

## Seven Churches or One Lamb's Wife

In the book of Revelation, God showed John seven different churches with seven different problems. Each Church, when looked upon in the earth, had areas that God was dealing with, helping to bring them all into maturity and life. Not one of these churches had all wisdom and maturity. Each one had touched life in certain areas, and yet needed to allow the measure of Christ to increase in other areas. They were all "in process", growing up into Christ in all things.

It is always this way in the earth. Whether it is an individual Church group or an individual believer, we are all at different places in our conformity to the Lamb. His life is maturing in each believer at different stages. Our agreement and oneness is not based on these things. There is only one view and one place from which we can properly know each other and abide in true unity.

From the scriptures in Revelation it is clear that God was fathering all these churches. He loved them, chastised them, wrote letters to them and walked in their midst. In that sense, John could have felt that he was really beginning to know who each church was. The brothers and sisters in Smyrna were the suffering church, the group in Ephesus was the deeper life fellowship, and the Laodiceans were the saints who had some real problems! In that sense each group could be known by its place of maturity in time and space. But God wanted the beloved Apostle to know who these churches really were by showing him their true identity.

John was taken up far above the earth to see what was true and eternal in God. The Lord showed John the Lamb's wife. He did not see seven different churches but one corporate temple inhabited by the Lamb. He did not see problems or differences but a city tempered together as one, joined to the Lamb and each other in divine Lamb nature. However they appeared on the earth, and whatever problems they were having, in the Spirit was the heavenly Jerusalem, God's beloved Zion. God Himself, Who comprehends more deeply and sees more clearly every problem in every place, knows us in His Son. His focus is on His heavenly city, the Zion where He dwells. She is the apple of His eye. His heart and view is full of this tabernacle that is true in the heavens.

And now God beckons to us, even in the midst of world situations, personal problems and individual groups, to "Come up here and SEE!" As our eyes are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we will not only find help in our time of need, but translation out from our earthly form and identities into the bride of His heart, the wife of the Lamb.

As we come to know one another according to what is "true above", we will have patience and grace until we all come into the fullness of His stature as one new man. We will stand together as one bride even when there is yet immaturity and lack. Rather than allowing these situations to bring forth division and critical attitudes, we will let these very things usher forth the tender care and longsuffering that only those married to the Lamb can display. Our true identity is as one wife in union with the Lamb. Because we dwell above in the true and new Jerusalem, we are able to come down into these situations having the glory of God. As we corporately bear His nature together, our focus can turn from our needs and conflicts to the needs of others. Now the focus is Life and healing to the nations. What seven separate churches could not do, one Lamb's wife can!

Even in the midst of correction and chastisement, may we embrace our true and heavenly identity. May God open the eyes of our hearts that we might satisfy Him as the Zion in which He can rest.