

Wednesday Night Local Groups

7

“Seven Church Letters”

March 2017 - July 2017

Introduction: “Seven Church Letters”

The Book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ. He stands before His church in perfect righteousness. He looks at the present and the future with grave warnings. Let no one doubt His love for His church. This love is a purifying love. When He stands before the church, He calls for repentance and reform. Let no one overlook the holiness of God. When He stands before the world, He calls for judgment. The final resolution for sin and death was accomplished by God at the cross of Christ. At the cross the judicial wrath of God toward sinners was propitiated – satisfied. This is the only place where sinners are set free in perfect justice. It is the only place where sinners find everlasting peace with God. In the book of Revelation the Savior speaks to purify His church and warn of the wrath to come.

The book of revelation is divided into five parts:

1. The vision of Christ (Chapter 1)
2. Seven letters to seven churches (Chapters 2-3)
3. The tribulation (Chapters 4-19)
4. The millennium (Chapter 20)
5. The new heavens and the new earth. (Chapters 21-22)

Our study deals with the seven letters to the seven churches. These seven churches in Asia Minor (Turkey) were facing seven different problems. So, the Lord appeared in a vision to the Apostle John to address these concerns. Many believe that these problems were not only occurring in these seven historic churches, but also were to be reoccurring problems in the ongoing life of the church. If that is the case, lessons learned in the past are pertinent for the church today.

The seven letters are all written with the same literary structure:

- 1 – **the address** · the angel / messenger of the church
- 2 – **the author** · Jesus Christ with an attribute from the vision
- 3 – **the commendation** · “*I know your ...*” → good works
- 4 – **the rebuke** · identifying and addressing a problem
- 5 – **the repentance** · a call with warning or encouragement
- 6 – **the discernment** · “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*”
- 7 – **the incentive** · “*He who overcomes*” → a promise

The point of this structure is to address each church in a similar manner. It also has the effect of a beating drum that warns of the dangers to come. In our study of these letters, we will examine each of the seven churches on two nights. The first examination is to

identify the problem and how this problem relates to God. The second examination is to focus on the resolution of the problem and the effect upon Christians in the church today. Each letter provides a way to address the problem. This should cause us to search the Scriptures for additional verses to encourage life and godliness in the church.

Jesus addressed the churches because of His concern for the purity of His body the church. May this study have the same effect upon us.

Questions for Lessons 1-3-5-7-9-11-13 (the problem):

1. What are your initial thoughts on this passage?
2. What **problem** is being addressed in this letter?
3. What does this passage emphasize about Christ – and teach us about God?
4. How is this historic problem a potential problem in the church today?
5. How does this passage impact our views of God, the church, and Christians today?

Questions for Lessons 2-4-6-8-10-12-14 (the solution):

1. What has impressed you about this passage?
2. What **solution** is prescribed to address the problem in this church?
3. What does this teach us about these historic Christians – and about us?
4. What other passages in the Bible can be helpful in resolving this church problem?
5. How should this letter impact our thinking and change our lives?

Scripture for Memorization (NASB):**Revelation 1:4-8**

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—
6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
7 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.
8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Revelation 2:4-5

4 'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.
5 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

"Seven Church Letters" Study Schedule

#	Date	Title	Scripture	Memory
The First Church: Ephesus				
1	03/29/17	The Problem at Ephesus	Revelation 2:1-7	Revelation 1:4
2	04/05/17	The Solution at Ephesus	Revelation 2:1-7	review
	04/12/17	Spring Bible Conference	No meeting	
The Second Church: Smyrna				
3	04/19/17	The Problem at Smyrna	Revelation 2:8-11	Revelation 1:4-5
4	04/26/17	The Solution at Smyrna	Revelation 2:8-11	review
The Third Church: Pergamos				
5	05/03/17	The Problem at Pergamos	Revelation 2:12-17	Revelation 1:4-6
6	05/10/17	The Solution at Pergamos	Revelation 2:12-17	review
The Fourth Church: Thyatira				
7	05/17/17	The Problem at Thyatira	Revelation 2:18-29	Revelation 1:4-7
8	05/24/17	The Solution at Thyatira	Revelation 2:18-29	review
The Fifth Church: Sardis				
9	05/31/17	The Problem at Sardis	Revelation 3:1-6	Revelation 1:4-8
10	06/07/17	The Solution at Sardis	Revelation 3:1-6	review
The Sixth Church: Philadelphia				
11	06/14/17	The Problem at Philadelphia	Revelation 3:7-13	Revelation 2:4
12	06/21/17	The Solution at Philadelphia	Revelation 3:7-13	review
The Seventh Church: Laodicea				
13	06/28/17	The Problem at Philadelphia	Revelation 3:14-22	Revelation 2:4-5
14	07/05/17	The Solution at Philadelphia	Revelation 3:14-22	review
15	07/12/17	Wrap-up and Launch at Hillcrest	@HBC	

March 29 ■ Lesson 1**Seven Church Letters****The First Letter: “The Problem at Ephesus”**

Text: Revelation 2:1-7

“**angel**” is a possible reference to a guardian angel of the church – or a “messenger” like an elder or pastor of the church.

“**Nicolaitans**” are identified by some as followers of Nicolaus of Antioch (Acts 6:5). They abandoned true Christian doctrine and practiced idolatry and immorality. They may have accepted a form of dualism – regarding the body as being evil (to do evil) and only the spirit as being good. They used Christian liberty as an occasion for the flesh – and lived in shameless self-indulgence. The Nicolaitans were specifically addressed in the third letter to Pergamos.

Memory Verses: Revelation 1:4

1. What are your initial thoughts on this passage?
2. What problem is being addressed in this letter?
3. What does this passage emphasize about Christ – and teach us about God?
4. How is this historic problem a potential problem in the church today?
5. How does this passage impact our views of God, the church, and Christians today?

April 5 ■ Lesson 2

Seven Church Letters

The First Letter: “The **Solution** at Ephesus”

Text: Revelation 2:1-7

Memory Verses: Revelation 1:4 (review)

1. What has impressed you about this passage?
2. What solution is prescribed to address the problem in this church?
3. What does this teach us about these historic Christians – and about us?
4. What other passages in the Bible can be helpful in resolving this church problem?
5. How should this letter impact our thinking and change our lives?

April 19 ■ Lesson 3

Seven Church Letters

The Second Letter – “The Problem at Smyrna”

Text: Revelation 2:8-11

Memory Verses: Revelation 1:4-5

1. What are your initial thoughts on this passage?
2. What problem is being addressed in this letter?
3. What does this passage emphasize about Christ – and teach us about God?
4. How is this historic problem a potential problem in the church today?
5. How does this passage impact our views of God, the church, and Christians today?

April 26 ■ Lesson 4**Seven Church Letters****The Second Letter – “The Solution at Smyrna”****Text:** Revelation 2:8-11**Memory Verses:** Revelation 1:4-5 (review)

1. What has impressed you about this passage?
2. What solution is prescribed to address the problem in this church?
3. What does this teach us about these historic Christians – and about us?
4. What other passages in the Bible can be helpful in resolving this church problem?
5. How should this letter impact our thinking and change our lives?

May 3 ■ Lesson 5**Seven Church Letters****The Third Letter – “The Problem at Pergamos”****Text:** Revelation 2:12-17**“Balaam and Balak”** – see Numbers 22-24; Joshua 13:22; Micah 6:5; 2 Peter 2:15 & Jude **11****“Nicolaitans”** – see the note on the first study**Memory Verse:** Revelation 1:4-6

1. What are your initial thoughts on this passage?
2. What problem is being addressed in this letter?
3. What does this passage emphasize about Christ – and teach us about God?
4. How is this historic problem a potential problem in the church today?
5. How does this passage impact our views of God, the church, and Christians today?

May 10 ■ Lesson 6

Seven Church Letters

The Third Letter – “The Solution at Pergamos”

Text: Revelation 2:12-17

Memory Verse: Revelation 1:4-6 (review)

1. What has impressed you about this passage?
2. What solution is prescribed to address the problem in this church?
3. What does this teach us about these historic Christians – and about us?
4. What other passages in the Bible can be helpful in resolving this church problem?
5. How should this letter impact our thinking and change our lives?

May 17 ■ Lesson 7

Seven Church Letters

The Fourth Letter – “The Problem at Thyatira”

Text: Revelation 2:18-29

Memory Verse: Revelation 1:4-7

1. What are your initial thoughts on this passage?
2. What problem is being addressed in this letter?
3. What does this passage emphasize about Christ – and teach us about God?
4. How is this historic problem a potential problem in the church today?
5. How does this passage impact our views of God, the church, and Christians today?

May 24 ■ Lesson 8

Seven Church Letters

The Fourth Letter – “The Solution at Thyatira”

Text: Revelation 2:18-29

Memory Verse: Revelation 1:4-7 (review)

1. What has impressed you about this passage?
2. What solution is prescribed to address the problem in this church?
3. What does this teach us about these historic Christians – and about us?
4. What other passages in the Bible can be helpful in resolving this church problem?
5. How should this letter impact our thinking and change our lives?

May 31 ■ Lesson 9

Seven Church Letters

The Fifth Letter – “The Problem at Sardis”

Text: Revelation 3:1-6

Memory Verse: Revelation 1:4-8

1. What are your initial thoughts on this passage?
2. What problem is being addressed in this letter?
3. What does this passage emphasize about Christ – and teach us about God?
4. How is this historic problem a potential problem in the church today?
5. How does this passage impact our views of God, the church, and Christians today?

June 7 ■ Lesson 10**Seven Church Letters****The Fifth Letter – “The Solution at Sardis”****Text:** Revelation 3:1-6**Memory Verse:** Revelation 1:4-8 (review)

1. What has impressed you about this passage?
2. What solution is prescribed to address the problem in this church?
3. What does this teach us about these historic Christians – and about us?
4. What other passages in the Bible can be helpful in resolving this church problem?
5. How should this letter impact our thinking and change our lives?

June 14 ■ Lesson 11

Seven Church Letters: Philadelphia

The Sixth Letter – “The Problem at Philadelphia”

Text: Revelation 3:7-13

Memory Verse: Revelation 2:4

1. What are your initial thoughts on this passage?
2. What problem is being addressed in this letter?
3. What does this passage emphasize about Christ – and teach us about God?
4. How is this historic problem a potential problem in the church today?
5. How does this passage impact our views of God, the church, and Christians today?

June 21 ■ Lesson 12**Seven Church Letters: Philadelphia****The Sixth Letter – “The Solution at Philadelphia”****Text:** Revelation 3:7-13**Memory Verse:** Revelation 2:4 (review)

1. What has impressed you about this passage?
2. What solution is prescribed to address the problem in this church?
3. What does this teach us about these historic Christians – and about us?
4. What other passages in the Bible can be helpful in resolving this church problem?
5. How should this letter impact our thinking and change our lives?

June 28 ■ Lesson 13

Seven Church Letters: Laodicea

The Seventh Letter – “The Problem at Laodicea”

Text: Revelation 3:14-22

Memory Verses: Revelation 2:4-5

1. What are your initial thoughts on this passage?
2. What problem is being addressed in this letter?
3. What does this passage emphasize about Christ – and teach us about God?
4. How is this historic problem a potential problem in the church today?
5. How does this passage impact our views of God, the church, and Christians today?

July 5 ■ Lesson 14

Seven Church Letters: Laodicea

The Seventh Letter – “The Solution at Laodicea”

Text: Revelation 3:14-22

Memory Verses: Revelation 2:4-5 (review)

1. What has impressed you about this passage?
2. What solution is prescribed to address the problem in this church?
3. What does this teach us about these historic Christians – and about us?
4. What other passages in the Bible can be helpful in resolving this church problem?
5. How should this letter impact our thinking and change our lives?