

Behold, I Come Quickly...

A Study of Revelation

PART 1

Revelation 1:1 - 3:22

The Seven Churches

LESSON 4

Revelation 2:1 - 2:7

The Seven Churches - Part 1 {The Things Which Are}

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. (Revelation 22:7)

Rev 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and **the things which are**, and the things which shall be hereafter;

As we have learned, the first division represented the things that John had seen described in chapter 1. Now, the second division represents the things which are as described in chapters 2 and 3, the letters to the seven churches. Later, we will see the third division that represents the things which shall be hereafter described in chapters 4 through 22.¹ Now, in chapters 2 and 3, we will see the things which are. We will study the contents of seven letters written to seven churches located in Asia Minor.

The Letters to the Churches

The Greek word for "church" is "ekklesia," which simply means "a group of people that is called together for some special-purpose."² It's not a building or an organization. It can also "refer to a group of people who meet in one specific location for worship and fellowship." Today the word "church" is used by many to refer to the building or organization, but its earliest meaning would refer only to the people in the building or organization.³

Each letter was addressed to a real church in John's time. The letters were structured in a pattern as follows:⁴

1. **The church and city are identified.**
2. **Christ's character is revealed.**
3. **The church is commended (except Sardis and Laodicia).**
4. **Compromise is condemned (except Smyrna and Philadelphia).**
5. **The church is counseled.**
6. **There is a call to commitment.**
7. **Compensation is promised to overcomers.**

See APPENDIX Figure 1 for Hal Lindsey's fuller description of the structure of these letters.

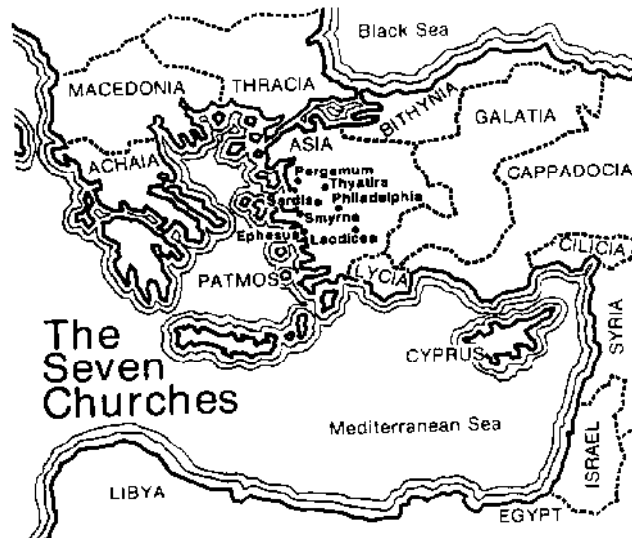
¹ Walvoord, THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, pp. 47, 48.

² Hal Lindsey, THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING, New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1973 by Vision House Publishers, Ventura, CA, p. 23.

³ Lindsey, THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING, p. 24.

⁴ Levy, REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word, p. 33.

The Seven Churches⁵



As we will see, each church represents the condition of the various churches at the time of writing, and may be applied to the various churches today. The conditions and solutions are also applicable to individual Christians in every generation. Sadly, the vital importance of these letters for churches today, as well as for individual Christians, is seldom stressed.⁶ The personal nature of these letters can be seen in the statements, "he that hath an ear...."⁷ Some commentators believe that each separate church represented a prophecy of a coming age which the individual church most closely represented.⁸ In this respect the individual churches represented the condition of the church during the church age down through of the centuries as follows:

The Church Ages⁹

- ***The Church of Ephesus* - The Apostolic Church (33-100 AD)**
- ***The Church of Smyrna* - The Persecuted Church (100-312 AD)**
- ***The Church of Pergamos* - The Church Merged with the State (312-606 AD)**
- ***The Church of Thyatira* - The Counterfeit Church (606-1517 AD)**
- ***The Church of Sardis* - The Reformed, But Not Revived Church (1517-1750 AD)**
- ***The Church of Philadelphia* - The Missionary Church (1750-1925 AD)**
- ***The Church of Laodicea* - The Church of Compromise and Apostasy (1925-The Tribulation)**

There are differences of opinion regarding the time lines represented by these churches:

⁵ Tim LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973, 1975, p. 16.

⁶ Walvoord, THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, p. 51. Levy, REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word, pp. 32, 33.

⁷ Walvoord, THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, p. 52.

⁸ Walvoord, THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, p. 52.

⁹ Lindsey, THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING, pp. 26-56. Gregg, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: A PARALLEL COMMENTARY, pp. 22-67.

The Church Ages Variation¹⁰

The Church Age

Author	Ephesus Period	Smyrna Period	Pergamum Period	Thyatira Period	Sardis Period	Philadelphia Period	Laodicea Period
Tim LaHaye ¹	A.D. 30 to A.D. 100	A.D. 100 to A.D. 312	A.D. 312 to A.D. 606	A.D. 606 to Trib. Per.*	A.D. 1520 to Trib. Per.*	A.D. 1750 to Trib. Per.*	A.D. 1900 to Trib. Per.*
Hal Lindsey ²	A.D. 33 to A.D. 100	A.D. 100 to A.D. 312	A.D. 312 to A.D. 590	A.D. 590 to A.D. 1517	A.D. 1517 to A.D. 1750	A.D. 1750 to A.D. 1925	A.D. 1900 to Trib. Per.
J. Vernon McGee ³	Pentecost to A.D. 100	A.D. 100 to A.D. 314	A.D. 314 to A.D. 590	A.D. 590 to A.D. 1000	A.D. 1517 to A.D. 1800	A.D. 1800 to Rapture	Does not say
Daymond R. Duck	Pentecost to A.D. 100	A.D. 100 to A.D. 312	A.D. 312 to A.D. 590	A.D. 590 to A.D. 1517	A.D. 1517 to A.D. 1750	A.D. 1750 to A.D. 1900	A.D. 1900 to Trib. Mid-Point

*Tim LaHaye believes these 4 church periods all end with the Tribulation Period.

It is my belief that each church's characteristics are present in each generation throughout the church age. However, each church did more directly represent a particular time period. Each church had its own particular character.

Character of the Churches¹¹

- Two were very **good**: Smyrna and Philadelphia.
- Two were very **bad**: Sardis and Laodicea.
- Three were part **good**, and part **bad**: Ephesus, Pergamum, Thyatira.
- The two **good** churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia, were composed of the humbler classes of people and were facing persecution.
- The two **bad** churches, Sardis and Laodicea, seem to have included the ruling classes, nominally Christian, but pagan in life.
- Ephesus was orthodox in teaching, but losing its first love.
- Pergamum was heretic, but faithful to the Name of Christ.
- Thyatira was heretic, tolerating Jezebel, but growing in zeal.

Let's begin our study of the seven churches beginning with Ephesus.

Revelation 2:1-7

To the Church in Ephesus - Duty Without Love

REV 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of **Ephesus** write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

You will notice that in each letter the Speaker identifies Himself with a partial description previously given in chapter one. The Speaker is therefore Jesus Christ.

The city of Ephesus was considered the finest and largest church of the first century. The population was approximately 250,000. Ephesus means "desired one." It was characterized by fervent evangelism. The Apostle Paul on his second missionary journey founded the church at Ephesus. The founding of this church is described in Acts 18-20.¹²

ACT 18:19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. **20** When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; **21** But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

¹⁰ Duck, Richards, REVELATION: GOD'S WORD FOR THE BIBLICALLY-INEPT, p. 27.

¹¹ Henry H. Halley, HALLEY'S BIBLE HANDBOOK, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1927, 1965 Halley's Bible Handbook, Inc., p. 694.

¹² LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, pp. 22, 23. Levy, REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word, p. 34. Gregg, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: A PARALLEL COMMENTARY, p. 64.

In the very next chapter we find that Paul had indeed returned to Ephesus as promised.

ACT 19:10 And **this continued by the space of two years [at Ephesus]**; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

ACT 20:16 For **Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus**, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. **17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.** **18** And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, **19** Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: **20** And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, **21** Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesus was a depraved city dedicated to the worship of the goddess Diana.¹³ The temple of Artemis (Latin - "Diana") was the largest Greek temple in antiquity and was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.¹⁴

Diana of Ephesus¹⁵



Diana of Ephesus.*

Diana was the twin sister of Apollo, the sun-god. She is the moon-goddess. In Israel she is known as Ashtoreth. Diana was considered the mother of the gods. She wore a turreted crown, reminiscent of the Tower of Babel. She has been identified with Nimrod's wife, Semiramis of Babylon. She is therefore identified as the

¹³ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, pp. 22, 23. Freedman, "Ephesus," THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY, Vol. II, p. 548.

¹⁴ Freedman, "Ephesus," THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY, Vol. II, p. 545. "Diana," SMITH'S BIBLE DICTIONARY, Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour and Company, Inc., 1987, p. 76.

¹⁵ Rev. Alexander Hislip, THE TWO BABYLONS, Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1916, 1943, 1959, p. 29.

"goddess of fortifications."¹⁶ She was an offspring of the Babylonian mystery religion.¹⁷ Notice in Daniel this statement about a "god of forces" that the Antichrist will honor:

DAN 11:38 But in his estate shall he honour **the God of forces:** and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. KJV

Notice that the New King James and New International Versions renders this verse to specify "a god of fortresses."

DAN 11:38 "But in their place he shall honor **a god of fortresses;** and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. NKJV

DAN 11:38 Instead of them, he will honor **a god of fortresses;** a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. NIV

The Hebrew word translated "forces" or "fortresses" is a word that means "force, fort(tress), rock, strength, or strong(hold)."¹⁸

Ephesus was originally a Greek trading colony situated near the entrance of the Cayster River and the Aegean Sea. It was a large commercial center situated on a major road for traveling to the east.¹⁹ Ephesus had a population of approximately 250,000, and at the time of Paul was the largest and most important city of the Roman province of Asia. Paul ministered there about three years. Others who ministered there included Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila, and Timothy, as well as John.²⁰

Due to the cult of Diana, much trade was carried out by the silversmiths making souvenirs of silver shrines and images. It was to this trade the book of Acts referred.²¹

ACT 19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season. **23** And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. **24** For a certain man named Demetrius, **a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana,** brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; **25** Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. **26** Moreover ye see and hear, that **not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28** And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

So it seems that Christianity was bad for trade.

However, it may be that silting of the river may have contributed to the demise of Ephesus as a commercial center.²²

In prophecy, Ephesus represents the Apostolic Period, 33 to 100 AD. It represented "circumspect conduct, and zealous labor for the Lord, but waywardness in heart attitudes." The Ephesian church began to serve more from a sense of duty and works, opening the door to legalism.²³

"Seven stars" represent seven angels or messengers to the churches. The seven golden candlesticks represent the churches whose purpose is to spread the light of the Gospel.²⁴

¹⁶ Hislip, THE TWO BABYLONS, pp. 30, 31. "Diana," SMITH'S BIBLE DICTIONARY, p. 76. Colonel J. Garnier, THE WORSHIP OF THE DEAD, or, The Origin and Nature of Pagan Idolatry and its Bearing upon the Early History of Egypt and Babylonia, London, ENG: Chapman & Hall, Limited, 1909, pp. 59, 60.

¹⁷ Garnier, THE WORSHIP OF THE DEAD, or, The Origin and Nature of Pagan Idolatry and its Bearing upon the Early History of Egypt and Babylonia, pp. 59-64.

¹⁸ James H. Strong, "Strong's Number 4581, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary" STRONG'S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, Reprinted 1987, p. 69.

¹⁹ Freedman, "Ephesus," THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY, Vol. II, pp. 542, 543. Halley, HALLEY'S BIBLE HANDBOOK, p. 694.

²⁰ Gregg, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: A PARALLEL COMMENTARY, p. 64.

²¹ Halley, HALLEY'S BIBLE HANDBOOK, pp. 694, 695.

²² Walvoord, THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, pp.57, 58. Freedman, "Ephesus," THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY, Vol. II, p. 543.

²³ Lindsey, THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING, pp.29, 30. Strict, literal, or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code <the institutionalized legalism that restricts free choice>, Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2009, Merriam-Webster Online. 22 December 2009 <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/legalism>>

²⁴ Lindsey, THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING, pp. 17, 27.

MAT 5:14 Ye are **the light of the world**. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. **15 Neither do men light a candle**, and put it under a bushel, but on a **candlestick**; and **it giveth light** unto all that are in the house. **16 Let your light so shine before men**, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

That Christ walks among the candlesticks indicates his intimate relationship with the churches.²⁵ We are to abide in Him and He in us.

JOH 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye **abide in me**. **5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: **He that abideth in me, and I in him**, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **without me ye can do nothing**. **6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.** **7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.** **8** Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

REV 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

Paul warned the church at Ephesus that wolves would appear among them to draw away disciples after them. As the "end-time" approaches we see more and more cults on our doorstep. Aberrant doctrines are espoused over our television screens. Mainline churches are turning from sound biblical doctrine, embracing politically correct social agendas and doctrines. Many churches are opting for a feel good message in order to increase attendance, but not true repentance. Wolves are literally at our heels and in our faces. They look like true shepherds, but are actually wolves in sheep's clothing. Because of this, Paul warned the elders of Ephesus with these words:

ACT 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. **29** For I know this, **that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.** **30** Also **of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.** **31** **Therefore watch**, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

REV 2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Christ describes the works of the church. The church was a steadfast church, which was responsible for the spread of the gospel. Their "first love," or original commitment to Christ was beginning to cool, as was typical of churches of the late apostolic period.²⁶ "When love for Christ cools, labor done in His name can become self-centered and lead to compromise and spiritual corruption."²⁷ Their original zeal had slackened. They were like people today who attend church on Sunday, but do not hunger and thirst after the kingdom.

MAT 6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. **33** But **seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.** **34** Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

You might ask yourself: "What is that kingdom of God that we are to seek?"

ROM 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

With every fiber of our body, soul, and spirit while we live we are to first seek the kingdom of God. When we fully understand this principle, and apply it to our lives, we then enter into God's kingdom. Can we say that

²⁵ Lindsey, THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING, p. 27.

²⁶ Duck, Richards, REVELATION: GOD'S WORD FOR THE BIBLICALLY-INEPT, p. 29. Morris, THE REVELATION RECORD, p.50.

²⁷ Levy, REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word, p. 35.

we are seeking the kingdom first, or have we lost our first love and are concerned more about the cares of this world, rather than the next? Like Martha, some become so occupied with religious work that they neglect the "one thing needed."

LUK 10:38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named **Martha received him** into her house. **39** And she had a sister called **Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.** **40** But **Martha was cumbered about much serving,** and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. **41** And Jesus answered and said unto her, **Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: 42** But **one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.**

The Ephesian church represented duty without love. We show up as Christians on Sunday, but does our Christianity show up the rest of the week?

REV 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

The Ephesians, as well as today's church, were exhorted to return and renew their commitment to Jesus Christ; otherwise their light would no longer shine. Many people continued to assemble at the church at Ephesus for many years, but eventually even the large prosperous city of Ephesus became a ruin and the candlestick was removed.²⁸ "Loveless churches eventually lose their ability to shine in a lost world. The Ephesian church closed in the fifth century."²⁹

REV 2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

Nicolaitanes were false teachers. No one knows who they were exactly, but it has been speculated that they may have been followers of the early deacon, Nicolas of Antioch, who later became heretical in his beliefs.³⁰

ACT 6:5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and **Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:**

2CO 11:13 For **such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.** **14** And no marvel; for **Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.** **15** Therefore **it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness;** whose end shall be according to their works.

MAT 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

MAT 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

MAT 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Later, a Gnostic group became known as the Nicolaitanes probably because they opposed the writings of John.³¹ In any event, the Nicolaitanes attempted to infiltrate the Ephesian church but were exposed by the leaders of the church. Some believe, with good justification, that a Hebrew wordplay of the name of Balaam, as applied to the name Nicolaitanes, justifies the idea that the name "Nicolaitanes" may have derived from the Greek "nikao" (overcome) and "laos" (people), meaning "those who conquered people," (*Balaam* – he has

²⁸ Morris, THE REVELATION RECORD, p. 51.

²⁹ Levy, REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word, p. 35.

³⁰ Gregg, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: A PARALLEL COMMENTARY, pp. 64, 65. Morris, THE REVELATION RECORD, p. 51. Walvoord, THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, p. 58.

³¹ Morris, THE REVELATION RECORD, p. 51. "Gnostic" comes from the Greek word "gnosis" meaning "knowledge." "Gnosticism" is a philosophical religious movement of pagan, and later, Christian times that had as its central doctrine that emancipation came from knowledge, the possession of which saved the initiates from the clutches of matter. Refer to: "gnosis, gnostic, Gnostic, Gnosticism," WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY, Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Co., Publishers, 1961, p. 354.

destroyed the people and *Baalam* – lord of the people). This association will become clearer in Revelation 2:14 and 15. However it is they were deceivers.³²

2JO 1:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. **8** Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. **9** Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. **10** If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

Even more so, these dangers are still with us today.

The Nicolaitanes held two heretical views. First, they practiced sensuality by separating the spiritual and physical natures (Gnosticism).³³ This gave them a license to sin. Secondly, the Nicolaitanes may have tried to set up an ecclesiastical order in that they called themselves apostles and prophets and tried to recruit disciples.³⁴ Some view that this second heresy known as "Nicolaitanism" eventually culminated in the establishment of "a clerical hierarchy superimposed upon the laity and robbing them of spiritual freedom." This is similar to churches with ecclesiastical forms of government such as Catholic, Episcopal, and other similar church denominations with hierarchical forms of organization. This hierarchical system binds the local church, in a feudalistic fashion, to one man or group of men whose personal spiritual life sets the tone for the spiritual success or failure of the church.³⁵

REV 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

The message to the Ephesian church is still valid for us today. We are to "overcome," then we can have access to the "tree of life."

GEN 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; **the tree of life also in the midst of the garden**, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

GEN 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of **the tree of life**, and eat, and live for ever: **23** Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. **24** So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of **the tree of life**.

There will be a new creation.

REV 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. **2** And I John saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven**, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

REV 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. **2** **In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.** **3** And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: **4** And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

³² Morris, THE REVELATION RECORD, p. 52. Walvoord, THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, p. 58. Freedman, "Nicolaitans" THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY, Vol. IV, pp. 1106, 1107. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, et al, "Nicolaitans", THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1915, 1929, 1979, pp. 533, 534.

³³ Freedman, "Nicolaitans" THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY, Vol. IV, p. 1107. LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p. 26.

³⁴ Freedman, "Nicolaitans" THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY, Vol. IV, p. 1106. LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p. 26.

³⁵ Walvoord, THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, p. 58. LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p. 26.

feu-dal-ism: *n.* **1.** A political and economic system of Europe from the 9th to about the 15th century, based on the holding of all land in fief or fee and the resulting relation of lord to vassal and characterized by homage, legal and military service of tenants, and forfeiture. **2.** A political, economic, or social order resembling this medieval system.

"The word overcomer does not refer to Christians who have gained some spiritual victories in life, but to those who have accepted Christ as Savior."³⁶

1 John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

APPENDIX

Figure 1 – Common Format in the Letters According to Hal Lindsey³⁷

- ***Destination***--this includes not only the city where the church is located but pertinent historical background of the city.
- ***Description of Christ***--in each letter Christ gives a description of Himself which is designed to meet some need existing in that church.
- ***Commendation***--Christ seeks to praise each church for something, but unfortunately no praiseworthy thing can be found about Thyatira, the counterfeit church, or Laodicea, the apostate church.
- ***Rebuke***--the only churches Christ doesn't have to rebuke for sinful activities are Smyrna, the suffering church, and Philadelphia, the missionary church.
- ***Exhortation***-- Christ counsels and encourages each of His churches to add what is needed to make them more godly and to remove anything that hinders their single-hearted devotion to Him.
- ***Promise***--Christ promises fabulous blessings to everyone who "has an ear" and heeds Christ's advice to the church and the individuals in it.
- ***Prophetic Application***--this is the historical role that each church was to play during the subsequent nineteen centuries.

³⁶ Levy, REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word, p. 35.

³⁷ Lindsey, THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING, pp. 25, 26.