

The Revelation of Jesus Christ. The plan of eternity

Chapter 2

Introduction to Revelation 2



In Chapters 2 and 3, Jesus Christ addresses the seven churches of the book of Revelation. Jesus addresses four churches starting with Ephesus, and then going north to Smyrna, then to Pergamos (Pergamum), from Pergamos going southeast Thyatira. In chapter 3, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea complete the seven churches. Jesus in chapter one is pictured standing in the midst of seven lamp stands representing the seven churches

Jesus had specific comments for each church. These comments can be broken down into to four categories;

Commendation	Condemnation
Consultation	Challenge

In chapter 2, only the church at Smyrna had no condemnation, while the harshest condemnation was leveled at Thyatira. In understanding the extent of these comments, it is important to understand the audience.

There are four audiences addressed in the book of Revelation, the literal churches, saints who have an ear, seven church types and seven church ages.

1. The literal churches

The first audience addressed in these letters is the literal church. These were literal churches with literal problems. Jesus in his comments first acknowledges the positive aspects (commendation) for each church. Except for the

church of Laodicea, they had no commendation. Jesus also points out, where the churches lacked and their sin (condemnation). He warns them, what would follow, if they fail to correct the problem. The churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia received no condemnation, but were consoled for their suffering and weakness. The resurrected Jesus tells the failing churches what they need to do to correct their course (consultation). Jesus then promises the person who "Overcomes" an aspect of the life to come. He challenges the believer, to succeed, to "Overcome", and achieve the challenge before them.

2. The saints "He who has an ear"

In addition to the physical churches, the letter also applies to every individual member of the church, especially those who have "Spiritual ears". Jesus specifically addresses those who have an ear. The ear referred to here is not a physical ear, but a spiritual ear. Jesus is talking to the spiritual hearing, those who have a spiritual ear, to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. The contents of the letter as well as the comments are not limited to the "Seven Churches", but the whole church.

The seven churches are merely models of what applies to the whole of Christianity. The church is made up of various types of believers, each like these churches dealing with issues. Some saints now suffer, some are rich, others have compromised their walk and their beliefs. To us, who have "Spiritual" ears, Jesus addresses this letter. Jesus holds out the promise, the challenge to the "Overcomer".



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3. Seven Church Types

Of the seven churches, no two are alike. Some of the churches have aspects of the other churches, but they deal with them in a different ways. Both Ephesus and Pergamum had Nicolaitans, one rejected them the other tolerated them. This variety in church types demonstrates an aspect seen from the founding of churches in individual cities, not every church is alike. Some churches are more obedient than others some thrive in the midst of persecution, others crumble with an abundance of wealth and power.

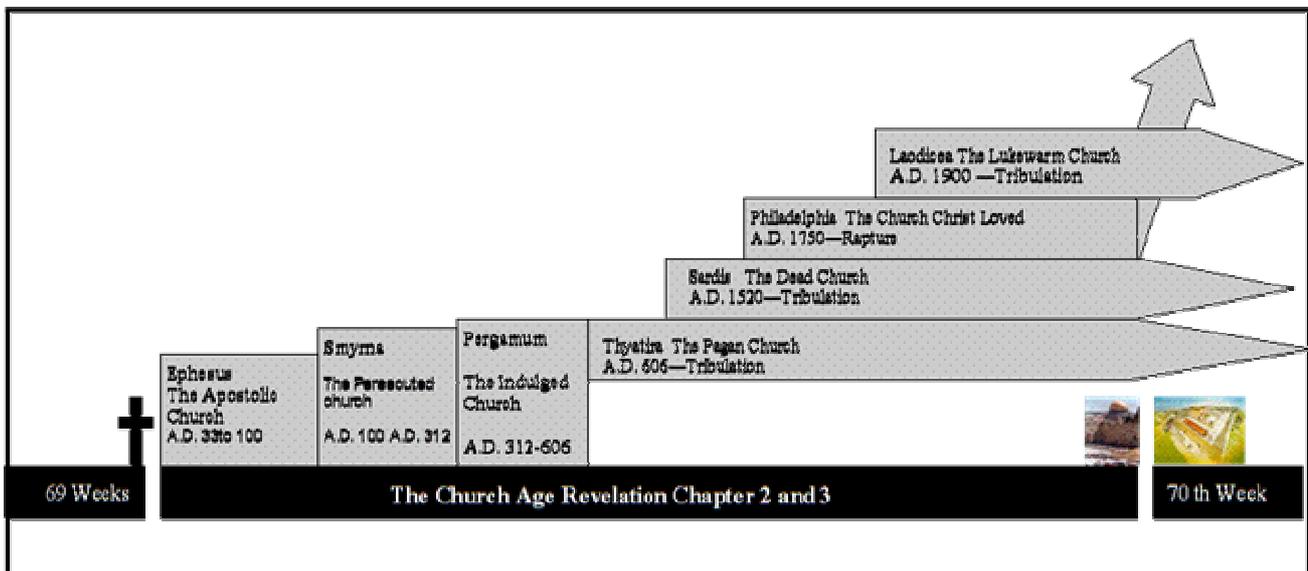
These seven church models are seven church-types; here Jesus gives the secret for a successful church. The letter to the seven churches is also a letter to seven types of churches. Churches today are faced with the same problems these first century churches faced. Jesus is telling the church how to deal with its problems.

Today there are huge church buildings and large congregations, filled with divisions over gay rights and abortion, what would Jesus' position be on these issues? We can look at the model of Thyatira to find the answer. What about the suffering Christians in places where Christianity is persecuted by governments, like North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Iran? The church at Smyrna models the persecuted church, the letter is for them. If you were in a persecuted church, the message to Smyrna would be a message to your church.

4. The Seven Church Ages

In chapter one, we see Jesus in the midst of "Seven Lampstands". From Revelation 1:21, we learn, the seven lampstands represent the seven churches addressed in chapters 2 and 3. They represent the complete church. The progress of church history has a direct correlation to the events following the seven churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

Starting with the Ephesus, the church founded by the Apostle Paul and administered by the Apostle John to the church of Laodicea, the wealthy lukewarm church, the history of the church is prophetically foretold. Jesus gives a "Prophetic foreshadowing" in the seven churches. From the churches founded by the apostles to the end of the age, Christ has a message for each church age imbedded in the message to the seven churches.



Following John, the last apostle, the Church underwent a period of persecution, until the time of Constantine, where the Roman Emperor himself professed to be a Christian. Christianity became popular within the Roman Empire. Constantine made allowances for pagan rites and customs. The correspondence between history and the letters to the seven churches, demonstrates their prophetic nature, foretelling the history and progression of church until the end of the age. This

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correspondence can be seen as the prophetic foreshadowing of the seven church ages.

Church	Church Age	The prophetic foreshadowing
Ephesus A.D. 33-100	The Apostolic Church	The church founded by the apostles from Pentecost A.D. 33 to the death of the last apostle John. John is buried at Ephesus
Smyrna A.D. 100-312	The Persecuted Church	The church received persecution from the time of Nero until Constantine the Roman Emperor himself became a Christian. During this period the church was humble and at the mercy of Rome but grew fast with many turning from Greek paganism to the faith.
Pergamum A.D. 312-605	The Indulged Church	When Constantine accepted Christianity he turned his kingdom into a "Christian" kingdom, ending persecution. Christianity was now popular, and allowances were made for the pagans to become part of the church. The Church indulged some pagan doctrines to make Christianity more attractive.
Thyatira A.D. 605-Tribulation	The Pagan Church	Pagan doctrines continued to be introduced into the church. Doctrines such as praying to saints, excluding lay people from scripture reading, purgatory, worship of images and relics, etc.,
Sardis A.D. 1520-Tribulation	The Dead Church	The Pagan doctrines of Rome gave birth to the reformation. The Reformation, which started out based in scripture, become part of the political landscape as nations and kings adopted the reformation to separate them from Roman Catholic domination. The churches had a reputation of being alive but became political.
Philadelphia A.D. 1730-Rapture	The Missionary Church	The printing press allowed Bibles to be published in the languages of the common people. This allowed people to act on scripture. Out of the reformation movements, the missionary age was given birth. People went throughout the earth to spread the gospel. This movement continues today as the gospel is spread fulfilling Matthew 24:14
Laodicea A.D. 1900-Tribulation	The Lukewarm Church	This church which receives no Commendation. Christ is outside the church knocking on the door. This is when the Church has grown wealthy and self-sufficient not needing Christ, rejecting his doctrines. Christ is outside this church, this church feels they are wealthy but they are actually, poor, wretched and naked. Abortion rights, gay marriage and biblical liberalism is a picture of this present church in our day.



The Church of Ephesus –(The Apostolic Church)

1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

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3 "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

Angel: The letter to each church is addressed to the *αγγελος* *Aggelos* meaning a messenger, envoy, one who is sent. The word is understood by some, to mean, the pastor over the church. This is also interpreted as a literal angel, in charge over this church and or age. See Ephesians 6:12.

Ephesus: This church was founded by Paul, an Apostle born out of due season. Paul began this church at the end of his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-20). Paul was so successful in his evangelism, the famous goddess of Ephesus, Artemis (Diana) dated to 1044 B.C. was abandoned by many of the citizens, causing an uproar.

John the Apostle, continued where Paul left off, being the last of the Apostles. The tomb of John is in the city of Ephesus.

Holds the seven... The seven stars represent the seven angels over the churches, who Jesus addresses to in chapters 2 and 3. Jesus holding the stars represents his power over the churches. The word "hold", is translated from the Greek word, *κρατεω* *Krateo* meaning to have power, be powerful. Jesus has power over his church. He however operates through his church, his body which represents Him.

Midst of the seven. Jesus pictures Himself in the midst of the Seven Lamp stands. The church in this age is the visible light of Christ in the world. The Church starting with Ephesus, the Apostolic church shines the Gospel in the world we live.

Commendation

I know: Before each of the Seven Churches Jesus, tells them he knows their condition. He knows their works.

A. Working Church

Works, labor and patience... Ephesus was a working church founded by the Apostles. Without television, newspapers or radio the Gospel moved from Jerusalem to the ends of the Roman Empire and beyond. The evangelism of the world was laborious and dangerous work. The work, often caused the death of many of the early apostles.

This church labored in bringing the Gospel to the rest of Asia, through patience and persistence.

B. Separated Church

Bear those: This church was a pure church testing its members. They did not allow those who tolerated evil to be part of their body. They did not make sin relative; sin was serious to Ephesus.

Many of the great Christian institutions and churches in history fell because they allowed sin to become part of their ministry. Rather, then deal with sin, they allowed it to fester, until the Church the church or ministry was no different then the world.

Say they are apostles. The Ephesus church was willing to test those who claimed to be Christ's apostles. During the early years of the Church, many appeared, claiming the authority of Apostleship. They attempted to teach doctrines contrary to the Church. Some claiming to be Apostles tried to reestablish Old Testament laws in the church, they were the Judizers. Paul addresses this group in Galatians.

Today many cults claim Apostolic authority, teaching heretical teachings denying the very person of Christ. In the Apostolic age and at Ephesus the church stood its ground against these false teachers.

Persevered: The Ephesus church understood Christ name was at stake, for this reason they separated themselves to insure the integrity of the ministry.

C. Cult opposing

Nicolaitans: This group is mentioned present at Ephesus and Pergamum. According to Iraneus, the group was founded by Nicolas from the book of Acts (Acts 6:5). He taught a teaching that would later become known as Gnosticism. This teaching taught the Earth and flesh was separate from the spiritual realm and therefore it was ok to indulge the flesh.

The Nicolaitanes are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is very plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, [when they are represented] as teaching that it is a matter of

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indifference to practice adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Wherefore the Word has also spoken of them thus: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."¹

4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place-unless you repent.

6 "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Condemnation

Against you: Jesus seeks a pure church, a perfect church. Even though, all seemed right at Ephesus, there were cracks forming. The Church was hard working, non-nonsense church not tolerating false teachers or believers.

The system started to lose its meaning over time. The church in Ephesus in A.D. 95 was over 30 years old, and leadership, except for John, was second generation. Jesus wanted the church to not get lost in the details and remember why they were there.

First love: The two words here are **prwto** *Protos* and **agaph** *Agape*. *Protos* means first in time or place. An example of this love is the love between a husband and wife when the courtship first begins and they are inseparable. Wanting to be with each other all the time, learning and growing in the relationship, but as the relationship becomes ritualized the "Protos" love begins to disappear.

Jesus is warning Ephesus against the ritual relationship. Jesus does not want a ritualized relationship with us or his church. He wants an "Excited", "On fire" church, one still with its first love relationship in tact..

Consultation

Remember: The goal of Christ here is help and instruct his church. He points out where they are successful and where they are failing.

Jesus also gives the remedy for the problem faced by the church at Ephesus. The remedy had three parts. This same remedy applies today to any person or church caught in the ritual trap.

1. *Remember where from where you have fallen:* One of the first steps is take a spiritual inventory. To really see where you are today after Christ and where you were before Christ. Christ wants to not get comfortable in our salvation, and forget what happened at the Cross. He is saying remember the excitement of your salvation and see where you are today.

2. *Repent:* Acknowledge the problem, take it before the throne and turn away from the sin of complacent relationship.

3. *Do the first works:* Go back to the basics, get excited again, understand your eternity, tell people about Christ because you love them and want them in heaven, not because it a good ritual.

Or else: Outward rituals no matter how pure or right at the start are meaningless. The world sees right through an outward ritual. The light of the Gospel will not glow from dead rituals, for this reason, Christ wants Ephesus to go back to the beginning.

Challenge

7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Overcomes: The Greek word is **nikaw** *Nikao* and means to conquer to carry off the victory, come off victorious. Jesus is referring here to those in the church who have victory. In each of the Seven churches Jesus gives a message of victory to the believer, the overcomer and what is to come following the church age.

The Church of Smyrna (The Persecuted Church)

Thirty-five miles to the north of Ephesus is the port city of Smyrna. A city founded by the Hittites dating back to 2000 B.C., the Greeks "Sea peoples" conquered the land about 1100

¹ Iraneus, Against Heresies, Chapter 26

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B.C. The city was part of the Ionian league of Greek city states.

The city was completely destroyed in 600 B.C. by the Lydian King Alyattes II. The city was rebuilt by Alexander and his generals Lysimachus about 300 B.C. The city was conquered by the Romans and in 193 B.C. a temple was erected to the deity of Rome.

The temples of Zeus and Cybele were linked by a mall said to surpass all others. Smyrna was a wealthy port city, which the flow of trade entering and leaving Asia Minor utilized. The city was controlled by guilds, those refusing to join or **denied membership would be unable to enter in commerce.**



8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life

First and last: In the message to the church of Ephesus Jesus described Himself as holding the seven stars and standing in the midst of seven lampstands. Here referring back to the first chapter, Christ describes his nature and character. He is alive and not dead. To those in Smyrna looking at the horrors of death, Christ promises victory over death.

He conquered death, and so can we. Death is not to be feared by the Christian.

Commendation

9 "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Tribulation: This is the model church of persecution and represents the age of persecution. The church of Smyrna was marked by tribulation. The guilds controlled the marketplace and unless you were willing to participate in the worship of the gods, you could be excluded. The Christians refused and suffered tribulation for their faith.

One of the most famous martyrs of Smyrna is Polycarp, (Death 156 A.D.) the Bishop of Smyrna, who died at the age of 86 refusing to deny Christ.

Poverty: The word used does not just mean poor, but abject poverty. The Greek word, *ptwceia* *Ptocheia* means beggary, being destitute of riches or abundance. The Christians of Smyrna faced persecution and lost their businesses and possessions because of faith in Christ.

Blasphemy: The Jews of Smyrna were extremely hostile to the Christians of the city. In the Polycarp's martyrdom they retrieved the wood for his burning. Jesus calls the Jews of Smyrna blasphemous not only because of the persecution of the Christians, but also for their ungodly alliance with the pagans of Smyrna.

The agora or marketplace was a mall between two of the Greek gods Cybele and Zeus. The Christian Greeks and converts of Judaism refused to worship or acknowledge them therefore they were denied guild membership and lost their possessions and became destitute because of their faith.

Synagogue of Satan: The Synagogue of Smyrna was in league with Greek gods of Smyrna in opposition to the Christians.

Counsel

10 "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Do not fear...suffer. Death is not to be feared by the faithful. Ignatius on his way to be milled by the Lions commented he yearned to be, "milled by teeth of lions into the bread of Christ"

Devil. God allowed Satan to test His Church. During this period, the Church grew like never before. The greatest period of church growth was during this period of persecution. The more the church was persecuted the faster it grew.

Tribulation...ten days. The period of persecution was to last period for a specified period. The persecution during this period lasted from the time of Domitian in A.D. 96 until Diocletian and his

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successor Galerius in A.D. 311. Depending on when counting begins 10 or 11 periods of persecution can be located during this period. If we start at Domitian, John was on Patmos because of Domitian, then there are 10 periods, with Nero as the start there are 11 periods.

	Nero	A.D. 54- 68	Paul beheaded and Peter crucified
1	Domitian	A.D. 81-96	John exiled
2	Trajan	A.D. 98-117	Ignatius burned at the stake
3	Marcus Aurelius	A.D. 161-180	Justin Martyr killed
4	Severus	A.D. 193-211	
5	Maximinus	A.D. 235-238	
6	Decius	A.D. 249-251	
7	Valerian	A.D. 253-260	
8	Aurelian	A.D. 270-275	
9	Diocleation	A.D. 284-305	
10	Galerius	A.D. 305-311	

Until death. In death, the Christian martyr demonstrates to the world the victory we have in Christ. We do not have to fear death, because one second after death we are in the Lord's presence for eternity. For this reason Paul could boldly say,

21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.
 23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.
 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.
 Philippians 1:21-24



Challenge

11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."

Second death: The Christian was judged with Christ on the cross. We do not have to fear death. The persecutors of the saints will face the "Second Death" when they stand before the "Great White Throne" to give an account of their lives on earth. (Rev. 20)

The Church of Pergamos (The indulgent church)

The city of Pergamum was the center of the imperial cult; the name of the city means "Fortress". The city dates from the time of nearby Troy 1200 B.C. Alexander the Great's general Antigonus seized Pergamum for Alexander's Kingdom. The city passed to Lysimachus, another general of Alexander's who succeeded him after his death.

Pergamum became a city-state under the control of the Seleucid's in 263 B.C. The city later changed alliances to Rome, and still later under Attalus II (159-138 B.C.) the city was willed to Rome.

The city was made famous by its library of 200,000 scrolls and rivaled Alexandria's. Pergamum popularized writing on goatskin

sheets later known as "Parchment" a corruption of the name Pergamene.

The city was known for its Altar of Zeus and its large theater at the top of the acropolis.

12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

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Sharp: Jesus when addressing this refers back to chapter one to describe his sword used in judgment throughout the book of Revelation. The double-edged sword cuts both ways. Pergamos brought the threat of Christ's wrath for their actions.

Two edged sword: The sword is a *Rhomphaia*, a large long sword which came crashing down on its opponent. Jesus Christ was and is able to bring judgment on his church.

Commendation

13 "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Your works: Christ understood the opposition this church faced by being in close proximity to Satan's power. Jesus takes this into account with the Church of Pergamos, Christ acknowledges their location, but Smyrna the persecuted was also faced with difficult decisions.

The church of Smyrna thrived under persecution, and so did the persecuted church. The last Emperor to persecute Christians was Galerius, who died an excruciating death as his body rotted from within while he was alive. Days before his death, he recanted his orders of Christian persecution and then died.

Following his rule was Constantine, a neophyte Christian, who made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire. Being a new Christian, he was willing to make compromises to the pagans allowing mass conversions, allowing pagan priests to become Christian priests.

The problem was many of these conversions were more convenient than real. Pagan practices were just repackaged with Christian names, keeping many of the older rites. An example is Easter, the name is pagan in origin, but in order to help pagans feel more at home with the "Resurrection Sunday", the name Easter remained. Other practices such as bunny rabbits, white dresses and eggs also stayed and packaged for Christian consumption.

Satan's throne: The power behind Pergamos was Satan. Jesus refers to the city as "Satan's throne". There are several opinions what this could mean. Pergamos had the temple of Zeus at Pergamum, Zeus the Greek god and Marduk the Babylonian god are by most accounts the same god with a different name. The meanings are the same, just different names according to Herodotus, the Greek historian. The goddess Ashtora of the Philistines, Isis of Egypt and Artemis of the Greeks are essentially the same but with different names. The source behind this deception is Satan himself.

Pergamum, according to Revelation chapter 2 was the demonic spiritual powerhouse behind this evil.

Do not deny my faith: Despite being in the fortress of Satan's operation, the church did not deny faith in Christ. The church during the time of Constantine was known held to the name of Christ.

Antipas: Pergamum still had faithful saints willing to die for Christ. Antipas was an early model of faithful saints, faithful to the Lord despite the condition despite of the church.

Condemnation

14 "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

15 "Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Those...doctrine of Balaam: Unlike Ephesus, Pergamum was will to indulge the ways of the world into their system. Balaam was a prophet hired by the king of Moab, Balak, to find a way to destroy Israel. Israel was entering his land on the way to the Promised Land, and he was unable to curse them because each time a blessing occurred.

Balaam suggested intermarriage with the Moabites, eating food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality as the method to destroy Israel. This is the doctrine of Balaam, to combine the things of God with the ways of the world. This was happening in Pergamum, the church was permitting practices of the pagan Greeks to be introduced into the church.

These groups would later be known as the *Gnostics*. Today, a great example of Gnosticism is *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown. Many Christians are embracing a novel with a different Jesus. The Jesus of Gnosticism was married to Mary Magdalene a Temple prostitute and had a child named Sarah. Dan Brown presents this as fact, and many who might call themselves Christians are embracing this book. The same was occurring here in this Church.

Sexual immorality This proto-Gnostic group was teaching sexual freedom. The Greeks at their

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various temples had Temple prostitutes. This church allowed those who taught sexual promiscuity was permissible to be part of the leadership.

These very issues plague the church today, and again some churches teach the permissibility of sexual freedom, including gay rights, marriage and sexual liberty.

Nicolaitians... The Church at Ephesus refused the Nicolaitians to be part of their leadership or teachers. Pergamum not only embraced their doctrines, they allowed them to be part of their leadership.

This is what happened Pergamum during this church age. The pagan's world was allowed to be part of the Church. Doctrines contrary to scripture introduced into the Church, became a corruption of the truth.

One of the doctrines introduced was the teaching the Church had become Israel, (Replacement theology). This position allowed took away the literal meaning of scripture and replaced it with allegory.

A.D. 300	Prayers for the dead
A.D. 300	Making sign of the cross
A.D. 375	Worship of saints and angels
A.D. 394	Mass first instituted
A.D. 431	Worship of Mary begun
A.D. 500	Priests began dressing differently than laypeople
A.D. 526	Extreme unction
A.D. 593	Doctrine of purgatory introduced
A.D. 600	Worship services conducted in Latin
A.D. 600	Prayers directed to Mary

Counsel

16 'Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

Repent... Gr. metanoew *Metanoeo*, means to change one's mind, i.e. to repent. What this church needed to do was make a total change.

This same counsel applies not only to this church but any church permitting sexual impurity as part of their doctrine.

Fight ...sword of my mouth. Continual sinning without repentance will bring the judgment of Christ against the offender. During this time, the Church saw the invasions of the Huns, the Vandals and many other problems. Some view these events as fulfilling the words of Christ, in judgment against his church, in the church age of the Pergamum.

Challenge

17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."



hidden manna. Jesus had a specific promise to those in this age who "Overcame". Manna was the bread from heaven given to Israel in the wilderness. Christ makes the same promise to those living in this church taking him seriously. They would have Christ, the bread of God, (John 6:22-40)

white stone. There is still debate about what this means. Some feel in the Pergamum Theater, white stones were used as admission to the theater. Here, Christ uses this imagery for admission into the kingdom of God for the overcomer.

new name. When we come to Christ, we are

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"Born again" on the outside we look the same but spiritually we are born again. Each believer has a unique relationship with Christ, a special relationship. In heaven, we will have a special name only known to Christ and the believer.

The Church of Thyatira (The Pagan Church)

Thyatira is 45 miles southeast of Pergamos. The city was founded as Pelopia, a shrine to the Lydian sun-god Tyrinnus. The city was located on the Hermus River. The city was rebuilt by Seleucus Nicator (301-281 B.C.) and made into a frontier garrison. The city became a center for small manufacture and trade.

Thyatira was famous for its highly organized trade unions (cooperatives) and specialization in "purple" dye made from the madder root rather than the more expensive shellfish.

Lydia in Acts 16;14 was a "Purple" merchant and a convert to Judaism who came from the Thyatira.

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:

Son of God. Jesus Christ recalls for this Church his deity and holiness. This Church fully embraced the pagan way of the Greeks.

Eyes like a flame. The eyes of Christ are piercing seeing every action His church was involved. The picture of fire demonstrate his anger at this church for what is being allowed to take place.

Feet ..fine brass. Gr. *kal kol ibanon Chalkolibanon*, this word is only used twice in scripture in Revelation 1:15, 2:18. The meaning seems to be a precious alloy, pointing to brilliance of the metal illustrating Christ as holy judge.

Commendation

19 "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

Works. Thyatira is best relates to the period known as the Dark ages of the Church, where the doctrine of Jesus Christ's deity was taught but other elements were added which corrupted the Church.

Condemnation

20 "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

21 "And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

22 "Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

23 "I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

Woman Jezebel. To illustrate the problem at this church Christ uses the Old Testament character of Jezebel. Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, King of Sidonians. She tried to corrupt Israel, by having Israel worship Baal and Asthutorah the pantheon originating in Babylon.

The teaching of Jezebel mirror the attempts of the early Gnostics to move Christianity toward the Greek religion with its pantheon of gods and goddesses. As the Greek religion's influence began to fall with the spread of Christianity. Satan used the method used against Israel under Jezebel, he tried to get the church to incorporate the gods and goddesses of Greece with a Judaic/Christian package. This is the story behind the Gnostics and *The Da Vinci Code*. It's the same strategy used in the past just rewritten for a different era.

Jezebel at this church foretells the attempts within the Catholic Church to make Mary the co-redemptrix with Christ. This doctrine is blasphemous, but taken seriously by many within the Catholic Church, in fact a petition with over 5-million signatures was delivered to the Pope requesting the church announce Mary as co-redemptrix. Mary is already acknowledged as the "Queen of Heaven" and *Mother of God* within the church, these blasphemous teachings caused many to stumble and miss eternity.

Prophetess. In Thyatira, a women some feel the wife of the pastor of the church was a leader teaching and directing the servants of Christ to participate in the Greek pagan sex rites. She called

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herself a prophetess, representing another Christ to the Church.

Some feel that Lydia returned to Thyatira after hearing the Gospel and started a church. This church was accustomed to female leadership, which made them vulnerable to this form of teaching.

Eat things. She tried to have the servants of Christ compromise their walk by eating the meat sacrificed in the Greek temples to the various gods and goddesses. Some see this also as a picture of the teaching with Catholicism with the Eucharist, the doctrine that Christ is sacrificed every Sunday when the bread is broken.

Christ died once for our sins, He sits at the Fathers side interceding for his saints.

Great tribulation. The one aspect of Thyatira is two groups addressed in this Church. There is group which does not hold to these doctrines (Verse 24). They are the overcomers, but Christ promises the ones who persist in these false doctrines, they will enter great tribulation.

Prophetically Christ is indicating this church will be dealt with in the Tribulation period, except for the ones who do not hold to this doctrine.

I will kill. The offspring of this adulterous women and her adulterous teaching will suffer for their pagan teachings.

I will give. Jesus Christ examines the intentions of each of us, and pays us accordingly. Christ searches the real meaning on why we do what we do.

A.D. 607	Boniface III made first Pope	A.D. 1414	Cup forbidden to laypeople at Communion
A.D. 709	Kissing the Pope's foot	A.D. 1439	Doctrine of purgatory decreed
A.D. 786	Worshiping the images and relics	A.D. 1508	The <i>Ave Maria</i> approved
A.D. 850	Use of "Holy water" begun	A.D. 1534	Jesuit order founded
A.D. 995	Canonization of dead saints	A.D. 1545	Tradition granted equal authority with Bible
A.D. 998	Fasting on Fridays and during Lent	A.D. 1546	Apocryphal books put into Bible
A.D. 1079	Celibacy of the priesthood	A.D. 1854	Immaculate conception of Mary
A.D. 1090	Prayer beads	A.D. 1864	Syllabus of Errors proclaimed
A.D. 1184	The inquisition	A.D. 1870	Infallibility of the Pope declared
A.D. 1190	Sale of indulgences	A.D. 1930	Public schools condemned
A.D. 1215	Transubstantiation	A.D. 1950	Assumption of the Virgin Mary
A.D. 1220	Adoration of the wafer (Host)	A.D. 1965	Mary proclaimed mother of the church.
A.D. 1229	Bible forbidden to laypeople		

Counsel

24 "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

25 "But hold fast what you have till I come.

Do not have this doctrine. A distinction is made between these two groups in this Thyatira. Those who have embraced these false doctrines and those who reject them. Thyatira is a picture of Catholic church, today many Catholics who read their Bible claim to be "Born Again" not according to Protestant teachings but the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Some of the greatest saints such as John Wycliffe and Tyndale were Catholic priest who died for their desire to have God's word reach the common people.

Depths of Satan. Today, The Da Vinci Code is making in roads into many churches as people read the book, their whole perception of Christ is changing. This book claims to reveal hidden secrets kept by a patriarchal society who want to suppress the "Sacred Feminine" aspect of God.

The book is just reworking the doctrines of the Gnostic church, which talked about secret doctrines and rites with temple prostitutes.

The word used to describe this knowledge is *ginoskw Ginosko* where the Gnostic is derived.

Challenge

26 "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the

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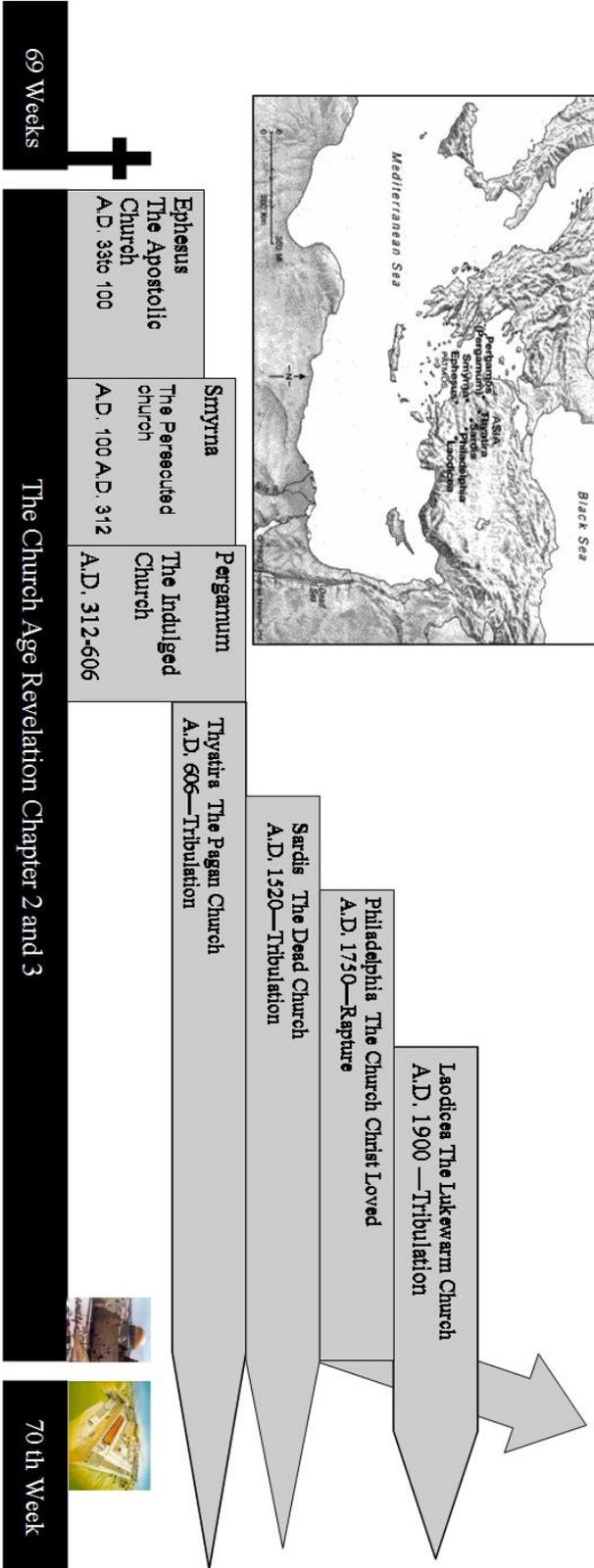
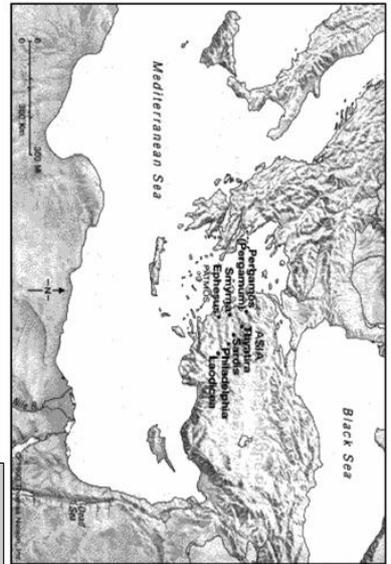
nations

28 "and I will give him the morning star.

29 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

Power over the nations. To those who overcome Christ promises a place of ruler in the Millennium. Rev. 20:1-7

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The Church Age Revelation Chapter 2 and 3

	Ephesus The Apostolic Church Rev. 2:1-7	Smyrna The Persecuted Church Rev. 2:8-11	Pergamum The Indulged Church Rev. 2:12-17	Thyatira The Pagan Church Rev. 2:18-29	Sardis The Dead Church Rev. 3:1-6	Philadelphia The Church Christ Loved Rev. 3:7-13	Laodicea The Lukewarm Church Rev. 3:14-22
Commendation	A.D. 33-100 Good works, labor, patience	A.D. 100-312 Works, tribulation, poverty	A.D. 312-606 Works. Held fast my name, has not denied my faith.	A.D. 606-Tribulation Good works, love, service, faith, patience.	A.D. 1520-Tribulation Works. A name that you live	A.D. 1750-Rapture Works. Missions. Little strength. Kept my word. Not denied my name.	A.D. 1900-Tribulation Not one word!
Condemnation	You have left your first love.	Not one word!	You have false teachers of Balaam and the Nicolaitans	You allow Jezebel to teach idolatry and compromise	You are dead. Works not complete	Not one word!	You are lukewarm, wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.
Counsel	Remember from where you are fallen and repent.	Rear not. Be faithful.	Repent.	Hold fast what you have until I come.	Watch. Strengthen the things that remain. Remember hold fast and repent.	Hold fast what you have.	Buy gold tried by fire and white raiment. Anoint your eyes. Be zealous and repent.
Challenge	Will give to eat of the tree of life.	Will not be hurt by the second death.	Will give hidden manna and a white stone.	Will give millennial leadership and the Morning Star	Will be clothed in white raiment. I will not blot his name out of the book of life	Will make him a pillar and write upon him the name of God and My new name	Will grant to sit with me on my throne.