

- Focus “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*” as exalted Lord and King over all. Rev. 1:1 It’s one thing to agree with statement, it is quite another to be willing to die for it.
- We are looking at the messages dictated by Jesus to John to write and send to the seven churches of the Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).
- These were seven real churches facing persecution in the first century.
- There is a consistency to each message...
 - Jesus starts with, ‘I Know’ where you are, what you’re facing, etc.
 - There is a pattern of commendation, concern, counsel, & reward
 - There is a challenge to anyone who “has an ear to hear”

We said there were those who try to make these churches represent the scope of church history from the birth of the church in approx. 33AD to the current church age.

Others have seen parallels between the seven churches and seven parables of Matt. 13.

It seems as though these cities were picked not because of their importance to commerce or trade or even population, it had to do more with how religious they were.

Each of these seven cities held temples and focused on various Roman gods or imperial worship (worship of the Caesars).

I did a study when I taught OT about each plague as a direct attack on an Egyptian god to show they could not stand against Yahweh. There might be a similar correlation in the message to the seven churches. I studied some of the main Roman/Greek gods of the time period and noticed there were seven. Each of them were honored in these various cities. If you look at the seven attributes of Christ you see there are qualities revealed to each church which reflect a comparison to the god who is primarily worshipped in that city. ([see chart](#))

“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.¹³ I know where you live—where Satan has his throne.

Pergamum a very religious city. Several large temples and a gigantic altar to Zeus, the ruler of all the gods. This is probably why reference to Satan's throne.

Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

We don't know anything about Antipas except he was CHRIST'S faithful witness.

All he had to do was sprinkle a little incense on the altar and acknowledge Zeus, or maybe make the declaration "Caesar is lord". But, he couldn't deny Christ, he belonged to Christ and could not bring himself to give Caesar the title that only belonged to Christ.

¹⁴ Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. ¹⁵ Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

Nicolaitans we talked about a few weeks ago and Balaam was the OT prophet who was enticed by money to prophecy against Israel. When that didn't work he suggested compromise as a way to undermine their faith.

What altars have been built around you that keep you from being fully Christ's? What are other people bowing to around you that is enticing?

ME > IDOL > IDOL > CROSS Why Jesus said the way is narrow.

The problem was teaching that evolved from Christianity but were leading people away from God. A new Gospel that fit their world and didn't require sacrifice.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill took a close look at the religious beliefs held by American teenagers, they found that the faith held and described by most adolescents came down to something identified as "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism."

1. "A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth."
2. "God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions."
3. "The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself."
4. "God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem."

5. "Good people go to heaven when they die."

The danger is that we give up the real Jesus and true spirituality for something that reduces Christianity to any number of philosophies. No reality, no power.

¹⁶ Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

In other words, the Word of God which brings freedom also brings judgment to those who oppose it. Jesus first reveals Himself as one who has a **"sharp, double edged sword."** This is what they need, TRUTH to combat the lies among them.

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. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

Manna – was the food God supernaturally provided which the Israelites ate in the wilderness. The manna represents Christ. He is the prize.

Now we only see or get a taste of Christ but He promises them that overcome will enjoy Him fully. We deny ourselves of idolatry in this life to enjoy God's best for eternity.

tessera - A token or password; ACCESS. My DHS card.

Next on the "circular mail route" is Thyatira. We cover these together because they were facing similar challenges.

Thyatira was a working class city, smaller than the others. Picture Anderson or Elkhart.

Workers were part of trade-guilds. These trade-guilds would throw elaborate parties involving feasting and sexual immorality. The ultimate office parties.

"To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. ¹⁹ I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

Ephesians had started great but lost their "first love", the church of Thyatira we continuing to mature and grow on their faith.

20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess.

Jezebel was probably not her name but a reference to the queen in the OT who was the nemesis of Elijah and the Israelites. Her husband Ahab was weak and allowed her idolatry and witchcraft. The same thing is happening here. A strong woman is probably teaching that since we are free in Christ we can do anything.

By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.²¹ I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.²² So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.²³ I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

Strong language here because sin is so very costly. Jesus particularly calls out for more severe punishment, “her children”. These are those who are following her exclusively to the neglect of Christ. She has become a cult figure to them.

The word here for “searches hearts and minds” in one Greek work “kardiognostes”, means “heart-knower”. God is the Heart Knower. No one can know their own heart.

²⁴ Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan’s so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you):²⁵ Only hold on to what you have until I come.

People with this same spirit of Jezebel always come along with some special or secret knowledge that is more important than “just the Bible”. They need to interpret it for you because they are special. They always are hungering for “deeper knowledge and a deeper experience”, usually to make themselves look important.

²⁶ To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—

²⁷ ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery’—

just as I have received authority from my Father.²⁸ I will also give him the morning star.²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The Morning Star is Christ himself. Again this is our prize, all of Christ.

Authority over nations is a hard one. We don’t know what eternity will bring, but it will be good.

	Ephesus 2:1-7	Smyrna 2:8-11	Pergamum 2:12-17	Thyatira 2:18-29	Sardis 3:1-6	Philadelphia 3:7-13	Laodicea 3:14-22
Description of Christ	Holds 7 stars, walks among 7 lampstands	First and Last, Died and came to life	The One with two-edged sword	Eyes of fire, feet like brass; searches minds	Holds 7 spirits and 7 stars	Holy, true, holds keys, opens and shuts	Amen, true witness, Beginning of creation
What Christ knows	Works, labor patience	Works, trials, poverty; blasphemy of false Jews	Works, living where Satan's throne is	More works, love, service, faith, patience	Works, (and see "What you have")	Works	Works: neither cold nor hot
Commendation	Tested false prophets, perseverance	Rich in spite of poverty	Held to My name & faith even in time of martyr	(above)	Have a few names undefiled	Kept command to persevere	x
Rebuke	Left first love	x	Ones with doctrine of Balaam	Jezebel with immorality permitted	Works imperfect	x	Lukewarm, wretched, blind, naked
Counsel	Remember, repent, do first works	Do not fear suffering	Repent	Hold fast till I come	Watch, strengthen remainder	Hold fast, preserve crown	Buy gold, clothes, eye ointment
Warning	Lampstand will be removed	x	Will fight with sword of mouth	Jezebel into sickbed, children killed	I will come as thief if you do not watch	x	I will spit you out; rebuke and punishment
What you have	My hatred for Nicolaitans	Tribulation coming	Also have ones with Nicolaitans doctrine	Rest do not have false doctrine, not Satanic depths	A name as alive, but dead (and see above)	A little strength, My word and name	Not what you think you have
Reward for overcomers	Eat from tree of life	Not hurt by second death	Hidden manna, white stone	Power over nations; morning star	Clothed in white, name in book, confessed	Made pillar, inscribed with new name	Sit on my throne
Other promises	x	Eternal life to ones faithful to death	x	Rest are given no other burden	Undefiled ones will walk in white	Submission of false Jews; Kept from hour of trial	Eat with those who open door
Period described	The early church, to AD 100	The church under pagan persecution, to 313	Paganism enters the church, to 500s	Papal supremacy of Dark Ages, to mid 1500s	Protestant reformation and fossilization, to late 1700s	Awakening, Bible printed and studied, to mid 1800s	The end-time church, content but sinful, to End.
Matt. 13 Parable	The Sower	Wheat and Tares	Mustard Seed	Leaven	Treasure in Field	Pearl of Great Price	The Dragnet
Roman/Greek god	Diana/Artemis fertility	Caesars imperial worship	Jupiter/Zeus Ruler of gods	Juno/Hera Queen protector	Mercury/Heremes trade & merchants	Mars/Ares war	Apollo truth, healing

