

THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN REVELATION

Many of the authors that I have read after say that Revelation chapters 2 and 3 formed a prophetic outline of the development of the Church Age. While I agree that it could be a rough outline of the Church Age, I think both chapters are pictures of churches that exist in every year after Acts chapter 2. Throughout the world today we can, and do, find every type of church discussed in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. The question is, which church type are you a member of? In five of the seven churches major problems were identified by the LORD Jesus Christ that should be corrected in any church they are found in. His charge to those churches was REPENT. We should take a real close look at our church, and see where we stand. If we identify any of those problems in our church, they must be removed.

EPHESUS: The church that left its first love: *Revelation 2:1-7*:

¹ 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. *Revelation 2:1-7*

1. Is known for its works, its labour, and its patience (2:2).
2. Tried false apostles and found them to be liars. (2:2).
3. Doctrinally steadfast (2:3).
4. Left first love (2:4). They were doing all the right things, but it was not tempered by the love for the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. They hated the doctrine of the Nicolaitans: Nicolaitans literally means above the laity (2:6).
6. Warning: Repent and return to the first works: See *Jeremiah 2:2*:

² Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown. *Jeremiah 2:2*

7. Promise: those that overcome will eat of the tree of life.
8. He that hath an ear, let him hear

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By Brother Mike Sutherland

SMYRNA: The martyrs church: *Revelation 2:8-11*:

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. *Revelation 2:8-11*

1. The first and the last: the resurrected Saviour. (2:8).
2. The poverty stricken and tribulation church ((2:9)
3. The blasphemous liars of the synagogue of Satan who falsely claim to be Jews are condemned (2:9).
4. The imprisoned and martyred church (2:10).
5. No condemnation for this church.
6. No call to repentance for this church.
7. Promise of a crown of life and no threat of the second death.
8. He that hath an ear, let him hear.

PERGAMOS: The Carnal Church: *Revelation 2:12-17*:

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*. *Revelation 2:12-17*

1. The Lord Jesus Christ with the sharp sword (2:12). See *Hebrews 4:12-13*:

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¹² For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.
Hebrews 4:12-13

2. Pergamos is the place of Satan's seat (2:13).
3. Antipas was martyred in Pergamos (2:13).
4. Pergamos held fast to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and had not denied the faith (2:13).
5. Pergamos was condemned for tolerating those holding the doctrine of Balaam who was promoting idolatry, fornication, and intermarriage in Israel in Numbers chapters 22-24.
6. Pergamos was also condemned for tolerating those holding the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (2:15). Many Bible teachers try to mix the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. They are not the same. I have read many explanations for the Nicolaitans over the years that I do not agree with. I believe the Nicolaitans were a group of elitists who promoted an unscriptural form of church leadership. The Bible does not teach the religious concept of a clergy and a laity who lord over God's heritage and his people.
7. Warning: Repent or fight against the sword of the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ (2:16).
8. Promise: over comers will eat of the hidden manna and be given a white stone (symbol of victory)(2:17).
9. He that hath an ear, let him hear (2:17)

THYATIRA: The Idolatrous Church: *Revelation 2:18-29*:

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

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that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. *Revelation 2:18–29*

1. The Son of God with eyes as a flame of fire and feet like fine brass (2:18).
2. Thyatira is commended for their works, charity, service, faith, and patience (2:19)
3. Jezebel is presented as the New Testament type of the Old Testament Jezebel in 1 Kings 18, 1 Kings 19, 1 Kings 21, and 2 Kings 9. Jezebel is a false teacher and a false prophet. She is promoting idolatry and fornication. The Lord Jesus Christ condemned the church at Thyatira for allowing Jezebel to teach. *1 Timothy 2:12* says:

¹² But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. *1 Timothy 2:12*

The Lord Jesus Christ said he gave Jezebel space to repent, but that she would not repent. The Lord Jesus Christ also commanded those in the church at Thyatira to repent lest they be cast into great tribulation with Jezebel (2:20-22)

4. Many of the members of this church were immersed in Satan worship (2:24).
5. Verses 26-27 will be a fulfillment of *Psalms 2:9*:

⁹ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. *Psalms 2:9*

6. He that hath an ear, let him hear (2:29)

SARDIS: The dead church: *Revelation 3:1-6*:

¹ 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. *Revelation 3:1–6*

1. Sardis is identified as church that is almost completely dead with a false reputation that it is alive (3:1).

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2. This church is in much need of revival. They are told to be watchful and to work on the things that are weak (3:2).
3. Sardis is commanded to heed the word of God and repent. They are warned of pending judgment (3:3).
4. The Lord Jesus Christ says that even as wicked and defiled as they are, there are still a few who are clean and worthy to walk with him (3:4)
5. Promise: Those that overcome will be clothed in white. Those that do not will be blotted out of the book of life. I believe this church was full of unsaved church members and that is the source of their deadness. That is also the reason for the very strong warning from the Lord Jesus Christ that those who do not repent will be blotted out of the book of life (3:5).
6. Listen up. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.

PHILADELPHIA: The church with a door that only the LORD Jesus Christ can open and close: *Revelation 3:7-13*:

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. *Revelation 3:7-13*

1. This is the church of the open door that no man can shut that has the power of God upon it. The key of David of *Isaiah 22:22* has been given to this church (3:7).

²² And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. *Isaiah 22:22*

2. Philadelphia is a strong church that has not denied the Lord Jesus Christ (3:8)
3. Philadelphia is also a church that is under the attack from the liars of the synagogue of Satan who falsely claim to be Jews. It is very instructive that both Smyrna and Philadelphia came under the direct attack of Satan. They are the only two churches that the Lord Jesus Christ

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said nothing bad about (3:9). There are some Philadelphian churches even in this age of almost total apostasy and heresy.

4. Philadelphia is the church of THE DELIVERANCE (3:10). She is promised deliverance from the hour of temptation that is to try the whole world during the tribulation for God hath not appointed her to the wrath that is to come (1 Thessalonians 5:9).
5. Philadelphia has been given a crown. They are exhorted to hold fast to the faith (3:11).
6. The over comers are promised a pillar in the temple of God.
7. He that hath an ear, let him hear.

LAODICEA: The regurgitated church: *Revelation 3:14-22*:

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. *Revelation 3:14-22*

1. The church at Laodicea is the worldly, carnal church that is neither cold or hot. They are lukewarm. Laodicea is the regurgitated church that Christ has spued out of his mouth. Laodicea will stand for nothing and because of that they fall for every wind of doctrine. They are a naked, spiritually blind, miserable lot that do not have a clue who the Lord Jesus Christ is. That is why he is standing outside of their door knocking. I have seen pictures that present the church of Laodicea as being a door with a knob on only one side. The church of Laodicea either will not stand against sin or openly promotes it. They promote the murder of unborn babies. They promote sodomy by ordaining sodomites to the ministry and by allowing known sodomites to continue as church members. They promote the purely Satanic transgender agenda. They hold drag queen shows for the children in their churches. Are you shocked yet? They openly promote the Devil's music by holding rock concerts with smoke and lights in buildings that they call churches. You cannot worship God with Satan's music. The church of Laodicea openly denies the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The church of Laodicea promotes Islam. They derisively mock the Biblical doctrine of repentance by calling those who stand for it Pharisees and legalists. The Laodiceans have a counterfeit God, a counterfeit

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Christ, a counterfeit Holy Ghost, counterfeit gospels, counterfeit baptisms, counterfeit churches, counterfeit preachers, and counterfeit Bibles. The Laodicean churches have become dens of iniquity inhabited by unclean and evil spirits that promote doctrines of devils. If the Laodicean churches have any saved folk in them, it cannot be proved by the doctrines that they teach and preach and the vile lascivious life stiles that they both tolerate and promote. Welcome to the church in general in America!