

**Earliteen Sabbath
School Lessons**

Second Year, First Quarter

The 7 Churches



A topographical map of Asia Minor showing the locations of the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation. The map is labeled with regions: Ionia, Phrygia, Lydia, Mysia, and Pisidia. Rivers like the Maeander and Lycus are shown. The seven churches are marked with dots: Philadelphia (red), Hierapolis (black), Laodicea (red), and Colossae (black). The title 'The 7 Churches' is overlaid in large red text.

Philadelphia

Hierapolis

Laodicea

Colossae

THE CHURCHES OF
REVELATION

EARLITEEN
SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

SECOND YEAR, FIRST QUARTER

THE 7 CHURCHES

© 2019 International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, American Union. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be edited, altered, modified, adapted, translated, reproduced, or published by any person or entity without prior written authorization from the International Missionary Society. Write to info@sda1888.org for authorization.

Bible story illustrations used by permission.

Copyright © Sweet Publishing/FreeBibleImages.org

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PUBLISHING ASSN.

9999 East Mississippi Avenue

Denver, CO 80247

info@sda1888.org / www.sda1888.org

Contents

THE 7 CHURCHES

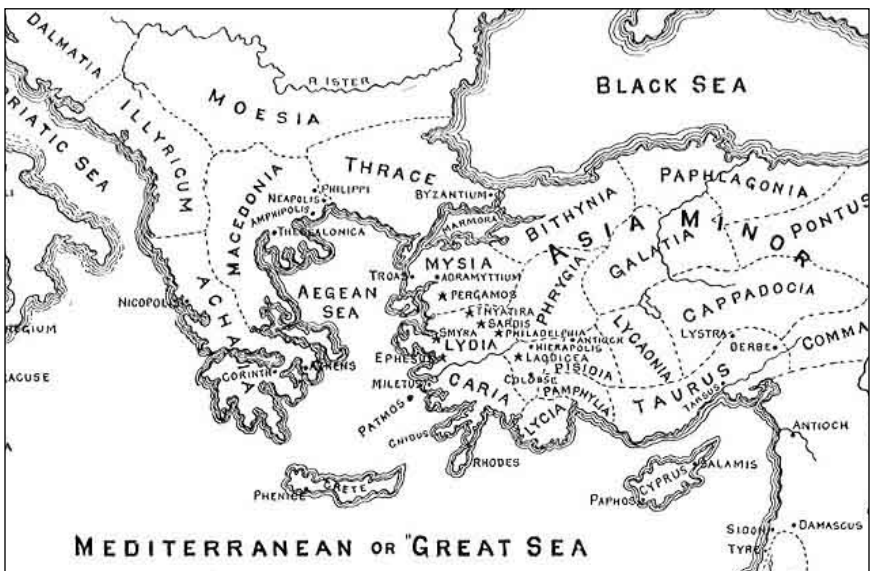
1. PATMOS	5
2. REVELATION	7
3. THE 7 CHURCHES	9
4. EPHESUS	11
5. SMYRNA	14
6. PERGAMOS	16
7. THYATIRA, Part 1	20
8. THYATIRA, Part 2	22
9. SARDIS, Part 1	24
10. SARDIS, Part 2	26
11. PHILADELPHIA	29
12. LAODICEA	32
13. REVIEW OF THE 7 CHURCHES	35

INTRODUCTION

The prophecy of the 7 churches in Revelation 2 and 3 presents “the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585.

The church that Jesus established on earth and entrusted with His word and work when He ascended to heaven encountered obstacles from without and within. It was relentlessly attacked by agents of the great adversary of God and man. Severe trials are clearly visible in the 7 church periods. While the “angel”–leaders–of the church are held accountable by Heaven for their failures to be faithful, they are mercifully called to repent and uphold holy principles. Supernatural strength and power are placed at their disposal for this by heavenly beings and agencies.

While each church period revealed particular weaknesses, the student will recognize that every Christian is subject to such failings. Thus, it is very important that the past serve as a teacher for the present, especially now as the plan of redemption reaches its completion on the earth.



Scripture text: Revelation 1.

The book of Revelation was written around A.D. 100 by the apostle John while he was banished to the Isle of Patmos by the Roman emperor, condemned “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 1:9. But though exiled as a criminal to this barren, rocky island in the eastern Aegean Sea, John was not forsaken of God. Peace filled his heart as he reviewed his past life and the blessings he had received, and the appearance and the voice of the Lord brought great comfort and encouragement to the faithful apostle.

Although death had overtaken the other disciples, and though the beloved John himself was only a step away from the grave, Jesus lovingly reassured the faithful exile: “Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [grave] and of death.” Revelation 1:17, 18. Most importantly, the instruction and prophecies that John received in his communion with God were intended to be a blessing to the church for all future time.

Answer the questions below

1. Locate the Isle of Patmos on the map.
2. Revelation 1:11 names seven Christian churches in seven cities of Asia Minor. Locate them on the map; and, starting with Ephesus, connect them with a line in the order in which they are given. How would you describe this order? Clue: Think of a courier or messenger on foot starting from Patmos with a message to all seven places. Of course, he would have to take a boat first to reach the mainland.

“Among the cliffs and rocks of Patmos, John held communion with his Maker....

“In his isolated home John was able to study more closely than ever before the manifestations of divine power as recorded in the book of nature and in the pages of inspiration.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 571.

3. Name several objects from his surroundings that reminded John of God and His love, power, glory, wisdom, steadfastness, wrath, and control. For additional study, read *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 572.

True or False?

4. God cannot use aged workers.
5. Although the aged laborers may have infirmities, they still possess talents that qualify them to stand in their place in God’s cause.
6. The counsel they can give the younger men is of no value.
7. The *King James Version* of the Bible calls this book “The Revelation of St. John the Divine.” This title is in agreement with the first verse.
8. John, the beloved disciple, evangelist, and apostle, can also be called a prophet.



Isle of Patmos

2

Revelation

1. What does the word “revelation” mean?
2. To whom do revealed things belong? Deuteronomy 29:29.
3. For what purpose was The Revelation given? Revelation 1:1.

“This Revelation was given for the guidance and comfort of the church throughout the Christian dispensation. Yet religious teachers have declared that it is a sealed book and its secrets cannot be explained. Therefore many have turned from the prophetic record, refusing to devote time and study to its mysteries. But God does not wish His people to regard the book thus. It is ‘the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.’” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 583.

4. If The Revelation was given for the benefit of God’s servants, whom does that include?
5. With what blessing are believers encouraged to study and observe this part of God’s word? Revelation 1:3.
6. What other motive is given for studying it? Revelation 1:3, last part; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20.
7. According to the Bible verses listed in Question 6, what is the central theme of the book of Revelation?

8. How important are its messages?

“Daniel and Revelation must be studied, as well as the other prophecies of the Old and New Testaments....”

“There is need of a much closer study of the word of God; especially should Daniel and the Revelation have attention as never before in the history of our work.

“Read Revelation in connection with Daniel. Teach these things.”
–*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 112, 115.

“The solemn messages that have been given in their order in the Revelation are to occupy the first place in the minds of God’s people. Nothing else is to be allowed to engross our attention.”
–*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 302.



3

The 7 Churches

The messages to the 7 churches should be regarded as prophetic, applying to seven distinct periods of the Christian church. Here are some of the reasons why this is so. There were more than seven churches in Asia Minor, such as Colossae, Miletus, Troas, and Galatia. The entire book of Revelation was dedicated to the seven churches, although it was no more applicable to them than to other Christians in Asia Minor. Most of the events portrayed in the book were far in the future—beyond the lifetime of the generation then living, or even the time during which those churches would continue. The number 7 is used symbolically. It stands for perfection and completeness and occurs frequently in the Revelation: 7 churches, 7 spirits, 7 candlesticks, 7 stars, etc.

The Lord chose these seven particular churches because they were typical of the church as a whole and because the characteristics of each revealed the religious features of the period of the gospel age which it represented.

Answer the questions below

1. Who wrote a letter to the church at Ephesus in the New Testament? What is it called?
2. Name the churches to which the apostle Peter addressed his first epistle. Locate them on the map.
3. Name other prophecies in the Revelation that contain a group of seven.
4. Memorize the names of the seven churches in order.

4

Ephesus (A.D. 34-100)

“One of the largest, most important cities of the Eastern world during the time of the Roman Empire, Ephesus was most famous for its temple, the Artemision, dedicated to Artemis, the goddess which the Romans also called Diana. This temple took 120 years to build and was finished around B.C. 430. It was destroyed in B.C. 356, the year that Alexander the Great was born. The temple was rebuilt more splendidly than before. The famous statue of the goddess of hunting and fertility, Artemis, stood in the inner sanctuary of the temple. It was made of black wood, partly overlaid with gold, leaving the hands, head, and feet uncovered. Its followers believed that it fell from heaven and was perhaps made from a meteor. The statue had many breasts, a symbol of fertility. The temple was a place of refuge for political refugees. As the banking system was highly developed, a lot of money flowed into Ephesus. The feasts to Diana were connected with gross immorality and much eating and drinking. All these facts explain the riot against Paul told about in Acts 19:23-41.

“Ephesus probably had a population of about 225,000 in the 2nd century B.C., and the city grew under the Romans. It was situated between two rivers, the Meander (a very crooked, wandering river which gave us the English word ‘meander’) and the Hermes. It had a natural harbor in a small bay. This made Ephesus a very important and wealthy business center.” –M.P. Ringelberg, *Seminar Syllabus: Revelation*, pp. 7, 8.

Answer the following questions

1. To whom is the letter to the church of Ephesus addressed? Revelation 2:1.
2. Who is the Sender? How is He described? Revelation 2:1.

The Sender of the letter introduces Himself to the angel in a most appropriate manner for each respective church. At the beginning of the chain of Christian periods, He portrays Himself as One holding 7 stars in His right hand, walking in the midst of the 7 golden candlesticks. Stars indicate the leadership of the seven churches, while the candlesticks are the seven churches.

The commendation

3. How well does the condition of the church in its first state coincide with its name? Revelation 2:2, 3.

4. What does the Lord look upon—one's profession or his actions?

5. By what standard will everyone be judged? Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14.

The complaint

6. *(Circle the letter of the correct answer)* The first Christian church was guilty of departure from (Revelation 2:4):
 - a. Fundamental doctrine
 - b. Its first love
 - c. Scriptural morality

7. Can a Christian's zeal, suffering, or patience atone for the want of love? 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

8. Finish the quotation: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else _____

_____, except thou repent."
Revelation 2:5.

The removal of the candlestick means Christ's rejection of the people as His representatives. The church would no longer be considered God's church.

9. (Circle the letter of the correct answer) This important lesson should be learned here: A church, once called of God and blessed of God,...

- a. can fall
- b. cannot fall

10. Who were the Nicolaitans? Revelation 2:6.

The Nicolaitans were one of the heretical sects that plagued the churches at Ephesus and Pergamum. The Nicolaitans were gnostics. Among the false (Gr. *gnosis*) knowledge which they taught was: The deeds of the flesh do not affect the purity of the soul and consequently have no bearing on salvation. Have you heard any contemporary variations of this idea?

11. What does the inspired word say about the doctrine of the Nicolaitans? 1 Corinthians 10:31; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16.

12. What is promised to the overcomer? Revelation 2:7.



Coast of Ephesus

5

Smyrna (100-323)

“Smyrna is now called Izmir; it is one of the most beautifully situated cities in Asia Minor. It lies at the head of a gulf that reaches 30 miles inland and has a harbor that is well protected by mountains. It is a port; ocean ships have access to it, which made it, of course, a very important trade center. From about B.C. 100, the city was populated by Greek colonists; the majority of its population is Greek. The climate is pleasant, and there is profuse vegetation, olive, fig, pomegranate, and plane trees, and date palms. The city is famous today for Smyrna figs, tobacco, and silk, as well as the well-known Smyrna carpets. Iron, manganese, gold, silver, mercury, lead, copper, and antimony are found in the region. Soft coal is mined there. Smyrna also has warm springs (for arthritis treatment), the water from which relieves intestinal troubles.

“It was the birthplace of Homer, the most famous of all Greek poets.

“The Christian community of Smyrna suffered many periods of persecution. ‘Myrrh,’ the bitter tasting but aromatic herb, symbolizes the experience of the church well. The Christians of Smyrna experienced more suffering than those of any other city in that area. Polycarp, a disciple of John and later bishop of Smyrna, was burned alive here (155) either in the stadium or the great theater. Smyrna became one of the strongest centers of Christianity in the Eastern half of the Roman empire.

“Until World War I, four out of every five inhabitants were Christians, but today the majority are Moslems. When the Greeks were driven out by the Turks in 1922, the Christian community received its death blow.” –*Seminar Syllabus: Revelation*, p. 9.

Answer the questions below

1. How is the Sender of the letter to the church of Smyrna described? Revelation 2:8.

“The Christian church underwent many severe persecutions at this time. The most intense and



Smyrna

bloody of them was under Emperor Diocletian and his immediate successors. It lasted ten years, from 303 to 313.

2. Besides historical evidence, what Biblical proof is there for interpreting the ten days of Revelation 2:10 as ten literal years? Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34.
3. How were the Saviour's prophetic words spoken on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24:9) fulfilled in the experiences of the early Christian church? Hebrews 11:36-38.
4. How appropriate and comforting, then, is the description of Christ given in Revelation 2:8?
5. Explain the apparent paradox of Revelation 2:9: "I know thy ... poverty, (but thou art rich)...."
6. What does "the synagogue of Satan," given in Revelation 2:9, mean?

"Christ speaks of the church over which Satan presides as the synagogue of Satan. Its members are the children of disobedience. They are those who choose to sin, who labor to make void the holy law of God. It is Satan's work to mingle evil with good, and to remove the distinction between good and evil. Christ would have a church that labors to separate the evil from the good, whose members will not willingly tolerate wrongdoing, but will expel it from the heart and life." —(*The Review and Herald*, December 4, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 958.

7. What is the glorious promise to the overcomer? Revelation 2:10, last part, 11; 2 Timothy 4:8.
8. What is the second death?

The second death is contrasted with the first death, with which mortal man, and especially the believers, were so familiar. From the first death there is a resurrection, both for the just and for the unjust. Acts 24:15. The second death is final, taking place after the 1,000 years; there will be no resurrection from it.

6

Pergamos (323-538)

“Pergamum was another one of the famous cities of Asia Minor. It was situated in a wide valley, about 15 miles from the sea. The main buildings of the city were built on the summit and slopes of a high hill. This included the palace, temples, theaters, gymnasia, and other public buildings. It was founded by Greek colonists. The early history of this city has been lost to a great extent, but we know that it was an important place in the 5th century B.C., for it coined its own money as early as B.C. 420. Lysimachus, one of Alexander the Great’s four generals, deposited his state treasure of 9,000 gold talents in the fortress of the city. After he died, the treasure was taken by Philetaerus, who became ruler of Pergamum (B.C. 283-263).

“The city had a tremendous altar to Zeus—127 ft. long, 120 ft. wide, and 40 ft. high. It was a masterpiece of architecture and art. It consisted of a two-story hall built in the form of a horseshoe, the lower part covered with beautifully sculptured reliefs depicting the war between Pergamum and the Gauls. The upper parts were formed by colonnades. Another great structure was the compound of Asclepius, the god of healing. Multitudes of people came to be healed in this temple-like structure. There were halls where water treatments were administered, rooms where the people rested and were put into visionary dreams, etc. There was also a round temple in it, where people deposited their offerings (the business office and cashier). Galen, the famous physician of antiquity, was born in Pergamum and was trained in its Asclepieion.” —*Seminar Syllabus: Revelation*, pp. 10, 11.

Answer the questions below

1. What is the meaning of the word “Pergamos” or “Pergamum”?

In this period, the Christian church, which had been persecuted as a sect by the Roman emperors, was now elevated to a powerful, popular religion that was acknowledged by the state. During this period, influences began to work which brought errors and evils

into the church; and the true children of God began to be opposed by the worldly, professed followers of Christ.

2. What is the connotation of the figure of speech, “the sharp sword with two edges”—one of commendation or of punishment and judgment? Revelation 2:12; Hebrews 4:12.

3. How appropriate is the description, “where Satan’s seat is,” of the location of the church of Pergamos? 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4. (Remember, Satan works not only through obvious pagan or heathen cults, but also through false Christianity.)

4. What is known about Antipas, referred to in verse 13 of Revelation 2?

Antipas could refer to one specific martyr or to a class of people. William Miller favored the latter belief. Here is his opinion on this point: “It is supposed that Antipas was not an individual, but a class of men who opposed the power of the bishops, or popes, in that day, being a combination of two words, ‘Anti,’ *opposed*, and ‘Papas,’ *father*, or *pope*; and many of them suffered martyrdom at that time in Constantinople and Rome, where the bishops and popes began to exercise the power which soon after brought into subjection the kings of the earth, and trampled on the rights of the church of Christ.” –Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 373.

5. Who persecuted the church in Smyrna? Conversely, who persecuted the church in Pergamus? Were these pagan or “Christian” powers?

6. Whose conversion marked the beginning of the age of Christian popularity?

“The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled

the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 49, 50.

7. What did the Lord say about this church? Revelation 2:14, 15.

8. What was the “doctrine of Balaam”? Numbers 22-25; 31:13-16.

“It appears that Balaam desired to curse Israel for the sake of the rich reward which Balak offered him. But not being permitted by the Lord to curse them, he resolved to accomplish essentially the same thing in another way. He therefore counseled Balak to seduce them, by means of the women of Moab, to participate in the celebration of the rites of idolatry and all its licentious accompaniments. The plan succeeded. The abominations of idolatry spread through the camp of Israel, the curse of God was called down upon them by their sins, and twenty-four thousand persons died.

“The doctrines complained of in the church of Pergamos were of course similar in their tendency, leading to spiritual idolatry and an unlawful connection between the church and the world. Out of this spirit was finally produced the union of civil and ecclesiastical powers which culminated in the formation of the papacy.” –*Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 374, 375.

9. What admonition did the Lord give to this church? Revelation 2:16.

10. What three things are promised to the overcomer? Revelation 2:17.

- a. **Hidden manna.** It is likely that this manna is symbolically the spiritual life in Christ now and the eternal life to be given at His coming.
- b. **White stone.** It was an ancient custom to use white and black stones in a jury to indicate guilt or innocence. In this case, John, using the expression, “I will give him a white stone,” would mean that the one receiving it would be assured of victory over sin.

- c. **New name.** The name stands for character. Think of the significant names in the Old Testament. Some were given prophetically; others, as an indication of a certain characteristic of the person. A new name would indicate, then, a new and different character patterned after God's. Isaiah 62:2; 65:15; Revelation 3:12.
- d. **No man knoweth.** Spiritual rebirth and transformation of character can be known only by personal experience.



Pergamos

7

Thyatira, Part 1 (538-1798)

“Thyatira is not as famous as the previous cities. There are no wars in its history; it was never a great center of commerce or art, nor did it have great fame. Its history is quite colorless and obscure. It was a city of guilds (trade organizations). The guild of the dyers held a very prominent position. The dyers of Thyatira had learned to make purple dyestuff from the madder root, instead of the shellfish. This made their product special and in demand. This purple dye, called ‘Turkish red,’ made their cloth competitive with other places where cloth was dyed. Acts 16:14 mentions Lydia, the seller of purple, in the city of Thyatira.

“Thyatira had a temple for the deity Sambathe, in which an officiating prophetess gave oracles. Perhaps ‘Jezebel,’ mentioned in this letter, refers to this oracle. Revelation 2:20. One thing is certain—the church in this period fell far away from its purity, and the true Christians experienced great troubles.” —*Seminar Syllabus: Revelation*, p. 12.

Answer the questions below

1. Who was the Christian convert—“a seller of purple”—from the city of Thyatira? Acts 16:14.
2. What commendation did this church receive from Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire? Revelation 2:19.
3. What period was covered by the church of Thyatira? How many years was that?
4. What term is usually applied to the long “dark” period of papal supremacy and persecution?

5. How did its spiritual state compare to that of the church at Ephesus? Was it a decline or an improvement?

6. Where else in the Bible was the period of papal oppression foretold? Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7; 12:6, 14.

7. What did Jesus prophesy, and how were His words fulfilled? Luke 21:16, 17.

“Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons, or to suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman’s ax.... Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and the world became a vast battlefield. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 54, 55.

8. Will there be another time of fearful persecution for the children of God before Jesus comes the second time? Revelation 13:16; Daniel 12:1.

“The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weakness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint, though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time....

“The ‘time of trouble such as never was,’ is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess, and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God. ‘Though Noah, Daniel, and Job’ were in the land, ‘as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.’ Ezekiel 14:20.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 621-623.

8

Thyatira, Part 2

Answer the following questions

1. What symbols does the Bible use to represent this church period?
Revelation 2:20, 21; 12:17.
2. What kind of woman was Jezebel? 1 Kings 16:31; 18:13; 19:1, 2; 21:15, 16, 23-25; 2 Kings 9:30-37.
3. So, what power do you think Jezebel represented in this church period?
4. What kind of judgments were threatened against her and her children, or followers? Revelation 2:22, 23.
5. What was so terrible about the threatened punishment?

“The death which is threatened is doubtless the second death, at the end of the one thousand years of Revelation 20, when the righteous retribution from the Searcher of ‘the reins and hearts’ of all men will be given. Further, the declaration, ‘I will give unto every one of you according to your works,’ is proof that the address to this church looks forward prophetically to the final reward or punishment of all accountable beings.” –*Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 378.

6. Was the light of truth completely extinguished in this period, or was there a remnant of loyal believers who resisted the corrupt doctrines? Revelation 2:24.

“Amid the gloom that settled upon the earth during the long period of papal supremacy, the light of truth could not be wholly extinguished. In every age there were witnesses for God—men who cherished faith in Christ as the only mediator between God and man, who held the Bible as the only rule of life, and who hallowed the true Sabbath.”
—*The Great Controversy*, p. 61.

7. What was Christ’s promise to the remnant (rest) of this church? Revelation 2:24, last part; Matthew 24:22; Daniel 11:34, 35.

This refers to a respite promised the church from the burden of papal oppression. The days of tribulation were to be shortened for the elect’s sake.

8. What hope was to be kept alive in their hearts? Revelation 2:25; Titus 2:13.
9. What would be the final destruction of the wicked? Revelation 2:27; Psalm 2:9.



Thyatira

9

Sardis, Part 1 (1798-1833)

“Sardis is located some 50 miles northeast of Smyrna and three miles south of the river of Hermus. It was the capital of the Lydian kingdom. In its earliest days it was a stronghold with strong protective walls, but later it spread into the plains below. The city was in the hands of the Persian satraps for many years, then it fell into the hands of Alexander of the Greeks; the Seleucids followed, and around B.C. 190, Sardis had already lost much of its importance. The temples and important buildings from its time of glory all lay in ruins, and besides this an American expedition excavated the remains of a small ancient brick church, the only surviving monument of the Christian history of Sardis.” –*Seminar Syllabus: Revelation*, p. 13.

Answer the questions below

1. What time period was covered by the church of Sardis?
2. What significant event occurred in 1798?
3. What symbolic language does the Bible use in referring to this event? Revelation 13:3.

Since Sardis is the church of the Reformation, some have suggested that this church period started in 1517. There is a certain overlap in time, and the dates are approximate. True, papal persecution ended sometime before 1798, but the prophetic words of Jesus offer an explanation. Read Matthew 24:22.

4. How does the year 1517 stand out in church history? *The Great Controversy*, pp. 725, 720.

5. What fault is found in the church of Sardis? Revelation 3:1, 2.

The churches of the Reformation had lost the spirit of vital godliness while retaining the forms of religion. They were living a lie, for they were "Protestant" in name only. Their spirituality declined as their popularity with the world increased.

6. What did the following men say about the spiritual condition of Protestant Christianity?

- a. Mr. Barnes, in the *Congregational Journal*, May 23, 1844. –*The Great Controversy*, p. 376, last paragraph.
- b. Professor Finney of Oberlin College, February, 1844. –*The Great Controversy*, p. 377, first paragraph.
- c. Richard Challoner. –*Catholic Christian Instructed*, Preface, pp. 21, 22.
- d. Dr. Samuel Hopkins. –“A Treatise on the Millennium,” *Works*, vol. 2, p. 328.
- e. Thomas Guthrie. –*The Gospel in Ezekiel*, p. 237.
- f. C.H. Spurgeon. –Find the last four quotations in *The Great Controversy*, p. 384.

Answer the following questions

1. What do you think? When is it especially necessary to be watchful—in times of relative prosperity and intellectualism, or in times of adversity, poverty, and privation?

2. Where else in the Bible does Christ admonish His people to be watchful? Matthew 24:42; 25:13. To whom will the day of the Lord come as a thief in the night? Revelation 3:3.

“Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour’s admonition: Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.’ Mark 13:33. ‘If therefore thou shall not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shall not know what hour I will come upon thee.’ Revelation 3:3.

“When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still: And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.’ Revelation 22:11, 12.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 490, 491.

3. What was the great danger in this period? Revelation 3:2.

4. What are a small number of faithful believers called?

While the founders possessed the true spirit of reform and left an example of humility, self-denial, and renunciation of the world, their children remained reformers in name only. But even then there were “a few names” which had “not defiled their garments.” Revelation 3:4.

5. What was promised to the overcomer? Revelation 3:5.

6. What does white raiment represent? Zechariah 3:4; Revelation 19:8.

White raiment symbolizes purity of character and is the righteousness of Christ.

7. Where are the names of those who have heavenly citizenship written? Daniel 7:10; 12:1; Revelation 3:5.

There is danger that after our names have once been entered in the heavenly record they may be blotted out. It is a solemn thought that either our names or our sins must be blotted out. It is only by being overcomers to the end that our names can be retained in the book of life.

8. What great honor will Christ bestow upon the overcomers in the presence of the Father and His angels? Revelation 3:5, last part.

“But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: ‘Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.’ John 12:31,

32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin." *-Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 68, 69.

"Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which 'angels desire to look,' and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which 'seeketh not her own' has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto." *-The Desire of Ages*, pp. 19, 20.



Sardis

11

Philadelphia (1833-1844)

“Philadelphia is the youngest of the seven cities here discussed. It was founded about B.C. 150, during the reign of King Attalus II of Pergamum, and was named Philadelphia in honor of King Attalus’ loyalty to his elder brother, Eumenes II. This city bore different names at different times, such as Decapolis (one of the ten cities of the plain). Later it was called Neo-Kaisaria after emperor Tiberius. In Vespasian’s time it was called Flavia, but in John’s time it had returned again to its original name of Philadelphia. The name of Philadelphia today is the Turkish Alashehir, which means ‘reddish city,’ because of the red soil on which it was built.

“Philadelphia was rich and was also called ‘little Athens,’ since it had many temples and magnificent public buildings. Christianity entered this city in apostolic times. Later on, notwithstanding the repeated barbaric onslaughts and occupation by the Turks in A.D. 1390, the Christian community was determined to remain faithful. No man would take their crown.” –*Seminar Syllabus: Revelation*, p. 15.

Answer the questions below

1. What does the name “Philadelphia” mean?

“The word ‘Philadelphia’ signifies ‘brotherly love,’ and expresses the position and spirit of those who received the Advent message up to the autumn of 1844. The great religious awakening in the early part of the nineteenth century, which resulted from a study of the prophecies, culminated in this advent movement. Men from all denominations were convinced that the coming of Christ was near. As they came out of the various churches, they left sectarian names and feelings behind, and every heart beat in unison as all joined to give the alarm to the churches and to the world, and pointed to the coming of the Son of man as the believer’s true hope. Selfishness and covetousness were laid aside, and a spirit of consecration and sacrifice was cherished. The Spirit of God was with every true believer, and His praise upon every tongue. Those who were not in that movement cannot fully realize how

great was the searching of heart, the consecration to God, the peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, and the pure, fervent love for one another which true believers enjoyed.” –*Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 386, 387.

2. To what does the “key of David” refer? Isaiah 22:20-22; Revelation 3:7.
3. Who holds the key, and of what significance is the opening and shutting of the door?

Christ has full authority to carry the plan of salvation to its final success. Adventists regard this door as the entrance into the most holy place. In 1844, Christ began His high-priestly function in the antitypical day of atonement.

4. What did the term “synagogue of Satan” mean? Revelation 3:9.

In those days, the Jewish centers became literally “synagogues of the accusers.”

5. Why are God’s people admonished to be patient? Revelation 3:10; 14:12.

“Those who now live in patient, faithful obedience to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will be kept in the hour of temptation and peril.” –*Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 388.

6. What was the comforting promise to the believers of the Philadelphia church? Are God’s promises reliable? Revelation 3:11; Hebrews 6:12; 2 Peter 1:3, 4, first part.
7. What were the righteous told to hold fast? Revelation 3:11; 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:12.

8. What will be the overcomers' reward? Revelation 3:12.

"The overcomer is to be a pillar in the temple of God, and go out no more. The temple here must denote the church, and the promise of being made a pillar in it is the promise of a place of honor, permanence, and safety in the church, under the figure of a heavenly building.... There is no more danger of his falling away, he is the Lord's forever, and his salvation is sure.... They are to have written upon them the name of God, whose property they are, the name of the New Jerusalem, to which place they are going, not old Jerusalem where some are vainly looking. They also have upon them the new name of Christ, by whose authority they are to receive everlasting life, and enter into the kingdom. Thus sealed and labeled, the saints of God are safe. No enemy will be able to prevent their reaching their destination, the glorious haven of rest, the New Jerusalem above." –*Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 390.



Philadelphia

12

Laodicea (1844-end of time)

“Laodicea was situated about 100 miles east of Ephesus in the valley of the Lycus River, between mountains that rise to 8,000 and 9,000 feet. The city was probably founded by Antiochus II (B.C. 261-246), one of the Seleucid rulers of the Hellenistic era, who named it after his sister and wife Laodice. The first population was composed of Syrians and transplanted Jews from Babylon. At first it was an insignificant town, but it became increasingly important after the Romans formed the province of Asia in the 2nd century B.C.

“In the country around Laodicea great flocks of black sheep were raised, and so Laodicea became the center for glossy black wool and black garments for export to many countries. The city was also famed for its Phrygian eye powder (Kollurion: little roll, tube) and was a strong financial center with several great banking houses. The nearby temple of Men Karou conducted a well-known school of medicine.

“Laodicea was one of the richest towns in Roman times in the East. Emperor Nero called it ‘the illustrious city of Laodicea,’ when offering help after its destruction in an earthquake in A.D. 60. The proud, wealthy citizens refused his aid, stating that they had enough financial resources to rebuild their city without outside help.

“Approximately 6 miles from the town there was a hot spring and waterfall at Hierapolis. As the water from this spring flowed through the Lycus valley toward the town, it inevitably cooled off, and by the time it reached Laodicea it was only lukewarm, unfit for any real use, and least of all for drinking.” –*Seminar Syllabus: Revelation*, pp. 16, 17.

Answer the following questions

1. To whom is the letter to the church of Laodicea applicable today?

This letter to the church of Laodicea is applicable to all Christians living today, but especially to God’s professed people, Seventh-day Adventist believers.

2. Who is the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness? Revelation 3:14; Isaiah 65:16.
3. What does it mean spiritually to be neither cold nor hot? Revelation 3:16.

“Think of the waterfall and hot spring—the tepid, indifferent condition of the Christians at Laodicea. This is also a striking description of Christianity in our day. Think of ecumenism, the World Council of Churches, and various other religious movements. Lukewarmness is dangerous. It breeds contentment with what we have and pride in the little progress that has been made. This makes it almost impossible to convince a Laodicean that he must strive to become perfect. He thinks he already is. Lukewarmness is thus the great danger confronting all Christians living in this last period of the Christian church.” –*Seminar Syllabus: Revelation*, p. 17.

4. What does the expression, “I will spue thee out of My mouth,” mean? Revelation 3:16.

It represents final rejection. See *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 408.

5. What does a Laodicean think of himself? Revelation 3:17, first part.
6. What true picture does Christ give of those in the Laodicean period? Revelation 3:17, last part.
7. What counsel is given to them? Revelation 3:18.
8. What does “to buy” mean in this context? Is salvation not free?

Buying is obtaining something for a price; but the price here required is our old way of life, not a payment of money. Isaiah 55:1.

GOLD: This is a symbol of faith that works by love. Galatians 5:6; James 2:5; *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 158. These are the

spiritual riches offered by Christ. This gold must be purified; all its dross must be burned away in the fires of affliction. James 1:2-5; Job 23:10.

WHITE RAIMENT: This is offered in contrast to their nakedness. It is the righteousness of Christ. Matthew 22:11; Revelation 3:4; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 88.

EYESALVE: Laodicea was famous for its eyesalve. The spiritual eyesalve offered here is the Holy Spirit and, in a specific sense, the Testimonies of God's Spirit given to the last church. Disregard of these Testimonies will lead to spiritual blindness.

9. What does Christ's rebuke of the Laodiceans show about His care for them? Revelation 3:19; Deuteronomy 8:5; Job 5:17, 18; Proverbs 3:11, 12.

10. What position does He take toward the church today? Is this a call to the church as a whole or to individuals? Revelation 3:20.

Christ stands at the door of each heart, wanting to have true fellowship and communion with those who are willing to let Him in.

11. What will be the reward of the faithful from the Laodicean period? Revelation 3:21; Matthew 25:21.



Laodicea

13

Review of the 7 Churches

1. Who recorded the book of Revelation, and where did he write it?
2. List the seven churches presented in Revelation 2 and 3. (Find these cities of Asia Minor on a Bible map).
3. What does the word “revelation” mean? Why was the book of Revelation given?
4. Give the dates of the seven church periods.
5. Give the meaning of each church name in the prophecy.
6. In what condition were the Christians in the church of Ephesus?
7. Of what was the first Christian church guilty?
8. What churches went through severe persecution?
9. To what does the “synagogue of Satan” refer?
10. What is the second death?

11. For which church did pride and popularity prove a downfall?
12. Who will be given a new name?
13. What city was famous for its purple dye?
14. During what church period was papal oppression the strongest?
15. What symbol does the Bible use to represent a church?
16. What was the church of the Reformation?
17. What is significant about the year 1517?
18. Why is it necessary to be watchful in the last days of earth's history?
19. What does white raiment represent?
20. What church was characterized by brotherly love?
21. Who are the spiritual Laodiceans depicted in the prophecy?