



## A Map of the Area





## Keys to Understanding the Book of Revelation

### Lies of the devil:

- REVELATION is too “scary”...
- REVELATION is too hard to understand...
- REVELATION is not for me...

### TRUTH OF GOD:

- REVELATION is a book of Worship
- REVELATION presents clearest picture of our Glorious Resurrected Savior
- REVELATION was written to “**encourage**” the saints
- REVELATION is the only New Testament book of prophecy

REVELATION depicts **Christ** riding “*out of heaven to **destroy** sin and Satan and to **restore** creation to its original glory for our good and His good pleasure forever.*” ~Chuck Swindoll

### Key Verse:

**Revelation 1:19** provides a simple outline of entire book.

“the things you have seen”	Chapter 1
“those that are”	Chapters 2–3
“those that are to take place after this”	Chapters 4–22

### Key Divisions:

Book of Revelation is understood in groups of “Seven”.

- Ch. 1–3      Seven Letters to Seven Churches
- Ch. 4–6      Seven Seals  
Judgments largely generated by the sinfulness of man
- Ch. 7–9      Seven Trumpets  
Judgments largely associated with satanic and demonic activity
- Ch. 10–13   Seven Signs  
Judgments largely generated by the sinfulness of man
- Ch. 14–16   Seven Plagues/Bowls/Vials  
Final series of judgments against those who followed the beast, just prior to the return of Christ
- Ch. 17–19   Seven Dooms
- Ch. 20–22   Seven New Things

## Chapter 1 – January 10, 2018



### Introduction

“Revelation” – Latin term *revelatio*, referring to:

- The act of revealing or making known
- The thing which is revealed
- In theology, designates God’s own self-disclosure or manifesting of himself, or things concerning himself and the world
- May also mean the “Word” itself, oral or written, which bears such revelation
- Equivalent NT term: apocalypse means unveiling, uncovering, or making someone or something known
- Can also mean the “Word” itself which reveals

### Two Kinds of Revelation

#### a) General Revelation

God reveals himself in nature, in history, and in all people as made in his image.

Ps.10:11; 14:1; 19:1; Acts 14:17; 17:22–29; Rom 1:19–21

#### b) Special Revelation

God purposes to share his gracious, loving heart intending salvation of all people.

- Articulate language directly spoken (Gn 3:14–19; 6:13–21; 7:1–4; 12:1–3).
- Various means: Angel of the Lord (Gn 18:1–15)
  - Burning bush (Ex 3:1–22)
  - Cleft in the rock (Ex 34:6, 7)
  - Fire and cloud (Ex 19)
- Came through dreams and visions (1 Sm 3:1–14).
- The zenith of God’s revelation was the coming in the flesh of **his beloved Son, Jesus Christ** (Jn 1:14–18; Gal 4:4, 5; Heb 1; 2).
- Jesus’ revelation of the Father and the Father’s gracious will toward all people was direct, accurate, and preeminent (Jn 14).

Mankind would know nothing at all of God’s messianic purposes in Christ, had God not revealed his heart and purposes throughout Scripture.

## Background

Written by the apostle John:

- Exile on the island of Patmos, off the coast of present-day Turkey.
- Letters from Christ himself to seven actual churches.
- Letters include commendation, criticism, and comfort.
- Then a long series of visions of judgment on the wicked, highly symbolic language.
- The Church is under great distress but assured of the final triumph of Jesus as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (19:16),
- Brings an end the rebellion of humanity and ushers in “a new heaven and a new earth” (21:1), where God himself will reign forever and ever (11:15).
- Revelation was probably written between A.D. 95–96.

### Prologue - Revelation 1:1-3 ESV

- 1:1a      **Purpose** of the Book  
1:1b-2    **Producer** of the Book  
1:3        **Provision** of the Book

### Greetings to the Seven Churches - Revelation 1:4-8 ESV

- 1:4a      The **Location** of the Churches  
1:4b-6    The **Lord** of the Churches  
1:6b      The **Legacy** of the Churches  
1:7-8     The **Legitimacy** of the Church

### The Vision of the Son of Man - Revelation 1:9-20 ESV

- 1:9-11    The **Receiver** of the Vision  
1:12-16   The **Revealed** Vision  
1:17a     The **Response** to the Vision  
1:17b-20 The **Reassurance** from the Vision

**PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE - COMPLETE BEFORE WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17.**

Study Instructions:

1. Read Revelation 2:1-7 at least three times, meditate on these verses.
2. After a time of meditation (thinking on the verses), use Bible resources if you like.
3. Fill in the chart on the **Church of Ephesus** based on what the Lord teaches you.

**Personal Study** for January 17, 2018

**Ephesus**

"The Loveless Church"

2:1-7

Who is being spoken to?

2:1a

Describe the one who is speaking these words

2:1b

Describe what the Speaker KNOWS (commendations)

2:2-3, 2:6

Describe what the Speaker SEES (concerns)

2:4

Describe what the Speaker COMMANDS

2:5a

Describe what the Speaker CONCLUDES (consequences)

2:5b

Describe what the Speaker STIPULATES (choices)

2:7a

Describe what the Speaker REWARDS (promises)

2:7b

## LESSON 2 – JANUARY 17, 2018

### Church of Ephesus The “Loveless” Church Revelation 2:1-7 ESV

#### Overview

- Christ **Commends** the Ephesian Church for Its faithful practice
- Christ **Condemns** It for Its Lack of Witness
- Christ **Exhorts** It to Overcome This Lack in Order to Inherit Eternal Life

#### Outline of 2:1-7

1. **ACKNOWLEDGED Work (vs. 2-3)**  
*"I know your works..."*
2. **ABANDONED Work (vs. 4-5a)**  
*"But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first..."*
3. **ATONING Work (v. 5b)**  
*"If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent."*
4. **AGREED Work (v. 6)**  
*"Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."*

#### About EPHEBUS

- A port city of western Asia Minor at the mouth of the Cayster River.
- Ephesus lay between Smyrna and Miletus.
- Most important city of the Roman province of Asia, located on the western shore of Asia Minor (modern Turkey).
- Ephesus was built on a natural harbor whose waves, according to the Roman writer Pliny the Elder, “used to wash up to the temple of Diana.”
- Ephesus was described by Strabo, an early Greek geographer, as the largest commercial center west of the Taurus Mountains.
- Well known as “guardian” of the temple of Artemis (Acts 19:34) [Romans called her, Diana].

#### Christianity’s Threat

- Gospel threatened Pagan temple and the commerce it produced for the makers of idols.
- Preaching the Gospel almost cost the apostle Paul his life (Acts 19:24, 30–31).
- Associated with the early preaching in Ephesus:
  - Priscilla and Aquila (18:18–19)
  - Timothy (1 Tm 1:3)
  - Erastus (Acts 19:22)
- According to Irenaeus, an early Christian writer, apostle John, after his exile on the island of Patmos (Rev 1:9), returned to live in Ephesus until time of emperor Trajan (AD 98–117).
- The commendable practices of the Christian community described in the letter to the Ephesians had been largely abandoned by the time John wrote Revelation (Rev 2:4).

#### City of Ephesus

- Founded by Ionian Greeks at a location where Cayster River emptied into Aegean Sea gulf.
- A city for about 1,000 years when Paul arrived on his third missionary journey (Acts 19).
- The worship of Artemis in Ephesus was as ancient as the city itself.
- The temple, built in middle of sixth century BC, was largest edifice in the Hellenistic world.
- The first of monumental size ever to be constructed entirely of marble.

#### NICOLAITANS

- Heretical sect in the early church
- Mentioned by name twice in the book of Revelation:
  - Church at Ephesus was commended for hating the works of the Nicolaitans (2:6)
  - Church at Pergamum was criticized for having members who held their doctrine (2:15)
- Since the specific sins condemned at Pergamum—the eating of food sacrificed to idols and the practice of immorality—were also present at Thyatira (Rev 2:20), it is commonly thought that the woman Jezebel was a leader of the Nicolaitans in that church.
- In the letter to Pergamum, their sins are equated with the teaching of Balaam (Rev 2:14; cf. Num 25:1–2; 31:16; 2 Pet 2:15; Jude 1:11),
  - Balaam advised Balak, the king of the Moabites, to bring about Israel’s downfall by inviting them to worship the Moabite gods and engage in intermarriage and the sexual immoralities connected with Moabite religious practices.
  - Thus, the Jews would have been separated from God and his protection.
  - In Jewish thought, Balaam was the symbol of all that led men to obscene conduct and the forsaking of God.
  - The ungodly practices at Thyatira are called the “deep things of Satan” (Rev 2:24).

### **The Early Church Also Threatened By Idolatry and Immorality So Prevalent In The World**

- The necessity for frequent warning in the NT reveals the gravity of the problem.
- The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:20) called upon the Gentiles to abstain from eating food that had been offered to idols and sexual immorality.
- Paul called for a voluntary avoidance of this kind of fare for the sake of those who were weak or immature in the faith (1 Cor 8).
- He strongly condemned actual participation in:
  - Idol feasts (1 Cor 10:14–22)
  - fornication in general
  - temple prostitution in particular (6:12–20)

### **Who the Nicolaitans were is More Difficult to Determine**

- The tendency among the church fathers was to identify them as followers of Nicolaus of Antioch, a Gentile convert to the Jewish faith, who had become a Christian and was chosen to be one of the original seven deacons (Acts 6:5).
- Both Irenaeus and Hippolytus believed that he had fallen from the faith.
- Clement claimed that the heretical and immoral Nicolaitans were not actual followers of Nicolaus but falsely claimed him as their teacher.
- In any event, there is no direct evidence available.
- Since the 19th century it has been common to view the name as a translation into Greek of the Hebrew name Balaam.
- This is in accord with the allegorical, symbolical nature of Revelation and the apparent linking of the two names in the letter to Pergamum (Rev 2:14–15).

## LESSON 2 – JANUARY 17, 2018

### Church of Ephesus The “Loveless” Church Revelation 2:1-7 ESV

#### BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Acts 19:1-10; 19:21-41 and 20:17-37. Discuss the climate of Ephesus of the Church and the city?
2. At the time John writes this letter to the Church, what some of the reasons John says they have lost their first love?
3. Think about your own spiritual journey, what areas of devotion in your life have slacked, since you first got saved?
4. What do you think the Lord is saying to you about what you need to do to rekindle that devotion?
5. Pray for one another concerning those areas that need rekindling.

#### PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE - COMPLETE BEFORE WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24.

##### Study Instructions:

1. Read Revelation 2:8-11 at least three times, meditate on these verses.
2. After a time of meditation (thinking on the verses), use Bible resources if you like.
3. Fill in the chart on the **Church of Smyrna** based on what the Lord teaches you.

Personal Study for January 24, 2018

<b>Smyrna</b> "The Persecuted Church" 2:8-11	
<b>Who is being spoken to?</b>	
2:8a	
<b>Describe the one who is speaking these words</b>	
2:8b	
<b>Describe what the Speaker KNOWS (commendations)</b>	
2:9a	
<b>Describe what the Speaker SEES (concerns)</b>	
2:9b	
<b>Describe what the Speaker COMMANDS</b>	
2:10a, 2:10c	
<b>Describe what the Speaker CONCLUDES (consequences)</b>	
N/A	
<b>Describe what the Speaker STIPULATES (choices)</b>	
2:11a	
<b>Describe what the Speaker REWARDS (promises)</b>	
2:11b	

## LESSON 3 – JANUARY 24, 2018

### Church of Smyrna (Myrrh) The “Persecuted” Church Revelation 2:8-11 ESV

#### Overview

- Christ **commends** the Church of Smyrna for enduring tribulation
- Christ **encourages** the Church of Smyrna to continue to be faithful in anticipation of imminent, more severe persecution, in order to inherit eternal life and heavenly kingship

#### About Myrrh

- First mentioned as a principal ingredient in the holy anointing oil (Ex. 30:23).
- Gift brought by the wise men from the east, who came to worship infant Jesus (Matt. 2:11).
- It was used in embalming (John 19:39),
- It was also used as a perfume (Esther 2:12; Ps. 45:8; Prov. 7:17).
- Custom of the Jews to give those condemned to death by crucifixion “wine mingled with myrrh” to produce insensibility.
  - This drugged wine was probably partaken of by the two malefactors
  - But when the Roman soldiers pressed it upon Jesus “*he received it not*” (Mark 15:23)

#### About SMYRNA (Rev 1:11; 2:8–11)

- It is the modern Izmir, located in Turkey.
- Inhabited at least 3,000 years before Christ.
- The Aeolian Greeks were replaced by the Ionians.
- The city, along with Miletus and Ephesus to the south, flourished under Ionian dominance.
  - **Ionians** were one of four major tribes the Greeks divided into during ancient period.
  - The other three being the Dorians, Aeolians, and Achaeans.<sup>[1]</sup>
- Ionian dialect (and Dorian and Aeolian) the three major linguistic divisions of Hellenic world
- “**Ionian**” defines several groups in Classical Greece:
  - In the narrowest sense, referred to the region of Ionian in Asia Minor.
  - In a broader sense, described all speakers of Ionic dialect (Ionian proper also included populations of Euboea, the Cyclades, and many cities founded by Ionian colonists.
  - In the broadest sense, described all those who spoke languages of the East Greek group, which included Attic.

#### The city was conquered by the Lydians whose capital was Sardis

- The **Lydians** were an Anatolian people living in Lydia, a region in western Anatolia, who spoke the distinctive Lydian language, an Indo-European language of the Anatolian group.
- The site was left in ruins for nearly three centuries until its re-founding by Alexander the Great in 334 BC at a site farther south along the gulf.
- Although built by the energy of the Seleucids, the city recognized the coming dominance of Pergamum and entered into an alliance with its king.
- Later, with remarkable foresight, she transferred her allegiance to Rome, and in 195 BC built a temple in which Rome was worshiped as a deity.
- Reward for Smyrna’s early commitment to rising Roman influence, the city prospered under Roman rule, partly as a rival to Pergamum and partly as a rival to prosperous island of Rhodes.
- Because they had been an ally of the Romans, the people of Smyrna thought it would be to their credit to build (in AD 26) a temple in which the Roman emperor would be honored.
- This city became the seat of the Caesar cult that afflicted the church so seriously during the latter half of the first century.

#### Historical Timeline

- The **Seleucid era** or *Anno Graecorum* (literally "year of the Greeks" or "Greek year"), sometimes denoted "AG", was a system of numbering years in use by the Seleucid Empire and other countries among the ancient Hellenistic civilizations.
- It is sometimes referred to as "the dominion of the Seleucidæ," or the Year of Alexander.
- The era dates from Seleucus I Nicator's re-conquest of Babylon in 312/11 BC after his exile in Ptolemaic Egypt,<sup>[1]</sup> considered by Seleucus and his court to mark the founding of the Seleucid Empire.
- According to Jewish Tradition, it was during the sixth year of Alexander the Great's reign (possibly Alexander the Great's infant son, Alexander IV of Macedon) that they began to make use of this counting.<sup>[2]</sup>
- The introduction of the new era is mentioned in one of the Babylonian Chronicles, *the Chronicle of the Diadochi*.

#### **Revelation 2:8 speaks of the city as being “dead and then alive”**

- A possible allusion to the period of 300 years when it lay devastated until revived by Alexander and the Macedonians.
- Ancient writers (Appollonius and Aristides) spoke of Smyrna as having the “crown of life.”
- This was a way of describing the hilltop behind the city as if it crowned Smyrna on top, with its feet at the seashore, known as “the Crown of Smyra.”
- The promise of “the crown of life” to the Smyrnan believers probably plays off this image.
- This promise was given to believers in Smyrna who would remain faithful through persecution.

#### **References to “synagogue of Satan” (Rev 2:9) and to the devil putting them in prison (Rev 2:10)**

- Reflects the tribulation probably experienced under Roman emperor Domitian (c. AD 95).
- Crime punishable by death to refuse to worship the image of the Roman emperor as “lord.”
- Many Christians were compelled to choose between “Caesar as Lord” or “Jesus as Lord.”
- To choose Jesus was to choose martyrdom.

#### **SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN**

- A reference to Jewish persecutors of the Church (Rev 2:9; 3:9).
- Members of the “synagogue of Satan” were persecuting churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia.
- In Revelation, Jesus denounces them despite their claims to Judaism and the synagogue.
- May also refer to Christians who sought protection from the synagogue during times of difficulty.

#### **IRONIC**

- Jews’ attack against Smyrnan church demonstrated that Jews were not only “false Jews” but also “a **synagogue of Satan**,” and that the church, by implication, was the “true Israel.”
- Some commentators demur on the identification of the church with latter-day Israel.
- Nevertheless, the identification is confirmed not only by broad contextual indicators (e.g., 1:6, 7, 9, 12; 2:17; 3:9, 12; 5:9–10; 7:4–9, 15–17; 11:1–4) but also by the fact that in the immediate context the church is seen as fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy about Israel.
- Identification is enhanced by association of the church’s trial with Daniel and his friends (2:10).
- The false accusations against the saints that induced oppression identify the Jews with “satan” (“false accuser”), since this is also a characteristic trait of the beast in persecuting God’s people [“blasphemy”] in 13:1, 5–6; 17:3–6; cf. John 8:44.
- Such collusion could lead to various economic measures taken by the Roman authorities against Christians, sometimes in the form of bans against practice of trades (e.g., expulsion from trade guilds) and often imprisonment (see Heb. 10:34, where Christians are said to suffer loss of property for their faith).

LESSON 3 – JANUARY 24, 2018

Church of Smyrna (Myrrh)  
The “Persecuted” Church  
Revelation 2:8-11ESV

Outline of 2:8-11

1. I know Your **TRIBULATION** (v.9)

*“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”*

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2. I know Your **TESTING** (v.10)

*“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation.”*

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3. I know Your **TRIUMPH** (v.10b)

*“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*

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## LESSON 3 – JANUARY 24, 2018

### Church of Smyrna (Myrrh) The “Persecuted” Church Revelation 2:8-11ESV

## BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Revelation 2:8 aloud. How does this description of the speaker bring encouragement to the Church of Smyrna, which is undergoing extreme persecution?
2. In Revelation 2:9, the word “tribulation” is used to describe a “crushing pressure.” In light of this crushing pressure, what do you think those in the Synagogue of Satan wanted the suffering saints to think about the power Jesus Christ?
3. Revelation 2:10 presents a word play. Why do you think the speaker used “Crown of Life” as a superior contrast to the well-known and cultural Crown of Smyrna? (See above, **Revelation 2:8 speaks of the city as being “dead and then alive”**.)
4. In Revelation 2:10, the speaker clearly indicates that Satan has “some” degree of power (as allowed by the will of God). What does the phrase, “ten days” teach us about Satan’s power?
5. When you experience “crushing pressure” from circumstances in life, is it your tendency to run TO Jesus and His Word or to seek solace FROM worldly companions, comforts, habits and practices?
6. How can Ecclesia help YOU “overcome” such difficulties?

## PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE - COMPLETE BEFORE WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31.

### Study Instructions:

1. Read Revelation 2:12-17 at least three times, meditate on these verses.
2. After a time of meditation (thinking on the verses), use Bible resources if you like.
3. Fill in the chart on the **Church of Pergamum** based on what the Lord teaches you.

**Personal Study** for January 31, 2018

<b>Pergamum</b> "The Compromising Church" 2:12-17	
<b>Who is being spoken to?</b>	
2:12a	
<b>Describe the one who is speaking these words</b>	
2:12b	
<b>Describe what the Speaker KNOWS (commendations)</b>	
2:13	
<b>Describe what the Speaker SEES (concerns)</b>	
2:14-15	
<b>Describe what the Speaker COMMANDS</b>	
2:16a	
<b>Describe what the Speaker CONCLUDES (consequences)</b>	
2:16b	
<b>Describe what the Speaker STIPULATES (choices)</b>	
2:17a	
<b>Describe what the Speaker REWARDS (promises)</b>	
2:17b	

## LESSON 4 – JANUARY 31, 2018

### Church of Pergamum The “Compromising” Church Revelation 2:12-17 ESV

#### Overview

- Christ **commends** the Church of Pergamum for its persevering witness in the midst of persecution
- Christ **condemns** the Church of Pergamum for its permissive spirit of idolatrous compromise
- Christ **exhorts** the Church of Pergamum to overcome this compromise in order not to be judged but to inherit end-time fellowship and identification with Christ

#### About Pergamum

- City just north of the Caicus River, in the southern part of Mysia (eastern Turkey).
- One of the greatest cultural centers of the Hellenistic era.
- Early geographer Strabo (63 BC–AD 24?) called area around Pergamum the richest land in Mysia.
- It is mentioned only twice in the Bible (Rev 1:11; 2:12; KJV “Pergamos”).
- The province of Mysia was combined with Lydia and Caria to form the Roman district of Asia, comprising the western portion of modern Turkey.
- Pergamum lies less than 20 miles inland from the sea.
- About three miles north of the Caicus River on a large conical hill, 1,000 feet high.
- Sandwiched between two smaller streams that flow into the Caicus, the Selinus on the west and the Cetius on the east.
- This natural position of strength, combined with its religious significance as a temple site, made it a desirable place to store wealth.
- Lysimachus, one of Alexander the Great’s generals, deposited an enormous sum of money here (9,000 talents), later used by Pergamene kings to create the glory of Pergamum.
- Although coins were minted in Pergamum before 400 BC, it was not a great city until long after the death of Alexander.

#### Review of Nicolaitans

- Pergamum’s sins equated with the teaching of Balaam (Rev. 2:14; Num. 25:1-12; 31:16; 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 1:11).
- Balaam advised Balak (king of Moabites) to bring about Israel’s downfall by:
  - Inviting them to worship the Moabite gods
  - Inviting them to engage in intermarriage
  - Inviting them to engage in Moabite religious sexual immoralities
- Thus, Jews would have been separated from God and His protection.
- Jewish Thought: Balaam was symbol of all that led men to obscene conduct and forsaking God.
- The ungodly practices at Thyatira are called the “deep things of Satan” (Rev. 2:24).

**Outline of Pergamum - 2:12-17**

1. **The ENVIRONMENT (v.13a)**

*“I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is....”*

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2. **The ENDURANCE (v.13b)**

*And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.*

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3. **The ENTICEMENT (vs.14-15)**

*But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak...Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

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4. **The ENCOURAGEMENT (vs. 16-17)**

*Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” ’*

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## LESSON 4 – JANUARY 31, 2018

### Church of Pergamum The “Compromising” Church Revelation 2:12-17 ESV

#### SELF-STUDY TO PREPARE FOR WEDNESDAY STUDY TIME

Historical and cultural understanding is the key to understanding this message to Church of Pergamum. **Do self-study at home!** Briefly describe/discuss these key terms:

- Satan’s throne & “where Satan dwells” (2:13; 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9; 20:2)
- Teaching of Balaam (2:14; Num. 22–25 [especially 25:1-9])
- Teaching of Nicolaitans (2:15)
- “Sharp two-edged sword (2:12) & “sword of my mouth” (2:16; Heb. 4:12)
- Hidden manna (2:17; Exo. 16:32-36; Heb. 9:4; Mt. 4:4; Jn. 6:32)
- White stone (2:17)
- Trivia – Who was Aesculapius and what was his symbol?

#### BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the word, “Pergamum” mean?
2. Who was Antipas and why did he receive special mention?
3. If you have ever been a stumbling block for someone else, describe how you “repented” and how the situation was resolved.
4. In those days, a “white stone” (2:17) had two uses:
  - Put into a vessel by a judge to vote acquittal for a person on trial
  - Used like “ticket” to gain admission to a feastHow might the “white stone” apply to the believers in Pergamum?

#### PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE - COMPLETE BEFORE WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7.

##### Study Instructions:

1. Read Revelation 2:18-29 at least three times, meditate on these verses.
2. After a time of meditation (thinking on the verses), use Bible resources if you like.
3. Fill in the chart on the **Church of Thyatira** based on what the Lord teaches you.

**Personal Study for February 7, 2018**

<b>Thyatira</b> "The Corrupt Church" 2:18-29	
<b>Who is being spoken to?</b>	
2:18a	
<b>Describe the one who is speaking these words</b>	
2:18b	
<b>Describe what the Speaker KNOWS (commendations)</b>	
2:19, 2:24	
<b>Describe what the Speaker SEES (concerns)</b>	
2:20-22	
<b>Describe what the Speaker COMMANDS</b>	
2:25	
<b>Describe what the Speaker CONCLUDES (consequences)</b>	
2:23	
<b>Describe what the Speaker STIPULATES (choices)</b>	
2:29	
<b>Describe what the Speaker REWARDS (promises)</b>	
2:26-28	

## LESSON 5 – FEBRUARY 7, 2018

### Thyatira

“The **Corrupt** Church”

2:18-29

#### Overview

- Christ **COMMENDS** the Church of Thyatira for its Christian works of witness
- Christ **CONDEMNS** the Church of Thyatira for its permissive spirit of idolatrous compromise
- Christ **EXHORTS** the Church of Thyatira to overcome in order not to be judged but to inherit End-Time Rule together with Christ

#### About Thyatira

- Founded by the Lydian kingdom and later captured by Seleucus, Alexander’s general.
- It then served as a border settlement to preserve his kingdom from Lysimachus, his rival to the west.
- After the kingdom of Pergamum was founded (282 BC), Thyatira became the borderline between Pergamum and the Syrians.
- The city was without natural defenses.
- It was not built on a hill and therefore was subject to repeated invasions.
- The strength of the city lay largely in its strategic location and also upon the fertility of the area surrounding it.
- Its inhabitants were descendants of Macedonian soldiers and retained much of their ancestors’ militancy. They were formidable defenders of the city.
- When Rome defeated Antiochus in 189 BC, Thyatira was incorporated into the kingdom of Pergamum, Rome’s ally. Peace and prosperity followed.
- Under the Roman emperor Claudius (AD 41–54), Thyatira rose to new prominence and was permitted to issue its own coins.
- The emperor Hadrian included this city in his Middle East itinerary (AD 134), a hint of the importance of Thyatira in the second century AD.
- Prosperity attracted many Jews to this area.
- Among the commercial activities of the city were textiles and bronze armor.
- The armorers were in a guild, like the silversmiths in Ephesus.
- The first known Christian convert in Europe was a businesswoman from Thyatira named Lydia (Acts 16:14–15, 40). She specialized in the costly purple garments that were exported from Thyatira to Macedonia. Here the purple dye, from the madder root, offered a much cheaper cloth to compete with costlier garments dyed with the expensive murex dye from Phoenicia.
- In the message to the church in Thyatira, the members are commended for their love, faith, service, and endurance (Rev. 2:19).
- But the influence of paganism is still reflected in the sharp rebuke of those who tolerate the heresy of which “Jezebel” was the leader.
- Their temptation was similar to that of the Corinthian believers who were uncertain about eating food that had been dedicated to idols (1 Cor. 8:1–13).

#### Representing the Church Age around The Dark Ages

- In presenting Himself to this Assembly as “The Son of God,” foreseeing the rapid rise of Romanism, our Lord would have successive generations know that He Alone is supreme in the final Authority.
- That in His foreknowledge the sad condition was prophetic of that period of Church history to be recorded as the Dark Ages.

**Outline of Thyatira - 2:18-29**

1. **The SERVICE (v.19)**

*I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.*

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2. **The SEDUCTION (v.20-21)**

*Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.*

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3. **The SUFFERING (v.22-23)**

*Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.*

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4. **The STEADFASTNESS (v.24-26)**

*Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.*

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## LESSON 5 – FEBRUARY 7, 2018

### Church of Thyatira The “Corrupt” Church Revelation 2:18-29 ESV

#### SELF-STUDY TO PREPARE FOR WEDNESDAY STUDY TIME

Historical and cultural understanding is the key to understanding this message to Church of Thyatira. **Do self-study at home!** Briefly describe/discuss these key terms:

- Eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze (2:18; 1:14-15)
- Jezebel (2:20; 1Kings 16-19)
- Deep things of Satan (2:24)
- Morning Star (2:28)

#### BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The city boasted in the special temple to Apollo, the “sun god.” What title is used to introduce Jesus Christ in verse 18 and why?
2. Explain the difference between “true spiritual activity” (2:19) and mere “religious activity.”
3. The historical idolatrous queen Jezebel enticed Israel to add Baal worship to their religious ceremonies (1 Kings 16-19). Explain why this symbolic Jezebel of Thyatira fostered such a stern warning from the Son of God.
4. Explain why the “tolerance” mentioned in 2:20 was so dangerous to the Church.
5. 2:24 identifies some who did NOT hold to the false teachings and compromising practices. How do YOU overcome false teachings or compromising practices?

#### PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE

COMPLETE BEFORE WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7.

Study Instructions:

1. Read Revelation 3:1-6 at least three times, meditate on these verses.
2. After a time of meditation (thinking on the verses), use Bible resources if you like.
3. Fill in the chart on the **Church of Sardis** based on what the Lord teaches you.

**Personal Study** for February 21, 2018

<b>Sardis</b> "The Dead Church" <b>3:1-6</b>	
<b>Who is being spoken to?</b>	
3:1a	
<b>Describe the one who is speaking these words</b>	
3:1b	
<b>Describe what the Speaker KNOWS (commendations)</b>	
3:1c, 3:4	
<b>Describe what the Speaker SEES (concerns)</b>	
3:1d	
<b>Describe what the Speaker COMMANDS</b>	
3:2-3a	
<b>Describe what the Speaker CONCLUDES (consequences)</b>	
3:3b	
<b>Describe what the Speaker STIPULATES (choices)</b>	
3:6	
<b>Describe what the Speaker REWARDS (promises)</b>	
3:5	

## LESSON 6 – FEBRUARY 21, 2018

### Church of Sardis The “Dead” Church Revelation 3:1-6 ESV

#### Overview

- Christ condemns the Church in Sardis for its lack of witness and its compromise.
- Christ exhorts it to overcome this in order to inherit the blessings of salvation life.

#### About Sardis

- An important city in the Roman province of Asia.
- Once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia.
- Lays astride great highways linking it to coastal regions to the west and to eastern Asia Minor.
- A cultural, religious, and commercial center.

#### Under King Croesus (c. 560–547 BC)

- Its wealth became legendary.
- Gold and silver coinage came into use.
- The geography and topography of Sardis were advantageous.
- The Pactolus River lay on its eastern side and flowed eventually into the Hermus River.
- The broad ridge of Mt Tmolus (pronounced Tō-los), springing from the central plateau, dominates the Hermus Valley to its north, and a series of steep spurs jut out into the plain, offering strongholds. Sardis lay on one of these.
- The site of Sardis proper lay 1,500 feet (457.2 meters) above the plain and assumed a position of great importance from the earliest days of the Lydian kingdom (13th Century BC), although it was occupied in earlier times; the lower city spread to the valley floor.
- The king lived in the great acropolis, which became a place of refuge in time of war.

#### Under Alexander the Great (c. 334 BC)

- In 334 BC the city surrendered to Alexander the Great, who left a garrison on the acropolis.
- Following Alexander’s death, Sardis changed hands several times.
- Controlled first by Antigonus, then by the Seleucid rulers, and then by Pergamum, which had broken away from the Seleucids.

#### Christianity

- Christianity took root here before the end of the first century and later included a bishopric.
- The NT letter to “the angel of the church in Sardis” (Rev. 1:11; 3:1-6) gives insight into the condition of the church at that time.
- After the Arab invasion of AD 716, the city declined.
- Today the small village of Sart preserves its name.

**Outline of 3:1-6**

1. **The INSINCERITY (v.1b)**

*“I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.”*

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2. **The INCOMPLETION (v.2)**

*“Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.”*

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3. **The INSTRUCTION (v.3a)**

*“Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent.”*

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4. **The INDICTMENT (v.3b)**

*“If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.”*

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5. **The INCORRUPTIBLE (v.4-5)**

*“Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. <sup>5</sup>The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.”*

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## LESSON 6 – FEBRUARY 21, 2018

### Church of Sardis The “Dead” Church Revelation 3:1-6 ESV

#### SELF-STUDY TO PREPARE FOR WEDNESDAY STUDY TIME

Historical and cultural understanding are key to understanding this message to the Church of Sardis. **Do self-study at home!** Briefly describe/discuss these key terms:

- Seven spirits of God (3:1) -
- Seven stars (3:1) -
- Garments - soiled & white (3:4-5) -
- Book of Life (3:5) -

#### BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did it mean to have a “reputation of being alive, but you are dead,” and how might that look today?
2. How can we see hope by comparing “dead” in 3:1 and “about to die” in 3:2.
3. The history of Sardis included a devastating earthquake and two surprise military attacks. These events lingered in the minds of the people for centuries. Why is the “wording” in 3:3b significant?
4. How did “white garments” factor in to this city that was famous for rich, colorful fabrics?
5. Define the word “repent” and describe how 3:5b might speak to the importance and necessity of daily/on-going repentance?

#### PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE

COMPLETE BEFORE WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28.

Study Instructions:

1. Read Revelation 3:7-13 at least three times, meditate on these verses.
2. After a time of meditation (thinking on the verses), use Bible resources if you like.
3. Fill in the chart on the **Church of Philadelphia** based on what the Lord teaches you.

**Personal Study** for February 28, 2018

<b>Philadelphia</b> "The Faithful Church" 3:7-13	
Who is being spoken to?	
3:7a	
Describe the one who is speaking these words	
3:7b	
Describe what the Speaker KNOWS (commendations)	
3:8	
Describe what the Speaker SEES (concerns)	
N/A	
Describe what the Speaker COMMANDS	
3:11	
Describe what the Speaker CONCLUDES (consequences)	
3:9	
Describe what the Speaker STIPULATES (choices)	
3:13	
Describe what the Speaker REWARDS (promises)	
3:10, 12	

## LESSON 7 – FEBRUARY 28, 2018

### Church of Philadelphia

#### The “Faithful” Church

#### Revelation 3:7-13 ESV

#### Overview

- Christ commends the Church in Philadelphia for its persevering witness
- Christ will empower its members further,
- Christ encourages them to continue to persevere so as to inherit end-time fellowship and identification with him

#### About Philadelphia

- A City in western Asia Minor.
- One of the seven Asian cities to which the author of the book of Revelation addressed letters, mentioned in 1:11 and 3:7–13.

#### Founding of Philadelphia

- Founded about 140 BC by Attalus II of the city of Pergamum.
- Attalus II was also known as “Philadelphus”
- The name of the city was derived from this royal nickname.
- Philadelphus intended that the city would serve as a center for the spread of Greek culture throughout the region, especially to the people of Phrygia.
- Situated on a fertile plain, it was rich with vineyards and wine production.
- Asian Philadelphia was heavily damaged by an earthquake in the year AD 17.
- For the purpose of rebuilding, it was granted disaster aid by the Roman emperor Tiberius.

#### John Writing to Philadelphia

- When John wrote from Patmos near the end of the first century, the churches of western Asia were undergoing persecution.
- The church in Philadelphia was one of them.
- This church was enduring the persecution faithfully.
- The letter to it (Rev. 3:7–13) contains no words of reproach or warning.
- Instead, Jesus gave them encouragement and precious promises.

#### Later Writing to Philadelphia

- Some years later, the Christian bishop and martyr Ignatius of Antioch also wrote a letter to the Church in Philadelphia
- He expressed appreciation for his recent visit with them.
- He encouraged them in Christian unity.

#### Outline of 3:7-13

1. **The OPPORTUNITY (v.8a)**

*“I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut....”*

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2. **The OBEDIENCE (v.8b)**

*“I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name”*

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3. **The OPPOSITION (v.9)**

*“Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.”*

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4. **The OVERCOMING (v.10-12)**

*“<sup>10</sup>Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.*

*<sup>11</sup>I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.*

*<sup>12</sup>The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.”*

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## LESSON 7 – FEBRUARY 28, 2018

### Church of Philadelphia The “Faithful” Church Revelation 3:7-13 ESV

#### SELF-STUDY TO PREPARE FOR WEDNESDAY STUDY TIME

Historical and cultural understanding are key to understanding this message to the Church of Sardis. **Do self-study at home!** Review these key terms:

- Philadelphia - means “love of the brethren.” 1 Thes. 4:9; 1 John 4:19; John 13:34; Rom. 5:5
- Key of David (3:7) - Isaiah 22:22; Rev. 9:1; 20:1; 21:2; 1:18
- Synagogue of Satan (3:9) - Rev. 1:6, 7, 9, 12; 2:17; 3:9, 12; 5:9-10; 7:4-9, 15-17; 11:1-4
- “Bow down before your feet” (3:9) - Philippians 2:9-11

#### BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Answer **ALL** for your edification ... Answer **THREE** questions as a group)

1. What do the references to keys and doors represent in 3:7-8?
2. Brainstorm a bit...What open doors of opportunity has God set in front of Ecclesia? (As a group, try to list at least 7 things.)
3. Current thought is that large or mega churches are “strong.” However, the Church in Philadelphia had “but little power.” What two qualities does God value in a church? (see 3:8)
4. In 3:9, how does “love” factor into the open door for “evangelism”?
5. What did the Lord promise in 3:10 and what earthly action preceded the promise?
6. Philadelphia sat on an earthquake fault. Explain the teaching about the “pillar” and the “temple.”

#### PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE

COMPLETE BEFORE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7.

Study Instructions:

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22 at least three times, meditate on these verses.
2. After a time of meditation (thinking on the verses), use Bible resources if you like.
3. Fill in the chart on the **Church of Laodicea** based on what the Lord teaches you.

**Personal Study for March 7, 2018**

<b>Laodicea</b> "The Lukewarm Church" 3:14-22	
<b>Who is being spoken to?</b>	
3:14a	
<b>Describe the one who is speaking these words</b>	
3:14b	
<b>Describe what the Speaker KNOWS (commendations)</b>	
N/A	
<b>Describe what the Speaker SEES (concerns)</b>	
3:15; 3:16a; 3:17	
<b>Describe what the Speaker COMMANDS</b>	
3:18; 3:20	
<b>Describe what the Speaker CONCLUDES (consequences)</b>	
3:16b	
<b>Describe what the Speaker STIPULATES (choices)</b>	
3:22	
<b>Describe what the Speaker REWARDS (promises)</b>	
3:21	

## LESSON 8 – MARCH 7, 2018

### Church of Laodicea The “Lukewarm” Church Revelation 3:14-22 ESV

#### Overview

- Christ condemns the Church in Laodicea for its:
  - Ineffective witness
  - Deplorable spiritual condition
- Christ exhorts its members to:
  - Persevere by becoming faithful witnesses
  - Persevere by renewing their fellowship with him so as to reign with him

#### About Laodicea

- Largest of the three major cities in the broad valley area on the borders of Phrygia.
- Laodicea stood where the Lycus Valley joined the Meander.
- Significantly, the western entrance to the city was called the Ephesian Gate.
- The traveler left the city on the east by the Syrian Gate, for the great road ran to Antioch, where other roads branched to the Euphrates Valley, to Damascus, and to the northeast, where the desert trade routes ran toward the mountains, the Gobi, and the remote lands of the East.

#### With the Roman peace

- Laodicea lost all of its frontier character.
- Under Rome, the city grew in commercial importance.
- Cicero traveled that way in 51 BC on his way to the provincial governorship of Cilicia.
- The fact that Cicero cashed drafts in Laodicea shows that the city had outgrown neighboring Colosse and was already a place of financial importance and wealth.

#### Laodicea Medical School

- The names of its physicians appear on coins as early as the principate of Augustus.
- It was probably the medical school of Laodicea that developed the Phrygian eye powder, famous in the ancient world.
- It is a fair guess that this was the dried mud of the Hierapolis thermal springs, which could be mixed with water to form a kaolin poultice, an effective remedy for inflammation.

**OUTLINE of 3:14-22**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ **(3:15-16)**

*“<sup>15</sup>I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! <sup>16</sup>So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.”*

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2. \_\_\_\_\_ **(3:17)**

*“<sup>17</sup>For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.”*

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3. \_\_\_\_\_ **(3:18-19)**

*“<sup>18</sup>I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup>Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.”*

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4. \_\_\_\_\_ **(3:20-21)**

*“<sup>20</sup>Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup>The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.”*

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LESSON 8 – MARCH 7, 2018

Church of Laodicea  
The “Lukewarm” Church  
Revelation 3:14-22 ESV

**BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. 3:14. How do the names used to describe Jesus Christ in 3:14 relate to this most “stern” message to a people who were self-deceived?
2. 3:15-16. Laodicea had no local water supply. Received cold water from Colossae and hot water from Hieropolis. List the positive purposes of cold, hot, and “lukewarm” water.
3. 3:17. Define each of the “progressive” descriptives of the Laodiceans.
  - Wretched –
  - Pitiable –
  - Poor –
  - Blind –
  - Naked –
4. 3:18. Why does Jesus paradoxically call for the Laodiceans to “buy” items that the rich would already possess?
5. 3:19-21. List three specific things that “this” passage teaches us about our Loving God:
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL STUDY EXERCISE**

COMPLETE ON YOUR OWN – FOR YOUR PERSONAL EDIFICATION.

**STUDY INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Recap the 7 Churches of Revelation 2 - 3 by completing this **Chart of Promises to Overcomers**.
2. Read the verse(s) containing the promise given.
3. Read the corresponding verse(s) containing the promise fulfilled.
4. Write in your own words the promise that God fulfilled.

**WORSHIP TIME:**

5. Arrange a special “meeting/dinner” with others who have embarked on this study of Revelation and spend some time worshipping Jesus because He is a **Promise Keeping God!**

## Chart of Promises to Overcomers

Revelation Chapters 2 - 3

<b>Promise</b>	<b>Write in What Will Happen</b>	<b>Fulfillment</b>
2:7		22:2
2:11		20:6; 27:7-8
2:17		21:11; 21:18-21
2:26-27; 3:21		20:4
2:28		21:23; 22:5; 22:16
3:5		19:7-8; 21:2; 21:9-10
3:5		21:27
3:12		21:22-23
3:12		21:10
3:12		22:4