

## **The letters for 7 churches in Revelation**

**Read: Revelation chapter one and two and try to answer the questions about the first church in Ephesus 2:1-7**

**Introduction:** In revelation the Apostle John presents the prophetic visions that were given him to see and to hear in the year 95 while he was in exile on the small island Patmos opposite the southern coast of the Roman province Asia, toward the end of the reign of the great persecutor of the Christians, the Emperor Domitian. The apostle John wrote Revelation by the Lord's own order (1:19; The Holy Spirit (divine inspiration) guided his pen. The first letter is for the Christians in Ephesus:

### **I- To the church in Ephesus:**

- a- What was your "first love" in school like?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b- What do you know about the church at Ephesus? (see Act 19)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c- What good things characterized this church?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- d- What do you think their weekly worship was like?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- e- What is repentance? Why is that necessary for the Ephesian church?

### **Application for deepest thought:**

- 1- In what ways have you lost your first love for Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2- What has helped you to keep that love alive?

## **The letters for 7 churches in Revelation are written for the church in the world**

**Introduction:** Every letter John wrote starts with the description of Christ which repeats part of the total description of him at the beginning of the scene. Every letter corresponds in shape to every other, beginning with the names of the addressees and the sender, continuing with statements about the former and messages to them, and ending with a command and a promise. The second letter is to the church in Smyrna. We need to know that the beauty of this city, which rivaled Ephesus, was the beauty of a resurrection. Seven hundred years before, old Smyrna had been destroyed and had lain in ruins for three centuries. The city was one which had risen from the dead. Resurrection was to be the experience of its church. Like their city their Lord died and came to life. A guarantee a resurrection for them too.

The persecution at **Smyrna** was made especially poignant by the fact that the great enemy was the local community Jews. These were God's people racially, but not really (Rom. 2:28), and were in fact blaspheming God as they persecuted his church under the guise of doing him service (Jn.16:2). Perhaps it was economic pressure from these Jews that brought the church to poverty, and slanderous accusation by them that led to imprisonment and death. Behind these Jews stands Satan; it is he, not Abraham, who is their spiritual father (Jh. 8:33,44).

But let the Christians take heart!

**1- What problems is this church facing?**

**2- How can they be both poor and rich?**

**3- Why is Jesus known as the First and the Last?**

**4- What does this passage teach about suffering?**

**5- In what ways do you feel spiritually rich?**

## The letters for 7 churches in Revelation

### Introduction:

If Ephesus was the New York of Asia, **Pergamum** was its Washington, for there the Roman imperial power had its seat of government. There also was built the earliest temple for the state-sponsored worship of the Emperor. Whether or not this was what Christ meant by the throne of Satan, it emphasizes the kind of difficulties the Christians in Pergamum have to face. Satan is working here through the pressures of non-Christian society. He persecutes; the suffering which will come to Smyrna has already come to Pergamum.

The sins in the church at Thyatira, like those at Pergamum, are immorality and compromise with idol worship. In Thyatira a particular woman takes on both the evil character of Jezebel and the prophetic role of Balaam, and begins to teach, as if from God, new deep things" which some members of this strong and lively church are only too willing to explore.

### To the church in Pergamum

What pressures are the Christians in Pergamum facing (V.13)? At what point are they strong?

Where are they tempted?

Which do you think is easier to endure: Persecution by enemies or seduction by the culture? Why?

Why is the title by which Christ reveals himself so appropriate to these Christians?

What is the significance of the sword V.16? For the manna and stone V.17?

#### **IV- To the church in Thyatira:**

What are the strengths of this church?

Its weaknesses?

What does the symbolic name “Jezebel” reveal about the woman in this church (1king 2:5-25; 2king9:7-37)?

How does Jesus describe himself? How do you interpret this description? What is he saying about himself? Why is this appropriate for the church at Thyatira?

How is the nature and source of the temptation in Thyatira like (and unlike) that in Pergamum?

What do you think Jesus’ promise in verses 26-27 means?

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### **V- To the church in Sardis:**

#### **Introduction:**

In spite of their faults, in all churches so far addressed Christ has recognized much good. What will he find to commend in Sardis? Nothing. The only good she has is a good reputation. Christ's verdict on her is devastatingly brief: "in name she is alive, in fact she is dead". Perhaps by her sister churches she is considered live. Since Christ tells her to wake up and warns her that his coming to judge her will be quite unexpected, it seems that she herself is not aware of her real spiritual state. Sardis the city well known of two things: It is dying and woollen industries and its profligacy. There are few things about her which are not yet dead. There are memories of her first response to the gospel how she received and heard few people in her are righteousness V.4.

We shall better understand what John demanded of the church at Sardis ; Secure, complacent like the city she lived in, untroubled by persecution or heresy she set the task of avoiding hardship by pursuing a policy based on convenience and circumspection, rather than whole-hearted zeal. The church in Sardis appears to reflect the history of the city. once it had a name for spiritual achievement, now it was lifeless

## **1- What is the contrast between reputation and reality in Sardis? V.1**

- I.** The church in Sardis appears to reflect the history of the city. Once it had a name for spiritual achievement, now it was lifeless. The church as whole is characterized as dead, for that condition all are held responsible.
- II.** Sardis suffered from spiritual dry and deadness.
- III.** the great foes that threaten our spiritual life directly are careless, indifference, sleep and sloth, failure to remember, to keep to continue in repentance , to avoid the world's foulness.
- IV.** what are the seven role/ aspects of the Holy Spiritual? Isaiah 11:2
- V.** What are the fruit of the Holy Spirit? Gal.5
- VI.** What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit? 1Cor.12, Rom. 12, Eph. 3
- VII.** The seven spirits are the eyes of God from whom nothing is hidden 5:6
- VIII.** the seven Spirit are the message of severity we have just heard
- IX.** the seven spirit are the life giving power of God
- X.** The title reflects 1:4 and 1:6 Christ is spoken of as the possessor of the seven spirits, possibly to represent His complete knowledge of the deeds of the churches 5:6 also may hint of the spiritual gifts

**2- What dangers exist for Christians who rely on an image instead of nurturing a genuine spiritual life V.2?**

His saying to all church be aroused and obtain this promise- “Walk with me”, Not concern about spiritual life. Not obeying. Not using his spiritual gifts. Not faithful for what God called him to do. Matt.24:42-51. How could we do that? Mt. 25

**3- What is the only hope for the survival of the church in Sardis? V.3**

Remember and repent

In the old testament: 613 commands: 70 times obey God mentioned around (keep the Torah), 50 times be Holy,  
20 times remember responding to what he did in the past., 19 fear God, 18 Love God

**4- What was God’s promise to the people who walk with him and over come?**

All that Christ promised to the victors of Sardis is the “robe of his righteousness”, “non deletion their names from the book of life” and “their acceptance before God”.

The “*white robe*” are mentioned for the second time and again are symbolic of heavenly holiness.

There are heavenly white robes: 4:4; 6:11; 7:9-13; 19:8

Some viewed the resurrection body as a garment of glory. The idea is used by Paul 2cor 5:4

The “*name*” are synonymous with persons. This “*book*” contains the names of all who have the true spiritual life.

The blotting out from the book of life recalls Ex. 32:32 where the book is a register of the citizen of people in the kingdom of God. as Dn. 12:1, Ps. 69, Is, 4:4 and many new testament passages like Luke 10:20 Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 21:27.

We also have the books that certain a record of the deeds. The Lord knew those that are his 2Tim. 2:19; Mat. 7:23.

**5- If Jesus addressed this wake up call to you what would he want you to strengthen?**

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### **VI- To the church in Philadelphia**

#### **Read Revelation 3:7-13**

**Introduction:** Apart from Smyrna, Philadelphia is the only church with which Christ has no fault to find... had small population owing to its frequent earthquakes. The church appears to have been correspondingly feeble V. 8 “You have little power”. The church has no great strength to meet particular trials and specially the last one are embodiments. Philadelphia is like Smyrna again in that it has to face the opposition of the synagogue of Satan and there is no hint of persecution from pagan authorities, nor of heresies within the church as at Smyrna. The Jews claim falsely to be the holy people of God and created the trouble here (2:9). There is neither rebuke nor warning from the Lord for this church, but simply commendation and exhortation.

**1- What does the “key of David” open (V.7-8; 4:1; Is. 22:22-24; Mt 16:19)?**

**2- How is this church able to persevere?**

**3- Describe their enemies?**

**4- How does their reward V.12 fit their faithfulness?**

**5- In what ways are you like the Christians in Philadelphia?**

**A- Unlike them?**

**B- Why?**

**6- What is the spirit saying to you now?**

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### **VII- To the church in Laodicea:**

**Introduction:** Laodicea was a banking center and textile town, famous also for the manufacture of a certain kind of eye ointment (V.18); lime-laden water flowed, tepid and sickly, from nearby springs (V.16). So Christ's words to the church there were uncomfortable. But even without such background knowledge, we could not mistake his judgment on her. "If only you were cold or hot" What more terrible condemnation could there be of a church's condition, than that the Lord would prefer even a cold Christianity to the sort he actually finds in her?

Elsewhere in Asia we have seen that the state of a church has often corresponded to the state of its city. At Laodicea, however, the two are contrasted. The church is the image of the city reverse in a black negative. Financiers, physicians, clothing manufacturers are among its notable citizens; but poor, blind, and naked is the verdict on its church. It has failed to find in Christ the source of all true wealth, splendor, and vision. She claims to have everything, and has nothing. It is worse even than Sardis. Where a glimmer of life remained. The only good thing in Laodicea is the church's thoroughly good opinion of herself-and that is false.

**1- If you could invite any famous person for dinner, whom would you ask? Why?**

**2- What does the "faithful and true witness" see when he looks at the Laodicea church V. 15-16?**

**3- How the church view itself? Why the contrast?**

**4- What does Jesus tell them to do in verse 18? Why?**

**5- What does this say about true wealth?**

**6- How would you describe Christ, based on what you have read so far in this book?**

**7- What is Jesus waiting for at the door of your life?**

**8- Why not let him in?**