



1



2

“Those who do not know suffering through oppression shall have great difficulty understanding this letter from Patmos.”

Alan Boesak, "Comfort and Protest-The Apocalypse from a South African Perspective" (1987), 38.

3

KEY THEME

‘Surely I come quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!’

Revelation 22:20b

4

KEY VERSES

¹⁹ “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;”

¹⁴ “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.”

Revelation 1:19; 17:14

5

Use Scripture to interpret Scripture

Rather than trusting the church fathers and their writings, we should crawl under the wings of our mother hen, the Lord Christ, and look to him alone. The heavenly Father said, “*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.*” (Mat 17:5) ¹

We do not place our total reliance on the Church Fathers for doctrine as if they could articulate it more clearly than the Word of God Himself as found in the Scriptures. ²

¹ Martin Luther, “Trusting Christ Instead of People”, *Martin Luther, Faith Alone: A Daily Devotional*, James C. Galvin, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) October 14.

² Martin Chemnitz, *Enchiridion - The Lord's Supper, The Lord's Prayer, Chemnitz's Works (Volume Five)*. Translated by Luther Poellot, J.A.O. Preus, and Georg Williams, trans. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2007) p. 149.

6

Use church fathers to validate

1. Numerous Church Fathers taught that the John of Revelation was the apostle, the son of Zebedee. They placed John on the isle of Patmos, and later returning to Ephesus. E.g.:
 - Papias (c.60-130)
 - Justin Martyr (c.100-c.165)
 - Melito (ca. unknown -120)
 - Irenaeus (c.125-202)
 - Clement of Alexandria (c.150-c.215)
 - Tertullian (c.160 - c.225)
 - Hippolytus of Rome (c.170–c.235)
 - Origen (c.185–c.254)
 - Eusebius of Caesarea (c.265-c.340)
2. Church Fathers considered Revelation to be scriptural, citing and quoting from John to explain theological points. E.g.:
 - Justin Martyr (100-165 AD) explained the “thousand years” of Revelation 20:2-7.
 - Victorinus (ca. 270 - ca. 303) wrote a “Commentary on the Apocalypse”.
 - Augustine of Hippo (354-430) cited and quoted Revelation the City of God.

7

CAUTION

“It would seem like wisdom,
but for the **warning** in my heart.”

(Frodo, The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring)

The book of Revelation has been called everything from drivel to a masterpiece. Because it is both prophetic and symbolic, it is prone to being interpreted to suit the interpreter's world view, and thus has the widest possible divergence of explanation. Most people avoid it altogether. Luther and Calvin hated it.

Modern atheistic and secular scholarship questions everything about it, including its author, its dating, and even its message.

So what should we do about the book of Revelation?

8

CAUTION

"It would seem like wisdom,
but for the **warning** in my heart."

(Frodo, The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring)

The book of Revelation has been called everything from drivel to a masterpiece. Because it is both prophetic and symbolic, it is prone to being interpreted to suit the interpreter's world view, and thus has the widest possible divergence of explanation. Most people avoid it altogether. Luther and Calvin hated it.

Modern atheistic and secular scholarship questions everything about it, including its author, its dating, and even its message.

Maybe it's time to listen to Frodo.

9



I miss more than one thing in this book [of Revelation], and this makes me hold it to be neither apostolic nor prophetic. ... There is one sufficient reason for me not to think highly of it - Christ is not taught or known in it. ... I stick to the books which give me Christ clearly and purely.



Martin Luther, preference to Revelation
in his 1522 translation of the New Testament

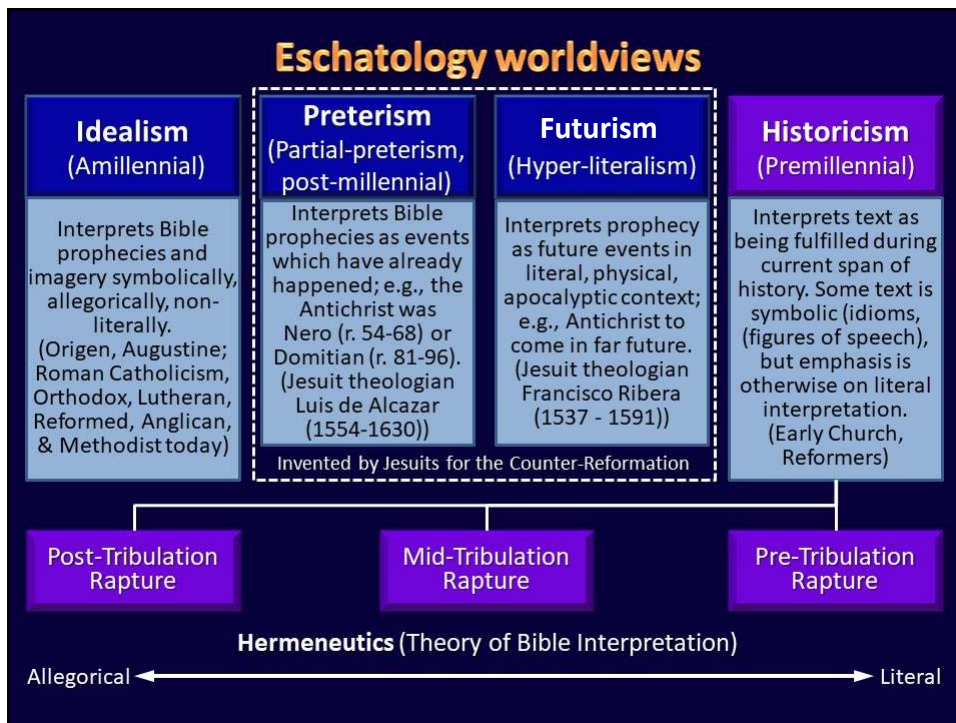
10

Common mistakes in reading Revelation

1. Emphasizing almost exclusively the identification of every name, place, and person mentioned in the book and relating them to today's current events;
2. Assuming that we have the ability to clearly interpret allegory and imagery [relating to future reality] well and definitively;
3. Believing that historical settings are insignificant, and that everything pertains only to God's Kingdom today;
4. Believing that the historical [and prophetic] settings can be skipped over in preference to modern day interpretations;
5. Ignoring the book entirely as "too-hard-to-explain" or as pertaining only to Christian character and Church life;
6. Interpreting it on the basis of some external philosophical system [e.g., dogma, tradition, or eschatology worldview].

Mark Brighton, *Revelation* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2012) p. 8.

11



12

Major Schools of Interpretation of Revelation

Amillennial (Idealist)	Preterist
<p>This method says that the book does not describe any specific events but rather the great battle between the forces of good and evil that repeats itself throughout history. These forces are viewed as opposing agents of Satan and God locked in spiritual battle. The book is to be taken allegorically, not literally.</p>	<p>It views the book as completely fulfilled in the past. According to Summers (1951), there are two distinct schools of thought. Right-wing preterists apply the book to Domitian (95 AD) with a few applying it to Jerusalem. Left-wing preterists apply it to Nero (pre-70 AD), deny its inspiration, and say it lacks any spiritual value.</p>
Futurist	Historicism (continuous historical)
<p>This school is applies most of Revelation to the "end times" (Walvoord, 1977). They are hyper-literalists, who claim that the book is to be taken literally and will literally occur sometime in the future. This wrests the book from its historical setting, as it was clearly meant to encourage early Christians facing persecution.</p>	<p>This method views Revelation as both a literal and symbolic forecast of world history from the time of John to the end time (and beyond). Some reformers used this school of interpretation to find Papal and Catholic persecution of the reformers in scripture (Rome is the city ruling over kings, etc.).</p>

13

Thinking through the maze

Understanding of Revelation will be influenced by a person's method of interpretation. That's a fact!

One way to overcome one's prejudice may be to ask:

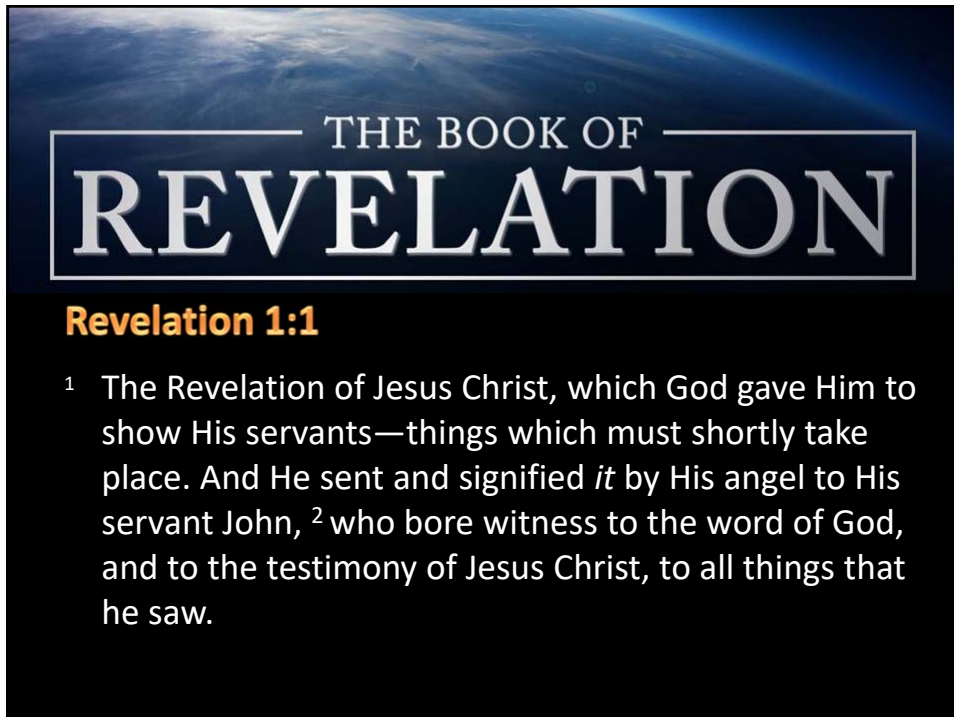
1. "What would the passage/book have meant to the people to whom it was addressed?"
2. "What would the passage/book have meant to people during the past ~2,000 years?"
3. "What will the passage mean to future people yet to come (assuming, of course, that the world exists)?"
4. Now ask, "What does this passage mean to me?"

14

Simplified Guidelines of Bible Interpretation

1. Consider the authors, addressees and their cultures, lives and times.
2. **The Golden Rule.** When the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense. Take every word at its primary, ordinary, literal meaning, unless the immediate context clearly indicates otherwise.
3. **The Law of First Mention.** The first occurrence of a doctrine may be required to discern its fundamental inherent meaning.
4. **The Law of Double Reference.** The Bible is full of similar or related ideas and patterns, usually separated from one another by long periods of times, which can be blended to form a single picture.
5. **The Law of Recurrence.** Recurrent events or accounts usually give added details, similar to an artist who “blocks out the portrait” of a person at the first sitting and adds details at subsequent sittings.
6. **The Law of Context.** A text apart from its context is a pretext.
7. **The Law of Paronomasia** (*aka*, watch out for plays on words).

15



THE BOOK OF
REVELATION

Revelation 1:1

¹ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

16

³ Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.

Greeting the Seven Churches

⁴ John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,
⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

17

Vision of the Son of Man

⁹ I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,
¹¹ saying,

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and,

"What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,
¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

¹⁴ His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;
¹⁵ His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

18

¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength.

¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.

But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands:

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

19

PROMISE

“Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.”

(Revelation 1:3)

20

DANGER

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

(Revelation 22:18-19/ESV)

21

The Divine Outline of the book of Revelation

¹⁹Write the things which thou hast seen,

and the things which are,

and the things which shall be hereafter,

(Revelation 1:19)

22

The Divine Outline of the book of Revelation

¹⁹Write the things which thou hast seen,

The Vision of Christ Chapter 1

and the things which are,

The Seven Churches Chapters 2,3

and the things which shall be hereafter,

What follows after the Churches .. Chapters 4-22

(Revelation 1:19)

23

The book of Revelation

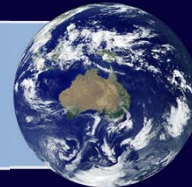
THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN
(Chapter 1)

- John' vision of the exalted Christ, 1



THINGS WHICH ARE
(Chapters 2-3)

- The messages to the seven churches, 2-3



THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER
(Chapters 4-22)

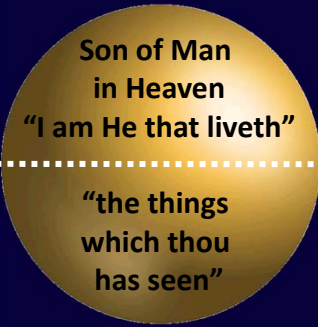
- Throne in heaven, 4-5
- Tribulation on earth, 6-19
- The Kingdom of Christ, 20
- The new heavens and earth



24

The Outline of the book of Revelation

PAST



Son of Man
in Heaven
"I am He that liveth"


"the things
which thou
has seen"

Rev. 1
Christ in Glory

25

The Outline of the book of Revelation

PAST **PRESENT**



Son of Man
in Heaven
"I am He that liveth"

"the things
which thou
has seen"

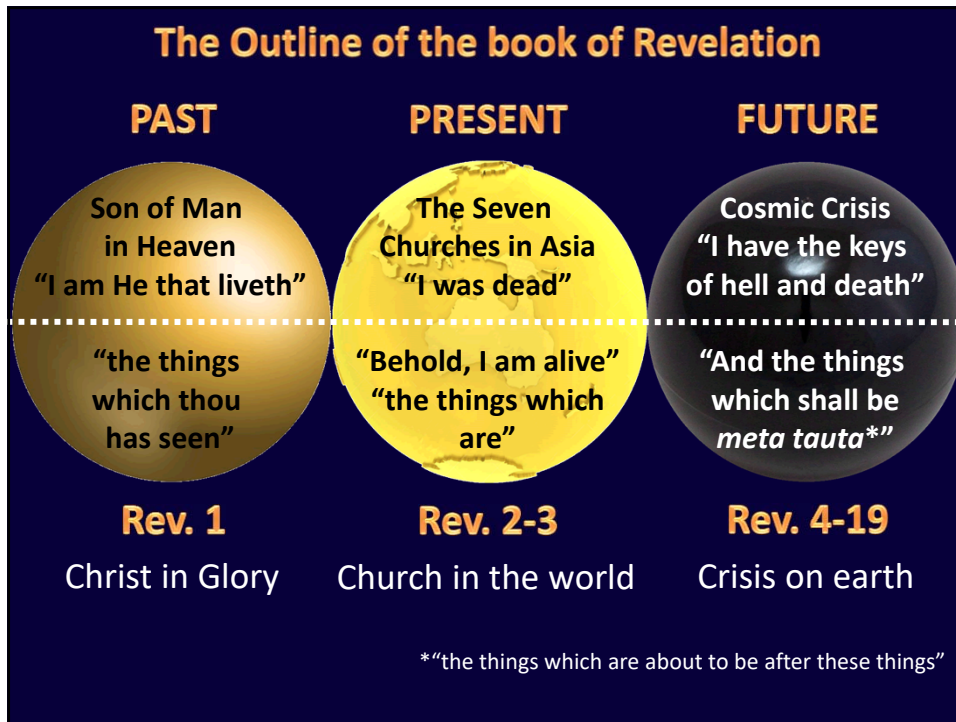
Rev. 1
Christ in Glory

The Seven
Churches in Asia
"I was dead"

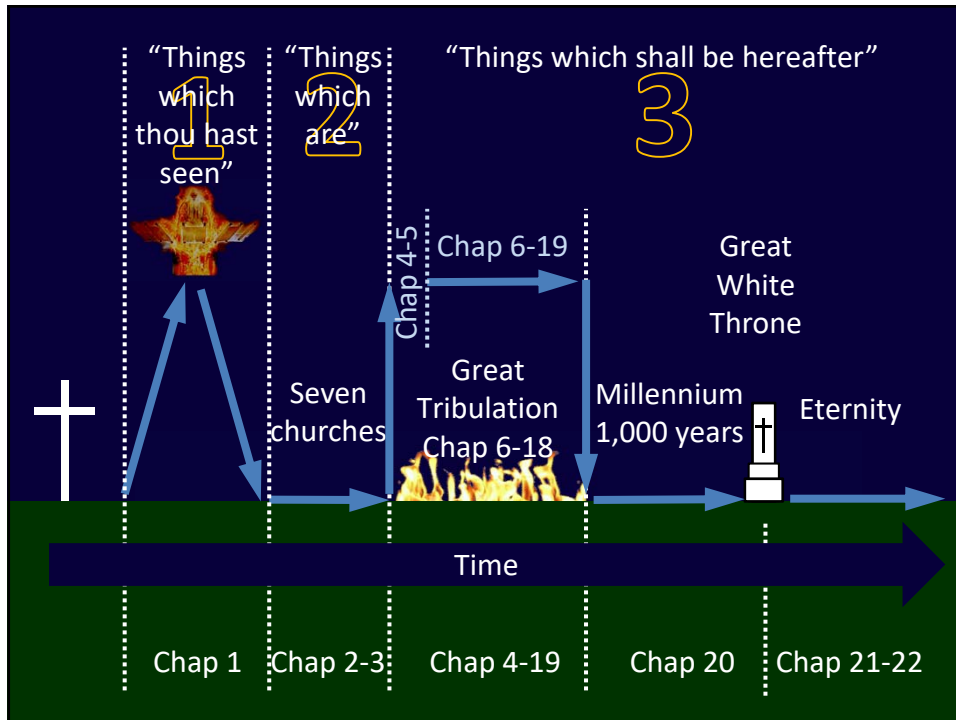
"Behold, I am alive"
"the things which
are"

Rev. 2-3
Church in the world

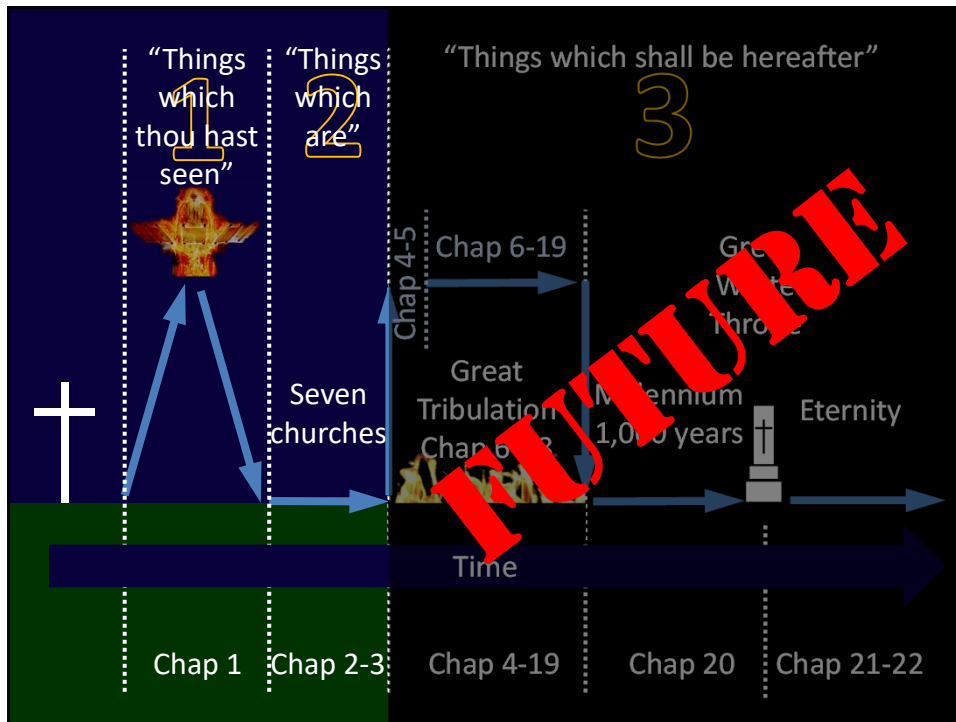
26



27



28



29

WARNING

1. Revelation begins with the Cross.
2. Chapter 1 shows the glorified Christ.
3. The "church" in Ch. 1 & 3 is on earth.
4. The "church" in Ch. 4 & 5 is in heaven.
5. The Great Tribulation on earth in Ch. 6-18.
6. Christ returns in Ch. 19, and judges.
7. Christ reigns 1,000 years in Ch. 20.
8. Eternity begins in Ch. 21-22.

PAST
PRESENT
FUTURE

30

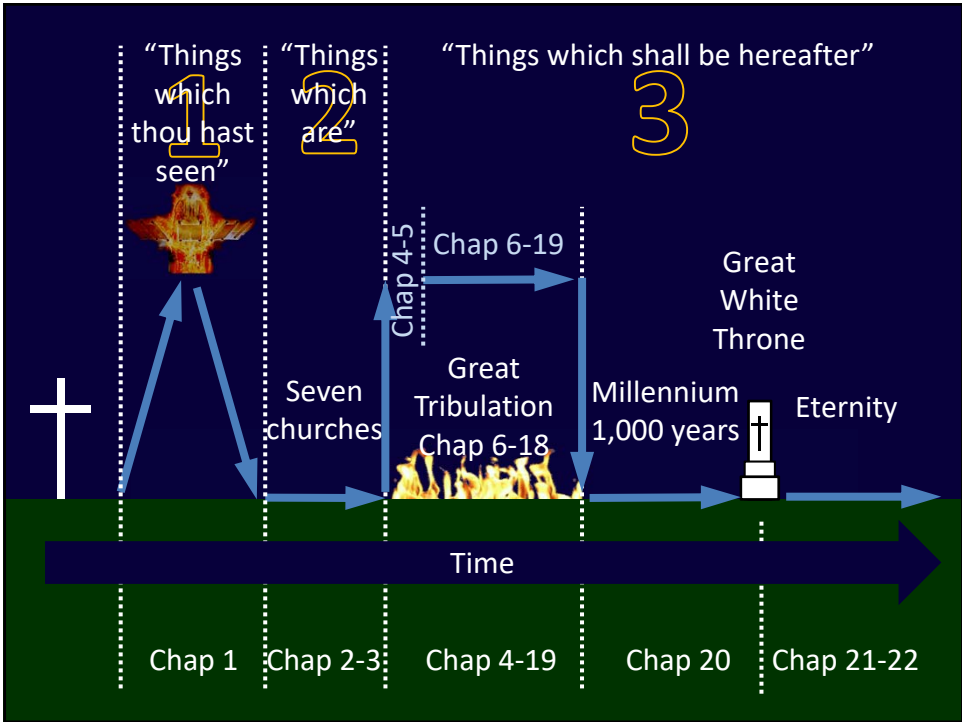
“I would rather lose now and win later than to win now and lose later.”

John Calvin

“I've read the last page of the Bible. It's all going to turn out all right.”

Billy Graham

31




32

The book of Revelation


THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN
(Chapter 1)

- John' vision of the exalted Christ, 1



THINGS WHICH ARE
(Chapters 2-3)

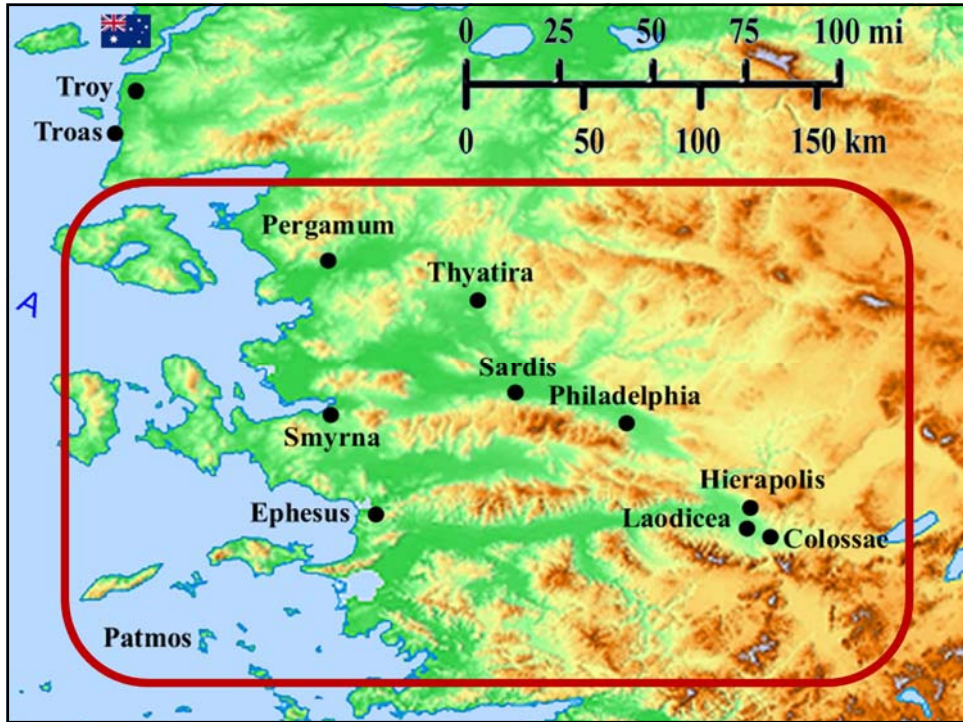
- The messages to the seven churches, 2-3



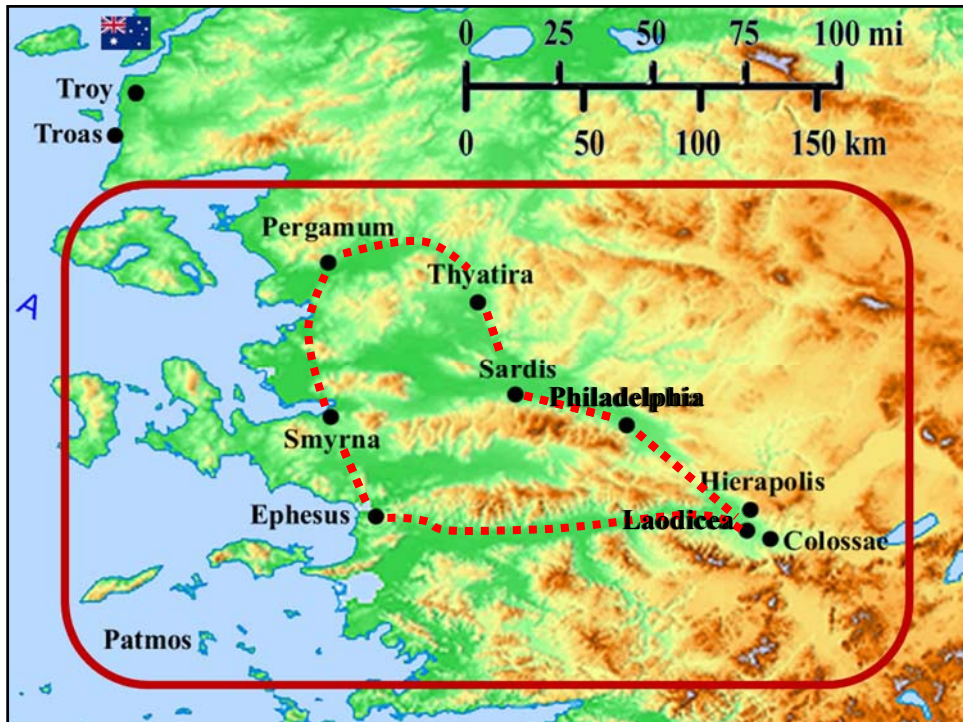
33



34



35



36

The name of each church is relevant

Ephesus (“Desired One” or “Darling”)

Smyrna (“Myrrh”, “Suffering” or “Death”)

Pergamos (“Mixed marriage” or “Serpent”)

Thyatira (“Semiramis” or “Daughter”)

Sardis (“Red Stone” or “Remnant”)

Philadelphia (“Brotherly love”)

Laodicea (“Rule of the people”)

37

Why these churches?

For whatever things
were written before were
written for our learning,
that we through the patience
and comfort of the Scriptures
might have hope.

Romans 15:4

38

The Seven Churches

1. Each was written to an actual active *ekklesia* in the day.
2. Each letter alludes to relevant known past history of the city/region.
3. The messages given to them assess the spiritual condition of each church with appropriate compliments and directions for corrective action.
4. Each letter contains prophetic allusions to current events, over-horizon events, and future events.
5. The seven churches represent all churches then and now.
6. Some suggest that the seven in the order given represent seven successive eras in the history of the Christian Church.
7. Lessons from each church can be applied to individuals.

39

Seven Parts of Each Letter

- 1. Name of church:** "To the Angel in..."
- 2. Title of Christ:** "These are the words of Him who..."
- 3. Commendation:** "I know your deeds..."
- 4. Concern:** "Yet I hold this against you..."
- 5. Exhortation:** "... or I will come ..."
- 6. Appeal:** "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."
- 7. Promise to the overcomer:** "To him who overcomes I will ..."



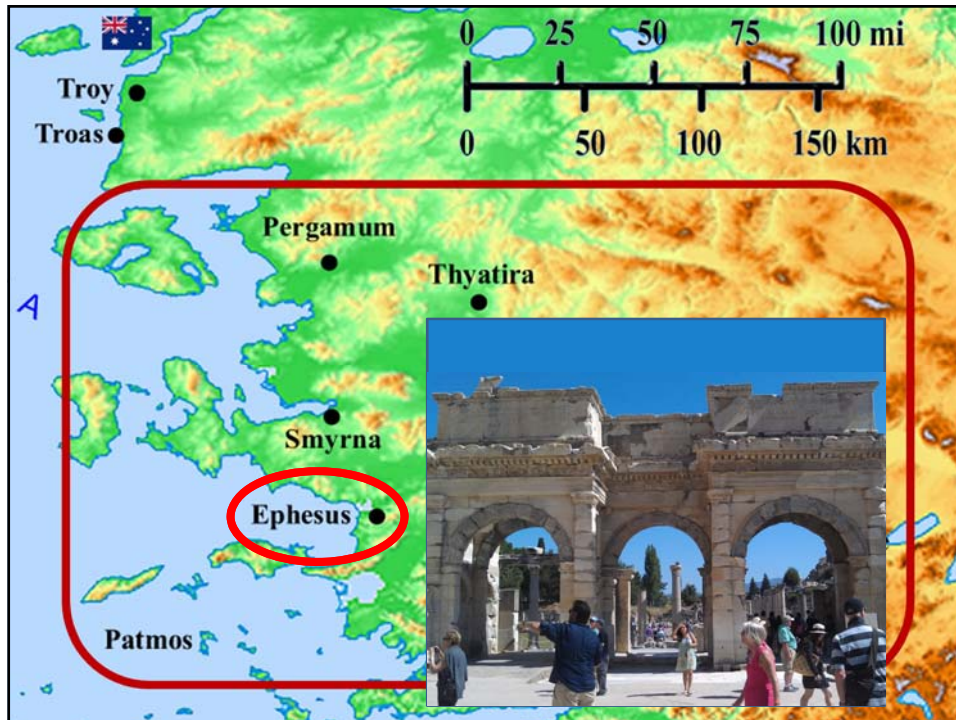
40

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας
To the angel of the church in

EPHESUS

Revelation 2:1-7

41



42

Ephesus, the loveless church

Name	✓	1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,
Title	✓	'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:
Commendation	✓	2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.
Concern	✓	4 Nevertheless I have <i>this</i> against you, that you have left your first love.
Exhortation	✓	5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
Promise	-	
Appeal	✓	7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
Promise	✓	To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." '

43

Overview of Design

Name	✓	
Title	✓	
Commendation	✓	
Concern	✓	
Exhortation	✓	
Promise	-	
Appeal	✓	"He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches"
Promise	✓	

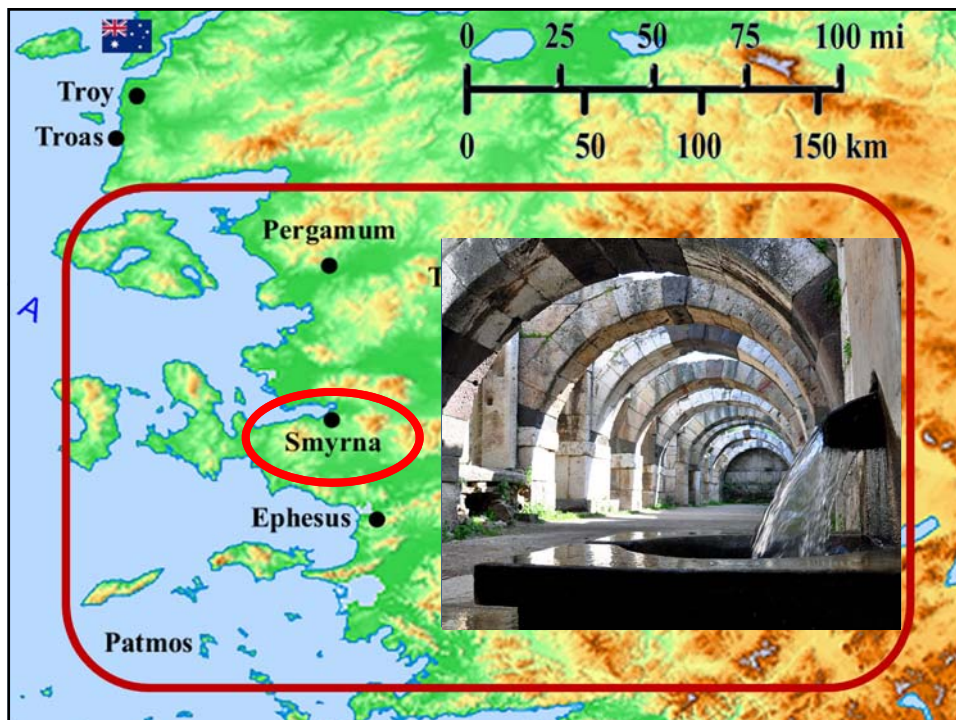
44

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας
 To the angel of the church in

SMYRNA

Revelation 2:8-11

45



46

Smyrna, the persecuted church

Name	✓
Title	✓
Commendation	✓
Concern	✗
Exhortation	✓
Promise	-
Appeal	✓
Promise	✓

8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,
'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:

9 "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan.

10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." '

47

Overview of Design

	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamos	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
Name	✓	✓					
Title	✓	✓					
Commendation	✓	✓					
Concern	✓	✗					
Exhortation	✓	✓					
Promise	-	-					
Appeal			"He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches"				
Promise	✓	✓					

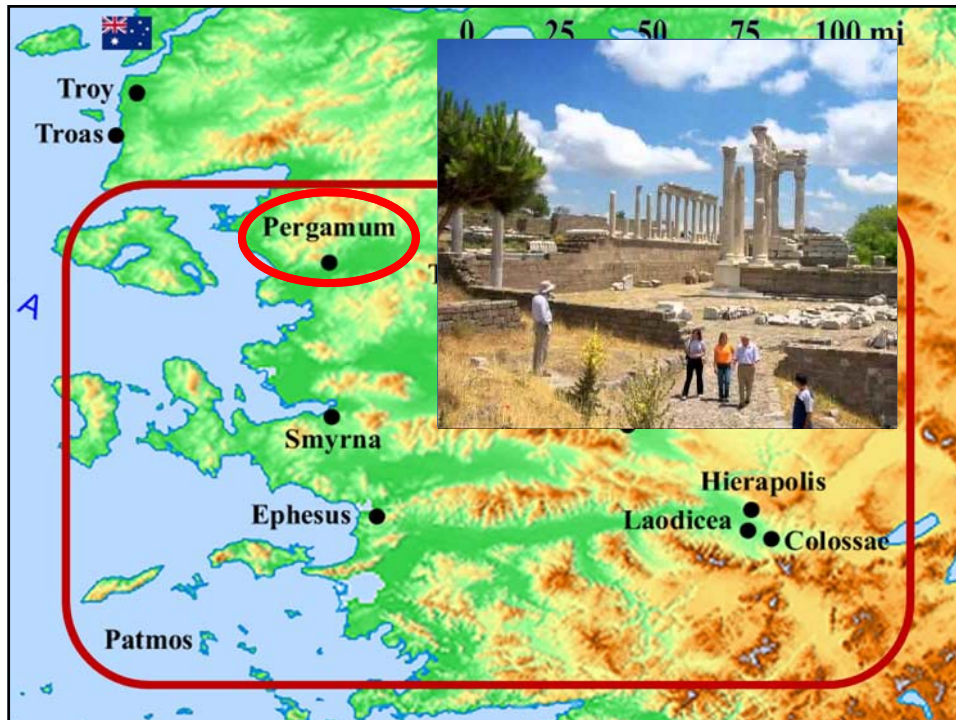
48

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας
 To the angel of the church in

PERGAMUM

Revelation 2:12-17

49



50

Pergamos, the compromising church

Name	✓
Title	✓
Commendation	✓
Concern	✓
Exhortation	✓
Promise	-
Appeal	✓
Promise	✓

¹² "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

¹³ "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne *is*. 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.

¹⁴ But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. ¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

¹⁶ Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

¹⁷ "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."

51

Overview of Design

	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamos	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
Name	✓	✓	✓				
Title	✓	✓	✓				
Commendation	✓	✓	✓				
Concern	✓	✗	✓				
Exhortation	✓	✓	✓				
Promise	-	-	-				
Appeal	"He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches"						
Promise	✓	✓	✓				

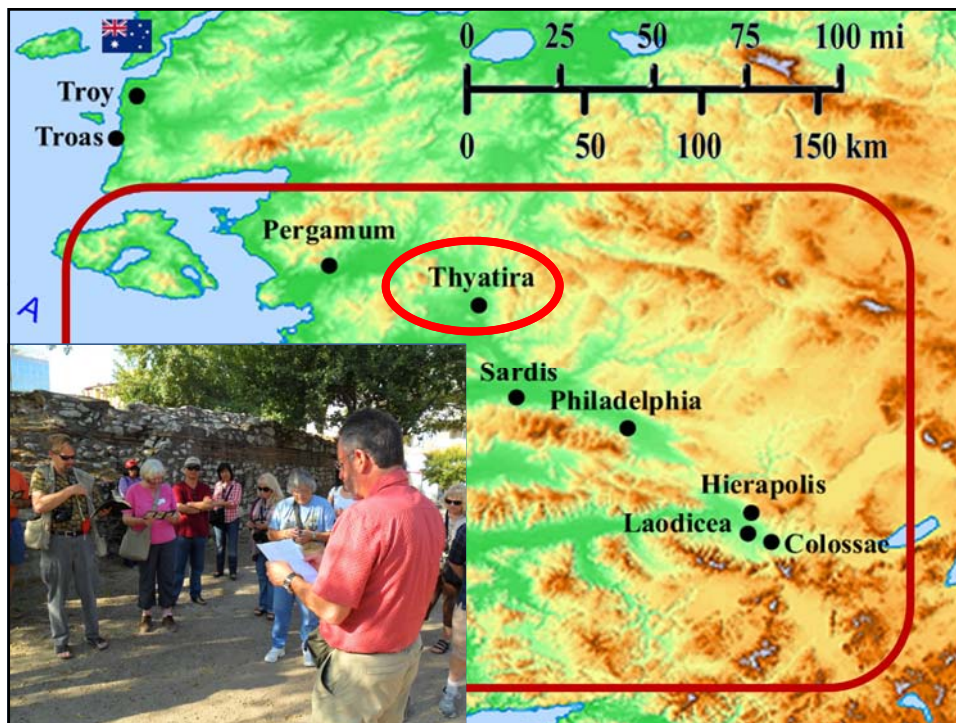
52

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας
 To the angel of the church in

THYATIRA

Revelation 2:18-29

53



54

Thyatira, the corrupt church

Name	✓
Title	✓
Commendation	✓
Concern	✓
Exhortation	✓
Promise	✓
Appeal	✓
Promise	-

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,
'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:

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

20 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. ²¹I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. ²²Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

24 "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. ²⁵But hold fast what you have till I come.

26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—²⁷'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'— as I also have received from My Father; ²⁸and I will give him the morning star.

29 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

55

Overview of Design

	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamos	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
Name	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Title	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Commendation	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Concern	✓	✗	✓	✓			
Exhortation	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Promise	-	-	-	✓			
Appeal	"He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches"						
Promise	✓	✓	✓				

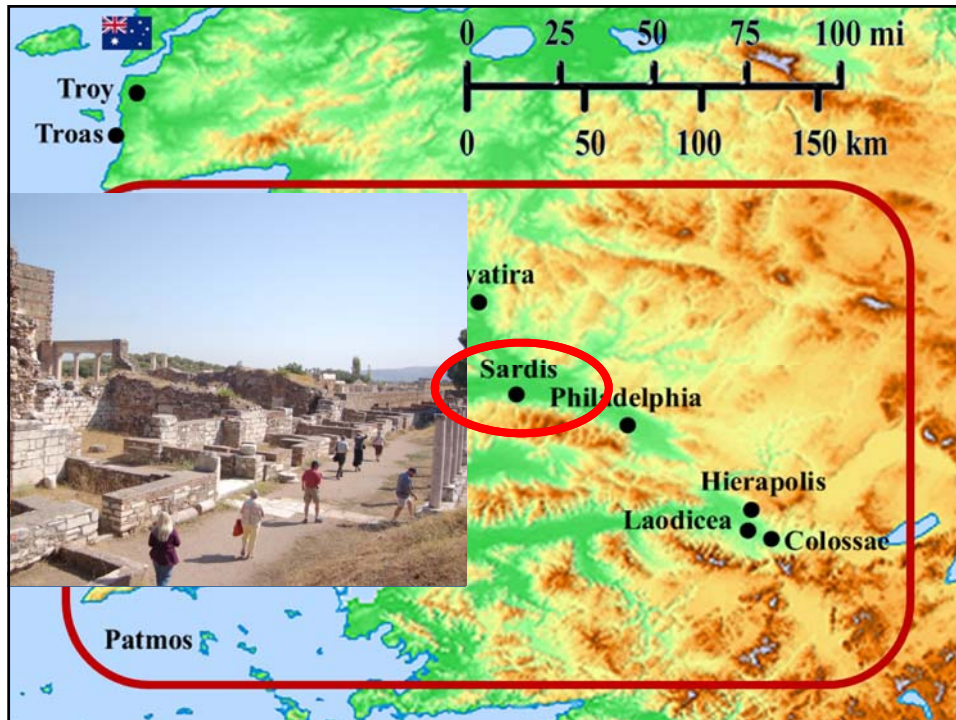
56

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας
To the angel of the church in

SARDIS

Revelation 3:1-6

57

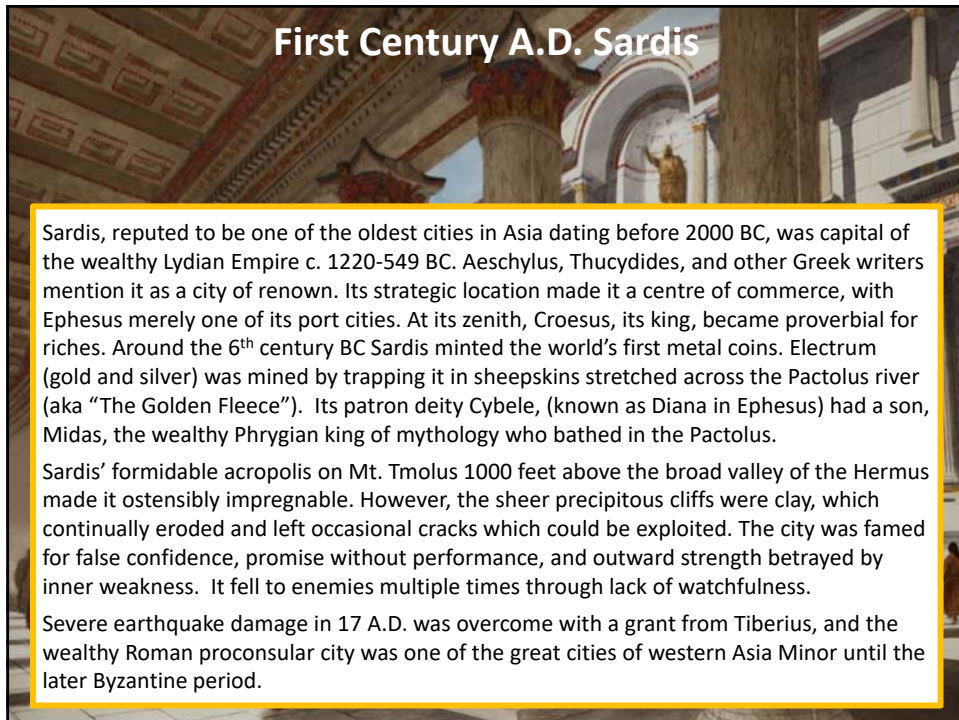


58



First Century A.D. Sardis

59



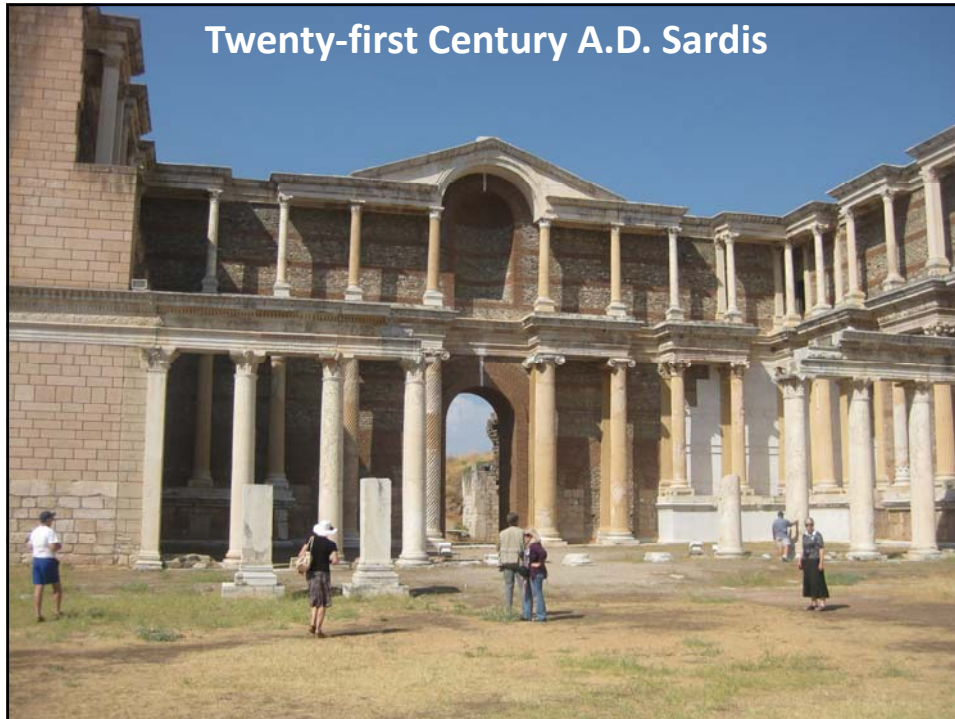
First Century A.D. Sardis

Sardis, reputed to be one of the oldest cities in Asia dating before 2000 BC, was capital of the wealthy Lydian Empire c. 1220-549 BC. Aeschylus, Thucydides, and other Greek writers mention it as a city of renown. Its strategic location made it a centre of commerce, with Ephesus merely one of its port cities. At its zenith, Croesus, its king, became proverbial for riches. Around the 6th century BC Sardis minted the world's first metal coins. Electrum (gold and silver) was mined by trapping it in sheepskins stretched across the Pactolus river (aka "The Golden Fleece"). Its patron deity Cybele, (known as Diana in Ephesus) had a son, Midas, the wealthy Phrygian king of mythology who bathed in the Pactolus.

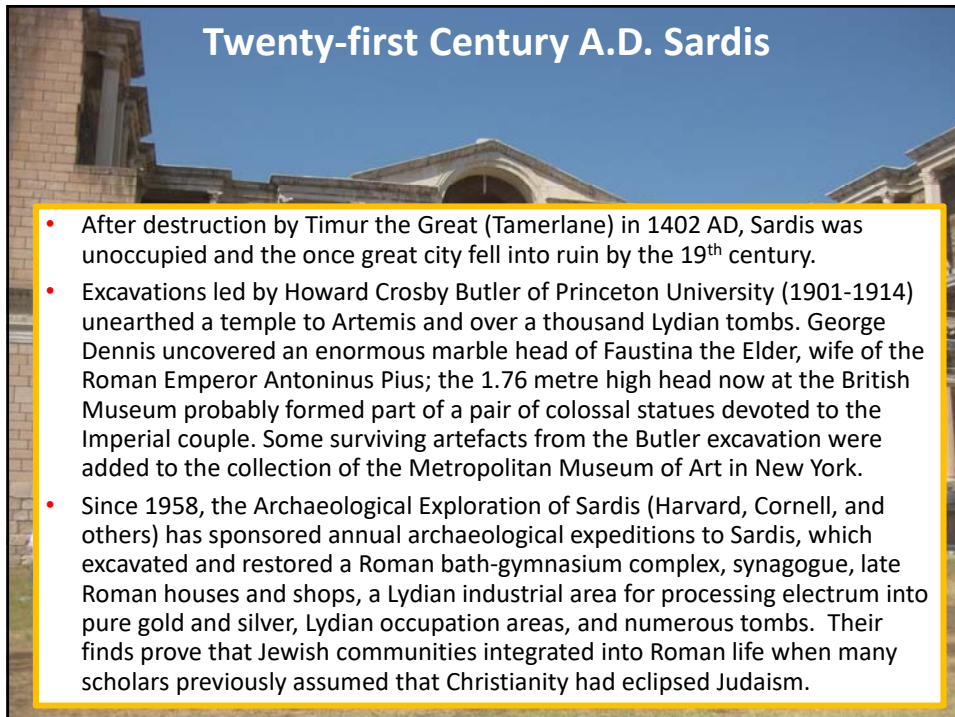
Sardis' formidable acropolis on Mt. Tmolus 1000 feet above the broad valley of the Hermus made it ostensibly impregnable. However, the sheer precipitous cliffs were clay, which continually eroded and left occasional cracks which could be exploited. The city was famed for false confidence, promise without performance, and outward strength betrayed by inner weakness. It fell to enemies multiple times through lack of watchfulness.

Severe earthquake damage in 17 A.D. was overcome with a grant from Tiberius, and the wealthy Roman proconsular city was one of the great cities of western Asia Minor until the later Byzantine period.

60



61



- After destruction by Timur the Great (Tamerlane) in 1402 AD, Sardis was unoccupied and the once great city fell into ruin by the 19th century.
- Excavations led by Howard Crosby Butler of Princeton University (1901-1914) unearthed a temple to Artemis and over a thousand Lydian tombs. George Dennis uncovered an enormous marble head of Faustina the Elder, wife of the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius; the 1.76 metre high head now at the British Museum probably formed part of a pair of colossal statues devoted to the Imperial couple. Some surviving artefacts from the Butler excavation were added to the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.
- Since 1958, the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis (Harvard, Cornell, and others) has sponsored annual archaeological expeditions to Sardis, which excavated and restored a Roman bath-gymnasium complex, synagogue, late Roman houses and shops, a Lydian industrial area for processing electrum into pure gold and silver, Lydian occupation areas, and numerous tombs. Their finds prove that Jewish communities integrated into Roman life when many scholars previously assumed that Christianity had eclipsed Judaism.

62



63

Sardis, the dead church

- 1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,
'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
- 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.
- 4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
- 6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'

64

Sardis, the dead church

Name	✓	1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,
Title	✓	"These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
Commendation	✗	2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.
Concern	✓	3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.
Exhortation	✓	4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
Promise	✓	6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."
Appeal	✓	
Promise	-	

65

The Title of Christ

1 "These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: 'I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.'"

Jesus alone possesses the angels and the Seven Spirits of God (OT euphemism for Holy Spirit, "7" is fullness). The Holy Spirit gives life to an *ekklesia*, something Sardis needed desperately because they thought they were great, but Jesus didn't agree.

All of an *ekklesia's* man-made programs can never bring life, but many are uncomfortable around the life-giving Holy Spirit.

Sardis had a name (or label) that it was great, as the wealthy city had been in historic times, but the label was barren.

66

Commendation

None.

There are no words of commendation to the believers at Sardis.
Nor were there any doctrinal problems to correct.
Neither was there any mention of persecution.
It's as if the *ekklesia* simply didn't exist.

67

Concern

² "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God."

But there was still hope. Some things remained that were not yet dead, but they needed to be turned around.



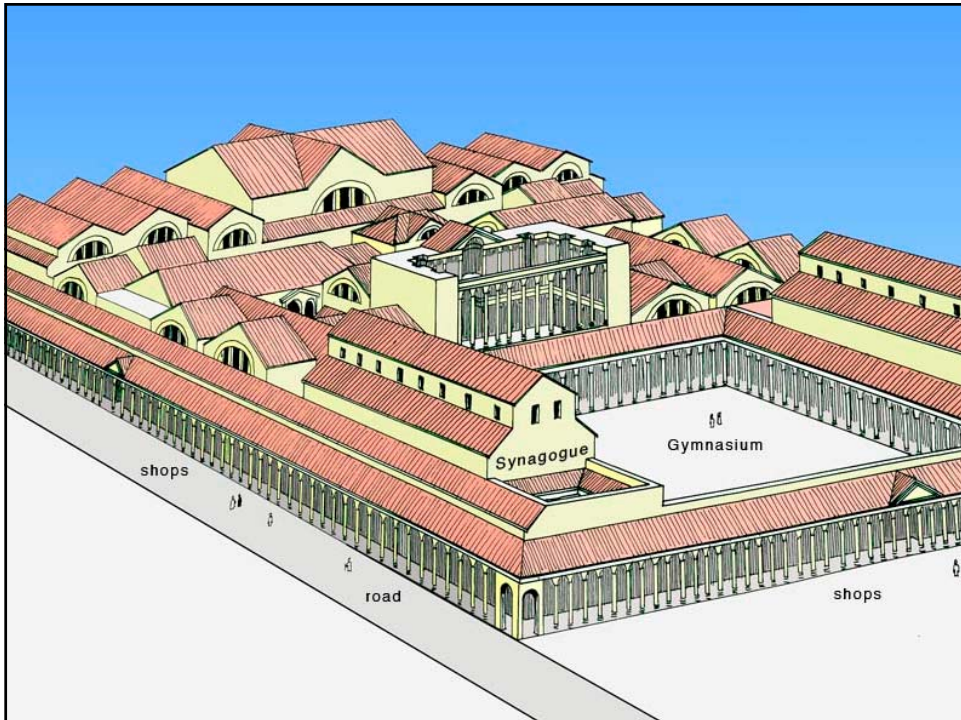
What's a Roman eagle doing on the altar in the Sardis synagogue?

68

Why is the Sardis synagogue part of the Baths/Gymnasium complex?



69

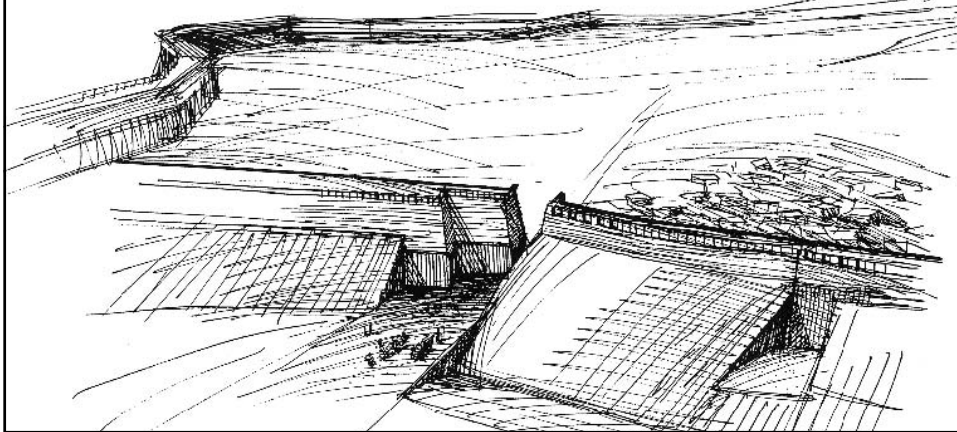


70

Exhortation

³ “Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.”

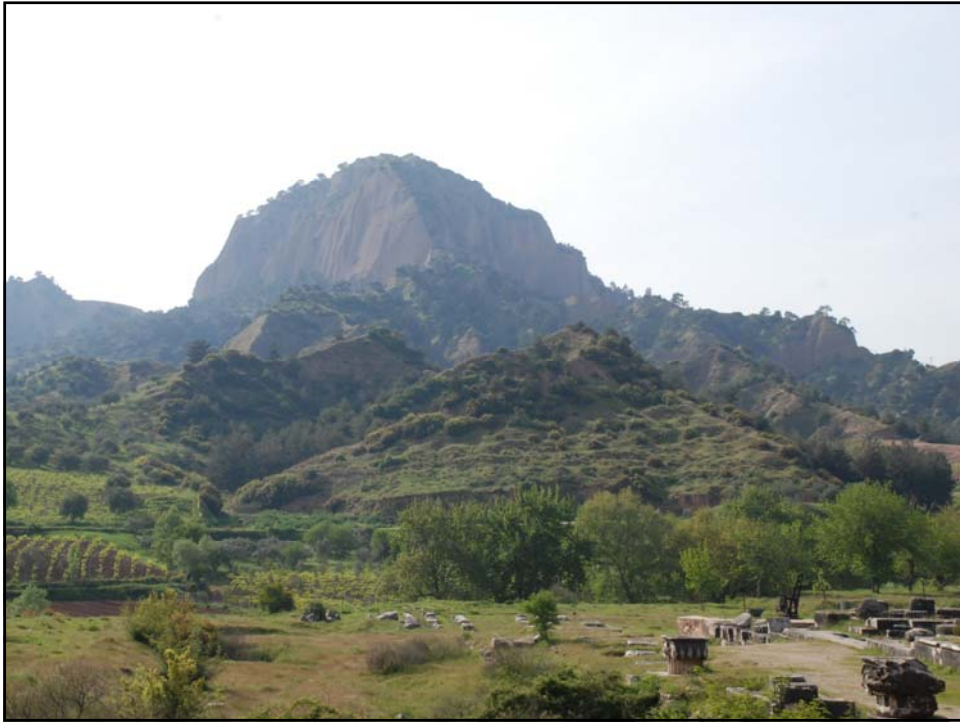
- The Sardis acropolis was impregnable, and no expense was spared on making the city wall fortifications impregnable, also.



71



72



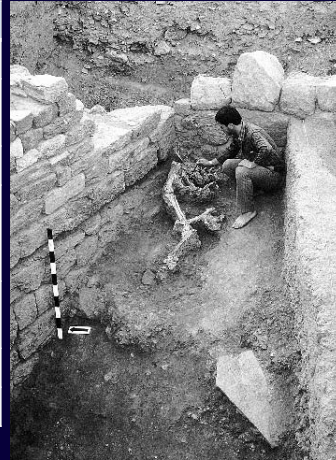
73



74

Yet impregnable Sardis fell because defenders slept

Year	Sardis Fortress
547 BC	Conquest of Sardis by Cyrus the Great.
490 and 480 B.C.	Sardis is staging area for Persian invasions of Greece.
334 BC	Sardis surrenders to Alexander the Great.
214 BC	Sardis besieged, captured, and punished by Antiochus III, who relocated 2,000 loyal Jewish families from Babylon to Asia Minor.
AD 1071 AD 1097	Fell to Seljuk Turks in 1071 by recaptured by Byzantines in 1097.
AD 1306	Handed to Turks by treaty
AD 1402	Destroyed by Turco-Mongol warlord Timur



A Sardis soldier found in 1988 clutching his weekly wage, a casualty of Cyrus II's conquest of king Croesus c. 546 BC.

Sardis was situated on a hill 1000 feet above the broad valley of the Hermus at the foot of Mt. Tmolus. It appeared to be impregnable. An example: When besieged by the Persians in 549 B.C., Croesus, then king of Lydia, left unguarded the precipitous cliffs on three sides of the city. After a

75

Promise

⁴ "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

- "Even in Sardis" a faithful remnant lived (biblical principle).
- White garments would have been meaningful to people in this city that produced woolen garments.
- Names not being blotted out would be significant to people in the Roman Empire, where citizenship was key (Acts 22:24–30).

76

Appeal

29 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

**HE WHO HAS
AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR**

77

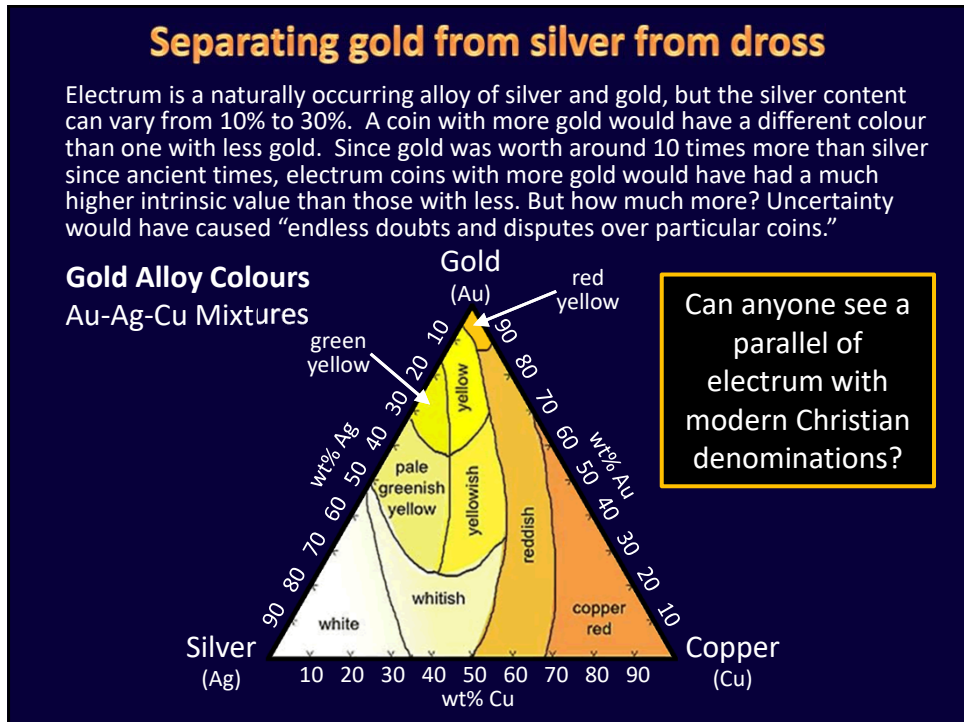
Overview of Design

	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamos	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
Name	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Title	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Commendation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗		
Concern	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓		
Exhortation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Promise	-	-	-	✓	✓		
Appeal	"He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches"						
Promise	✓	✓	✓	-	-		

78



79



80