



3. Along the same line of thought, 1 John highlights what is true of those *born of God*. Note what you observe about those *born of God* in the following verses?
  - a. 1 John 2:28, 29
  - b. 1 John 3:9, 10
  - c. 1 John 4:7, 8
  - d. 1 John 5:1-4
4. Review Study Guide 3, question 3 regarding false (and/or erroneous) teachings John addresses and how he refutes them. Now read 1 John 4:1-6. How are we, in light of being those *born of God*, to respond in the following cases to false or erroneous doctrine?
  - a. From a someone with the spirit of the antichrist?

b. From a fellow believer?

5. In a couple of sentences, describe the primary point(s) of 1 John.

## **2 John and 3 John**

2 John and 3 John present situations in which the principles of 1 John apply very practically to church body life.

6. Very briefly summarize the situation and John's instruction in 2 John. (You studied 2 John in Study Guide 11.)

7. Now look at the different circumstances in 3 John. Succinctly recap the situation and John's direction to Gaius. (Reviewing Study Guide 12 may help.)

8. If there is anything in particular you want to remember about John's epistles, record it below.

### **Revelation 1-3**

9. Describe what John experiences in Revelation 1-3 – think big picture.
10. Review your summary pages about the churches at the end of Study Guides 15, 16, 17, and 18. (Now that they are complete, you may wish to assemble them together as a reference packet.) A completed side-by-side comparison table is available at the end of the Study Guide. (If you picked up a hardcopy, there is also a tabloid-sized sheet with the table on a single page.)
- a. Compare your summary pages to the provided comparison table. If you note any big discrepancies, give those some extra thought to possibly resolve them. (The comparison table is simply one take on the information; there may be additional details or different applications which you captured in your studies.)
  - b. Spend some time thinking about the messages to the churches. What do you still wonder about? (Some possibilities: Why these churches? How are the churches in relatively close proximity to one another and yet they face such different situations? Why this order?)

- c. What, if anything, catches your attention as you look at the churches side-by-side?

There are different views about why the Lord highlighted these seven specific churches:

### **Interpretation 1**

- ❖ The seven churches are simply the churches to whom the messages were directed and there is no additional significance.
- ❖ Strengths of this view:
  - Straightforward and simple
  - The church sequence may represent the route in which the book traveled (All 7 churches received all 7 messages (Revelation 1:11.))
- ❖ Potential issues with this view:
  - Only the church at Ephesus has significant mention elsewhere in Scripture. Smyrna, Pergamum, Sardis, and Philadelphia are only mentioned in Revelation. Thyatira appears in the Book of Acts as the hometown of Lydia and Laodicea is mentioned elsewhere only in Colossians. (Why include these seemingly more obscure churches?)
  - This view seems a little out of place with the prophetic nature of the rest of Revelation.

### **Interpretation 2**

- ❖ The seven churches represent a sampling of different churches and their issues throughout history.
- ❖ Strengths of this view:
  - The messages are timeless.
  - This matches the Bible's pattern of prophetic fulfillment – applicable at the time of writing and applicable in the future.
- ❖ Potential issues with this view:
  - The specificity of the situations and their direct correlation to the past (political and cultural) details of each city seems out of place with such a generalized view. (On the other hand, perhaps the specificity points to Jesus' intimate understanding and personal involvement with each church.)

### Interpretation 3

- ❖ The seven churches symbolize and correlate to different church ages across history.
- ❖ The church ages represented: (The dates are approximate and scholars holding this view acknowledge some overlap between the church ages.)

|              |                                         |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Ephesus      | The Apostolic Church 30-300 AD          |
| Smyrna       | The Persecuted Church 300-313 AD        |
| Pergamum     | The Compromising Church 314 – 590 AD    |
| Thyatira     | The Roman Catholic Church 590 – 1517 AD |
| Sardis       | The Reformation Church 1517 – 1700      |
| Philadelphia | The Revival Church 1700 – 1900          |
| Laodicea     | The Apostate Church 1900 – ?            |

- ❖ Strengths of this view:
  - The view supports the order in which the churches are named. Any other order would not correlate.
  - This matches the Bible's pattern of prophetic fulfillment – short-term realization at the time of writing and long-term future fulfillment.
- ❖ Potential issues with this view:
  - It is possible for a church to experience any of the difficulties covered in Revelation 2-3. (That is to say, all the problems in today's church may not necessarily correspond to what Laodicea faced.)
  - This view centers primarily on church ages as perceived from a Western vantage. It omits any history of the Eastern Orthodox church and history of the Christian church in Africa and eastern Asia.

11. What do you think? Do any of the three interpretations mentioned seem more plausible to you than the others? Explain.

12. When you consider Jesus' involvement with the churches, what especially stands out to you?

13. Now that you have had the chance to review the messages to the churches as a complete set, what one or two things do you particularly want to remember and/or apply to your own life as a body member?

 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2024*



Seven Churches of Revelation

|                     | <b>EPHESUS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>SMYRNA</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>PERGAMUM</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                     | <b>The loveless church</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>The persecuted church</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>The worldly church</b>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                     | <i>Desirable or Permitted</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>Myrrh<br/>[perfume used in burials]</i>                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>Objectionable<br/>[or mixed] marriage</i>                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                     | Great on deeds, short on devotion                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Hard times ahead, but are rich because they have Jesus                                                                                                                                                                                 | In a city of many temples, pressure to compromise                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                     | <b>Revelation 2:1-7</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Revelation 2:8-11</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Revelation 2:12-17</b>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Jesus</b>        | <i>The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands.</i>                                                                                                                         | <i>The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life.</i>                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>The One with the two-edged sword.</i>                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Commendation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👍 Deeds, toil, perseverance</li> <li>👍 Disallow evil men</li> <li>👍 Test apostleship claims</li> <li>👍 Persevered for Jesus &amp; have not grown weary</li> <li>👍 Hate the Nicolaitans</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👍 Endure tribulation &amp; poverty (though they are rich)</li> <li>👍 Face blasphemy from [false] Jews</li> </ul>                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👍 Despite dwelling near Satan's throne, have remained fast to Jesus' name</li> <li>👍 Have not denied Jesus' faith even in the face of death</li> </ul>                         |
| <b>Censure</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👎 Left their first love</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                | (none)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👎 Some in their midst hold to the teachings* of Balaam</li> <li>👎 Some in their midst hold to the teachings* of the Nicolaitans</li> </ul> <p>*[idolatry &amp; immorality]</p> |
| <b>Instruction</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠ Remember the best [from which you have fallen]</li> <li>⚠ Repent</li> <li>⚠ Do the deeds as at first</li> </ul> <p>– or your lampstand will be removed.</p>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠ Do not fear the coming suffering</li> <li>⚠ Expect prison, testing, &amp; tribulation for 10 days</li> </ul> <p><i>Remain faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠ Repent</li> </ul> <p>– or Jesus is coming quickly to make war against the holders to the false teachings.</p>                                                                |
| <b>Overcomers</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏆 Eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏆 Not hurt by the second death</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏆 Receive hidden manna &amp; a white stone with a new name</li> </ul>                                                                                                          |
| <b>Application</b>  | Hold fast to loving Jesus and not just working for Him                                                                                                                                                                                   | Stay faithful always<br>Understand suffering is temporary                                                                                                                                                                              | Adhere to sound doctrine<br>Jesus has the true power over life & death in contrast to the authorities' <i>ius gladii</i>                                                                                              |



Seven Churches of Revelation

| <b>THYATIRA</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>SARDIS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The corrupted church</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>The dead church</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>White castle<br/>The castle of Thya</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>Reddish<br/>[like the area soil]</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Looks good from the outside;<br>but corrupt inside                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Thought they were impregnable,<br>so they are lax                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Revelation 2:18-29</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Revelation 3:1-6</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>The Son of God with eyes like flames and feet like burnished bronze.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>The holder of the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👍 Deeds, love, faith, service, &amp; perseverance</li> <li>👍 Deeds of late are better than deeds before</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👍 Some in their midst have not soiled their garments</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚫 Tolerate Jezebel – self-proclaimed prophetess who leads others astray (immorality &amp; idolatry)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚫 Deeds – their reputation is that they are alive, but they are spiritually dead</li> <li>🚫 Incomplete deeds</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠️ To those on the path with Jezebel: repent, for great tribulation is instore**</li> <li>⚠️ To those opposed to her: no other burden; hold fast to what you do have</li> </ul> <p><i>**... then all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠️ Wake up; strengthen the things that remain</li> <li>⚠️ Remember what you have received &amp; heard</li> <li>⚠️ Keep it</li> <li>⚠️ Repent</li> </ul> <p><i>If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏆 Receive authority [given by Jesus] over the nations, just as Jesus received the authority from His Father</li> <li>🏆 The morning star</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏆 Clothed in white garments</li> <li>🏆 Name not erased from the book of life</li> <li>🏆 Jesus confesses their name before the Father &amp; before His angels</li> </ul>                                                                                                       |
| Do not be led astray, do not compromise on truth<br>Seek inner purity; the outer will follow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Stay vigilant (maintain the lamp oil so as to be ready for the bridegroom)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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Seven Churches of Revelation

| <b>PHILADELPHIA</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>LAODICEA</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>The thriving church</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>The complacent church</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                     |
| <i>Love of the brethren</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>Ruled by the people</i><br>[or <i>Justice of the people</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                     |
| Reliant on Jesus;<br>Jesus controls their door                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Self-sufficient and prideful;<br>Jesus on the outside, knocking                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                     |
| <b>Revelation 3:7-13</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Revelation 3:14-22</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                     |
| <i>He who is holy, true, has the key of David; who opens and none will shut, who shuts and none opens.</i>                                                                                                                                      | <i>The Amen, the faithful and true Witness; the Beginning of the creation of God.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Jesus</b>        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👍 Deeds; loved by Jesus &amp; all will know it</li> <li>👍 Have a little power, so Jesus keeps their door open</li> <li>👍 Kept Jesus' word</li> <li>👍 Did not deny Jesus' name</li> </ul>                 | (none)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Commendation</b> |
| (none)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👎 They are lukewarm [and vomit-worthy]</li> <li>👎 Believe they are rich; are instead wretched, miserable, poor, blind, &amp; naked</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Censure</b>      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠️ Hold fast to what you have so that no one will take your crown.</li> </ul> <p><i>Because you have kept the word of my perseverance, I also will keep you from/through the hour of testing....</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠️ Buy from Jesus refined gold &amp; white garments for clothes &amp; eye salve to see</li> <li>⚠️ Be zealous &amp; repent</li> </ul> <p><i>Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline.... Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.</i></p> | <b>Instruction</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏆 Become a pillar in the Temple [a permanent fixture]</li> <li>🏆 Name of God, the new Jerusalem, &amp; Jesus' new name written on them</li> </ul>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏆 Granted him to sit down with Jesus on His throne, just as Jesus overcame &amp; sat down with His Father on His throne</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Overcomers</b>   |
| <p>Keep Jesus' word [obey His commands] &amp; remain faithful</p> <p>My identity is secure in Christ</p> <p>Jesus controls the ins &amp; outs when I abide in Him</p>                                                                           | <p>Accept Jesus' discipline &amp; repent</p> <p>Walk, clothed in Jesus' righteousness</p> <p>Pray for eyes to see my pride &amp; conviction to address it</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Applications</b> |

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