**UNRAVELLING THE BOOK OF REVELATION | SESSION 11** 

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES

PART S



**IHOP - ONE THING MINISTRIES** 

In the last session, we talked about the seven churches in Revelation

2 and 3.



They give us a prophetic picture of the spiritual condition of the End-Time Church, and they also clearly reveal to us the seven areas of spiritual maturity that Jesus is looking for.

One of the best ways to study Revelation 2 and 3 through the eight is common elements found in each of the letters. We have talked about the first element. Today, we will go through the remaining seven, starting with the second element.





**REVELATION OF JESUS** — there are **16 specific descriptions** of Jesus in the two letters.

a. Ephesus — "He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands" (Rev. 2:1).

Jesus walks in the midst of His Church and He holds us in His hand. He is communicating **His tender care and deep commitment to His people**. If we truly encounter this truth, we will really love Him with all of our hearts!

b. Smyrna — "The First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life." (Rev. 2:8).

Jesus revealed Himself as the source and assurance of all blessings.

He is the First because He created all things. He is the Last because everything ends with Jesus, at His Judgment Seat. He knows how to assess us and He will repay us for everything that was lost for His namesake. He will reward us richly!

c. Pergamos — "He who has the sharp two-edged sword" (Rev. 2:12).

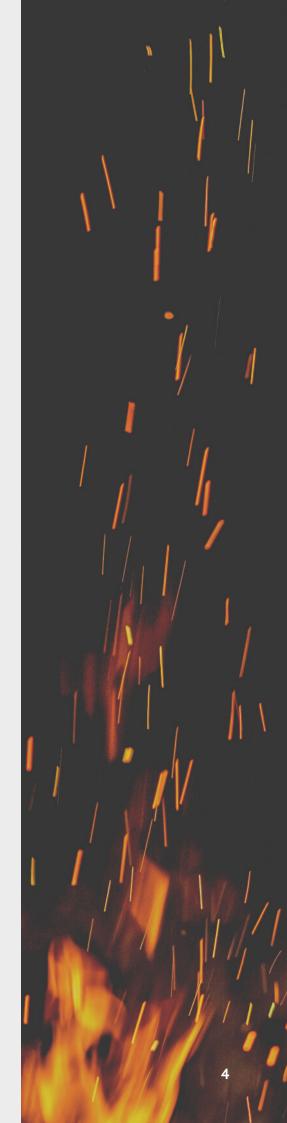
Jesus will war against everything that corrupts His people. This emphasizes His zeal against sin and against wrong doctrine that leads to compromise.

d. Thyatira — "The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass" (Rev. 2:18).

Jesus wants to impart holy fire. He will come and release His fire and judgment against immorality and idolatry.

e. Sardis — "He who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars" (Rev. 3:1).

Sardis was a church that was dead. Jesus wants to release the Holy Spirit and life of the Spirit to His people. He wants to impart His Spirit to revive His people!



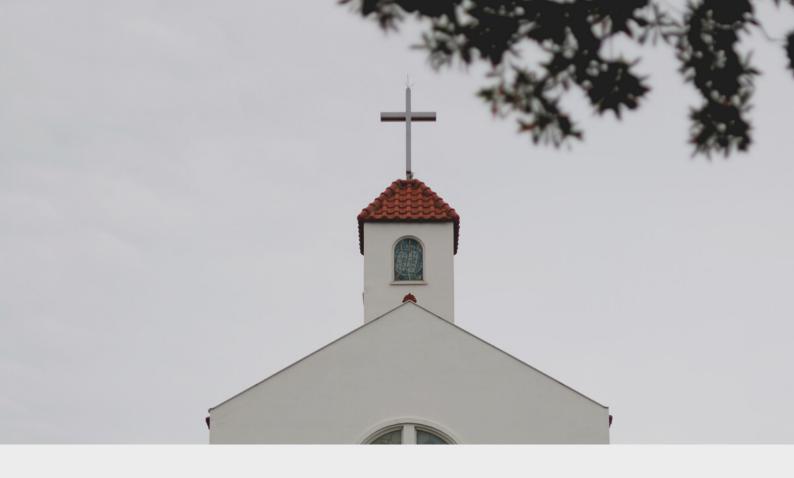


f. Philadelphia — "He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David..." (Rev. 3:7).

Jesus reveals Himself as holy, reliable, and powerful. He is emphasizing His faithfulness and commitment to intervene and help us in times of testing and trial.

g. Laodicea — "The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14).

Jesus reveals Himself as One who is true to His word and zealous for wholehearted love.





AFFIRMATION FOR FAITHFULNESS – this tells us what Jesus wants and what the churches did right.

Five churches received affirmation. The churches in **Sardis** and **Laodicea** did not receive any affirmation. Interestingly, these two churches were the largest and richest, but

## THEY WERE NOT BUILDING THEIR CHURCH ON WHAT REALLY MATTERS TO GOD.

The ten things that Jesus affirms are — good works, endurance, hatred of evil, hatred of wrong doctrines, being persecuted for His name's sake, faithful to Jesus' name, love, service, faith and obedience.



CORRECTION/REBUKE FOR COMPROMISE — the correction and rebuke of Jesus tells us what Jesus dislikes and what we must do.

Correction is not rejection. It is out of love and grace that Jesus corrects (Heb. 12:5-7). There were five churches who received correction:

## I. EPHESUS

FOR LOSING THEIR FIRST LOVE.

#### II. PERGAMOS

FOR IDOLATRY AND WRONG TEACHING.

#### III. THYATIRA

FOR IMMORALITY.

## IV. SARDIS

FOR DEAD WORKS.

### v. LAODICEA

FOR BEING LUKEWARM.



EXHORTATION TO RESPOND — True hearing involves a response. If we have not really heard.

God gave specific instructions on how we should respond to Him. We must respond to the correction of Jesus by repenting. True repentance is not just about knowing that we are wrong, it is about us changing our ways. We need to apply the specific actions that Jesus gave to our lives so that we can overcome.

#### ı. EPHESUS

(REV. 2:5)

**REMEMBER** — RECALL HOW WE USED TO BE WHEN WE WERE IN LOVE WITH JESUS.

REPENT AND DO THE FIRST WORKS — GO BACK TO WHAT WE WERE DOING THAT KEEPS US IN LOVE WITH JESUS.

#### II. SMYRNA

DO NOT FEAR PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING (REV. 2:10).

#### III. PERGAMOS

WATCH OUT FOR DOCTRINAL COMPROMISE (REV. 2:16).

#### IV. THYATIRA

WATCH OUT FOR MORAL COMPROMISE (REV. 2:21-22).

#### v. SARDIS

OVERCOME SPIRITUAL DEADNESS BY CULTIVATING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AND FINDING LIFE IN HIM AGAIN (REV. 3:2-3).

#### vi. PHILADELPHIA

HOLD ON AND PERSEVERE IN OBEDIENCE (REV. 3:11).

#### VII. LAODICEA

RECOGNIZE OUR SPIRITUAL POVERTY AND RETURN TO GOD (REV. 3:17-18.20).

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THE CALL TO OVERCOME - Overcoming is the main theme of the Book of Revelation. To overcome is to walk in spiritual maturity and be consistent in obedience and faithfulness even in the midst of challenges. Overcoming does not mean attaining to perfection, but constantly reaching for victory with all our strength. There are seven specific areas to overcome:

#### ı. EPHESUS

**PASSION** — IS OUR PASSION FOR JESUS OR FOR THE WORLD?

#### II. SMYRNA

FEAR OF PERSECUTION, SUFFERING, AND DEATH.

#### III. PERGAMOS

FALSE DOCTRINE AND TEACHING.

#### IV. THYAT<u>ira</u>

IMMORALITY, IDOLATRY AND SORCERY.

#### v. SARDIS

"HYPE", FAKE AND SUPERFICIALITY — GOD WANTS US TO BE REAL, DEEP AND AUTHENTIC.

#### vi. PHILADELPHIA

GIVING IN TO COMPROMISE OUT OF WEAKNESS —
OVERCOME BY PERSEVERING IN MATURE OBEDIENCE.

#### VII. LAODICEA

PASSIVITY





ETERNAL REWARDS FOR OVERCOMERS — Jesus took time to list out 22 distinct rewards in these two chapters, all of which are important. There are three reasons why Jesus gave such an in-depth teaching on eternal rewards:

- a. Rewards are part of our destiny and inheritance God wants to give us rewards. He does not want us to miss out on them. They are not secondary or irrelevant to our Christian life.
- b. Jesus wants us to know how Eternal Rewards are given — Rewards are given to us according to our works, our faithfulness, obedience, and how we serve the call that Jesus has given us in this life.

### Jesus wants us to have **CLARITY ABOUT**

## THE ISSUE so that we will have an ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE and LIVE DIFFERENTLY for Him here on earth.

c. Jesus teaches on rewards to motivate and stabilize us as we face crisis and persecution — Knowing this as a reality gives us greater strength to persevere, endure and overcome because our perspective and confidence are now anchored in eternity.





The Call to Hear — Jesus intentionally ended every letter with the exhortation,

# "HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES..."

The Lord is emphasizing to the End-Time Church that what He is saying through the seven letters is extremely important and critical for the preparation process of the Church to become the mature Bride.

Indeed, we are wise if we take heed, receive the truths deep into our hearts and seek to intentionally live out the message of Revelation 2 and 3 in a focused and determined manner, by the supernatural empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

So that at the end of the day when Jesus returns,

HE MAY FIND A MATURE BRIDE WHO IS PERFECT AND COMPLETE IN HIS SIGHT, LIVING IN FULL AGREEMENT AND ALIGNMENT WITH HIM!



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