


## Course of This Age: Eschatology of Visible Church



Presented by Fred DeRuvo

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## Revelation Chapters 2 and 3

Characteristics Found in the Seven Churches:

1. Messages of Jesus to the Churches
2. Involve the visible church, not the invisible church
3. Jesus has something against five of them and nothing against two.
4. Finds something good in six churches and nothing good in the seventh.
5. Four common things in all seven letters.

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## Revelation Chapters 2 and 3

Characteristics Found in the Seven Churches:

1. Four common things in all seven letters.
  - a. Every letter has a description of the Messiah taken from the description of the Glorified Son of Man in chapter one.
  - b. All seven letters contain the words: "I know"
  - c. "he that overcomes" followed by a promise
  - d. "he that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" – admonition to obedience

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## Revelation Chapters 2 and 3

### Interpretation

Most Agree that: (among Premillennialists)

1. These churches were seven real churches
2. Provide us a picture of what the Church was like toward the end of the first century.
3. The messages to these churches will always be perennial
4. The messages contain prophetic truth
5. All seven church types exist throughout the Church Age
6. All seven types will continue to exist until the Rapture

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## Revelation Chapters 2 and 3

### Historical-Prophetic Interpretation

1. While all seven types of churches always exist, one type dominates a particular era of church history.
1. These letters then could present a prophetic picture of seven historical periods in which the visible church will develop
1. The letters are being written to the seven churches, representative of the whole

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## Revelation Chapters 2 and 3

1. These churches were likely chosen because
  - a. of the particular meaning of their names
  - b. the situation of that particular local church will also be characteristic of a future period of church history

1. Certain statements made to specific churches cannot be true of just that local church situation
2. Must have a far wider meaning

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# Revelation Chapters 2 and 3

## Basic Outline of Letters

- Destination
- Description of Jesus
- Commendation
- Condemnation
- Exhortation
- Promise

Not all seven letters have all points or in that order, but the basic structure remains the same throughout

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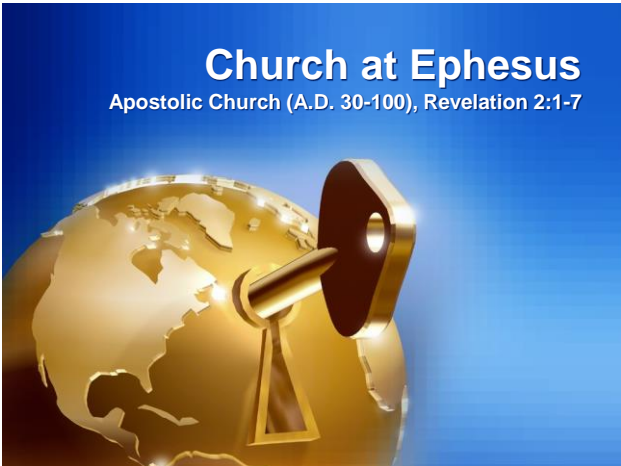
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## Church at EPHESUS

"Lost your first love"  
Busy, fundamentalist...cold as death.



For as the  
BODY  
without the  
SPIRIT  
is dead,  
so  
FAITH  
without  
works is  
dead also.  
James 2:26




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# Church at Ephesus

Destination: Ephesus which means "desired"

- Might represent Apostolic Church, from A.D.30 to A.D.100
- About the time of the death of John
- "He who holds the seven stars in His right hand..."
- Commended for condemning false teachers, vv. 2-3
- Commended for hating the work of the Nicolaitans, v. 6
- Condemned for losing their first love
- Urged to remember their first love, repent and turn to it
  - Failure will result in the removal of their candlestick, or their witness
- Promised privilege of eating of the fruit of the Tree of Life

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# Church at Smyrna

Church of Roman Persecution (A.D. 100-313),  
Revelation 2:8-11




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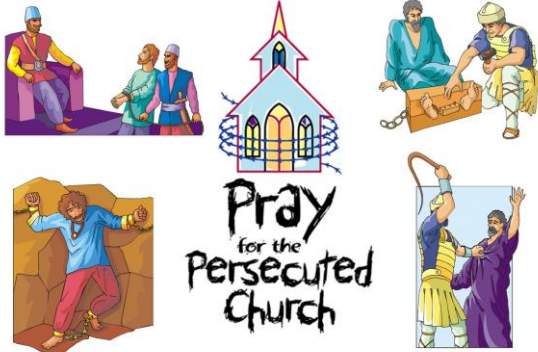
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# Church at SMYRNA

"I know your poverty (but you are rich)"  
Persecuted and among the "synagogue of Satan"




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## Church of the Roman Persecution

Destination: Smyrna which means "myrrh"

- Represents the Roman persecution resulting in death
- "the First and the Last..."
- Commended for having patience in sufferings
- Commended for enduring the blasphemy of those who claim to be Jews, but are of the synagogue of Satan
- Jesus has nothing against this church – no condemnation
- Urged not to fear what they are about to suffer
- Warns them that they are about to suffer persecution for a period of ten days (likely a literal ten day period, not ten periods of time)
- Exhorted to not fear death
- They will not die a second time (2<sup>nd</sup> death)

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## Church at Pergamum

Church of the Age of Constantine (A.D. 313-600),  
Revelation 2:12-17




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## Church at PERGAMUM

"I know where you dwell"  
Compromise, Immorality and Idolatry



"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image..."

Exodus 20:4




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## Church of the Age of Constantine

Destination: Pergamum which means "thoroughly married"

- Church was married to the State – official religion of Rome
  - Resulted in spiritual fornication and idolatry
- Satan’s throne is – Temple of Esculapius, Serpent-Son
- “has the sharp two-edged sword” - judgment
- Commended for not denying the faith
- Condemned for allowing some to hold to teachings of Balaam (Numbers 22-24; encouragement of corruption by intermarriage resulting in fornication and idolatry)
- Condemned for permitting the teachings of Nicolaitans
- Exhorted to repent, clean up church, or be judged
- One who overcomes will be given manna; white stone; given new name

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## Church at Thyatira

Church of the Dark Ages (A.D. 600-1517),  
Revelation 2:18-29




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## Church at THYATIRA

“Love, faith, service and patient endurance...and Jezebel”  
Under a spell




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## Church of the Dark Ages

Destination: Thyatira which means "perpetual sacrifice"

- Roman Catholic doctrine of continual sacrifice through Mass
- "Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire..." judgment
- Commended for their works of love, faith, ministry, patience
- Characterized by their good works
- Condemned for tolerating Jezebel
  - Phoenician name; Phoenicians had disappeared by this time as a separate ethnic identity
  - Thyatira was not located in Phoenicia, but Asia Minor
  - Probably not a real woman; represents a religious entity

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## Church of the Dark Ages

Destination: Thyatira which means "perpetual sacrifice"

- Jezebel of the OT introduced pagan religion to Israel (I Kings 16:29-33)
- Surpassed all previous sins of idolatry in Northern Kingdom
- Idolatry began with Jeroboam I
  - Corrupted true religion
  - Morality still present
- Jezebel introduced a whole new god and system of worship
  - Involved sexual immorality
  - Became a picture of Roman Catholic Church during Dark Ages

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## Church of the Dark Ages

Destination: Thyatira which means "perpetual sacrifice"

- During Dark Ages, Roman Catholic Church introduced:
  - Justification by works – not grace through faith
  - Baptismal regeneration – person saved by baptism
  - Worship of images
  - Celibacy – forbidding to marry
  - Confessionalism – sins confessed; priests declares absolution
  - Purgatory – where one is refined prior to Heaven
  - Transubstantiation – continual sacrifice of Jesus
  - Indulgences – pay your way out of Purgatory
  - Penance – torment of one’s body to reduce time in Purgatory
  - Mariolatry – worship of virgin Mary, elevation as mother of God, declaration of her deity

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## Church of the Dark Ages

Destination: Thyatira which means "perpetual sacrifice"

- Verse 22 indicates the woman to be thrown into Great Tribulation
  - This means that the Roman Catholic Church will play a role in the Great Tribulation
  - This obviously cannot then refer to a real woman
  - Exhorted to hold fast to that which is pure, who are not already part of Satan's counterfeit (Roman Catholicism)
  - Promised to have a part in the Messianic Kingdom and will have the Morning Star (refers to Jesus Himself (Rev. 22:16))

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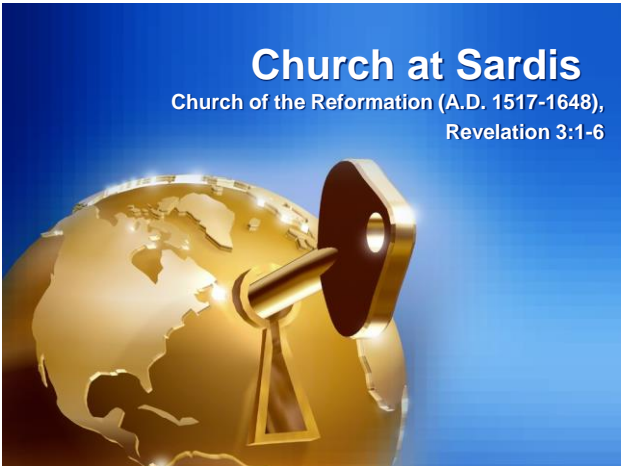
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## Church at SARDIS

"Alive but dead"  
Stop sleeping! Awake!




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## Church of the Reformation

**Destination: Sardis which means "those escaping"**

- "He that has the seven Spirits of God..."
- Condemned because they have a name that lives, but are dead
- Valid description of the church in the Reformation
  - Doctrinal correction and good creeds
  - Did not rectify the problem of church married to state
  - No spiritual vitality
  - Churches that broke away from Roman Catholicism all became state churches
- Exhorted to resurrect that which is about to die – go back to spiritual life as well as sound doctrinal creeds
- Commended because they exercised faith
- Promised to have white garments (salvation) and their names not blotted out (eternal security) and names will be confessed before the angels

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## Church at Philadelphia

Church of the Great Missionary Movement (A.D. 1648-1900),  
Revelation 3:7-13

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## Church at PHILADELPHIA

"You have kept my word"  
In revival



SHARE THE GOSPEL

Do everything in

# LOVE





MISSION PROJECT



AFRICA MISSIONS



SOUTH AMERICA MISSIONS

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## Church of the Missionary Movement

Destination: Philadelphia which means "brotherly love"

- "He that has the key of David..."
- Commended for making use of the open door
- During the period of 1700-1900 there was virtually no place where a missionary could not go - not so today
- Promised fruit from those who claim to be Jews or people of God and are not
  - Could reference those cults who claim to be true Jews:
    - Mormons
    - Jehovah's Witnesses
  - Will not go into the Great Tribulation period, v. 10
    - Cannot obviously be limited to the Church at Philadelphia
  - They will serve as a pillar in the Temple of God
  - They will have three new names: name of God, name of Jerusalem, new name of Jesus
  - Exhorted to continue doing well

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## Church at Laodicea

Church of the Apostasy (A.D. 1900 to present day),  
Revelation 3:14-22




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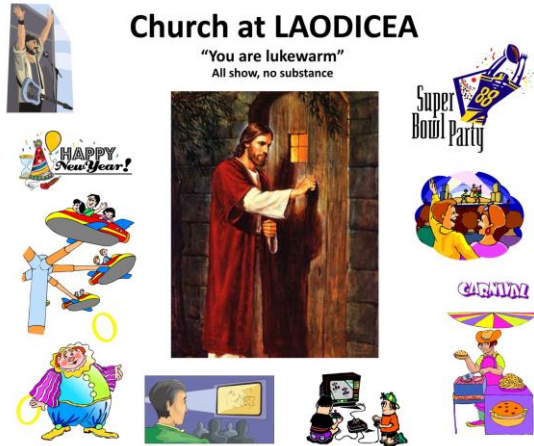
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### Church at LAODICEA

"You are lukewarm"  
All show, no substance




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## Church of the Apostasy

**Destination: Laodicea which means "people ruling"**

- "the faithful and true Witness..."
- **The only Church will NO commendation**
- **Condemned for being lukewarm**
  - "hot" are truly saved
  - "cold" not believers and do not claim to be
  - "lukewarm" are those who claim to be believers but aren't
  - v.17, characterized as richness in worldly goods, self-deceived because they are spiritually poor, blind and naked
  - Apostasy is the departure from the truth that one professes to have. Does not mean they actually possessed the truth
  - A departure from a truth they professed to have because of an affiliation with a particular church
  - Characterizes the church of the 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> century

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## Church of the Apostasy

**Apostasy in the Church was predicted in two NT passages:**

- **II Thessalonians 2:1-3: "...day of the Lord..."**
  - "day of the Lord" always references the Tribulation period
  - Two things will occur first:
    - Falling away - Greek word is *apostasia* = the apostasy
    - Character of apostasy: doctrine of demons (I Tim 4:1)
      - » Apostates have essentially given into seducing spirits and preaching a system of doctrine of demons
- **II Peter 2:1-22**
  - Apostates teach destructive denials
    - Denial of Trinity, I John 2:22-23
    - Denial of Incarnation, I John 4:2-3
    - Denial of Second Coming of Messiah, II Peter 3:3-4
    - Denial of Person and work of Messiah
    - Denial of Inspiration of Scriptures

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## Church of the Apostasy

**Other Characteristics of Apostates:**

- **Mocking**
  - Jude 17-19 "But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: that they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts. These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit."
  - They will **mock** the doctrine of His **2<sup>nd</sup> Coming**
- **Schisms**
  - Will create separations or schisms, denying some of the fundamentals of the faith because of their heretical teachings.

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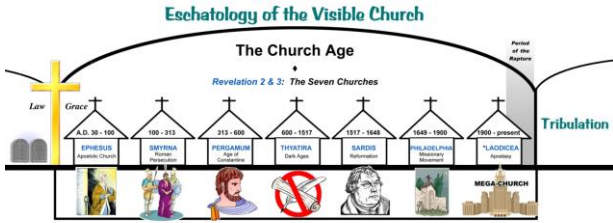
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### Church of the Apostasy

Ultimately Apostasy involved the Bible PLUS Experience

- 1948
  - World Council of Churches was organized on two principles:
    - The unity of all churches on the basis of liberal tenets
    - The unity of all religions
- 1950
  - Federal Council of Churches reorganized into the National Council of Churches
    - Attempt to unify all churches in the United States along liberal tenets
- The Visible Church is outwardly primarily apostate today
  - Appears religious and spiritual
- Recently, destructive denials have been introduced into this system, leading many to be...
 

*"tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine..."*

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### Church of the Apostasy

No Fellowship with Apostates

- II Corinthians 6:14-7:1
  - Believers are admonished to separate from apostates and not to continue to worship with them
  - Context is not dealing with marriage, but fellowship
  - Worshipping with unbelievers is an unequal yoke
  - There can be no fellowship between righteous and unrighteous
  - No communion between light and darkness
  - No common ground between the two
  - No agreement between Satan and Messiah
  - We are the Temple of God

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### To Sum It All Up...

Church	Ref	Description of Christ
• Ephesus	2:1-7	holds the 7 stars...
• Smyrna	2:8-11	first and the last
• Pergamum	2:12-17	has sharp two-edged sword
• Thyatira	2:18-29	eyes like flame...
• Sardis	3:1-6	7 spirits of God/7 stars
• Philadelphia	3:7-13	holy & true one/keys of David
• Laodicea	3:14-22	the Amen/faithful/true witness

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### To Sum It All Up...

Church	Commendation	Rebuke
• Ephesus	doctrinal vigilance	loss of first love
• Smyrna	spiritually rich	none
• Pergamum	not denying faith	false teaching
• Thyatira	growing love	toleration of heresy
• Sardis	none	dead works
• Philadelphia	patiently enduring	none
• Laodicea	none	spiritually blind

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### To Sum It All Up...

Church	Solution	Consequence
• Ephesus	remember/repent	removal of lampstand
• Smyrna	be faithful to death	none
• Pergamum	repent	war against them w/truth
• Thyatira	hold fast	each as work deserves
• Sardis	repent	Christ will come
• Philadelphia	hold fast	none
• Laodicea	buy gold, repent	will be spit out of His mouth

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To Sum It All Up...	
Church	Promise for Conquerors
• Ephesus	will be given food from tree of life
• Smyrna	crown of life
• Pergamum	given hidden manna and white stone
• Thyatira	given the morning star/authority
• Sardis	clothed in white
• Philadelphia	made a pillar in God's temple
• Laodicea	will dine with Christ/sit on His throne

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Next Up: Sequence of Pretribulational Events