

**“The Things Which Are”**  
**The Letters to the Seven Churches**  
(The Present Church Age)  
Revelation 2-3  
by James T. Bartsch, [WordExplain.com](http://WordExplain.com)

**Introduction:**

Key Verse: Rev. 1:19: “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

(1) “What John had seen” was the risen Christ (Chapter 1).

(2) “The things which are” refers to the present Church Age – the Letters to the Seven Churches (Chapters 2-3)

(3) “The things which will take place after these things” refers to the events of the Rapture, Tribulation, Second Coming of Christ, Millennium, Final Revolt, Great White Throne Judgment, New Heavens and Earth with New Jerusalem as its Capital City (Chapters 4-22).

(4) It is my belief that each church is a first century A.D. church. I also believe it is possible that each church reflects a period of church history. This latter interpretation is not the focus of this study.

**A. The Church in Ephesus. Rev. 2:1-7**

1. **Jesus’ Constituency.** To whom was John to write? 2:1
2. **Jesus’ Characterization of Himself.** How did Jesus describe Himself? 2:1
3. **Jesus’ Commendation.** How did He compliment them for their 2:2-3
  - a. Hard work?
  - b. Hatred of evil?
  - c. Awareness of false apostles?
  - d. Unflagging loyalty?

4. **Jesus' Criticism.** For what did Jesus criticize them? 2:4
5. **Jesus' Caution.** How did He caution them? 2:5
  - a. His commands:
  - b. The consequence for inaction:
6. **Jesus' Commendation.** For what else did He commend them? 2:6
7. **Jesus' Challenge.** How did He challenge them... 2:7
  - a. To listen?
  - b. To conquer?
8. **My Response.** Is there anything from the message to this church that speaks to you personally –
  - a. Is there a warning to you?
  - b. Is there a sin to forsake?
  - c. Is there a promise to claim?

## **B. The Church in Smyrna. 2:8-11**

1. **Jesus' Constituency.** To whom was John to write? 2:8
2. **Jesus' Self-Characterization.** How did Jesus characterize Himself 2:8
  - a. In relation to time?
  - b. In relation to life?

**3. Jesus' Commendation. 2:9**

- a. How was he aware of their suffering?
  
- b. How was He aware of verbal opposition they faced?

**4. Jesus' Comfort. Jesus comforted them by alerting them to coming trials. 2:10**

- a. How were they not supposed to react?
  
- b. Of what things did He warn them they would face?

**5. Jesus' Conditional Promise. 2:10**

- a. What was His command?
  
- b. What was His conditional promise?

**6. Jesus' Challenge. How did Jesus challenge them? 2:11**

- a. To listen?
  
- b. To conquer?

**7. My Response. Is there anything from the message to this church that speaks to you personally –**

- a. Is there a warning to you?
  
- b. Is there a sin to forsake?
  
- c. Is there a promise to claim?

**C. The Church in Pergamum. Revelation 2:12-17**

1. **Jesus' Constituency.** To whom was John to write? 2:12
2. **Jesus' Self- Characterization.** How did Jesus describe Himself? 2:12
3. **Jesus' Commendation.** 2:13
  - a. Jesus knows they live in a hostile situation. Where do they live?
  - b. How does Jesus describe their loyalty?
  - c. What happened to Antipas, apparently one of their number?
4. **Jesus' Criticism.** 2:14-15
  - a. Some of them engaged in practices described as holding to the teaching of \_\_\_\_\_. What two things are symbolized by his teaching?
  - b. Some among them also held to the teaching of the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(This may indicate a compromising spirit of moral departure.)
5. **Jesus' Caution.** How did Jesus warn this church? 2:16
6. **Jesus' Challenge.** How did Jesus challenge them... 2:17
  - a. To listen?
  - b. To conquer?

7. **My Response.** Is there anything from the message to this church that speaks to you personally –
  - a. Is there a warning to you?
  - b. Is there a sin to forsake?
  - c. Is there a promise to claim?

#### D. The Church in Thyatira. 2:18-29

1. **Jesus' Constituency:** To whom was John to write? 2:18
2. **Jesus' Characterization of Himself.** How did Jesus characterize Himself? 2:18
3. **Jesus' Commendation.** Jesus commended the church for five things 2:19
  - a. Their \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Their \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Their \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Their \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Their \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. How did Jesus commend them for their deeds?
4. **Jesus' Criticism.** Jesus criticized the church. 2:20-23
  - a. The church tolerated a woman named \_\_\_\_\_. 2:20
    - 1) She called herself a \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2) She teaches and leads people astray so they

a) Commit \_\_\_\_\_

b) Eat \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Jesus had given this woman time to repent. Had she done so? 2:21
  - c. What would Jesus do to her? 2:22
  - d. What would he do to those who commit adultery with her?
  - e. What would He do with her children? 2:23
  - f. What will the churches know?
  - g. How will Jesus respond to each person?
- 5. Jesus' Comfort.** Jesus gave a certain amount of comfort to some in the church. 2:24
- a. What did they not hold?
  - b. What had they not known?
  - c. How would Jesus treat them?
- 6. Jesus' Challenge.** 2:25
- a. What did Jesus challenge the church to do? 2:25
  - b. How did Jesus define conquering? 2:26
  - c. What would Jesus give to the one who conquers? 2:26
  - d. How would the conqueror wield his authority? 2:27
  - e. When will this take place?

- f. What else would Jesus give the conqueror? 2:28
  - g. What was Jesus' final challenge? 2:29
7. **My Response.** Is there anything from the message to this church that speaks to you personally –
- a. Is there a warning to you?
  - b. Is there a sin to forsake?
  - c. Is there a promise to claim?

**E. The Church in Sardis. 3:1-6**

- 1. **Jesus' Constituency:** To whom was John to write? 3:1
- 2. **Jesus' Characterization.** How did Jesus describe Himself? 3:1
- 3. **Jesus' Commendation.** Jesus commended them for two things. 3:1
  - a. He knew their \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. They had a reputation for being \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4. **Jesus' Criticism.** 3:1
  - a. In spite of their reputation, they were actually \_\_\_\_\_. 3:1

- b. What did Jesus warn them they had better do? 3:2
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. They were to remember... 3:3 \_\_\_\_\_
- e. They were to \_\_\_\_\_
- f. They were to \_\_\_\_\_
- g. If they did not wake up, what would Jesus do? \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Jesus' Renewed Commendation. 3:4**

- a. There were a few in Sardis who had not ... \_\_\_\_\_
- b. These would do what with Jesus ... \_\_\_\_\_  
(cf. Rev. 19:7-8)
- c. Why? Because... \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Jesus' Challenge to Conquer.** Jesus gave incentive to the Christians in Sardis to conquer. 3:5 He who conquers

- a. Would be clothed... \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Jesus would not erase... \_\_\_\_\_

- c. Jesus would confess his name
  - 1) Before \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) and before \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Jesus' Challenge to Listen.** What challenge does Jesus give to anyone to listen? 3:6

**8. My Response.** Is there anything from the message to this church that speaks to you personally –

- a. Is there a warning to you?
- b. Is there a sin to forsake?
- c. Is there a promise to claim?

**F. The Church in Philadelphia. 3:7-13**

**1. Jesus' Constituency.** To whom was John to write? 3:7

**2. Jesus' Characterization of Himself.** How did Jesus describe Himself? 3:7

- a. He who is \_\_\_\_\_
- b. He who is \_\_\_\_\_
- c. He who possesses \_\_\_\_\_
- d. He who \_\_\_\_\_ and no one will \_\_\_\_\_;
- e. He who \_\_\_\_\_ and no one \_\_\_\_\_;

**3. Jesus' Commendation. 3:8-9**

- a. Awareness. What does He know about the people of the church in Philadelphia? 3:8 \_\_\_\_\_
  
- b. Promise of Ministry. What has He put before them? An \_\_\_\_\_ door which no one can \_\_\_\_\_. 3:8 (I believe this is a promise of a door of ministry or service.)
  - 1) Why? Because they have \_\_\_\_\_,
  - 2) and have \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) and have not \_\_\_\_\_.
  
- c. Promise of Judgment. Jesus' compensation. 3:9 He is going to do something about the "synagogue of Satan." (I believe this is a promise of judgment upon their enemies.)
  - 1) What will Jesus make them do?
  - 2) What will He make them know?

**4. Jesus' Consolation. Promise of Preservation. 3:10**

- a. They qualify for consolation. How so? They have \_\_\_\_\_
  
- b. In response, Jesus makes a commitment. From what will He keep them? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- c. How widespread will that time of testing be? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- d. What is its purpose? \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 3:10. I believe that Jesus' promise to preserve the church of Philadelphia out of the Great Tribulation that is to try the whole world is applicable to the Church-at-Large. It is a promise that Jesus will rescue His Church, and that the Church will not be forced to suffer through the Great Tribulation.

**5. Jesus' Caution. 3:11**

- a. What did Jesus promise? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What did He warn them to do? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Why? So no one will \_\_\_\_\_.

**6. Jesus' Challenge. 3:12-13**

- a. Challenge to Conquer. 3:12
  - 1) What is the condition? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) What are the promises?
    - a) Prominence: Jesus would make him a \_\_\_\_\_ in the temple of His God.
    - b) Security: That person will not do what any more?
    - c) Identity: Jesus would write on him
      - i The name of \_\_\_\_\_
      - ii The name of \_\_\_\_\_
      - iii And \_\_\_\_\_ name
- b. Challenge to listen. 3:13. What challenge does Jesus give to anyone to listen? \_\_\_\_\_

**7. My Response.** Is there anything from the message to this church that speaks to you personally –

- a. Is there a warning to you?

- b. Is there a sin to forsake?
- c. Is there a promise to claim?

**G. The Church in Laodicea.<sup>2</sup> 3:14-22**

1. **Jesus' Constituency.** To whom was John to write? 3:14
2. **Jesus' Characterization of Himself.** How did Jesus describe Himself? 3:14
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Jesus' Empty Commendation.** 3:15
  - a. What did Jesus know? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What was their condition? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. What was His desire? \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Jesus' Caustic Criticism.** 3:16
  - a. His assessment of them: Since they are \_\_\_\_\_ and neither \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ ...
  - b. His rejection of them: He will \_\_\_\_\_!

---

<sup>2</sup> The Church in Laodicea. Obviously this was a first century church. But it also, I believe, speaks either of the Church at large as it will exist just before the Rapture, or else the visible, professing church as it exists in the Tribulation, having missed the Rapture. If the latter view is correct it refers to the organized church, the members of whom were not truly believers. Notice that there are no bona fide commendations for this church. It sounds like a church utterly in need of salvation!

**5. Jesus' Caution. 3:17-18**

a. How did the Laodiceans view themselves? 3:17 They said they were

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) Needed \_\_\_\_\_

b. Jesus said they were ignorant that they were actually 3:17

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Jesus' Counsel. 3:18-19** Jesus advised them to buy from him

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ so they could become truly wealthy; 3:18
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ so they could be suitably clothed;
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ so they might truly see.
- d. Jesus' policy: Those whom he loves he \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. 3:19
- e. Jesus' command: \_\_\_\_\_.

**7. Jesus' Invitation. 3:20**

- a. What is He doing? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What is His condition? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What is His promise? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Have you ever opened the door of your life to Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Jesus' Challenge. 3:21-22**

- a. To conquer. What authority will Jesus grant the one who conquers?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3:21
- b. To listen. How does He challenge people to listen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3:22

9. **My Response.** Is there anything from the message to this church that speaks to you personally –
- a. Is there a warning to you?
  - b. Is there a sin to forsake?
  - c. Is there a promise to claim?