

Revelation 2, Letters to the Churches, Part 1

1. Ephesus

Situation in the local Church.

- The city had worship of Artemis, a wicked city.
- A vital Church, Acts 20:19-20.

The Historic Period Covered: The Apostolic Church, (32-100 AD)

- The only letter that mentions the apostles.

The Good: Rev. 2:1-3, 6

- A working church: Ephesians 2:8-10.
- A separated church: Romans 16:17.
- An enduring church.
- An autonomous church.

The Bad: Rev. 2:4

- Dependence on the Apostles.

The Fix: Rev. 2:5

- Three things: 1) Remember, 2) Repent, 3) Return.

The Bonus: Rev. 2:7

- Overcame the false Christs and lies.

The Savior Revealed:

- The Churches are His, not the pastor's.



2. Smyrna

The Situation in the Local Church

- A wealthy area but not for true believers.
- Invention of the Semi-Christian Church of Religious Stew.
- Persecution of true believers was very cruel.

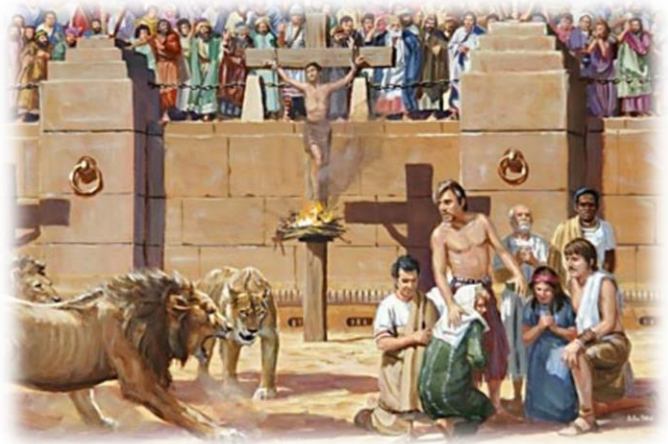
The Historic Period Covered: The Persecuted Church, (100-312 AD)

- True Christians in the coliseum against lions and gladiators.
- The church thrived, reached the known world for Christ.
- Handwritten copies and translations of scriptures abounded.

The Good: Rev. 2:8-9

- Rich in their poverty.
- Share God's glory in 1) Obedience, 2) Suffering, 3) Persecution, 2 Cor. 6:10
- The wealthy Jews here were prosperous, but not religious.
- Synagogue of Satan.
- False religions stray on one of two areas 1) False doctrines about Jesus Christ, and 2) mixing the law and grace (works and faith).

The Bad: None.



Revelation 2, Letters to the Churches, Part 1

The Fix: Rev. 2:10

- Do not fear.
- Persecution for 10 days. Ten Emperors.
- Jesus is enough. Grace, Courage. Philippians 4:19.

The Bonus: Rev. 2:11

- After persecution, nothing to dread.

The Savior Revealed:

- “The first and the last, the one who rose from the dead.”
- There is no difficult time our Lord will not see us through.
- He who rose from the dead has us securely held in His victory.

Emperors of Rome who persecuted the Church		
Nero	A.D. 54-68	Paul beheaded, Peter crucified
Domitian	A.D. 81-96	John exiled
Trajan	A.D. 98-117	Ignatius burned at stake
Marcus Aurelius	A.D. 161-180	Justin Martyr killed
Severus	A.D. 193-210	
Maximinus	A.D. 235-238	
Decius	A.D. 249-251	Destroyed most documents
Valerian	A.D. 253-260	
Aurelian	A.D. 270-275	
Diocletian	A.D. 284-305	Worst of all

3. Pergamos

The Situation in the Local Church.

- Capital city of Asia for period.
- Home of many idol temples.
- Rulers demanded religious tolerance and acceptance.
- Satan’s throne? Probably tolerance of paganism.

The Historic Period Covered: The Indulged Church (AD 312-606)

- Satan learns that persecuting was ineffective.
- 50 copies of the scripture were commissioned to Eusebius.
- Bad things? Government financed the Churches and paganistic practices were adopted into church.



The Good: Rev. 2:12-13

- Jesus Christ was predominant.
- The Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) settled the issue of the deity of Christ.

The Bad: Rev. 2:14-17

- Preferred Contamination over Persecution: Numbers 22-31.
- “Nicolaitans”, lay people lost their voice.

The Fix: Rev. 2:16

- Repent or be judged by the Word.

Bonus: Rev. 2:17

- Hidden manna, spiritual depth should be given priority.
- Assurance from Grace exceeds the doubt created by works.

The Savior Revealed:

- Jesus is the Truth, the Word.

Paganism Married into Christianity	
A.D. 300	Prayers for the dead.
A.D. 300	Making the sign of the cross.
A.D. 375	Worship of the saints and angels.
A.D. 394	Mass first instituted.
A.D. 431	Worship of Mary begun.
A.D. 500	Priests began dressing differently from Laity.
A.D. 526	Extreme unction.
A.D. 593	Doctrine of purgatory introduced.
A.D. 600	Worship services in Latin.
A.D. 600	Prayers directed to Mary.

4. Thyatira

The Situation in the Local Church.

- The city, wealthy, known for her colored dyes.
- Positively, a place that allowed women to rise in society and business.

The Historic Period Covered: The Pagan Church (A.D. 606-1520, the Dark Ages)

- Thyatira means “continual sacrifice”. (1:18)
- The results are the sacrament, praying for the dead, candles, etc...



The Good: Rev. 2: 18-19

- A busy Church.

The Bad: Rev. 2:20-23

- Keeping the Bible from the people.
- Jezabel brought Baalism to Israel.
- Parallels the devilish and pagan teachings adopted by the Pagan Church.
- Immorality equates with idolatry.
- Eating meat sacrificed to idols equates to union with the world. John 18:36.
- The longest Church age. Plenty of time and opportunity to repent.
- Future prophecy, “I will cast her...” The church of the Great Tribulation. Revelations 17.
- Children? Those who left but did not reform completely.

Changes in Doctrine in the Pagan Church	
A.D. 607	Boniface III made first Pope
A.D. 709	Kissing the Pope's foot
A.D. 786	Worshipping of images and relics
A.D. 850	Use of "Holy Water" begun
A.D. 995	Canonization of dead saints
A.D. 998	Fasting on Fridays and during Lent
A.D. 1079	Celibacy of the priesthood
A.D. 1090	Prayer beads
A.D. 1184	The Inquisition
A.D. 1190	Sale of indulgences
A.D. 1215	Transubstantiation
A.D. 1220	Adoration of the wafer
A.D. 1229	Bible forbidden to laypeople
A.D. 1414	Cup forbidden to people at Communion
A.D. 1439	Doctrine of purgatory decreed
A.D. 1439	Doctrine of seven sacraments affirmed

Bonus: Rev. 2:24-25

- To the faithful, hold what you’ve got.

Challenge: Rev. 2:26-29

- The Millennial Reign of Christ.
- The Morning Star, Revelations 22:16

The Savior Revealed:

- “Seeing eyes, and judging feet.”

Notes and Questions: