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Episode 58 - Unveiling the Mysteries of Revelation's Seven Churches

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Join Scott Stanley of DTG Ministries as he delves into the profound mysteries of the seven churches of Revelation, chapters two and three. In this episode, he paints a comprehensive picture of how these churches symbolize stages of understanding that believers must navigate to ascend out of the world's apostasy and reach heavenly truth.

Scott discusses the critical themes of apostasy, the nature of Trinitarian beliefs, and the symbolic significance of the lampstands depicted in Revelation and Exodus. He explains that these lampstands are not mere symbols of problems but rather representations of redeemed experiences, demonstrating the stages of spiritual growth and understanding that every believer goes through, from Ephesus to Laodicea.

Discover how the seven churches reflect a spiritual journey, highlighting the necessity of overcoming misconceptions about the nature of sin and redemption, and shedding light on the true path to spiritual awakening and victory over iniquity. This episode challenges traditional interpretations and urges a re-evaluation of what it means to truly understand and live by the word of God.

Modified Transcript:

Scriptures are directly transcribed with notations. See KJV for verbatim wording.

Hi. This is Scott Stanley with DTG Ministries, continuing the Revelation podcast. We're looking at the deep things of God in the Seven Churches of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3. I would like to paint a big picture here. To do a study on the Seven Churches is massive, but if I could paint a big picture, hopefully, you could get an understanding of what is being depicted. Then we can come back and put this together one church at a time.

We need to know that this is essential information. There was an apostasy that began in the first century, 1 John 2:18, and it will continue until the second coming. In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul says the mystery of iniquity does already work; Christ will destroy it when he comes at the second coming. So it began in the first century, and it will last until the second coming.

There is no way you and I were kept out of the apostasy when we gave our hearts to the Lord and decided to become Christians and serve God. You had to be in the apostasy. Now, if you can't believe that, if you can't get past that point, then you're going to have to go back and rethink it. Go back and look at 1 John 2, and look at what he is saying, because the two points of contention the Antichrist has with the apostles are 1) the Father and Son, and 2) Christ coming in the flesh. Those two doctrines contradict the Trinity. There's no way you can believe Jesus is actually the Son of God, that He emptied Himself and became a man, and He came in the flesh without an understanding of God. If you're a Trinitarian, that doesn't work. It won't work for you.

So I have to speak of myself coming into Christianity, giving my heart to God. I did not belong to a church that said Jesus was born in eternity and really was the Son of God. I didn't go to a church like that. The church I went to, and all of the ones after that, were Trinitarian. You may not be a Trinitarian. Maybe you're in a church that doesn't believe in the Trinity, but if they're not saying Christ was born in eternity, and came in the likeness, in the similitude of sinful flesh, and came in the flesh without an understanding of God, you're in the apostasy!

The apostasy ... you can't get around it, so it's essential that we understand that, because, once we understand that, we begin to understand the problems in our Christianity and the problems in our lives and why we're not having more victory over sin and iniquity- because we're being taught Christ died to pay your penalty—it's not in the Bible! "He died to pay your sin debt." No, it's not in the Bible. He died to redeem us from all iniquity. So when we look at Revelation, the Seven Churches, Christ has given us a similitude of it. That similitude is in Revelation, chapter 1, verse 20.

Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks or lampstands. The stars are the messengers of the churches: the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

What do you mean by "the seven lampstands"? The lampstands are what is seen in Exodus 25, in the making of the sanctuary. The lampstands are part of the sanctuary. It's where the High Priest would go in and light the seven lamps every day and keep this fire burning, keep this light going. Again, Christ in Revelation 1, the last verse, equates the seven churches to the lampstands. How are they like the lampstands? What is this all about?

Well, in Exodus 25, there's the making of the lampstands, and I'm going to start reading verse 31, but we need to understand that when God had them make the lampstand, it is a picture of the redeemed experience that you've had. It's not a similitude of the problem. It's a similitude of the problem *corrected*. You see, the seven churches are stages of understanding that each person will go through. You're not found in just one group or the other. If you're going to come out of the apostasy, you're going to go from Ephesus to Laodicea.

It may take you thirty years, it may take somebody a week, but you've got to be taken through the process of understanding the truth so that when you hear the sound of a trumpet, "*I heard a voice as of a trumpet which said, Come up here,*" Rev 4:1, you are able to ascend out of the apostasy into God's heavenly truth.

So when I read in Ephesus that they have lost their first love, that never returns until they ascend out of the lie. It is one person continuing through the process of coming out of the apostasy that this world is in. Again, looking at the making of the candlestick,

it's the redeemed picture of it, just like when I look at the Table of Shewbread, I see the Bible. The 144,000 are the redeemed truths from the apostasy we were given based on Bible verses. When he redeems that and fixes it, it's the 144,000. But when he redeems the churches and corrects it, here's the picture of the candlestick or the lampstand.

Exodus 25:31 You shall make a candlestick (or you'll make a lampstand) of pure gold. ...

Gold is the faith of Christ. So these people have been redeemed. This is an experience that's been redeemed from the apostasy. You have the faith of Christ. Notice it is a beaten work. In other words, God made an effort to give you that faith; it's a beaten work. We are his workmanship. So, being redeemed from the apostasy, God paints a picture here.

It's a beaten work. It has a shaft, which is a main stem, a main shaft, stemming from the bottom to the top, but branches extend from the shaft, three on each side. There are bowls, knops, and flowers. Now this is key because the word "bowl" is the word "cup." It's a cup. [1375] is the Strong's number in the Hebrew language. A bowl [1375] is a cup. A cup is an experience.

A knop. What is a knop? A knop is actually a knob. The knob in the Ancient Hebrew, it just blows you away to see what it is, what he is actually saying. The word "knob" is used in Zephaniah 2:14... and I want to read this to you, but I want to read verse 13 with it. Now we're looking at the word "knop," which is a knob, K -N -O -B.

Zep 2:13 He will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria (which is a corrupt government). And he will make Nineveh a desolation and dry like a wilderness.

Zep 2:14 Flocks shall lie down in the midst of her. All the beasts of the nations...

Stop right there. The nations: You're to be redeemed from all nations, kindred, tongue, and people. The nations are what you have been taught from the world. The nations represent iniquity, and all nations need to be put under our feet. You need to overcome it.

Zep 2:14 The flocks will lie down in the midst of her, and the beasts of the nations, both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge, where? In the upper lintels ...

Where do the beasts of the nations lodge? In the upper lintels. Well, that "upper lintels" is a knob. So, if I take that back to Exodus 25, I see there are bowls- there are experiences, and knobs- experiences of the nations ... and flowers. What is a flower? The literal meaning of a flower, taken from the Ancient Hebrew, means "to burst, to bud" ... it's like it bursts forth. Now there's one more word to add to this. In Exodus 25:33,

Exo 25:33 ... bowls are made like unto almonds, with knobs and a flower in the branch ...

What's an almond? Almond... look up the word "almond" in the Ancient Hebrew. It's the word "eye." It's an understanding. So let's just put this together. I want to look at Exodus 25:34.

Exo 25:34 And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knobs and their flowers.

In the lampstand will be four experiences made like almonds. See, an almond is the shape of an eye, made like the understanding of the nations and bursting out of that. The flowers are the "bursting out" of the understanding of the nation; the experience you are having because of understanding like the nations. There are your seven churches because you're in complete apostasy. For you to come out of that, you burst out of the experience you're having in understanding like the nations.

So God says, *"All right, we're going to make a similitude of that experience, and I want you to make a lampstand with a shaft."* There are four experiences, four bowls on that shaft. That is earthly completeness. But each branch has three. Each branch extending from that shaft shows a picture of three. Three is complete. Three is a complete number, looking at time- past, present, and future, that's all of it. So when I look at three times that you burst out of your understanding as the nations, the experience you're having as understanding like the nations, you burst out of that three, it's complete. With each branch, you have a complete bursting out of it.

The main shaft has four; it is earthly completeness. When you come from Ephesus to Laodicea, and you hear the voice as of a trumpet saying, *"Come up here,"* you have now

completely separated from the experience you're having in the seven churches. You're out of there. You are now in a position where this candlestick or this lampstand made of beaten work of gold (the faith of Christ) is what delivers you out of understanding like the nations and brings you into a heavenly experience, Revelation 4 and 5.

The candlestick represents the redemption of the person and the coming out of the apostasy. It doesn't mean that you're perfect and know everything. It just means, "*Remember to each church to him that overcomes*" ... you overcome when you see that God is love, love does not make a record of sin, and you begin to build your truth. That is the foundation Zerubbabel lays: God is love, and love does not make a record of sin. You start building on that. You ascend out of the lies into the heavenly way that God understands, and you turn around, and God shows you that with a lampstand of solid gold, showing where you are completely delivered from the understanding of the nations.

Now, this is put in the sanctuary, and understand this: You don't get any light from just one of them. When the high priest lights a lamp, he lights all seven. Therefore, in the sanctuary, the lampstand is not a picture of a person going through the problem. It's a picture of the person having ascended out of the problem. And the high priest can now give you light from each church experience, Ephesus to Laodicea. You can look back and remember where you were, what was going on, why you were so deceived, and what they were saying to you that kept you from the truth. What were they saying to you that you would lose your first love? What happened there?

You come to the Lord ... and Ephesus - "*You lost your first love.*" See what's going on? Well, one thing to remember is that coming from the 'apostasy people' are the four winds of heaven blowing on the sea. Up comes the lion, the bear, and the leopard. The lion has had his wings plucked. The bear has the Trinity in his teeth (his basic concepts, he's told to devour much fleshly understanding). The leopard has spots showing it can't forgive (it struggles forgiving, maybe even forgiving yourself), but it has four heads. Four is earthly completeness.

An earthly head is Satan, which causes you to need to be beheaded so you can serve God in spirit and in truth. You lose that head, you're able to lead it away, take the meaning of the cross, and die daily, eat your daily bread. The bread is broken for you. A

broken body- broken bread means wine, means blood. You eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of Him spiritually every day so that you can walk in love and patience and apply atonements to the people in your life who are causing you problems, who are inflicting pain upon you. God has given you the tools.

So again, light is coming from the lampstand. What light? Look back at the lampstand. When you do that, each one of these churches is a temporary dwelling. You're only in Ephesus temporarily. You move on to Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira, you keep moving through those churches. They are temporary structures. When you stop and consider where you've been, that is the Feast of Tabernacles. You are dwelling in a booth to commemorate your dwelling in temporary structures. So the whole sanctuary process, all of this, including the feasts- all of them are in the Book of Revelation because *all of these things are written for those upon whom the end of the world has come*, 1Co 10:11.

I know that what I am sharing is, for some, wild. It's way out there, but the verses depict this, and if I am going to look at the symbols, the similitudes being used in the book, this is what I see. Again, it's essential to realize that we were taught literalism. We were taught to read the Bible literally and not put life into it. Paul says, 2Co 3:6, "*Life is in the spirit of it. Death is in the letter of it.*" So, actually, if we could get it down in our hearts, the church is in apostasy, we need to understand spiritual truth. We need to realize something is not right in these churches because, being in those churches, I was taught I could not overcome sin.

Now, I'm realizing that is not what God is telling me. God is telling me I can overcome sin. I can be redeemed from all iniquity, and iniquity is the thought I had before I sinned. God has the ability to redeem us from all iniquity. The candlestick, or the lampstand, is a picture of a person who's been redeemed. That is their experience. They have been redeemed from the apostasy. You come out of that apostasy; you ascend into the heavens. God begins to show you; He gives the book, your mind, to Jesus.

You're seeing a vision here; this is a vision. He opens your book, a seal at a time. The seals are just the process you've gone through to get to the place where he can open your book, present to you the truth, seal the truth, creating the 144,000, a redeemed truth, allowing you to come before God with the Holy Spirit, bringing the truth of the cross to you and burning out the iniquity.

This is the picture being painted in Revelation, and without an understanding that you're coming out of apostasy, if you're still looking back to find something good in that mess, that is going to be your downfall. You need to let go of all the baggage and let God rebuild. Let Him give you a new heaven and a new earth, because that is the only way you're going to be saved from all iniquity. You need a new heaven and a new earth.

I worship God, I praise God for everything He's revealing to us. I know how unworthy I am, and to give me the truth, I just bow my head because what I am sharing with you is scriptural. Again, it's spiritual. It's making sense out of the fact that the candlestick or the lampstand is in the sanctuary. It is the seven churches of Revelation. Jesus said so. To go back and look at how he constructed that lampstand, and the symbols he put on there, again, the lampstand is showing you bursting out of the understanding of the nations and the experience that you were having in that apostasy.

That's what I want for my life. I don't want to ever experience what I did in the churches. I know there are a lot of happy people there. There are a lot of good people there, but they are not being saved from iniquity. They're being kept from salvation. They're being told they are saved, but they don't understand what happened on the cross. They're told they just have to believe it, and I'm telling you, if he simply died to pay your penalty, that might be true, but that verse is not in the Bible. Titus 2:14, "*Christ died to redeem us from all iniquity.*" Remember that verse, memorize that verse.

Come out of the apostasy, ascend out of the apostasy, and let the Lord Jesus Christ do His ministry of high priest to you. How does he do that? You have to understand the Branch, which is Jesus, who gave his life on the cross, and what does the cross mean? What does that actually mean? The candlestick, the lampstand, is a picture of being delivered from doctrinal iniquity. We need to be delivered from personal iniquity. The candlestick, doctrinal iniquity, is now solid gold, one piece beaten, a work of gold, a beaten work.

You move over to the Table of Shewbread, where the "truth" you've been told is redeemed, creating the 144,000 which you apply, and move to the Altar of Incense, where you are redeemed from personal iniquity. The whole plan of your salvation is in

that sanctuary. *"God's way is in the sanctuary"* (Psa 77:13). He'll redeem you doctrinally, give you the truth of the scripture, the healing truth, and heal you emotionally.

That curtain that separates the holy place from the most holy will come down when you understand the cross, and you see that man portraying your soul of darkness: Guilt, iniquity, nakedness, and darkness. Hear him speak, hear him proclaim, *"This is what this iniquity is doing, Father. I just feel separated from you. I feel forsaken, but I still thirst. I'm thirsting for truth, and I'm finished. It's finished, my trying to do all this myself. Into your hands I commend my spirit."* You find the *death to self*, and you unite with Jesus Christ in death. If you unite with Him in death, you will live with Him eternally. If you suffer with Him, you will reign with Him (Rom 6:5, 8:17).

Jesus Christ, praise God for that man! Praise God for the only begotten Son of God! Praise God for the God of Israel, and his willingness to humble himself, to empty himself, and become a man. Praise God for the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

Father, we pray to be a blessing to you and to glorify you, and we can do that as we love one another, and we can love one another as we come out of the apostasy and understand the truth. May you be forever glorified in your church. Amen.