

# Understanding the Seven Churches of Revelation

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<sup>10</sup> *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,*  
<sup>11</sup> *saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."*

*Revelation 1:10 - 11*

**S**ome Bible teachers regard the seven churches of Revelation to be a predictive prophecy representative of the chronological unfolding of the Church's history. There are several problems with this interpretation though.

Firstly, the conditions described in each of these churches have been present in nearly every era of the Church's history. To view this as a chronological forecast of the global Church is grossly over simplistic, and unsustainable from a Church history.



Secondly, it makes no sense for the Lord to command John to write to what we know were seven actual churches and cryptically invent scenarios that didn't actually pertain to them. If this had been the case, this epistle from John would have been dismissed as uninspired and thereby rejected from the Canon of Scripture very early. But it wasn't. This seems to suggest that the initial recipients acknowledged it as being truly insightful into their church's condition and presumably responded accordingly. This initial acceptance by these seven churches of what we know as the first three chapters of the Revelation would have also given added credibility to the remainder of the Book. Indeed, since it was readily accepted as integral to the Canon very early in the formation of the Canon we could also surmise that what appears to be very enigmatic to the modern reader may not have been so to the first readers.

Remember the theme of the Book when reading about these churches? How Christ describes Himself to these churches is often overlooked by those more interested in speculating about what it might say about the future condition of the Church.

Church	Revelation of Christ
<b>Ephesus</b>	2:1 ~ Christ relates to His churches through God ordained authority (stars). He is One who has authority and relates to His Church through His appointed authority. This does not mean that Christ is 'authoritarian' and thereby aloof, rather, He is authoritative and imminent (close) to His Church – He <i>“walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.”</i>
<b>Smyrna</b>	2:8 ~ Christ is in absolute control of the universe. He is First. While this world wars against the Church through futile efforts to destroy it and it may at times look like the Church will not survive the barrage of unreasonableness, Christ is there at the Last, and so will His Church be also. While the Devil thought that he had conquered Christ when Jesus died on the Cross, it turned out to be his greatest humiliation (Col. 2:15). So too when believers die for their faith the world erroneously considers it a victory for their cause, but ironically the victory is ours! Thus Christ was dead, but is now alive forevermore.
<b>Pergamos</b>	2:12 ~ Christ is a Just Lord- He will execute judgment on His enemies- He has a two-edged sword in His mouth. Unlike mortal rulers, Christ's words are more powerful than any human weaponry. Never underestimate the words of Christ!
<b>Thyatira</b>	2:18 ~ Christ sees all and will hold the guilty to account. Fire nearly always represents judgment in Scripture and Christ's eyes are described as being like fire. Only He is qualified to judge since He Himself has been judged and found innocent- <i>He has feet like burnished bronze (brass)</i> . Burnished bronze in the Old Testament spoke of that which withstands judgment (hence it is burnished). One such example of this is found in Numbers 16:39-40.
<b>Sardis</b>	3:1 ~ Christ loves His Church deeply. He is the One who gives His Church the Anointing – <i>the Seven Spirits of God</i> - (1John 2:20), and <i>anointed ones – Stars</i> - (Eph. 4:11).
<b>Philadelphia</b>	3:7 ~ Christ is without compromise: He is holy and true.
<b>Laodicea</b>	3:14 ~ Christ fulfils the Word of His Father- He is the Amen, Faithful and True. He is the beginning and source of all that has been created, He therefore has the right to judge the earth.



It's actually quite refreshing to avoid speculating about whether the Lord's messages to these churches are some cryptic predictions about the Church throughout the Ages. Instead, as we try to look over the shoulder of the original readers we can see how

this revelation *of Christ* would have given them so much strength and courage. Imagine living during a time when becoming a Christian could cost you your life because you were seen as a threat to the stability of the Empire who would mercilessly deal with such threats. Imagine living during a time when being a Christian meant that you would be ostracized by your family, friends, and community, who would ruthlessly slander you for your faith in Christ. Imagine also living at time when you had been told that there was only a short time before Christ would return and bring all of creation under subjection to His authority, yet the longer you believed the less likely it seemed. Imagine how it must have felt to the first century Christians who witnessed some of their brothers and sisters being publicly martyred, and to see others openly forsaking their faith in Christ.

But what about how John the apostle must have been feeling? He had oversight over at least seven churches. He knew that some of these churches were struggling in the midst of all this pressure. Some of them had resorted to trying to gain political approval by accumulating wealth and a corresponding prestige (Rev. 3:17). Others had just grown complacent thereby losing their zealous passion for Christ and His cause (Rev. 2:4). Still others had downright succumbed to an immorality-is-tolerated attitude (Rev. 2:20) which was destroying them in the process. John must have been tempted to despair. Everything looked like it was going awry.

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Christ's last words before His ascension stated His lordship over everything- but there was little visible evidence of it. Christ's last commission was to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth and make disciples of all nations- but all the nations were rejecting the Church and killing its servants. Christ said He would return soon- but time was dragging on and there was no sign of His coming.

Some of these issues are addressed in this Revelation. But the focal point of the Book of Revelation is not to make fanciful predictions about the future, but to point the reader back to Christ! The message contained in Revelation is a message that spoke straight into the hearts of the first hearers and still speaks with special power today.

## THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES AND TODAY'S APPLICATION...



### ***Ephesus...***

Christ commended the Ephesian church for their hard work. They were a church which cared for elderly widows (1Tim 5:3), preached the Gospel in the midst of opposition, and sought to be diligent to the Lord's instructions (we draw these conclusions from Paul's epistles to the *Ephesians*, *First & Second Timothy*, and *Acts 20*).

Today we should understand that Christian service requires diligence and hard work. They did not tolerate those who were evil. Today we should guard what we put aside in the name of “grace” and ensure that our grace does not become “disgrace” because we accept or tolerate what is evil. They tested those claiming to be apostles and found many of them to be liars. This implies that the apostolic ministry was not limited to the original disciples of Christ but is a ministry gift given by Christ to the Church to bring it to maturity. Apparently there were many who were claiming apostolicity (that they were apostles), but neither had the gifts nor the character to substantiate their claims. Today we should be very careful about both claiming to be an apostle and recognising someone as having an apostolic ministry when we have not tested their claims first.

**T**he Ephesian church had lost its first love for Christ. Today it is possible to become distracted with so much administration and gadgetry that we can almost leave Christ out of the Christian equation. Love is the only appropriate response to Christ at any time. If there is no love in the church for Christ there is no need for it to exist- hence Christ says He would remove their lampstand (Rev. 2:5, which is symbolic of their witness as a church). In gracious conclusion Christ commends the Ephesians for being against the Nicolaitans who taught that there was a priestly class within Christianity. Today we should be especially on guard against teaching that contradicts the priesthood of *all* believers.

### ***Smyrna...***

The church at Smyrna was also commended for the hard work. May we gain an understanding that ‘success’ in the church (which is measured by our obedience to Christ) actually demands work. “Work” may best be described as toiling under a certain degree of duress. In other words, work is doing what you have to do, even when you may not want to do it. Even as enjoyable as a job might be, there will always be moments when it really becomes “work”. It’s the same in church. There are some things that have to be done under a certain degree of duress! Elders who labour in preparation to preach may feel that their efforts go unnoticed and unappreciated. Deacons who spend hours stocking the church’s pantry to show hospitality to others who take for granted what they enjoy (food and drink and service) may feel that their efforts go unnoticed and unappreciated. The worship musician who spends hours learning a worship song so that they can be liberated from the sheet music to truly worship may feel that their efforts go

unnoticed and unappreciated. But the work done by these servants is noticed and is appreciated! Even though there may not be any human accolades, the Lord Jesus Christ sees the work that was done. And He regards it as work done for Him!



The church at Smyrna was experiencing tribulation. Today we must be prepared to endure the discomfort that comes from standing up boldly for Christ. While the church at Smyrna felt inadequate due to their

lack of resources, it actually resulted in them having to depend upon the Lord which in turn made them “rich” in the eyes of the Lord. As wealthy and as well as we may resourced, if we become self-reliant we quite possibly could become spiritually bankrupt! We need to live dependant upon the Lord.

*Excise all the references to heaven from the New Testament and you have very little left. Saint Teresa said, ‘In light of heaven, the worst suffering on earth, a life full of the most atrocious tortures on earth, will be seen to be no more serious than one night in an inconvenient hotel.’*

*Saint Teresa, cited in THE CASE FOR FAITH, Strobel, page 65*

As also said to the church at Ephesus, Christ makes reference to “overcoming”. For the Ephesians Christ said that overcoming would qualify them to eat from the tree of life in the Paradise of God (Rev. 2:7). For those in Smyrna Christ said that overcoming the pressure to abandon Him would shield them from the second death.

### ***Pergamos...***

Christ’s statement confirming that He knew the works of the church at Pergamos is encouraging. What we do for Christ is not unnoticed. Unlike the other two churches already addressed, Christ says that He was also aware that the church at Pergamos was physically located in a very difficult area. He described Pergamos as where *Satan’s throne* was. Interestingly He gave them no command, instruction, or edict to confront Satan in what many today pass off as “spiritual warfare”. (For more on this issue please refer to my book on *An Examination of Spiritual Warfare*.) In the midst of much spiritual opposition they had held fast to the Lordship of Christ even to point of laying down their lives in martyrdom (verse 13). Christ’s restatement that this was

where Satan dwells seems to give the insight that the martyrdom of Antipas was not the mere machinations of flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12), but a deliberate plot of Satan designed to destroy the church.

But Christ had some disappointments with the church at Pergamos. They had some people in the church who held to a false doctrine which endorsed a form of idolatry and sexual compromise. This is referred to as *the teaching of Balaam*. Today we must guard what doctrines are tolerated in the church. Wise pastors know how to gently correct the erring but teachable. But it is vital to also know how to confront and address those who hold to dangerous doctrines because their beliefs will eventually harm themselves and others! If we could believe anything then Christ would not address these two subtle doctrinal errors.

The second doctrinal error is that they had some who held to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. No can be sure at this stage (perhaps some manuscripts or archaeological data is yet to be discovered) exactly what this meant. But there is good reason to believe that this doctrine was the beginning of a teaching which drew a line of distinction between those who had received holy orders (*cleros* from where the word *clergy* comes from) and laity (ordinary). Hence it is speculated that the term Nicolaitans meant *nico* – over, *laitan* – ordinary; the doctrine of a priestly class of believers lording it over ordinary believers. Christ said that He *hated* this doctrine of the Nicolaitans. His instructions for dealing with this doctrine are short: *repent*. And His warning for not doing so is severe: *I will fight against them with the sword of My mouth*. Today we must guard against elitism in the church. We must also understand the New Testament teaching on the priesthood of all believers which negates the possibility of a New Testament priestly class.

Whenever the expression *he who has ears let him hear* is used it demands that the reader *look beyond* the natural implications of what has been said (note Isa. 6:10; 42:20; Jer. 5:21; 6:10; Ezek. 12:2; Matt. 11:15; 13:16). This necessitates that we understand that Christ is saying something that goes *beyond* what it immediately may sound like. We all (generally) have ears, but Christ is referring to *understanding* something that may not be immediately obvious. He makes this statement to each of the seven churches and it is still true today.

### **Thyatira...**

Christ commended the church at Thyatira for increasing their good works (2:19). But Christ condemned them for *tolerating* sexual immorality. One disturbing New Testament Manuscript describes this Jezebel as “your wife Jezebel” (refer to the translator’s footnote in the NKJV). If this was the case, then it makes the charge all that more serious. Since this was addressed to the star of Thyatira, which we regard as the leader of (messenger to) the church, then that particular manuscript suggests that this corruption was coming from very close to the top. The Lord said that He was going to cast this woman onto a sickbed (vs 22) and bring great tribulation on those who had committed adultery with her. This reference to a woman does not appear to be symbolic language. It has all the hallmarks of talking about a real character and situation in the church at Thyatira. But we can draw legitimate lessons from this for today in regard to tolerating immorality within the church.

**T**he Lord also warned those who followed this woman. Christ warns that they were in danger of “great tribulation”. We know that Caesar (Titus) Vespasian launched a campaign of terror against the Jews throughout the Empire around 70AD in which some Christians suffered as well. These followers of the woman Jezebel are called *her children* (vs. 23). John also referred to his disciples as *his children* (1John 2:1; 3:7). We should be on guard against any teaching that says that the Lord punishes children for the sins of their parents.

*"Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin."*

*Deuteronomy 24:16*

To interpret this verse as saying that the Lord Jesus would kill this woman’s children is an error. Clearly the reference to children is to *her followers*. To be killed with “death” (verse 23) is akin to dying of pestilence- a wasting death brought about by disease.

*I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.*

*Revelation 2:23*

The purpose for the Lord in dealing with these people so severely was to establish a clear message to all the churches that He would not tolerate sin in His Church. People often fail to understand that while God is absolutely



gracious, He remains absolutely just. God did not stop being just in the New Testament! He was, is, and always will be *just*. He “*searches the minds and hearts*” is a timely reminder to us just as it was to the original recipients that Christ will judge our actions and motives (refer to Matthew 5:28).

But not everyone in Thyatira had fallen prey to the corruption of false doctrine and immorality though. For these believers, it must have been tough to remain loyal and faithful in the midst of so much opposition. Graciously, the Lord Jesus says to these battered believers that He would lay no further burden on them vs. 24. Perhaps you have felt overwhelmed by life and your spirituality has suffered as a result. This can often lead to a downward spiral of guilt and condemnation. Take heart. Remain faithful to Christ and He lays no further on you.

**A**s a pastor I have had to counsel people with the Word of God through some tough periods in their life. They have confessed to me that they have felt ashamed because they weren't able to read their Bible as much as they had been used to, or prayed with the reverence they had previously grown to enjoy, or serve in the church with the diligence they knew was deserved. During these tough times, my pastoral counsel has often reflected Christ's words to the battered believers.

### ***Sardis...***

Some scholars have noted that there seems to be a progression of deteriorating conditions in the seven churches listed. As I've previously stated, there is no Scriptural or logical reason for doing this. These Historicist scholars regard the church at Sardis as representing the Church at the point of the Reformation (early 1500s) because this church was “dead” and their works were no longer perfect (Rev. 3:1). That's how the Reformers regarded the (Roman Catholic) Church of their day. They also felt that their reforming work was ushering the Church into the Philadelphian Age. This is reading too much into the text when we consider that the hermeneutical principle of *audience relevance* demands that we regard Christ's words to the leader of the church of Sardis as pertaining immediately to them.

Each of these messages to the seven churches is primarily addressed to the “angel” of the church. The Greek word translated into English as “angel” is the word *angelos* which literally means *messenger*. It is used in the New

Testament of both earthly and heavenly messengers. Since Christ is giving this message to the leader of the church at Sardis we note that he had ceased to “watch” and grown weak in good works and thus affected the whole church.

The term “watch” is an Old Testament term. In the Old Testament it was the watchmen who were responsible to hear from God and deliver His Word, but they had failed to do so.

*Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, Listen to the sound of the trumpet But they said, We will not listen.*

*Jeremiah 6:17*

The church at Sardis had failed to watch. The correlation between the leader of a church and the spiritual depth of a church is now well established. Many people who move into a new area, and look for a new church home, make the mistake of basing their evaluation of a new church purely upon what the church offers them and their family rather than on who might be leading them. The leader of a local church has the privilege of setting the spiritual pace and tone of a church, and those who align themselves with a church will be influenced by the spiritual depth of the leader.

**T**o this leader, and church, Christ commands that they remember what they heard and return to it (repent). They are then told to *watch*. To “watch” demands prayerfulness, prophetic proclamation and heeding the word of God. Today we should also be watchful by giving ourselves to prayerfulness, obedience and boldness in proclaiming God’s Word. For the church at Sardis this was apparently their last opportunity to do so.

Even in this church which looked alive, but was dead (Rev. 3:1), there were some who had not “defiled” their “garments”. This expression generally related to sexual morality.

*Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her.*

*Leviticus 18:20*

Christ promised those who had not defiled their garments that they would be clothed in white. This is an expression that is used several times in Revelation and speaks of the believer’s resurrection with ‘garments’ of righteousness (Rev. 4:4; 7:9).

*And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen,  
clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts  
of the saints.*

*Revelation 19:8*

### ***Philadelphia...***

The Reformers believed that they were ushering in the Philadelphian Age of Church history. They believed that they were bringing the Church back to true brotherly love, which is what Phila (love) Delphia (brotherly) means. To this actual church Christ stated that He had “*the key of David*”. This is very significant considering the tone of Christ’s message to this church. What ‘key’ did David have? Some regard the key to David’s success as his genuine love for others. He had an incredible ability to win people over. Christ has this same ability. Still other scholars regard this as an expression which affirms Christ’s messiah-hood. He had the key of David to the true City of David- the New/Heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 3:12). In the context of this view Christ was affirming the Philadelphian church as being the rightful continuation as the people of God rather than the apostate Jews of the local synagogue. This makes sense considering Revelation 3:9-

*Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan,  
who say they are Jews and are not, but lie; indeed I will  
make them come and worship before your feet, and to  
know that I have loved you.*

*Revelation 3:9*

The reference to “*the hour of trial*” in Revelation 3:10 is regarded by Futurists as referring to a future “Great Tribulation”. If this “Great Tribulation” was yet another 2,000 years away from the recipients of this message, then Christ’s promise to “keep you from” it, is absurd. There is a growing number of scholars who acknowledge that this period occurred during the time leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. Interestingly, the New Testament uses three Greek words which are translated “world”. One of those Greek words is “oikoumene” which refers to the Roman Empire (note the use of this word in Luke 2:1 and Romans 10:18). That is the word used here.

Based on verse 11, something was very imminent: *the coming of Christ to judge*. It is ridiculous to make this mean anything other than what it plainly says therefore negating an interpretation which demands thousands of years of waiting in order to be fulfilled.

The irony of verse 12 is that while Christ was about to do away with the last vestiges of the Older Covenant by the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, He promised to make the overcoming Philadelphian Christians “pillars” in the real Temple in the real Jerusalem (the Heavenly one).

### ***Laodicea...***

Historicists regard this church as depicting the last age of the Church. Their view of the future Church was affected by their understanding that there had to be a *great falling away* (2Thessalonians 2:3), a great betrayal (Matthew 24:10), and a growing cold of the love of many for the things of God (Matthew 24:12). But these references relate to the time leading up to the fulfilment of what is referred to as the Olivet Discourse (the teaching of Christ in Matthew 24). The events of Matthew 24 were related to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and Christ’s judgment on those who had rejected Him. Jesus said that all the events of Matthew 24 would take place within the lifetime of His disciples (Matthew 24:34). The references to apostasy and betrayal are recorded in the New Testament as being fulfilled (NB. 2Timothy 1:15).

Also from a purely historic point of view the facts of Christianity’s growth today flies in the face of this age being considered the “Laodicean Age”. Never before in the history of Christianity have so many people been converting to Christ. This is taking place in both the Western world, the East, and the Middle Eastern world.

The statements about this church are used to support a late date for the writing of Revelation. In 62AD Laodicea experienced a major earthquake. Because the church is described as being wealthy, some scholars have used this as internal evidence that Revelation must have been written toward the end of the first century so that the Laodicean church would have had time to become wealthy. But this assumes, perhaps wrongly, that because there was a destructive earthquake in Laodicea that the church would have been financially or materially depleted. We know from historical documents that Laodicea rebuilt itself within a couple of years and was restored to being a prosperous city within that time. So either way, this is a poor assumption for the late date of the writing of Revelation. Interestingly, we note Paul’s prayer for the Laodiceans recorded in Colossians 2 -

<sup>1</sup> For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, <sup>2</sup> that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2:1-3

Revelation's reference to the Laodicean church being wealthy makes Paul's prayer somewhat ironic. While the Laodicean church was materially wealthy, or perhaps in particular the Laodicean church's leader, they were spiritually poor. Today, while we may make financial security our goal, it is actually a dangerous thing to be in a situation where we *need nothing* (vs. 17) because we think we can live without God's daily bread!

Laodicea was famous for four things. Firstly its water was lukewarm. Secondly, it produced eye ointment. Thirdly it produced coloured garments. Fourthly, it was a very wealthy city. Christ said to them that He wanted them hot *or* cold, but not lukewarm like their water. Secondly He said to them that they should use *His* eye salve (ointment). Thirdly He told them to wear white garments from Him. Fourthly He told them to buy true gold from Him which had been refined by fire (vs 18).



Pictured above: remains from the ancient city of Laodicea.

*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*

*Revelation 3:19*

Christ was rebuking the Laodiceans. *Rebuking* is rarely regarded as an act of love. Perhaps this is both indicative of how we both rebuke and love today. Jesus could rebuke with both sternness and compassion so that His hearers could recognise His deep concern for them. May God grant us, especially those of us who are charged with the oversight of the church, to be able to rebuke *because we love* – just like Christ.

Christ's appeal to the Laodiceans was not forceful, but rather an appeal to their volition (free will choice). Thus, He says to them that He was standing at the door and knocking, awaiting for the occupants to open up to Him and invite Him in to dine with them (Rev. 3:20). The same is true today. Christ does not force Himself on anyone. It is up to us to invite Christ in to the dining room of our hearts and welcome Him into intimate fellowship with us.



A view of the monastery on Patmos today where tradition states that John received *Revelation*.

## **OVERCOMING & HEARING**

To each of the churches Christ challenges them to overcome and hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. These churches had to overcome the mounting temptation to revert back to Judaism or simply abandon Christ. What made the temptation all the more enticing was the hardship that went with being Christian caused by the constant threat from Judaizers which often meant being stoned and clubbed for blasphemy (as was James the brother of Christ, and author of the Book of James, around this time).

*[A]t the instigation of the younger Ananus, the high priest, of the sect of the Sadducees, whom he calls "the most unmerciful of all the Jews in the execution of judgment," stoned to death with some others, as "breakers of the law," i.e. Christians, in the interval between the procuratorship of Festus and that of Albinus, that is, in the year 63. The Jewish historian adds that this act of injustice created great indignation among those most devoted to the law (the Pharisees), and that they induced Albinus and King Agrippa to depose Ananus (a son of the Annas mentioned in Luke 3:2; John 18:13).*

*Philip Schaff, citing - Josephus: ANTIQUITIES. XX. 9, 1*

*Hegesippus, a Jewish Christian historian about A.D. 170, puts the martyrdom a few years later, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem (69). He relates that James was first thrown down from the pinnacle of the temple by the Jews and then stoned to death. His last prayer was an echo of that of his brother and Lord on the cross: "God, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."*

*Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Volume I. Apostolic Christianity*

This Jewish persecution against Christians at this time should not be underestimated. If James was brutally martyred in 62 or 69 AD it shows that the hostility experienced by the Church in the early chapters of Acts had not abated even forty years later! Added to this was the edict of Caesar Nero in 64AD that Christians should be killed, and this was a time when these Christians had some very real challenges to *overcome*. But this wasn't all. Within the Church there was a growing tolerance of immorality and idolatry. So we note the promises of Christ to those in these churches who overcame:

**Ephesus** - I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. (Rev. 2:7)

**Smyrna** - I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it. (Rev. 2:17)

**Thyatira** - and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations. (Rev. 2:26)

**Sardis** - shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Rev. 3:5)

**Philadelphia** - I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. (Rev. 3:12)

**Laodicea** - I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Rev. 3:21)

These promises should not be thought of as relating exclusively and uniquely to each of these seven churches. Rather they are universal promises to all believers *who overcome*. May we be counted among such company!