7. 1:7 Explains the theme of Revelation, that _Jesus is coming again as Judge. Every living creature will see Him (believers and unbelievers)_____

8. What is the significance of "every eye will see Him" (1:7) _All people will witness His second coming_____

One Like a Son of Man (1:9-20)



1. What's your favorite picture of Jesus?
2. John identifies himself as a __brother_____ and ____partner_____ of his readers through faith in Christ (1:9).
3. This faith brings __suffering_____, ___a kingdom_____, and __patient____endurance_____ (1:9)
4. John is on the prison island of Patmos because of his proclamation of the _Word of God_____ and the testimony of __Jesus_____ __Christ_____(1:9; see also 1:2)
5. John receives this vision on "___The Lord's Day_____" while he is in "__in the spirit_____" (1:10-11).

[see Acts 10:10-11]

6. Note how Jesus is described in 1:12-18:



a) stands among __seven_____
___golden____lampstands_____

b) voice like a __trumpet_____ (Announcement)

c) ___robe____ reaching to his feet

Like a High Priest Exodus 28:31–35 and 39:22–26; Leviticus 8:7–9

d) __golden sash_____ around His chest (like a priest)

e) head and hair ___white_____ like _wool____
and ___snow_____ (Honor respect)

f) eyes like __blazing fire_____ (Pure, holy righteousness,
dignity, wisdom, penetrating-knows everything)

g) feet like ___bronze glowing___ in a furnace Refining, purifying

h) voice like the sound of _rushing waters_ power and authority

i) Seven ___stars_____ held in His right hand
angels of the 7 churches (pastors) Jesus supports them.

j) sharp double-edge sword (Law/Gospel)__ out of His mouth

k) face like ___brilliently shining sun__purity and holiness

l) the ____first_____ and the __last_____

m) the ____living One_____ (Alive forever)

n) holding the _keys__ of _death__ and _hades_ In control

7. Sometimes the meaning of the symbols in Revelation are easy:

   a) The seven stars are the "angels" [in Greek, "__messengers__' meaning the __pastors_____] of the seven churches.

   b) The seven lampstands are the seven ___churches__ (1:20).

light of the world



The Seven Letters to the Seven Churches (Chapters 2-3)

A. A look at the seven cities.

The seven letters to the churches were written to seven historical churches in the Roman province of Asia, what is today Western Turkey. These cities were located about 50 miles apart, forming a circle moving clockwise from Ephesus to Laodicea. These cities served as postal centers for their particular geographic region.

1. **Ephesus** – The capital of the province of Asia and its largest city, Ephesus was important for: religious, cultural, commercial and political reasons. It was located at the intersection of major trade routes. The pagan temple to Diana of the Ephesians was so



magnificent it was chosen as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The worship of Diana and the many festivals throughout the year in Ephesus has been called the grossest forms of immorality and hedonism the world ever had known. Paul and Barnabas first took the Gospel to this city. John moved to Ephesus and was holding the office of Bishop of that church until he was exiled to the island of Patmos. Timothy then held that office and spent most of his ministry here. The church at Ephesus was the most famous Christian church of its day.



2. **Smyrna** – Located on the main Roman highway, it was a home of the Olympic Games. The philosopher Homer was born there. One of the most beautiful cities of the province of Asia, the surrounding country was so fertile and the climate so pleasant the vines produced two crops of grapes a year. The people living here were well known for their drinking *(perhaps due to the abundance of wine)*. They worshiped the goddess Cybele with sensual, sexual ceremonies and practices, as a major part of their worship and celebrations. The annul games and plays were held in the name of the wine god Dionysos whom they also worshiped. This city was closely aligned with Rome and as such, was readily willing to meet the demands for worship of the Roman emperor. (Even having a temple to Nero proclaiming he was "the savior of the whole human race.") There was also a large Jewish population in the city that was actively hostile to Christians, all of which made it extremely difficult to live there as a Christian.





3. **Pergamum** – A pagan cathedral town, having a temple containing the world famous great altar to Jupiter, a temple to Augustus (both of which were enormous), and a temple to Esculapius, the healing god, worshiped in the form of serpent. People traveled from all over the Roman Empire to worship Esculapius in the temple. The name Pergamum means "citadel" and is the origin of our word "parchment."



F. To the Church in Sardis (3:1-6)

1. The Church (3:1)



1. Sardis was known around the world for dyed wool fabrics; it is said that the dying of fabrics was invented there. Electrum, a kind of bronze metal, was first produced here. Gold dust had been found and once was plentiful in the Pactolus *{pack-TOL-us}* stream that flowed through Sardis. History records gold and silver coins were first minted at Sardis.
2. The city of Sardis had an interesting past. It was located on a major Roman trade route about halfway between Thatira and Philadelphia. Actually, Sardis consisted of two towns, one located on a plateau and the other in the fertile valley below. The city on the plateau was virtually inaccessible, but, because the people of Sardis failed to keep watch, the city was overrun twice in its history by enemies utilizing surprise attacks at night. *(Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me?")*
3. Question for reflection:
    1. Is this a danger for our church today?
4. As is the case with other churches in Revelation, nothing is known about the founding and early growth of the church at Sardis beyond what is contained in this letter.
5. This letter suggests a degree of religious and moral laziness had crept into church. There was no specific heresy, no persecution, no suffering.
    1. Perhaps they were so secure in their life-style that there was no reason to attack them.
    2. Perhaps they had all the forms of Christian life, but were empty shells, only outwardly religious.

b. How is it that we become conquerors? ___God give it.___ _His promises is eternal._____

c. The second thing given is “the morning star.” Look at Revelation 22:16. What is the bright morning star? _____ __Jesus_____

d. How can such promises bring help, comfort, and encouragement to people in similar situations today? _God cares for us in every circumstance._____

4. **Thyatira** – The smallest of the seven cities. It had been



founded by Alexander the great. After he conquered Persian he brought Macedonians, who had themselves been conquered by the Persians, and settled them in Thyatira. This was a center of worship to Apollo, the sun god, as well as many others. Thyatira was an immigrant town, with many people settling in it to work their trades. It was the home of the guilds (the labor unions of the day): bakers, potters, tanners, weavers, dryers. They had their shops in Thyatira and traveled out into the world to sell their products. Lydia, “a dealer in purple cloth” in Acts 16:14, was from Thyatira.



5. **Sardis** – Located on a main Roman highway, it had



been founded at about the time of Jesus’ birth. It was a famous and prosperous city, once the capital of the Lydian Empire. It was known around the known world for its dyed wool fabrics. Electrum, a kind of bronze metal, was first produced there. Gold had been found in the area and gold and silver coins were minted here. Worship of the goddess Cybele was practiced.



Philadelphia – Located on the slopes of Mt. Tmolus, the city was named after Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamus, who died about 138 B.C. It commemorates his love for his brother Eumenes II (philadelphia means “brotherly love”). It was in a rich and fertile valley in a volcanic area. It was known for its cultivation of grapes, its wine, and its wine festivals (they put the head of Bacchus, the god of wine and excessive freedom to party and celebrate, on its coins).



7. **Laodicia** – The banking center of the area, banking being the main source of revenue. Laodicia was the richest city in the province of Asia. It also had the thriving and sophisticated culture which always attaches itself to wealth. It was a city of beautiful theaters and galleries, containing buildings which were architecturally beautiful. Laodicia had fashion and style. It was known worldwide for its manufacture of

rich garments of naturally black, glossy wool. Laodicia was a scientific center, with medical colleges specializing in eye problems, even manufacturing a powder used around the world the treatment of eye problems. It had a regular problem of maintaining an adequate water supply for the city.

B. To the Church in Ephesus (2:1-7)

1. The Church (2:1)
   a. The Church at Ephesus was perhaps the largest and most famous church in the world at that time, but because of its location, it always faced struggles.
   b. Acts 18:24-28 describes the type of leaders the church as Ephesus produced: Knew Scripture, taught others, missionary caring
   c. What problems existed for the Ephesus Christians? (see Ephesians 4:28-32; 5:5-21) Bitterness, anger, brawling, slander, drunkenness, coarse talk (same as today).
   d. What tools are suggested to fight these problems? (see Ephesians 6:10-18) Put on the full armor of God (Faith, truth, righteousness, etc) the tools to fight come from God.
   e. What does Paul describe in his farewell to the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17-38) as the elements of effective ministry (vs 27 key). Strength, faithfulness based on the Word, repentance and faith.
2. The Commendation (2:2-3)
   a. What is the commendation? Hard work, perseverance and have not grown weary (all for the Gospel). They tested those who teach. They did not tolerate false teachings.

   a. How is the faith of these Christians clear? Actions of faith appear to be increasing: Kindness to others, service.
   b. List the works of love, faith, service, and patient endurance show at our church by individual members or groups: _____
6. The Condemnation (2:20-23)
   a. Who was Jezebel? (see 1 Kings 16:29-18 and 2 Kings 9): Lead people to worship Baal. She was power-crazed
   b. What are some "Jezebels" facing the church today? _____
   c. What is the Lord's attitude toward compromising practices? He will not accept compromise. He is in control.
7. The Correction (2:24-25)
   a. What is the correction that is required? (see also verse 21) Repent and change
   b. According to verse 25, those not participating in such activity can fight it off and come out victorious by holding fast to what they have. What is it they (and we) have? How do we "hold fast to" (or "get a firm grip on") it? _____ Faith in Jesus. The Holy spirit does it for us. Word and Sacrament, attending worship, being a part of God's Church.
8. The Call and Challenge (2:26-29)
   a. Evaluate life and the church in light of God's Word.
      1. These verses pull form Psalm 2:8-9 where the coming Messiah's reign over the heathen is prophesied. Christ gives to His own (the conquerors) the very thing others thought they lacked. What does He give to His faithful? Why that? Authority with Him in heaven. Jesus has the authority to give us this promise.

E. To the Church in Thyatira (2:18-29) The Church (2:1-18)



1. Thyatira was the smallest of the seven cities whom Jesus addressed in these seven letters. The city of Thyatira was founded by Alexander the Great. After conquering the Persians, Alexander brought Macedonians, who had been captured by the Persians, and settled them in there. Thyatira is located on a major trade route between Pergamum and Sardis, and became the home of a variety of guilds (the labor unions of the first century); bakers, potters, tanners, weavers, dryers, cobblers, etc. (Lydia, mentioned in Acts 16:14, was a businesswoman from Thyatira).
2. It is concerning the guilds of Thyatira where the problem arises. Each guild had its own god. If a person wanted a job that person had to be a member of a guild and attend its festivals, taking part in all the activities of that festival (eating food offered to the guild god, revelry, at, at times, immorality). The problem at Thyatira was not one generated so much from outside persecution but an internal problem within the congregation: how far, if at all, may the Christian compromise or cooperate with the world?
3. How the church at Thyatira began we don't know. Two possibilities are suggested:
   a. The church grow out of Paul's ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:10) Lydia (maker of purple cloth) may have met with Paul at Philippi in Macedonia while on one of her business trips, heard him preach, was converted, returned home to Thyatira, and became the first missionary there.
   b. What picture of the Christ is given here? All seeing and going everywhere – Son of God
4. What message is conveyed? _____
   _____
5. The Commendation (2:19)

   b. How are to to approach false teachers? (see Matthew 7:15-20) Listen to them, test their teachings by the Word and if false not tolerate them.
   c. A question for discussion: Do Christians today tolerate false teaching too easily?



Agree or Disagree: "Once you become a Christian everything will be much easier for you." Not in this world, but between me and God much much easier.

ne Condemnation (2:4)

(What they are doing is good, but the reason is wrong.)

   a. "You have forsaken your first love."
   b. What is "love"? (see 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 for the "attitude" and "characteristics")
      Seeking to please or serve others first.
      _____
   c. 1 John 4:7-11 describes the ultimate love: The sacrifice for sin which God gave to us.
4. The Correction (2:5-6)
   (Their love is not sincere, they have forsaken God and each other.)
   a. Jesus not only condemns; He also gives encouragement to correct. Why? Because of Jesus' love for them. He still wants them to be saved.
   b. What is the encouragement/warning? Repent – turn back to God's love. If not – condemnation
   c. Martin Luther, in thesis #1 of the 95 nailed to the church Wittenberg Church, wrote, "Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said Poenitentiam agite, *(live in repentance)* willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance." To Repent" means to turn around.

1. Acknowledging sin, asking for forgiveness. Trusting Jesus for forgiveness

2. Change the way you think and act.

d. The Nicoloations *(nikáō: to conquer laós: people)* believed and defended a compromise with the paganism which surrounded the Church. They believed the Church should compromise in public activities like festivals and social occasions. (Nicoloations : Acts 6:5 "Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch." Profound fall from faith)
What is the problem with compromise? It pulls us away from our faith.
Does it occur today in churches? _____

5. The Call and Challenge (2:7)

a. Evaluate life and the Church in light of God's Word.
He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

b. "To the one who conquers." The victor is the Christian who has the promise of Christ and remains faithful through all.

c. Discuss: "We need to be careful we do not become so busy with the things of the kingdom that we do not have time for the better things–abiding in the love of Christ. When the Church neglects this, it descends into "conventional Christianity" or "utility Christianity." Unless there is repentance and a return to a love for Christ this will develop into pious hypocrisy which leads to stagnation and spiritual death. State more practically, "Do the *red* and say the **black**" is not the Christian faith or Christian worship.

C. To the Church in Smyrna (2:8-11)

1. The Church (2:8)

and provide a way out (confidence), strength in Christ, Remove yourself from situations of sin

d. Note that the Christians at Pergamum have not, at this point, followed these teachings, but have tolerated those who put stumbling blocks in the way of God's people. How does Jesus say we are to respond in Matthew 18:6? (Also: 15-17)
Show fellow believers their sin

7. The Correction (2:16)

a. What is the correction that is required and what threat is added? Repent and change their behavior or Christ will by pass the people and judge the sinners (the congregation will also be lost.)

b. According to Matthew 18, what is the procedure of Church discipline? The goal? First show the person his sin; take two or three others, take it to the church (members of one body). If there is still no response then don't associate with him. Purpose: to save the person's soul.

8. The Call and Challenge (2:17)

a. Evaluate life and the church in light of God's Word.

b. What is the significance of the "personalization" here? (See also: Romans 16:25-27) Personal reference and adds reinforcement to the message by mentioning names the people were familiar with "This is for me".

c. What is meant by the hidden manna and white stone? Faith in Christ (manna – symbol of life) stone – token for admission or not guilty vote in count (not guilty in Christ).

d. What does this letter say to people today? Salvation is personal. You are saved if you believe.

IV. What does this description say about the power and authority of Jesus? How could this be helpful and encouraging to these Christians (and us)? _Power and authority are Christ's. We will prevail with Him._____

b. The Commendation (2:13)

c. How did the members of the Pergamum Church react to emperor worship in the city? _They remained faithful not worshiping the emperor, also professed Jesus as Lord.__

d. What was happening to some of them as a result of this? _Some were being put to death (Antipas)_____

e. How did Antipas turn a bleak situation into an opportunity for witnessing? Does this apply to us today? _Vocalizing his faith – telling those around him that they too could be faithful in Christ._

6. The Condemnation (2:14-15)

a. See Numbers 22:1 – 25:5 and 31:15-18 for the historical background of Balaam. What does the reference to Balaam mean? What was Balaam's sin? _Balak (the king) caused the people to worship his god, not the Lord. Balaam didn't obey God's command, prophising falsely enticing the people to sin. (Enticement away from God.)_____

b. Why can compromise be so dangerous to the Church, especially when it comes to compromise in doctrine and practice (the Nicolatians again?) _We lose the frame of reference. No stability of faith._____

c. What helps are suggested in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22 when Christians are temped to compromise their faith? _Fellowship with other Christians, Lord's Supper. Don't be ignorant in the Lord (more attached to Him) God is faithful – He will keep us

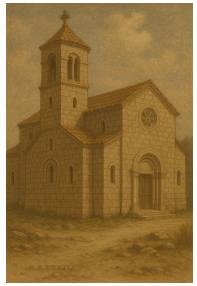
a. The Church in Smyrna is not mentioned in the New Testament except here. Tradition says Paul visited Smyrna (today: Ismir, Turkey) on his way to Ephesus. It is thought that Polycarp, Baptized as an infant and later a disciple of John, was bishop of Smyrna during this time. The difficulties the Church had to deal with came from outside the congregation, as Smyrna was a city of emperor worship and had a large Jewish population.

b. Note how Jesus is described:

I. ___First and last_____

II. ___Died and came to life again._____

III. How would this give hope and encouragement to Christians? They had the promise of life over death because of Jesus conquering of death._____



2. The Commendation (2:9)

a. What is the commendation? _They are rich in Faith (Spiritual riches)_____

b. It was dangerous to be a Christian in Smyrna. Would there be any comfort in Jesus saying, "I know…"? (See: 1 Corinthians 10:12-13) __He understands our feelings Jesus knows and has suffered the same._____

c. "Poverty…yet you are rich!" Is that a contradiction? (See James 2:5; 2 Corinthians 8:1-2, 9) _True riches involve Faith. Spiritual riches are worth more than earthly riches._____

d. Slander, false rumors, gossip. Should the Christian expect such things? (See Proverbs 26:22; James 3:6-10; 1 Peter 2:23) __It is the devil's attempt to break our faith._____

e. What perspective does Jesus give us on suffering and trials? (See: 1 Peter 1:3-7; Philippians 1:29; James 1:2-4) It is temporary – It will stop (life). There is no suffering in heaven.

f. C.S. Lewis said: "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains; it is His mega-phone to rouse a deaf world." How do you feel about that?

g. Note the significance of "ten days"! All of life on earth (limited)

3. The Correction (2:10)

a. Smyrna was famous for its arena and games (the Olympic Games were held there). The crown (a wreath) was given to those winning the race or contest.

I. What is the contest of which John speaks? entering heaven

II. What is the crown? eternal life

III. How is it obtained? faithful unto death

b. This verse is considered by some to be the central thought of the entire Revelation. (see also Hebrews 12:1-3) describes the race of faith.

4. The Call and Challenge (2:11)

a. Evaluate life and the Church in light of God's Word.

b. According to Revelation 20:11-14 and 21:5-8, the "second death" is Eternal death that results from sin (only for unbelievers)

c. What is Paul's conclusion in Philippians 3:4-11?

d. How could this bring hope and comfort to suffering Christians? The hope is in Christ, not in what we do or have.

e. Discuss: "Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ, and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer." *(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)*.

5. To the Church in Pergamum (2:12-17)

a. The Church (2:12)

I. Pergamum was situated on a high hill. It was an impressive sight. It was a cultural center, having a large library of over 200,000 parchment scrolls. It also was the home of many pagan deities (including Zeus, "Askeleppias the savior," and emperor worship). In this city the Caesar was proclaimed lord, and refusal to worship the emperor was an act of treason. Because of this, the Church at Pergamum faced many difficulties. This church is referred to only in Revelation. We do not know when it was founded, by whom, or if it was a large or small church. Really, all we know about Pergamum comes from these six verses.

II. What picture of Jesus is given here? Christ is the one who fights for us – protects us.

III. What weapons are offered for Christians to use to fight against false christs and the forces of evil? (see also Ephesians 6:10-20) Be strong in the Lord, full armor of God