

THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES: AN OVERVIEW
(Revelation 1:11; 2:1 – 3:22)

- I. The Churches Viewed PRACTICALLY: Discussing REAL conditions in CONTEMPORARY churches
 - A. Ephesus, the FORMAL church: reminded of the PRESENCE of the Lord (2:1)
 - B. Smyrna, the FEARFUL church: reminded of the POSITION of the Lord (2:8)
 - C. Pergamum, the FALTERING church: reminded of the POSSESSION of the Lord (2:12)
 - D. Thyatira, the FALSE church: reminded of the PERCEPTION of the Lord (2:18)
 - E. Sardis, the FRUITLESS church: reminded of the POWER of the Lord (3:1)
 - F. Philadelphia, the FEEBLE church: reminded of the PREROGATIVE of the Lord (3:7)
 - G. Laodicea, the FASHIONABLE church: reminded of the PERSON of the Lord (3:14)
- II. The Churches Viewed PERENIALLY: Describing PRESENT conditions that have ALWAYS existed in LOCAL churches
 - A. Ephesus, outwardly SOUND but lacking in LOVE: characteristic of *Fundamentalism*
 - B. Smyrna, adopting remnants of a DEAD RELIGION: characteristic of *Ritualism*

- C. Pergamum, separate church caste to officiate RELIGIOUS MATTERS:
characteristic of *Clericalism*
 - D. Thyatira, emphasis on RITUALS, IMAGES, and LITURGIES:
characteristic of *Sacerdotalism*
 - E. Sardis, emphasizing WORKS but divorced from TRUTH: characteristic of
Liberalism
 - F. Philadelphia, danger of missing opportunities for EVANGELISM:
characteristic of *Revivalism*
 - G. Laodicea, spiritual influence drowned by seduction of WEALTH:
characteristic of *Materialism*
- III. The Churches Viewed PROPHETICALLY: Anticipating DEVELOPING
conditions in successive PERIODS of church history
- A. Ephesus, the POST-APOSTOLIC church: “you have fallen” (2:5)
 - B. Smyrna, the PERSECUTED church: “tribulation for ten days” (2:10)
 - C. Pergamum, the PATRONIZED church: “the teaching of Balaam” (2:14)
 - D. Thyatira, the PAPAL church: “the woman Jezebel” (2:20)
 - E. Sardis, the PROTESTANT church: “a name that you are alive, but you are
dead” (3:1)
 - F. Philadelphia, the PRACTICAL church: “an open door” (3:8)
 - G. Laodicea, the PRESENT-DAY church: “lukewarm” (3:16)