

Inflated with Intellectual Pride

In the opening chapter of Revelation, the Apostle John receives an extraordinary vision of the risen Lord Jesus. However, John is given the meaning of only two features of this vision. The first is the Seven Stars in the Lord's Right Hand, and the second is of the Seven Golden Lampstands:

As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

(Revelation 1:20)

The Seven Stars are the Angels of the Seven Churches whom the Apostle was instructed to write these Letters to. The term *angel* here may be a reference to the Heavenly Beings who represent each Local Church in the Heavenly Courts, or to actual Bishops within each Church.

It is frequently held that these Seven Churches represent the Spiritual History of the Christian Church during the last two thousand years.

Ephesus represents the Church of the First Century. Smyrna represents the Church under Roman persecution from 100 to 300 A.D., circa. Pergamum is the Church mixing with the world in the Middle Ages.

Thyatira speaks of the time of decline in the pre-Reformation period. Sardis is the time of the Protestant Reformation. Philadelphia represents the period of revivalism, and Laodicea describes the final apostasy in the Visible Church.

Other Christians argue these Letters refer to the specific historical Churches to whom the Book of Revelation was written. The truth is, they represent both! We know the Early Church lived their lives in expectancy for Christ's soon appearance, and it is the very nature of Biblical Prophecy to make this possible for every generation!

This made clear, we will shift our attention to the lamps. It is easy to see why lamps should symbolize the Church. All through the New Testament, and prefigured in the Old, the lamp is a symbol of Christian Witness. Jesus said:

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp-stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

(Matthew 5:14-16)

Most of our respected Bible commentators have described the Church of Laodicea as the worst of all, because there is no praise from the Lord, only strong rebuke.

Considering how far back some of their works were composed, and the conditions they list will exist, they could be more accurately described today as prophecy!

But how could so many professing Christians have fallen into such error? Simple, lamps need oil to function! In the Bible oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit!