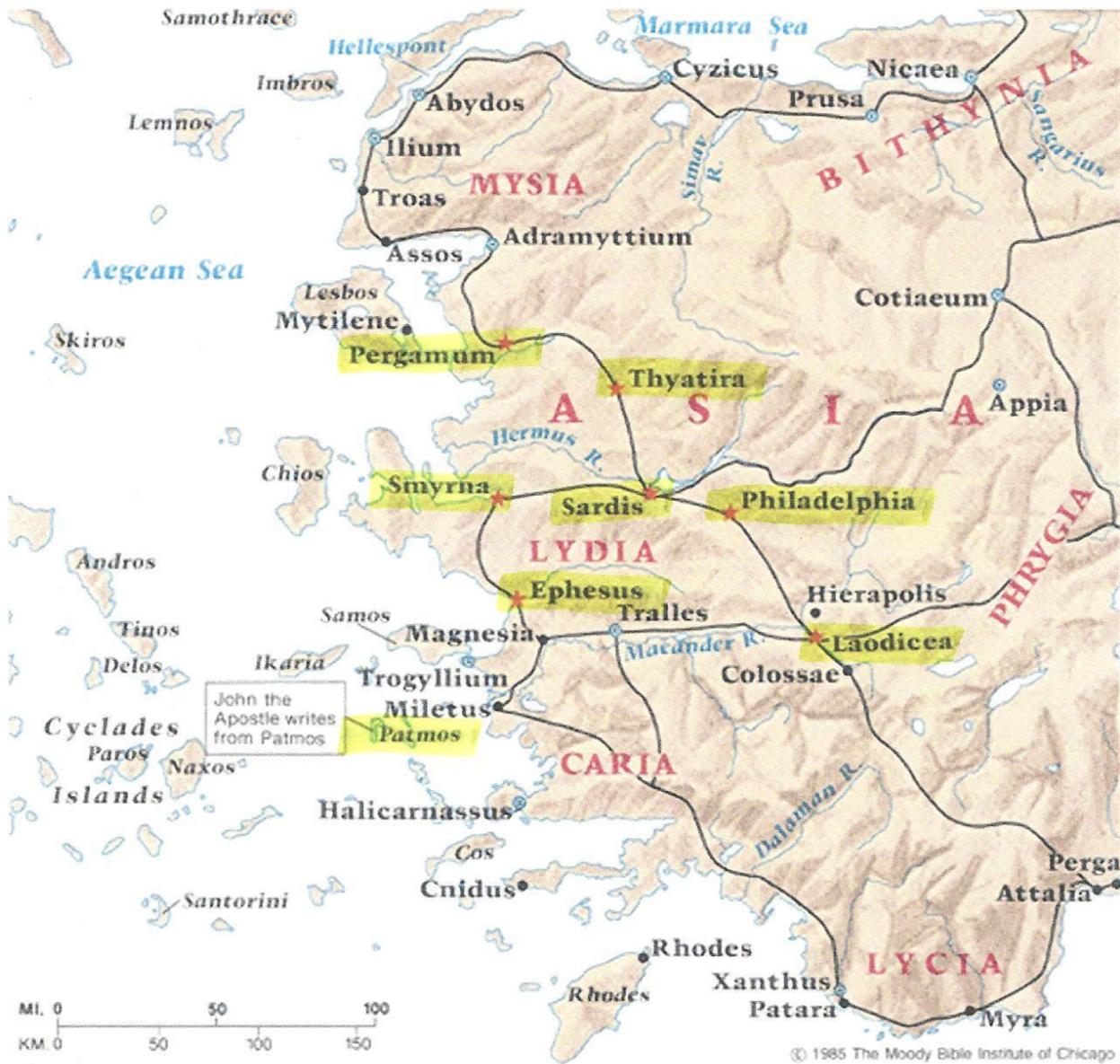
Perfecting in the Word Ministry

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry,
for the edifying of the body of Christ."

Apostle/Bishop Stephen E. Parson, Sr., Ph.D.
Presiding Bishop & Chief Apostle



Seven Churches in Asia Minor (Modern-Day Turkey)





Perfected in the Word Ministry

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for the edifying of the body of Christ."*

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