

Messages to the Churches - Revelation 2 and 3 July 11-18, 2020

To the Church in Ephesus

2 "To the angel^[a] of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. **2** I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. **3** You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. **5** Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. **6** But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

To the Church in Smyrna

8 "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. **9** I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. **10** Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.

11 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.

To the Church in Pergamum

12 "To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. **13** I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not

renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

¹⁴ Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. ¹⁵ Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

¹⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

To the Church in Thyatira

¹⁸ "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. ¹⁹ I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

²⁰ Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. ²² So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. ²³ I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

²⁴ Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you, ²⁵ except to hold on to what you have until I come.'

²⁶ To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— ²⁷ that one 'will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery'^(b)—just as I have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ I will also give that one the morning star. ²⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Sardis

3 "To the angel^[a] of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits^[b] of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

⁴ Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. ⁶ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Philadelphia

⁷ "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. ⁸ I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹ I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ¹² The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. ¹³ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Laodicea

¹⁴ "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

¹⁹ Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. ²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

²¹ To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² *Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*"

Questions to Ponder (Messages to the Church) Rev. 2, 3

- Where are Chapters 2 and 3 in the timeline of humankind?
- What is common to the messages to all the churches?
- What features described here fit with a church or churches you know?
- Which message to the churches stands out to you?
- **Rev 3:20** Do you know this scripture? How?
- What do you think is next in John's vision?
- What feelings/emotions do these messages provide to you?

Revelation Chapter 4

The Throne Room of Heaven

4 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne. **3** [Ⓜ]And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. **4** Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw **twenty-four elders sitting**, clothed in white [Ⓜ]robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. **5** And from the throne proceeded lightnings, [Ⓜ]thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire *were* burning before the throne, which are the[Ⓜ] seven Spirits of God.

6 Before the throne *there* [Ⓜ]was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, *were* **four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back**. **7** The first living creature *was* like a lion, the second living creature like a calf (ox), the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle. **8** *The* four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

“Holy,[Ⓜ] holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!”

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, **10** **the twenty-four elders fall down before Him** who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

11 “You are worthy, [Ⓜ]O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they [Ⓜ]exist and were created.”

Revelation Chapter 5

The Lamb Takes the Scroll

5 And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a **scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.** ² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

⁴ So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open ^{4a}and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, **the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David,** has prevailed to open the scroll and ^{4b}to loose its seven seals."

⁶ And I looked, ^{6a}and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the **four living creatures,** and in the midst of the elders, **stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes,** which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Worthy Is the Lamb

⁸ Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
¹⁰ And have made ^{10a}us kings^{10b} and priests to our God;
And ^{10c}we shall reign on the earth."

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; **and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,** ¹² saying with a loud voice:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

¹³ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

"Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ¹⁴ever!"

¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the ¹⁵twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped ¹⁶Him who lives forever and ever.

Questions to Ponder - Rev. 4, 5 July 18, 2020

1. Where are Chapters 4 and 5 in the timeline of humankind?
2. Are these chapters in Revelation related to prophecies of Daniel and Ezekiel? How?
3. What is meant by John writing that he was "in the Spirit?"
What is the "seven-fold Spirit of God?"
4. What are the four attributes of God represented by the "four living beings?"
Rev. 4:6 - 7 (*See also Ezekiel 1:5-10*)
5. Who do the 24 elders represent? Rev. 4:4 What do they do? Rev. 4:10
6. How does Rev 4:11 relate to content in Genesis? Which verses?
7. What is significance of the scroll with seven seals?
8. In Rev. 5:5-8, Christ is pictured as both a Lion and a Lamb. What is the significance of these?
9. What do you think is next in John's vision?
10. What is the take-home you get from Rev. Chapters 4 and 5