

## Revelation 2-3 Overview Lists and Chart

### 1. It is literal

1. The "7" churches were literal churches located on a major Roman postal route in ancient Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey
2. The "7" churches were recipients of literal letters written by John, inspired by the Spirit, dictated by Jesus, and read by the pastor
3. The "7" churches were close in proximity with each other, about 100 miles from each other, and would have known each other
4. The "7" churches were all unique in the sense that the letters were specific to that church in that day as it is to the church today
5. The "7" churches were commended, commanded, reprimanded, and or promised that they would be rewarded if they took heed
6. The "7" churches were a "complete" representation of what we know today as the "Church Age" in that day and in the last days
7. The "7" churches were all very different from their situation historically, to their revelation prophetically and everything in between.

### 2. It is personal

1. Historic Situation (Each letter is personally tailored in profound detail to the history of that particular church)
2. Name Interpretation (Each letter to the specific church is personal related to the name representing its nature)
3. Positive Affirmation (Each letter has a personal commendation with the exception of "the church of the Laodiceans")
4. Corrective Exhortation (Each letter has a personal rebuke with the exception of the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia)
5. Eternal Motivation (Each letter has a personal inspiration and eternal motivation in their taking heed to the Word of God)
6. Prophetic Revelation (Each letter speaks to a period of church history vis-à-vis a last day's revelation of Bible prophecy)
7. Personal Application (Each letter has a personal "take-away" not just for the church, but also the Christian in the church)

### 3. It is applicable

Historic Situation	Name Interpretation	Positive Affirmation	Corrective Exhortation	Eternal Motivation	Prophetic Revelation	Personal Application
Ephesus First Church	Let Go/Leave Darling/First Love	Perseverance Discernment	Left (not lost) First Love	Eat From the Tree of Life	Approximately 70AD to 170AD	Remember Repent and Repeat
Smyrna Persecution	Myrrh when it's Crushed is Fragrant	Rich in Poverty and Suffering	NONE	Receive the Crown of Life	Approximately 170AD to 312AD	Better not Bitter when Crushed
Pergamos Satan's Throne	Perverted/Adulterous Marriage Union	Remained True Didn't Renounce	Sexual/Spiritual Adultery/Idolatry	Hidden Manna and New Name	Approximately 312AD to 606AD	Purity not Adultery with the World
Thyatira Jezebel Doctrine	Continual Sacrifice	Love Faith Service Perseverance	Tolerate Deceptive Seductive Teachings	Authority Over the Nations	Approximately 606AD to The End	Bought at a Price as a Living Sacrifice
Sardis Rest on Laurels	Invincible Remnant	Hard Work Good Name	Wake Up and Watch Before it's too Late	Clothed in White Name in Book	Approximately 1520AD to The End	Be Watchful for The "Thief in the Night"
Philadelphia 2-Brothers Built	Brotherly Love	Little Strength kept God's Word/Name	NONE	Kept from the 7- Year Tribulation	Approximately 1750AD to The End	Known as Disciples by love for another
Laodicea Lukewarm Water	The Laity Ruled as the Diocese	NONE	Rich but Poor See but Blind Clothed but Naked	Sit with Jesus on His Throne	Approximately 1900AD to The End	Hot or Cold for and to Jesus

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KAPONO: Would you join with me in a word of prayer? Lord, thank You so much for this time of worship, Lord, and how encouraging and how it just really changes us. We thank You Lord for that.

What a blessing. And what a blessing to be here in this place, Lord, as well, this beautiful place that You have gifted us with that we can gather and hear Your word being preached. We thank you for our pastors, Lord, Pastor Leitu and Pastor Mac who filled in, in the time of need.

And Lord, we thank You for bringing Pastor JD back to us. Would You be with him, lead him, guide him? Continue to give him that boldness from the Holy Spirit to continue to do what You have called him to do, Lord. Would You be with our understanding this morning? And thank You for this time in Your word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. And good morning and welcome. You can be seated. So glad you're here. Those of you online, we're so glad that you're joining with us as well.

Let me begin by first thanking all of you for your understanding, your grace — you're very gracious to me and my family — and your overwhelming love for my family and I during the month of May, which the Lord blessed in every possible way.

Now, actually, this was the first time that my family has ever gone anywhere together as a family. 26 years. And we flew to California for my second born son's college graduation and had an amazing time.

Now, I don't share that because I'm soliciting sympathy or pity. I just share it to praise God and thank you for allowing us to experience this amazing time together, which only God could have provided for and certainly did.

As you know, we actually celebrated two graduations. Not just my son's, but my 17-year-old daughter who graduated as a Junior one year early — pray for me — from high school.

We also celebrated two birthdays, first for my wife, for whom we are most grateful to the many who have been praying concerning her ongoing battle with breast cancer. You have no idea how much that means to us. Please continue to pray.

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We also celebrated a very special 26th birthday for our firstborn son, which this year was very important for us to do as a family. So it was an amazing month. We had a really good time. I just wanted to say thank you to you as a church for letting me as your pastor have that time with my family. So thank you very much.

[ Applause ]

But boy, is it good to be back. I missed you. Did you miss me? Awe, come on. You're just saying that. No, I really did miss you, and I missed the profound privilege that is mine to be your pastor and a teacher of God's word, which is what we're going to do now.

In fact, actually, we're gonna do something a little bit different today. It's going to be an overview of sorts instead of an expositional or more textual teaching, verse-by-verse. We're going to do an overview of two chapters. I'll have you out of here by 3:00-ish, heavy on the 3:00-ish.

But no, I want to do an overview specific to the seven letters written to the seven churches in *Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3*, which is where we find ourselves having completed *Chapter 1* the last time I was with you.

In my time out of the pulpit, I took advantage of that time in my personal time with the Lord concerning these two chapters for a number of reasons, not the least of which is, I know I say this about every chapter in every book of the Bible, but these are among my favorite chapters in all of God's word.

Oh, you didn't even hesitate to laugh. So I've been really looking forward to it, spending time in God's word concerning it. This will be the fourth time, if I'm not mistaken, that I've taught through Revelation over the years.

But just in taking that time with the Lord, it became abundantly clear that, we're not to just jump into this. We're not going to run into it. We're going to walk into it.

We're not going to start with the first letter to the first church of Ephesus today, but instead we're going to do this overview in order that we might have what is known as the bigger picture. We need to see it as a whole.

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First, this is a bird's eye view, if you prefer, so as to get the idea as to the “why.” I sensed that the Lord would have us to approach these seven letters to these seven churches for that reason, to first know why were they written?

This is one of the things I know I talk about often. I hope you don't tire of me talking about it. But I'm learning in my own Christian walk as a teacher of God's word, the importance of knowing the “why” behind the “what.”

In other words, we would do well to ask ourselves, why do I have this in my Bible? Because we know in God's word of God's word, God says that His word, every word in His word is there for a reason. So there's got to be a reason why we have two chapters like this in our Bible.

So we gotta address the “why” first, in order to understand the “what,” why we have what we have in our Bibles specific to these two chapters in this amazing *Book of Revelation*. Can I just say that we're in for a thrilling — what's another word I can use? This is all extemporaneous, by the way. Exciting. I ran out, so I'll let you fill it in.

But I mean, I don't know how else to say it. I'm struggling, obviously, for the right words to express it. But this is going to be such a blessing, these two chapters, these seven letters to these seven churches. I am so excited. I mean, so much so — no. I was going to say so much so that, I mean, the Lord could wait till after we're done.

But actually I want the rapture to happen before we teach through and go through and study through these two chapters. But they're that good. They're that good.

So if you'll kindly allow me to, I want to take the time that we have together today and answer this “why” question that is before us today. Now, I'm keenly aware that it might seem like we're going backwards. This is what happens when I take time off. I don't know where we left off, but I'm going to draw your attention back to *Revelation Chapter 1*, and I want to read *verses 10–11*.

Can I ask you to stand for the reading of God's word, if you're able? If not, where you're seated is fine. This is just to kind of reset, reboot. The Apostle John in about the year 95 A.D. has been banished, left to die on the island of Patmos, about 50 miles off the coast of modern-day Turkey, there in the Aegean Sea.

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And he writes in *verse 10*, **“On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: [And then he names them] to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”**

Can we pray before we go any further? If you would join with me. Thank You, Lord. Thank You for Your word. Thank You for *Chapters 2 and 3* in this amazing *Book of Revelation*. Thank You for these seven letters to these seven churches.

Lord, there's a reason why we have them in our Bibles. And now we need for the Holy Spirit to minister to us why it is that we have them in our Bibles. So Lord, would You do that for us today? Minister to us today. Speak into our lives in and through Your word, especially personally, for anyone who's may be here today and brought with them to church today a really difficult trial they're really struggling with.

Lord, I pray that this will be an encouragement to them. So Lord, we're here because we want to hear You speak into our lives. So will You, Lord? Speak. Speak, Lord, Your servants are listening. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen and amen. You could be seated. Thank you.

Now, the reason I wanted to start out this way is because the entirety of this book, including these seven letters to these seven specific churches, were physically mailed to them. In other words, the Apostle John, in obedience to the Lord, not only writes what he's told to write, commanded, but he also sends what he's told to write to who it was to go to.

I mean, you can write something, but sometimes you just don't send it. Sometimes that's a good thing. When it comes to emails, I've never regretted an email that I didn't send. And conversely, there have been more times than I care to mention where I've regretted pushing “send,” wishing there was a button that said “*unsubscribe*.” But there's not.

So John is obedient to God's command in writing these letters. Why? We're going to find out. But not just writing them but sending them. Now, enter the title I've chosen for today's sermon. I hope you like it. That wasn't very...

[ Laughter ]

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'Jesus Wrote a Personal Letter to Me.' You have to say it just like that. Let me try that again. Jesus wrote a personal letter. Jesus himself personally wrote a letter to me.

Now, why do I say it like that? Because we are all prone. I (Chuckle) may be worse than you, am even more prone to approach two chapters like this and experience what I often refer to as "the disconnect." Well, this was written to them then, but what does it have to do with me now?

So Jesus had John write seven letters to seven churches. So what? Why? See, here's the problem. We all have a frequency on the radios of our life. I know this is antiquated. I'll come up with some newer ones. And it's the station, WIFM. Have you heard of it? What's in it for me?

Oh, you know that station on your dial. Oh, everything's digital now, I guess. Excuse me. In other words, why does this have anything to do with me? Why do I need to know this?

You remember in school? I used to hate this. I'm just being honest and open and transparent. But I used to hate it when the teacher would say, "You need to know this." And of course, leave it to me. "Why?" "Because you're going to be tested on it."

Wow. Not God's word. No, you need to know this. Why? Because it's for you and to you. Why? Because I love you. You know, the whole entirety of the pages of Holy Writ have been affectionately referred to as a love letter. And if you think about it, that's what God's word is. It's a letter to those whom He loves.

Some of you romantics — of course, many years have gone by. It's not like that anymore. You know how when you used to open the door? Now it's, "Get in! We're running late. What's going on?"

But remember those — I still have those, by the way, the ones I wrote being the romantic, godly, you know, husband that I — at the time, you know, when I was courting my wife before we got married. Of course, I was on my best behavior, just like you. But I still have those love letters I wrote her.

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I tried one time. I don't recommend this necessarily. It depends on your marriage relationship. But I tried to pull it out and read some of them to her, and we both almost threw up. They were so sappy.

[ Laughter ]

They were just like, you know, I can't stand to be away from you. You know, 35 years of marriage: I can't stand to be with you. I can't wait to get away from you.

[ Laughter ]

Was that too much?

They're love letters. They're love letters to the church. Who's the church? The bride. He's the bridegroom. He's writing a love letter to His churches, to His bride.

So I chose this title to personalize it because I think we do err greatly when we just academically, you know, approach the word of God. And there's this disconnect. And I guess I need to know this. The pastor's going to preach on this, and, you know, then we'll leave, and I'll go to lunch and forget all about everything.

No, this is personal. This is personal. And we're going to talk about that. That's what I want to talk with you about today. I want to personalize this overview of these seven letters in three ways, the first of which is they're literal, they're literal.

Well, now that's a firm grasp of the obvious, Pastor.

Well, not so fast, John, inspired by the Holy Spirit penned with those — one of those skills with the feather that they dip in the ink with the scrolls on the parchment. He literally wrote these letters, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that Jesus dictated to him to write to them and send to them. They're literal seven letters that are literal to seven literal churches, which is why they apply to us today.

Kindly allow me to begin with a map. I spent quite a bit of time on this, I hope you know.

Boy, this is a...

[ Laughter ]

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Should I have stayed away another week or so? No, I just — I wanted to give you a visual because I know some of you are visual learners. I'm a visual learner. I'm also an auditory learner.

You always know somebody that's a visual and auditory learner when, you know, like, you'll see them in the aisles at the store, and they're talking to themselves. They have to hear themselves remind themselves of what they need to get, so they don't forget to get what they need to get. That's auditory. It comes in through the ear gate.

So if you ever see me out and about, which isn't very often because I don't get out that much, and you see me talking to myself, I've not lost it. Well, that's — (Chuckle) it's because I need to hear. **“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing the word of God.” “Hear, O Israel.”** There's something about auditory and visual seeing.

So I want you to see this map because of how much time I spent on this map.

[ Laughter ]

But I want you to have a visual. These were seven literal cities in Asia Minor at the time. We know it today as the modern-day country of Turkey. In fact, you can go there and visit the ruins of these cities — well, most of them — and where these actual churches were. I wouldn't recommend going to Turkey right now, but if you did, you could see where these literal churches were.

Now, why are you harping on this?

Because it's of paramount importance for all of us to understand that God, in His infinite wisdom and omniscience — I know that's a big word, omniscience: all knowing.

Omnipresent: all present — selected these specific seven physical churches at that time. In other words, there were other churches.

In fact, Colossae, the letter to the church — Colossians, we call it in our Bibles — that was close by. They were neighbors. You could drive there like Kaneohe and Kailua. They were right next door to each other.



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Well, why didn't God have John write a letter to the church in Colossae? No. Paul wrote that for that time, for a different purpose. So apparently, the selection of these seven specific literal churches was for a reason.

So here's what I did. Because I can't help myself, I put together another list.

[ Laughter ]

I'm calling it 'Seven Fast Facts Concerning Seven Literal Churches,' and I'm going to take you through it. I'll try to go as quickly as I can. It's going to be germane to our understanding of what I believe God has for us today, and what the Spirit would say to those who have ears to hear.

Number 1: The seven churches were again, literal churches, and they were located on a major Roman postal route. And they were the recipients of not just the letters, but the scrolls containing these seven letters, and with it, the entirety of the *Book of Revelation*

Number 2: The seven churches were literal letters written by John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, dictated by Jesus, and read by the pastor of the church, to the church, to the angel of the church.

[ Laughter ]

That's the pastor. Yeah, all seven letters, **"To the angel of the church."** That's — just let me have this one. In the original language, the word "angel" carries with it the idea of the messenger, the leader, the pastor.

So literally they would receive the scroll and the pastor would read it to the church because they didn't all have their own copy, times 12, sitting at home, of God's word. So he would read it to them.

That's why in *verse 3 of Chapter 1*, John is told to write that anyone who reads, hears, and takes to heart that which is written in this book will be blessed exceedingly so. The only book in the whole Bible that promises a blessing to those who read it, hear it read, and take to heart, take heed what is read.

Number 3: The seven churches were close in proximity to each other, about 100 miles from each other, and doubtless would have known each other.

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Now, why is that important? Because like with us now, it was the same for them then. You have all of these churches, they're all different parts of the body of Christ, brothers and sisters in Christ. They're just in a different location, in a different city. But they would have known each other, had a relationship with each other because of how close in proximity they were to each other.

Number 4, and this is important. The seven churches were all unique in the sense that the letters were specific to that church in that day, just as it is specific to what the Spirit is saying to us in the church today. And it kind of ties into number 5: The seven churches were commended, commanded, most being reprimanded, but all seven being promised that they would be rewarded if they took heed to God's word.

Number 6: The seven churches were a complete — seven, the number of completion. This is the answer to the “why” question of why wasn't Colossae or these other churches that were also there, close in proximity, included in the seven letters?

Because there was something unique about each one of these churches that represented the church as a whole, broadly. That's why they were selected. They represented a complete representation, seven, the number of completion of what we know today as the “church age.”

And oh, by the way, remember when John in *verse 19 of Chapter 1* was told to write that which he had seen, that which is now, and that which is to come here after, *meta tauta*, after these things? Write what was past, present, and future.

*Chapter 1*: Past. Jesus Christ crucified, buried, resurrected, and at the right hand of the Father, that's past. Now, Chapters 2 and 3: That which is now, present. *Chapter 4:1* on through the rest of the book: All yet future. Can't wait to get to *Chapter 4:1* in like eight weeks now, I guess, it's going to be if we...

Wait. Are you saying, Pastor, you're going to take one church a week?

[ Laughter ]

What? Probably. Because each church, again, is unique unto itself, and we're going to see this in a moment, with its own unique, tailored message, again, to those who have ears to

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hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. And this is why these seven churches were selected.

And this is number 7: The seven churches were all very different churches. You know, some churches have — well, it's maybe better said, every church has its own personality. It's actually been suggested that the church takes on the personality of the pastor, for which I am so sorry. It explains a lot, right?

No, I heard this when I started my first church on the mainland. This was many years ago, now. You know, there's no shortage of, you know, stats and facts and figures and all the things, you know, especially when you're new. This was my first church plant. I'm in my 30s. (Weeping sound) I don't know what I'm doing.

But God. I didn't need to know what I was doing. God knows what He's doing. In fact, it's better that I don't know what I'm doing because if I know what I'm doing, I'm going to do it, and then God can't because I am. So I don't know what I'm doing.

God says, good. That's exactly where — I got you right where I need you to be. You don't know what you're doing. I know what I'm doing. So let Me do it. So that was — wow, that was interesting.

[ Laughter ]

I heard this statistic that the pastor of a church will usually attract an age group that is within ten years of his age, either younger, ten years younger, to about ten years older.

Now, I remember my wife, when I shared this with her, she just looked at me and she goes, “No wonder.” I'm in my 30s, and we didn't have anybody under 20. And so the stat was true. And so I became very bitter. I made it through it, obviously.

But again, every church has its own personality, its own kind of, its own unique — I mean, could you imagine if every church were a carbon copy of the other? They would be unnecessary. I mean, what are we, McDonalds? I mean, you go in, it's the same exact thing.

No, there's a different flavor at this church. And maybe I need to expound on this because some of you are looking at me like, what are you going off on this for? Because I'm not everybody's cup of tea. And I want you to know I'm okay with that.

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And if God's called you to this church, and you're here in this church, and you're being ministered to here in this church, sitting under the teaching of God's word, then this is where God has you.

Now, if this is not, there are other churches, and that's what they're there for, for people who... I better stop right there because I'm going to get myself into trouble.

But they were all very different from their situation historically to their revelation prophetically and actually everything in between, which we're going to see in our second one, which is that these letters are personal. These seven letters are personal letters, so much so that I created another list.

[ Laughter ]

Listen, when I've been gone, I got to make up for lost time. So it's another list of seven. This time this list is about the seven unique aspects of each of the seven churches, which are as follows. And again, this is an overview and we're going to get more in depth as we go through and study about each of these churches. But here's the seven. You ready?

Number 1: The historic situation.

Number 2: The name interpretation.

Number 3: The positive affirmation.

Number 4: The corrective exhortation.

Number 5: The eternal motivation.

Number 6: The prophetic revelation.

And last but certainly not least, number 7: The personal application.

Okay, let's go through them. I'll go quick. Don't look at me like that.

Let's talk about the historic situation. What do you mean by that? Each letter is personally tailored in profound detail to the history of that particular church in that particular city.

Number 2: The name interpretation. This is going to be one of the more fascinating aspects of our study of these seven letters. Each letter to the specific church is personal, related to the name representing the nature. You understand now, in scripture that they would wait

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to name the child until they knew what the nature of that child was because the name was the nature.

Example: Isaac, literally in Arabic, my native tongue, and Hebrew, means laughter because that was the nature of his birth and life as laughable. Sarah was 90. Abraham was 100.

What are you going to name him? Ha-ha-ha-ha!

Roll call in school: could you imagine? We say Isaac. It's Yitzhak in Hebrew. In Arabic, we say yitzhak. It literally means laugh. If I say to you in Arabic, ana yitzhak ma'akum. I'm being careful. I just said I'm laughing with you, not at you. I'm laughing, yitzhak, ana yitzhak ma'akum I'm with you, I'm laughing with you.

Yeah, he's in school. Roll call. You know, present, present. You know, Yitzhak? Ha-ha ha-ha! Present. That was what his name literally meant because that was the nature of who he was.

Yaaqob, Jacob, again, heel snatcher, con man, grabbed the heel of his fraternal twin, Esau, in the womb. There was already the contention. Contentious, competitive. It literally means heel snatcher, Yaaqob.

I got several more, but I'm not going to do that to you. I'll just create another list, another time, of the names. Actually, we're going to see that when we go through them, each name has a description of that particular church in that city. The name is the nature.

Number 3: Positive affirmation. Each letter has a personal commendation and affirmation with the exception of one church. You know which one it is? The church of the Laodiceans. The seventh of the seven churches. They were not affirmed or commended for anything.

Number 4: Corrective exhortation. Now, this is interesting. Each letter has a personal rebuke, with the exception of two churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia, there is no rebuke for them. There's no correction because these were corrective letters written by Jesus via John, and there was no correction, no rebuke for those two specific churches.

Number 5: Eternal motivation. Each letter has a personal inspiration and eternal motivation, but it's predicated upon the church having ears to hear and take heed to the word of God.

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So there was this motivation and inspiration. If you will repent, then... If you, then I... So it was a conditional promise eternally.

Number 6: Prophetic revelation. Now, hang in there with me on this because some people — it's hard to understand this part. We're going to get into this in just a moment. Each letter speaks to a period of church history prophetically, vis-à-vis the last days revelation of Bible prophecy specific to the last days church.

In other words — and we'll go more in detail on this in just a moment — each one of these churches, starting with the first church, the first love that was left, the church of Ephesus, it represented a period of time in church history over the last 2000 years. Again, we'll get to that in a moment.

Lastly, personal application. And this is perhaps the most important for us today because as the title I chose would say, this is a letter personally written to me for a reason.

Thursday night we were in *Daniel Chapter 5*. It's the well-known account of when Belshazzar is just, I mean, blasphemously defying God by getting drunk, drinking out of the vessels that his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from Jerusalem when they destroyed the temple and took the Jews captive, and he starts this party, it's a huge party. You can go visit the remains of that.

That's in Iraq. You might want to stop on your way to the seven churches in Turkey. I wouldn't recommend going either place. But you can actually find the archeological remains of the banquet hall that this huge party took place in.

So here's Belshazzar. He's starting to feel, you know, getting a little bit intoxicated, inebriated. And so he says, hey, you guys, go get those vessels that my grandfather took from the Jews from the temple, those gold vessels that were set apart for the worship of God in the temple of God.

And so stupid, stupid, stupid move. They go get these vessels, they start drinking out of these vessels and they start praising their gods of wood, stone as they're drinking out of the vessels, sanctified, and set apart for the true and living God. Big boo-boo!

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So I think it's about *verse 11*. Here they are, partying, drunk, all kinds of lewd activity. Don't use your imagination too much on that. And then out of nowhere comes a hand and the fingers, and there's writing on the wall.

So the title of the Bible study, Thursday night, is 'The Handwriting of God on the Wall of My Life,' meaning, if God were to write on the wall of my life, what would He say?

First of all, if He has to go to that extreme to get your attention, you're in trouble right out of the chute. That means that He's got to use drastic means to get your attention. I mean, that would get my attention.

Could you imagine? You're having this big party. Talk about a buzz kill. You're sitting around partying, and all of a sudden, a hand out of nowhere comes and starts writing on the wall. Well, you don't see that every day. And then none of the magicians and soothsayers could translate it or interpret it. So of course, Daniel's called. He's in his 80s at this time.

What's your point? My point is, is that sometimes God will choose to use a wall to write on. If He does, what would He write on the wall of your life? God may choose to write you a letter. What would He say to you in that letter that He would write? I think we need to allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts in this regard.

Would there be a corrective rebuke? What would be — what would He commend me for, affirm me in? What would He correct me about? And what would that letter read like? I think that's a good question to ask ourselves, just between us and the Lord, and allow the Holy Spirit unfettered access to our heart. But each letter has a personal takeaway, not just for the church, but also for the Christian in the church.

Again, this is where that disconnect comes in. It's so easy and it's so subtle, especially when you're in the Old Testament or a book like Revelation, which has gotten such bad press about being such a hard book to understand. It's actually not a hard book to understand at all.

It's actually an easy book to understand because that's what the book is. The name is the nature. It's a revelation. It's being revealed, not hidden, covered, veiled, cryptic.

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No, it's been decoded. It's been revealed. It's been unveiled. And like God's going to write a letter inspired by the Holy Spirit with human authors included in the canon of scripture and have it have no application? What? Fill up space? We need to even this out. Let's get one more book in there. We'll put in the *Book of Revelation*. Finish it off.

No, there's a personal take-away from each and every one of these churches, and that dovetails into our third and final one, which is that not only are they literal and personal, but so too are these seven letters applicable.

You know, it's been said that knowledge is wisdom, but — knowledge is — (Sigh) Let me start over.

Knowledge is information. Wisdom is the application of that information. You know how it is. You can know people. They're so knowledgeable but they're not wise. They're not synonymous in terms. I mean, you can know something, but if you don't apply it, pfff! Yeah, just like that, pfff! You just have to... That's in the original.

[ Laughter ]

I mean, of what use is it? This is *Matthew 7*, the parable that Jesus taught about two builders. Apparently, they went to the same church. So one built his house — and they built at the same time. They must have got a loan from the same bank. I don't know, but one guy decided to build on the rock. The other guy decided to build on the beach, on the sand.

And so when, not if, a storm came, the one on the sand, of course, came crashing down, and mighty was that crash. And the one that was built on the rock was like — well, here it is again, if you don't mind, pfff! Oh, we had a storm? Oh, I didn't know. Why? Because I'm on the rock, solid rock. Stand firm. Rock solid.

Well, what's the difference between the two builders? The one who built his house on the sand is the one who heard the word but didn't put it into practice by applying it. You can have people that know the Bible probably better than you; it means nothing.

My dad, growing up as a kid, very intelligent, spoke six different languages, taught three of them. I don't want to go there. I don't know why I did. I had to take his classes. It was a small school. Very intelligent and knew the Bible. I mean, he could quote scripture, but he



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wasn't born-again. He had a knowledge of God's word, but not a saving knowledge of the God of the word, a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. So knowledge is nothing. It's just information. Now what we need is the application. And thank You, Lord, there is a personal application with each of these seven churches. And yes, I got one more, except this time it's a chart.

[ Laughter ]

Please, please, please don't let this chart that I spent a lot of time on after I did the map dissuade you from the profound personal application that's woven into the fabric of these seven fascinating letters. Now, you'll notice that I've organized the seven letters to the seven churches into the aforementioned seven categories concerning all the, what I'll call "ations," historic situation name interpretation, etc. So can we just go through them real quick? After all that work, you can't say no.

Ephesus. Historic situation: The first church, first love. Name interpretation: Ephesus means — this is the interpretation of the name. Let Go/Leave, Darling/First Love. Positive affirmation: perseverance, discernment.

Corrective exhortation: [And listen very carefully because this is a big problem and misunderstanding that must be understood or you lose the whole meaning of this first letter to this first church] They left their first love, not lost it.

See, if I lose my first love, I don't know where to find it. But if I leave it, I know where it is. I know it might seem inconsequential, but that is a game changer. They deliberately left their first love.

What was the eternal motivation? Eat from the tree of life. Prophetic revelation: This is that period of church history that the church of Ephesus represents.

Now please, hold on loosely. That's why it says approximately because it's approximate. That's why I'm saying approximately because it's approximate. Approximately 70 A.D. to 170 A.D. What's the personal application, the takeaway from this letter to that church for us? Remember, repent, and repeat.

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Smyrna. Historic situation: Smyrna is the modern-day city, you can go there, Izmir.

Beautiful city on the water. But ancient Smyrna, historically positioned there, port city, was the persecuted church.

And here's what's interesting. The name interpretation again, myrrh. Smyrna. It carries with it the idea of myrrh being bitter, bitter persecution, until it's crushed, and when it's crushed, it becomes fragrant. The name is the nature. This was the persecuted church, but they were fragrant before the Lord.

And their positive affirmation was, and this might seem like a paradox, but they were rich in poverty, suffering, and persecution. Wait, that's being rich? I haven't seen that definition of rich in a while. How about their corrective exhortation? None. No rebuke, only two of the seven churches.

Their eternal motivation: Receive the crown of life. The prophetic revelation: Approximately 170 A.D. to 312 A.D. That's when Constantine comes on the scene. We'll talk a lot about him.

What's the personal application, the takeaway from this letter to the church of Smyrna? You know, sometimes the same sun that melts can harden. And the takeaway from this is I will either be better or bitter when I'm crushed.

Let's go on to — this is an interesting church. This is where Satan dwelt, resided, had his throne. Pergamum, Pergamos some of your translations render it. This was the perverted church, the adulterous church. You know what the name interpretation is? Watch this. Per = perverted. Gamos = marriage. Monogamy, polygamy. Perverted, corrupted, marriage and union. That's when the state married the church.

That's when Satan realized, well, if you can't beat them, join them. So that's when Satan joined the church and Christianity became legal. What was their positive affirmation? They remained true — there were some within this church that remained true and didn't renounce Jesus. What was their corrective exhortation? This is going to be a little bit gnarly when we get to it. Their sexual, spiritual adultery and idolatry.

Did they have any internal motivation? Yes. All seven did. Hidden manna and a new name. And they needed a new name because they didn't have a very good name. The prophetic

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revelation: Again, approximately 312 A.D. I think Constantine issued the edict, and then Christianity was no longer illegal up until 312, 313 A.D. on through approximately 606 A.D.

What's the personal application? Well, I'm going to borrow from James, if you don't mind. To be friends with the world is to be at enmity with God. He — and you got to — you got to love James. I mean, he's just not pulling any punches. You adulterers! You're committing spiritual adultery. You think you can be friends with the world? No you cannot. You're committing adultery with the world. You're committing spiritual adultery. You're perverting your marriage relationship with God. It's adultery, not purity with the world. Oh, I really — that was...

Well, it gets worse. Thyatira. Some suggest that this was, the period of time in church history that would be representative of the Catholic Church. They had the Queen mother. You know her name, by the way. Jezebel. The seductive church. The name interpretation of Thyatira is 'continual sacrifice.'

Have you noticed? And I'll just say this, and please understand, I truly believe you can be a Catholic and be born-again. But have you noticed that Catholics still have Jesus on the cross like He's being continually sacrificed? No, He's not on the cross anymore. He's risen.

What was their positive affirmation? Love, faith, service, perseverance. What was their corrective exhortation? They were tolerating this Jezebel, this deceptive, seductive Jezebel teachings. When we get to this church, I'm going to have to pray and fast for — well, I won't. I can't go longer than a week because we only have a week.

The prophetic revelation. Oh, I missed the eternal motivation: Authority over the nations, which it's so ironic. I shouldn't be surprised. The women had authority over the men, just as Jezebel had authority over Ahab and ran him into the ground. He couldn't go to the bathroom without — that's a terrible illustration — without Jezebel giving him permission. She ran the show. She ruled the roost.

So what's the eternal motivation? No, you've been given a God-given authority in your rightful position. I will give you authority over nations. Now, the approximate prophetic revelation in church history from this church on through the church of Laodicea. They're all now to the end, approximately 606 A.D. to the end.

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Translated: The church of Thyatira is alive and well today. What's the personal application? I can't be seduced because I already belong to another. I'm not my own. I've been bought by a price from the One who became the living sacrifice, not continually, but once and for all, Jesus the Christ.

It's all going to tie together. Again, it's just an overview. Are you okay so far? I mean, okay, we're almost done. So there's hope.

Sardis. Some who suggest that maybe Thyatira is representative of the Catholic Church suggest also that Sardis is representative of the Protestant church, the dead church, who rested on their reputation and their name, who think they're alive, but they're dead.

Now, don't picture this big building, denominational church, that once upon a time was filled with people on fire for the Lord but now there's like six people there, and it echoes whenever, whoever goes up and speaks. They don't even need a microphone. They got the acoustics there in that building. It wasn't like that.

This was a going, growing, glowing, I mean, thriving church. But they were resting on their laurels. And the name interpretation is kind of interesting. It carries with it the idea of invincibility, the invincible remnant. In other words, we've already paid our dues. Do you know who we are? And they're resting on that.

Positive affirmation: Hard work, good name, good job. Corrective exhortation: Watch this one. Wake up and watch before it's too late. The eternal motivation: You'll be clothed in white, and your name will be in the Book of Life. Now, when's the period of church history in terms of the prophetic revelation? Approximately, approximately 1520 A.D. to the present.

Again, the last four of the seven churches are present and alive and well today, representing the church age. You can find these four of the seven churches alive and well today. What's the personal application? Well, I'm going to have some fun with this one when we get to this church. Be watchful for the thief in the night.

I love that idiom. Jesus' return in the rapture, pre-tribulation rapture is likened unto a thief in the night, which was what the wedding customs were. The bride would be abducted as a thief in the night by the bridegroom in an hour and a day that nobody knew, which made it a

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big problem for wedding invitations because you couldn't really, you know, plan when this is going to be. Nobody knows the day or the hour. But the bridegroom would come as a thief in the night.

And if you don't mind, I just want to take it one step further. Think about this. Just think this through with me. When have you ever heard about a thief calling or texting ahead of time saying, hey, I'm going to come as a thief about 2:00 a.m.? Is that a good time for you?

No, that's the whole point. The whole point is you never expect. You always have to watch because that's what thieves do. They come when you don't expect them to come. Because if you expected them to come, they wouldn't come. That didn't work very well, so we'll leave it at that.

Philadelphia. This is cool. Historic situation: First of all, it's known as the loving church. But the history of this church, get this; it was planted by two brothers. And that's what the name means, 'brotherly love.' Philia. Philia. Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, the one in Pennsylvania, not Turkey. But that's what philia in Greek — there's different words. When we get there, we'll talk more about it. Philia or philia is in Greek, brotherly love. And that's what this church was. It was the real deal church.

And their positive affirmation. Again, it's paradoxical, but He was affirming, Jesus was affirming them for their, wait for it, little strength.

Wait, that's not a rebuke?

No, that's a commendation, an affirmation.

No, that's a rebuke, isn't it? You of little strength! (Said with disgust) You know, come on. Buck up buttercup!

No, it's you've got a little strength, but like Paul would say, when I'm weak, that's when I'm strong. And I'm going to boast in my weakness. Because when I'm weak, then I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And that's what this letter is all about. You guys, hang in there. I know you're barely hanging on. You're battle weary. You have little strength, but you've kept My word and not denied My name.

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Corrective exhortation: You won't find it. None. Nada. Zero. (Speaking Arabic) I had to use the Arabic word. What was their eternal motivation? Well, this directly connects to their positive affirmation.

Because you have kept My word and not denied My name, I'm going to keep you from the 7-year tribulation that is coming upon the whole earth. This is pre-trib rapture stuff here. It's standalone pre-tribulation rapture, *Revelation Chapter 3*, in the letter to the church of Philadelphia, virtually stand alone. Okay, I feel better.

Prophetic revelation: Approximately 1750 A.D. to the end, to the present. Personal application. I love this. No pun intended. But how are we known to be disciples of Jesus? By our love, brotherly love, one for another. So we're going to — this is going to be the love letter. Can I call it that when we get to Philadelphia?

The love letter. And not a moment too soon because it's going to be short lived. Because after Philadelphia, we have to talk about Laodicea. I'm sorry. Not really because this is — this church, the last church is the condition of the church in this, the last day.

That's how we know how close we are to the end. Look at the condition of the church. The description prophetically we have in the Bible of what the church will be like at the time of the end when the trumpet sounds and the dead in Christ rise first, is exactly what the condition of the church is today: lukewarm. The lukewarm church.

And the name interpretation, a combination of two English words, again. Kind of like Pergamum. Lao dicea: The laity = Lao. Dioces = decided. The laity ruled. Hey, we're running the show. This is the church where Jesus is (Knocking sound). He's not even inside. He wants back in. He was at one time. But apparently, they decided, hey, out; we'll take it from here. That's why of the seven letters, it's the only one that starts out different than the other six.

It's **"To the angel of the church of Ephesus."** **"To the angel of the church of Smyrna."** So forth, so on. Get to the Laodiceans, **"To the church of the Laodiceans."** This is not even My church anymore. It's their church. The laity have taken over. The name is the nature. They rule. They run the show.

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Does this church have positive affirmation? No. How about the corrective exhortation? This is lengthy. I'll condense it for a change. Rich but poor, see but blind, clothed but naked.

And we're going to go into detail on that Eternal motivation? Yeah. Sit with Jesus on His throne. How fitting is that? He's asking to come back in, knocking on the door to come back in, to sit down and sup with them and them with Him. You see how that ties in? So the eternal motivation is that they will sit with Jesus, not when they let Him back in, but when they're seated on the throne.

Now, this particular church, in terms of its prophetic revelation, would encompass approximately the period of time from the turn of the last century, about 1900. That's when things really started to go downhill.

And what's really interesting, and I just — can I just give you one quick detail and we're — are we done? Oh, one more personal application, then we're done, almost.

Hierapolis was known — oh, you can — oh, man, go online and search Hierapolis. It's mentioned in the Book of Acts. Natural hot springs on the cliffs overlooking the Aegean Sea, I mean, breathtaking. It's like coming out of the tunnel to the windward side, the most beautiful side of the island, and it's just that breathtaking. The teal water, the — just the breathtaking — even the Ko'olau when it rains and the waterfalls, it's like, wow!

That was Hierapolis. They had these hot springs, natural hot springs, but Laodicea didn't. But what Laodicea did have was money. They were extremely wealthy, so much so that they built this elaborate aqueduct to channel the water from Hierapolis, to get the hot springs to come from Hierapolis to Laodicea so they could have hot springs too. But by the time the water got there it was lukewarm and polluted. It had already been contaminated.

And that's why Jesus to this church says, I wish you were either hot or cold, but because you're lukewarm and contaminated, you make Me sick and nauseated, and I'm going to vomit you out of My mouth.

That's pretty graphic. You have to come for that week. I'll let you know ahead of time. You can't be sick that day. Well, let's end it off with this personal application because it is so apropos to where the church of Jesus Christ is today.

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Hot or cold, no in between. I'm either hot, on fire for the Lord, or cold and indifferent toward the Lord. This lukewarm church of today alive and well today, has let the world come in and cool it. So it's not hot.

And when you're thirsty, don't you want a cold, cold water to drink to satiate your thirst? What if somebody gives you lukewarm water, and you're just like, so thirsty, and somebody gives you a room temperature, water?

Well, don't slap them. You may wish to in Jesus' name. Don't do that. But what's up with this? I mean, at best, you're going to just (Spitting sound). No, that isn't — I need cold water. Or how about — this doesn't apply here.

But I remember on the mainland, cold days when I'm out all day in the cold, bone cold as they would say, I'd come home, start up the fire in our fireplace, and just sit there, and I couldn't get warm. All I wanted was hot something. I don't care.

Well, I should care. Not just anything. But hot tea. Hot cup of coffee. Man, I gotta warm up. I am freezing. I need to cool down. I am so thirsty, and I'm sweating.

So you get a lukewarm water, room temperature water, you're going to spit it out. That's how we can be with and towards the Lord, lukewarm. I know we talk a lot about, and I'll close with this. Hey, and we pray, right? I mean, we say, "Lord bless me."

Can I just ask you just very humbly, and I'll ask it of myself. How about pray this? There's nothing wrong with, "Lord bless me, bless them, bless this, bless that, bless the food to my body." Sometimes I pray, "Lord, don't bless this food to my body, please, God." But how about this prayer? "Lord, I want to bless You. I want to bless You."

Acts 13, **"They ministered to the Lord."**

Hey, I thought the Lord ministered to us?

He does. But have you ever thought about that you can bless God?

How do you bless God? Praise God.

**"He inhabits the praises of His people."** There is **"In His presence is found fullness of joy."**



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I mean, have you ever thought about it like that, that you can actually bless the heart of God? I mean, if you can grieve the heart of God, so too can you bless the heart of God, please God, be pleasing in His sight because that's all that matters. You have an audience of one. Lord, are You pleased? Are You blessed?

You know, I stopped asking, you know, my precious wife, you know, "Well, how is the teaching?" Years ago I stopped because I didn't like the answers she gave me.

But you know, it really doesn't matter what she thought about the teaching. And I say this in love. And please don't take this the wrong way. I do care. I love you. I care about you being fed the word of God, the bread of life. That's my job description, is to feed the sheep. So I want you to be fed.

But at the end of the day, the only thing that matters is, is God pleased. See, you might leave here today and go, "You know, man, he should have taken an extra week off, at least, maybe two."

And I'm sorry. I mean this with all due respect, in love, it doesn't matter. Can I just — this is probably as good of a time as any to bring Kapono up because I'm going to use him as an example. And I'm going to also ask you to stand up, which will give you hope that we're going to close.

Let's just talk about Kapono for a second. Are we okay? You all right? It's good, it's good. It's really good.

So you come to this church, and Kapono leads us in worship, and you're just like, you know, I didn't really quite — I wasn't feeling it in the worship today, you know, the song selection, I just...

How am I doing so far? Is this okay? All right. It gets better.

So you know, Kapono's going to go home after it's all said and done, as am I, as are you, but it's going to be kind of different for us because we're on the ride home. We have — I'm presuming, to speak for you — we have very interesting conversations with the Lord on the way home.

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God — first of all, I'm apologizing profusely. God, I'm so sorry! It's like, no. God, it doesn't matter if they didn't like it or they weren't pleased by it, or they didn't really get anything out of it. The only thing that matters is: Were You blessed? Were You pleased?

So if you don't like — I probably should have stopped where I — quit while I was ahead. If you don't like the worship, I'm sorry to say it and break it to you, but it's not about you and it's not for you.

And the request lines are not open. [

Laughter ]

So why doesn't he do it more contemporary? Why doesn't he do more of the traditional? I really should have stopped it when I had the chance. Okay. I'm done. You got my point?

It's for Him. It's worth-ship. That's where we get the word worship. He is worthy of all of our praise and worship. Worthy is the Lamb. We praise and worship Him and bless Him. If you're not blessed...

[ Laughter ]

I should pray now, shouldn't I? Let's pray.

Lord, thank You for humor, for laughter, how therapeutic it is. Thank You for giving us humor and laughter. It's medicinal. But Lord, also the seriousness of that which we've seen here today concerning the state of the church in these last days.

Lord, we want to be a Philadelphia church and a Philadelphia Christian. So Lord, as we go through these seven churches and study these two chapters, should You tarry, if we're still here, I mean, we're making that assumption, Lord willing, will You speak so clearly to us in and through these letters, which are really to us and for us? So Lord, thank You. We love You so much. In Jesus' name, Amen.