

September 20, 2020
La Jolla Christian Fellowship
REVELATION : Letter To The Seven Churches
Episode 1
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Revelation 1:4-20

⁴John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. **To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father,** to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. ⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”⁹I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. **Vs. 10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹saying, **“Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”** ¹²Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw **seven golden lampstands,** ¹³and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶**In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword,** and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. ¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, **“Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.** ¹⁹Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. ²⁰**As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.**

We are better served to focus on what we can know of Revelation than what we can't.

- 1. Many believers are more interested in the chronology of the end times and its characters than the type of life it is calling us to live in the end times.**
- 2. Revelation was recorded for the purpose of instructing, encouraging and rebuking the church.**
 - a. **Vs. 10** *“Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches.”*
 - b. **Vs. 20** *“...the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”*
 - i. The "two-edged sword" is the word of God. (Hebrews 4:12)
- 3. God's attitude towards us is one of love and He calls us to high purpose.**
 - a. **Vs. 5b** *To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood ⁶and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.*
- 4. Jesus is ruler over all things: Vs. 5a** *“...and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.”*

THE SEVEN LITERAL AND ARCHETYPAL CHURCHES

1. **Ephesus** ; The desirable church that left its first love (Revelation 2:1-7). Ephesus was the influential capital city of Asia Minor on the Aegean Sea. Ephesus is now known for its huge metropolis of ancient streets, arches and ruins. It is the second most visited place in Turkey after Istanbul Sultanahmet district-Old town.
2. **Smyrna** ; The persecuted church that suffered poverty and martyrdom (Revelation 2:8-11). Smyrna was located north of Ephesus in a powerful trading position on the Aegean Sea known for its harbors, commerce, and marketplaces. The primary ruins of Smyrna are located in the modern Turkish city of Izmir (3rd biggest city).
3. **Pergamum** ; The worldly church that mixed doctrines and needed to repent (Rev. 2:12-17). Pergamum is located on the plains and foothills along the Caicus River in Western Turkey. It was considered a major city in Asia Minor since the 3rd century BC, and became a Greek and Roman hub for temple worship.
4. **Thyatira** ; The false church that followed a seductive prophetess (Rev. 2:18-29). Thyatira is located in western Asia Minor about 42 miles inland from the Aegean Sea. The ancient city was known for its textiles and dyeing trade, and is now known as Akhisar-town of Manisa.
5. **Sardis** ; The “dead” church that fell asleep (Revelation 3:1-6). Sardis is located on the banks of the Pactolus River in western Asia Minor, 60 miles inland from Ephesus and Smyrna. Popular ruins include the decadent temples and bath house complexes.
6. **Philadelphia** ; The church of brotherly love that endures patiently (Revelation 3:7-13). Philadelphia is located on the Cogamis River in western Asia Minor, about 80 miles east of Smyrna. Philadelphia was known for its variety of temples and worship centers.
7. **Laodicea** ; The “lukewarm” church with a faith that’s neither hot nor cold (Rev. 3:14-22). Laodicea is located in the Lycus River Valley of western Asia Minor, a primary trade route between the cultures of the West and East. Laodicea was known as a primary hub for the Roman aqueduct system.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. When you think about Revelation, do you think more about the timing of events or the way you are called to live?
2. Many believers fear when reading the book of Revelation, but the opening is one of comfort and great calling to Christ's church. Does Revelation encourage you or cause you concern?
3. Jesus is called, “the ruler of the kings of the earth” and is said to have the power over, “death and Hades”. Does this change how much credence you might give to individual leaders or worldly events happening today?
4. Which attitudes & practices of the above churches seem to please God and which do not?
5. What has God said to you personally through this teaching and scripture?