

Which Church Are We?

I know that for years and years now, many of the bretheren in the Lord God's scattered, small churches of this world, have often turned to the book of Revelation, and starting at verse 20 chapter one, have begun to read through the scriptures concerning what the Lord Jesus Christ has to say about each of the seven end-time churches mentioned therein. I should think that almost all who read about those churches would dearly hope that *their* particular church is, or turns out to be, the `Philadelphia` church which is the one which is attributed with the most praiseworthy comments.

Well there is one thing for sure, we cannot *all* be the Philadelphia church, to begin with the odds are six to one against. So, bearing that in mind I thought that rather than try to find out which church *we* may be, or try to convince the reader as to the identity that their particular church might be, maybe I should try and discover which church we (or maybe your church) are not. Of course once this sort of process is started what soon becomes apparent is that we are not *exactly* as any of the churches mentioned in the book of Revelation because we do not meet *all* the criteria allocated to any *one* specific church, rather, we find that we are a *combination* of several of the attributes of each of the seven churches. Hopefully we can come to some sort of an idea as to where we, as being the individual, small end-time churches of God, are spiritually at this moment in time. But we must bear in mind that any conclusions regarding the seven churches reached within the context of this article are not `set in stone` even if they are correct, this is because the Lord Jesus commands some of the churches to `repent`, and we know that if a person or indeed a church repents, then that indicates a deliberate change in that person or church's behaviour and direction. It's the same as when the scriptures state that `prophesies may fail`, they are not all `set in stone`, let's remind ourselves of this by reading [1 Corinthians 13: 8](#). `Love never fails, but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be languages they shall cease, whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away`. Prophecies, other than *always* condemning all things mentioned within them to happen no matter what, rather, give people time and a chance to reflect on and to repent of their evil ways. If people, or churches repent, then circumstances will change and prophetic events will be altered, just the same as the city of Ninevah repented in the book of Jonah, and instead of the Lord destroying it as He well meant to do, He stayed His hand and spared it, and we can read of this in [Jonah 3: 10](#). `And the Lord saw their works, that they had turned from their evil ways, and the Lord repented of the evil that He said that He would do to them, and so He did not do it`. Let's make one thing clear though, repentance of an individual, a church or even the whole world, will not and does not alter in any way shape or form the plan and the ultimate destiny that the Lord God has predetermined for humankind.

So let's now get into the book of Revelation and the seven churches mentioned therein. [Revelation 1: 20](#). and [2: 1-2](#). `The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches. To the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things says He that holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. I know your works and your labour and your patience, and how you cannot bear them that are evil; and you have tried them who say that they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars`. The first things mentioned about this church is its` works, and in association with these works the labour that it has put in whilst doing these works, and

also the patience that it has had seeing these works through. Well, we must ask ourselves, do we (or the church that you are in) labour? Do we do the work of a true Christian church? Are we getting the word of God `out there` to the people of our country and to the people of this world as best that we can? Have we continued to persist in this work when for most of the time it seems that we are having no impact or effect on anybody whatsoever? Have we been patient and not given up, the reason for our patience being because we have not expected to have instantaneous results or to have hundreds of willing, new converts hammering at our doors to be let into our church? Have we at any time ever thrown our hands in the air and complained `Oh what`s the point, nobody out there is taking any notice`? Well I can speak for our little group when I say that for year after year we have been patiently `doing the work` of a true Christian church, and you who are reading this are one of the people who we have reached. We can only put the word `out there`, we plant, it is the Lord God who waters and makes grow, and then finally brings to the `harvest` those whom He has called and then chosen to be there. Further on in that scripture in Revelation it mentions the fact that the church referred to `cannot bear them that are evil`. The word `bear` used here means to tolerate, to put up with, to readily accept into one`s company, well I think that this is true of our church for the main part, although we realise that not one of us is perfect in the Lord`s eyes and therefore we should not be too quick and ready to condemn others. But having said that, we would not tolerate within our church or our social lives an obviously out-and-out evil or morally corrupt person. Still in verse two of Revelation one, have we `tried them who say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars`? Now the word `apostles` as used in this context refers to those who are true representatives of God`s true church as opposed to those who follow their own agenda and have their own perverse and evil reasons for masquerading as ministers of the church of Jesus Christ. Well in answer to the question, we *must* have tried (tested) them even before coming into the Lord`s true church, otherwise we wouldn`t be here but instead we would be members of a `cult` or one of the myriad of other `christian` churches which are nothing more than shadow/sister types of the world`s mainstream, Satanically perverted `christian` churches. But, just as importantly we *continue* to test them and ourselves using the very words of God from within the scriptures as a sure guide, and we do this by reading the scriptures daily as did those who are mentioned in the book of **Acts 17: 10-11**. `And the bretheren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night to Beria; who coming there went into the synagogue of the Jews. These (Jews) were more noble than those in Thesalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily to see whether things (the things that they were told by Paul and Silas) were so`. And so, having tested the lying priests and ministers of the so-called `christian` churches of this world, the `sunday` keepers and the observers of pagan ceremonies and rituals such as `christmas`, `easter` and `hallowe`en, we keep our spiritual distance from them, but more specifically from their pagan ceremonies. Most of these false Christian church`s congregations are deceived but even so they are all guilty of complacency, because they have not even bothered to read the scriptures and so find out the truth about what the Lord God requires of them and us for themselves. But let`s be brutally honest, if any of them have come to the truth or would even *dare* to come to it, it would be just too hard or awkward for most of them to accept, it would be too much trouble for them to leave their comfort zone of fellow backslappers and self-satisfied, self-congratulatory, `do-gooding`, `holier-than-thou` priests, ministers and companions.

Revelation 2: 3. `And have borne and have perseverance, and for My name`s sake have laboured and not grown weary`. We in the *true* churches of God, as I mentioned before, have not given in, we persevere, we have patience, we do not seek our ultimate reward in this life, we

may have grown a bit weary at times but we have never `called it a day` and packed the whole thing in, we continue to keep ourselves spiritually awake so that we can keep on doing the work that our calling has indicated that we should do. But as `noble` as all this may seem, it is still, in the Lord God`s eyes, not enough, He expects more of us as we can read of in **Revelation 2: 4.** `Nevertheless I have this against you, because you have left your first love`. So what then should be considered to be our `first love`? and have we in any of the Lord God`s true churches, left it? I looked in the book of Psalms and in the book of Proverbs to see if I could find any reference to a `first love`, but I could not, there was nothing therein which could be definitely identified as such. This being the case, I began to wonder that maybe this `first love`, figuratively speaking or otherwise, was nothing more or less picturing or using as an example the first true love between a man and a woman, and that the leaving of it was a separation in the form of some kind of abandonment but not necessarily because of the act of *physical* adultery. (as opposed to *spiritual* adultery) The dictionary definition of the word `abandon` is to, `give up to another`s control or mercy`, so bearing this in mind I`ll take the liberty of rewriting/interpreting that scripture as so; **Nevertheless I have this against you, because you have given yourself over to another`s control and mercy.** Wow, if my interpretation of that particular scripture is correct, then that is a really serious thing that this church has done. It would appear to have, momentarily or otherwise, lost sight of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son, and given itself over to the misguiding influences of another, a potentially deadly thing to do! And this is *exactly* what every false Christian church on this earth has done and continues to do. But they no longer do it because of a lapse in concentration or because of momentary waywardness, they do it because it is *their preferred* way to worship that which they worship. Even though this may be the case, the next scripture gives all who heed its` warning, a chance, **Revelation 2: 5.** `Remember therefore from where you are fallen, and repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly, and will remove your candlestick (church) from out of its` place, except you repent`. As that scripture states, `Remember therefore from where you are fallen`, it is a good thing for any church to remember and repent *whilst it still has a memory from just where exactly it has fallen!* Obviously all of the so-called `christian` churches of this earth have by now no memory of what they once started out as, but the evidence is out there, it has all been documented, and I would suppose that the richest and most complete and ready-to-hand source of this documentation is to be found in the secret vaults and document files of that place in Rome known as the Vatican, because Satan just loves to rub the noses of the people who follow him, in the truth about what they have erroneously and sinfully done! I can say with complete confidence that none of the world`s so-called `christian` church`s congregations would recognize themselves as being anything like that which the original true Christian churches of this world were like when they were first formed. Remember the words of scripture that state in **Malachi 3: 6.** `For I Am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed`. No, the Lord does not change, and neither does He expect any of His church`s laws and observances to change! There is no `moving with the times` concerning the behaviour of the Lord`s true churches or in the way that they should continue to worship Him! In other words what is being stated in Revelation 2: 5. is; `Make a point of being aware of that which you have fallen away from, find out, remember how you first started off with all of the honourable intent of doing the Lord`s good will with all of the zeal of a truly enlightened Christian, think about that and compare it to where you now find yourself now, go back and start anew, `do the first works`, regain your motivation and true Christian zeal`. Still in verse five, the Lord goes on to say that if this church does not repent, that is to say change its` ways and direction, then it will have its` candlestick (its` position as being a

church of God) removed. Well, we can deduce from this that even though there are only seven true churches of God, the Lord will not hesitate to reduce this number to even less if any of the churches do not meet His requirements.

Revelation 2: 8-9. `And to the angel of the church in Smyrna, write; these things say the First and the Last, (Alpha and Omega) which was dead and is alive. I know your works and tribulation and poverty, (but you are rich) and I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan`. `I know your works`, Well I think it is safe to suppose that these works spoken of here must be acceptable in the Lord`s sight as there is no condemnation of them here. Then the Lord goes on to say `I know your tribulation`, in other words the troubles that this church endures, probably brought upon it because it is a true and faithful church of God which is constantly battling against the Satanic flow of this world instead of taking the easy way and giving in to `sunday` worship etc. `I know your poverty`, that is of course to mean the church`s material poverty, no wealthy benefactors here, no celebrities, no politicians or royalty, no bank vaults secret or otherwise containing billions of pounds worth of valuable works of art etc. There are no people in this church who have given into and subsequently been corrupted by the Babylonian System, that Satanic force that controls the `movers and shakers` of this world. There are none in this church who have their status elevated far beyond the norm by having `titles` and/or obscene amounts of money bestowed upon them simply because they are `adored` and idolised by the masses. But this church is not *really* poor, because as the scripture goes on to say, `But you are rich`, yes this church is rich far beyond money, it is spiritually rich, and this kind of wealth is not of this earth, *it can be and is taken with a person when they die* because it is God-given and it is the wealth that all of God`s true churches should be striving to achieve. In this evil world this is not an easy thing to accomplish, material wealth is far easier to get, and illegally attained material wealth is easier still, just ask any drug dealer, thief, extortionist, blackmailer, liar, pimp, backstabber, cheat, prostitute etc. Continuing with the scripture, `and I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan`. Well, these words for them to apply to those of us who are not Jews may possibly be read as, `and the slander of them who say that they are Christians, and are not, but are of the church of Satan`. All true Christian churches (remember, a church is not a building, it is the people who are the church) should examine themselves from time to time and ask of themselves whether or not they have strayed over the years so far from God`s word that they have now become just another of the many thousands of watered down and adulterated false Christian churches of this world. I do not for one minute think that we in the Maranatha Ministry have strayed far from the word of God, but even so we have not become so complacent and arrogant to suppose that we are perfect in the Lord`s sight, and that we are doing everything 100% right, but I know that our *desire* is to be 100% right. The key to getting everything right in the Lord`s sight is to not allow ourselves to become complacent, in other words not to `settle on the lees (dregs)` as the scripture puts it in **Zephania 1: 12.** `And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with candles (every dark corner) and I will punish the men who have settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, and neither will He do evil`. There are many `christian` churches who started off with all good intent but over the years they have become complacent, they have folded their arms as it were and sat back and thought to themselves, `right, that`s it, we`ve achieved all that we set out to achieve, we can now all relax, sit back and market it, get it out to the world and even charge for it`. What kind of spiritual drive and motivation does this provide for new people coming into that church? in their eyes there is nothing left for them to do except become an unquestioning `employee` of that

church. This is how finance and business runs, and like all business, one day it will cease to operate, but it is very rarely the `bosses` who suffer (immediately) when a business fails, but it is the `employees` who *always* suffer when a business `goes to the wall`.

Revelation 2: 10. `Fear none of those things which you shall suffer, behold, the devil will cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried, and you shall have tribulation ten days, be you faithful to death, and I will give you a crown of life`. Within this portion of scripture we have been given guidelines for our possible future both as a church and as individuals, we are told not to fear some of the things that may befall us and to bear in mind that they will pass, but that our reward for remaining true to our calling, our faith, will be for all eternity. Let's read **James 1: 2-3.** `My bretheren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials. Knowing this, that the testing of your faith brings forth patience`. We will suffer setbacks and complications and even imprisonment and some of us worse things, but it is all a part of our individual requirement to become an acceptable person before our God. If we were all the same then we would all be tested with the same trials and tribulations, but we are not all the same, so some of us will need to suffer more in this life and in different ways than others. **Revelation 2: 11.** `He that has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches, He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death`. This scripture definitely refers to those who will be the `firstfruits` and who will reign with Christ during the `millenium`. But it also refers to those who *after* the millenium are subjected to the `great white throne judgment` and are then found to be worthy to receive their reward of eternal life and as a consequence will not suffer the `second death`, which is an eternal death as opposed to the death which we all must die at the end of the life that we now live upon this earth. **Revelation 20: 11-12.** `And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, (this is the `great white throne judgment`) from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works`. So at this point have you any inkling as to which church we/you are or as to which church we/you are not? Maybe it's too early for a decision to be made, but as I hope to explain at the end of this article, we may not be any *specific* church actually named in the book of revelation, but we do have a position as a church. **Revelation 2: 12-13.** `And to the angel of the church of Pergamos, write, These things says He which has the sharp sword with two (cutting) edges; I know your works and where you dwell, even where Satan`s seat is, and that you hold fast (remain true to) My name, and have not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwell`. As we have read, this particular church is to be found where `Satan`s seat is`, a place called Pergamos, also the place where Antipas was martyred. So where then in the modern world is Pergamos? Well, I'll read a description of the place from Young`s concordance: `A celebrated city of Mysia, near the river Caicus, parchment was first perfected here, and a library of 200,000 volumes formed which was eventually sent to the more famous library of Alexandria. Pergamos also had the temple of Esculapius, who was represented under the figure of a serpent`. Today, Pergamos or Pergamum as it is also known, (not to be confused with Pergamos on the island of Crete) is/was a Greek city in modern day Turkey, at Aeolis which is 16 miles from the Aegean sea. As for it accommodating the temple of `Esculapius who was represented under the figure of a serpent`, well I think we all know who is represented as a serpent within the scriptures, let's read from the first lines of **Revelation 12: 9.** `And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and Satan. . .` So we have had, but do we still have or are we yet to have a true Christian church of God in Turkey, a

predominately Muslim country? Or is the church of Pergamos as far as our modern world is concerned, just a `type` of God`s church which is not necessarily to be `pinned down` to any one specific place? I can`t answer that question with any certainty, but it`s something for us all to bear in mind. Let`s continue about what the Lord has to say about the Pergamos church.

Revelation 2: 14. `But I have a few things against you, because you have there them that hold the doctrine (teaching) of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication`. A `stumbling block` as used in this context is something that causes a church or a person to sin. It can be anything from wrong teaching to idol worship or just plain carelessness or indifference towards noticed bad behaviour patterns and trends amongst bretheren. This church has amongst its` congregation those who practice idol worship, elsewise how could they and why would they be eating things that have been sacrificed to idols? They also commit fornication, or `free love` as it was euphamistically called in the 1960`s and beyond. Fortunately I can say that I do not know of any such behaviour being committed in our church and neither do I suspect anybody of doing such things. But there are more bad things to be said about this church in Pergamos, **Revelation 2: 15-16.** `So have you also them that hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, (false Christians) which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth`. Now these people who adhered to the teachings of the Nicolaitanes were, according to the various sources that I have found, followers of a heretic by the name of Nicolas, and they allowed themselves to lead lives of `unrestrained indulgence` and who openly and unashamedly ate things offered to idols. Nicolas himself even allowed other men to marry his own wife thus encouraging others to also commit the adulterous practice of polygamy. Now let`s stop and think for a minute, how can a church that allows such things to happen amongst its` bretheren even be considered as a true church of God? Why is it even mentioned as a contender? Well I have only come to two conclusions at this present time. One, that this really was/is a true church of God, but unbeknown to the *majority* of its` faithful congregation at the time of its` admonition by Jesus Christ, it had been infiltrated by the agents of Satan and that the true worshippers are being warned by this scripture in Revelation of that fact and have been given the chance to rectify it. (Apparently the original `Nicolaitanes` sect mentioned was very short lived, but unfortunately its` `type` still lives on) Two, this church is mentioned as a warning to all churches for all time because it is still representative of the `common or garden` church which supposes itself to be Christian but which is not because of the idolatrous things which they practice and the worse things that they do, and as we know, the world is littered with such `christian` churches and clergy. If this scenario in conclusion two of mine really is the case then there is truly a great hope for all of the world`s *deceived`* `christians`, as long as they are one day willing to open their eyes, have a change of heart and sincerely admit their error, change their ways and begin to purge out all of the easy to follow false doctrine that they have loved to adhere to for so long, just as Jesus Christ has illustrated the case to be in **Matthew 15: 8-9.** `This people draw near to Me with their mouth, and to honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. In vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines (facts) the commandments of men`. Let`s couple that last scripture with **2 Timothy 2: 20-21.** `In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some are used for honourable purposes and some for dishonourable purposes. If a man therefore purge himself of wickedness, he shall be a vessel fit for honourble purposes, sanctified and fit for the master`s use, and ready for every good work`.

To finish this particular section of this article we`ll read **Revelation 2: 17.** `He that has an ear

let him hear what the spirit has to say to the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receives it`. Now I cannot be certain that my interpretation of this scripture will be one hundred percent accurate but I will offer this; It would seem to me to be an indication that any person who manages to overcome this world spiritually will receive the hitherto hidden or withheld/unattainable bread (manna) of heaven, in other words the bread not just of life but of eternal life, Let`s read **John 6: 31-35**. `Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; As it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said to them, Truly, truly I say to you, Moses did not give to you that bread from heaven,; but My Father will give you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world. Then they said to Him, Lord give us for evermore this bread. And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life, he that comes to Me shall never hunger, and He that believes on Me shall never thirst`. And so clearly as the scripture tells us, if we are to be allowed to eat of the `hidden manna/bread` we have to firstly come to Jesus Christ. Revelation 2: 17. also mentions a `white stone` upon which is written a new name for the person who receives it, a name known only to that person (and the Lord). I suppose we could liken that new name to the new person who has been born in/of Christ, and that the recipient can use it like an `ex` directory `phone number which is only given out to close friends and family and nobody else. Maybe that is why the `new name` is so secret.

And so to the next church, **Revelation 2: 18-20**. `And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things says the Son of God, who has His eyes like to a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass; I know your deeds and love, and service and faith and your patience, and your works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding, I have a few things against you, because you permit that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants, to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols`. Within this scripture where it states `and the last to be more than the first`, it could well mean that this church`s love, service, faith and patience which are mentioned, have in fact been growing over the years and continue to do so, and these are attributes which we should all recognize as being the signs of a healthy and a living church. The bretheren of this church have not become luke warm and `settled on their lees`, they have not lost their zeal for doing the work that the Lord requires of one of His churches. We should know that Jezebel, who is mentioned as being in this particular church, is a reference to the Jezebel of the old testament who was the wife of king Ahab, but it is not specifically limited to *that* Jezebel. Strong`s biblical concordance informs us that this particular use of the name `Jezebel`, means; `a woman without a husband`. Now many of us know that throughout the scriptures the term `woman` refers to a church, and so any true church of God should not be devoid of having a `Husband in waiting` as it were, because a true church of God is betrothed to our Lord Jesus Christ. Bearing this in mind it could possibly be that `Jezebel`, rather than being an actual *physical* person within a church, is in fact the blasphemous and corrupt *spiritual* teachings of a false Christian church which have been allowed to creep in and become a part of a true Christian church`s doctrines. Every true church of God should be on red alert for this sort of thing, because it is slow moving like a cancer, and just like a cancer, once it is detected, it can be too late to cure it. Satan`s ministers are everywhere, apperaing in the guise of mainstream `christian` clergy and in all of its` offshoot `christian` sister churches and the like. They are busy infiltrating and corrupting people and church congregations whenever they have the chance to do so, **Jude 4**. `For there are certain men who have crept in unnoticed, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, they are ungodly men who turn the grace

of our God into lasciviousness, denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ`. This church in Thyatira is a true church of God, but it appears to have been lax by allowing certain practices and doctrines to creep in unchallenged having not perceived them to have been of any real threat to be acted upon and summarily thrown out, a BIG mistake to make as we can read of in **Revelation 2: 21-23**. `And I gave her (the `Jezebel`) 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 searches the reins and hearts; and I will give to every one of you according to your works`. As the words of this scripture plainly indicate to us, those who have been led astray by the `Jezebel` the false Christian teachings within this and other churches, have been warned and have been given sufficient time to repent of their ways and that those who do not repent will have to suffer `great tribulation` and her children, (the children of the great Babylonian, Roman catholic `mother` church) her sister churches, will be seen by the remaining churches, to be destroyed, or `killed with death`. Let`s read on, **Revelation 2: 24-26**. `But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many that have not this doctrine, (the teachings of the `Jezebel`) and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put on you none other burden. But that which you already have, hold fast to it until I come. And he that overcomes and keeps My works to the end, to him will I give power over the nations`. Jesus Christ is saying to those within this church who have not been seduced by false Christian teachings, to stand fast to that which they know to be the truth, and not to be moved or convinced to/of the contrary by those who have fallen foul of them. They must constantly be on their guard to recognize and fight against against such false doctrines and of those who have been secretly influenced by them. Let`s have a read of **1.Thessalonians 5: 21**. `Prove all things: (take nothing at face value, check all scripture by reading it for yourself) hold onto securely to that which is good`. It only takes one little bit of giving way to any part of false doctrine, and then as sure as time and tide wait for no man, other bits of false doctrine follow behind until one day the whole church has been corrupted by it. Sure, many faithful and true believers will leave that church, but their places and more, will be readily filled by those who think that the price of salvation can be bought with money and off-handish or completely feigned obedience to the laws of God (were they exist!) and the Satanically inspired `devotions`, observances and ceremonies which have been cleverly and attractively crafted and ordained by their clergy, and so we find that yet another rapidly growing, false Christian church has been born!

Revelation 2: 27-29. `And he (he that overcomes) shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they (the nations) be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father. And I will give him (he that overcomes) the morning star. He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches`. And so we come to the end of the words which have been spoken about the church in/of Thyatira. These words still hold true for every one of the Lord God`s true churches and still apply to every one of them, because we must always be constantly aware of the danger of the threat of being subverted by seemingly innocent, attractive, and therefore easy to assimilate and follow, false `christian` teachings. There is no such thing as a `modern` true church of God, remember these words of **Malachi 3: 6**. `For I am the Lord, I do not change, . . .`. *If the Lord does not change, then neither do any of His given laws and commandments, and neither do any of his true churches!*

Revelation 3: 1-2. `And to the angel of the church in Sardis, write; These things says He that has the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know your works, that you have a name that you live, and are dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die:

for I have not found your works perfect before God`. Jesus Christ states in this scripture that He knows the works of this church in Sardis, and it would appear that these works (that is those of which are seen and recognized) have a `name`, a reputation amongst true Christians and are respected and perceived to be the living works of a true church of God. But Jesus warns this church that He knows the history of its` works and that now, these works have decreased from what they once were, and that what little of them still exist are in danger of becoming *completely* dead, as He states, `strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die`, an indication that at some time before, the works of this church were greater than they are now. Let`s continue, **Revelation 3: 3.** `Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore you shall not watch, (be on your guard) I will come on you as a thief, and you shall not know what hour I shall come upon you`. When Jesus states that He will come upon this church `as a thief`, He means that His final `inspection` visit will be *totally unexpected*, and that this church (and all churches) should always be prepared for such a visit. Jesus has made this sort of analogy before as in **Matthew 24. 42-44.** `Watch therefore, because you do not know what hour your Lord will come. But understand this, If the goodman of the house had known at what time the thief would come, he would have been prepared and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. And so you likewise should be prepared, for at such a time when you think that the Son of man will not come, He will come`. So, still with the church in Sardis, **Revelation 3: 4.** `You have a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, because they are worthy`. It would appear that even within a church that is not wholly right in the eyes of our God, there may still be found those who *are* worthy to walk with Jesus Christ `in white`. Now, bearing in mind that a `church` is the congregation, the people, and not the bricks and stone building, the question may rightly be asked, how can it be that *some* are right in God`s eyes whilst others are not? Well, on the surface each and every member of any given true church of God is probably perceived by each other of their particular church as doing the true work of God, but the Lord looks on the heart of an individual. Anybody can appear as though they belong where they are, but deep inside they may resent it and/or have an ulterior motive for being where they are, or they may just simply be `along for the ride`. **Luke 16: 15.** `And He (Jesus) said to them, You are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts: because that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God`.

Revelation 3: 5-6. `He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches`. Well that piece of scripture finishes what the Lord has to say about the church in Sardis, but not only *that* church, as it is a warning to all the other true churches of God not to become complacent and to begin to think more highly of themselves than they should. Any true church can find their way to the very `gates` of heaven, but to be able to open those gates, and then to be welcomed and allowed to walk in, is a different thing altogether!

And so now we come to the Philadelphia church, which is perhaps *the* church which every true church of God hopes that they will be seen as being come this time of appraisal. **Revelation 3: 7-13.** `And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things says He that is holy, He that is true, He that has the key of David, He that opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens. I know your works: behold. I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength and have kept My word, and have 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 your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, (testing) which shall come upon all the world, to try (test) them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly, hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown. Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name. He that has an ear, (understands) let him hear what the spirit says to the churches`. Now from that scripture we cannot tell what, if anything, the Philadelphia church has got wrong in the eyes of the Lord. Was this church perfect in the eyes of the Lord right from its` conception? I doubt it, otherwise how could it have grown spiritually? Previous scriptures tell us that we are all lacking in righteousness, let`s read the words of the apostle Paul in the book of **Romans 3: 8-10**.
`And not rather

(as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say) Let us do evil so that good may come; whose damnation is just. What then? are we better than they are? No, in no way; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one`. If the Philadelphia church has at any time sinned and offended the Lord in any way, it is, after all, His sole right to forgive any of those sins and shortcomings and to dismiss them out of hand. Why *would* He do this? well, let`s allow these words of the scripture to tell us, `. . . and to know that I have loved you`. We are not told how this church has reached the elevated state that it has, only that it must `hold fast` to it and not let its` guard down. ***To be a church that is loved by the Lord, is indeed something for all true churches of God to attain to.***

And so now we go from the nearly perfect to the practically ruined, the church of Laodicia. **Revelation 3: 14-16**. `And to the angel of the church of Laodiceans, write, These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would that you were cold or hot. So then, because you are luke-warm being neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth`. Oh dear, this appears to be a church that has settled on its` lees, sat back and let the flow of this evil world carry it along. It does not appear to have done much good nor wrong since after its` conception. It seems that it has said in its` heart `let`s not rock the boat any more, no point in upsetting the people by constantly reminding them of their sinful ways`, which, unfortunately for them, is what a true church of God should always be doing, as this next scripture tells us, **Isaiah 58: 1**. `Cry aloud, do not hold back, raise your voice like unto a trumpet, and point out to My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob (modern day America, Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and most of Europe) their sins`. This church has become a useless waste of space, or worse still it has become just another `stumbling block` for those wannabee `christians` who are looking for a church that promotes an easy, `happy-go-lucky` lifestyle. It has lost its` `bite` and if it were a liquid to be drunk it has no worthwhile character or sensation of hot or cold, it has nothing that would prompt or entice the discerning drinker to take a second mouthful, indeed it is so bland and unattractive that rather than the drinker swallow it, it would be spat/spewed out. Let`s continue, **Revelation 3: 17**. `Because you say, I am rich, and have increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked`. By the sound of it, this is no small church because of its` apparent material wealth, perhaps it has hundreds or even thousands who make up its` congregation. It seems to be so wealthy that it doesn`t need (as opposed to want) any more cash or `goods` whatsoever, and

on this earth at the present time, with this kind of wealth comes influence and ultimately power! But as we know, this kind of `wealth` means nothing in the eyes of the Lord God, and He tells this church as much when He states `...you are wretched and miserable, and poor...` This church it would seem, is spiritually impoverished and practically spiritually bankrupt. This is not a church that any true Christian would entertain for one moment, therefore we must assume that its` membership consists entirely of false Christians, many of them deceived because of their laziness and unwillingness to read and to try to understand the scriptures for themselves, instead they `leave all that sort of thing` to their clergy. This church has become a money-making enterprise, nothing more nor less than a very profitable business! Notwithstanding, even *this* church is given a chance to repent as we can read of in **Revelation 3: 18-19**. `I advise you to buy of Me, gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich, and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. (see the error of your ways and the right way to go) As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent`.

Finally, **Revelation 3: 20-22**. `Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches`. When Jesus Christ calls a person, (stands at the `door` and knocks) He does not use a `megaphone`. His voice is not sent echoing loudly around an individual`s head, it is more of an `inner voice`, a quiet prompting to act upon a certain something. Now that `something` may be an issue that an individual has `toyed` with over days or even years, it may be that person`s `conscience` prompting them to finally make a/the right decision in their lives, or it might come in the shape and form of a life changing opportunity. As the Lord knows the hearts of the people whom He calls, He knows how they will react to His calling, but this is only the *beginning* of life`s battle for the newly called, as Jesus Christ states in the book of **Matthew 20: 16**. `So the last shall be first, and the first last: for there are many that are called, but few that are chosen`. And so if we open the `door` and let Jesus Christ into our lives, (He will not use a sledgehammer to bash down that `door`, we have to open it) by so doing we should accept the fact that He will be constantly with us as long as we allow Him to be with us, because if we start to constantly behave in a way contrary to that of a true Christian, He will leave, just the same as you or I would leave if say the `birthday` party that we were invited to degenerated into a Satanically inspired and themed, drug-driven orgy.

And so in conclusion, I think that you the reader may think that we, the Maranatha Ministry, (or even the church that you are in) are not any definitive church mentioned in the book of Revelation, that we do not fulfill all of the criteria mentioned for each church but rather that we (or your church) are a combination of bits and pieces of some of the churches mentioned. (the good bits I hope!) This then raises the possibility of there being more than the seven `end-time` churches outlined in the scripture. Well maybe at face value it does, but then as time progresses I`m sure that all of the remaining seven, end-time true churches of God, will fit the descriptions allotted to them within the pages of the book of Revelation but that certain members of those churches will have taken note of the warnings in the Book of Revelation about their particular church and then left that church and/or repented of their ways whilst still within that church. We should all pray therefore that the particular church that we are a member of is not the Laodicean church, or much worse still, becomes like one of the mainstream, so-called, `christian` churches of this world.

