

# Preface

There are four basic interpretations of the messages to the seven churches. First, these churches did exist historically. Second, these churches represent all churches through all ages. Third, there will be seven different churches at the end of the age. The fourth view is that these seven churches represent seven consecutive eras of local church history extending from the first century to the end of the age. **It seems in all the discussions the fact is overlooked that the seven letters were written to seven pastors.**

God's commendations and criticisms were directed to the pastors not to the congregations.

## **It was to the pastors Christ said... "I know"**

- **Revelation 2:2** - "*I know thy works...*"
- **Revelation 2:9** - "*I know thy works...*"
- **Revelation 2:13** - "*I know thy works...*"
- **Revelation 2:19** - "*I know thy works...*"
- **Revelation 3:1** - "*I know thy works...*"
- **Revelation 3:8** - "*I know thy works...*"
- **Revelation 3:15** - "*I know thy works...*"

## **It was to the pastors Christ said... "repent"**

- **Revelation 2:5** - "*...repent...or else...*"
  - **Revelation 2:5** - "*...except thou repent.*"
  - **Revelation 2:16** - "*Repent; or else...*"
  - **Revelation 3:3** - "*...hold fast, and repent.*"
  - **Revelation 3:19** - "*...be zealous therefore, and repent.*"
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**It was to the pastors Christ said... • Revelation 3:16**

- *“So then because thou art lukewarm,  
and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”*

This warning has nothing to do with salvation and neither does it focus on the congregation. It is a warning to the pastor that he will cease to be God’s spokesman.

This book takes a closer look at the commendations and criticisms the Lord addressed to His pastors.



*“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and  
do not the things which I say?”*

(Luke 6:46)

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Revelation 2:1,2

**“Unto the angel of  
the church of Ephesus write...I know thy works...”**

Revelation 2:8,9

**“Unto the angel of  
the church in Smyrna write...I know thy works...”**

Revelation 2:12,13

**“Unto the angel of  
the church in Pergamos write..I know thy works...”**

Revelation 2:18,19

**“Unto the angel of  
the church in Thyatira write...I know thy works...”**

Revelation 3:1,8

**“Unto the angel of  
the church in Sardis write...I know thy works...”**

Revelation 3:7,8

**“Unto the angel of  
the church in Philadelphia write...I know thy works...”**

Revelation 3:14,15

**“Unto the angel of  
the church of the Laodiceans write...I know thy works...”**



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THE

# Seven Pastors

OF THE REVELATION



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## Introduction

**John, the only remaining apostle**, was nearly one hundred years old. The Temple and the city of Jerusalem lay in ruins, the Jews had been dispersed for over twenty-five years and the local church dispensation was underway.

**Alone, on the Isle of Patmos, John begins to write to seven different pastors.** He begins, “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.*” (Revelation 1:1).

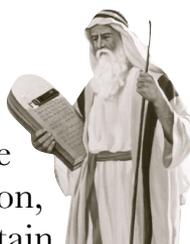
The word “*revelation*” is not used here in the sense that Christ is being revealed, but rather, Christ is revealing something. Paul used the same word in Galatians 1:12 where we read Paul said, “*...I taught...by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” He used the same phrase again in Ephesians 3:3 where he referred to the “*...revelation he (Christ) made known unto me the mystery.*” In Romans 16:25 Paul referred to this revelation as, “*...the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.*”

## **WHAT REVELATION WAS PAUL TALKING ABOUT?**

In Acts chapter nine we have the account of Paul being saved. In verse fifteen, we read that Jesus said Paul was, “...*a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.*” He was told to, “*Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*” The first thing Paul was to do was to travel to a specific mountain where Christ met with him. In Galatians 1:17 Paul said, “*Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.*”

### **PAUL AND MOSES ON THE SAME MOUNTAIN**

When God wanted someone to instruct Israel concerning how things were to be done during the Old Testament dispensation, He called Moses to meet Him on a mountain and gave him the information he needed to lead the nation of Israel. Exodus 19:3 says, “*And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel.*”

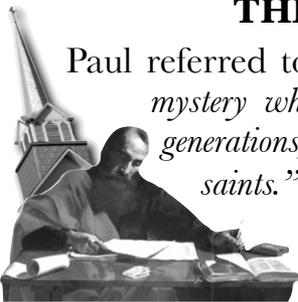


### **Paul Received Instructions From Christ Concerning The Local Church Dispensation.**

When God wanted someone to instruct people concerning how things were to be done during the local church dispensation, He called Paul to come to the same mountain and gave him the information he

needed to lead in the organizing of local churches. It was on that mountain that Paul received instructions concerning how pastors are to behave “...in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” (First Timothy 3:15). Again, referring to this trip, Paul said in Galatians 4:25, “For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia.” A close study of the accounts concerning when Moses and Paul received instructions will reveal that it was Christ who met with both of them.

## **PAUL WAS THE FIRST PERSON ON EARTH TO HEAR ABOUT GOD’S PLAN FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH**



Paul referred to what Christ taught him as “...*the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.*” (Colossians 1:26).

Following his instructions from the Lord concerning the local church age, Paul returned to Damascus. When his life was in danger he escaped and went to Jerusalem, where he met with Peter for fifteen days (Galatians 1:18) before returning to his hometown of Tarsus.

## **THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH NEEDED PAUL**

A close study of the four Gospels and the early part of the Book of Acts will show that local churches were meeting long before Antioch. However, Paul was the only person on the face of the earth who



knew how God wanted the churches organized, therefore we read in Acts 11:25, *“Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul.”* (Paul). He would know what to do, because, *“...the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations,”* had been revealed unto him. Act 11:26 says, *“And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”*

## **PAUL’S “MINISTRY” CONCERNING THE LOCAL CHURCH AGE**



In Ephesians 3:1-3, Paul said, *“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he (Christ) made known unto me the mystery.”* In verses five and six, Paul continued, *“Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.”*

## **PAUL’S GOD-GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY**

In verses 7-9, Paul continued, *“Whereof I was made a minister,...that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.”*

Paul spent the rest of his life introducing the local church age. He mentioned the local church in Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews.

He wrote about how things were to be done in the churches. Even at the end of his life, Paul sat in a dungeon writing to the pastor of the church at Ephesus. His purpose for Timothy, and for all pastors, was and is “...*that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God.*”

### **WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF REVELATION?**

The Book of Revelation has three main divisions. In Revelation 1:19 we read John was to “*Write the things which thou hast seen,* (Past Tense) *and the things which are,* (Present Tense) *and the things which shall be hereafter.*” (Future Tense).

### **THE CONDITION OF THE SEVEN PASTORS**

The local church age that Paul was given instructions about was underway. John was to write about the condition of the seven pastors and their churches in Asia. (For John this was...“*The things that are.*”) The focus of the first three chapters of Revelation is on the local church age.



# SEVEN CHURCHES

## SEVEN PASTORS

God's message is addressed to the pastors of the "...seven churches." In verse eleven He tells us where those churches were and in verse twenty He makes it plain that the focus is on the pastors. In verse thirteen Christ is in the "...the midst" of all the seven churches; however, at the end of the local church age we find Christ saying, "*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.*"

### CHRIST WAS IN CHARGE

#### - THAT SOON CHANGED -

The message to the church at Ephesus begins with the information that Christ "...holdeth the seven stars in his right hand." (Chapter 2:1). "*The seven stars are the angels (the pastors) of the seven churches.*" (Chapter 1:20).

### “HIS RIGHT HAND”

The Word of God has much to say about the right hand of Christ. His right hand speaks of power and authority.

- **Revelation 1:17** says Christ laid His "*right hand*" on John.
- **Psalms 20:6** speaks of "*...the saving strength of his right hand.*"
- **Psalms 98:1** says - "*...his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.*"
- **Matthew 27:29** says they mockingly "*...platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!*"
- **Acts 5:31** says, "*Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*"

When Christ has the pastor in His right hand, it means Christ has the control of the pastor. The pastor of the church at Ephesus did not focus on gathering a great crowd. His focus as a pastor, was not on keeping the church full, it was on keeping the church pure. We read in verse two, that he was commended because he did not *"...bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."*

### **"THUS SAITH THE KING!"**

In First Timothy, God commanded the pastor at Ephesus, to *"preach the word."* The Greek word for preach in Second Timothy 4:2 means *"to herald."* A herald came with a message from the King. It was not the herald's responsibility to soft-pedal the message so people would not get upset. He was to say what the King told him to say and he was not to leave out parts that might cause people to leave town.



### **PAUL WARNED THE LEADERS AT EPHESUS -THEY DID NOT LISTEN-**

In Acts 20:28, Paul was talking to the "overseers." He warned them to *"take heed to yourselves."* He warned them to *"feed"* the Christians in that local church. He warned them about the "grievous wolves" that would go after the church members. He warned them *"night and day"* for *"three years,"* and he wept as he warned them. The problems that arose were not taken care of quickly, and their local church was in serious trouble in just a few short years.

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A Personal Letter From The Lord To His Pastor

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Revelation 2:1,2

**“Unto the angel of  
the church of Ephesus  
write...I know thy works...”**



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THE PASTOR AT



# *Ephesus*

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## **PLANTING THE SEEDS OF A SICK CHURCH**



Churches do not get sick on their own, they get sick because the pastor plants seeds that make them sick, or he allows someone else to plant the seeds.

### **THE FIRST YEARS AT THE LOCAL CHURCH AT EPHESUS WERE GREAT YEARS**

The Bible gives us more information about the church that Paul established at Ephesus, than any other church in the New Testament.

In Acts chapters nineteen and twenty, we read of the establishment of the church. The Book of Ephesians was written concerning problems that the pastor allowed to creep into the local church at Ephesus.

The Books of First and Second Timothy were written to the pastor of the church who was given the responsibility to deal with those problems. Finally, we have the words of Christ in Revelation 2:1-7

concerning the sad condition of the church, forty years after it had been established. His rebuke was sharp.

To the pastor, He said, *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”* (Revelation 2:5).

## **AT THE BEGINNING, PAUL SEPARATED THE SINCERE BELIEVERS FROM THE REST**

In Acts 19:8, we read, *“And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”*

Paul continued with his God-given responsibilities and as a result we read, *“...fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.”* (Acts 19:17-20).



## **PAUL’S WARNING TO THE LEADERS OF THIS GOOD CHURCH**

Paul had a group of Believers in that local

church that meant business for God. They had a sweet spirit of unity and love; however, Paul saw a danger looming on the horizon that the leaders did not see, or simply refused to see. We read in Act 20:28-32 that Paul admonished the pastors to, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."*



## **THERE ARE NO PASTORS AS BLIND AS THOSE WHO WILL NOT SEE**



It bears repeating that the problems that arose were not taken care of quickly, and their local church was in serious trouble in a few short years. Ecclesiastes 8:11 says, *"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."*

## **THE FALL WAS GRADUAL**

In Acts chapter nineteen, the church at Ephesus was in excellent health. In the Book of Ephesians, the church was in a declining health. In First and Second Timothy the church was in a critical condition. In Revelation chapter two the same church was sick unto death.

Like the house built upon the sand, “...*great was the fall of it.*” (Matthew 7:27).

## **THE PASTOR WAS TO BLAME**

First and Second Timothy places the cause of the problem directly at the feet of the pastor. God made it plain. To the pastor, He said, *"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* (Second Timothy 4:1-4).

Pastors have a "charge" from God to *"preach the word."* We have a direct command from, *"God and the Lord Jesus Christ to preach (herald) the Word."*

Pastors are commanded to preach *"in season,"* when there is fruit for our labours, and *"out of season,"* when there is no fruit for our labours. Pastors are commanded to *"reprove"* (Express what is wrong) and to *"rebuke."* Pastors are also commanded to *"exhort* (lift up the fallen) *with all longsuffering and doctrine."* (Teaching).

## **NO COMPROMISING**

In John chapter six, Jesus had great multitudes following Him. They asked Him what they must do to *"work the works of God."* He told them and we read, *"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no*

*more with him.*” (v.66). Should Christ have soft-pedaled the message to keep the crowd? No!...and neither should you!

### **THEY WOULD NOT LISTEN**

In Luke 7:31 Jesus said, *“Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.”* Finally, His offer was withdrawn and Christ said in Luke 13:35, *“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate...”*

Again, to the compromising pastor who is busy building his own church Christ says, *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”* (Revelation 2:5).

A pastor who will not preach Bible standards, neglects church discipline, and refuses to expose false prophets is a compromiser, regardless of how many people he has listening to him on Sunday.

Ephesus was a very immoral city given over to the worship of the goddess Diana with her 1000 temple prostitutes; however, sinful people do not hinder the blessings of God on a church, sinful pastors and their people do that.

At the beginning the pastor, *“...tried them that say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars.”* The pastor would not allow any false teachers to get a foothold in

that church. In the early days of the church, if Calvinism had reared its blasphemous head at Ephesus, the pastor would have exposed them as liars. He would not cooperate in meetings with them, allowing them to influence the people God had given him the responsibility to lead in truth.

### **THE PASTOR CHANGED**

God charged the pastor saying, “...*thou hast left thy first love.*” HE DID NOT LOSE IT, HE “**LEFT IT.**” It does not say the pastor lost his first love, it says he “*left*” it. To lose something might be excusable; however, to leave something is to make a conscious decision. The word here means to “*depart from one place or position to go to another.*” The Ephesian church failed because the pastor purposely “*left*” his first love. He made a conscious decision. The problem was not the people. The problem was not the program. The problem was the pastor.

### **THE PASTOR’S SERVICE WAS COMMENDABLE**

Christ knew about the pastor’s service concerning the ministry. (“*works*”). He knew about the pastor’s efforts in the ministry. (“*labour*”) Christ knew about the pastor’s “*patience.*”

### **THE PASTOR’S SEPARATION WAS COMMENDABLE**

The pastor at Ephesus did not, “...*bear them which are evil.*” The pastor faithfully, “...*tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.*” The pastor

at Ephesus, unlike many so-called fundamentalists of our day, was faithful in keeping the church pure rather than keeping it full.

### **THE PASTOR'S STABILITY WAS COMMENDABLE**

Verse three says the pastor had, "...borne, (not abandoned truth) *and hast patience*, (Tribulation worketh patience - Any pastor who dares to be faithful concerning ecclesiastical separation will know some persecution) *and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.*" (Not grown weary so as to shut down).

### **THE PASTOR'S SHORTCOMING WAS NOT COMMENDABLE**

In verse four Christ rebuked his pastor, saying, "*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, (pastor) because thou hast left thy first love.*"

### **WHAT IS LOVE?**

Love is a relationship between people. There are several words mentioned in the Scriptures that refer to different kinds of love. There is a low-level type of love that says, "*I will love you if you do things my way.*" It is a conditional love based upon expectations. It is a love that says, "*you must earn my love.*" The love, mentioned in our text, is an unconditional love. Love is a relationship, but with whom is the pastor's relationship in our text, referring to?

### **SPECIFIC GOD-GIVEN LOVE RELATIONSHIPS**

God has put all of us in specific relationships such as husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children, etc.

As Christians our first love should be our love for Christ. First John 4:19, says we should, “...love him, because he first loved us.”

### **THE HUSBAND’S FIRST LOVE**

As a Christian husband our first love is to Christ; however, in our God-given position as a husband our main responsibility concerning our wives is to love our wives. Ephesians 5:25 says, “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*”

### **THE WIFE’S FIRST LOVE**

As a Christian wife their first love is to Christ; however, in their God-given position as a wife their main responsibility concerning their family is to love them. Titus 2:4,5 says wives are to, “...love their husbands, to love their children...that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Titus 2:4,5).

### **THE PASTOR’S FIRST LOVE**

As a Christian our first love is to Christ; however, in our God-given position as a pastor our main responsibility concerning our church family is to love them.

When Jesus was speaking to one who would pastor a local church Jesus said in John twenty-one, “...lovest thou me?...Feed my lambs...lovest thou me?...Feed my sheep...lovest thou me?...Feed my sheep.” Jesus said, “*The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*” (John 10:11).

First Corinthians 13:1 says, “*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*”

The pastor's main responsibility is not to be a great public speaker. His main God-given responsibility as a pastor is to love his people with an unconditional love. Years ago, when I was traveling as an evangelist, I was in a pastor's office one Sunday morning, before the Sunday School began. The phone rang but the pastor didn't bother to answer it. When I asked him why, he said "...it is probably just a bus kid."



**JUST A BUS KID?** That bus kid needed a pastor who would genuinely love him or her. **JUST A BUS KID?** That bus kid might have been the next D.L. Moody, if he had made it to church that day. Jesus said, "...lovest thou me?...Feed my lambs." He even mentioned the "lambs" before he mentioned the sheep.

### **"THE SHEPHERDS FED THEMSELVES"**

*"As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock."* (Ezekiel 34:8).

## **THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS CHIEF LOVE**

- **John 10:3**, "...the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."
- **Verse 4**, "...he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."
- **Verse 11**, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

The pastor at Ephesus was serving, he was separated, he was stable, however, Jesus said, “*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first (main) love.*” He was rebuked because, as a pastor, he had made a choice to focus on a program that might swell the attendance at the expense of loving the people God held him responsible to love.

## **THE PASTOR AT EPHEBUS**

Again, we want to emphasize that in verse five Christ warned His pastor to, “*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*”

## **MY CHURCH OR THY CHURCH?**

The first mention of the word church is found in Matthew 16:18. There Jesus mentioned it as being His church. He said, “*...I will build **my** church.*” To the pastor of the church at Ephesus Christ referred to the church as being the pastor’s church. Christ said, “*I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove **thy** candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*”

Today, although many people live in the area where the church was at Ephesus, there is no thriving church there now. The warning of the removal of the “*candlestick,*” went unheeded by the pastor and the same situation will occur today if pastors continue to ignore the warning of God in this portion of Scripture.

## **OUTWARDLY ALL LOOKED TO BE DOING WELL**

They were serving the Saviour, separated from the sinful, and stable in their stand; however, the pastor at Ephesus ignored the warning and the Church soon changed under his leadership.

## **GOD MAKES NO IDLE THREATS**

Five of the seven churches were eliminated by the Lord because the pastor failed to do things God's way.

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A Personal Letter From The Lord To His Pastor

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Revelation 2:8,9

**“Unto the angel of  
the church of Smyrna  
write...I know thy works...”**



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# THE PASTOR AT



# Smyrna

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## GOD HAS NO REBUKE FOR THE PASTOR AT SMYRNA

**Revelation 2:8-11**, *“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 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. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”*

SMYRNA was about thirty-five miles north of Ephesus. It had a population of 200,000. Today it is called Ismir. It has a population of 335,000. Smyrna was a centre of Emperor worship with a temple honoring Tiberius. Emperor worship was compulsory. Under the threat of death, everyone had to publicly worship Caesar saying, *“Caesar is Lord.”*

Obviously, true believers of Christ refused and they suffered for their stand. The church at Smyrna was a

persecuted church, however, the more persecution, the greater the church became. Those faithful believers were burned at the stake as they quoted Scriptures, sang Psalms, as they gave their lives for their Lord. The pastor at Smyrna had taught the people well.

It was not a popular church with insincere so-called Believers. Persecution is not a way of life for hypocritical Christians. When a local church is faithful to the doctrines of God's Word it will not be popular with those who are unfaithful. The pastor at Smyrna did not have the fancy buildings we so long for today. It was a poor church in the eyes of the people, however, Jesus said to the pastor, *"I know thy...poverty, but thou art rich."*

First Peter 4:12-14 says, *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."*

The word "Christian" is only found in two verses in the Word of God. One of those verses is First Peter 4:16 that says, *"...if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."* Second Timothy 3:12 was also written to the pastor. It says, *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

As our so-called fundamental churches slip deeper and deeper into apostasy and lukewarmness plagues our churches, we need to realize that God is still on the throne. *“This is my Father’s world. O let me ne’er forget, That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet. This is my Father’s world: the battle is not done: Jesus Who died shall be satisfied, And earth and Heaven be one.”* Second Chronicles 7:14 is still in the Word of God. He has promised, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*

Revelation 2:18,19

**“Unto the angel of  
the church of Pergamos  
write...I know thy works...”**



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## THE PASTOR AT



# Pergamos

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### **Revelation 2:12-16**

*‘And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 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.’*

To the pastor Christ says, *“I know thy works.”* Christ knew the pastor’s situation. He was working *“...where Satan’s seat is...where Satan dwelleth”*

The city of Pergamos was filled with many pagan temples. Along with many pagan gods, Caesar instituted *"imperial religion"* where the king is worshiped. It was required that every citizen come once a year and worship their king; refusal would lead to certain death.

It was very dangerous for Christians to live and worship in Pergamos. Antipas is mentioned as a martyr who died for the cause of Christ in this city. Christ commended the pastor's steadfastness saying he had, *“held fast to His name,”* and the pastor had not *“denied the faith.”*

### **SOME AREAS OF CONCERN**

In verse fourteen Christ said, *“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.”*

In verse fifteen He rebuked the pastor saying, *“So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.”*

Christ rebuked the pastor for corrupting the church by allowing wrong associations with those who promoted the doctrine of Balaam, and *“the doctrine of the Nicolaitans,”* and he warned the pastor to *“Repent; or else...”*

Today many of our pastors have dumped the doctrine of separation, refusing to separate from those who promote false doctrine. Some pastors welcome people in their midst who promote the *heresy* of Calvinism, and the *“damnable heresy”* that teaches repentance is not necessary for salvation. We are commanded to *“...mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”* (Romans 16:17). In verse seventeen Christ warned the pastor saying, *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*

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## THE PASTOR AT



# Thyatira

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### **Revelation 2:18-20**

*“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God...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.”*

### **THE PASTOR’S MINISTRY**

Christ commends the pastor for his very active ministry. This pastor was not a lazy man. Christ said, *“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.”* He was a busy man and he was a burdened man.

### **THE PASTOR’S MOTIVE**

We must never judge the motives of other Christians, however, God knows the heart. Christ said, *“I know thy works, and charity.”* The word used here is *“agape,”* meaning an unconditional love.

## **THE PASTOR'S MATURITY**

Christ commends this pastor for his growth in spiritual maturity. He refers to his, “...*patience, and...works; and the last to be more than the first.*”

## **THE PASTOR'S MISTAKE**

Christ said, “*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.*”

## **“THAT WOMAN”**

Christ rebuked the pastor because he allowed “that woman” to influence the people in his congregation. Notice the rebuke was “*thou* (the pastor) *sufferest that woman...to teach and to seduce my servants.*” It has been my experience over many years in the ministry that the women in the churches I have pastored have been godly people. Christ does not rebuke the pastor concerning all “*women,*” in the church but rather, “*that woman.*” It has also been my experience that the majority of problems in a local church are caused by a woman. Christ rebuked the pastor for letting “*that woman*” influence the people.

The Lord used Jezebel as an analogy concerning the issue in the local church at Thyatira. She was a wicked woman and so is any woman who would dare to influence church members against the teachings of the Word of God.

Sin must never be condoned in the church. The pastor is responsible to, “...*mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*” (Romans 16:17).

God gave the pastor three specific books concerning how sin is to be dealt with in the local church. (First and Second Timothy and Titus). He then gave pastors seven letters that were written for our (the pastor’s) admonition. Speaking to the pastor God’s Word says, “*Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.*” (First Timothy 5:20).

Referring to this verse Barnes, in his notes on the New Testament wrote, “...*it is a duty to reprove those who err. It is a painful duty, and one much neglected; still it is a duty often enjoined in the Scriptures, and one that is of the deepest importance to the church.*”

The word “*sufferest*” in our text means “*to tolerate, to permit, to allow.*” Christ rebuked His pastor at Thyatira because he allowed a woman to influence the sheep to go in the direction of the wolves. When this happens the pastor has a duty to stand up and do something about it.

There is much more to pastoring a church than preaching three times a week. When a pastor tolerates a woman to be used of the devil to harm the sheep Christ died for, he invites the anger and judgment of God on himself. Again, when we sit back and allow that kind of wickedness to go unchecked, we invite the anger and judgment of God!

Revelation 3:1,2

**“Unto the angel of  
the church of Sardis  
write...I know thy works...”**



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## THE PASTOR AT



# Sardis

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### **Revelation 3:1-4**

*“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write...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.”*

Christ rebuked the pastor at Sardis saying the church was "dead," even though they appeared to be thriving. Christ said, *“...thou hast a name that thou livest.”* It looked great on the outside, however, that was not the way the Lord saw it. To Christ, it was like a nicely dressed corpse in a funeral home.

There is no mention of anyone promoting heresy in this church in contrast with the others; however, neither is there any mention of persecution. Unlike the early days of the local church dispensation the church at Sardis was pastored by a pastor that never offended anyone.

Christ warned the pastor to wake up. He said, “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.” Christ said, “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis,” and He demands the pastor to take action. The pastor was to “...strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.”

In recent years there are some things in our fundamental, independent, Baptist churches that are, “ready to die.”

## **THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION IS SICK UNTO DEATH**

We need to ask ourselves as fundamental, independent, Baptist pastors if we are still “holding fast” to the things we have “...received and heard” concerning the subject of separation.

### **PROVING WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE**

Is it “*acceptable unto the Lord*” when we instruct our church members not to fellowship with Christians who have a poor standard of music. Then we, as pastors, fellowship with Calvinists who blatantly attack the character of God when they teach that He may have brought the babies in your church nursery into this world so He could watch them burn in Hell for eternity?

Is it “*acceptable unto the Lord*” when we preach to our people that fellowship with evangelical Christians is wrong, and then we as pastors, fellowship with those

who hold to the “damnable heresy” that repentance is not necessary for salvation? Again, Christ warned the pastor to wake up. He said, “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.”

### **“IF NOT”**

*“If therefore thou (pastor) 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.”*

### **IT HAPPENED IN JEREMIAH’S DAY**

Jeremiah began his ministry about sixty years after Isaiah died. The kingdom of Judah was in captivity in Babylon. Second Kings 24:14 tells us that. “...none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.” In His mercy God gave His remnant in Israel, Jeremiah, to minister to them. Jeremiah had warned them of the coming Babylonian captivity.

He had challenged them saying, “What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?” (v.5) He said they, “walked after things that do not profit.” (v.8) He said, “For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” (v.8) He said, “...thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?” (v.21).

Chapter three records God’s call to repentance. They continued going through the motions of serving God

each week, while ignoring His warnings. In chapters four through six God warned of the approaching judgment. They continued their Temple activities and ignored the warnings of God. In chapter thirteen God gave them five more warnings. They ignored Him again. Judgment fell!

### **WHERE DID GOD PLACE THE BLAME?**

- **Jeremiah 2:8** - *“...the pastors also transgressed against me...”*
- **Jeremiah 10:21** - *“For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.”*
- **Jeremiah 12:10** - *“...the pastors have destroyed my vineyard...”*
- **Jeremiah 23:1** - *“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.”*
- **Jeremiah 23:2** - *“...the pastors...have scattered my flock...”*

God’s people ended up in bondage and God laid the blame at the feet of the pastors. Let us read God’s present day warning again.

*“And unto the angel (Pastor) of the church in Sardis write...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.”* (Revelation 3:1-4).

## **“A FEW NAMES”**

*“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.”*

A close examination of our church congregations will quickly reveal that the majority do very little or nothing for the Lord. It is commonly reported that about 90% of the people just attend, even though God commands every Christian to use their gifts and talents in the local church.

### **DON'T LOSE THE TEN PERCENT**

God warned the pastor at Sardis that, if he did not get things back on track according to the will of God, he would lose those *“few names”* that wanted the old paths. Christ said, *“...they shall walk with me.”* If the pastor takes a compromising direction, the *“cream of the crop”* will leave him so they can continue to walk with the Lord.

This happened when the pastors of the evangelical churches would not listen to God's warning. The sincere Christians left and founded what we call fundamental churches.

It will happen again. Sincere Christians will leave when fundamental, independent, Baptist pastors refuse to listen to the warnings of God in His Word.

Revelation 3:7,8

**“Unto the angel of  
the church of Philadelphia  
write...I know thy works...”**



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## THE PASTOR AT



# Philadelphia

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### **Revelation 3:7-11**

*“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 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.”*

The previous pastors have been rebuked for several things. At Ephesus the pastor, by choice, had “left” his first love. At Pergamos the pastor had allowed false doctrine to be preached in the local church. At Thyatira the pastor tolerated a woman to influence the people against the things taught in the Word of God. At Sardis the pastor had a carnal church that looked very much alive but was spiritually dead.

## A VERY DIFFERENT PASTOR

Seven times when dealing with seven pastors Christ said, *“I know.”* To the pastor at Philadelphia He said, *“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.”* To each of the seven pastors Christ said, *“I know thy works.”* To the pastor at Sardis He said, *“I have not found thy works perfect before God,”* however, Christ was very pleased with the works of the pastor at Philadelphia.

Christ was not pleased because he had a crowd. He said, *“...thou hast a little strength.”* Christ commended the pastor saying, *“...thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.”* In John 8:31 Jesus said, *“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.”* Jeremiah 23:28 says, *“...he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.”*

Satan had been successful in getting pastors in most of the previous churches to get their focus off God’s instructions for the operation of the local church, and replace it with human reasoning.

The problem with human reasoning is God says, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* (Isaiah 55:8,9).

To the pastor at Philadelphia Christ said, *“...thou hast kept the word,”* and He challenged the pastor to *“...hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”*

You may have heard about the teenager who said, *“I have finally learned how to please my parents, it is simple,...they tell me what to do and I do it.”* For the pastor who wants to please the Saviour, it is simple, Christ tells the pastor what to do and he does it.

Revelation 3:7,8

**“Unto the angel of  
the church of Laodiceans  
write...I know thy works...”**



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# THE PASTOR AT



# Laodicea

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## **Revelation 3:14-19**

*“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write...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.”*

Again, as in the previous letters, the Lord begins with the phrase, *“I know thy works.”*

## **THE PASTOR’S COMMENDABLE WORKS**

- **Chapter 2:2** - *“I know thy works, and thy labour.”*
- **Chapter 2:9** - *“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty.”*
- **Chapter 2:13** - *“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest.”*
- **Chapter 2:19** - *“I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience.”*

## **THE PASTOR'S UNSUITABLE WORKS**

- **Chapter 3:1,2** - *“I know thy works...I have not found thy works perfect before God.”*

## **THE PASTOR'S ACCEPTABLE WORKS**

- **Chapter 3:8** - *“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.”*

## **THE PASTOR'S UNACCEPTABLE WORKS**

- **Chapter 3:15** - *“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.”*

As seen in all the letters God holds the pastor responsible for the condition of the local church. The serious charge, concerning the mess at this church, is directed to the pastor.

Verse 17 says, *“Because thou (the pastor) 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.”*

## **THE FOCUS ON BEING BIG**

There is nothing wrong with having a large congregation; however, the pastor who compromises the Word of God to get a crowd to sit in church to listen to him preach his lukewarm sermons is sickening to God. The pastor at Laodicea had his focus on material things. He said, *“I am rich, and increased with goods...”*

## **A FUNDAMENTAL LEADER FOR SALE**

In Judges chapter seventeen there is a story of a Levite who was a fundamental leader of his day. Verse eight tells us he was looking to *“find a place”* where he could

serve. Verse nine tells us, “*Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehemjudah and I go to sojourn where I may find a place.*”

In verses ten through thirteen we read, “*And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and...the young man became his priest.*”

### **A GOOD CAREER MOVE**

This was a good career move for the Levite. He had his needs met. Micah said he would give him money, a new suit each year and all the food he needed.

This fundamental leader could perform his daily activities while having recognition and acceptance from his peers. It gave him security. It was a great career move and it made him happy. The pastor who seeks his fulfillment in the things that make him happy should realize that happiness depends on happenings.

### **LOOKING SUCCESSFUL**

Since looking successful in the eyes of his peers means having a crowd, the Laodicean pastor has no problem avoiding messages that are too “*hot.*” That kind of preaching will cause people to leave and that will make the pastor unhappy. After all, ask anybody, (except God or a godly Christian) the chief end of man is his happiness.

## HE SPITS HIM OUT

Verse sixteen says, “*So then because thou (the pastor) art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*” As previously mentioned this verse is not dealing with the subject of salvation nor is it dealing with the church. It concerns the pastor, who may look successful but is no longer representing the Lord.

## “THOU SHALT BE AS MY MOUTH”

When the prophet was right with God, Jeremiah 15:19 tells us that God said, “*...thou shalt be as my mouth.*” When the prophets refused to do things God’s way they lost the opportunity to speak for Him. Jeremiah 1:7 says, God plainly warned Jeremiah saying, “*...whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.*”

A compromising pastor who will not preach “all the counsel of God” ceases to be God’s mouthpiece. God warns that pastor saying, “*I will spue thee out of my mouth.*” (Revelation 3:16).

## HE KNEW NOT

This pastor thought he was doing a great job. Christ said, “*...thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*”

Verse 19 says, “*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*”

Repent? This pastor sees no need to repent. He teaches unsaved people they need not repent, why should he? It matter not that Christ has commanded

six pastors and a church congregation to repent in His letter to the pastors. (Revelation 2:5, 2:16, 2:21, 2:22, 3:3, 3:19).

## **GOD’S PATIENCE IS RUNNING OUT**

Revelation 3:20 says, *“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door...”* Hear his voice? What is He saying? His words are plain and easy to understand. He said, *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”* (Revelation 2:5).

## **WHAT WE CALL FUNDAMENTALISM**

### **GOD CALLS LAODICEAN**

Much has changed in the fifty-five years since I became a Christian. I can remember when the *“Pastor’s Office”* was referred to the *“Pastor’s Study.”* This may seem like an insignificant thing, however, we need to honestly consider why we have made this change.

**I remember when** the area at the front of the church auditorium was referred to as *“The Pulpit Area.”* Today it is referred to as *“The Platform.”* We need to honestly consider why we have made this change.

**I remember when** nobody would even think of taking pictures of people praying. Today, it is seen as another opportunity to promote the church in the next church paper. It is a sad indication of where we have stooped to, that we would take pictures of



people praying without even a thought of it offending God and the person on his knees. Some pastors will be more upset about me mentioning this, than they will be with themselves for taking pictures of people praying.

**I remember when** a revival was a time when Christians cried out to God for forgiveness for their sin rather than a fellowship meeting for Christians, with a few sermons tossed in. I recently saw a church ad promoting “*revival meetings*” at an independent, Baptist church and part of the enticement on the flyer was the revival would include a trip to an amusement park. This is our new “*fundamental,*” degenerated, view of “revival.”

**I remember when** Christianity was God-centered, unlike today’s man-centered local churches where the message is compromised to reach and maintain a crowd.

**I remember when** pastors who called themselves fundamentalists preached like Peter preached. Peter did not suggest they pray a little forgiveness prayer, He said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you...”

**I remember when** pastors who called themselves fundamentalists preached like Stephen preached. Under the control of the Holy Spirit said, “*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?*”

**I remember when** pastors who called themselves fundamentalists preached salvation messages that focused on the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; today the focus is on people going to Heaven.

**I remember when** pastors who called themselves fundamentalists preached salvation messages that demanded repentance; today no demands are made. The new modern plan is to just say a prayer like the other religions do. The purpose of the prayer is not to glorify God but to get man to Heaven.

**I remember when** pastors truth was more important than crowds who will love the preacher. Jesus had no problem drawing a crowd and we read His crowd, “...sought the more to kill him.” (John 5:18). “...the Jews sought to kill him.” (John 7:1). “...they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.” (Luke 23:21). Peter and John drew a crowd, “And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.” (Act 5:18). Paul preached, “...warning every man.” (Colossians 1:28). Paul warned, “And thinkest thou...that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?” (Romans 2:3). When the Christian women were dressing immodestly Paul commanded, “...that women adorn themselves in modest apparel.” (First Timothy 2:9). Many of today’s so-called fundamental, Independent, Baptist women dress in very worldly, sexy, apparel because the pastor isn’t fundamental enough to preach the truth.

**I remember when** pastors would refuse to let women have a position in the church who dressed

immodestly. Now we hear preachers say, “*we ask*” our women to dress modestly. (That’s like a Sergeant asking his soldiers to wear a uniform). There was a time when fundamental, independent, Baptist pastors said, “*Thus saith the Lord!*” (That phrase is in the Bible in 430 verses). If the Lord says it, preach it with the authority God has trusted you with. Don’t “*ask!*”

God’s fundamental preachers in the New Testament didn’t ask, they commanded. God commands preachers to command.

- **First Timothy 4:11** - “*These things command...*”
- **First Timothy 6:14** - “*...keep this commandment...*”
- **Second Thessalonians 3:4** - “*...we command you.*”
- **First Thessalonians 4:11** - “*...as we commanded you.*”
- **First Thessalonians 6:14** - “*...keep this commandment...*”
- **Second Thessalonians 3:6** - “*Now we command you...*”
- **Second Thessalonians 3:10** - “*...this we commanded you...*”
- **Second Thessalonians 3:12** - “*...we command and exhort...*”
- **First Corinthians 7:10** - “*I command, yet not I, but the Lord...*”
- **Act 16:18** - “*I command thee in the name of Jesus...*”

## God Doesn’t Ask - He Commands

- **Act 17:30** - “*...God...commandeth all men...*”
- **Act 10:33** - “*...hear all things that are commanded thee of God.*”
- **Act 10:42** - “*...He commanded us to preach...*”
- **Act 1:4** - “*...commanded them...*”
- **John 15:14** - “*...I command you.*”
- **John 15:17** - “*...I command you.*”
- **Matthew 15:4** - “*God commanded, saying..*”
- **Second Corinthians 4:6** - “*God, who commanded...*”

Paul told immature Christians to, “*grow up.*” (Ephesians 4:15). He spoke to the Colossian Christians concerning,

*“fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”* (Colossians 3:5). Over a dozen times Paul warned Christians about their *“lusts.”* He preached at Corinth concerning their attitude toward, *“fornicators...idolaters...adulterers...effeminate...abusers of themselves with mankind.”* (First Corinthians 6:9).

Paul preached saying Christians were becoming *“lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”* (Second Timothy 3:2-5). To the Galatians he said, *“Are ye so foolish?”* (Galatians 3:3).

### **“SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE”**

Ephesians 4:11 says, God gave *“pastors.”* Verse fifteen says pastors are commanded to be *“speaking the truth in love...”* Two things are taught in this verse. The Greek word *“truth”* here is *alētheuō* and is only found in one other place in the Bible. Paul asked, *“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”* (Galatians 4:16). It refers to preaching the truth very plain rather than shadowy. It speaks of truth explained so plainly that none have to guess concerning the meaning of what is being commanded by God.

The word love here is *agapē* and refers to a divine love and deep compassion for Christ and for the people God has entrusted us to teach. Ephesians 5:25 says,

“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” That is our mandate as pastors.

## Not Always From The Pulpit

Ephesians 4:11 says, “*speaking*” the truth in love. There are times when teaching should be done privately. Paul said, “*I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house.*” There is never a time, however, when the truth should be soft-pedaled to reach a crowd or keep a crowd.

A.W. Tozer said, “*The temptation to modify the teachings of Christ with the hope that larger numbers may "accept" Him is cruelly strong in this day of speed, size, noise, and crowds. But if we know what is good for us, we'll resist it with every power at our command.*”

Paul could honestly say, “*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*” (Acts 20:27). Paul was a fundamentalist in God’s definition of the term. Unlike today’s so-called fundamentalists Paul started and ended the same. At the end he said, “*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*” (Second Timothy 4:7).

I remember when fundamentalists were fundamental. A recent survey was taken among “**Young Fundamentalists.**” Seventy-two percent of those surveyed were graduates of Bob Jones University, Maranatha Baptist Bible College and Northland Bible College.

## **The Fundamentalist Survey Results**

- **49%** of these “fundamentalists” admitted to having drunk alcoholic beverages. (Only 9% said they no longer drink)
- **75%** of these “fundamentalists” did not believe drinking alcoholic beverages was Biblically wrong
- **57%** of these “fundamentalists” did not use the King James Bible.
- **10%** of these “fundamentalists” felt that women could be pastors or deacons.
- **58%** of these “fundamentalists” believed in Calvinism. (*That God created millions of people for no other purpose than to have them burn in hell for eternity.*)
- **86%** of these “fundamentalists” had no problem with contemporary music in churches.
- **49%** of these “fundamentalists” said they were not committed to being a fundamentalist.
- **62%** of these “fundamentalists” said they believe that fundamentalists have majored in the minors.
- **48%** of these “fundamentalists” said we should not preach music standards.
- **13%** of these “fundamentalists” did not believe Hell was a literal place.

One can only guess what percentage of “fundamentalists” will not be concerned about these statistics. It is doubtful that the colleges mentioned above believe these things. The problem stems not from what they believe but what is not being taught. Remember we criticized the evangelicals for that?

## **SILENCE ALWAYS GIVES CONSENT**

Silence gives consent; therefore, we are commanded not to remain silent. We have a God-given responsibility to defend the truth. When Peter compromised concerning Bible doctrine, Paul publicly “...withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.” (Galatians 2:11). Peter was in a very influential position and he was influencing others to follow him in his compromise. Peter’s compromise caused others to be “...dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.”

## **FRIENDSHIP OR TRUTH?**

Paul did not look the other way because Peter was his friend. Truth demands that influential leaders need to be publicly confronted when things are done that are not “...acceptable unto the Lord.”

**Why didn't Paul handle it privately?** Paul could have simply sat down with Peter privately; however, he did not. He handled it before them all and God made sure the account was recorded in the Scriptures for our example. First Timothy 5:20 says, “*Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.*” Was Paul wrong when he openly confronted Peter in Galatians chapter two? Was Jesus wrong when He publicly rebuked Peter in Matthew chapter sixteen?

**Jesus and Paul did not cause disunity, Peter was the cause of disunity.** Peter was rebuked “*before them all,*” and in so doing neither Jesus or Paul caused disunity. Those who sound the alarm concerning compromisers today are not causing disunity; the compromisers are causing disunity. We are commanded to judge methods. Jesus said, “*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*” It is not our intention to judge anyone's motives. We can see ones methods, however, we cannot see into hearts and judge motives.

We do not judge the motives of anyone; however, we make no apology for judging methods that are contrary to Scripture. The reason why many

Christians today think that they don't have a right to judge anyone is because they have been indoctrinated with the false doctrine that it is wrong to judge.

### **High Time To Awake**

**Romans 13:11-12** says, *“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”*

**Romans 13:11** refers to them that are capable of *“...knowing the time.”* When apostasy comes in like a flood God has always had a remnant, and His remnant is always small in number. The prophet Isaiah said, *“Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.”* (Isaiah 1:9). Isaiah 16:14 says *“...the remnant shall be very small and feeble.”*

**God Has A Remnant Today.** His remnant is made up of faithful pastors in local churches across our land who have not compromised the doctrines of the Word of God to reach a crowd. His remnant is made up of faithful pastors who week after week give their lives for the sheep rather than for the compromising movements of our day. It is to the remnant of our day that God says, *“...now it is high time to awake...”* To be asleep is to be in a state of inactivity.

**Jude 1:3** commands us to *“...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”* This is not a time for inactivity, it is time for God's remnant to rise up and be heard.



# Conclusion

- **The pastor at Ephesus** was commended for his perseverance, but faced criticism from Christ for making the decision to leave his “*first love*.”
- **The pastor at Smyrna** was highly commended by Jesus Christ.
- **The pastor at Pergamos** was praised for his perseverance, but faced rebuke from Christ for allowing some in the local church to teach false doctrine.
- **The pastor at Thyatira** was praised for his faith and his service, but criticized for allowing a woman to influence people with her heresy.
- **The pastor at Sardis** was commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, to wake up.
- **The pastor at Philadelphia** was highly commended by our Lord.
- **The pastor at Laodicea** was sharply rebuked by Christ, and He had nothing good to say about this pastor who compromised to reach a crowd.

W. Tozer saw our Laodicean Fundamentalism coming. He said, “*Within the circles of evangelical Christianity itself there has arisen in the last few years dangerous and dismaying trends away from true Bible Christianity. A spirit has been introduced which is surely not the Spirit of Christ, methods employed which are wholly carnal, objectives adopted which have not one line of Scripture to support them, a level of conduct accepted which is practically identical with that of the world--and yet scarcely one voice has been raised in opposition. And this in spite of the fact that the Bible-honouring followers of Christ lament among themselves the dangerous, wobbly course things are taking...The times call for a Spirit-baptized and articulate orthodoxy. They whose souls have been illuminated by the Holy*

*Ghost must arise and under God assume leadership. There are those among us whose hearts can discern between the true and the false, whose spiritual sense of smell enables them to detect the spurious afar off, who have the blessed gift of knowing. Let such as these arise and be heard. Who knows but the Lord may yet return and leave a blessing behind Him? Lord, may I be one of those 'whose souls have been illuminated by the Holy Ghost.' Grant to me 'the blessed gift of knowing.' And then be pleased to use me for Your glory today. Amen."*

A.W. Tozer

## **WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE UNTO TO THE LORD?**

In Ephesians 5:10 we are commanded to be, *"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord."*

**Is it acceptable unto the Lord** for people to join God's local churches with little or no commitment to the cause of Christ. If it is not, why have we made it acceptable?

**Is it acceptable unto the Lord** for a large percentage of church members to sit in church on Sunday morning singing, *"Oh How I Love Jesus,"* and then sit at home on Sunday evening watching television? If it is not, why have we made it acceptable?

**Is it acceptable unto the Lord** for church members to call themselves fundamentalists while missing two out of three meetings a week? Is it acceptable with the Lord for these "fundamentalists" to miss 104 meetings a year? If it is not, why have we

made it acceptable? Would any pastor putting together a church baseball team allow anyone to join the team if he refused to show up for two-out-of-three games? By doing this we are teaching the young people in our churches that the local church is not as important as a ball game. We call this fundamentalism?

**Is it acceptable unto the Lord** to fellowship with preachers who “*shall bring in damnable heresies*” concerning God’s plan of salvation? (No repentance necessary). Is it acceptable with the Lord to fellowship with preachers who promote the heresy of Calvinism?

### **CHRISTIAN HERETICS**

It is important to understand that the only time the New Testament speaks of heretics is when it refers to Christians preaching false doctrine. Second Peter 2:1, warns us that Christians would be teaching what God calls “...*damnable heresies.*”

### **HERESIES & DAMNABLE HERESIES**

It is also important to understand that there is a difference between “*heresies*” and “*damnable heresies.*” CALVINISM IS HERESY! Anyone who promotes the blasphemy that says God predestined some people for Hell is preaching heresy!

### **PREACHING SALVATION WITHOUT REPENTANCE IS A “DAMNABLE HERESY.”**

In recent years, God’s plan of salvation has been replaced with a slick soul-winning sales pitch. The Gospel is presented like an insurance policy against

Hell. Lost souls are told to pray a little prayer and they will go to Heaven when they die. This is not just heresy, this is a “*damnable heresy*.” This heresy will damn a soul to Hell for eternity.

Jesus said in Luke 13:3 “*...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*” He did not say simply pray for forgiveness. He said we would perish, “*except ye repent.*” Catholics are praying forgiveness prayers everyday. God is no respecter of persons. It matters not if we call ourselves Baptists or Catholics, Jesus said, “*...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*”

It was not carnal evangelicals who first promoted the “*damnable heresy*” that repentance is not necessary for salvation, it was two men who called themselves fundamentalists. The first one to promote it was Jack Hyles, and the next was the Sword of the Lord editor, Curtis Hudson. It was fundamental Christian leaders who promoted this heresy, suggesting that Jesus did not know what He was talking about concerning repentance. It was fundamentalists that said just pray a prayer and ask Jesus to forgive your sin and you will go to Heaven when you die.

## **ARE FRIENDSHIPS MORE IMPORTANT THAN DEFENDING TRUTH?**

If evangelical leaders had changed the plan of salvation, fundamentalists would have had no problem exposing their heresy. Why is it acceptable to expose the errors of Jack VanImpe and not acceptable to expose the heresies of Jack Hyles?

## **FILLING THE PEWS AS WE POPULATE HELL**

Dr. W. A. Criswell was the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dallas Texas. The membership there grew to about 28,000 members. He said, *“I will be surprised to see twenty-five percent of my church members in Heaven.”* If he was right, 21,000 people who prayed a prayer and joined that local church in Dallas went to Hell when they died.

Is this acceptable with the Lord? If Criswell believed seventy-five percent of the people, were not saved, why did he make it acceptable for them to be members? Did twenty-one thousand people who were heading for Hell, believe they were on the road to Heaven because the pastor of a so-called fundamental Baptist church made it acceptable for them to join the church when he doubted if they were saved? Is this Bible fundamentalism? No! It is Laodicean fundamentalism.

## **DR. A. W. TOZER PUT THE NUMBER AT NINETY PERCENT**

Tozer, one of the most highly respected Bible teachers who ever lived, suggested ninety percent of professing Christians are not saved.

Commenting on this problem, Lewis Sperry Chafer said, *“Too often methods have been employed requiring mere outward actions which, though sincere, may indicate no heart experience.”* He said, *“Pressure can be the chief dependence of the preacher for his apparent success in his work.”*

## **PAUL RELIED ON THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We read in First Corinthians 2:4,5 that Paul said, *“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing (persuasive) words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”*

## **HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTION OR MIND MANIPULATING DECISIONS?**

Many modern day fundamental pastors are using cheap mind-manipulating tricks picked up from Jack Hyles at Hammond, Indiana to trick people into walking to the front of the church after a sermon.

Years ago I sat in one of his *“how to do it”* classes in Hammond. We were told to have some Christians ready to *“prime the well”* when the invitation was given. They were to walk the aisle so it would be easier for the unsaved to follow them. We were told to word the invitation in such a way that every Christian would look bad if they didn't walk the aisle.

## **THERE ARE NO MIND-MANIPULATING TRICKS IN THE BIBLE**

In Acts chapter two Peter preached, the Holy Spirit worked, and the people cried out in conviction saying, *“...what shall we do?”* Peter did not use some cheap trick to get them to pray an empty meaningless forgiveness prayer. He did not get some disciples to *“prime the well”* at the end of his message to make it easier for people to get saved. People responded to the Holy Spirit when

He gripped their soul with conviction through the preaching of the Word of God! As a result people were genuinely saved and unlike today's mind-manipulated decisions we read, "...*they continued.*"

All we need to do is "*preach the Word,*" get out of the way, and let The Holy Spirit convict through the preaching of the Word. If the Holy Spirit does not work, we must not trick people into praying.

It is only in recent years that we have stooped to replacing the power of the Holy Spirit with our carnal, "*if anybody wants to go to Heaven, say I do*" plan of salvation.

All Bible preachers of yesteryear would have risen up in protest against anyone who suggested people could bypass repentance. This is a damnable heresy! This is Laodicean.

### **THE SEVEN PASTORS**

The sharpest rebuke is leveled at the Laodicean pastor. There are eleven negative things said about him and no positive things mentioned, in spite of the big crowd of people attending his services. He avoids the issues because to preach the truth would decrease the amount of people who gather in a building each week to hear him preach.

God is not impressed with his crowd. He is the most despicable pastor of all seven, yet he is the most confident. He is blind to his true condition.

He does not seek to repent because he thinks he is spiritual. His church is filled with people who have said a prayer with no *“godly sorrow unto repentance.”* (Second Corinthians 7:10). The Laodicean pastor looks the other way when he should be enacting church discipline because church discipline will decrease the attendance and the offering.

**Seven times to seven different pastors** the Lord said *“I know thy works.”* To the pastors our Lord also said, *“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee...repent and do the first works...I have a few things against thee...Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain.”*

May those of us who have the privilege of holding the office of a pastor realize that the seven letters in the Book of Revelation, that we like to preach to the church congregation, were actually written to us.

First and Second Timothy, Titus, and the Seven Letters in the Book of Revelation were written to pastors. They are written so that we may know how things are to be done *“...in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”* (First Timothy 3:15).

As pastors may our prayer be, *“...neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus...”* (Act 20:24).