

## THE REVELATION *of* JESUS the CHRIST

18. and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19. “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. 20. “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

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The book of Revelation is written in three sections as seen in chapter 1:19.

Section (1) chapter 1 covers “the things which you have seen.”

Section (2) chapter 2 covers “the things which are.”

Section (3) chapter 4-22 “the things which will take place after these things.”

This is very important to understanding the context of the book of Revelation. First, “the things which you have seen,” speaks to John’s personal witness of Christ in His glory, after seeing Him at the First Advent in His sufferings. John’s unique perspective of Christ in his gospel is even more revealing in this book. This chapter then must be read in light of John’s unique experience and relationship with Christ (as seen throughout his gospel and letters). Second “the things which are” chapters 2-3 then deals with the present predicament of the state of the church during the time of this letter and Christ view of them. In keeping with textual accuracy one must then view these churches as literal churches that were in the regions mentioned by John. Christ via correspondence is sending these letters directly to the churches to inform them of His personal evaluation of them. Note, Christ will evaluate all of us (who are called by His name) on the day of judgement (John 5:22, 27, 29; Acts 17:31; Rom. 14:0; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8). Third “the things which will take place after these things” chapters 4-22 has yet to occur and is yet future, therefore must be view in that way.

About 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the book of Revelation covers the seven churches and there are five distinct

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characteristics to take notice of when approaching these letters.

### 1. We must understand the similarities of each letter

#### a. *Each letter is written to the angel of the church (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14)*

#### b. *Each letter begins with a unique description of Jesus Christ*

- EPHESUS (1:1) – **The** One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands
- SMYRNA (1:8) – **The** first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life
- PERGAMUM (1:12) – **The** One who has the sharp two-edged sword
- THYATIRA (1:18) – **The** Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze
- SARDIS (3:1) – **He** who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars
- PHILADELPHIA (3:7) – **He** who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens
- LAODICEA (3:14) – **The** Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God

#### c. *Each letter begins with an acknowledgement “I know they deeds”*

- EPHESUS (1:2) – I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance
- SMYRNA (1:9) – I know your tribulation and your poverty
- PERGAMUM (1:13) – I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith
- THYATIRA (1:19) – I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first

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- SARDIS (3:1) – I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead
- PHILADELPHIA (3:8) – I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut
- LAODICEA (3:15) – I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot

***d. All but two of the letter (Smyrna and Philadelphia) has a stern rebuke***

***e. Each letter has a special promise***

- EPHESUS (1:7) – To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God
- SMYRNA (1:11) – He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death
- PERGAMUM (1:17) – To him who overcomes, to him I will give *some* of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it
- THYATIRA (1:26) – He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS
- SARDIS (3:5) – He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments
- PHILADELPHIA (3:12) – He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore
- LAODICEA (3:21) – He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

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- f. *Each letter has the same concluding sentence, "HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES" (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)*
2. We must also understand each letter in its personal application.  
  
Each letter was written to a specific church at the time of John; each letter also addressed a specific era in the church age; each letter also addresses the individual Christian in every church in every age including today's church.
  3. We must understand the intent of the letters. John did not send parts of the book to the churches. In other words he did not simply sent the letter to Ephesus to the church at Ephesus, but rather the entire book. Each church then saw what was being said about the others.
  4. We must see the spiritual development of the church through the age of Grace
  5. We must see these letters as Christ evaluation of His church throughout time