

## Revelation

### Notes #2

#### Chapters 1—3

- I. The Literary Movement of the Book: Epistolary in form (cf. 1:4, 22:21), but narrative in body (1:9--22:16).

*It must be noted that there are no direct imperatives to the church (addressed) anywhere in the book. They are all given to John for the church. In other words, the whole epistle is a narrative description of what happened to John and what he was told and experienced.*

- A. Introduction and Conclusion of the Epistle (1:1-8, 22:17-21).
1. Introduction: 1:1-8 Author, addressed, basis of letter, the nature of the letter, characteristics of main characters.
  2. Conclusion: 22:17-21 Final expressions addressed to the churches.
- B. Narrative: 1:9--22:16 Narrative in form: In the letter (1:4) John describes what happens to him in narrative description
1. Setting: Instructions 1:9-20 A narrative description of the author's meeting with the Revealer and the Revealer's instructions regarding the rest of the narrative.
  2. John told what to write 2--3 Within the narrative a description of the epistle he is to write. Note that all the churches are given the information about the other churches.
  3. John led through events 4:1--22:16 Narrative in form: A description of events which John experiences following the instructions of 2--3.
- C. Conclusion
1. All the book was intended for all seven churches.
  2. The narrative incorporates both the churches (2--3) and the events of 4--21 indicating a unified message and the involvement of the events of 4--21 in the solution theology of 2--3.
  3. A major break in the form of revelation between 2--3 and 4--22 to John. In other words, John is told to write to churches, but only describes events in 4--22. John is on earth getting the instructions of 2--3, but in heaven during the revelation of events of 4--22.<sup>1</sup> The position of the

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<sup>1</sup> As part of the interpretation the reader must determine why John as the author views things from a different perspective in 4--22 than in 1--3. One possibility is that he introduces himself in 1:10, not as an apostle, but as a fellow sufferer with the church. It is possible then that John is taking the view shared with the church. In 22:20, John's words, "Amen, Come Lord Jesus" would be voiced by his readers along with the author.

author and the nature of the revelation appears to be in the intent of the author and must be included into the message of the text. The church is included by attribute<sup>2</sup> in the rest of the book as sharers in the promise through Christ.

II. Introduction: The Letter to the Churches (1:1-8).

- A. The Revealer: Jesus the Messiah (1:1)
- B. The Source of the Revelation: God the Father (1:1)
- C. Content: The Revelation of the Second Coming events (1:1)

*This statement is quite informative. The revelation of the book is the events of 4--22 for these are the events that are near.<sup>3</sup> Thus in the introduction the events of 4-22 are necessary for the church to know.*

- D. The means<sup>4</sup> of communication: John (1:1b-2)
  - 1. An apostle<sup>5</sup>
  - 2. An eyewitness to the words and works of Jesus Christ.
- E. The Blessing<sup>6</sup> (1:3)
  - 1. Reads: The form of the sentence may suggest the public reading of this book ("He who reads" contrasted with "those who hear").
  - 2. Hear: The form of the sentence may indicate that the church as a body is hearing the public reading of the book.
  - 3. Keep: This is used in the sense of *keeping* the commandments. Thus the reader is not simply to read and hear (cf. Matt. 13) but to impart into understanding (belief) and then testimony.
  - 4. "The time is near.": This is the impetus of the book. The Second Coming<sup>7</sup> is the next event in history and the believer needs to live in light of that. This then will be instructive for the time prior to the return.

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<sup>2</sup> This is not unusual in the book, since the name Israel is only mentioned once in the whole book, and Jerusalem is not mentioned until chapter 21, yet both are clearly included by listing their attribute for specific identification.

<sup>3</sup> "Near" here means that the events are past the atonement. The next prophetic event in history is the Second Coming, the first having already taken place.

<sup>4</sup> The identification of *His angel* is somewhat problematic. First of all, to whom does the pronoun *His* refer? Theologically it would most likely belong to God the Father since angels are normally referred to as being in His service (although it would violate nothing to have Jesus have angels). Note also that the common statement that *The (article) angel of the Lord* does not appear in the New Testament is without merit if this is referring to an angel (not a messenger, which could be Jesus), since this is literally "*the (article) angel of Him.*"

<sup>5</sup> This is affirming John as an apostle, or as a qualified revealer of the fullness of God's plan in history through Jesus Christ. Refer to John 14--16 for the same description of John's apostolic ability.

<sup>6</sup> The blessing is in the sense of an evaluation of being fortunate. It is used only in Deut. 33:29 (LXX) in the Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy instructions. It is the same word used in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5.

<sup>7</sup> When the "Second Coming" is referenced it normally means the whole period of time (rapture through the Kingdom) regarding God's visitation to earth to bring forth both wrath and deliverance to the visible eye. However, in some contexts it is the very specific day on which He proceeds down to earth.

- F. The Epistle itself: Addressees, Author, Main Characters, Main Theology
1. Author: John
  2. Addressed: Seven historical churches located in Asia Minor (cf. 2--3).
  3. Source: God the Father: Was (the beginning), is (First Coming), and is to come (Second Coming).<sup>8</sup>
  4. Ministers: The seven Spirits: Ministers of truth from God and to God.<sup>9</sup>
  5. Source: Paralleled to God the Father and the Seven Spirits is Jesus Christ.

G. The Main Characters

1. Jesus
  - a. The Messiah: The anointed One, the Man who acts on God's behalf, the ultimate Representative, the ultimate Ruler.
  - b. The Faithful Witness: Literally "the believing witness (or martyr)". The indication is that Jesus is the ultimate man who represented the word of God (believing or faithful) even to death in His testimony. The implication is that the believer is to identify with Jesus and imitate Him.
  - c. The Firstborn of the dead: All men must die as the judgment on the first creation. Jesus is the first of the resurrection of all the believers. All believers know they will also be resurrected since Jesus was.
  - d. Ruler of the kings of the earth: Perhaps a reference to Isaiah 52:13-15, Jesus is the obedient One who has been resurrected to rule over all the kings of the earth, no matter how great.
  - e. The Savior: Jesus has not only made Himself Ruler but has loved man enough to have died an unjust death so that they could have their sins removed.

2. The Seven Churches

- a. Released from the judgment of sins through Jesus (1:5b).

*It must be that the churches when viewed as a whole are saved churches, although individuals within each church may not be saved. The church, as a group, is similar in that way to the nation Israel. The nation was a saved nation through the Passover, but not all individuals in the nation were saved.*

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<sup>8</sup> It is very clear that the basic dispensations are presented here in God's visitation. He created the world in Gen. 1, brought forth new life in His Son at the First Coming (John 1) and will return to execute judgment in His ultimate representative (Rev. 1). This is not a new theme for John as he referred to Jesus as the Revelation of the Father in Creation (the Word, John 1:1), in His first appearance (John 8) and in His return (John 14).

<sup>9</sup> The precise identity of these Spirits and their purpose is difficult. They do operate on behalf of God and represent Him, even being sent out to the earth (1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6). If there is an Old Testament referent for this, this author is not aware of it. The most common one is Isaiah 11:2 which utilizes The Holy Spirit and then utilizes a different meaning of spirit (Isaiah's is a disposition, Revelation's is an actual Being), and the number of uses of 'spirit' is seven only if the translator manipulates it (four uses of *spirit*, applied to seven nouns, but non-equivalent). This would seem to require manipulation of the message to make it fit.

- b. Rulers and mediators of God's word to the world.

*John is paraphrasing Exodus 19:5 (βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα) here in 1:6 (βασιλείαν ἱερείς). The question is how John is using this verse to apply clearly to the church. John is not the only apostle to use this verse in relationship to the church. Peter used it in 1 Peter 2:9 to apply directly to the church (although his addressees were Jewish Christians). It must be noted that the church is exercising Israel's ministry during this period in light of Israel's apostasy. That ministry is the testimony of the revelation of God to the world.*

- H. The Theological Basis for the Book of Revelation (1:7): The Return of "a Son of Man" to Receive the Kingdom of God in the Nation Israel.

- A. "Behold, he is coming with the clouds":

*This quotation from Daniel 7:13 speaks of the time when "a Son of Man" (the Messiah in Daniel) will return to receive the kingdom. John sees this One in 1:13. The Book of Revelation is in essence saying that the reader knows who the One is and has seen Him validated in the First Coming and now is the time for His Second Coming.*

- B. "and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the families of the land<sup>10</sup> will mourn over Him"<sup>11</sup>

*This reference to Zechariah 12:10ff. indicates the time when Israel will recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah and will mourn.*

- C. Summary: The Restoration of Israel in their Messiah

*The Theme of Revelation is that the Messiah is about to return and restore the Kingdom of God on earth in His nation Israel.*

*The statement by God in 1:8 demonstrates the control of time and the establishment of the Father as the ultimate One. Alpha and Omega indicate the beginning and the end (of the revelation of theological time on earth). Since He was at the beginning, appeared in Christ, He will appear once more to come (Zech. 14:1ff.) to rescue His people.*

- II. The Things Which You Have Seen (1:9-20)

- A. Seven Golden Lampstands: The seven churches (1:20).

*The lampstand indicated Israel's priesthood (light) to the nations. In Israel's apostasy the church will carry forth that representation.*

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<sup>10</sup> Based on Zech. 12:10 ff. this is a more exact translation than "tribes of the earth."

<sup>11</sup> Note that in Rev. 7:4-8 where the 144,000 are listed, that each tribe is listed. This could be a reference to "all the tribes of the land". However there does not appear to be any mourning listed in this passage.

B. The One Speaking with John (1:12-16)

1. One like a Son of Man (Daniel 7:13):

*Ruler over Israel over the nations and creation on behalf of the Father, promised from Genesis 1:26, 28; 3:15, 2 Samuel 7.*

2. The Revealer of the End of the Times of the Gentiles

*The listing of attributes conforms closely to the revealer in Dan. 10 who appeared like a man.*

Rev. 1:13b-15

13 clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle.

14 And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire;

15 and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

Dan. 10:5-6

5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a *belt of pure gold of Uphaz.*

6 His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.

*The point of the revealer in Dan. 10 was to reveal to Daniel what was to come with regard to future Gentile kingdoms with regard to the Times of the Gentiles. Daniel 11--12 describes this (from Persia to Greece to Rome to Israel's final kingdom).*

*The point of the Revealer here (Jesus) is to reveal to John the rest of The Times of the Gentiles from John's day through the Israel's final kingdom.<sup>12</sup>*

3. The Representative of the Father

*The reference to "white hair" is from Daniel 7:9, but there it is a characteristic of the Father. The point is that the Son's appearance here is just like the Father's. He represents Him fully (cf. John 14:7-9).*

4. The Executer of Vengeance on the enemies

*The reference to a two-edged sword is Psalm 149:6 which indicates the vengeance of God going forth through His representatives to execute judgment on the enemies.*

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<sup>12</sup> The question of whether the revealer in Daniel is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus or not has had various proponents. Clearly, the One appearing in Daniel is not acting as Messiah but is acting as a revealer (and a protector as he aids Michael in restraining the Prince of Persia). The general theology of the Old Testament is that angels brought the revelation but *not* the ultimate revelation of the Son (cf. Heb. 1:1-2, 2:2). Thus, it would be very difficult to place Jesus as this one in Daniel.

C. The Angels: The Seven stars

*These angels are over the seven churches.<sup>13</sup> Angels in the Book of Daniel had as their purpose being the spiritual counterpart to the ruler over the nation. They represent them in the spiritual realm Michael was the angel over Israel and provided protection for them against the angel(demon) over the Gentile nation that was trying to persecute Israel.*

*In addition Daniel speaks of angels who were communicators. The function of the angels mentioned in 1:1 seems to be that function. It is also the case as John is told to write. Writing the angel is similar to writing the church itself.*

D. Summary: Jesus and the priestly church.

1. Jesus: He is the ultimate Ruler. It is belief in Him and the mediation of Him to the world that will determine the criteria by which the churches are judged (recall that their position is to mediate God to the world in Israel's absence).

- a. Faith: The church must be faithful to the revelation and person of Jesus Christ in His life and death (i.e., belief).
- b. Imitation (Works): Imitating Jesus, that is, *mediating Christ (testimony)* even to an unjust death, is the ultimate point of the believer. This includes a holy life as well as a testimony.

Unjust death: Satan will overcome him by execution of death, he will overcome Satan by his belief in the blood of the Lamb.

III. Chapters 2--3: The Seven Churches as PRIESTS TO THE WORLD.

A. The place of chapters 2--3 in the Book.

1. Church not mentioned directly in rest of book (until 22:16).
2. Connection between those in 2--3, and those in 4--21.
  - a. Similar Deuteronomy judgments.
  - b. Similar Judge purging His people.
  - c. The believers place in the ultimate reward (similar rewards).
  - d. Church to persevere during Satan's rule. Restoration to prevail.

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<sup>13</sup> Many do not hold this view since a proposed difficulty of this view is that Jesus instructs John to address the message to the angel of the seven churches, and then seemingly speaks to the churches themselves. To solve this problem many have proposed that "angels" should be translated "messengers" which would be the pastors. Thus it is written to a pastor on behalf of his church (the use of "you" is never plural and is always singular, thus indicating a singular pastor, angel or church as a whole unit). The difficulty with a single pastor over a church is it is unknown in the New Testament as an exhorted Biblical structure. Therefore, the basis for using pastor here would be new revelation, and since this is not his point, it would be without contextual basis.

In addition the use of ἀγγέλος in the Book of Revelation overwhelmingly supports the use of "angels". However, if one notes that the Book is technically an epistle, within which John utilizes narrative, then it is quite easy to see how the churches got the letter. No church got only its portion. Each church got the whole book. Within this epistle, John describes Jesus telling John to write to the angel of the church. Thus each church can see their individual message by hearing from John what Jesus told the angel. Thus the proposed difficulty is removed when one notes the format of the book.

3. The lampstand indicated Israel's priesthood (light) to the nations. In Israel's apostasy the church will carry forth that representation.
  - a. The churches fail or succeed based on that representation.
  - b. This representation was the only indication to the pagans of the God of the Bible. Christ had represented Him perfectly. Now the churches needed to reflect Christ.
  - c. "Overcoming" is the exhortation. It's basis is belief in Jesus Christ and is thus reflected by a *priestly* testimony concerning Jesus Christ, even to death (as He did) (12:11, 15:2).
  - d. The concern is not the loss of salvation but the loss of the priestly ability to minister for Christ. The righteous works are those which reflect the love (belief) of Christ from one's heart.

## EPHESUS

Attribute	Holds the seven stars in His right hand, Walks among the seven golden lampstands
Praise	I know your deeds, toil & perseverance You cannot endure evil men, tested apostles - found false You have endured for my names sake You hate the Nicolaitans
Criticism	Left your first love
Exhortation	Remember from where you have fallen Repent and do first deeds
Judgment	I am coming I will remove your lampstand out of its place
Overcomer's Reward	Eats of the tree of life in the Paradise of God

### Interpretation

Lampstand (Exodus 25:31-37)	A symbol of the priesthood (light) which Israel was to be to the world with God walking in her midst (Isa.42:6, 60:1-3, Lev. 26:12). The church, unlike Israel, was a separate, autonomous assembly. The lampstands are clearly here the churches, who are local, performing their deeds as priests to the world with varying degrees of success/failure. Priests were to represent God through His word to the world.
Stars (Exodus 23:20-23):	Angels of the seven churches. This was common as the nations had angels in the Old Testament. Also in Daniel 10 there is the "prince of Persia" who is fighting with the man who appears, and Michael, one of the chief princes (of Israel 10:21) fights with him. Thus it appears that the prince is an angelic (or demonic) being in charge of the particular nation
Left your first love (Deut. 6:5):	This O.T. exhortation was to the nation Israel to love God with all your heart and soul. The connection of this phrase with the phrase concerning testing of apostles refers to Deut. 13:1-3 (Deut 18:9-14) which was the testing of prophets to see if they were true. The purpose of this testing was to see if they loved the Lord. The loss of love was indicating mechanical obedience instead of true covenant love of God (cf. Deut.6:5, 7:9, 10:12, 11:1, 13:22, 13:3, 19:9, 30:6,16,20). They were to avoid self-righteousness in the land (Deut. 9:1-10:11, esp. 9:5) and remember what the Lord had said and done (Deut. 30:1-2). (For "remember and repent," see Psalm 22:27).  Hosea 2:7 refers to Hosea's wife (representing Israel) returning to her husband after a fruitless pursuit of other lovers.
Or else I am coming to you:	It is interesting that the church is faced with imminent judgment "unless it repents." It is not enough to be good, to hold



doctrines, one must exemplify true love from their hearts.

The issue of Christ's coming is used throughout the Book of Revelation. It is based on 1:7. During the church age Christ is coming (not physically) in judgment. In other words it is He alone who will execute chastisement and removal of the churches. However it is interesting to note that His coming (1:7) begins with the judgment on the churches, since it is only in them that He can be seen by the world.

The overcomer (cf. 12:11)

The overcomer is the one who overcomes Satan as a seed of the woman (responds to the revelation). In Genesis 3 it was to trust in the coming Messiah seen in the sacrifice (unjust death for others). Abel was the first overcomer, dying for his testimony in the sacrifice (Matt. 23:35, Heb. 11:4, 1 John 3:12). The overcomer in Revelation is one who believes unto death.<sup>14</sup>

Eat of the tree of life

It is interesting that the tree of life shows up at the end of Revelation. Thus the overcomer will overcome the devil and his attacks to enjoy life with God at the end. The point of the eating of the tree of life is the response to God's Word. Eve had responded selfishly, rejecting the Word in favor of her own reasonings. Now God asks them to respond from love (unselfish) and they will enjoy the tree.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Gen. 3:24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.

If the Ephesians do not repent, will they not enjoy the tree? As is seen from Revelation 22:14, all who have washed their robes (believed in the blood of the Lamb) have access to the tree of life. John is not indicating that believers who do not repent of their lack of love will not enjoy the tree, but that their ultimate state is one of *life* (representing God), and thus they need to represent Him now with His love. The negative judgment is the removal of the lampstand (not the denial of the tree), which indicates a removal from the possibility of representing God in this life.

#### Placement by attribute into the remainder of the Book of Revelation (4-22)

Rev. 22:2 in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was **the tree of life**, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Rev. 22:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the **tree of life**, which is in the Paradise of God.<sup>1</sup>

The overcomer is guaranteed eternal life in the kingdom through the eating of the tree of life.

#### Main Point

The point to the Church at Ephesus was that they should abandon their self-righteous efforts, return to a humble love of Christ, serving from their heart.

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<sup>14</sup> Death is Satan's overcoming of the believer. It is temporary. He was able to overcome man by having him die (lose representation). New life is God's overcoming of Satan. One overcomes Satan by belief (he gets life) and then testifies to that life (lives life). Death does not permanently overcome him, since he is resurrected by God to live again. Thus Satan is overcome.

## SMYRNA

Attribute	The First and Last, who was dead and has come to life
Praise	Under tribulation and poverty but are rich And the blasphemy of Jews (and are not), but the synagogue of Satan
Criticism	
Exhortation	Do not fear. About to be cast into prison for ten days. Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life
Judgment	
Overcomer's Reward	Shall not be hurt by the Second death.

### Interpretation

The First and Last . . . dead and has come to life	The attribute here has to do with the eternity of Christ, who is the focal point of God's plan from Genesis to Revelation. It will apply specifically to the imitation by the church. They are being confronted with death and should be like Jesus. They will live again as He does.
Jews who say they are and are not"	Similar to the anti-christs in 1 John. Particularly they are like the Pharisees of John 8 who said that they were children of God through genealogy, that is, born of Abraham. Jesus told them that they were children of Satan due to their lack of inner conformance. Here he alludes to the same thing. True Jews are those genealogical Israelites who worship Christ. False Jews are like Cain and Esau who rejected God, and are of Satan.
10 days	Here, as in Daniel 1, believers would be tested for 10 days.
be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life	is parallel to the line in verse 8, "was dead and has come to life." Jesus had died and would rule in the new resurrected life." Like Him the believer will reign with Him in new resurrected life. This is a crown of rule in New Heavens and Earth centered at Jerusalem. The point again is that life is the ability to represent Jesus Christ. These believers are being exhorted to disregard this physical life for real life. The crown which is life (representation) awaits them.
synagogue of Satan	This is a continuation of the "false Jews". The emphasis is that they are meeting to worship Satan, the ruler of this world and are not true Jews who worship Christ. <sup>15</sup>

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whenever a believer possesses new life.

<sup>15</sup> Note Rev. 12:17 where the true Jews are those who are believers in Christ yet also of Jewish descent.

crown of life	The crown is rulership. The <i>stephanos</i> here indicates the victor's crown, one which is earned through worthiness. Thus this is the reward of rule which is given as a share of His victorious rule. The "life" is representation of God. Thus, due to his representation here, he is awarded representative rule in the future.
not hurt by the second death	The second death is the entrance into the lake of fire (20:14). The statement is that they will not enter the lake of fire.

Placement by attribute into the remainder of the Book of Revelation (4-22)

Rev. 4:4            And around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones / saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and **golden crowns on their heads.**

Rev. 20:14        And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is **the second death, the lake of fire.**

This one who is faithful to death is given rulership, awarded to him in heaven. The twenty-four elders are the only<sup>16</sup> ones (other than Christ and God) who are referred to as having *stephanos* in the Book of Revelation. Thus, these faithful ones are awarded their crown of life and are in heaven during the Tribulation Period. The overcomer will not be involved in the second death of Rev. 20:16, and by contrast will be living forever.

Main Point

The point to the Church at Smyrna was that the second death would not affect them. They should not worry about the first death, and thus should be faithful.

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<sup>16</sup> In 9:7 the locusts have on their heads something that looked *like* crowns (*stephanos*). John is not saying that they actually had *stephanos* on their heads, just something which looked like *stephanos*.

"The appearance of the **locusts** was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men."

## PERGAMUM

Attribute	The holder of the sharp two-edged sword
Praise	You hold fast my name where Satan's throne is, did not deny even though Antipas was killed where Satan dwells.
Criticism	Some hold the teachings of Balaam (Num. 22--25, 31:16) putting stumbling blocks
Exhortation	Repent,
Judgment	I come quickly and will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.
Overcomer's Reward	Given the hidden manna a white stone, and a new name written on the stone, unknown except to him.

### Interpretation

The two-edged sword	Psalm 149:6 is the reference here and refers to the time when God executes judgment on the enemies through his people. Within His church the people were also to judge and were not doing it. There were in the church those who sought to disrupt the church and its purpose. The church at Pergamum was to judge the insiders and eliminate those who would lead them astray with immoralities and other pleasures of the world as well as compromise with idol worship which placed their faithfulness in question.
The hidden manna	A reference to God's provision of food to Israel in the wilderness <sup>17</sup> (Ex. 16). In John 6 Jesus refers to that manna when He speaks concerning Himself as the bread of life. It is He who gives life. Here again the overcomer is promised eternal food.
The "stone" with a name written on it	Memorial stones were placed when Israel crossed the Jordan on dry land. Zech. 3:9 refers to a stone which has an inscription on it regarding the removal of sins. The name (Is. 62:2) is based on one's reflection of God's righteousness (the testimony of Jesus Christ) in one's life. Memorial stone would indicate His purity in devotion to Christ.
Where Satan's throne is . . . Where Satan dwells . . .	Ever since Satan (as a serpent) reversed the rule in Genesis 3, he has been ruler of this world (cf. John 16:11). The implication is that God understands their plight, persecution in the face of faithfulness. <sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Some of the manna was placed in the Ark of the Covenant for a memorial (Ex. 16:32-34, Heb. 9:4). However, the "hidden" does not seem to refer to that since it was not hidden (secret is the sense), since everyone knew it was there.

<sup>18</sup> Historically several other solutions have been proposed to these references of Satan's throne and his dwelling (Source: Dr. Stanley Toussaint, DTS Notes, Doctoral Studies).

The teachings of Balaam                      In Numbers 22--25, 31:16, Balaam introduced the Israelites into sexual immorality with pagan women for personal financial gain. Purging is required (Deut. 25:4-9). It was a sword which brought an end to Balaam's plague (Num. 25:7-9).

Placement by attribute into the remainder of the Book of Revelation (4-22)

Rev. 19:12                      And His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon His head *are* many diadems; and He has a **name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself.**<sup>19</sup>

The overcomer will participate with Christ in the Second Coming.

Main Point

The point to the Church at Pergamum was that they needed to judge the sexually and theological fornicators, while they continue to stay faithful to Christ.

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1. The altar of Zeus. It looked like a large throne and has been moved to a museum in Berlin.
  2. The worship of the Goddess Aselepius. A temple existed in Pergamum.
  3. The center of Emperor worship. It was the first city to erect a temple to Rome and the emperor (29BC). Augustus was the emperor at this time.

Historically any of these may have existed and may have been a local focal point which reflects the statement of John. Biblically Satan would be the ruler who influenced all of these worship items, and any of these would have been an indication of Satan's rule over man. However, John's referent here is based on Genesis 3 and is the only thing one can be assured of in the text. Historically many referents may fit yet are ultimately unknowable.

<sup>19</sup> There is no direct reference to this attribute being that of a believer later. However, frequently in the Book there are attributes given to the believer that are originally the possession of Christ (cf. 2:26ff., where the overcomer is given the rule possessed by Christ as a fulfillment of Psalm 2). The point is that the believer appears to be sharing with Christ this "new name" attribute, which would place him with Christ at the Second Coming. The identification with Christ, and thus the sharing totally with Him, which includes being with Him, is strong in the book.

### THYATIRA

Attribute	Eyes like a flame of fire and His feet are like burnished bronze.
Praise	Your deeds love and faith and service and perseverance. Deeds greater than those of the first. Some do not hold her teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan
Criticism	Tolerate the woman Jezebel, prophetess (opposite of Ephesus who tried false apostles) leads bond-servants astray, they commit acts of immorality, and eat things sacrificed to idols.
Exhortation	Repent (Jezebel), (the rest) are to hold fast what you have until I come.
Judgment	Jezebel is cast upon a bed of sickness. Those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation (Deut. 27--28). Her children will be killed with pestilence (Jer. 21:6, Ezek. 33:26-27, Also Lev. 26, Deut. 28). God will give each one according to his deeds.
Overcomer's Reward	To him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces (Psalm 2:8-9), as I have received authority from My Father, and I will give him the morning star. The overcomer here has a share of rule over the earth along with the King of Kings, the Son of Man, who Himself overcame.

#### Interpretation

Jezebel	The same name as the woman who led Israel astray. She was a Canaanite woman who Ahab married and she introduced Canaanite worship to Israel (1 Kings 16:31). She sought the death of God's prophet Elijah when he called a curse on Ahab and Israel (1 Kings 19:1ff.). She counseled her husband in the death of Naboth to steal his vineyard. She ultimately died when Jehu had her thrown down (2 Kings 9:30-36). Her harlotries are referenced in 2 Kings 9:22. The sense here is that she is also teaching against the teachings of Christ and leading believers astray.
Authority over the nations . . . rule with a rod of iron . . .	Psalm 2 refers to these as being given to the Son (the Davidic ruler, ultimately Christ). It is clear that this use indicates that the believer will share in the rule of Christ over the nations. <sup>20</sup>

While the church had many attributes, it allowed false prophets who advocated other beliefs contrary to Christ to exist within the church. These beliefs would lead other Christians astray, keeping them from representing Christ. Jezebel, as a woman, is a false religion, a harlot. Unlike the 144,000, those who commit adultery with her are not faithful to the Lamb (14:5). This church should have tested the prophets as Ephesus did according to Deuteronomy 13:1.

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<sup>20</sup> This is another indication of the joint-heirship with Israel. The rule over the nations was assigned to Israel (Gen. 12:1-3). The church believer here is sharing with Israel that rule which Christ has taken as regards Psalm 2.

Those who did not hold the false teachings were to stay faithful to the word. These would represent Christ as ruler when He reigned in the Kingdom.

Placement by attribute into the remainder of the Book of Revelation (4-22)

Rev. 12:5        And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is **to rule all the nations with a rod of iron**; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

Rev. 19:15       And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it **He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron**; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

Main Point

The church should continue its faithfulness yet execute judgment on those who follow false teachings and particularly those who teach falsely.

## SARDIS

Attribute	He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.
Praise	You have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments
Criticism	You have a name that you are alive, and you are dead. Deeds are not completed in the sight of My God.
Exhortation	Remember therefore what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent.
Judgment	I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.
Overcomer's Reward	Clothed in white garments, and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

### Interpretation

white garments	Defiled garments were characteristic of sins of unfaithfulness which stained the white garment they had been given at salvation. What has occurred is that these priests have not been faithful and have not acted in a worthy manner to the commission they have been given. Zechariah 3 describes the removal of the filthy garments from the priests and the change to clean garments, followed by an exhortation to follow the Lord's way. Should he stain his garment, he must return to the blood to wash it once more (22:14). <sup>21</sup>
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Within the church at Sardis was a faithful remnant. It was these who were assured of their being clothed with white garments. The overcomer here is one who keeps the testimony of the Lord in his life.

### Placement by attribute into the remainder of the Book of Revelation (4-22)

Rev. 4:4	And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, <b>clothed in white garments</b> , and golden crowns on their heads.
Rev. 16:15	("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake <b>and keeps his garments</b> , lest he walk about naked and men see his shame.")
Rev. 13:8	And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, <b>everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.</b>

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<sup>21</sup> The question always occurs as to the statement "I will not erase his name from the book of life." This is what is called a "litote". It is a statement of what will not occur, a guarantee. It is not equally able to be used in the converse. Litotes is defined as something that affirms by negating the opposite. Similarly in John 6:37, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out", Jesus is affirming to keep those who come to Him, as opposed to the Pharisees who cast out the blind man (John 10). Thus, here Jesus is affirming that the name will not be blotted out, not that the opposite could happen.



Rev. 20:15      And **if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life**, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The overcomer appears very quickly in heaven during the Tribulation Period on a throne with a white garment and crown as part of the 24 elders. The overcomer will participate in the eternal state and the eternal city as the Book of Life records his name through salvation to life (representation of God).

Main Point

The faithful at Sardis need to continue to represent Jesus Christ faithfully in their deeds. The others need to repent and ask for forgiveness and be restored.

## PHILADEPHIA

Attribute	He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens
Praise	You have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.
Criticism	
Exhortation	Hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.
Overcomer's Reward	A pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it any more, and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

### Interpretation

key of David who shuts . . . In Isaiah 22:22, Hilkiah received the Key of the house of David. This steward had complete control over the king's household and had the authority to refuse or grant entry to the presence of the king (as priests they were the only representatives of the king to the world).

Those who had persecuted the church would come down and bow at their feet, recognizing that they were indeed the priests of Christ (cf. Isa. 60:14). In any destruction of the nation, the remnant would be delivered.

### Placement by attribute into the remainder of the Book of Revelation (4-22)

Rev. 11:19 And **the temple of God which is in heaven was opened**; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

Rev. 21:22 **And I saw no temple in it**, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its **temple**.

Rev. 21:2 And I saw **the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.**

The phrase "the temple of My God" only occurs in a non-physical sense during the Great Tribulation and is existing in heaven. Rev. 21:22 indicates that there is no temple in the eternal state. Thus, these statements indicate the overcomer will be in the Temple of God in heaven during the Great Tribulation. Following the return of Christ, the overcomer is then identified with the City of God, the New Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup>

### Main Point

Philadelphia needs to continue in its representation of Christ to those who desire to come to Him, even in the face of persecution.

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<sup>22</sup> Note that New Jerusalem is referred to as "the bride" in Rev. 21.

## LAODICEA

Attribute	The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God
Praise	
Criticism	You are neither cold nor hot...you say 'I am rich, and have become wealthy and have need of nothing' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.
Exhortation	Buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eyesalve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.
Overcomer's Reward	Sits down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

### Interpretation

The shame of their nakedness	Genesis 3: Adam and Eve had separated themselves from God since He was holy and they were not. Thus they were naked and ashamed. (cf. 1 John 2:28).
Stand at the door and knock	Similar to John 10 (the Good Shepherd) where Jesus is referring to the true sheepfold, which the church is to represent. However, while in Jesus' sheepfold, the unbelievers were outside, now Jesus is outside, having been ignored through the self-contentment of the church.

The waters from the mountain streams were cold and refreshing. The hot mineral waters provided soothing health benefits. But lukewarm water would make one nauseous and the drinker would spit (lit.: "vomit") that water out of his mouth. So it was with those at Laodicea. They had returned to a reliance on their wealth as opposed to the wealth that Christ would give them. Now Christ asks entrance to His own church from the outside. Since He loved them He would discipline them (Prov. 3:12).

### Placement by attribute into the remainder of the Book of Revelation (4-22)

Rev. 4:4	And around the <b>throne</b> were twenty-four thrones; and <b>upon the thrones / saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments</b> , and golden crowns on their heads.
Rev. 11:16	And <b>the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones</b> before God, fell on their faces and worshipped God,
Rev. 16:15	("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake <b>and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame.</b> ")
Rev. 20:4	And <b>I saw thrones, and they sat upon them</b> , and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

The only ones ever sitting on thrones beside the Father and the Son in Revelation are the twenty-four elders and some unidentified throne-sitters in 20:4. The 24 elders must include the overcomers and thus are in heaven during the tribulation, and also show up in their rulership during the 1000 year kingdom.

Main Point

The Church at Laodicea was self-sufficient. They were rich physically and had no need of Jesus for their success. They needed to repent of their self-effort and turn to Jesus and ask Him for all their needs, which meant His imputed righteousness. They were to live on that.