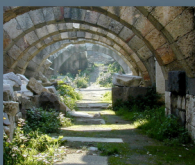


The Seven Churches



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Unit K

The Seven Churches

Bill and Shelley Houser

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This is the beginning of a series of studies on the book of Revelation and related prophecies. Although Revelation can be hard to understand, it is worthwhile to study, because there is a blessing promised to those who read and study it.¹ It is believed to have been written in AD 96² by the apostle John, while he was a prisoner on the island of Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.³



John saw a vision of Jesus⁴ holding seven stars in His right hand, and walking among seven golden candlesticks. Jesus explained that the stars were the angels, or messengers, of the churches,⁵ and the candlesticks were the seven churches in Asia Minor.⁶

**Write the things which...
thou hast seen**

**The Gospel According
to Saint John**

are

Revelation 1-3

shall be hereafter

Revelation 4-22

Jesus instructed John,⁷ “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;” John recorded in his gospel the things he had seen. In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, Jesus was telling John specific messages to give to the seven churches that were in Asia Minor at that time. The rest of Revelation⁸ was telling John what would happen in the future from his time.⁹

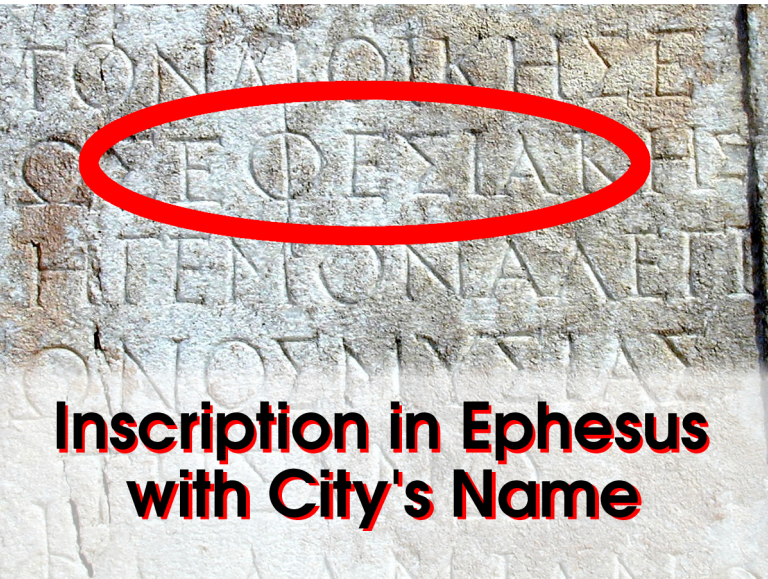


This study will focus on the specific messages to the churches, because they tell us how to prepare for the future events. Jesus emphasized that everyone should listen carefully to these messages, when He repeatedly said, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches.”

Typical Message

- Description of Jesus
- Praise for doing right
- Description of wrong
- Punishment for wrong
- Blessing for repenting

The typical message begins with a description of Jesus, and some praise from Jesus about what that church is doing right. From this part of the message, we can see what we should also try to do. Then, Jesus explains what they are doing wrong, and a punishment for them if they do not change those behaviors. From this part, we can understand what behaviors we should also avoid. Jesus ends the messages with a blessing promised for people who are faithful to Him to the end. We can be comforted and encouraged by these promises, too.



Inscription in Ephesus with City's Name

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;

Revelation 2:1



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: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Revelation 2 : 2-3

Brothel Advertisement



Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 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. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

Revelation 2:4-6



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.

Revelation 2:7



And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;
Revelation 2 : 8



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.

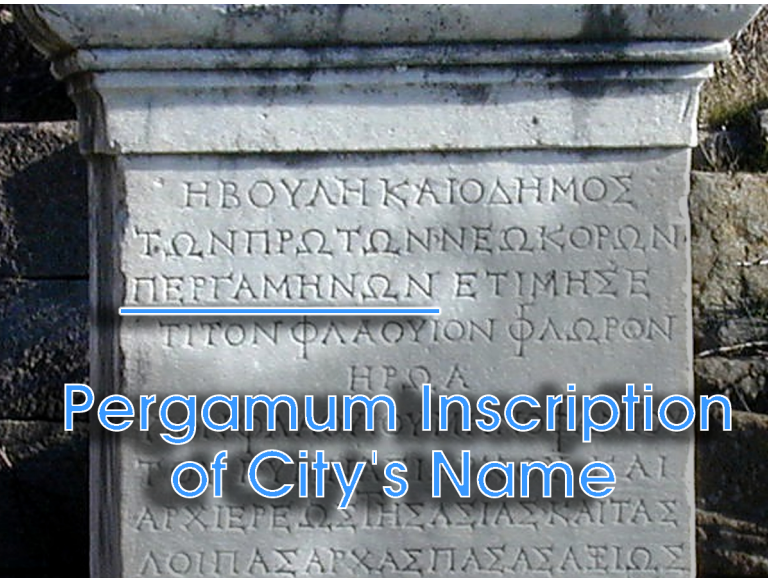
Revelation 2:9



Agora

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. 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.

Revelation 2:10-11



Pergamum Inscription of City's Name

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;
Revelation 2 : 12



Snake in Pergamum

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.

Revelation 2 : 13



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. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. Revelation 2:14-16



Victor's Name in Pergamum Museum

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. Revelation 2:17



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; 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.

Revelation 2 : 18-19



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.

Revelation 2 : 20



And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 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.

Revelation 2 : 21–23



Thyatira Church of St. John

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. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

Revelation 2 : 24-25



Thyatira Broken Potsherds

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 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. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Revelation 2 : 26–29



Sardis Columns

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. Revelation 3:1



Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Revelation 3:2

Sundial



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. Revelation 3:3



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. 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. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Revelation 3 : 4-6

Near Philadelphia

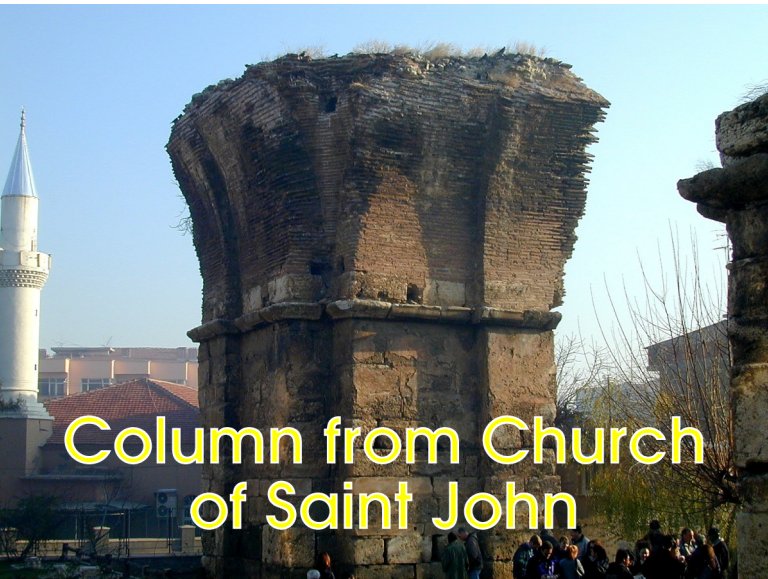


And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Revelation 3:7-8



Architrave

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. 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. Revelation 3:9-10



Column from Church of Saint John

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 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. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Revelation 3 : 11–13



In Laodicea

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; Revelation 3 : 14

Bathhouse

Aqueduct Piece



I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Revelation 3:15-16



Laodicean Street

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:

Revelation 3:17

Gold Coins Minted



While Trajan Was Emperor

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.

Revelation 3:18



"Ephesian Gate"

in Laodicea

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 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.

Revelation 3 : 19–20



Laodicea

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. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Revelation 3 : 21–22

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End Notes

Page numbers are listed in parentheses to help you find where each end note is referenced.

- ¹ Revelation 1:3 describe a blessing for those to study Revelation. (p. 2)
- ² According to both *Matthew Henry's Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible* and *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*, Revelation was written in A.D. 96. (p. 2)
- ³ Revelation 1:9 (p. 2)
- ⁴ To see that the person standing among the candlesticks is Jesus, consider these verses: Rev. 1:1 This book is Jesus' message to John, Rev 1:13 He looks like the Son of man, which is a title Jesus frequently used for himself (Luke 22:48, John 8:28, about 80 other times in the Gospels). Rev 2:18 This person is called the Son of God. (p. 3)
- ⁵ Revelation 1:20 (p. 3)
- ⁶ Revelation 1:11, 1:20. (p. 3)
- ⁷ Revelation 1:19 (p. 4)

End Notes

End Notes (Continued)

- ⁸ In Rev. 4:1 John was told that he was about to see things that would happen in the future. Then near the end of the book, Rev. 22:6 says John had just been told things that would soon happen. (p. 4)
- ⁹ Many people believe that the messages to the churches also prophetically describe periods of church history from John's time and into our future. (p. 4)