



# REVELATION

## Session 2

September 19, 2021

### “A Vision for the Church”

Revelation 1:9-3:22

#### BIG IDEA

This week’s big idea is to see Jesus and the Biblical Church more clearly. We tend to have a picture of Jesus which is too docile, and we tend to evaluate the church by our own criteria rather than by His standards.

#### BIBLE CONVERSATION / GENERAL INFO



Jesus has a message for Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Each letter is written with specific detail to each church and their cultural context. Now, these seven churches mentioned here were not the only churches in the area at the time. So why these seven? It is because these seven together act as a universal guide, a model, for all the rest of the churches to learn from.

It is from these letters to these churches that we get a vision of what Jesus would say to our own church body. The major lessons we might pick up from this are: 1) Churches reflect the

culture of their city, and 2) Jesus cares more deeply about the health and perseverance of His churches than their prominence, status, or wealth.

What does this tell us? These unique letters, as well as the whole of Revelation, is written to normal church people. Which means it is not something too big for us or too profound. It is not something for the scholars alone, but it will take some careful observation on our part.

**Question #1** Read Revelation 1:12-18. How is Jesus described? How does John react to seeing Him? How do you think you would react to seeing what John saw?

---

---

---

---

**Question #2** In verses 1:9-20 We see a repetition of “seven”. What “sevens” do you see? What do these “sevens” stand for?

---

---

---

---

SERMON OVERVIEW

John is on the Island of Patmos, likely as a political prisoner, when he is told to write on a scroll what he sees and send it to seven churches. The first thing he sees is a powerful picture of Jesus standing among seven lampstands, which are the seven churches. **Reflect on this vision of the Lord. Reflect on the seven letters to these churches and what the church should look like.**

**Ephesus:** I know your works, your toil and patient endurance, how you can't bear those who are evil. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first...repent and do the things you did at first. - Guard against your love growing cold.

**Smyrna:** I know your tribulation and your poverty. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. - Guard against faithlessness in tough times.

**Pergamum:** I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast to my name... I will give you a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to you. - Guard against moral pressure of the world.

**Thyatira:** I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance. But you tolerate that woman Jezebel... Hold on to what you have until I come. - Guard against religious practices that tolerate immorality.

**Sardis:** I know your deeds, you have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up!... I will come like a thief in the night. - Guard against confusing activity with being alive.

**Philadelphia:** I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. - Guard against attempting to open doors with your own power.

**Laodicea:** I know your works, you are neither hot nor cold, so because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. - Guard against becoming lukewarm.

**Question #3** When reflecting on these seven churches, which one sounds the most familiar to you? Which one seems the most relevant to us?

---



---



---



---

**Question #4** If Jesus wrote you a letter personally, what would he say? What would He call himself? What cultural situation would He remark on? What would He approve? What would He rebuke? What would His advice, appeal, or assurance be?

---



---



---



---

OPTIONAL EXERCISE

Option 1	Option 2
<p>These seven letters all follow the same pattern.</p> <p>See if you can spot this pattern in each letter. It may be helpful to use different colored pens to underline each part in each letter.</p> <p>Letter Pattern:</p>	<p>Rank yourself on a scale of 1-5 in terms of how much each church applies to you.</p> <p>Not like me <span style="float: right;">Very like me</span></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○</p> <p>Ephesus</p> <p style="text-align: center;">○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an address “to the angel of the church in...”,</li> <li>▪ an attribute “these are the words of...”,</li> <li>▪ an approval “I know...” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ and/or an accusation “Yet...I wish...I have things against you.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ an advice “Remember... Repent...”</li> <li>▪ an assurance “to him who overcomes...” (reward)</li> <li>▪ an adjournment “to him who has ears...”</li> </ul> <p>NOTE* Two of the letters have no accusation. NOTE* The first three letters have the adjournment before the assurance and then that order switches with the last four.</p>	<p>Smyrna ○—○—○—○—○</p> <p>Pergamum ○—○—○—○—○</p> <p>Thyatira ○—○—○—○—○</p> <p>Sardis ○—○—○—○—○</p> <p>Philadelphia ○—○—○—○—○</p> <p>Laodicea ○—○—○—○—○</p>
--	---

## PRAYER

- Intentionally Specific Prayer for this week:  
Pray for Briarcliff Church. Pray that we, as a church body, would be faithful and that together we would overcome the struggles and challenges which come our way. Pray that we would not get caught up in the trappings of our culture but that we would be steadfast to Christ and His Gospel.

### Next Session: Revelation 4:1-8:1

#### DIGGING DEEPER

#### “Son of Man”

“Son of Man” is a title Jesus uses of himself more than any other. This phrase is used 88 times of Jesus. This phrase is commonly understood as speaking of Jesus’s humanity, but also of his special elevated status within that. We find this to be the key phrase which Ezekiel used to speak of himself, and in which Daniel uses in Daniel 7:13. Some people think this phrase speaks specifically about the eschatological figure ordained to bring about the end of all things. Read up on the phrase “Son of Man”. What do you think it is communicating?



BRIAR  
CLIFF  
CHURCH