

## **Appendix 1: The Common Format of the Letters to the Seven Churches:**

### **1. The Recipient Church is Identified**

The “**angel**” (messenger) of each specific church is addressed.

### **2. The Lord is Introduced**

“**These things saith ...**” 7x.

The Lord introduces Himself in a characteristic way that links with John’s vision of Him in ch1 (excluding Philadelphia, which links with Isaiah 22v22), appropriate to the spiritual condition & needs of each church.

### **3. The Condition is Observed**

“**I know thy works ...**” 7x.

The spiritual condition of the church is noted by the Lord, giving praise & commendation where appropriate (excluding Laodicea).

There is a small faithful remnant in Thyatira (“**the rest**”, ch2v24) and in Sardis (“**a few names**”, ch3v4) who can be commended.

### **4. The Failure is Stated**

The spiritual failures of the church are highlighted (excluding Smyrna and Philadelphia).

### **5. The Counsel is Imparted**

The Lord gives His counsel to the church, often a command to repent of their failure.

### **6. The Challenge is Made**

“**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches**” 7x.

An appeal to the hearing ear, to hear the message being given.

### **7. The Promise is Given**

“**To him / he that overcometh ...**” 7x.

The Lord gives His promise of blessing & reward for the overcomers.

Through the victory of faith, all true believers are spiritual overcomers.

NB. The order of 6 & 7 is reversed in the letters to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia & Laodicea, i.e. the call of the Spirit to hear is only for the remnant of overcomers.

## **Appendix 2: The Vision of Christ & the Letters to the Seven Churches**

The vision of Christ in Revelation 1 is extensively & relevantly linked with the Lord's various introductions of Himself in the letters to the churches:

- **Ephesus** - Ch2v1 **"These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks"** links with ch1v13 & 16, emphasising the Lord's sovereignty over the Church, including His right if necessary to take away a lampstand of testimony for Himself (ch2v5).
- **Smyrna** - Ch2v8 **"These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive"** links with ch1v11,17 & 18, emphasising the risen Lord's power over death to believers who were in danger of physical death due to persecution.
- **Pergamos** - Ch2v12 **"These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges"** links with ch1v16, emphasising the Lord's incisive & penetrating ministry, exposing their failure in allowing false teachers to propagate error.
- **Thyatira** - Ch2v18 **"These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass"** links with ch1v14 & 15, emphasising the Lord's searching inspection of the church and His ministry of judicial intervention & correction, so that **"all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works"** (ch2v23).
- **Sardis** - Ch3v1 **"These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars"** links with ch1v16, again emphasising the Lord's sovereignty and accurate discernment of the spiritual condition of a church that was **"ready to die"** (ch3v2).
- **Philadelphia** - Ch3v7 **"These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth"** is taken from Isaiah 22v22 **"And the key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder; so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open"**. This also links with ch1v18 **"the keys of hell and of death"**, and further emphasises the Lord's sovereignty to deal with enemies who oppose and to preserve & ultimately save those who abide faithful.
- **Laodicea** - Ch3v14 **"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God"** links with ch1v5 & 8, emphasising in various ways the Lord's right to reject a church that was keeping Him on the outside.

### Appendix 3: The Mystery of the Seven Churches Prophetically

The 7 churches are suggested to correspond chronologically with the complete history of professing Church testimony on earth, as follows:

- **Ephesus** – the post-apostolic Church, when false apostles arose saying they were still apostles, but teaching that which was false regarding the Lord Jesus. Here is the backsliding Church, “**thou hast left thy first love**” (ch2v4), and we learn that all backsliding begins with losing 1<sup>st</sup> love affection for the Person of Christ.
- **Smyrna** - the persecuted Church, “**ye shall have tribulation ten days**” (ch2v10), typifying the bitter persecution that the people of God endured in early centuries (AD). Such suffering recovered the Church to the 1<sup>st</sup> love it had left, and so there are no words of censure or condemnation from the Lord for suffering Smyrna.
- **Pergamos** – the popular or compromised Church, representing that period beginning with Constantine the Great when the professing Christian Church & State were brought together in an unlawful unity. As a result of the world’s patronage, this church altogether lost its pilgrim character, “**I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is**” (ch2v13); it settled down in this world, it was dwelling in the place where it should have been sojourning as a pilgrim.
- **Thyatira** – depicting the dark ages of idolatrous Romanism & papal ascendancy, with its wicked doctrines symbolised in “**that woman Jezebel**” (ch2v20).
- **Sardis** – the escape from papacy to Bible truth with the Protestant Reformation (one meaning of Sardis is ‘*escape*’), to “**strengthen the things which remain**” (ch3v2).
- **Philadelphia** – the recovered Church, that period about 150-200 years ago when scriptural truths such as gathering to the Lord’s Name alone, the assembly in its house of God character and the Lord’s pre-tribulation coming to the air for His Church, were all recovered after having been lost for centuries. This was also a period of worldwide evangelism. In keeping with such recovery, no words of censure to Philadelphia, but the promise “**I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation**” (ch3v10).
- **Laodicea** – the self-satisfied professing Church of today, materially rich but marked by failure in testimony, loss of the distinctiveness of the assembly amongst the confusion of Christendom and all leading up to the ecumenical amalgamations of the last days. The Lord condemns this indifference, “**So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth**” (ch3v16).

## Appendix 4: The Old Testament & the Letters to the Seven Churches

Note many OT allusions and links with the OT historical record, as follows:

- **Ephesus** – a church which had fallen, **“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent”** (ch2v5). It had been beguiled from its single-hearted devotion & love for the Lord. The overcomer will **“eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God”** (ch2v7), i.e. various correlations with Genesis 2-3.
- **Smyrna** – a church suffering bitter persecution, passing through a defined period of tribulation, **“ye shall have tribulation ten days”** (ch2v10), i.e. akin to Israel under Egyptian bondage in the book of Exodus.
- **Pergamos** – a church tolerant of those who held **“the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication”** (ch2v14), i.e. Israel’s wilderness passage in Numbers 22-25. The overcomer will **“eat of the hidden manna”** (ch2v17), i.e. the pot with the omer of manna to be kept for generations (Exodus 16v32-24).
- **Thyatira** – a church tolerant of the teaching of **“that woman Jezebel”** (ch2v20), i.e. alluding to the wicked actions of king Ahab, as stirred up by his wife (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 21). The overcomer will rule over the nations with the Lord Jesus, **“with a rod of iron”** (ch2v27), i.e. Psalm 2v9.
- **Sardis** – a church which was alive in name only, and **“ready to die”** (ch3v2), but which had a remnant **“which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy”**(ch3v4). In the days of Babylonian exile, there were men like Daniel & his companions who would not defile themselves.
- **Philadelphia** – The Lord introduces Himself by alluding to Isaiah 22v22, **“These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth”** (ch3v7). This church had **“a little strength”** (ch3v8), but were faithful in keeping the Word of God, akin to the returning remnant of the nation in the days of Zerubbabel, Ezra & Nehemiah.
- **Laodicea** – a church which was self-deceived, oblivious to their true spiritual condition, **“thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”** (ch3v17), i.e. akin to the spiritual declension of Israel in the days of Malachi’s prophecy. The overcomer will sit with the Lord on His earthly throne, even as He overcame and is set down on His Father’s throne (ch3v21), i.e. Psalm 110v1.