

I. Last week we began a journey to, hopefully, uncover the things that *HaShem* has revealed to us about events leading up to the soon-coming of Messiah.

A. As a framework for this study, I picked a book from the *Brit Chadasha*, The Revelation, because it alone, of all the books in either the *Tanakh*, or the *Brit Chadasha*, is entirely devoted to this subject and it alone seems to combine, order, and unite the prophecies recorded for us in the *Tanakh* about this age-changing event. Therefore, I would ask that you keep an open mind as we continue, and see if what I have just stated is really so. I realize that most of the studies ever perpetrated on this book have come from the Gentile Christian point of view, and that most would consider Revelation to be a Christian book, but as I have documented in the previous lesson, it was written by a fellow Jew, named *Yochanan*, during the latter part of the first century CE, and *Yochanan* was a leader among the Messianic Jewish movement of that time (the last to still be alive of the original twelve *talmidim* of *Yeshua*). Therefore, I contend that this book started off with the intent of being a very Jewish book.

B. I always like to begin with a little review of what we have formerly covered in the previous lesson, so here goes: Last lesson we looked at some of the clues given in this book that might help us determine its layout.

1. For instance, we soon saw that the visions presented to us in this book were not to be understood as revealing one long continuous linear series of events. Instead, each major group of *sevens* seemed to overlap at only one point. Therefore, I must conclude that each of the major categories of visions (ie: seals, *shofarot*, and bowls) may describe the future from different perspectives, but are not part of a linearly-coupled group of visions, where the next one starts only after the previous one completes.

2. We also learned that this book contains information in three distinct categories: Things Yochanan originally saw in his vision (as described in Chapter 1), conditions currently existing in the seven Messianic communities to which copies of this manuscript were to be sent, and future events, which would ultimately lead up to the coming of *HaMashiach*.

3. We decided that the beginnings of the prophecy portion of the book, which would unveil the future, started at the beginning of chapter 4, where it says, “Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after these things.”

C. We noted the fact that *Yochanan* was only allowed to write what *HaShem* wanted us to understand someday. Hence, although in addition to the three main groups of visions featuring seals, *shofarot*, and bowls, a series of Seven Thunders was not explained to us at all. It remains a mystery.

D. We concluded that the Sixth Seal, the Seventh Shofar, and the Seventh Bowl all appeared to be prophetic records revealing the same event. We also saw that *Yeshua*, as recorded in the *Brit Chadashic* book of *Mattityahu*, chapter 24, appeared to prophesy of these same events.

1. The reason that we assumed that all of these scriptures were referring to the same event was that each vision used similar terminology: Commonalities such as, “G-d’s fury had come.”

2. Other common elements included a great earthquake, thunder, lightening, and severe hail.

E. Last lesson, we also noted that some of the content of this book doesn’t fit into the broad categories of seals, *shofarot*, or bowls, but does give important information, that I termed *parenthetical*, and provides additional information to, perhaps, help us further understand the times described for us in this book.

F. Finally, we ended last lesson as we began to prepare for tonight’s session. We discussed the “angels” to whom the seven copies of this manuscript were to be addressed.

1. We discovered that one copy of this book was to be sent to each of the Messianic communities in seven specified cities of the province of Asia.

2. The copies were probably addressed to the Rabbi in each *synagogue*.

**G. In this lesson we will look at chapters 2 and 3: the Letters to the Seven Messianic Communities. But, before we do, I want to speculate a little about how these Messianic communities probably came into existence.**

- 1. Soon after *Yeshua* was crucified by the Romans in about 33 CE, the message, that he was the Messiah, began to take hold in Israel. Whether you believe that he was the Messiah, or not, the fact that this message spread is undisputed fact. While the Jewish leadership did not widely accept *Yeshua* as their Messiah, many Jews did. For about the next ten years Messianic Judaism grew into a movement containing many *tens-of-thousands* of adherents. Finally, this message reached its first Gentile followers, when a Roman Centurion, named Cornelius, who had come to love the G-d of Israel, professed belief in *Yeshua* as Messiah, along with his whole household.**
- 2. Ultimately, Jewish believers from a synagogue in the city of Antioch, in the Roman province of Syria, sent some of their Jewish brothers to spread the message that Messiah had come, to other Jewish communities throughout the Empire. The result: This message was brought to the Jewish communities in many cities. Jewish pilgrims, who attended *HaShem's* appointed Feasts in Jerusalem before the destruction of the Temple, would also have undoubtedly heard the message that Messiah had come, from those in the *Messianic Community* who lived in the area.**
- 3. The Messianic Congregations to which the copies of this book were to be delivered were all well established long before the *Mikdash* was destroyed by the Roman legions. The point is, these Messianic communities were Jewish communities who had accepted *Yeshua* as their promised Messiah—a doctrine that had, by this time, become a recognized sect within Judaism. It was not until after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Temple, that *Messianics* were rejected as part of the faith by their fellow Jews.**

4. When the message of Messiah was taken to a new city, it was discovered that many Gentiles had come to love the G-d of Israel. The *Brit Chadasha* calls these *Goyim*, “G-d fearers.” They attended services at the local *shül*, participated in Jewish worship, celebrated G-d’s appointed times, and even tithed. The only thing they had not submitted to was the *B’rit Milah*. Many of these *Goyim* readily accepted the message that Messiah had come, along with many of the Jews, and became grafted into these newly forming Messianic communities as fellow *talmidim*. Of such, were the communities to which the copies of this book would be addressed. The changes from Messianic Judaism to Gentile Christianity were still very far away at the time that the Book of Revelation was written.

H. Let’s begin tonight’s lesson as we began our first: With the reading of chapter one of this book in preparation for the rest.

## Rev 1

The REVELATION of Yeshua the Messiah to Yochanan (John)

1 This is the revelation which God gave to Yeshua the Messiah, so that he could show his servants what must happen very soon. He communicated it by sending his angel to his servant Yochanan, 2 who bore witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of Yeshua the Messiah, as much as he saw. 3 Blessed are the reader and hearers of the words of this prophecy, provided they obey the things written in it! For the time is near!

4 From: Yochanan

To: The seven Messianic communities in the province of Asia:

Grace and shalom to you from the One who is, who was and who is coming; from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne; 5 and from Yeshua the Messiah, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the earth’s kings.

To him, the one who loves us, who has freed us from our sins at the cost of his blood, 6 who has caused us to be a kingdom, that is, cohanim for God, his Father — to him be the glory and the rulership forever and ever. Amen.

7 Look! He is coming with the clouds! Every eye will see him, including those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the Land will mourn him.

Yes! Amen!

8 **“I am the ‘A’ and the ‘Z,’”** says Adonai, **God of heaven’s armies, the One who is, who was and who is coming.**

9 I, Yochanan, am a brother of yours and a fellow-sharer in the suffering, kingship and perseverance that come from being united with Yeshua. I had been exiled to the island called Patmos for having proclaimed the message of God and borne witness to Yeshua. 10 I came to be, in the Spirit, on the Day of the Lord; and I heard behind me a loud voice, like a trumpet, 11 saying, **“Write down what you see on a scroll, and send it to the seven Messianic communities — Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea!”** 12 I turned around to see who was speaking to me; and when I had turned, I saw seven gold menorahs; 13 and among the menorahs was someone like a Son of Man, wearing a robe down to his feet and a gold band around his chest. 14 His head and hair were as white as snow-white wool, his eyes like a fiery flame, 15 his feet like burnished brass refined in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, out of his mouth went a sharp double-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

17 When I saw him, I fell down at his feet like a dead man. He placed his right hand upon me and said, **“Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last, 18 the Living One. I was dead, but look! — I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys to Death and Sh’ol. 19 So write down what you see, both what is now, and what will happen afterwards. 20 Here is the secret meaning of the seven stars you saw in my right hand, and of the seven gold menorahs: the seven stars are the angels of the seven Messianic communities, and the seven menorahs are the seven Messianic communities.** CJB

## II. The Cities to which this book was sent:

### A. Ephesus was a port city and the capitol of the province of Asia.

1. It was an ancient city by the time *Sha'ul*, one of the emissaries from the *shül* in Antioch, arrived there. There had been people living there since the middle of the second millennium BCE.

2. Ephesus enjoyed great prosperity, under Roman governance, during the first and second centuries, CE.

3. By the time *Sha'ul* arrived, the city had a population of about half a million. In other words, it was twice the size of the City of Spokane.

4. The city's importance lay in its political prominence, the economic clout derived from its position on major trade routes, and its religious leadership as a center for the worship of the Pagan goddess, Diana (or Artemis).

5. We also know that there were many Jews in the city who were, more or less, influenced by Messianic Judaism. We know this from accounts recorded in the *Brit Chadashic Book of Acts*, 2:9 and 6:9, where Jews from this area came to Jerusalem for the feasts.

6. Historically, we also know that Timothy was a leader in the Ephesian Messianic Community, and that according to the historian, Eusebius, *Yochanan* spent the last years of his life in this city.

### B. The next Messianic Community was located about forty miles north of Ephesus, in Smyrna.

1. Smyrna is the only one of the seven cities to which the Book of Revelation was addressed that is still flourishing today.

2. In ancient times it was one of the finest cities in Asia, and at one time was called "the crown of Ionia—the ornament of Asia."

3. It is thought that Smyrna may have also been the residence of Homer (Of *The Iliad* & *The Oddessy* fame).

### C. Pergamum was a city of the area known as *Mysia*, in Asia Minor.

1. It was famous for its vast library of 200,000 volumes, which was moved by Marc Antony to Egypt and presented as a gift to Cleopatra.
  2. This is where the making of parchment was invented.
  3. The city was greatly addicted to idolatry, and its grove, which was one of the wonders of the place, was filled with statues and altars to Pagan deities.
  4. Pergamum was a Pagan cathedral city, a university town, and a royal residence, embellished during a succession of years by kings who had all the passion for expenditure and ample means of gratifying it. With regards to splendor, this was the foremost city in Asia.
- D. Thyatira was a city of the province of Lydia, in what is today modern Turkey. It was situated on the road from Pergamum to Sardis.
1. The province in which this city lay was rich in natural resources, including fertile farmland that produced figs, grain, grapes, and olives.
  2. It was also a thriving manufacturing and commercial center during the period under discussion.
  3. As such, it was the home of many trade guilds, which were also involved in Pagan customs, superstitious worship, and feasts using food sacrificed to Pagan gods. Loose morality was also part of the guild life.
  4. Membership in these guilds was often necessary for financial and social success.
  5. Interestingly, as *Sha'ul* was spreading the message that Messiah had come in Europe for the first time, the first person who believed his message there was a woman named Lydia, a seller of purple from the City of Thyatira (Acts 16:15).
- E. Sardis was the capitol city of Lydia.
1. From ancient times it was well fortified and easily defended. It had been the capitol of the ancient Lydian Empire, then it passed successively to the Persians, the Greeks, and now the Romans.

2. This city, like Ephesus before it, had a great temple to Artemis.
3. It was also a city of complacency, relying on its past glory.

**F. Philadelphia was nearly destroyed by an earthquake in the days of Tiberius Caesar.**

1. The chief deity of this city was Dionysus, who in Greek mythology was the god of wine.
2. There was an active Jewish presence in this town during the time of *Yochanan's* writing.

**G. The last city to whom the Book of Revelation was addressed was Laodicea.**

1. Laodicea became extremely wealthy during the Roman period.
2. For example, history tells us that in 62 CE, Flaccus seized the annual contribution of the Jews of Laodicea, for Jerusalem, amounting to 20 pounds of gold.
3. When the city was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 CE, it refused aid from Rome for rebuilding.
4. The city was widely known for its banking establishments, medical school, and its textile industry. In fact, it was famous for garments fashioned from black wool produced by sheep from the surrounding area.
5. Just north of Laodicea there were hot and cold springs at a place called Hieropolis.

**H. Well, there you have it. I have now introduced you to the places.**

**III. Next, let's look at the letters personalized to each Messianic Community.**

**A. The letter to Ephesus:**



## **Rev 2:1-7**

2 1 “To the angel of the Messianic Community in Ephesus, write: ‘Here is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven gold menorahs: 2 “I know what you have been doing, how hard you have worked, how you have persevered, and how you can’t stand wicked people; so you tested those who call themselves emissaries but aren’t — and you found them to be liars. 3 You are persevering, and you have suffered for my sake without growing weary. 4 But I have this against you: **you have lost the love you had at first.** 5 Therefore, remember where you were before you fell, turn from this sin, and do what you used to do before. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your menorah from its place — if you don’t turn from your sin! 6 **But you have this in your favor: you hate what the Nicolaitans do — I hate it too.** 7 Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities. **To him winning the victory I will give the right to eat from the Tree of Life which is in God’s Gan-‘Eden.’**” CJB

1. The Community at Ephesus had a lot of good qualities. It had good deeds, hard work, and perseverance.
2. Its only problem: It had lost the love they had had at first.  
**WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SCRIPTURE MEANS BY THE TERM, “FIRST LOVE?”**
  - a) *While they had continued to love G-d, they had grown cool in their close personal relationships with each other.*
  - b) *Perhaps, like us, the business of their lives got in the way of spending time with each other in home fellowship.*
  - c) *An alternative translation that comes from the books that the Wycliffe Bible Translators use as a guide to understanding original intent goes like this:*

“But I must scold (criticize) you about this: you no longer love your fellow Christians as you did when you first believed in me.”

d) *One other thing in their favor: They were against the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Who were these guys? The general voice of antiquity accuses them of holding to the lawfulness of eating things offered to idols, and of mixing in and encouraging idolatrous worship, including consorting with the temple prostitutes.*

e) *Those who overcome in all of the Messianic Communities get the right to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of G-d. Thus, eternal life is promised to those who overcome.*

B. The letter to Smyrna:

### **Rev 2:8-11**

8 “To the angel of the Messianic Community in Smyrna, write: ‘Here is the message from the First and the Last, who died and came alive again: 9 “**I know how you are suffering and how poor you are (though in fact you are rich!), and I know the insults of those who call themselves Jews but aren’t — on the contrary, they are a synagogue of the Adversary. 10 Don’t be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Look, the Adversary is going to have some of you thrown in prison, in order to put you to the test; and you will face an ordeal for ten days. Remain faithful, even to the point of death; and I will give you life as your crown.** 11 Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities. He who wins the victory will not be hurt at all by the second death.” CJB

1. Notice how familiar *G-d* is with what *His* people are going through.
2. It is clear that *HaShem* looks at our situations from a perspective we do not naturally seem to possess.
  - a) *“I know how poor you are...”*
  - b) *Also, notice that the religious ones who think that they are right in G-d’s sight, are not necessarily so.*
3. The letter says that this particular Messianic Community was about to go through a time of suffering, but told not to fear.
  - a) *From this letter we learn that the things we go through always have an end.*
  - b) *We also learn that it is only when we are faithful unto death that we become sure of receiving our reward—life forevermore.*

C. The letter to Pergamum:

**Rev 2:12-17**

12 “To the angel of the Messianic Community in Pergamum, write: ‘Here is the message from the one who has the sharp double-edged sword: 13 “I know where you are living, there where the Adversary’s throne is. Yet you are holding onto my name. **You did not deny trusting me even at the time when my faithful witness Antipas was put to death in your town, there where the Adversary lives.** 14 **Nevertheless, I have a few things against you:** you have some people who hold to the teaching of Bil’am, who taught Balak to set a trap for the people of Isra’el, so that they would eat food that had been sacrificed to idols and commit sexual sin. 15 **Likewise, you too have people who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.** 16 Therefore, turn from these sins. Otherwise, I will come to you very soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities. **To him winning the victory I will give some of the hidden man. I will also give him a white stone, on which is written a new name that nobody knows except the one receiving it.**” CJB

1. The Messianic Community in Pergamum dwelt at a great seat of Pagan worship. The place of *the Adversary's throne* may be a reference to the great altar of Zeus found in this place.
2. There had even been persecution and martyrdom in that city, but the Messianic Community had remained faithful in spite of it.
3. Unfortunately, some of the members encouraged worldly, Pagan behavior and the Messianic Community tolerated such action. I must assume that this problem was occurring amongst the Gentile members of the Messianic synagogue, not necessarily the Jewish members. Remember that the Gentile members would have come out of a culture which embraced such practices, while the Jewish members of the community would have been used to the Torah-observant Jewish lifestyle.

a) *You see, even though the Gentile Messianic believers in this city knew that the Pagan gods weren't real, they should not have indulged in Pagan rituals nor eaten Pagan sacrifices. Apparently, some were even led into sexual immorality by such practices, while the members of the synagogue did nothing to stop them. There was, seemingly, no active oversight or principles of accountability to help these members overcome the evils of their society. Perhaps the Jewish members did not fully consider these Goyim as equals in their community, who were to be held to the same standards. Whatever the case, this was a terrible condition affecting spiritual health of the whole congregation.*

b) *This letter shows us that we cannot compromise with the world to try and fit in, nor can we try to hide our true relationship with our G-d. HaShem has no patience with those who carelessly act as the nations did that He removed from before us as we entered the Promised Land. We are not to even utter the names of their gods (Sh'mot 23:13).*

c) *The lesson here is that those who turn from G-d's path will be declared enemies of the Kingdom of G-d.*

D. The letter to Thyatira:

**Rev 2:18-29**

18 “To the angel of the Messianic Community in Thyatira, write: ‘Here is the message from the Son of God, whose eyes are like a fiery flame and whose feet are like burnished brass: 19 **I know what you are doing, your love, trust, service and perseverance. And I know that you are doing more now than before.** 20 But I have this against you: you continue to tolerate that Izevel woman, the one who claims to be a prophet, but is teaching and deceiving my servants to commit sexual sin and eat food that has been sacrificed to idols. 21 I gave her time to turn from her sin, but she doesn’t want to repent of her immorality. 22 So I am throwing her into a sickbed; and those who commit adultery with her I am throwing into great trouble, unless they turn from the sins connected with what she does; 23 and I will strike her children dead! Then all the Messianic communities will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts, and that I will give to each of you what your deeds deserve. 24 **But to the rest of you in Thyatira, to those who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some people call the ‘deep things’ of the Adversary, I say this: I am not loading you up with another burden; 25 only hold fast to what you have until I come.** 26 To him who wins the victory and does what I want until the goal is reached,

**I will give him authority over the nations;**

27 he will rule them with a staff of iron

and dash them to pieces like pottery,

28 just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star. 29 Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities.” CJB

1. This letter talks of a woman known as “Jezebel” who was probably a prominent woman in the congregation who was undermining loyalty to *HaShem* by promoting tolerance toward Pagan practices. Especially Gnosticism, the practice of trying to defeat Satan by entering into his stronghold (and experiencing evil deeply).
2. To those who overcome, *Yeshua* promises that *He* will give the authority to rule the nations. I must assume that this will be the condition found in the *Olam Haba*, the age to come, and not this present age. Christians call the age to come “the Millennium,” the time beginning with Messiah’s return.
3. Do you want to be a leader in *G-d’s* Kingdom? Now is the time of preparation for that future calling if this letter proclaims truth.
4. Once again, I get the feeling that *HaShem* does not tolerate compromise with the practices of the Pagans in any form—even something as simple as reading your horoscope in the Jerusalem Post. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

E. The letter to Sardis:

**Rev 3:1-6**

3 1 “To the angel of the Messianic Community in Sardis, write: ‘Here is the message from the one who has the sevenfold Spirit of God and the seven stars: **“I know what you are doing — you have a reputation for being alive, but in fact you are dead!** 2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains, before it dies too! For **I have found what you are doing incomplete in the sight of my God.** 3 So remember what you received and heard, and obey it, and turn from your sin! For if you don’t wake up, I will come like a thief; and you don’t know at what moment I will come upon you. 4 Nevertheless, you do have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; and they will walk with me, clothed in white, because they are worthy. 5 **He who wins the victory will, like them, be dressed in white clothing; and I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life; in fact, I will acknowledge him individually before my Father and before his**

**angels.** 6 Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities.” CJB

1. Here was a Messianic congregation going through the rituals without a true relationship with their *G-d*. They did what was expected of them without any emotional connection on the inside.
2. **WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS TO HAVE A REPUTATION THAT'S ALIVE, BUT YOU ARE INWARDLY DEAD?**
3. Answer: In death there is no growth, no fruit, no truth, and no relationship. These were people merely going through the motions because that was what was expected of them. Their covenant with *HaShem* was not at the center of their very existence. For such people, Torah merely consists of ritual performed by rote but lacking in personal meaning, not something done because one loves *G-d* and tries to obey *His* mitzvot through the conviction of a zealous passion.
4. Realize that this is talking about spiritual death. Those who are spiritually dead have no real, personal relationship with *HaShem*. They are only fooling themselves. Isn't it sad that there are many in churches and synagogues today whose hearts are not in their actions.

F. The letter to Philadelphia:

### **Rev 3:7-13**

7 “To the angel of the Messianic Community in Philadelphia, write: **‘Here is the message of *HaKadosh*, the True One, the one who has the key of David, who, if he opens something, no one else can shut it, and if he closes something, no one else can open it.** 8 “I know what you are doing. Look, I have put in front of you an open door, and no one can shut it. I know that you have but little power, yet you have obeyed my message and have not disowned me. 9 Here, I will give you some from the synagogue of the Adversary, **those who call themselves Jews but aren't** — on the contrary, they are lying — see, I will cause them to come and prostrate themselves at your feet, and they will know that I

**have loved you.** 10 Because you did obey my message about persevering, I will keep you from the time of trial coming upon the whole world to put the people living on earth to the test. 11 I am coming soon; hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown. 12 **I will make him who wins the victory a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he will never leave it. Also I will write on him the name of my God and the name of my God's city, the new Yerushalayim coming down out of heaven from my God, and my own new name.** 13 Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities.” CJB



1. Notice the strong Jewish symbolism in this letter. In this city the non-Messianic Community was causing grief to the Messianic Congregation.
2. This letter claims to have come from *HaKadosh* (the Holy One), the True One and the One who administers total control (the keeper of the Keys), to the Messianic Congregation in Philadelphia. Note that these titles are all ascribed only to *G-d*.
3. If the Messianic movement of the first century was a move of *G-d*, then to persecute it and try to destroy the movement would be adversarial to what *HaShem* was doing in the world. In this letter there is a group called, “...those who call themselves Jews but aren't.” *Who are these guys?* Have you ever considered that this phrasing might be referring to a group of Gentiles who have tried to call themselves *Spiritual Israel*—an early manifestation of *replacement theology*. Consider what David Stern said about this possibility in his *Jewish New Testament Commentary* with regards to this verse:
  - Yochanan writes about Gentiles who call themselves Jews but aren't—on the contrary, they are a synagogue of Satan, the Adversary. Perhaps they, like the Gentile Judaizers of the book of Galatians, adopted a smattering of Jewish practices and tried to force them on Gentile Christians. They may have subjected themselves to a legalistic perversion of the Torah. They apparently organized a pseudo-Messianic synagogue. Their false doctrine probably led them to wrong and immoral behavior, since false doctrine usually does. They probably drew Gentile Christians away from the truth and thereby threatened the Messianic community.

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4. These terms, just discussed, could also possibly refer to persecution from the hands of non-Messianic Jews and their synagogue on the Messianic community. In either case, whether the problem involved Gentiles or Jews, it is never wise to work against the plans of *HaShem*. Of course, this is just my opinion. Even Jewish brothers can err. In this letter, it is the wrong actions that are judged, not a people group.

5. Verse 10 says, "I will keep you from the time of trial coming upon the whole world . . ." The original Greek can be paraphrased in two ways:

- a) "keep you from undergoing. . . "
- b) "keep you through . . ."

6. Those who overcome by remaining faithful in the midst of persecution will gain eternity in G-d's presence and a place in *the New Jerusalem*.

G. Finally, the letter to Laodicea:

### **Rev 3:14-22**

14 "To the angel of the Messianic Community in Laodicea, write: 'Here is the message from the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the Ruler of God's creation: 15 **"I know what you are doing: you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were either one or the other!** 16 **So, because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth!** 17 **For you keep saying, 'I am rich, I have gotten rich, I don't need a thing!' You don't know that you are the one who is wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked!** 18 **My advice to you is to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich; and white clothing, so that you may be dressed and not have to be ashamed of your nakedness; and eyesalve to rub on your eyes, so that you may see.** 19 As for me, I rebuke and discipline everyone I love; so exert yourselves, and turn from your sins! 20 Here, I'm standing at the door, knocking. If someone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he will eat with me. 21 **I will let him who wins the victory sit with me on my throne, just as I myself also won the victory and sat down with my Father on his throne.** 22 Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities.'"" CJB

1. This community was labeled as “lukewarm.” **WHAT IS A LUKEWARM BELIEVER?**

2. Answer: The lukewarm person does not become greatly disturbed at hearing heretical teaching, and is not vigorous in the defense of the truth. A lukewarm person is probably not excited about learning new truth, and a good Biblical discussion is probably the farthest thing from his mind—let alone reading the *weekly portion* or participating in a *Shabbaton*.

3. Remember that this city was known for many things: its banking establishment, its medical school, and its black wool clothing. All of these strong points about this city are used by *Yeshua* in this letter to evoke images that those familiar with it could understand.

a) *Physicians of the day used lukewarm water to induce vomiting.*

b) *The banking industry smacks of wealth, yet they were spiritually poor. What could this mean except that they were doing no mitzvot.*

c) *The medical community made a famous eye salve. Note that Yeshua told them that they needed to buy salve from Him so that their blindness could be healed. One is spiritually blind when he fails to see things from G-d's perspective and to recognize G-d's will in various life situations.*

d) *Nakedness represented spiritual nakedness. They were advised to buy white robes from Yeshua to cover their spiritual shame by not living out G-d's true Torah.*

4. Those who overcome will be given the right to share Messiah's throne.

**IV. Thus ends the letters to the seven Messianic Communities. Now let's summarize.**

A. Remember your first love for one another. Be a community and have strong relationships. Make those in your synagogue an important part of your life. (Ephesus).

- B. Persevere no matter what happens in your life. Guard your faith. (Smyrna).
  - C. Do not conform in order to fit into your world. (Pergamum).
  - D. Maintain G-d's covenantal standards. (Thyatira).
  - E. Remember, you don't have to study Satan's ways to defeat his kingdom. That battle has already been won for us. (Thyatira).
  - F. Be active outside your walls. (Sardis).
  - G. Don't just seek your own comfort. The *kehilat* is not a club. (Laodicea).
- V. The promises to *overcomers*:
- A. Access to the tree of life (eternal life).
  - B. Immunity from the second death—the eternal punishment meant for the Devil and his angels (salvation).
  - C. Hidden provision and a new name (success and a fresh start).
  - D. Authority during the millennial reign to rule the nations (purpose).
  - E. The morning star (visibility).
  - F. White clothing and a name recorded in the Book of Life, known to *HaShem* and *His* angels (acknowledgement).
  - G. To dwell in G-d's presence for all eternity and live in the *New Yerushalayim* after the millennial reign of Messiah (security).
  - H. The right to come to before G-d's Throne (recognition).

*Next time: We will delve into the prophecies about our future.*