

# Revelation - Study 2

## The Letters to the Seven Churches

### Student Outline

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Christ among the Lampstands (1:20)

1. A symbolic picture of \_\_\_\_\_ and His \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The lampstand in the Tabernacle.
  - a. Seven branches with seven lamps.
  - b. Not only is He \_\_\_\_\_ of the Church, but He is also the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Church for out from Him is going the life of those churches.
3. John writes to seven distinct \_\_\_\_\_ churches. (1:11)
  - a. There were *seven* of them, yet they only made up the *one* total expression of the Body of Christ in that part of Asia.
4. He holds in His hand the stars, which were the “angels” of the churches.
  - a. ἄγγελος, *aggelos*, a \_\_\_\_\_, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, a messenger from God.
    - (1) Exegetical question is posed by the ἄγγελοι τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησιῶν: is this a reference to \_\_\_\_\_ or to real \_\_\_\_\_?
      - (a) Gerhard Kittel: “Since elsewhere in the Apocalypse ἄγγελοι are always angels, the latter seems more likely...the reference would seem to be to angels representing the communities. These correspond to the angels of the nations already found in Judaism, and to Michael as the angel of Israel, but also to the description of angels, common to the whole Book of Revelation, as mediators of the divine action.”
  - b. ἀστήρ, *aster*, star, celestial light source; supernatural light for \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 2: 2, 7, 9, 10)
5. Once you are a light in the darkness, the result is darkness \_\_\_\_\_ light.

## II. JESUS ADMINISTRATING HIS CHURCH (CHAPTERS 2-3)

### A. Four Views of the Seven Churches:

1. The *preterist* is right in directing our attention to the \_\_\_\_\_ century.
  - a. Any true exegesis must \_\_\_\_\_ with what this meant to them then.
  
2. The *historicist* believes that the seven churches represent the whole church in \_\_\_\_\_—seven consecutive epochs in church history.
  - a. Ephesus covers the \_\_\_\_\_ church.
  - b. Smyrna the \_\_\_\_\_ persecutions.
  - c. Pergamos the time of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. Thyatira the \_\_\_\_\_ Ages.
  - e. Sardis the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - f. Philadelphia the worldwide \_\_\_\_\_ movement.
  - g. Laodicea the \_\_\_\_\_ days church.
  
3. The *futurist* believes that the seven churches will be \_\_\_\_\_ in the very same cities of Asia just before Jesus returns.
  
4. The *idealist* usually shares the *preterist* view, but adds the idea that the seven historical churches represent the \_\_\_\_\_ Church in all \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Ephesus the \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_ fellowships.
  - b. Smyrna the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. Pergamos the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. Thyatira the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e. Sardis the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - f. Philadelphia the \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_.
  - g. Laodicea the \_\_\_\_\_.

### B. The Seven-fold Structure of the Seven Letter

1. A commission
  - a. “To the angel of the church in....”
  
2. A characterization (of Christ)
  - a. Relates to Rev. 1:12-16

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3. A commendation
  - a. Ephesus: Rejects evil, perseveres, has patience.
  - b. Smyrna: Gracefully bears suffering.
  - c. Pergamos: Keeps the faith of Christ
  - d. Thyatira: Love, service, faith, patience is greater than at first.
  - e. Sardis: Some have kept the faith.
  - f. Philadelphia: Perseveres in the faith.
  - g. Laodicea: None.
  
4. A criticism
  - a. Ephesus: Love for Christ no longer fervent.
  - b. Smyrna: None.
  - c. Pergamos: Tolerates immorality, idolatry, and heresies.
  - d. Thyatira: Tolerates cult of idolatry and immorality.
  - e. Sardis: A dead church.
  - f. Philadelphia: None.
  - g. Laodicea: Indifferent.
  
5. A correction
  - a. Ephesus: Do the works you did at first.
  - b. Smyrna: Be faithful until death.
  - c. Pergamos: Repent.
  - d. Thyatira: Judgment coming; keep the faith.
  - e. Sardis: Repent; strengthen what remains.
  - f. Philadelphia: Keep the faith.
  - g. Laodicea: Be zealous and repent.
  
6. A challenge: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
  
7. A covenant promise to “He who overcomes.”
  - a. Ephesus: The tree of life.
  - b. Smyrna: The crown of life.
  - c. Pergamos: Hidden manna and a stone with a new name.
  - d. Thyatira: Rule over nations and receive morning star.
  - e. Sardis: Faithful honored and clothed in white.
  - f. Philadelphia: A place in God’s presence, a new name, and the New Jerusalem.
  - g. Laodicea: Share Christ’s throne.

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### III. APPLICATION: COMMON CHALLENGES CONFRONTING ALL CHURCHES

- A. Introduction
- B. Devotion to \_\_\_\_\_ is no guarantee of \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. There is an \_\_\_\_\_ of CHRIST that answers to every \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. R\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ is the pathway to the overcoming life (2:5)
1. μνημονεύω, *mnemoneuo*, to \_\_\_\_\_ to one's mind.
  2. μετανοέω, *metanoew*, to \_\_\_\_\_ one's mind.
    - a. The command to repent is given \_\_\_\_\_ times.
- E. Four basic points of recurring error manifested in the church.
1. Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ (2:4; 3:15,16)
  2. Corrupted \_\_\_\_\_ (2:6,15)
  3. Tolerated \_\_\_\_\_ (2:14,20-23; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11)
  4. L\_\_\_\_\_ (2:9; 3:9)
- F. Nicolaitanism (2:6, 15)
1. Νικολαΐτης, Nikolaites, adherents of Νικόλαος, *Nikolaos*; from νίκος, *nikos* (3534), a \_\_\_\_\_, and λαός, *laos* (2992), a \_\_\_\_\_—means “victorious over the people or laity.”
  2. Led to division between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Became a heretical sect.
  - a. Possibly founded by Nicolaus.
  - b. Two heretical views:
    - (1) Practiced immorality by a complete separation of the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ (Gnosticism).
    - (2) Developed a \_\_\_\_\_ system.

G. Doctrine of Balaam and Jezebel (2:14, 20-24)

1. Balaam: C \_\_\_\_\_ without C \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Numbers 22-25; 31:16 - Balak the King of Moab and Balaam the magician.
2. Jezebel: Her objective is to silence the voice of the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. 1 Kings 16:30-31 - Jezebel's influence over King Ahab.
  - b. 1 Kings 18:4 - she murdered the prophets of the Lord.
  - c. 1 Kings 19:2-3 - she caused even Elijah to fear.
  - d. 1 Kings 21:5-16 - she arranged the murder of Naboth.
  - e. 1 Kings 21:25-26 - her evil domination of Ahab.
  - f. 2 Kings 9:22 - Jezebel was a harlot and a witch.
  - g. 2 Kings 9:30-31 - she tried to dominate Jehu.
    - (1) 1 Samuel 15:23 - rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.
    - (2) A witch will never genuinely submit to her husband.
    - (3) A witch will never genuinely submit to his/her pastor.
3. Application: \_\_\_\_\_ what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church.
  - a. L \_\_\_\_\_ to the Savior and L \_\_\_\_\_ to the Spirit.
  - b. Remember and repent.
  - c. Treat \_\_\_\_\_ as a friend and as a refining force.