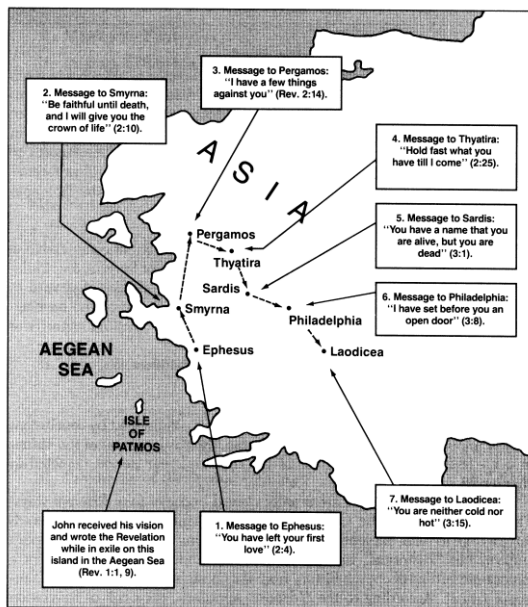


The Book Of Revelation - Chapters Two & Three



TO: EPHEBUS

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; **2** I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: **3** And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. **4** Nevertheless I have [somewhat] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. **5** Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. **6** But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. **7** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

TO: SMYRNA

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; **9** I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and [I know] the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but [are] the synagogue of Satan. **10** Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. **11** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

TO: PERGAMOS

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; **13** I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, [even] where Satan's seat [is]; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. **14** But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. **15** So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. **16** Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. **17** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a

white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth [it].

THE SEVEN CHURCHES

These seven cities were located in the Roman Province of Asia (modern Turkey), arranged in a horseshoe shape roughly 100 miles in diameter that formed the Great Circle Postal Route of the province. There were more churches in Asia, but these seven had strengths and weaknesses typical of all other congregations both ancient and modern. The messages are addressed to the angel ("messenger") of each church. Bible scholars see a three-fold application from these messages:

1. PRACTICAL - Specific instruction to the churches in John's day
2. PROPHETIC - Principles for the church in every age (Possible prophecies of the church in history)
3. PERSONAL - Spiritual application for individual Christians

Not every church is commended, nor is every assembly rebuked, but to all Christ says "I know thy works." There is a promise given to the one that "overcometh" in every congregation. To every church Christ says "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The word "churches" is plural, indicating these messages were to be read by all congregations, not just the one addressed. The words "He" and "him" are singular, indicating individuals must be in tune with God's Spirit in spite of the condition of their assembly. The word "hear" means "take to heart and act upon" and does not indicate mere listening. Revelation 2 & 3 form the last message of Christ to His Church recorded in Scripture. **Only Christ can see the true condition of a church or an individual!**

EPHEBUS, THE CARELESS CHURCH

- Capital of Roman Province of Asia, wealthy commerce center
- Home of Temple of Diana, one of Seven Wonders of Ancient World
- Church founded by Paul (Acts 19-20), first pastored by Timothy
- John lived - and wrote his books - here before and after Patmos
- "Ephesus" - name means "desirable," also "to let go, relax"
- Heraclitus - "no one can live in Ephesus without weeping" (immoral)
- "labor" - "toil until exhaustion" / "patience" - "endurance under trial"
- "Nicolaitans" - "to conquer the people" (initiated concept of laity)
- PROBLEM - abandoned "honeymoon love" (fervent, uninhibited)
- So busy maintaining separation, they neglected adoration!
- They had been in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6), now they had fallen
- The church that loses its love will eventually lose its light!
- God will remove lampstand (church), not extinguish light (truth)
- What we do is important, but so is why we do it!

SMYRNA, THE CROWNED CHURCH

- Port city (modern Izmir), important center of Roman Imperial Cult
- Famous for "Street of Gold" & "Hill Pagus" ("Crown of Smyrna")
- Citizens not acknowledging Caesar as Lord excluded from guilds
- Exclusion meant unemployment and poverty ("absolutely nothing")
- Polycarp (one of John's disciples) burned at stake here in AD 155
- Large Jewish community (accepted by Rome) persecuted Christians
- Devil ("slanderer") controls those in "synagogue of Satan"
- "Smyrna" - "bitter" (root word "myrrh" - crushed to give fragrance)
- "ten days" - "a brief time" (Genesis 24:55, Acts 25:6) - or 10 "waves"
- "crown of life" - "victor's crown" (awarded at annual athletic games)

PERGAMOS, THE COMPROMISING CHURCH

- Pergamos had first temple dedicated to Caesar ("Satan's seat")
- 200,000 volume library, second only to Alexandria - educated society
- Also Temple of Aesculapius, god of healing (twin serpents on staff)

- Gigantic altar to Zeus - one of Seven Wonders of Ancient World
- Sword was symbol of Roman Proconsul, but Christ's sword greater!
- Satan not successful as roaring lion, but got in as deceiving serpent!
- Antipas first martyr in Asia - we do not know him, but God does!
- Doctrine of Balaam - mix godliness and worldliness (Num. 22-25)
- Christians here compromised to avoid suffering, achieve acceptance
- "Pergamos" - from "tower" and "marriage" - union with idolatry
- Christ has a sharp sword to separate His people from the world!
- "hidden manna" - spiritual food better than that offered to idols
- imperial cults had "secrets" for members - God promises same to us
- "white stone" - used to vote for acquittal or gain admission to a feast
- This church more acceptable to society, but less acceptable to God!

TO: THYATIRA

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet [are] like fine brass; **19** I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last [to be] more than the first. **20** Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. **21** And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. **22** Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. **23** And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. **24** But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. **25** But that which ye have [already] hold fast till I come. **26** And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: **27** And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. **28** And I will give him the morning star. **29** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

TO: SARDIS

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. **2** Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. **3** Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. **4** Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. **5** He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. **6** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

TO: PHILADELPHIA

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; **8** I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. **9** Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. **10** Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. **11** Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. **12** Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, [which is] new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God:

and [I will write upon him] my new name. **13** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

TO: LAODICEA

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; **15** I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. **16** So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. **17** Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: **18** I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. **19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. **20** Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. **21** To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. **22** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

THYATIRA, THE CORRUPTED CHURCH

- The longest message was sent to the church in the smallest city!
- A military and commercial center, numerous trade guilds here
- Temple to Apollo (Sun God) - "Son of God" only here in Revelation
- Lydia, seller of purple, was guild member from Thyatira (Acts 16:14)
- City known for "turkey red" Thyatira cloth and bronze production
- Christ comes to judge with "fiery" eyes and feet like fine brass
- "Thyatira" - means "unweary of sacrifice" - continuous good works
- No amount of loving or sacrifice can compensate for tolerance of evil
- "Jezebel" - not likely a real name, but real woman like the OT queen
- She taught that there was no harm in outward conformity to the world as long as inward holiness was maintained - false doctrine!
- Ephesus was weak in love yet strong in doctrine; Thyatira was weak in doctrine yet strong in love - both extremes are hateful to God!
- "cast her into a bed" - bed of sin would become bed of sickness
- "kill her children with death" - "plague" / warning to ALL churches
- "depths of Satan" - heresy that taught Christians could indulge in all kinds of immorality with safety because their sins were forgiven
- Only one command given to the faithful - "Hold fast till I come!"
- In the millenium the church will be given power to wipe out sin!
- Jesus, the morning star (Rev. 22:16), is our reward for faithfulness
- The church crowded with good activity is not always a true church!

SARDIS, THE FEEBLE CHURCH

- Located at junction of five main roads - center for trade and military
- Located on inaccessible plateau 1500 ft. high - impregnable fortress
- Center for worship of Artemis - nature-worshipping reincarnation cult
- Famous for wool garments, but city just a shadow of former splendor
- Church had become like city - alive in name only, living on past glory
- "seven Spirits of God" - God sees the reality beyond the reputation
- Twice in history Sardis captured because Sentries were sleeping
- "come on thee as a thief" - unexpected or undetected judgement
- Deadness in the assembly due to defilement among the assembled!
- No persecution of church in Sardis - no friction means no motion!
- Even a dead church can have a dedicated remnant - the only hope!
- Promise to wear white raiment meaningful to garment-making people
- All the church's man-made programs cannot bring spiritual life!

PHILADELPHIA, THE FAITHFUL CHURCH

- Located in strategic place on trade route; called Gateway to the East
- Called Little Athens because of many temples; famous for vineyards
- Area prone to earthquakes; city was completely destroyed in AD 17
- "Philadelphia" - name means "brotherly love" / still exists today
- "Key of David" - authority of the Messiah (image from Isaiah 22:22)
- City was "door" through mountains; church had "door" of opportunity
- This congregation was small, but they easily understood how a little strength in a narrow valley corridor could hold back a large army!
- Jews who rejected Christ were the worst persecutors of the church
- Many Bible scholars believe that verse 10 is one of God's promises for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, since the "hour" (a specific time of trial) will come upon "ALL the world" and God says he will "keep" (Greek: "keep OUT OF") the church from it
- Overcomers will be made "pillars" (indicating stability in a city of earthquakes); names of prominent citizens were often engraved on temple pillars as a mark of honor - we will bear Christ's name forever
- It is possible to lose our rewards if we ignore our opportunities!

LAODICEA, THE FOOLISH CHURCH

- "Laodicea" - name means "judgement of the people" or "mob rule"
- God comes to them as the Amen (Hebrew "truth" - Isaiah 65:16)
- "beginning of the creation of God" - "source" or "origin" of creation
- Located between Hieropolis (famous for hot springs) and Colossae (famous for pure cold drinking water) - water from either place would be "lukewarm" by the time it arrived in Laodicea (Colossians 4:13)
- City ravaged by earthquake in AD 61, but refused financial assistance from Rome in rebuilding efforts due to its self-sufficiency
- Noted as a banking center, for production of glossy black wool, and for production of an eye salve used across the Roman Empire
- God tells them they are poor, naked, and blind; He counsels them to get gold, white raiment and eye salve for their spiritual lives!
- Christ is OUTSIDE the church, knocking because He wants inside!
- Door of ancient home had to be opened by the occupant from inside
- Laodiceans believed they had a perfect church because of prosperity
- God's counsel: "gold tried in the fire" - suffering realigns priorities!
- Christ says "I stand" ("I have taken my stand") - what will YOU do?