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Episode 57 - Unveiling the Mysteries of Revelation's Seven Churches

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Join Scott Stanley from DTG Ministries as we delve into the profound teachings of the Book of Revelation. This episode offers a fascinating exploration into the Great White Throne Judgment and the spiritual implications for the seven churches from Ephesus to Laodicea. Discover the transformative journey of believers as they emerge from spiritual apostasy and confusion.

Explore the critical discourse on interpreting Jesus as the Son of God, challenging traditional Trinitarian views, and understanding His role through scriptural prophecy and personal revelation. This insightful discussion sheds light on the significance of Jesus's baptism and the realization of his divine sonship.

Gain new perspectives on spiritual growth and the essence of faith as you navigate through the deep symbolic meanings in Revelation and the echoes of prophetic fulfillments in Psalms and Zechariah. Enrich your understanding and embrace a clearer view of the path to overcoming the world through faith.

Modified Transcript:

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

Hi. This is Scott Stanley with DTG Ministries. We are in the Book of Revelation studying the prophecies, and by the grace of God, making them practical. In the last podcast, I spoke on the Great White Throne Judgment, Revelation chapter 20. This is, of course, the judgment of the wicked. We see this because he says, "*I saw the dead stand before God.*" Well, when he says the dead, they're not physically dead anymore. They're spiritually dead, and they always have been. To say, "*I saw the dead stand before God,*" speaks of a resurrection, and it caused me to think about the seven churches of Revelation.

I used to look at the seven churches of Revelation, thinking that you could be in any one of them at any given time, and you may never be in some of them. You may find yourself in one or two, but I realized that what you're seeing is the people of God coming out of the apostasy, from Ephesus to Laodicea. It depicts a progression that every believer goes through to come out of the apostasy- the whole time not even realizing there was an apostasy, but seeing Babylon all around you, maybe not able to define it, but discerning the confusion in all the churches- and you go from Ephesus to Laodicea.

Why would that come to my mind? Because, looking at the seven churches, there is a downward progression through the first four, the fourth one being Thyatira. That is as low as you go. That is allowing Jezebel to teach you, and it is the church of Thyatira that's given the Godhead message. When you're given the Godhead message and you believe it ... and I say that because the term "*Son of God*" or the name "*Son of God*" is only used in the book of Revelation to the Church of Thyatira. So, they're given the message of the Son of God, and when they accept it, they become Sardis.

Now, in my Christian lifetime, when I accepted the Son of God, realizing the Trinity wasn't true, there weren't very many places to go to church. If I weren't a Trinitarian, or if I didn't believe Jesus was created, if I didn't believe in the oneness, there was nowhere to go to church. It caused me to have a feeling of victory or something. It's like, "I see something they don't see." Becoming Sardis, what does he say to Sardis? "*You have a name that you're living, but you're dead.*"

There is that death that you see in Revelation 20, the dead stood before God (Rev 20:12). Sardis is dead. Now they believe some doctrinal truth, but they don't have life. If you don't have life in Sardis, then you don't have life from Ephesus all the way through to Sardis. When you go to Laodicea- and he tells Laodicea, "*You're wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked,*" that too is death. So, the seven churches in Revelation have no life. They do not possess the Holy Spirit of God. That's what I want to address. What is it that gives us life? How does God define this? At what point does that happen to you? I want to read something to you from 1 John, chapter 5, verse 1,

1Jn 5:1 Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone that loves him that begat will love him that is begotten.

1Jn 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments.

1Jn 5:3 This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments (of loving our neighbor), and His commandments are not grievous.

1Jn 5:4 Whosoever is born of God will overcome the world, and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith, (or what we've been taught).

1Jn 5:5 Who is he that overcomes the world, if not he that believes Jesus is the Son of God.

Now look at the comparison. In verse 1, you believe Jesus is the Christ, you're born of God. Verse 5, you overcome the world when you believe Jesus is the Son of God. Now, if I were to walk into any universal church, asking "Is Jesus the Christ?" of course, they would say yes, and they believe he's the Son of God. But what are they basing that on? How are they concluding other than someone telling them "Jesus is the Son of God"? There doesn't seem to be much investigation into what that means, and the people teaching them, 'Jesus is the Son of God,' are framing it in the context of the Trinity.

So they are not understanding that Jesus is the Son of God based on the deeper meanings of Scripture. Our religion is of faith, meaning "*faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of God*" (Rom 10:17). "*How do you hear without a preacher?*" (Rom 10:14) Someone does need to tell us, but that doesn't mean that you don't verify it with the Scriptures, that you don't take the time to go to the Lord and seek the truth concerning

that subject (1Jn 4:1). But why would John say these two things, "*Believe he is the Christ and believe he is the Son of God*"?

Because he is referring to the baptism of Christ. How do I know this? At the baptism of Christ, John was told to baptize the children of Israel, and he would baptize somebody that he would see the Holy Spirit descending on that person like a dove... and he did, and it was Jesus. He pointed to Jesus and he said, "*I'm bearing witness this is the Son of God, this is the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world*" (Joh 1:29). But he was fulfilling a prophecy found in Psalm 2. Now, this is where you've got to reason this out, think this through, because in Psalms 2, let me just start reading verse 1,

Psa 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

Psa 2:2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against his anointed one.

Psa 2:3 Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.

Psa 2:4 Well, he that sits in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord will have them in derision.

Psa 2:5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and trouble them in his sore displeasure, (and here's what he says,)

Psa 2:6 Yet, (*even though* they are bound to reject my truth, *even though* they're taking counsel against my anointed one, *even though*) have I anointed or poured upon my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

Even though they're rejecting and refusing to believe, even though they do that, I've still anointed or poured upon my king upon my holy hill of Zion. That's the Father speaking. But then the Son says this,

Psa 2:7 I will declare the decree that God gave. I will declare the decree, Jehovah hath said to me, You are my Son; this day have I begotten you.

Now, why does this even matter? Because it was at this given time that Christ became the Christ; Jesus became the Anointed One. Look at it again, Psalm 2:6, "*I pour upon, or I've anointed my king,*" and Jesus says, "*I will declare that decree. He told me you're my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*" It was at that time Jesus became the Christ, when? At his baptism, he was spoken to by God, saying, "*You are my Son.*" That is when he realized he was the Son of God, and he was born again.

Now, this is blasphemy to the universal church. Why? Because they deny that Jesus came in the flesh. They deny that he came without an understanding of God and grew in wisdom and understanding- grew in an understanding of the Scriptures, and at his baptism, was spoken to of God that *"You are my Son."* I know he had not considered that because he immediately went into a wilderness. A "wilderness" is a "land not sown." It's a place that you haven't been before. And he's tempted of the devil. The devil is the whisperer. The devil speaks to your emotional side, how you see a thing, how you see yourself, and how you see others.

Well, what about when he was twelve years old, lost in the temple, and they went and found him and they're asking questions and he's sharing his understanding, and he said, *"Don't you know I must be about my Father's business?"* What about that? Well, that is no different than you and I giving our hearts to God and referring to God as our Father. He did not know at that time that he was the Messiah; he didn't know it until his baptism.

To bring that up in Luke about him being lost and then found, that is Gog. You see, that is the tradition, you could say, the traditional way of looking at the scripture. That is what comes up when somebody tells you what I just told you about Psalm 2. It's Psalm 2 that John is referring to, *"Whosoever believes Jesus is the Christ, whosoever believes he's the Son of God,"* because both of those things take place at the baptism... the understanding of Christ, the understanding that he received from his Father.

If you think he didn't come in the flesh, and that when he was born, he had a halo and the Trinity still existed- the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are all equal, co-eternal... if that's what you think, then his baptism will make no sense. What I just said to you would be blasphemy. You know, just as important as it is to me to understand that Christ came in the flesh (he emptied himself and became a man, that's important for me to see that), well, it's just as important for the universal church to say he was Trinity. Just as I am telling you, if you can believe Jesus is the Son of God, you overcome the world: *"Who is he that overcomes the world if not he that believes Jesus is the Son of God?"*

But if you're a Trinitarian, you don't believe that. How can you have a father and a son be co-eternal, be the same age? *"They are co-eternal; there was never a time one was without the other..."* Well, you can't have a father and son. They would have to designate

themselves as father and son. But according to the scripture, it was at his baptism, and Christ said, *"I'll declare the decree of your anointing. I'll declare that decree, you said I'm your son."* By telling Jesus he was the Son of God, He was telling him, *"You are Messiah."* Now, let me share something else about this.

When did Jesus receive the Holy Spirit? Well, it was at his baptism that the Spirit came down like a dove. We know in John 7:38, 39, *"The Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified."* But Jesus had the Holy Spirit. How could that be? Because when Jesus read the scriptures, he understood the scriptures. When he read about the sacrifices made (and you could see at the slaying of these animals that the high priest would make an atonement with that animal), Jesus wasn't confused about the word 'atonement.' He wasn't looking at it like that's forgiveness. He was looking at it the way it's defined- that is, a covering. That animal shows me how to make an atonement, how to make a covering that will cover my thoughts when I have anger, lust, or resentment toward another person. The sacrifice helps me make that atonement so that I can forgive them. It isn't my forgiveness, it's their forgiveness.

When he was on the cross, he said, *"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."* That is an atonement. That is how it works. Christ was not confused about that. He knew that Messiah would become a man and become the animal sacrifice. How did he know that? Because the scriptures declared it. Psalm 16 declares that the Holy One will die and be resurrected (Psa 16:10). Psalm 40 declares that he will be given a body (Psa 40:6).

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire. My ears you've opened: burnt offering and sin offering you have not required." Septuagint: *"A body you have prepared for me"* (Heb 10:5). So those were verses Christ understood, or I should say Jesus understood. But it wasn't until his anointing, when God said, *"You're my Son,"* that he knew he was Messiah. Hence, he had the understanding of the cross because he understood the sacrifices. Hence, he possessed Holy Spirit.

Now, there is a prophecy that I want to talk about in Zechariah, chapter 3, about Joshua the high priest. Joshua the high priest, you see him in Ezra, Nehemiah, as you see Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel, that name means "born in Babylon," and he came out of Babylon and went back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. He laid the foundation and finished it. What's interesting is that when you see in Ezra 6:14 that,

Ezr 6:14 The elders of the Jews builded and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah.

So, Zerubbabel was alive during the prophesying of Zechariah. That's why in Zechariah 4, you have the message, or the word, Zechariah 4:6,

Zec 4:6 ... the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel. (What is it?) It isn't by might nor power, it's by my spirit, sayeth the Lord.

Well, Zerubbabel had a high priest, Joshua. I've always wondered, how does this fit in, because I could see in my lifetime, in my day, Zerubbabel laying the foundation of the truth of God's temple, and he will be the one to finish it. That's talking about the end time. But who was Joshua? Well, Joshua is Yahshua. Yahshua is Jesus- it's Christ.

But why then do we see, in Zechariah 3, Joshua standing with Satan there to resist him? Because you're seeing a vision, and beginning to realize that Joshua, being Yahshua, the High Priest (Jesus), the reason Satan is there, and the iniquity is there, is because this is in the heart of Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel, laying the foundation of the temple, did not have a clear understanding of Jesus' role as high priest, and God gave us a vision to lay out this picture.

Now, what you're seeing is like in Revelation 12; you see a red dragon in the heavens. There is no literal red dragon in the heavens, it's just a picture of iniquity in the minds of believers. Well, this is iniquity in the mind of the last-generation church- Zerubbabel. Let me start reading this in Zechariah 3.

Zec 3:1 He showed me Yahshua, the High Priest, standing before the messenger of the Lord, and Satan standing there at his right hand to resist him, ... or the adversary standing at his right hand to be his adversary. That is inward. This is a vision.

Zec 3:2 Jehovah said unto the adversary, Jehovah rebuke thee, O adversary, even Jehovah that has chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee.

Now this Jerusalem is New Jerusalem. This New Jerusalem is a picture of the Holy Spirit.

Zec 3:2 ... Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel.

I want to tell you that in Isaiah 61:3, let me just read this:

Isa 61:3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness....

"Garment" and "spirit" are the same thing. The garment you wear is the spirit you have, and *"he will give you his garments of salvation, a robe of righteousness,"* as he goes on to say in verse 10 of Isaiah 61. So, when I'm looking at Zechariah 3, Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel; and you'll see in verse 4, it's your iniquity, it's *"thine iniquity,"* it's confusion. This is Joshua, who works with Zerubbabel.

Again, I'm going to tell you that Zerubbabel did not have a clear understanding of the risen Savior and what he was to do- and you're going to see this in this vision.

Zec 3:3 Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel.

What if I just said, Zerubbabel's understanding of the risen Savior, the High Priest? Remember, you've got the Branch and you've got the High Priest. The counsel of peace is between the two of them (Zec 6:13). Jesus is the Branch. The risen Savior is the High Priest. *"Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool"* (Psa 110:1). So, in the mind of Zerubbabel, there was iniquity surrounding Joshua's understanding of the risen Savior.

Zec 3:4 He answered and spoke unto those that stood before him, and he said, "Take away the filthy garments from him,"...

In other words, because this is a vision, *"Give Zerubbabel a better understanding of the High Priest. Take away the filthy garments."*

Zec 3:4 ... And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I'm going to clothe you with a change of raiment. (Which you see in Isaiah 61:3 and 10. Zachariah is writing this.)

Zec 3:5 I said let them set a fair miter upon his head. (That's Exodus 29:6. This was to go on the head of the high priest.) So they set a fair miter upon his head and clothed him with garments, and the messenger of Jehovah stood by.

Zec 3:6 And the messenger of Jehovah witnessed, gave witness to Joshua, to Yahshua,

Zec 3:7 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts (he is speaking to Zerubbabel's understanding of the high priest); If you'll walk in my ways and keep my charge as a high priest, then you'll judge my house, you'll keep my courts, and I will give you places to walk among these that stand by.

Zec 3:8 Hear now, O Yahshua, the high priest, you and your companions, that sit before you (they sit at your feet to be taught), for they are "men of symbol."

These are men who understand symbols, which literally is the way it's put in the literal translation of the Bible (LITV). These are men of symbols. Why say men of symbols?

Zec 3:8 ... For behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

Now, hold it. The Branch is Jesus. There was something they didn't understand about Jesus. Why? That's why Zerubbabel's understanding of the high priest was faulty. He wasn't clear. Look at this again.

Zec 3:8 ...I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

Do you know what "bring forth" means? "To fill an empty space." In other words, I'm going to fill in what you don't understand about the BRANCH, Jesus. What is it you don't understand? You don't understand that on the cross, he was portraying iniquity. This is what the High Priest ministers to you with, with that understanding. That's why Yahshua was covered with iniquity because in the mind of Zerubbabel, he did not understand that.

You come out of Babylon; you start working on that temple. But God has to bring you a deeper understanding of Jesus Christ. When you come to the Lord and you enter the seven churches and you're going through that process, you never understand that when Jesus died, He was portraying you, and that you are to unite with Him in death (Rom 6:3-6). What you believe is that he died to pay a penalty. You've got to come through the

seven churches and come to Laodicea, get past that so you can hear a voice as of a trumpet saying, "*Come up here.*"

See, think higher. "*I've got something for you,*" and you come up and you see Revelation 4 and 5: A mind where the truth has been redeemed. You see a mind redeemed. That's what the four living creatures and the elders say: "*You have redeemed us from every nation, kindred tongue, and people.*"

Well, he starts opening the seals to walk you through the steps it took you to find that redemption that you see in Revelation 7. You see a messenger ascending from the east, ascending... he's going away, going higher than the earth. He's going into the heavens, ascending from the east. East is self. And he has the seal of God. That is Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel has the seal of God.

Hag 2:23 In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith Jehovah, and I will make you as a signet for I've chosen you, saith Jehovah of hosts.

"Signet" in Hebrew, in the Strong's is [2368]. When you see a signet... they would take a ring or a cylinder and put it in wax to seal a letter. It seals. In Revelation 7, this guy is sealing the truth because he is the signet. *I will make you the signet, I'll make you the ring.* In other words, I'm going to make you the go-to guy. When a question is asked, you will have the answer because God is using you as his signet.

The message to Zerubbabel is that it's all by the Spirit of the Father. He is the one who will need to have his understanding of the High Priest perfected because it is the High Priest who ministers the cross to us.

Again, looking at Zechariah 3, I'm going to read verse 8 again.

Zec 3:8 Here now, O Yahshua the high priest, you and your fellows that sit before you. They are men of symbol. Behold, I am going to fill in the empty spots concerning my servant the BRANCH, Jesus.

Zec 3:9 For behold, the stone (or the concept) that I have laid before Yahshua, upon one concept will be a fullness of understanding: Behold, I will engrave the graving of it, saith Jehovah of Host, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

That one day is the sixth day. It is the sixth day of creation that he makes you in his image. He teaches you not just simply to believe in Jesus, to believe that he died for your sin, that he was buried, that he rose and appeared. No. That's only the beginning of it. He needs to fill in the rest of it: What happened on the cross and how it applies to your iniquity; how he died to redeem us from all iniquity, not to pay a sin debt. He will remove your iniquity in one day.

Zec 3:10 In that day, saith Yahweh of hosts, shall you call every man his neighbor, under the vine and under the fig tree.

I have come to see that word "under" as "governed by." You're governed by the vine, which is Christ, but you're governed by the fig tree, which in Hosea 9:10, "*The fathers, your fathers are the figs on the fig tree.*" For you and me, our fathers are the apostles. It is the apostles that we need to be in harmony with and understand what happened at Calvary, and how we apply that to our lives.

You see, Christ is making us kings and priests. Well, a king will search out a word. *It's the glory of God to hide a word, while a king will search out a word*, Proverbs 25. But a priest, he will know how to minister that truth, to lead you to salvation in Christ as our High Priest.

Heavenly Father, we worship you, we thank you, we praise you. May you be forever glorified, in Jesus' name. Amen.