**Lesson – 12 The Church Militant**

**Read for your study:** - [Rev. 2:1-7](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev.%202.1-7), [Hos. 2:13](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Hos.%202.13), [Rev. 2:8-17](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev.%202.8-17), [Rev. 2:18-3:6](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev.%202.18-3.6), [Isa. 60:14](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa.%2060.14), [Rev. 3:14-22](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev.%203.14-22).

**Memory Text: -** "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" **(**[**Revelation 3:20, NKJV**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Revelation%203.20)**)**.

**Introduction: -** Our world has all kinds of ideas about what is required to solve its problems, but to the most essential need in the lives of all people, Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians, of his desire for them to become experientially aware of the power and authority of Jesus Christ. He affirmed Christ’s supremacy, His authority over the Church, and the security of the Christian in Jesus, and proclaimed the hope that can only be found in the risen and reigning King.

The Seventh –Day Adventist church defines the terms **“Militant and Triumphant”** in the following ways, "While in this world the church is a militant church, daily engaged in the battles of its Lord, and in warfare against satanic agencies. Its members are in constant conflict with the world, the flesh, and the powers of evil **(Rom. 7:15-23; Gal. 5:17; 1 Peter 5:8, 9; 1 John 5:4; cf. 1 John 4:4). If this side of the Lord's return the church is the militant church, the church of the New Jerusalem is the triumphant church.** It is made up of faithful disciples and conquerors in this worldly battle. They have exchanged the sword for a palm of victory (Rev 7:9) and the cross for a crown **(2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4)**. The battle is over, the mission accomplished **(Matt. 25:21, 23)** and the redeemed, invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb **(Rev. 19:9)**, eat and drink at Christ's table in His kingdom **(Luke 22:28-30)** and reign with Him forever and ever **(Rev 22:5)**." **Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), pp. 565-566.**

Thus, the Seventh-day Adventist view is unique in that the church is the Church Militant until the general resurrection at the end of the present age. The church becomes the Church Triumphant only after the second coming of Christ.

John, one of the 12 disciples wrote Revelation which gives us much understanding of the great controversy through his description of the seven churches. Jesus’ approach is different as He introduces Himself in a different way to each church. He is pictured holding the seven stars and walking among the lampstands. These lampstands represent the seven churches, and the seven stars are angels that are assigned to care for the churches **(Rev. 1:20)**. Thus there is a close connection between the churches and the throne of God in heaven and their part in the great controversy.

Let’s dive into our study to learn the connection and the qualities of each church, how they got involved in the Controversy and what advice and promises they received. The message to the churches is for us and our church too!

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|  | **EPHESUS** | **SMYRNA** | **Pergamos** | **Thyatira** | **SARDIS** | **Philadelphia** | **LAODICEA** |
| **JESUS** | He walks in the midst of the seven lampstands holding the seven stars in His right hand. Christ cares leads and looks after you. | The First and the Last, who was dead and came to life. | He has the sharp two-edged sword. He is the Judge whose verdict is irrevocable. | The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass. He is full of glory. | He has the 7 spirits and the 7 stars. Jesus leads your life through the Holy Spirit. | Holy and true. He has the key of David. He rules the Church and my life. | The Amen, the Faithful Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God. |
| **QUALITIES** | You work hard, you are patient and you detest apostasy. | You are spiritually rich. | You have my Name. You have not denied your faith in me. | You have love, faith, service, patience and many works. Are you part of the faithful Remnant? | Are you one of the worthy people who have not been morally corrupted? | You have kept the Word and you haven’t denied Jesus’ name. | – None in this message. – |
| **THE CONTROVERSY** | You have left your first love. You are tempted to forget how God led you in the past; you have changed your relationship with Him. | You are suffering slander and persecution. Satan is allowed to offend the believers and even kill them sometimes. | You suffer persecution and apostasy (Balaam and the Nicolaitans). | Do you fight against the widespread apostasy (Jezabel) that is disguised as false love and faith? Are you faithful to God? | Are your works imperfect? Is your faith dying? | You will have trouble with the “synagogue of Satan.” You will win in the Controversy despite all that trouble. | Are you living spiritual lukewarmness and pride? |
| **ADVICE** | Repent and do your first works. | Don’t be afraid. Be faithful until death and you will be rewarded. | Repent. | Are you an apostate? If you are, repent. If you are part of the Remnant, you are OK. If you are faithful, stay faithful to the light you have received. | Repent and keep what you have received. | Wait for His Coming. Keep what you have. | Buy gold, white garments and eye salve. Be zealous and repent. Open the door to Jesus. |
| **THE PROMISE** | You will eat from the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise. | You won’t be hurt by the second death. | You will be fed by God. He will give you a new name written on a white stone. | You will rule the nations and you will receive the morning star. [Jesus is the morning star (Revelation 22:16)] | You will receive white garments. Your name won’t be blotted out from the Book of Life. Jesus will confess your name before God and the angels. | You will have God’s character. You will have an important and permanent place at His presence. | You will seat down with Jesus on His throne. |

**The message to the seven churches is for us and our church today!** The best approach would be that we understand each letter from the standpoint that it might have personal instruction for us. Since we are undergoing similar spiritual circumstances, the attitudes and positions taken by each church could reflect our own. We would be wise to take the advice Christ offers. With this in mind, let us continue to reflect upon the message to these churches and how is it relevant for us today!