

# Tithing & The Seven Churches

Fred R. Coulter—August 16, 2025

## TITHING

Here recently we had a discussion concerning tithes. Well, we're not like all churches that send out letters of send more money, or like they do on the television programs: 'Give your money to us,' and like one minister said, 'You can be debt-free if you give your money to me!' That's the way that a lot of people look at it.

Here's something we need to understand: Whenever we think we know something of the Bible, we need to study it to make sure we get all the facts. And you can read *The 14 Rules of Bible Study* that's Appendix A in the Bible, *A Faithful Version*.

Now then, it was alleged and claimed that 'the Church has no right for any tithes or offerings, because the Levitical priesthood no longer exists.' Well, do the tithes begin and end with the Levitical priesthood? That's the question you need to ask first before you can come to that decision.

Num. 18—let's see something very important concerning the tithe coming from the mouth of God to Moses to tell the Levites and the priest. This tells us something; then we'll look at some other Scriptures, which will prove conclusively that it was not the sole jurisdiction of the Levites and the priests.

Numbers 18:20: "And the LORD said to Aaron..."

Who was Aaron? *He was the very first priest!* Now, you shall have no inheritance in the land. They did not have a separate state. There was no tribal state of Levi, but they were scattered through all Israel. So they had certain cities for priests and certain cities for Levites so that the Word of God can be preached and explained to them in their local area, because not everybody could come to the temple.

"...You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any part among them. **I am your part and your inheritance** among the children of Israel. And behold, **I have given**..." (vs 20-21).

- Who's doing the giving?
- Are the priests and Levites just taking?

**or**

- Is it by command of God? *Well, it's by command of God!*

"...I have given the sons of Levi all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, the service of the tabernacle of the congregation" (v 21).

- there's no longer any tabernacle
- there's no longer any temple

So, people say, 'See, God gave it to the priests, the Levites.' The question becomes:

- Whose is it?
- Is it God giving something? *Yes, indeed!*

They didn't create this law; they didn't confiscate it for themselves. **God gave it to them!**

Is this the first time that there was tithing? Let's come to Gen. 14 and see something there. (also note Heb. 7).

Gen. 14—Here is where there was a battle. Abraham got up his army, going out and rescuing those who were captured by the enemy.

Genesis 14:18: "**And Melchisedec the King of Salem**... [Think on that, because Jesus Christ is 'a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.'] ...brought forth bread and wine. And **He was the Priest of the Most High God.**"

- the Most High was the One Who became the Father in the New Testament
- the One Who was the Priest was the One Who became Jesus Christ (Heb. 7).

Verse 19: "And He blessed him, and said, 'Blessed *be* Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed *be* the Most High God, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' **And he**... [Abram/Abraham] ...**gave Him tithes of all**" (vs 19-20).

- Why? **Because the tithe belongs to God!**
- Did He expect the Church to have no way of supporting itself, and carrying out the work of preaching the Gospel to the world?

Let's look at Mal. 3, because this tells us something else that is important. I'll mention here that **we have a whole series going through everything on tithes and offerings!**

Let's read what it says in Malachi. This is to the priest, but also it involves Jesus Christ.

Malachi 3:1: "'Behold, I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me.... [that was John the Baptist; he was the messenger] ...And the Lord, Whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in Whom you delight. Behold, He comes,' says the LORD of hosts." *Now then, that's interesting!*

- When did he suddenly come to the temple as the Messiah? *John 2!*
- What was the first thing He did? *He turned over the tables of the money exchangers and chased out all the animals and everything, and said, 'Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise.'*
- How's that for an entrance to a temple suddenly?

Well, that got everybody's attention, ***but they didn't understand it at all!*** Let's look at v 2; this becomes very interesting, *because this happens quite a bit, especially in the book of Isaiah!* Verse 2 immediately jumps ahead to Christ's second coming! In v 1 we have John the Baptist and the first coming of Jesus Christ

Verse 2: "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness" (vs 2-3).

Then that blends right into what where everything started.

- Where did the Church start? *At the temple!*
- When did it begin? *After instructing the apostles for over three years, it began on the Day of Pentecost with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit!*

Verse 6: "For I *am* the LORD, **I change not...**"

Keep that in mind. Jesus Christ is 'the same yesterday, today—whenever today is today for you and me—and forever!'

Verse 6: "For I *am* the LORD, **I change not.** Therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed. From the days of your fathers, **you have gone away from My statutes, and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,**' says the LORD of hosts..." (vs 6-7).

That's the whole thing, and you can read that in Isa. 55, ***IF you return to God, He will return to you!*** Same thing here.

"...But you say. "In what way shall we return?"'" (v 7).

All right, let's look at it. Let's see what it says. Remember: Who gave the tithes to Aaron and the Levites? ***God did!*** Abraham tithed, did he not? *Yes, he did!*

Let's come back to Gen. 28, because I want to read something that's very important. We know

that Melchizedek was before the children of Israel. Remember what it says in:

Genesis 26:5: "Because **Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My Laws.**"

Gen. 28:22—This is after the dream that Jacob had, and that God was going to bless him. He was on his way to get his wife, and he had this dream. When he slept, it was so powerful, God was right there with him, and the stone he put—he didn't use it for a pillow—at the head where he slept.

Genesis 28:13: "And behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, 'I *am* the LORD, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your seed. And your seed shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south....' Vs 13-14)—*spread out to the whole world!*

Now, where are the children of Israel today, the twelve tribes? *Well, you've got a good number of Jews there in the area of Palestine.* Then you have the United Kingdom...

{Note our book, ***America and Britain: Their Biblical Origin and Prophetic Destiny***}

"...the British Isles, the democracies of Northwestern Europe, and then you have America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

All of those are to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south as you look at the whole globe. Has God fulfilled that? *Yes, He has!*

Verse 15: "And, behold, I *am* with you, and will keep you in every *place* where you go, and will bring you again into this land, for I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken of to you."

That's everything north, east, south, west, and everything. So, that is a statement that goes forward from then to the return of Christ.

Verse 16: "And Jacob awoke from his sleep, and said, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.' And he was afraid and said, 'How fearful *is* this place! This *is* nothing but the House of God, and this *is* the gate of Heaven!'" (vs 16-17). *What a dream that must have been!*

When God said, look to the west, look to the north, look to the south, look to the east, did God give him a vision of what it would look like on the globe? *Have no idea!* Perhaps He did.

Verse 18: "So, Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone, which he had put at his head, and set it *as* a memorial pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place The House of God. But the name of that city *was* Luz

at first. Then **Jacob made a vow...**” (vs 18-20).

Here’s what he said. We need to listen very closely because it shows that he understood what we’re going to cover was already in motion and active before this time.

“...saying, ‘Since God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, and I come again to my father’s house in peace, then shall the LORD be my God. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar shall be God’s house. And of all that You shall give me, **I will surely give the tenth to You.**’” (vs 20-22).

- What does that show? *That shows that the tithe is God’s! We give it to God, because that’s part of His Laws and Commandments!*
- How do we say in an expression if you have an agreement or you say you’re going to do something? *Put your money where your mouth is!*
- Is your word worth anything?

Malachi 3:7 “From the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My statutes, and have not kept them.”

Now the statutes, all those things on how to live, are right there.

“...**Return to Me, and I will return to you.**” says the LORD of hosts. ‘But you say. “In what way shall we return?” **Will a man rob...**’” (vs 7-8)—*the Levites? Does it say that? NO!*

“...**Will a man rob God?....**” (v 8).

- How can you rob God? *He’s in heaven above and you’re on the Earth!*
- Are you going to go up there and steal something from Him? *No, of course not!*

“...**Yet, you are robbing...** [present tense, on an ongoing basis] ...**Me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’....** [answer]: ...**In tithes and offerings!**” (v 8).

Which tells you what? **If you don’t tithe, you’re stealing from God!**

Isn’t that what it says? Get the whole series that we have done on tithes and offerings in the New Testament.

But I never want to hear again from anybody that because the Levitical priesthood is no longer in existence and someone has written a faulty theses on that saying that the Church has no right to take any tithes, only just offerings. Well, that’s not so. ***Every person in the world owes God a tithe!***

Verse 8: “**Will a man rob God?....**”

- Doesn’t say an Israelite
- Doesn’t say the Levites
- Doesn’t say Aaron, the priesthood

Verse 8: “**Will a man rob God? Yet, you are robbing Me. But you say...** [robbing continually, on a continuous basis] ...**‘How have we robbed You?’....** [we didn’t go up to heaven to do it] ...**In tithes and offerings!**”

*That’s why it’s important that everyone prove:*

- Where is God
- Where is the Truth?
- Where is the Church of God?
- What does God expect you to do?

When the ministers receive the tithes and offerings, ***they better use it to preach the Gospel and to produce the things necessary to help people understand the Word of God and God!*** Now what happens if you don’t do it?

Verse 9: ““**You are cursed with a curse; for you are robbing Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the treasure house, so that there may be food in My house. And prove Me now with this,**” says the LORD of hosts, **‘to see if I will not surely open the windows of heaven for you, and pour out a blessing for you, until there is not enough room to receive it.** And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes...” (vs 9-11).

Now, let’s put that not only just in the way of crops and things that people plant, but let’s put it this way.

- Who wants to devour us? *Satan the devil!*
- Who can protect us from that? *God can!*

***But we have to make the right choices!***

““...and it shall not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field,” says the LORD of hosts. ‘And all nations shall call you blessed; for you shall be a delightful land,’ says the LORD of hosts” (vs 11-12)

That blends right into the Kingdom of God. So, yes, we receive tithes and offerings because:

- people love God
- people want to obey God

When we receive it, we use it to produce the things necessary”

- everything connected with this live presentation we have to pay for
- every book
- every Bible

- everything like that that we do
- we are not exceedingly spending money on ourselves like so many on TBN and Day Star and the Sunday-keeping Churches

**You have to decide what you're going to do, because it's between you and God!**

We won't get into all the aspects of who may not be able to tithe, who should tithe, what should you tithe on, and all of that. *That's all covered in the series.*

I wanted to answer this very clearly, very publicly, *because we've heard it from a number of sources! We always have to go by what the Word of God tells us!*

Now, Paul says—not that he didn't have the power to collect it—to the Corinthians, because he wanted them converted first. But he made it clear that he had the power to collect it, but he said, 'Since I didn't do it the way that it should have been done, forgive me for this wrong.' So, he understood that he wasn't doing it correctly himself.

I hope that answers the question; ***the tithe belongs to God***, and everyone who gives it, and I give it, it is to be used in a way that God expects, ***and that He will bless us because of it.***

### **THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

The seven Churches in Rev. 2 & 3 are very instructive for us. But before we get there, let's understand what the Church is supposed to be. And this ties right in with what Lyall said in the opening message. Now, the Church is not to be a social club, though we socialize with each other. The Church is not to be for political action groups.

***The Church is to be the congregation of the saints of God to learn and study the Word of God!*** To keep the appointment that God has set for us every seven days. Now, we have the Sabbath every seven days because we need it. Because with human nature and our human minds and even with the Spirit of God, think what would happen if we quit keeping the Sabbath and God all wrapped up in everything. And look at what Satan had provided on from Friday night to Saturday night with all the activities of entertainment and sports and partying and things like this. Here's what the church should be.

1-Timothy 3:14 *defines what the Church of God should be.* And then we will see that there are always the things of resistance against this.

1-Timothy 3:14: "These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you shortly; but if I should delay, *you have these things in writing*, so that you may know how one is obligated to conduct oneself **in**

***the house of God...***" (vs 14-15). ***So, the Church is the House of God!***

- What did we read concerning tithes and offerings?
- Will you rob God? ***No, of course not!***

***"...which is the Church of the living God..."*** (v 15). *That's something!* God established the Church. That In the Greek it's 'ekklesia,' which means ***the gathering together of the saints!***

***"...of the living God..."*** (v 15).

Now that also tells you something else. All of those who falsely worship God are not worshipping the true God.

Now notice the next phrase because this is absolutely important:

***"...the pillar and foundation of the Truth"*** (v 15)—*the Truth of God!*

That's why we need the Bible the way it should be.

Sidebar on the Faithful Version.: We're getting more reviews coming in. How much more accurate that the Faithful Version is, than any of the other versions that are out there. Just keep that in mind, because that's what we have been doing. And everything that we do is:

- Is it the Truth of God?
- Is it the Truth of God?
- Is it ***ALL*** the Truth?
- Does it cover
  - ✓ what God wants us to have?
  - ✓ what God wants us to do?
- What did Jesus say?
- How are we to do it?

We can't come along like the SDAs; this is going to be a big problem. As I have mentioned to Richard Gonzalas. They understand the Sabbath. But they're so wrapped up in the Sabbath that ***they're being deceived by the Jesuits from within!*** And where that goes, you probably already have a good idea.

However, the biggest problem that the SDAs have in overcoming all of their errors—they have a lot of them, when you get down to it—they have a lot of things that are good. But what is the greatest error that they have? ***They don't understand the New Covenant!***

Why don't they understand the New Covenant? ***Because they do not keep the Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month according to the Calculated Hebrew Calendar!*** That is ***the day of***

*covenant*, because that Covenant is enacted *after* there is a sacrifice!

And the Passover Day and *the sacrifice of Christ*—and everything that happened in that 24 hour period—*and all the words of the New Covenant* were spoken on that day.

The SDAs keep Communion the first Sabbath of every quarter. I don't recall reading any Scripture like that. Do you? *NO!* Who is called 'our Passover'?

1-Cor. 5—this tells us something very important. Paul is saying right here, and this is important because with human nature:

- **UNLESS** you are keeping the Sabbath
- **UNLESS** you are overcoming
- **UNLESS** you are learning to live by every Word of God

***THEN*** you are going to find yourself getting in trouble! That's how, as we will see in the seven Churches (Rev. 2 & 3) get themselves in trouble. They begin *justifying* sin; or accepting false doctrine—either one.

So, the Corinthians had this problem of incest with one of the members of the Church, his stepmother.

1-Corinthians 5:6: "Your glorying *is* not good...."

Now why would he say that? In relationship to that kind of activity that it was depicted before this. Because people were saying"

Oh well, there's the grace of God. Besides the Law—just like today they say in Protestantism—has been done away. Isn't that a nice thing? How loving that could be.

Verse 6: "Your glorying *is* not good. Don't you know that a little leaven..." That's why we keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because during Unleavened Bread we learn the lesson that sin is like leaven. Or you could also say, like mold.

- it grows
- it erodes
- it takes apart
- it tears down

"...a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" (v 6).

You can liken that to your body. As Jesus said, 'IF your body is full of darkness, full of sin, how great is that darkness?' Or 'IF you have the Spirit of God, the Light that is within you comes from God; from His Spirit, and because you do the things that please God.

Verse 7: "Therefore, **purge out**..."

This is something we need to do every day; we'll talk about that a little bit later.

Verse 7: "Therefore, **purge out** the old leaven... [get rid of the sin within] ...so that you may become a new lump..."

Conversion is changing the heart and mind, and everything about you in preparation for the resurrection.

"...even as you are unleavened...." (v 7).

In other words. They took the leaven out of their houses, ***but they weren't getting rid of what the leaven meant!*** They were glorying in the leaven that was still left.

**"...For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us"** (v 7).

That's the central key to everything. People can acknowledge the sacrifice of Christ, but on the wrong day, at the wrong time ***they're not in covenant with God!*** They don't keep the Commandments of God. All of God's Word ***is Truth!*** Isn't that what Jesus said?

Verse 8: "For this reason, let us keep the Feast.... [the Feast of Unleavened Bread] ...not with old leaven...."

- here has to be *change*
- here has to be *repentance*
- here has to be *removal of sin*

In each one's life you have to come to see it in yourself.

"...not with old leaven, nor with *the* leaven of malice and wickedness, **but with the unleavened bread of Sincerity and Truth**" (v 8).

1-Tim. 3, and then we will begin examining again the 7 churches in Rev. 2 & 3. Quite a thing indeed!

1-Timothy 3:15: "...conduct oneself in *the* house of God, which is *the Church* of *the* living God, *the* pillar and foundation of the Truth." *That's what God wants us to do:*

- in our lives individually
- in our lives collectively
- for all the ministers and elders in teaching the people
  - you teach the Truth
  - you live by the Truth

You can't live one way, then expect to come in on the Sabbath and preach from the Bible, and expect it to be heard and recognized as Truth. ***Because your sins are going to find you out!***

That's what it says in Num. 32:23.

Verse 16: "And undeniably, great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifested in *the* flesh..."—and all that was; all that took place with that.

He came the way that He did so that no one could say, 'Oh God:

- You don't understand what it was like to be a little baby—*He was!*
- You don't understand what it's like to be a teen—*He was!*
- You don't understand what it's like to have people against You—*He had **everyone** against Him!*

"...**was justified in the Spirit**..." (v 16). *Kept in right standing with God, with the Spirit within Him!*

"...was seen by angels, was proclaimed among *the* Gentiles, was believed on in *the* world, was received up in glory" (v 16).

Now, after saying that the Church is the pillar and foundation of Truth...

1-Timothy 4:1: "Now, the Spirit tells us explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith, *and* shall follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."

We see that everywhere. You watch the advertisement on television for all the movies.

- they're more satanic
- getting deeper into satanism
- getting deeper into evil spirits
- there's even one movie called *Sinners*
- then there's *Harry Potter*

You thought Harry Potter, when he grew up, it would come to an end. *No!* He's out there *full blown as a male witch!*

Think about what's happened in the Churches of God.

Verse 2: "Speaking lies in hypocrisy..."

Isn't that what they do? They live an evil life over here, come to Church on the Sabbath and pretend that they're righteous. Now, those of you who have been in the church a long time and through the experience of Worldwide Church of God understand what I'm saying.

"...their consciences having been cauterized with a hot iron" (v 2).

Then talks about other things. Now let's come to Rev 2 & 3; let's review how error starts. Let's read it here in the Church of Ephesus: He tells them

how what they have done that is very good. Then Christ says this:

Revelation 2:4: "Nevertheless, I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love."

Now the Greek there 'protos' means *primary; the primary love!* Everything starts when you are not loving God the way that God says. That's why you hear me say all the time.

- we **believe** God
- we **obey** God
- we **love** God

***That's a progression! They have left their first love!*** That opens the door, and we will see how that happens.

Verse 5: "Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, **and repent, and do the first works...**"

Now, isn't that interesting? **Love, works and faith go together!**

"...for **IF you do not...**" (v 5). **Christ gives a warning!** This is for everybody. **We used to say:**

In this time in history, we had the Ephesian Church. Then after that we had the Smyrna Church. Then after that we had the Pergamos Church. After that we had Thyatira, then Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

***NO!*** The seven Churches ***exist in varying degrees*** all the way down through the history of the Church. These seven Churches all existed at the same time.

"...for IF *you do* not, I will come to you quickly; and I will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent" (v 5).

So, that's quite a thing! Why is it that there's always trouble in the Churches?

Matt. 13—we will see this is quite a little parable here when we understand it. Because when we go through this one section, this tells us why we have all the problems that come along, and to alert us what we need to do. ***To always be on guard!***

Matthew 13:24: "And He put another parable before them, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man who was sowing good seed in his field.'"

Now, the One Who was sowing good seed was Jesus Christ ***sowing the Word of God!***

Verse 25: "**But while men were sleeping...**" In other words, *they weren't alert!*

"...**his enemy came...**" (v 25).

Who's our enemy? ***Satan the devil, the demons, and other people coming in to subvert the***

**Church!** And I could tell you a lot of experience on that. But we'll let it go for this time being.

"...and sowed tares..." (v 25)—*look-alikes!*

They're not wheat, but as they grow, they look alike, and you can't tell one from another until the fruit is beginning to develop at the top of the stem of the wheat..

"...sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. Now, when the blades sprouted and produced fruit, then the tares also appeared" (vs 25-26).

So, sooner or later, they all come out. All the problems develop.

Verse 27: "And the servants came to the master of the house *and* said to him 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Then where did these tares come from?' And he said to them, 'A man *who* is an enemy has done this'" (vs 27-28).

Now, that's **how and why** Worldwide Church of God failed, and **how and why every church is going down the drain!** They are putting lesbian women as preachers in Protestant churches and even in England, in the Church of England, to the highest level. **The enemy has conquered them!**

"...an enemy has done this.' Then the servants said to him, 'Do you want us to go out and gather them?' But he said, 'No, lest while you are gathering the tares, you *also* uproot the wheat with them'" (vs 28-29).

Notice the next verse, because this answers the question: **Why do we always have trouble?**

Verse 30: "Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and at the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, 'Gather the tares first, and bind them into bundles **to burn them; but gather the wheat into my granary.**'" *That's the resurrection!*

So, All through the Church Age there are going to be tares. That's what happened to Ephesus. They went to sleep. They didn't stay alert. You can read what happened in the next 200 years. *The Catholic Church developed full blossom!.*

Then we have the Church of Pergamos, Where there's martyrdom. Then we have the Church of Thyatira, Where we left off before. So, let's read that.

Revelation 2:18: "And to the angel of the Church in Thyatira write: 'These things says the Son of God, He Who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet *are* like fine brass. I know your works, and love..." (vs 18-19).

Now, two important things that we need to remember:

### 1. **I know your works**

*Then at the end of every Church description it says:*

### 2. **The one who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches**

*In other words:*

- **we need the Spirit of God within us**  
*we need to come out of*
  - ✓ the stupor of sleeping
  - ✓ the stupor of putting up with false doctrine
- **we need to stay close to God**

Thyatira was quite a Church. It came down through the Middle Ages, and had full assault by the Catholic Church against them, in the form of the woman Jezebel.

Verse 19: "I know your works, and love, and service, and faith, and your endurance, and your works; and the last *are* more than the first. But I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel..." (vs 19-20).

Who was Jezebel in the Old Testament? *She was the wife of Ahab*, who was the son of the priest of Baal—**SUN-worship!** What is the whole Catholic Church all built upon? **SUN-worship!** Easter worship!

Every pagan thing under the sun is in the Roman Catholic Church, **renamed as Christian**, to appear to be the Church of God. **But it's not! They are the church full of tares. No wheat in them!**

"...who calls herself a prophetess, **to teach and to seduce My servants...**" (v 20).

That's exactly what has happened with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and is happening now. That's exactly what happened in the Worldwide Church of God and what has happened to them, as well.

So, this shows that this can be at any time, not just in a particular historical time setting.

"...**into committing fornication...**" (v 20)—*spiritual fornication!*

Why is that? **Because if you are baptized and have God's Holy Spirit, you have been espoused—**as Paul says in 2-Cor. 11—**to Christ!**

That takes place when you repent, are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. You have to remain faithful because the marriage will not take place until the resurrection and the return of Christ. We have to understand that.

So, that's spiritual fornication. What is spiritual fornication? *Sunday, Christmas, Easter, the sacrifice of the Mass and everything like that!* That is all **spiritual fornication!**

“...and eating things sacrificed to idols.... [the Eucharist] ...And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, but she did not repent” (vs 20-21).

Historically, that happened during the time of the Council of Trent. And believe it or not, they had a whole group of Catholics that were saying,

Let's get rid of the idols. Let's get rid of everything that we have that's not found in the Bible. Let's all go by the Scriptures.

Because the Protestants were saying, at that time,

Sola Scriptura; let's go by the Scriptures; let's go by the Scriptures.

So in the Council of Trent, they had a whole group of them that wanted to go by the Scriptures. But why didn't that happen? Well, you can read of that by Cardinal Gibbons. The problem was Luther. Luther started out very well. He nailed his '95 Theses to the cathedral door on Halloween Day.

But what did Luther miss? *The Sabbath!* How did that happen? *There's a whole book written*, and it's all about Karlstadt, who was a personal friend of Martin Luther. He kept telling Luther, 'you've got to keep the Sabbath, not Sunday.' Luther wouldn't do it. Then when the farmers revolted, Luther put his alliance with the Catholics to put down the farmers.

So, the Council of Trent decided:

We can't get rid of tradition, because Sunday is tradition and the day that we have instituted! We can't get rid of that.

Look at what the Protestants have done with Luther. They keep Sunday, so, therefore, we can conclude, as Gibbons wrote that:

Our worship will consist of tradition *and* Scripture.

So, that's how it happened. They didn't repent!

Now, there were a lot of Waldensians and Seventh-Day Baptists also coming up in the Celtic Church in Britain. That's quite a thing to read if you get that book.

Verse 22: "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their works."

*Now, that brings it clear down to the second return of Christ!* They can have other periods of tribulation in between, just like we see everywhere today. Verse 23 tells you how serious it is:

- IF we don't stay with God
- IF we don't keep the Truth
- IF we don't live the way we should

That's why, as I've said, *we have the Sabbath and the Passover and all the Holy Days.*

Verse 23: "And I will kill her children with death..."

Now, that almost seems like a contradictory statement, because if you kill someone, they're dead. But if you kill *with death*, this is undoubtedly *the second death*, the Lake of Fire; for those who had been in the Church!

"...and all the Churches shall know..." (v 23).

*This is what we need to understand.* There it is right there. *All the Churches shall know that Christ is the Head of the Church*, and wherever there are those who love God and keep His Commandments and have the Spirit of God, *there is a Church of God*, whether it's a few people, whether it's a larger group, regardless of what it is.

"...all the Churches shall know that I am He Who searches the reins and hearts..." (v 23).

What does this tell us?

*The reins*, as we find back in Psa. 139, *are at the creation of human beings in the womb of the mother.* David said, *'You have known my reins.'*

Now, that's whatever part of the brain there is that we don't know. People think they know a lot about the brain today, but they don't. There's a place that is called *the reins; that God can know at any time what anyone is thinking if He wants to know it!* 'I search the reins and the hearts.'

What does our heart have to be? We've covered that:

*You love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and being!*

- that's what it is
- that is our greatest protection
- that is the thing so that we can fight against all the tares

"...and I will give to each of you according to your works" (v 23). *Notice how many times that it says works!*

- God will bless us if we do what is right
- God will bless us if we come to Him and we do the things we need to overcome

We'll talk about that here in just a little bit, because this means we have a great responsibility for doing an awful lot in using the Spirit of God to maintain our relationship with God, *and*:

- to keep our mind
- to keep our heart



- to keep loving God
- to keep doing the things that are pleasing in His sight

“...according to your works. But to you I say, and to the rest who *are* in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan” (vs 23-24)).

Isn't that something? *I don't want to know what the depths of Satan is*, but that's got to be nothing but evil. ***IF*** it's the depths of Satan that people get into, what is that going to result in? ***Being killed with death, the second death!***

“...as they speak; I will not cast upon you any other burden, but hold fast what you have until I come. And to the one who overcomes...” (vs 24-26).

This is what we need to do. We need to overcome. We'll see how we need to overcome here in just a bit.

“...and keeps My works unto the end...” (v 26).

- Did Jesus ever abolish the Sabbath? *No!*
- Did he ever abolish the Passover? *No!*
- Did he ever abolish any of the Feast days? *No!*
  - ✓ Unleavened Bread?
  - ✓ Pentecost?
  - ✓ Trumpets?
  - ✓ Atonement?
  - ✓ Tabernacles?
  - ✓ Last Great Day?

What are our works?

- to love God and keep His Commandments
- to love our neighbors as ourself
- to live our lives and begin to control our minds
  - ✓ by choice
  - ✓ by work
  - ✓ by having the Word of God written in our heart and in our mind

“...I will give authority over the nations. and he shall shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces; as I have also received from My Father; and I will give him the Morning Star. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches” (vs 26-29).

- How do we keep from losing our first love?
- How do we keep from getting into things like Pergamos, where there was:
  - ✓ open idol worship
  - ✓ Satan worship
  - ✓ unto the Catholic Church and what they have done?
- How do we keep that?

Galatians 5:16—*let's see it; let's see what we*

*need to do: “Now **this** I say, walk by the Spirit...” That means **that's the way that you live!***

Let God's Spirit lead you, help you! ***It will!*** God will put thoughts into your head and things like this that you need to do.

“...and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (v 16).

- When a temptation comes, what do you do? *You put it down!*
- When something comes up that is not right, what do you do? *You make it right!*

Verse 17: “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these things are opposed to each other, so that you cannot do those things you wish to do.”

***This is the struggle of human nature!*** Whenever you are not fighting that battle of the struggle of human nature that we all go through:

- What happens?
- What happens to the Church?
- What happens in your life?

God looks at the whole view of it!

Verse 18: “But if you are led by *the* Spirit, you are not under *works of law*.”

That's the ***works of law of Judaism or the teachings of men!*** Then Paul goes on showing: What are the works of the flesh? All of these things are out in full display at this time, so let's look at them. Every time you turn on the television, they come waltzing right into your home.

Verse 19: “Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness.” ***Sexual problems!*** Look at it in the world:

Licentiousness is doing your own will ***or*** Satan's will ***rather than God's!***

Verse 20: “Idolatry...” ***Let's talk a little bit about idolatry!***

Ezek. 14—let's look this because this is important to understand, because it has to do with our mind. Remember what we read that Jesus said, that ‘He searches the hearts, the minds and the reins.’

Ezekiel 14:1: “And some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts’” (vs 1-3).

***Amazing!*** That ties right in with what we brought out concerning Thyatira.

- What's in your mind?
- What are your thoughts?

- What happens when you have evil thoughts come into your mind?

*Because you will! That's the nature of overcoming!*

- OR**
- Do you take those and cast them down?
  - Do you delight in sin, the pleasures of sin, for a pleasure for a while, a season?

"...and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I at all be inquired of by them?" (v 3).

He's saying, *'There's no way that I'm going to be inquired by them!'* Why? *Because God says:* To which one will I look? *He who has a broken heart and a contrite spirit and trembles at My Word.*

Verse 4: "Therefore, speak to them, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Every man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart..."

- Are we not spiritual Israel?
- How many idols do we have in our mind?
- How many things do we allow in our mind to occupy our thoughts when we shouldn't?

*That's all a part of overcoming!*

Like Jesus said, 'To the one who overcomes...' *That's the struggle!* The tares are there. We need to really understand that today we have more of them than any ever before. If you have a smartphone, you have it right in your hand. It's there! Look at all the stupid things that happen on the social media. Absolutely insane!

What did they say? Oh, we'll have social media and this will be good and everybody can have all their own opinion.

What do they do? *They bring out all of their sins, all of their wretchedness and everything like that!* They corrupt children; they corrupt people.

"...and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet..." (v 4).

- You're going to come to a preacher?
- You're going to come to God?

*Well, you better repent!* That's what He says in Rev. 2 & 3; **'I, the Lord, will answer him according to the multitude of his idols.'**

Verse 5: "So that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart because they have deserted Me for their idols—all of them. Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Repent and turn yourselves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations'" (vs 5-6).

That sounds a little bit like what we have back here? Yes, indeed!

Gal. 5 again so that we understand what we need to do.

Galatians 5:21: "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such things as these; concerning which I am telling you beforehand, even as I have also said in the past, that those who do such things shall not inherit *the Kingdom of God.*"

Now then, we read through all the things concerning the sins and we'll finish those off. Now then, Paul contrasts that with the fruit of the Spirit. Here's the fruit of the flesh that we read. And the worst thing is **the idols in the mind.**

Galatians 5:22: **"But the fruit of the Spirit..."**

- to walk in the Spirit
- to live in the Spirit
- to think in the Spirit

**"...is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control..."**(vs 22-23). Now, we'll talk about *self-control* here in just a bit.

"...against such things there is no law. But those who *are* Christ's have crucified the flesh...[that's what we do; we crucify it with the Truth] ...with its passions and lusts. **IF we live by the Spirit...** [conditional] **...we should also be walking by the Spirit**" (vs 23-25)

2 Cor. 10—Let's see this warfare that Paul is talking about here, that we're all going through. In the seven churches, this is the key on how we overcome.

- overcome the tares everywhere
- overcome the difficulties within the Church
- overcome the difficulties within our heart and mind

That's the key; self-control led by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Let's see that Paul likens that to warfare. The war is going on! As long as we're in the flesh, those things are still going to beat against us, like tares in our mind, you could say.

2-Corinthians 10:3: "For although we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to *the flesh.*" *We'll see how we war in the spirit!*

- How do we use the Spirit of God?
- How do we use the Truth of God?
- What are we thinking?
- How do we control these things?
- How does it work?

*Right here it tells us:*

Verse 3: “For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal...” (vs 3-4).

- you can’t do it by human means
- you can’t do it by psychology

***You must do it by the Spirit of God!***

“...but mighty through God **to the overthrowing of strongholds**” (v 4).

*Then he defines the strongholds! What is the hardest thing to change? **The human mind!***

Verse 5: “**Casting down vain imaginations...**”

All those wild thoughts that come in. And sometimes you go along and you think:

- How did that happen?
- How did that get in my mind?

That’s because it’s in the air everywhere today, if you could put it that way.

Verse 5: “Casting down *vain* imaginations, **and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...**”

That’s the battle within! We have the battle collectively concerning the church and the people and gathering together and the society out there that’s out there.

But this is individually within, inside our mind and heart. So that we don’t have idols, and that we learn to control—self-control—with the Spirit of God, so we can cast down all these vain imaginations and all the reasonings that come along. Because they will.

Look at what Paul wrote when you read Rom. 7. We won’t go back there.

**“...and bringing into captivity every thought”** (v 5).

You control your mind—self-control—that’s the key that answers what happened to the Churches in Rev. 2 & 3. ***They didn’t follow what Paul was teaching here.***

**“...bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ”** (v 5). *That’s what we fight against every day!*

That’s what was missing with the Churches. There’s an awful lot to learn from the seven Churches. So we’ll continue next time and see what happens to Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. ***There’s quite a lot. And a lot of that applies to us today!***

Scriptural References:

### **TITHING:**

- 1) Numbers 18:20-21
- 2) Genesis 14:18-20
- 3) Malachi 3:1-2, 6-9
- 4) Genesis 26:5
- 5) Genesis 28:13-22
- 6) Malachi 3:7-12

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 7
- John 2
- Isaiah 55

Also referenced: {[truthofGod.org](http://truthofGod.org)}

- Series on *Tithing*
- Book: *America and Britain in Prophecy: Their Biblical Origin and Prophetic Destiny*

### **THE SEVEN CHURCHES:**

- 1) 1-Timothy 3:14-15
- 2) 1-Corinthians 5:6-8
- 3) 1-Timothy 3:15-16
- 4) 1-Timothy 4:1-2
- 5) Revelation 2:4-5
- 6) Matthew 13:24-30
- 7) Revelation 2:18-29
- 8) Galatians 5:16-20
- 9) Ezekiel 14:1-6
- 10) Galatians 5:21-25
- 11) 2-Corinthians 10:3-5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Numbers 32:33
- 2-Corinthians 11
- Psalm 139
- Romans 7

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