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Episode 62 - Unlocking the Seven Churches' Mystery in Revelation - Repentance

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Join Scott Stanley from DTG Ministries as he delves into the profound lessons from the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. In this episode, uncover the interconnectedness of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' teachings, and the new understanding we gain about overcoming human iniquity.

Scott highlights the pivotal role of the Holy Spirit in providing insight into humanity's struggles with sin and the path to achieving true liberty through Christ. He also explores the message conveyed to each of the seven churches, addressing them with the wisdom of a high priest.

Discover the significance of repentance, the comfort provided by the Holy Spirit, and how these elements guide us in overcoming personal and collective struggles. Embrace the message of redemption and salvation, as illuminated in this enlightening journey through Revelation and other biblical passages.

Modified Transcript:

Scriptures are transcribed directly with notations. Refer to KJV for verbatim wording.

Hi. This is Scott Stanley with the DTG Ministries, continuing the Revelation podcast. We've been looking at the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, and in each podcast, there seems to be another concept that blankets those seven churches. It covers all of them. This one's no different. To be able to get into the specifics of what is being said to the seven churches, we need to understand another thing. It has to do with John, chapter 7, verses 38 and 39.

Joh 7:38 He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Joh 7:39 This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for Holy Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Out of your belly, out of your mind, will flow the Holy Spirit. It's obvious that the Holy Spirit is an understanding of God. It's a specific understanding because the *Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified*. I began to understand with that, the Holy Spirit is a particular grouping of concepts dealing with the problems of humanity- we could just say iniquity and the impact iniquity has on humanity, and how to overcome it. Those concepts constitute the Holy Spirit.

Now, to build on this, I want to read from Revelation 21. A lot of this information is something we've already covered, but it needs to be stated again right now.

Rev 21:1 I saw a new heaven and a new earth: the first heaven and first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.

Rev 21:2 I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of the heavens saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

I realize the tabernacle of God, or that tabernacle, that thing that contains God's understanding, is the Holy Spirit. Here he refers to it as the Holy City, New Jerusalem, which he mentions in Isaiah 65, verse 17,

Isa 65:17 For, behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth: the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Isa 65:18 But be glad and rejoice forever in them which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem, a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Isa 65:19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people ...

So obviously, Jerusalem above, or New Jerusalem, is a similitude of the Holy Spirit, or of that information which depicts humanity, that can show us our problems and how we can connect with Jesus to find death to self. It's obvious that if the Holy Spirit is that information that Jesus portrayed, you cannot talk about the Holy Spirit without talking about the cross, because Jesus depicted that. Hence, you have Paul making this statement in 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 17,

2Co 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

So it is the Holy Spirit that explains the results of iniquity and how to overcome it. Talking about that, you're talking about Christ on the cross, so he can say now that Spirit is Christ. He is that Spirit. He is the one who brought the information of the Spirit to us.

So now I want to read from the Gospel of John, chapter 14. Again, all of this points to the seven churches. John, chapter 14, starting at verse 15,

Joh 14:15 If you love me, keep my commandments.

We know again he isn't speaking of the Ten Commandments. He's talking about loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving your neighbor as yourself (Mat 22:37-40) ... To walk in love fulfills the law.

Joh 14:15 If you love me, you'll keep my commandments.

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he'll give you another Comforter, that he may remain with you forever;

Joh 14:17 The spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he is dwelling with you now, and (future) shall be in you.

Joh 14:18 I will not leave you orphans: *I will come to you.*

Here he is basically telling you he is the Comforter, which the apostle John reiterates in 1 John, chapter 2, Verse 1,

1Jn 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. If any man sin, we have an advocate...

Well, the word "advocate" is "comforter." It's the same word. King James put "advocate" right here. Everywhere else, they put "comforter."

1Jn 2:1 ... A Comforter with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

Now, the reason this is significant, looking at the seven churches in Revelation, each church begins with Christ giving a revelation of himself as High Priest. In each church, he addresses them as the High Priest. He is the risen Savior. Paul says in Romans 7:4,

Rom 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, you also are become dead to the law through the body of Christ; that we should be married to another, to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

I can remember teaching that years ago when I was in Tennessee, and pointing out the fact that we're not married to the Christ who died, we're married to the one who's risen. People asked me, "Well, what's the difference? What's the big difference about it?" Honestly, at the time, I could not express the difference between them. Today I understand it. I realize that Christ, who died, was the God of Israel. We call him the BRANCH.

Christ, who is raised from the dead, is the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb 5:9-10). Christ, who is raised from the dead, is the mediator of our faith. He brings to us God's information. God's information is the Holy Spirit. It is through Christ that we receive the understanding of what happened on the cross and how to apply it to our lives. Hence, the work of the High Priest and the work of the Holy Spirit are the same thing, because they are the same person. Our High Priest is the Holy Spirit.

So, looking at Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, to each church, he is addressing them as the High Priest. But at the end of each letter, at the end of each message to the seven churches, he concludes, "*He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.*" He is that Spirit. So, therefore, when he is addressing the seven churches (now this is what they all have in common), they're all being addressed by the High Priest, who is in the mindset of the Holy Spirit, who concludes his message with, "*Hear what the Spirit is saying.*"

Again, the Spirit is what brings healing to us. It is the Spirit that will heal humanity, to receive the instruction: Here's what's wrong with you, here's how you can fix it. Iniquity is the problem ... here's what iniquity has done, and here is how you overcome it. That is the message of the risen Savior, our High Priest, who mediates for God and brings us that information to bring healing to his church. The problem is, when you look at the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, they are not on that level. They don't understand that yet. They don't have a ministry to help them understand that. Christ, your High

Priest, works through his ministry. In Babylon, or the universal churches, there isn't a ministry bringing them the truth of the Holy Spirit, doing the work of the high priest.

Nevertheless, he addresses them in that manner. Why? Because it is really for you and me, who have received the Holy Spirit, to go back and read these seven churches, applying the truth that we have. When I was in that state of wondering about the Trinity and finally seeing Jesus as the Son of God, but still thinking he died to pay my sin debt and wrapped up in all that iniquity- I could never understand what he was saying to the seven churches. Now I have a better handle on it.

Now, there is still something else spoken to every church except one. To every single church, he tells them to repent. Who is telling this? The High Priest. So what? He is bringing you the Holy Spirit. It caused me to go back to the Old Testament. I try to take the concepts from the Old Testament or the meanings of the words. Well, this goes back to Genesis, chapter 5, verse 29, and I want to read this to you, it's concerning Noah.

Gen 5:29 And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which Jehovah has cursed.

Did you see "repent" in there? It's the word "comfort." Again, how is it that Christ referred to Himself? He's the Comforter. So, immediately I thought, 'Wow, let's look up this word,' because it literally means "to comfort," but it also means "to regret, to have sorrow." Now, some very interesting verses in the Old Testament use the word "repent." "*God is not a man that he should repent*" (Num 23:19), but when you put in there that he should have sorrow, it begins to make more sense. But I want to bring this to the New Testament, and I'm reading the Greek, Strong's number [3341], and I want to cover just a few verses that deal with the word "repentance." For instance, in Matthew 9:13, Christ makes the statement,

Mat 9:13 But go you and learn what this means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

In other words, playing off the Hebrew concept of the word, he has come to call sinners to mourn. You see, he says this in Matthew 5:4,

Mat 5:4 Blessed, or happy, are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (Without the sorrow for sin, there is no repentance.)

Luk 24:47 That repentance and remission of sin (or overcoming sin) should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Act 5:31 Him has God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sin.

Again, that is the work of the High Priest, who works through his ministry.

Act 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then has God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

See, all of these words are significant to me.

Act 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews and the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Act 26:20 But he showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coast of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Rom 2:4 Do you despise the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God is leading you to repentance?

2Co 7:10 For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of: It's the sorrow of the world that works death in us.

2Co 7:11 For beholding this selfsame thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear of God, what vehement desire, what zeal, what revenge! In all things you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

2Tm 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

2Tm 2:26 That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

This "will" has particular meaning, because I believe, it is what is being played off of in Revelation 2:10. Now remember, this is the prophecy God gave to Jesus, to give to John, to give to us, to give to his servants.

Rev 2:10 Fear none of those things which you'll suffer... (Remember, he is talking to people in the seven churches as their High Priest, as the Comforter.) Behold, the devil (or the whisperer or the author of iniquity) is going to cast some of you into prison (in other

words, you are going to be in bondage to your iniquity), that you may be tried; and you will have tribulation ten days ("ten days" is until you come to God's understanding): be faithful unto death, and I'll give you a crown of life.

That death is not physical; it's death to self. That's the only way you overcome iniquity. That, again, points back to 2 Timothy 2:25. There's no other way to overcome iniquity but death to self, to acknowledge what the truth actually is.

2Ti 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

2Ti 2:26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Now, in Revelation 2, to the Church of Smyrna, he doesn't use the word "repentance," but it's the concept found in verse 10. The only church that he doesn't mention "repentance" in is Philadelphia. It's to Philadelphia that he gives the understanding of spiritual truth- symbols. But if these seven churches are all one person going through the process, they become Laodicea because they're carrying that truth of the Godhead from Thyatira. They're understanding symbols, and he tells them, "You need to understand there is a sin problem of iniquity," which is what he's basically saying to Laodicea. As Laodicea, they're still dead. They're dead throughout the seven churches. Finally, in Luke, chapter 17, verse 3,

Luk 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If your brother trespasses against you, rebuke him; if he repents, forgive him.

Luk 17:4 If he trespasses against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turns again to you, saying, I repent, well, forgive him.

See, the question that comes to my mind is, "What if he never repents? What if he never says, "I repent"? Remember again the Hebrew meaning of repentance is comfort, mourning- to mourn, to be sorry for what you have done. If somebody is not repentant, they are not sorry for what they have done. "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted*" (Mat 5:4). What if you just said: *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall find repentance*. God will grant them repentance.

This message of repentance is huge. It isn't something to be shrugged off or laughed at. It is something to prayerfully consider, because again, if a person has godly sorrow, you're going to know it ... and godly sorrow works repentance to salvation. It's my prayer that we experience salvation from iniquity. It's my prayer that we be free from the gall of bitterness and the bondage of iniquity (Act 8:23), and be free in Jesus Christ. Again,

the seven churches do not have these concepts. The seven churches ... we need to come out of that and experience redemption, the redemption of Jesus Christ.

Now, I would like to close with Revelation 21 again. Revelation 21, speaking of New Jerusalem or speaking of the Holy Spirit,

Rev 21:22 I saw no temple in it: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The Father and the Son are the temple. They contain the Holy Spirit. But 1 Corinthians 6:19 says the church is the temple of it, too. (*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*)

Rev 21:23 The city had no need of the sun, or moon to shine in it: for it is the character of God that lightens it, and the Lamb is the light of it.

Now we see the Lamb in chapter 5, who had been slain, standing, the risen Savior. The Lamb brings us the understanding, the light of God, the character of God.

Rev 21:24 The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor to it.

Rev 21:25 And the gates of it will not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there.

Rev 21:26 They shall bring glory and honor of the nations to it.

Every single thing the nations believe will be brought to the understanding of God to be redeemed, to be corrected. They will bring their glory to it.

Rev 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles...

I used to read that, and I thought, "Well, that means when you die and get there, you can't enter in." It doesn't mean that. It means right now, today. Anything that defiles, or works an abomination, or makes a lie, cannot possibly be in that mindset,

Rev 21:27 ... but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The Lamb's book of life is the faith of Christ. The Lamb's book of life isn't a book with a bunch of names in it. The Lamb's book of life is the faith of Jesus Christ. That's why, in Revelation 20, when he says,

Rev 20:12 I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: the dead were judged out of those things written in it, in the books...

It's because it is the book of life, or the faith of Christ, that you want your character to be in. You want that understanding to be in you. We understand, of course, it's the Holy Spirit. The faith of Christ is the book of life, and of course, it's our prayer that it contains our character, our names, that we might glorify God through all eternity.

Heavenly Father, help us to be full of your truth and Spirit and to glorify you in Jesus' name. Amen.