

## 1b§1-3

### Seven Ages and Messengers

*Shalom,*

*^ Relatively quickly I deal with the church ages. More deeply and extensively I have done that further on.*

*With the prayer of believers who carry another's burdens (Gal. 6:2), Bert*

✘ In 70 AD Rome had destroyed Jerusalem (and its apostolic center) and among others the apostle John and the mother of Jesus, Mary, had settled in the city of Ephesus (cf. John 19:27).

In 96 John was Jesus' last living disciple/apostle. Times were hard and there was much persecution. Possibly John was boiled for 24 hours in oil before he was deported as a witch to the prison island of Patmos. Though, his presence near the church in Ephesus confirmed that it was the spiritual center of the churches of that time (Rev. 2:1-7), Rev. 2:7a, <".... He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ....">

✘ To seven churches the Lord Jesus had written His love letters. In the beginning He had referred to some of His attributes (Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, etc.).

For the church of John in Ephesus it had been an emergency message. Its lampstand would be soon removed out of its place, if it did not repent (Rev. 2:4-5), Rev. 2:4, <But I have this against you: You have abandoned your first love.>

✘ From John the first runner left for the first stop. He had among others the task of conveying the personal message of Jesus Christ to the messenger of the church, Rev. 2:1, etc., <To the messenger/angel of the church in Ephesus write: '.... ..!>

The messenger/angel in question (the Greek word 'angelo' ['angel']) was a believer on earth, as the basic meaning of that word is messenger. Only in special situations, when it relates to heavenly beings, the translation would be angel. Throughout the Book of Revelation, both possibilities need to be carefully considered.

✘ The church in every town represented one Light period for many churches, one revival age. A total of seven Light periods had been announced. It was the mystery of the lampstands (0\_Menorah and 1a§1-3).

In addition, the messengers of the churches would represent seven different star messengers, with God's Revelation and ministry for that church age. It was the mystery of the stars (1a§1-3, =), Rev. 1:20, <.... The seven stars (in My right hand) are the messengers/angels of the seven churches. ....>

✘ According to brother Branham the star messenger of the Ephesian church age had been the apostle Paul. He was absolutely true to the Word, did the work in the Power of the Holy Spirit and had the evident fruit of his God given ministry. Multitudes of Gentiles came to faith. Even, he had been the first apostle of the church in Ephesus. About 53 A.D., he had laid and completed the foundation for the revival in de gentile city of Ephesus (and also in many other gentile cities) (Acts 19).

More than half of the letters of the New Testament he wrote. With sound teachings and his self-sacrificing way of life he equipped the churches. God's Love in him was never extinguished.

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✘ When the revivals of the Ephesian church age everywhere had died out, Jesus had removed its lampstand. But active believers, hungry and thirsty, had previously begun to pray to the Lord God for new Holy Ghost Power. When the believers of the Smyrna age had been ready for it, when the first love for God had returned into them, the next revival had begun, and at some point the next star messenger appeared.

Of the seven ages, only in two the believers would act so well, or the circumstances would be so harsh, that only words of encouragement were to be given to them, Smyrna and Philadelphia.

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✘ Nowadays in circles of revival Christians has somehow been accepted that, after the (Dark) Middle Ages, the Reformation of 1517 on the European continent represents the revival period for the fifth church, the church of Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6).

Under Luther's leadership the truth had been rediscovered that only through faith man can become righteousness, Rm. 1:17, <For the gospel reveals the righteousness of God that comes by faith from start to finish, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith.">

✘ Regrettably this restoring did not go far enough. A new revival was needed (Rev. 3:7-13).

In Britain during the Philadelphian church age, the blessing of a holy life was widely found back, with the birth of the Methodist Movement (later Church), the Salvation Army, and many mission societies. Next, in the United States it spread on a large scale (cf. Hep. 12:10b-14).

✘ Once again the reviving came to a standstill and died. One more revival was needed, the Laodicean church age revival, the Azusa Street revival, the worldwide revival of the Pentecostal churches. It began in 1906 in the city of Los Angeles. Then the gifts of the Holy Spirit were found anew (Rev. 3:14-22).

But the message to the Laodicean church tells that this spiritual movement changed. For later the Lord Jesus is only found from the outside of this church (Rev. 3:20)....