

# **The Seven Epistles to the Churches in the Book of Revelation**

(Revelation 1-3)

## **I. The Vision of the Son of Man as the Great High Priest Walking in the Midst of the Golden Lampstands (Rev. 1:12-20)**

- A. The main vision of the Book of Revelation: the Son of Man (as the great High Priest) walking in the midst of the golden lampstands (His churches)
  - 1. Christ loves the church (Matt. 16:18-24; Eph. 5:25b-32)
    - a. He laid down His life for the church (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:2; 1 Jn. 3:16)
    - b. As the High Priest, His main duty in the sanctuary is to trim the lampstand (Lev. 24:1-4)
    - c. The builder of His church (Ps. 127:1-2; 147:2-3, 5-6, 10-11; 1 Cor. 15:10; Jn. 15:5; 5:19; Phil. 4:13)
  - 2. His churches must be golden lampstands – glorious (without spot or wrinkle; holy and without blemish)
    - a. Gold – the divine nature
    - b. Filled daily with the fresh olive oil – the Holy Spirit
    - c. In the likeness of an almond tree – fully in the resurrected life of Christ
    - d. Shining forth as the light of life in this dark world

B. Christ as the great High Priest

1. The heavenly High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6-10; 7:1-3; 14-17; 21-28; 8:1-2)
  - a. Made like the Son of God
  - b. Seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens
  - c. Able to save us to the uttermost, always making intercession for us before God the Father
  - d. Meeting our every need (exactly what we need)
2. As the Son of Man walking in the midst of the golden lampstands (Rev. 1:10-18; Dan. 10:5-12)
  - a. Clothed with the priestly garment and a golden girdle about the chest (Rev. 1:13)
  - b. The hair on His head was white like wool, as white as snow (Rev. 1:14a)
    - i. He is “the Ancient of Days” (Dan. 7:9, 13, 22; Mic. 5:2; Isa. 9:6)
    - ii. White like wool and white as snow (Isa. 1:18; Mk. 9:3)
      - Pure and holy, full of life and heavenly - crown of glory (Prov. 16:31)
      - In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3; Job 32:7; Rom. 11:33; Ps. 139:17-18; 147:5; Isa. 40:28b; 55:8-11)
  - c. His eyes were like a flame of fire (Rev. 1:14b, 19:12; Ps. 26:2; 139:23-24; Prov. 17:3) – penetrating and searching all the inward parts of man
  - d. His feet were like fine brass refined in a furnace (Rev. 1:15a; 2:18; Mal. 3:2-3)
  - e. His voice was as the sound of many water (Rev. 1:15b; 14:2; Ps. 93:4; Ezek. 43:2) – mighty and powerful

- f. He had in His right hand seven stars – messengers of the churches  
(Rev. 1:16a, 20b; 2:1; 3:1; Dan. 12:3)
- g. Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword  
(Rev. 1:16b; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21; Heb. 4:12-13; Isa. 11:4; 49:2-3)
- h. His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength (Rev. 1:16c; 10:1; Matt. 17:1-2; Acts 26:13; Ps. 67:1; 4:6; 89:15; 80:7; Num. 6:24-26; Mal. 4:2)
  - i. Seek His face (Ps. 24:6; 27:8-9; 105:4)
  - ii. Enter with boldness into the holy of holies  
(Heb. 10:19-22)
  - iii. Pursue holiness with a pure heart  
(Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14; 2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:12; 1 Thess. 3:13)
- C. From God appointed with an oath to be a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek  
(Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:17, 21; Ps. 110:4)
  - 1. According to the power of an endless life (Heb. 7:16)
  - 2. He is the Alpha and the Omega (Rev. 1:8)
  - 3. The Beginning and the End
  - 4. The First and the Last (Isa. 44:6; Rev. 1:11)
  - 5. The Almighty
  - 6. The Living One (Rev. 1:18)
  - 7. The One who holds the keys of Death and of Hades
  - 8. The One who is holy and true
  - 9. The One who has the key of David (Isa. 22:22)
  - 10. The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness
  - 11. The Beginning of the creation of God

## **II. The Church in Ephesus** (Rev. 2:1-7)

- A. Ephesus <desirable> – the beginning of the church
- B. Christ – the One who holds the seven stars and walks in the midst of the lampstands (Rev. 1:20)
  - 1. An example to the believers  
(Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Pet. 5:3)
  - 2. The church – the testimony for the Lord in this dark world (Matt. 5:14-16; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)
- C. The first love and the first works
  - 1. Not lacking in works - the problem is our nature  
(1 Cor. 13; Matt. 7:22-23; 23:3-7)
  - 2. To love the Lord with our whole heart (Mk. 12:30; Deut. 6:5; Ps. 31:23; Matt. 22:37; Lk. 10:27)
  - 3. The best works only come out of our best love for the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58; Col. 1:10, 12; 3:17; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 6:10)
  - 4. Without repentance the lampstand will be removed
- D. Hating the works of the Nicolaitans – not seeking position or recognition (1 Pet. 5:2-3; Phil. 2:3-8)
- E. Eating of the tree of life and not just having knowledge (Gen. 2:9, 17; 2 Cor. 3:6; Song. 2:3; Rev. 22:2, 14)

### III. The Church in Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11)

- A. Smyrna <myrrh> – the period of persecution until 313 A.D.
- B. Christ – the First and the Last, who was dead and came to life (Rev. 1:17-18; 22:13)
  - 1. God will finish what He has begun (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12)
  - 2. Death and resurrection – myrrh und frankincense (Song. 4:14; Matt. 2:11; Phil. 3:10)
- C. Suffering and martyrdom for the sake of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:9)
  - 1. Willing to suffer (Phil. 1:29; 2:5-8; 1 Pet. 4:1)
  - 2. Ten days of tribulation – a short time (2 Cor. 4:17-18; 1 Pet. 5:10)
  - 3. Faithful unto death (1 Cor. 4:2; Rev. 6:9; 12:11)
  - 4. The crown of life (Jam. 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)
  - 5. Reward: not to be hurt by the second death (Matt. 10:28; Lk. 12:4-5)
- D. The drink offering (Num. 28:7 <to pour out>)
  - 1. Poured out for God's enjoyment (Phil. 2:7)
  - 2. The example of Paul (Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6)
  - 3. Hating and forsaking the soul life (Matt. 16:25-26; Mk. 8:35-37; Lk. 14:26; 1 Jn. 3:16; Rev. 12:11)

#### **IV. The Church in Pergamos** (Rev. 2:12-17)

- A. Pergamos <to lift up, to marry> – the period beginning with Constantine the Great, from 313 to 527 A.D.
- B. In need of Christ as the One who has the sharp two-edged sword (Rev. 2:12, 16; 1:16; 19:15) – the word of God which cuts and judges (Heb. 4:12)
- C. Dwelling where Satan’s throne is (Rev 2:13) – mixture with the world (Matt. 4:8-9; Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 Jn. 5:19; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12)
  - 1. Do not love the world (1 Jn. 2:15; Jam. 4:4-5; Matt. 6:24; Rom. 12:2; Jn. 15:19; 17:14-18; 1 Pet. 2:11)
  - 2. Antipas <against everything> – the faithful witness <martyr>, who was killed among them
  - 3. Overcome the world (Jn. 16:33; 1 Jn. 4:4; 5:4)
- D. Having those who hold the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:14-15)
  - 1. The doctrine of Balaam (Num. 22) – serving for profit (2 Pet. 2:15-16; Jude 11; Jn. 10:12-13) and leading God’s people astray (Num. 25:1-11; 31:16)
  - 2. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans – the religious clergy-laity system (Matt. 20:25-28; 23:8-12; 1 Cor. 14:26)
- E. The reward for the overcomers in Pergamos (Rev. 2:17)
  - 1. The Lord will give them some of the hidden manna to eat (Exod. 16:32-34; Ps. 73; 81:16; 141:4; Dan. 1:8)
  - 2. The Lord will give each a white stone on which a new name is written (Matt. 22:14)

**V. The Church in Thyatira** (Rev. 2:18-29)

- A. Thyatira <perpetual sacrifice> – the period of Roman Catholicism, from the 6<sup>th</sup> century until today
- B. These things says the Son of God who has
  - 1. Eyes like a flame of fire (Rev. 1:14, Rev. 19:12; Dan. 10:6)
  - 2. Feet like fine brass (Rev. 1:15)
- C. Jezebel <virgin> – the false prophetess – the great harlot Babylon (1 Kings 16:31; Rev. 17:1-6)
  - 1. Teaches the servants of the Lord to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols
  - 2. Knows the depths of Satan
  - 3. Did not repent of her sexual immorality
  - 4. Babylon is incurably sick (Matt. 13:33, Jer. 51:9)
  - 5. Ripe for God’s judgment (Rev. 18:10, 21; 19:2)
  - 6. Come out of her, my people (Rev. 18:4)
- D. He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end (Rev. 2:26)
  - 1. Keeps the Feast of Unleavened Bread – purging out the leaven seven days a week (Exod. 12:15; 1 Cor. 5:7)
  - 2. Will be given power over the nations (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5)
  - 3. Christ will give him the morning star (2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 2:28; 22:16)

## **VI. The Church in Sardis** (Rev. 3:1-6)

- A. Sardis <remnant, separated, renewed> – the Reformation and all denominations and free groups, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century until today
- B. She needs Christ as the One who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars (Rev. 3:1a; 1:4, 16, 20; 4:5; 5:6)
- C. She has the name that she is alive, but is dead (Rev. 3:1b, 4a) – spiritual death (Num. 19; Rom. 5:12; 7:24; 8:2, 6)
- D. Her works were not found perfect before God (Rev. 3:2)
  - 1. Follow the Lord all the way to the goal (Rev. 14:4; Phil. 2:12; 3:12-15; Eph. 4:13; Heb. 5:11-14; 6:1, 11)
  - 2. Do not stay in tradition and oldness (Matt. 15:1-3; Rom. 7:6; 2 Cor. 3:6)
  - 3. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain (Rom. 13:11; Eph. 5:14; Lk. 22:32; Rev. 1:17b-18)
- E. Repent and be watchful in order not to miss the coming of the Lord (Rev. 3:3; 1 Thess. 5:6; Mk. 13:33-37)
- F. The reward for the overcomers in Sardis (Rev. 3:4-5)
  - 1. They shall be clothed in white garments and shall walk with the Lord in white (Rev. 1:13; 19:7-8, 11-14) – the holy priesthood (Exod. 28:39-43; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; Jam. 2:21-22)
  - 2. The Lord will not blot out their names from the Book of Life (Matt. 22:11-14)
  - 3. The Lord will confess their names before His Father and before His angels (Matt. 7:21-23; 10:32-33; 25:11-13, 26-30; Lk. 9:26; 12:8-9; 2 Tim. 2:12-13)



## **VII. The Church in Philadelphia** (Rev. 3:7-13)

- A. Philadelphia <brotherly love> – the “restoration” of the golden lampstand as the true expression of the church from the 18<sup>th</sup> century until today
- B. Brotherly love (2 Pet. 1:5-7; 1 Jn. 4:20; Ps. 133; Jam. 2:1-9) through the peace offering (2 Cor. 5:20; Jam. 4:4; Rom. 8:7)
- C. Christ – He who is holy and true (Jn. 1:9; 6:32; 15:1), and has the key of David (Rev. 3:7)
  - 1. The nature of the Lord and the priesthood – holiness (1 Pet. 2:5; 1:13-16; Heb. 12:14; Eph. 5:26)
  - 2. He who opens and no one shuts (Isa. 22:22; Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:8-9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3; Matt. 16:19), and shuts and no one opens
- D. Philadelphia has an open door (Rev. 6:2), because it has
  - 1. A little strength (Isa. 57:15; 66:2; 1 Pet. 5:5): a humble spirit and humble heart, having the flesh and the self dealt with by the Lord (Phil. 3:3)
  - 2. Kept His word (Rev. 3:10) – the preciousness of God’s word (Ps. 56:10; Matt. 4:4; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 6:17)
  - 3. Not denied His name (Acts 9:14; Song. 1:3)
- E. The reward and exhortation (Rev. 3:10-12)
  - 1. To be raptured as firstfruits before the last 3½ years
  - 2. To be a pillar in the temple of our God (Gal. 2:9; Ps. 144:12; Eph. 4:2; Rom. 12:11-13)
  - 3. Hold fast and overcome – diligently practice the priestly service (1 Tim. 4:15-16)

## **VIII. The Church in Laodicea** (Rev. 3:14-22)

**14** “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

**15** “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

**16** So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

**17** Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

**18** I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

**19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

**20** Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

**21** To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

**22** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’ ”