

Inside the Text:

I. The letters were concise.

- A. Each letter includes approximately seven verses comprising an introduction, main body, and conclusion.
- B. Five of the seven letters included a word of encouragement, a word of rebuke, and a word of invitation.

II. The letters were comprehensive.

- A. The letters were written to entire churches...
Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.
- B. Comprised of individual members...
 - 1. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)
 - 2. “To the one who conquers...”
 - i. **Ephesus** (2:7) I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.
 - ii. **Smyrna** (2:11) will not be hurt by the second death.
 - iii. **Pergamum** (2:17) I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.
 - iv. **Thyatira** (2:26-28) *To the one who conquers* and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when the earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star.
 - v. **Sardis** (3:5-6) will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.
 - vi. **Philadelphia** (12) I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.
 - vii. **Laodicea** (22) I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.
- C. Who needed to submit to the authority of Christ.
 - 1. **Ephesus** (2:1) – the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands
 - 2. **Smyrna** (2:8) – the words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.
 - 3. **Pergamum** (2:12) – the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.
 - 4. **Thyatira** (2:18) – the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.
 - 5. **Sardis** (3:1) – the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

6. **Philadelphia** (3:7) – the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.
7. **Laodicea** (3:14) – the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation.

III. The letters were confrontational.

- A. **Ephesus** abandoned her first love. (2:4)
- B. **Pergamum** endured false teaching. (2:14-15)
- C. **Thyatira** tolerated false teaching. (2:20)
- D. **Sardis** concealed her depravity with activity. (3:1-2)
- E. **Laodicea** failed to stand for anything. (3:15-16)
- F. **Smyrna** (2:8-11) and **Philadelphia** (3:7-13) were not confronted.
 1. Smyrna was under intense persecution for Christ. [intense persecution]
 2. Philadelphia was actively sharing her faith. [strong witness]

Apply the Text:

- **Take time to write a note of encouragement to someone this week.**
 - Write with content.
 - Write with clarity.
 - Write with compassion.
 - Write with the cross behind you and the Kingdom before you.
- **Remember that Christ is watching how we at PBC respond to His word.**
 - Ask God to help us not start down the “slippery slope” of having our light removed.
 - Pray for the persecuted church. (Smyrna)
 - Pray for the salvation of souls through the witness of our members. (Philadelphia)
- **Remember that Christ is watching how you personally respond to His word.**
 - Thank Jesus for who He is by using one of the 7 descriptions of Christ found in the intro to each letter.
 - Meditate on what it means to be counted as “one who conquers.”
 - Spend time this week studying the letter to the church at Ephesus.