



# A MESSAGE TO SEVEN CHURCHES

## Revelation 1–3

In addition to his Gospel and letters, John, the apostle, is the author of The Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation is a message of hope for the future when Christ will come again and reign forever. The opening paragraph of the book identifies this letter as a revelation of Jesus Christ. This book, like others in the Bible, is all about Jesus Christ. John, at the time of writing, was exiled on the island of Patmos. John's vision was one of encouragement. The first few chapters helped identify some of the shortcomings the churches in Asia were experiencing. These chapters include messages to seven churches.

John's vision started with his seeing the risen Christ coming in power and righteousness. Christ gave John a message to share with the seven churches in Asia. The message to the seven churches parallels ways that believers today should be living in order to honor God. The churches in Asia were Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Specifically, the churches in Ephesus, Pergamum and Thyatira were warned to return to their first love—God. Unfortunately, these churches had begun to listen to false teachings and Jesus wanted them to return to loving only Him.

Another constant struggle for the churches was rampant persecution they faced because of their faith and preaching. The churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia were all under attack, but the message John shared encouraged their continued commitment to God who would one day bring rescue.

The Lord's messages to Sardis and Laodicea are harsh and biting. Sardis thought they were alive, but they were seen as dead. A return to faithfulness would correct their dangerous drift. Laodicea was said to be lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. This did not please the Lord who wanted them to be one or the other. John encouraged this church to choose faithfulness so they too could live with God forever.