

Today is the final Sunday of “I Want To Know” Sermon Series. We have been on this series for 8 weeks responding to the questions we have about our faith. The last question we have today is about the message from the Book of Revelation—***What message does the Book of Revelation have for us, the followers of Jesus?***

In the hearing of the disturbing news from Charlottesville, Virginia and the escalating tension between the America and North Korea particularly, we ask ***“What message does the Book of Revelation have for us, the followers of Jesus?”*** I would say that the main messages of the Book of Revelation can be found in the letter to those seven churches that can be found in the first three chapters of Revelation. We will briefly review those messages today.

Please know that we have more main points than usual even though each would be very brief. So, buckle up and be attentive in listening. I will be speaking little faster than usual. Ready? Ok. Let’s start.

1. EPHESUS: LOST ITS FIRST LOVE

The first letter was to the church at Ephesus representing the churches of the Apostolic era which is the first and second centuries AD. Ephesus was the leading city of Asia Minor—but it was in a state of decline. This church is commended for its works—the preaching, enduring and serving by the early disciples (Revelation 2:1-3). However, this church at the end of the first century was told that “you have left your first love” (Revelation 2:4). God warned that, unless they repented, He would cease to use them for His purpose (Revelation 2:5). So, the first message of the Book of Revelation for us is this: **Remember your first love and get back on track!**

Do you remember the first time you felt God’s love? Do you remember when you felt that God loves you so dearly? Do you still have that amazing moment of feeling with God? How about the first moment of love you felt with your spouse or partner in life or with your children? The Book of Revelation tells us to remember our first love and get back on it!

2. SMYRNA: FAITHFUL IN TRIAL

The second letter was to the church at Smyrna representing the churches in the third and fourth centuries AD, a period of intense Roman persecution of the Church. Smyrna was a prosperous, bustling, beautifully planned port city, but Christians there faced considerable persecution. While the Smyrna era is commended for its works and being rich in faith (Revelation 2:9), it is urged to be “faithful until death” (Revelation 2:10). The church at Smyrna illustrates the vital importance of **endurance**—of *holding on to your beliefs* during difficult times. The second message of the Book of Revelation is this: **Don’t give up! Remain faithful in trials—endure to the end!**

Are you going through a difficult time now? The message for you today is this: Don’t give up. Hang in there. God is with you. God is doing something great with you. Trust God who loves you.

3. PERGAMOS: THE COMPROMISING CHURCH

The third letter was to the church at Pergamos. The Pergamos era is from about 500–1000 AD. It was during the time of the Dark Ages when the Roman Church dominated Europe—that Easter, Christmas, Halloween and the philosophical ideas of the Trinity were absorbed from paganism into the dominant church. Intellectual sophistication, human reason and the desire to be “progressive” often leads to abandoning fundamental biblical truth. The third message of the Book of Revelation is this: **Do not tolerate false teachings or those who promote them—compromise causes people to stumble; Christians must stand for the Truth.** Like St. Augustine advised, “Wrong is wrong, even if everyone is doing it. Right is right, even if no one is doing it.”

4. THYATIRA: THE CORRUPT CHURCH

The fourth letter was to the church at Thyatira that was under pressure to compromise to fit in. The Thyatira era stretches from about the 11th century to the 16th century, including the Reformation and Counter-Reformation periods when many left the established Roman Catholic Church. Over time under the pressure of Counter-Reformation forces, many churches drifted back into prevailing practices by sitting in Sunday services, observing pagan holidays and going along with whatever in the community to avoid persecution. Many suffered and died as a

result. The fourth message of the Book of Revelation is this: **Do not compromise the Truth for fitting in!**

5. SARDIS: THE DEAD CHURCH

The fifth letter was to the church at Sardis. Only a few comments are made about Sardis, a city *once famous* for arts, crafts and wealth. Sardis corresponds to the Church era from about the 16th century to the early 20th century. The main description of the Sardis era is that it was a *dead* church (Revelation 3:1). Although it had a recognizable name and pieces of the Truth, it never did much with that precious information. During this era, we find a number of small and insignificant churches in England, America and other parts of the world. The Sardis church was also urged to be *watchful*—but, they did not know what to watch for! They lacked of understanding of the biblical truth. The fifth message of the Book of Revelation of us, the followers of Jesus Christ, is this: **Read the Bible and know the truth. Do not let the Truth die.**

6. PHILADELPHIA: SMALL BUT FAITHFUL

The sixth letter was to the church at Philadelphia which was small but faithful. “Philadelphia” means “brotherly love.” The Philadelphia era appears to have begun in the 1930s—about the time radio became popular and just before the age of television. In the last 75 years, the church has used mass media to reach millions of people. God promised to provide the Philadelphia era with an open door for preaching the Gospel. God commends this small church for its *persistence* in fulfilling its mission, and for holding on to His precious Truth (Revelation 3:7-8). The sixth message of the Book of Revelation is this: **Hold on to the truth faithfully, and love your brothers and sisters.**

7. LAODICEA: LUKEWARM AND LAID-BACK

The last letter was to the church at Laodicea. The charge against the Laodiceans is their lukewarm attitude (Revelation 3:16). The picture of Laodicea is of a sophisticated and self-sufficient church that trusts in its own wealth, numbers and wisdom. It appears strong, stable and unified, but it is internally divided. Its independent-minded people unconsciously and consciously also reject the leadership of Jesus Christ while they do their own thing! It is the “people-deciding” church. This lukewarm attitude is prophesied to become dominant in the

church at the end of the age. The last message of the Book of Revelation for us is urgent: **Wake up before it is too late and submit to the leadership of Jesus Christ!**

Now, we heard the seven messages from the Book of Revelation—(1) Remember your first love and get back on it! (2) Don't give up! Remain faithful in trials—endure to the end! (3) Do not tolerate false teachings. (4) Do not compromise the Truth for fitting in! (5) Read the Bible and know the truth. (6) Hold on to the truth faithfully, and love your brothers and sisters. And (7) Wake up before it is too late and submit to the leadership of Jesus Christ!

In hearing of these messages, what does the Lord require of you? The answer is yours. Amen.