

A yellow envelope is shown against a dark wood background. Inside the envelope is a card with a textured, parchment-like appearance. The card features a large, bold red number '7' in the center. Overlaid on the '7' is the text 'SEVEN LETTERS' in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters. Below this, the text 'REVELATION 2-3' is printed in a smaller, bold, black, sans-serif font. The card has faint, illegible text in the background, suggesting it might be a page from a book or document.

**SEVEN  
LETTERS**  
REVELATION 2-3

(Recap Part 1/2)

Truth Matters Church, Inc.

# Overview of Today's Study



## ☞ RECAP: 7 Letters to the 7 Churches

- ☞ Historical Context
- ☞ Commendations, if any
- ☞ Criticisms, if any
- ☞ Exhortations
- ☞ Promises

## ☞ TAKE AWAYS

- ☞ Reflections

# EPHESUS

THE CHURCH THAT LEFT

IT'S FIRST

Love

# Ephesus: Historical Context



- ✧ It's likely that Paul, Priscilla, Aquilla and Apollos were instrumental in strengthening the church in Ephesus
- ✧ Home of 1 of the 7 Great Wonders of the World
  - ✧ Temple of Artemis
- ✧ Other characteristics
  - ✧ Worship of other deities (Artemis, Cybele)
  - ✧ Demon possession
  - ✧ Practiced sorcery
  - ✧ Tree of Life at town square

# Artemis of the Ephesians



## Another OBSERVATION

### In Ephesus:

- ❧ The goddess *Cybele* was a woman
- ❧ The goddess *Artemis* or *Diana* (after Cybele) was a woman
- ❧ Both shared “Great Mother of Life” titles
- ❧ The church of Virgin Mary was in Ephesus
- ❧ There were councils held in Ephesus on how to view Mary
- ❧ It was determined that she is/was immaculate
  - ❧ Sinless
  - ❧ Great Mother of God
  - ❧ Aka a goddess
- ❧ “Artemis of the Ephesians” sure looks similar to “Mary the Mother of God” who was birthed in Ephesus!



# Ephesus: Commendations



- ❧ Deeds, toil, perseverance
- ❧ Cannot tolerate evil men
- ❧ Test those who call themselves apostles
  - ❧ Found them to be false
- ❧ Have perseverance and endured for the gospel and not grown weary
- ❧ Hated deeds of the Nicolaitans
  - ❧ Similar teachings to Balaam
  - ❧ Ate food sacrificed to idols and committed acts of sexual immorality

# Ephesus: Criticisms



☞ Left first love

☞ This is prophecy sometime after 95/96AD

☞ “left” is *aphiēme* which means to let go from oneself

☞ “first love” is *prōtos agapē* which means first and foremost love

☞ We use this in our vernacular, this person was my “first love”

☞ TRANSLATION: Just like Jesus told Peter, you will deny Me three times

☞ Jesus is telling these believers in that church (and likely the angel over it) that they will let themselves go from their first love sometime after the writing of this letter

# Ephesus: Exhortations



5a Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first;

❧ We looked to Ephesians and got a glimpse of the deeds they did at first:

❧ Faithful in Christ Jesus

❧ Aspired to know the mystery of His will

❧ Their hope in Christ thrived

❧ They viewed themselves as God's own possession

❧ They prioritized to bring Him glory

❧ Demonstrated love to all the saints

❧ Read, studied, meditated, applied Scripture

❧ They no longer walked in their former manner of life

❧ They did not entertain strange doctrines, myths, and endless genealogies



# Ephesus: Exhortations



CONJECTURE: Can angels who joined Satan in the angelic rebellion repent? Probably not, but the angel over this church might have been given a small window of opportunity:

5a Therefore remember from where you [the angel over them] have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first;

☞ Allusions to the fall of angels

Revelation 12:7-8 (After the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet; War in heaven)

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, 8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them (Satan and his angels) in heaven.

# Ephesus: Promises



- ✧ Since Ephesus had their own version of the “Tree of Life”, Jesus calls their attention to the true “Tree of Life” which is not on earth, but in “the Paradise of God” and that is to come in the new heaven and new earth
- ✧ All believers will be allowed to eat from Tree of Life which is in the Paradise of God





THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA

# THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

LIVING FAITHFUL NO  
MATTER THE COST

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# Smyrna: Historical Context



- ✧ Church founder unknown
- ✧ City had nickname “The Crown City”
- ✧ City itself had a reputation of being raised from the dead
  - ✧ Alexander the Great desired to restore Smyrna to its former glory
- ✧ Known for their commodity of myrrh
- ✧ Several shrines erected to Greek gods, goddesses, Roman emperors
- ✧ Polycarp (discipled by John) later became bishop and was martyred

# Smyrna: Commendations



- ✧ Experienced tribulation for their faithfulness and poverty
- ✧ Though they may not be considered rich economically, they were reminded of being truly rich spiritually

# Smyrna: Criticisms



❧ Absolutely NONE!

❧ 1 of 2 churches not to receive any criticism!

❧ The other one was Philadelphia

# Smyrna: Exhortations




- ❧ Endure enemies of the gospel
  - ❧ Whether it be by the government or Jews (synagogue of Satan)
- ❧ To not be fearful of impending tribulation
  - ❧ Some will be thrown into prison for 10 days
- ❧ Remain faithful at all costs – even if it costs them their lives

# Smyrna: Promises



- ✧ Faithful believers will not experience a 2<sup>nd</sup> death, but instead receive a crown of life from the risen Lord Jesus!
- ✧ Just as the apostles and believers in Smyrna before us have suffered and endured and were faithful even unto death will be given a crown of life, so too will all believers of all time who are faithful, even if faced with death, will receive the same crown by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
- ✧ CONJECTURE: Could those who have died for their faith be given a unique crown? Possibly Yes!

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a golden crown with intricate designs and a large diamond. The background is dark and moody, with a soft light source behind the crown.

BE FAITHFUL  
UNTIL DEATH,  
AND I WILL  
GIVE YOU THE  
CROWN OF  
LIFE.

REVELATION 2:10



# LETTER TO PERGAMUM

REVELATION 2:12-17

WHERE SATAN'S THRONE IS

# Pergamum: Historical Context



- ✧ Church founder unknown
- ✧ Major producer of parchments
- ✧ City was considered the great city of the Greek gods, goddesses, Roman emperors
  - ✧ Zeus and Athena were prominent figures
- ✧ Ancient location of healing, entrenched in idolatry, witchcraft and sorcery
- ✧ Was the city where Satan's throne is, where Satan dwells
- ✧ Antipas (discipled by John) was former bishop and was martyred

# Pergamum: Commendations



- ☞ Held fast the gospel
- ☞ Did not deny Christ, even during severe Roman persecution
  - ☞ Even in the days of Antipas who was killed

# Pergamum: Criticisms



- Some held teaching of Balak and Nicolaitans
  - Ate food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality

# Pergamum: Exhortations

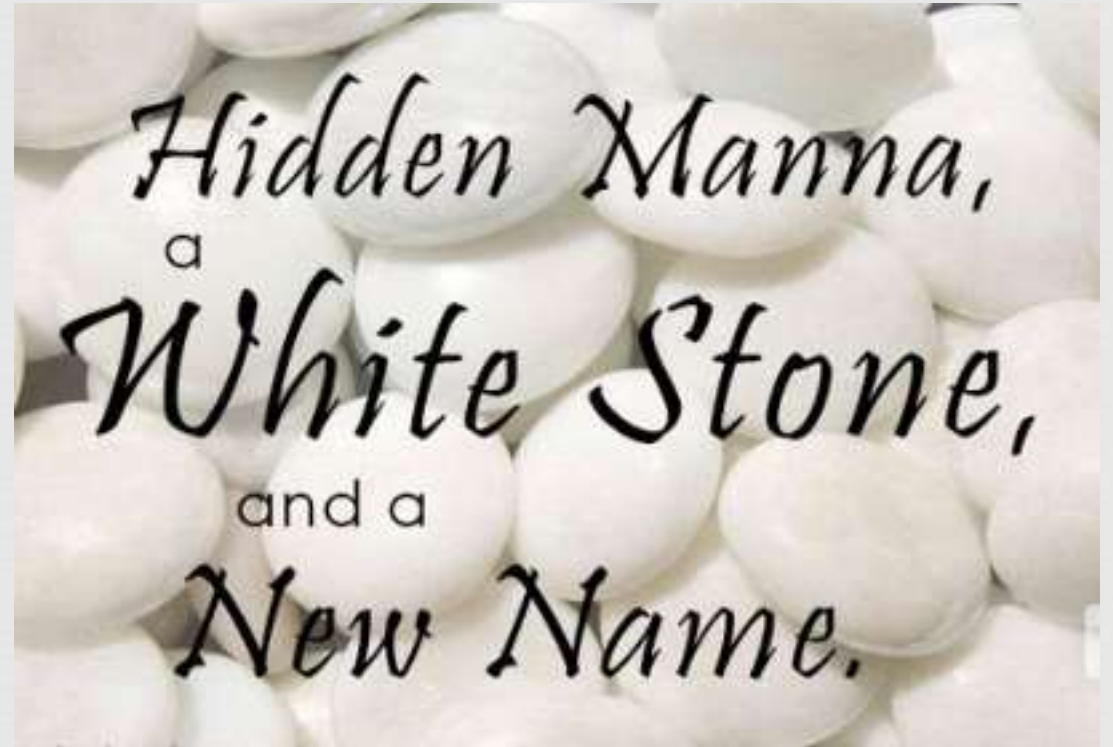


- ✧ Repent or else they will be treated as the disobedient sons of Israel in the OT who rebelled against God and against Moses who were judged and killed when they held to such teaching
  - ✧ Baal and Asherah worship
- ✧ Jesus warns them that if they do not repent He Himself will wage war against them with the sword of His mouth

# Pergamum: Promises



- ✧ Faithful believers (perhaps only certain ones) will receive hidden manna, a white stone with a new name written on the stone
- ✧ All faithful believers will receive a personal invitation to the marriage supper of the lamb!



REVELATION

FROM PATMOS TO PARADISE

# THYATIRA



THE CHURCH OF

**IDOLATROUS COMPROMISE**

# Thyatira: Historical Context



- ✧ Church founder unknown
- ✧ Known for its dyes, in particular purple
- ✧ Had many temples and shrines erected to Greek gods, goddesses, Roman emperors



# Thyatira: Commendations



- ❧ Love, faith, service and perseverance
- ❧ Deeds of late are greater than at first

# Thyatira: Criticisms



- ❧ Tolerated the woman Jezebel
- ❧ The original Jezebel Queen of Israel influenced King Ahab and the people of Israel to engage in Baal and Asherah worship
  - ❧ Eating food sacrificed to idols
  - ❧ Sexual immorality
- ❧ Apparently there was a self-proclaimed prophetess who continued to teach and lead the people of Israel astray
  - ❧ There are also prophetic implications concerning the state of Israel and the world during the end times



# Thyatira: Exhortations



- ✧ Jesus gave her, the woman Jezebel, time to repent but she would not
- ✧ Jesus will kill her with pestilence and throw her and her children onto a bed of sickness and into great tribulation
- ✧ Jesus places no other burden on them, but to keep resisting her teachings and influence
- ✧ Jesus also exhorts them to remain faithful and proclaim the gospel until He comes

# Thyatira: Promises



- ❧ Faithful believers will be given authority over the nations during the millennial kingdom
  - ❧ Currently Christians are ruled and dominated by the world. The time will come and the script will be flipped where Christians under Christ will rule and dominate the nations
- ❧ Faithful believers will be given the Morning Star
  - ❧ When Jesus promises to give him the morning star, He is promising that He will grant him authority over the nations when Jesus returns to earth

