



The Seven Churches of Revelation Chapters 2 & 3

The message of the seven churches of Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 chronicles the history of the Christian church from the time of the Apostles of Christ until the final generation before the Second Coming of Christ. Spoken in the form of letters written to seven specific churches of Asia Minor that existed during the time of the writing of the Revelation (~85AD), John pens words of approbation, warning, and hope from none other than Jesus Christ, the One who walks among the seven churches. With each church, Christ identifies Himself in some distinct manner, revealing a characteristic of His divine nature and authority, giving Him the right to speak words of encouragement, rebuke, and admonition to the churches. Christ reveals that He knows the works of each church and gives counsel and encouragement to the Israel of God, those who overcome by His strength. The story of the seven churches is the story of Christ's presence in the midst of His church throughout time, serving as High Priest in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary where He daily makes intercession on behalf of His beloved, His bride for whom He died. Later in the Revelation we see Christ in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary where, with His own blood, He purges His bride's sins, preparing her to meet Him at His Second Coming. The messages of encouragement and counsel are timeless and are given to perform a work of revival and reformation in His bride so that she may prepare herself to receive Christ, the Groom, and the kingdom He has prepared for her.

Church Name	Historic Facts	Scripture	Prophetic Era	Christ's Identification	Message of Approbation	Message of Warning	Promise	Reference
Ephesus (Rev 2:1-7)	A name meaning "desirable", Ephesus, located in modern day Turkey and bordering the Aegean Sea, was the 2nd largest city of the Roman empire after Rome itself w/ ~250K people living in it in the first century. City made famous for its temple of Artemis (Diana), the goddess of fertility, one of the seven wonders of the Ancient World, destroyed in 450AD by John Chrysostom. It is suspected that John wrote his gospel to the churches from Ephesus. The city fell to the Goths in 263AD	"To the angel[a] of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. 2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. 6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.	The Apostolic Church - 31AD to 100AD: Prophetically the church of Ephesus denotes the early church that was empowered with the Gospel and was founded by the Apostles of Christ. Most of the firsthand eyewitnesses of Jesus' life had passed on by the time of the writing of the Revelation.	He who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: Jesus is the One who upholds the church with His right hand of righteousness. ¹ It is Jesus who condescended, taking on the form and likeness of men, dwelling among us and sharing in our human experience that He might save us from our sins. The same demonstration of intimacy and closeness ² is seen in Jesus walking among the seven churches. He is ever present and a discerner of the hearts and thoughts of men so that He is qualified to give us counsel and admonition.	Hard work, perseverance and hatred for the works of the Nicolaitans were the characteristics of this first church. It was the efforts of this first church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, that spread the gospel to the then known world. Their focus on purity of doctrine and lifestyle was in stark contrast to the teachings of the Nicolaitans who taught that obedience to God's law was unnecessary. The bible shows that the redeemed show evidence of a changed life in harmony with God's law and character ³ .	"You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place." The message of reform given to this first church shows the early winds of formalism and apostasy that would embrace the church. This once pure, on-fire church for Christ had lost its first love and was in need of repentance. Jesus warns that if the church does not repent, He will remove its lampstand among the other six lampstands.	Those who overcome will be given the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. The Tree of Life first spoken of in Genesis 3:X, and located in the garden located in Eden was transported to heaven prior to the flood the destroyed the earth. This tree which bears twelve fruit monthly, has the power to sustain life eternally and will be made available to the faithful.	2xxx; ³ 1John 5:3
Smyrna (Rev 2:8-11)	An ancient Greek word meaning "myrrh" or "sweet smelling", Smyrna was located directly north of Ephesus along the Aegean Sea. It was one of the premier cities of the Roman Empire of Asia and competed with Ephesus and Pergamom for influence.	"To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. 9 I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. 11 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.	The Persecuted Church: Early 100s-Early 300s: The faithfulness of the church of Smyrna during an era of spiritual persecution, begun by the Jews and carried on by the Romans, is a sweet smelling aroma to the Lord. These faithful believers tasted of the cup of affliction born by Christ and were willing to bear and suffer long for the cross of Christ, even to the death. It is to these that Jesus has promised eternal life as a "victor's crown". Praise the Lord!	First and the Last, the One who died and came to life again: Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, First and the Last, Author and Finisher of man's faith, He who was in the beginning of all creation and will be forever more. The self-existent, eternal God laid down His life to become the Redeemer of the world, more specifically, those who love Him and keep His commandments.	I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death,	None - Jesus sees faithfulness in this body of believers despite their trials and is well pleased with them.	Those who overcome will not be hurt by the second death but receive life as the victor's crown. This is the hope of all who cherish God and His plan of Redemption.	

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Pergamom (Rev 2:12-17)	Name derived from Greek word purgos meaning "tower" city of modern day Turkey located north of, and situated like a citadel above a valley. The technique of preparing sheepskins for parchment (<i>Pergament</i>) was developed in Pergamom and was a major export item with textiles and fine pottery.	"To the angel of the church in Pergamom write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. 13 I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives. 14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. 15 Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.	The Church of Compromise: Early 300s-Mid 500s: This is the church that experienced that which Jesus and Paul warned of "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." It is this church that witnessed and experienced the influx of paganism through the agency of the state. With Constantine's proclamation of the Christian faith and his lordship over state and church affairs brought a horde of falsehood and pagan beliefs as Christianity, once persecuted became the popular religion. As worldly, power and money hungry bishops of Rome pandered to the influence of the emperor and pagan officials, they acted the part of the false prophet Balaam, causing a stumbling block to be placed before the people of God.	He who has the sharp double-edged sword: The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God is that sword which proceeds out of the mouth of Jesus Christ. Christ's teachings, His counsels and His chastening is to be heeded with all reverence and honor as the One who is Sovereign over heaven and earth. The sword of the Spirit has the effect of cutting one way, where we are convicted of sin and of judgment and our need for repentance, while cutting another way, in ensuring our complete victory over sin, our power to live godly lives and our ultimate redemption through the power and victory of Jesus Christ. The message of the two edge sword has the reforming effect upon the lives of both those who render it and those who receive it.	"You remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.": Jesus commends the faithful among the church of Pergamos of their commitment and fidelity to Christ, even in the face of death, among a larger church body that has been caught-up in a flood of dissipation.	Among the church members were those, who as false prophets were promoting the doctrine of Baalam, namely through their deeds and teachings, were a stumbling block to the household of God through the promotion of sexual immorality and the handling and consumption of things offered to idols. Further, among the congregation are those who hold to the Arian and demonic doctrine of the Nicolaitans which is an abomination to God. Jesus counsels this church to repent of its sins, lest He come and punish the wicked among them with the Sword of His mouth.	To those who overcome Jesus will give them of the hidden manna, preserved in the Ark of the Covenant to eat. Jesus will also give each person a white stone bearing a unique name which only they know, denoting an experience which they alone can give account of with Jesus Christ.	

Acts 15:29;
Revelation 12:13-15; 22:16

Thyatira (Rev 2:18-29)	Translated "odor of affliction" a city of Asia Minor bordering Lydia and Mysia in modern Turkey.	"To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. 19 I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. 20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. 21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. 23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. 24 Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, I will not impose any other burden on you, 25 except to hold on to what you have until I come. 26 To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— 27 that one will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery [b]—just as I have received authority from my Father. 28 I will also give that one the morning star. 29 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.	Church of the Dark Ages: (538AD-Early 1500s): Thyatira is the church which has a place prepared in the wilderness when the apostate church system, Babylon, reigns upon the earth. This apostate church system, a masterpiece creation of Satan himself, also called <i>Jezebel</i> , is only interested in causing the people of God to forsake God and worship idols and perform pagan rites and rituals.	<i>The Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze:</i> Fire has been an identifying mark of the presence of the true God and is therefore appropriately used in describing Jesus Christ. Jesus' eyes, which search the hearts and intents of men represent a portal to the character and works of God. God's unapproachable holiness, purity and glory are alighted in the eyes of Christ that search the earth for those He may shower His grace upon. The piercing gaze of Christ as seen by John is the same that understood and had compassion upon the powerless demoniac, fully ensnared in the grips of Satan, and has compassion upon you and I. Similarly it is Christ's unerring gaze that read the malicious intents of the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees while He walked the earth. Jesus' feet of burnished bronze reflect the glory of God as One who walks among the purifying coals of fire unscathed and has Himself been made strong through the fires of affliction.	The church is one that is full of works: love, faith, service, perseverance and their works continue to increase.	The church has compromised with the world and has allowed the false prophetess, Jezebel, the counterfeit church also known as Babylon the Great, to teach and seduce God's servants to turn their backs on the practical godliness given by the Apostles of Christ to the church (flee sexual immorality and things offered to idols). The church has become flooded by the doctrines of Jezebel so that consummate craft prevails, where truth appears as error and error as truth. The church must maintain its faithfulness to the word of God over the teachings of men lest it completely lose its bearing and be overtaken by the flood spewed out by the Dragon power (Satan working through Papal Rome - Jezebel). Jesus offers no strong rebuke or other burden upon this church in light of the trials and deceptions this church and those who have not heard the gospel in light of the workings of Satan, have to endure, only that they hold fast the faith they have until He comes.	To those who overcome the trials of the apostate church, Jezebel, and remain faithful to God, keeping His works, Jesus promises that they will rule the nations with a rod of iron, just as He was given a rod of iron to rule by His Father. Further, to dispell the darkness of the 1,260 years of religious apostasy (Dark Ages), Jesus Christ will be given them Himself, the Bright and Morning Star, as an inheritance.	
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Sardis (Rev 3:1-6)	The chief capital city of Lydia, Sardis, located in modern Turkey.	"To the angel[a] of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits[b] of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. 3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. 4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. 5 The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. 6 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.	Church of the Reformation Movement: (1500s-1700s): The church that God through His Protestant Reformation movement awoke to the perils and heresies promoted for centuries by the apostate church called Jezebel. The church of this era was given progressive light during an era of spiritual darkness where the doctrines of men superseded the word of God. Through reformers such as Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, Zwingli, and Martin Luther, men were shown that salvation is born through the unmerited gift of God through Jesus Christ and not through indulgences, pilgrimages and acts of penance as taught by the church of Rome.	Him who holds the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars is none other than Jesus. The number seven, a number symbolizing godly perfection and completeness, is the number denoting the Spirit of God that works through the messengers (stars) of the seven churches. It is the ever present Holy Spirit that Jesus promised and commissioned to be a guide to His church until His Second Coming when He and His bride shall part no more. Jesus Himself is represented as a Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes, symbolizing the Holy Spirit that is ever vigilant throughout the entire earth.	Jesus identifies some in Sardis who have not defiled their garments but have remained faithful to that faith which had been given them. To these Jesus commend and state they will walk with Him in white clothing, bearing His righteousness.	To this church strong warnings are given concerning their condition. They are said to have a name, that they are alive, but Jesus pronounces them dead, where He has not found their work perfect before God (complete and born of God) . This condition of deception and delusion is marked with those who have received counsel but have not developed a love for the truth. It is this church whose converts were torn with accepting the pure truths of salvation by grace through faith and a victorious life over sin through Christ or conforming to an easy, self-serving life of sin with the false promise of the remission of sins through indulgences. Jesus counsels this church to remember how they received and heard the gospel, by faith, and so walk therein. Jesus further counsels them to wake-up and be vigilant, lest He come upon them unaware like a thief.	To those who overcome, Jesus has promised that they will wear white garments, symbolic of His righteousness imputed to them, and their names will not be blotted out of the Lamb's Book of Life. Further, Jesus promises to confess the Faithfull's name before God the Father and the angels.	Revelation 5:6, Matthew 10:32; Colossians 2:6

Psalm 27:4

Philadelphia (Rev 3:7-13)	A name meaning "brotherly love", the era as with Pentecost is marked by powerful manifestations of the Spirit of God. It is during this era that the foretold signs and wonders in the heavens and skies, spoken by the prophets Joel and Christ were manifest. Further it is during this era that the mysteries of God for earth's closing history held secret since the beginning of time were being made known through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is during this era that the once sealed book of Daniel was opened by none other than Jesus Christ Himself and given to men that they may read, understand, and eat the book, internalizing its meanings and making its truths and counsels their own.	"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. 8 I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. 9 I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. 10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. 11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. 12 The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. 13 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.	Commencement of The Last Days: (1798-1844): The church of Philadelphia parallels the experience of Elijah, as a people having a loving desire to turn the hearts of the people of God back to the worship of the true God after 3.5 prophetic years of spiritual darkness. Their message is typified through the Three Angel's message of Revelation 14:6-12. The message begins with a message of love and repentance, calling all men around the world to worship the true God of Creation. The message is followed by a warning of continuing in the practice of the apostate church power, Jezebel, that has caused men to sin against God. Lastly the message concludes with the announcement of a time of judgment, where all must show their fidelity to Christ or the great Whore, Jezebel. Punishment for rejecting Christ is made plain through the Third Angel's message, but the means for victory in Christ, namely, having the faith of Jesus or righteousness by faith, is pronounced as the hope and faith of the redeemed.	He who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open : Holiness and truth are attributes founded in God alone that He imparts to those who are found faithful. Jesus, the root and offspring of David is the one and only true heir to the royal throne of righteousness. The keys which Jesus bears are those which He won by merit of His atoning death for mankind. The keys to death and hell and the keys to the Kingdom of God belong to Jesus alone. Those to whom He opens either, He alone may open and none shut and shut and none other may open.	Christ bears a <i>Closed Door</i> message to the mainline Protestant Churches of the era through the Church of Philadelphia, that they must flee from sin and embrace the truths of God made plain through His Word, the bible, and uphold the Protestant tenets they claim. When these churches scornfully rejected the Advent message and evidences of bible prophetic truth confirmed in history, they became the synagogue of Satan. To these, Jesus warns that He will cause them to bend the knee and worship before the faithful church of Philadelphia that bore reproach for their faithfulness to God; then shall they know that God has loved the church of Philadelphia and placed His stamp of approval on their works. Further, Jesus assures those faithful who continued with Christ beyond the Great Disappointment of October 21, 1844 and followed the Lamb into the Most Holy Place, entering into covenant with Jesus as a denominated people, to these Jesus promises to preserve them from the Hour of Trial and time of testing where the 144,000 who follow their faith will be tested through a National Sunday Law.	No strong words of warning or rebuke are given to this faithful church that has embraced the Advent message and served as pioneers to the last day remnant church of God.	Jesus counsels the members of this church to hold fast to their faith so that no one may take their crown which He has prepared for them. Jesus promises that all who overcome will be made a pillar in the temple of God, and will never depart but will dwell continually before the Lord; a fulfillment of the longings and petitions of the heart of David, the man of God. Further promises to write the name of the Father, New Jerusalem and His own name upon those who remain faithful to the end.	
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<p>Laodicea (Rev 3:14-22)</p>	<p>A name comprised of two Greek terms: <i>Laos</i> - meaning "people" and <i>dike</i> - meaning "principle, decision". In other words, Laodecian were those who made their opinion principle over that of Jesus Christ. An historic church that Paul mentions in his writing to the church of Colossus.</p>	<p>"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. 15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. 19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. 21 To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."</p>	<p>End Time Church: 1844 - 2nd Coming of Christ: The message to the Laodecian church is a message of strong rebuke and a call for reformation to the last church before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This church has become consumed with worldliness, pride, and self-importance and has forgotten its purpose to be a light to the world. It is this church that God intends to equip with a "Loud Cry" message to bring the world back to worship the true God. However, God must first revive and shake this church, purifying it of all that defiles so that it may rightly represent Him to the world.</p>	<p><i>The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God:</i> Jesus is the completion, the affirmation and the consent to all that God has purposed, because He Himself is God. Jesus is the faithful and true witness of God, giving full revelation of the character, love, justice and mercy found in the Father. Jesus' proclamation to Philip "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" gives credence to the singleness in purpose and unity that exists between Jesus and the Father. The One who authored creation and secured man's redemption is faithful in His counsels of approbation and rebuke to all seven churches. His witness is consistent with the purposes of God to bring reform, reformation and redemption to His people.</p>	<p>Jesus has no words of approbation for this church entrusted with so many blessings and knowledge of God's plans and purposes, but rather words of strong warning and counsel</p>	<p>The last church before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the church entrusted with all the wisdom of the Old and New Testaments, the examples of Ancient Israel, and empowered by the Spirit of Prophecy through the writings of God's maidservant for the last days, this church, like Ancient Israel has lost its course and bearings and has become increased with the world's goods. In so doing it has become comfortable with its sojourn in the wilderness and has lost sight of the Promised Land that lies immediately before it. To this church, strong rebuke has been given for its enfeebled state, being neither hot nor cold and therefore adding no therapeutic value to a dying world. God likens this church to dead dry bones who need to hear the prophetic word, a hallmark of their calling and appointment, eat the little book of Daniel, become converted through the empowering of the Holy Spirit that they may be the last day army for the Lord to proclaim the Three Angel's Messages. Jesus counsels them to be zealous and repent while buying of Him white raiment to cover their nakedness, symbolizing His righteousness; gold tried in the fire to replace their poverty, symbolizing His faith; and eye salve replacing their blindness so they may see, symbolizing His wisdom and guidance</p>	<p>Jesus shows that His strong words of warning and rebuke are given to those whom He loves. Jesus purposes the redemption of all who hear His voice, answer the door of their hearts and allow Him in to dine with them. In addition He promises that all who overcome and are faithful to the end as He was, will sit on thrones and reign with Him. Jesus' message to this last church is the fulfillment of all the promises given to His church throughout time.</p>	<p>Colossians 2:1, 2:15-17, 4:13-16; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Revelation 14:6-12</p>