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Episode 61 - Unveiling the Mystery of the Seven Churches: The New Covenant

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In this episode of the DTG Ministries podcast, Scott Stanley delves into the intricate themes found in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, focusing on the seven churches. Central to this discussion is the understanding of key concepts presented in Revelation chapter 1, particularly the dimensions of Jesus Christ as seen through the references to the seven churches. As Scott reads through the scripture, he reveals the portrayal of Christ as the high priest, emphasizing His testimony and its significance to the everlasting covenant.

Scott explains how this testimony is intertwined with Jesus' mission on the cross, aiming to convey God's unfathomable love, humanity's struggle with iniquity, and the path to overcome it. These crucial aspects form the foundational message of the Holy Spirit, which is integral to experiencing spiritual rebirth and walking in love through the power of the world to come. Scott encourages a deep and transformative understanding of the cross, urging listeners to apply its lessons in daily life, paving the way toward perfection as mentioned in Hebrews chapter 6.

Join Scott Stanley as he unravels these profound truths, exploring the role of the high priest and the interpretation of the new covenant, challenging commonly held beliefs, and inspiring listeners toward a more profound spiritual transformation.

Modified Transcript:

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

Hi. This is Scott Stanley with the DTG Ministries. We are continuing our podcast on the Book of Revelation, keying now on chapters 2 and 3, the seven churches. There is still another basic concept that needs to be understood so that we can apply it to what we read to each church. We see that concept in Revelation chapter one. I want to start reading verse 4 so that we can pick up all of the dimensions of Jesus Christ that are mentioned here in this chapter, because as you go to the seven churches, they keep referring back to these things.

Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you in peace from him which is, which was, and which is to come (That's the Father); and from the seven spirits which are before his throne;

Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness of the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Now, when we get into the churches more, we will see the seven spirits before this, or what that actually is. Let's keep reading.

Rev 1:6 He has made us kings and priests unto the God and Father of him; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Rev 1:7 Behold, he is coming with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Rev 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (referring back to the Father).

Rev 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, came to be in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Rev 1:10 I came to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Rev 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and last. What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches in Asia- Ephesus to Laodicea.

Now, why am I reading this? Because he just mentioned the testimony of Jesus Christ, and that's what I want to talk about just a little bit. But before I do, let's continue reading this, verse 12:

Rev 1:12 I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. In being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks...

Now what we're going to read is referred to in most of the seven churches (points of this), and one church will point back to verse 5. But here is a description of Christ.

Rev 1:13 In the midst of the seven candlesticks I saw one, like unto the Son of Man, he is clothed with the garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with the golden girdle.

Rev 1:14 His head and hair was white like wool, as white as snow; his eyes were a flame of fire.

Rev 1:15 His feet were like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; his voice as the sound of many waters.

Rev 1:16 He had at his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword and his countenance was as the sun that shines in his strength.

Rev 1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. He laid his right hand upon me, and he said, Fear not; I am the first and last:

Rev 1:18 I am he that was living, and I was dead (I had come to be dead); behold, I'm alive forevermore. I have the keys of the grave and death.

Now I'm reading that because, again, when you read the seven churches, he will describe himself pulling from this description. What you're reading in this description is the risen Savior, of course. The risen Savior is seated at the right hand of God and is as a priest, like unto Melchizedek. He is the High Priest. The point I'm trying to make is that to each one of the seven churches, Christ refers to himself as the High Priest- these symbols depict him as the High Priest. So why the High Priest? Coming back to verse 9,

Rev 1:9 I was in the isle called Patmos because of the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The testimony of Jesus Christ is coming from the High Priest. The testimony of Jesus Christ is what took place on the cross. Jesus told Pilate in John 18:37,

Joh 18:37 ... To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness (give a testimony) unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth will hear my voice.

He is going to bear witness to the truth. He was born in eternity, born in Bethlehem, to bear witness or give a testimony to the truth. When you go to the cross, Jesus is bearing witness of the truth of God's love for humanity. How? It's because he is the Son of God. Just the fact that he is the Son of God dying on the cross means God loves you as much as he loves Jesus, his only begotten Son. The fact that he is the only begotten Son proves that God loves you as much.

Then, the second thing he bears witness to is the problem humanity has with iniquity and the effect it has on him- hence the crown of thorns, stripes on the back, nakedness, and darkness. But the third thing he bears witness to is how to overcome it. He prays the prayer, *"I feel forsaken, yet I still thirst for truth. I am finished trying to do this myself. In your hands, I commit my spirit."* Those three things—God's love for you, the problem we have with iniquity, and how to overcome it—that is the testimony of Jesus Christ. It is also called the Holy Spirit. That information is what you give to a person who wants to overcome sin.

When they repent of their sin, and they want to find forgiveness, and they want to find deliverance from it, you give them the testimony of Jesus Christ. Now, that testimony is over and above simply teaching a person that he died for your sin, he was buried, he rose, and he appeared- he was saved. That is the gospel. But over and above that, the rest of the gospel is that he is the Son of God, iniquity is our problem, and you have to die to self.

Now, if you can unite with Christ with His portrayal of us on the cross, if you can unite with him there and pray that prayer with him, in that frame of mind, you will find death to self and God will resurrect you spiritually, giving you the power of the world to come.

The power of the world to come is mentioned in Hebrews, chapter 6 (and I need to make this statement before I go on in Revelation). In Hebrews, chapter 6, I want to start reading verse 1, which says,

Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let's go on to perfection ...

See, that's what I'm talking about. You have to be given the gospel, but you have to be told the rest of the story- what happened on the cross.

Heb 6:1 Let's leave the principles, the basic teachings of the doctrine of Christ, and go on to perfection. Don't lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith toward God,

Heb 6:2 The doctrine of baptisms and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Heb 6:3 We'll do this, if God permit.

Heb 6:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift of the Holy Spirit, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

Heb 6:5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the ability of the world to come.

The ability of the world to come is to apply the cross to the situations in your life and walk in love toward everyone.

Heb 6:6 If they fall away from that, it's impossible to renew them again unto repentance. (Why?) Because they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh....

How? One thing we need to understand about the Son of God is found in 2 Corinthians 3:17.

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

Jesus Christ, in portraying outwardly the understanding of the Father or the Holy Spirit, is that Spirit. If we want to talk about the Holy Spirit, we're going to talk about "*Jesus and him crucified*" (2Co 2:2) because he portrayed God's understanding of humanity and how to overcome it. So, "*Now he is that spirit*" (2Co 3:17). So, when it comes time for you to make a decision, am I going to continue in my anger, or am I going to apply the cross? Here's your choice: The flesh or the spirit.

You can crucify the flesh by dying to self, but if you choose to continue in your anger, you're crucifying the Spirit, you're crucifying Christ afresh, and putting him to an open

shame- claiming that you're a believer, claiming you're walking in this New Covenant, and you're still expressing your anger. To do that, you had to crucify the Spirit. You crucified Christ to retain your anger and lust or whatever it is. So, this message I'm giving you is the testimony of Jesus Christ, the testimony coming from a high priest. It's referred to in Revelation 19, where one of the messengers who pours out the vials, John falls at his feet.

Rev 19:10 I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, See that you do it not: I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. (In other words, I understand the cross in the Holy Spirit of the cross.) Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Well, the spirit of prophecy is defined in 1 Corinthians 14:3: You edify, exhort, and comfort. To edify is to build up. You edify people, you exhort people, and you comfort people. The way this is stated in the literal version:

1Co 14:3 But the one prophesying to men speaks to build them up, and encourage them, and comfort them.

To build up, encourage, and comfort. That is the message of the High Priest as he enters the information of the cross into your life, and you can either accept it or reject it on a daily basis- you have to die daily. You die daily as iniquity happens, and you make the choice. If you receive the testimony of Jesus Christ, you will find death to self, and in death to self... if someone's trying to make you angry, if they do make you angry, and you apply the principles of the cross, then you will find that anger leaving, and you will discover the power of the resurrection.

The power of the resurrection- you put away the iniquity and experience the power of the resurrection, which is the ability of the next world (Heb 6:5). If you choose to go the other way, to do that, you have to crucify Christ. You cannot crucify Him again if you don't understand this truth. If you do understand this truth, you're choosing the flesh or the spirit.

So, John is on the Isle of Patmos because of Revelation 1:9, "*The word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.*" It is the High Priest who approaches John to write the letters. Therefore, we have Christ seated at the right hand of God, a priest after the order of Melchizedek, testifying to us the explanation of the cross, to edify, encourage, and comfort. This is what happens because of the New Covenant. Now, I want to touch on the New Covenant briefly because all of this plays into the seven churches. Why?

Because they don't have it. They don't understand what the New Covenant is. Jeremiah 31:31.

Jer 31:31 Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, I'll make a new covenant with the house of Israel, with the house of Judah:

Jer 31:32 Not like the one I made with their fathers when I took them out of Egypt; I was a husband to them.

So we established that it was Jesus Christ who led them out of Egypt, making the first covenant of the Ten Commandments, Deuteronomy 4:13, and it is Jesus Christ who makes the second covenant, the New Covenant, after that. Now, Paul says something about this in Hebrews 9 that I just want to touch on briefly. We'll start in Hebrews 9, verse 13.

Heb 9:13 If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh:

Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ (not the blood of an animal), who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, how much more should that now purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

This is what the New Covenant will do. We're going to see why.

Heb 9:15 Because of this, He mediates the New Covenant. ...

When he mediates the New Covenant, it doesn't mean he is standing between you and God to protect you. To mediate this covenant, he is bringing to you God's understanding, which is the Holy Spirit.

Heb 9:15 He is the mediator of the New Covenant, that death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions under the First Covenant, they which are called might receive the promise... *of what?* the Holy Spirit, the eternal inheritance.

Heb 9:16 Where you have a testament, there is also of necessity the death of the testator.

That's why we know Christ is the one who gave the covenant because he is the one who gave his life.

Heb 9:17 A covenant is of force after men are dead, otherwise, it's of no strength at all while the testator lives.

In our world today, we have people leaving a Last Will and Testament. That testament is not of force until they die. That is a type of what Jesus did. What Jesus is promising you in Jeremiah 31 about the New Covenant is that he is going to write his law on your inward parts and in your heart. His law is not the Ten Commandments. His law is to love God and love your neighbor. But for him to write that on your heart, he has to give his life. There's no way around it. It is through the giving of his life that he portrays the Holy Spirit, giving you the motive to walk in love and not cause more pain, hurt, and guilt; understanding why people do what they do- they're naked and in darkness.

For him to get that in your heart, in your soul, in your inward part, he has to give his life. In our world, giving that testament and having to give your life is just a similitude of it. He makes a covenant to give us this information. The only way to do it is to die on that cross. So, that is why Paul makes the statement in Hebrews 8, "*A testament is of force after men are dead.*" What Jesus Christ promised you could not happen unless He died. He references this in John 16:7.

Joh 16:7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it's expedient for you that I go away: if I don't go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I leave, I'll send him to you.

Well, the Comforter, according to John, in 1 John, chapter 2, verse 1,

1Jn 2:1 My little children, these things I write unto you that you sin not, if any man sin, we have a ... (King James, put "advocate.") We have a Comforter.

See, Christ, in bringing you his personal experience, can bring you edification, exhortation, and comfort- build you up, encourage you, and comfort you. If any man sins, we have someone who can build us up, encourage us, and comfort us. That Comforter is Jesus Christ. That Comforter is our High Priest. It is the High Priest who will reveal to us those truths. It is the High Priest who gives the messages of the seven churches.

Now, one last thing, and it is what he states in Revelation 1. I'm going to start reading at verse 17.

Rev 1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead, and he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last.

Now, think about it. If you're the first and last, you're the only. I'm the first one, and I'm the last one. Well, I'm the only one. I am the only begotten Son of God.

Rev 1:18 I am he that is living, but I came to be dead...

That is huge because without his death, you don't have the information of comfort that he can give you. So, this is key that we understand he was dead.

Rev 1:18 ... I'm alive forevermore...

Why is that key? That has to do with what we're getting ready to read.

Rev 1:18 ... I have the keys, the information, I can unlock the grave and death for you by means of what happened on the cross.

Rev 1:19 Write the things which you have seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be after this.

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

Well, you cannot be a messenger without a message, and he talks about the mystery of the stars and the golden candlestick. Well, the golden candlestick is a golden lampstand, and it is referenced in the sanctuary. But notice, the stars are in his right hand. Now, when he became a high priest, Psalms 110:1,

Psa 110:1 Jehovah told me to sit at his right hand, till he makes my enemies his footstool ... sit at my right hand.

Did he literally go sit at the right hand of God? That is a similitude of how God would use the truth of what he revealed on that cross, he is at the right hand of God. That is the strength of God's message to you to make you in the image of Jesus Christ. You need the testimony of Jesus Christ. God's right hand is to give you that truth. Well, these stars are in Jesus's right hand. These messages are in his right hand. These are the things that need to be made in the image of Christ.

The stars have to be his testimony that he is giving. Ephesians, chapter 1, mentions in verse 9: "*The mystery of God's will.*" Remember these seven stars, the mystery of these seven messages. Well, the mystery in Ephesians 1:9 goes to Ephesians 3. He says, in verse 9, "*to make all men see the fellowship of the mystery.*" So, let's back up to verse 1 of Ephesians 3.

Eph 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

Eph 3:2 If you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of the Divine One, which is given to me for you, toward you.

The dispensation of grace: God showing you grace and unmerited favor. He's going to show you grace and put his spirit in your inward man, the Holy Spirit.

Eph 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, (as I wrote before in a few words,

Eph 3:4 Whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.)

Eph 3:5 In other ages it was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in Spirit;

Eph 3:6 That the nations should be fellow heirs, and of the same body...

Now, stop. I used to read that and think the mystery was that the nations would be fellow heirs and of the same body with the Jew- that's the big mystery. That is not the mystery. Put the word "so" before the word "that." Let me read it again.

Eph 3:5 In other ages, this mystery was not made known to the sons of men. It is now revealed to the apostles and prophets,

Eph 3:6 So that the nations should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ,

Eph 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of the Divine One given unto me by the effectual working of his power,

Eph 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given... what? That I should preach among the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The "unsearchable riches" are what happened on the cross. That is what has been hidden from all of mankind. God is revealing this to the apostles and prophets so that the message can be given to the Gentiles, too. Again, verse 9,

Eph 3:9 To make all men see the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hidden in the Divine One, who created all things through Jesus Christ:

Eph 3:10 His intention in giving us the truth of the cross, the intention is that now, to all the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, they might know through the church the manifold wisdom of God.

The wisdom of God is the cross. What happened on that cross? Why is it such a mystery that if you can identify with Christ on the cross, his death becomes your death, his resurrection becomes your resurrection, and you can be free from all iniquity, which sets

you free from sin? If you don't crucify the spirit, then you crucify the flesh. I'm going to close with Philippians, chapter 3, verse 8.

Php 3:8 I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I've suffered the loss of all things, and I count them dung, that I might win Christ.

It's obvious Christ did not die simply to pay your debt. Christ died to give you the Holy Spirit, setting you free from iniquity. Verse 9,

Php 3:9 I want to be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness, my own understanding, which comes from the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, not faith in Him, the faith of Him (comma), which is the righteousness which is out of God based on being taught.

You have to be taught these riches because they are unsearchable. God has a ministry that He will reveal it to. As a high priest, he offers gifts and sacrifices. The gift is the ministry, which explains the sacrifice, and who gives you the Holy Spirit.

Php 3:10 I want his righteousness that I may know him and the ability of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable to his death.
Php 3:11 If I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

I think those verses right there are some of the most powerful verses in the New Testament, explaining that Christ on the cross was you on the cross. You can enter into his resurrection by dying to self, entering the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death ... death to self, that you might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, the literal resurrection that is going to happen.

Right now, you receive the Holy Spirit and apply that truth to your life daily. When it's needed, bring it in. When it's needed, you're getting angry, you're getting lustful, you're getting jealous, you're getting whatever. But you can apply the truth of the Holy Spirit to yourself and to others to build up, encourage, and comfort. It will bring you into death to self, allowing that anger to leave, and you are now living in the ability of the next world. You're resurrected. *"He that is dead is free from iniquity"* (Rom 6:7). You're now living in the power of the next world, and he is preparing you for the resurrection of the dead that is going to happen on the last day.

This message, again, is setting up the seven churches. This will help us better understand the way Christ identifies himself to each church. He is the High Priest. He is

their High Priest. However, the people who are in the mindset of those seven churches do not understand the Everlasting Covenant. They have been told that Jesus paid their sin debt. They prayed a prayer on TV, every head bowed, every eye closed... "Raise your hand, don't be embarrassed." They did that in the church, and now they are saved. That is what they've been told.

That is the apostasy, and that is what Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, the seven churches are showing: The process God puts us through to get us out of the apostasy. The apostasy denies Father and Son. They deny that Christ came in the flesh. They deny the Holy Spirit, and they don't even know it. It's my prayer that we might see something different and that He changes our lives.

Father, I thank you for this time and the words that you have given me. Father, all of us need you so much. We need to understand the truth. I just ask you to bless these words. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.