

Dear Church...

EXPLORING THE LETTERS TO THE
SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION

Revelation
chapters 2 & 3



Pergamum

Thyatira

Smyrna

Sardis

Philadelphia

Ephesus

Laodicea

PATMOS



Pergamum

Thyatira

Smyrna

Sardis

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Ephesus

Laodicea

PATMOS

1. Ephesus..... *The Loveless Church*



Pergamum

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PATMOS

- 1. Ephesus..... *The Loveless Church*
- 2. Smyrna..... *The Persecuted Church*



- 1. Ephesus..... *The Loveless Church*
- 2. Smyrna..... *The Persecuted Church*
- 3. Pergamum..... *The Compromising Church*



Pergamum
3
Thyatira
Smyrna
2
Sardis
1
Philadelphia
Ephesus
Laodicea
PATMOS

1. Ephesus..... *The Loveless Church*
2. Smyrna..... *The Persecuted Church*
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2. Smyrna..... *The Persecuted Church*
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4. Thyatira..... *The Corrupt Church*
5. Sardis..... *The Dead Church*



PATMOS

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5. Sardis..... *The Dead Church*
6. Philadelphia.... *The Faithful Church*



1. Ephesus..... *The Loveless Church*
2. Smyrna..... *The Persecuted Church*
3. Pergamum..... *The Compromising Church*
4. Thyatira..... *The Corrupt Church*
5. Sardis..... *The Dead Church*
6. Philadelphia.... *The Faithful Church*
7. Laodicea..... *The Lukewarm Church*



Revelation 3:1-6

Sardis

The Dead Church



The situation in Sardis is the historical context for this letter...

Sardis was flattened by a major earthquake in 17 A.D. But in the centuries prior to that, Sardis had been a predominate city both militarily and commercially:

- First city in the world to mint coins (600 BC)
- Capital of the Kingdom of Lydia...Croesus as king...the richest man in the world (500 BC)
- Site of the Temple of Artemis...fourth largest Ionic temple in the world (300 BC)
- Location of the largest synagogue in Asia Minor
- Major commitment to Emperor worship until 300 AD...when, finally, persecution of Christians began to slow down
- Abandoned in 1402 AD

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Unique words, phrases, or concepts that will help us understand
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v.1 'the seven spirits of God'

v.1 'the seven stars'

v.4-5 'white garments'

v.5 'book of life'

Unique words, phrases, or concepts that will help us understand the content of this letter to Sardis...

v.1 'the seven spirits of God'

Mentioned four times in the book of Revelation: 1:4-5; 3:1; 4:5; and 5:6.

- 1:4-5 depicts the Trinitarian nature of authorship of Revelation
- 3:1 depicts the close relationship of between Christ and the Spirit
- 4:5 depicts the 7 spirits as flames around the throne of God
- 5:6 depicts the 7 spirits as eyes of the Lamb;
 'Spirits' sent throughout the world.

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v.1 'the seven spirits of God'

Isaiah 11:2 also references the Holy Spirit using a seven-fold description:

“The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.”

The prophecy is that the Messiah would be empowered not by seven individual spirits but by the One Spirit, described seven ways:

- 1) ***The Spirit of the LORD***
- 2) ***The Spirit of wisdom***
- 3) ***The Spirit of understanding***
- 4) ***The Spirit of counsel***
- 5) ***The Spirit of power***
- 6) ***The Spirit of knowledge***
- 7) ***The Spirit of the fear of the Lord***

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v.1 'the seven spirits of God'

***The “seven spirits of God” in the book of Revelation
are a reference to the Holy Spirit
in the perfection of His diverse ministry.***

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v.1

'the seven stars'

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v.1 'the seven stars'

Mentioned four times in the book of Revelation: 1:12-20; 2:1; and 3:1.

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands one like a Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around His chest. ¹⁴ The hairs of His head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶ In His right hand he held seven stars, from His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and His face was like the sun shining in full strength.

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v.1 ‘the seven stars’

¹⁷ When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last,¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. ¹⁹ Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.

²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

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Greek: aggelos

Definition: a messenger, angel

Usage: a messenger, generally a (supernatural) messenger from God, an angel, conveying news or behests from God to men.

Properly, a *messenger* or *delegate* – either human (Mt 11:10; Lk 7:24, 9:52; Gal 4:14; Js 2:25) or heavenly (a celestial *angel*); someone sent by God to proclaim His message.

- used 176 times in the NT (usually of heavenly angels), but only the context determines whether a human or celestial messenger is intended. For example, in Rev 1:20 can refer to heavenly angels or key leaders (perhaps pastors) of the seven churches.
- can refer to "a *human messenger*"
- plural refers to *heavenly angels* over 150 times in the NT, i.e. ***spiritual beings*** created by God to serve His plan.
- **In Rev 2 & 3, "angels" seems to refer to heavenly angels that serve God in conjunction with these seven local churches.**

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In the book of Revelation white clothing is used to depict *moral and ritual purity*... similar to other parts of Scripture:

Ecclesiastes 9- told people to always wear white as we enjoy the life God has provided

Daniel 7- God is described as wearing white.

Matthew 17, Mark 9 and Luke 9- Jesus appears in intensely (dazzling) white garments (more than anyone on earth could bleach them) at the Transfiguration.

John 20- the angels at Jesus tomb wore white garments

Acts 1- two men (angels) spoke to the disciples at Jesus ascension.

Revelation 3- the white garments reveal the sincere and deep faith of the remnant of believers who 'conquer' as victors.

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In the Bible the *'book of life'* represents a register of God's covenant people:

Philippians 4:1-3

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. I entreat Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, *whose names are in the book of life.*

¹ “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:

‘The words of Him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

“I know your works.

You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

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.

³ Remember, then, what you received and heard.

Keep it, and repent. 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’



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"What's so important?"

"What you got here that's worth living for?"

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"What you got here that's worth living for?"

'Truee lovee'

So...therefore...what now?

"What's so important?"

"What you got here that's worth living for?"

'True love'

II Corinthians 5:20-21

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin,
so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

So...therefore...what now?

"What's so important?"

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II Peter 2:24

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

So...therefore...what now?

Ephesians 2:1-10

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

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Dear Church...



See you in Philadelphia next week!