

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 6th 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 16th 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 18th 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.” ’ ’ ”