

REVELATION Chs. 2-3

Introduction to the Letters to 7 Churches in Asia

Author: Lord Jesus Christ

Date: c. 95 AD

Recipients: 7 Churches in Asia; Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (**Rev. 1:11**)

Addressees: To “the angels” of the churches (**Rev. 1:20**). These “angels” are charged with various sins in the body of the letters; since elect angels do not sin, these “angels” are most likely human “messengers”, perhaps pastors/leaders of these churches.

Enduring Relevance for Churches/Believers Today:

These 7 churches were real, historic churches in 1st century Asia; they really had the characters/issues described in these letters. And yet, these 7 churches were providentially selected by the Lord Jesus Christ to be the recipients of 7 unique letters in order to provide (in some sense) a *complete* message to all churches (i.e., believers) during the present Church Age.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches...” (**Revelation 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22**)

Outline of the Letters

- I. Salutation.** Includes one or more (metaphorical) titles for Christ from vision of Rev. 1 and appropriate for the message to the church. Name of church addressed also has meaning relevant to its character/situation.
- II. Commendation.** 2 of the churches receive no commendation (Sardis and Laodicea).
- III. Criticism.** 2 of the churches receive no criticism (Smyrna and Philadelphia).
- IV. Exhortation.** Instruction and/or warning for the church directed to either whole congregation or faithful remnant.
- V. Promise.** Each letter closes with one or more promises for individual believers, conditionally extended to “him that overcometh” (cf. **1 John 5:5**).

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