

7 Letters for 7 Churches

Revelations 2:1-7, 3:14-22

1. Interpreting Revelations

Historicist interpretation

Roadmap of history

History becomes primary data for interpretation

FUTURIST interpretation

Blueprint of the future.

Laodicean church seen as the present day, Revelations 4-22 end-times

Headlines become the data for study

Secular, non-supernatural—serious study of text to learn of 1st Century Church

No application for today

IDEALIST, spiritual principles—draw spiritual truths for today

Spiritual truths tend to be whatever you believe

Nature of vision:

Altered states of consciousness—awakened, heightened

Beyond human consciousness—more than we can completely understand

Graced nature—given as a revelation from God

How to interpret vision:

1. Take the experience seriously

2. Recognize the indescribable nature of visionary experience

Note words as, like, Revelations 1:13, “like the Son of man,”

Revelations 1:14, head and hair white like wool

Revelations 1:15, feet like glowing bronze, voice like waterfall

Apocalyptic language—see Daniel, Ezekiel

Structure of visions is often synchronous rather than sequential

3. Transforming power of vision—Spiritual reality, Spirit and Life

How do we understand the 7 Churches.

Actual Churches

Church life-cycle

Church throughout history

Church types

The entire Church—7 as number of completion or perfection.

2. **Right Church**—Church of Ephesus

²I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown wear.”
—Revelations 2:2-3

- **Hard** working
- **Right** believing
- Lost or losing its **passion**

3. **Rich Church**

¹⁵I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.
—Revelations 3:15-16

Facts about Laodicea

Wealthiest city in the area
Known as Trimitaria—named after special black wool tunic
Famous for eye salve—Phrygian powder and ointment
No local water supply—drinking water, 2 miles, hot springs, 6 miles

Truths about rich churches

Self-sufficient—we’re doing fine, doors open
Self-righteous—might makes right, wealth makes health
Lost—Jesus outside the church door

Jesus’ invitation

Repent, Return to My Love and let’s eat together.
Repent, Open the door, and let’s eat together.

Jesus’ warning

Remove your candlestick (Church and witness)
Remove your presence (Spit church out)