

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

II Corinthians 13:5 NKJV - Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified.

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Four ways to look at 7 Churches in Rev 2 & 3 (from Scofield Reference Bible)

- 1) **Local.** To the churches actually addressed.
- 2) **Admonitory.** To all churches in all time as tests by which they may discern their true spiritual state in the sight of God.
- 3) **Personal.** In the exhortations to him “that hath an ear,” and in promises “to him that overcometh.”
- 4) **Prophetic.** As disclosing seven phases of the spiritual history of the church from ~96 A.D. to the end.

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Who is providing the message to the 7 churches?

Rev 1:11 - saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

:12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,

:13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

:14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

:15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

:16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

:18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

:19 Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

:20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Message to church of Ephesus Rev 2:1-7

- :1 To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:
- :2 I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;
- :3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.
- :4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.
- :5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.
- :6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
- :7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

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Let's reverse-engineer the "assessment" form:

Identity and attributes of the assessor

Assessment

Positive commendation

Areas needing remediation and consequences of not changing

Reward for performance

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Message to the church of Ephesus Rev 2:1-7

- :1 To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:
- :2 I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;
- :3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.
- :4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.
- :5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.
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The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Message to church in Smyrna Rev 2:8-11

:8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:

:9 I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

:10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Message to church in Pergamos Rev 2:12-17

- :12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:
- :13 I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.
- :14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.
- :15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.
- :16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.
- :17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Message to church in Thyatira Rev 2:18-29

- :18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:
- :19 I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.
- :20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.
- :21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.
- :22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.
- :23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.
- :24 Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.
- :25 But hold fast what you have till I come.
- :26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—
- :27 He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' -- as I also have received from My Father;
- :28 and I will give him the morning star.
- :29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Message to church in Sardis Rev 3:1-6

- :1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
- :2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.
- :3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.
- :4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.
- :5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
- :6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Message to church in Philadelphia Rev 3:7-13

- :7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":
- :8 I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.
- :9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.
- :10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.
- :11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.
- :12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.
- :13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Message to church in Laodecia Rev 3:14-22

- :14 And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:
- :15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.
- :16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.
- :17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—
- :18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.
- :19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.
- :20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.
- :21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
- :22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

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Let's aggregate all of the data for each of the characteristics

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Identity and attributes of the assessor

- These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:
- These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:
- These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:
- These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:
- These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars:
- These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":
- 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:
- He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (7 times)

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Assessment--Positive commendation

- I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.
- But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate
- I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.
- Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days.
- I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Assessment--Positive commendation

- I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.
- As many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come.
- You have a few names who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.
- I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.
- Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.
- Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

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Assessment-- Areas needing remediation and consequences of not changing

- Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.
- Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.
- But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.
- Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.
- Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.
- Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.
- And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.
- Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

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Assessment-- Areas needing remediation and consequences of not changing

- I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts.
- I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
- Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.
- Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.
- I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.
- So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.
- Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—
- I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

(2 of 2)

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Reward for performance

- To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.
- Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.
- To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.
- And I will give to each one of you according to your works.
- And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—
- He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' -- as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.

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Reward for performance

- He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
- Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.
- He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.
- As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.
- Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.
- To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

(2 of 2)

The 7 Churches of Rev 2 & 3

Thoughts:

As we examine ourselves, how many of the characteristics of the different church eras do we exhibit?

How would each of the churches interact with each other?

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