

*Jesus, The Seven Churches of Revelation  
Words to a Faithful Church*

**Revelation 3:7-13**  
**Week 7 - March 17, 2024**

# Welcome!

Welcome to the Winter 2024 Life Group Series! In this session, we will be learning about the Seven Churches of Revelation.

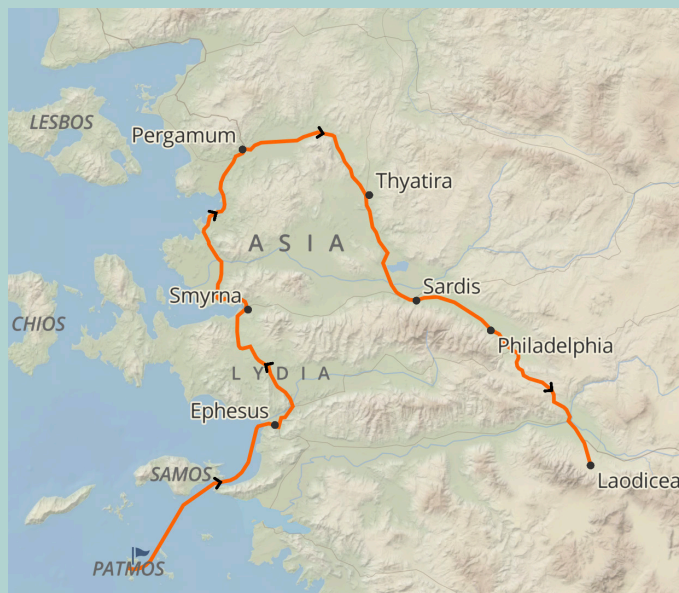
First CRC of Hanford is in the midst of transition, and has been through quite a lot over the last few years. We've weathered political discontent, a pandemic, the loss of our Senior Pastor who'd served twenty years in the role, watched, prayed, and cried as we've lost beloved members of our church family.

All churches have struggles, and according to the book of Revelation, they always have. Join us in this seven week study as we examine ancient churches in their strengths and struggles.



## Map of the Ancient Churches

## Tips for Reading the Book of Revelation



The book of Revelation, written by the Apostle John, is one of the most misunderstood books of the Bible. It's full of strange imagery that's unfamiliar to modern readers. However, the careful reader will discover patterns in the text that help us interpret it.

Our texts roughly have the following pattern.

1. Setting - the church under discussion.
  2. Title - a title of Jesus.
  3. Commendation - what the church is doing right.
- Complaint - what the church is doing wrong.  
Correction - what the church needs to do to get back on track.

# Before You Come to Life Group

1. If you're bringing a new person to the study, we recommend getting them study materials ahead of time so they can feel prepared.
2. Pray that the LORD will open your eyes and heart to receive the lessons he has to teach you in the study.
3. Read the scripture focus for the study.
4. Go through the questions and think about how you might answer them. We've provided space in the study for you to write down your answers if you'd like.

## Catechism Corner

Q & A 127

Q. What does the sixth petition mean?

A. "And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one" means:

By ourselves we are too weak to hold our own even for a moment.<sup>1</sup>

And our sworn enemies—the devil,<sup>2</sup> the world,<sup>3</sup> and our own flesh—<sup>4</sup>never stop attacking us.

And so, Lord, uphold us and make us strong with the strength of your Holy Spirit, so that we may not go down to defeat in this spiritual struggle,<sup>5</sup> but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win the complete victory.<sup>6</sup>

1 Ps. 103:14-16; John 15:1-5

2 2 Cor. 11:14; Eph. 6:10-13; 1 Pet. 5:8

3 John 15:18-21

4 Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17

5 Matt. 10:19-20; 26:41; Mark 13:33; Rom. 5:3-5

6 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23

# What We Believe

1. Read Revelation 3:7-13. What title does Jesus have in our text? What does the title mean?

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2. What commendation does Jesus have for the church in Philadelphia? Do you think Jesus would commend the First CRC of Hanford for a similar reason?

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3. Jesus has no complaint against the church in Philadelphia. Who does the Lord have a complaint against?

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4. What does Jesus promise the Philadelphian church for its faithfulness?

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# Philadelphia Facts

Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, wrote a letter to the church at Philadelphia sometime in the late first or early second century AD. Ignatius had visited the church at Philadelphia and, based on his letter's contents, must have experienced some conflict with those in the church. In the letter, he encourages the church to be unified with their bishop (Ignatius, To the Philadelphians 8.1) and to avoid listening to the Jews who are not Jews (Ignatius, To the Philadelphians 6.1). The latter is reminiscent of the language used in Rev 3:9. Trevett has argued that Philadelphia may have been a prime region for the growth of Montanism in the early second century (Trevett, "Apocalypse," 313-38). Montanism was an early heretical movement that emphasized prophetic speech and ecstatic worship experiences. On the other hand, Shaye Cohen, among others, argues that Ignatius' sharp language is simply a proverbial statement, not necessarily an attack on a specific opponent (Cohen, "Judaism").

The Lexham Bible Dictionary.  
Lexham Press.

# God Speaks to Us

1. Verse 11 says, “Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown” What crown is Jesus talking about? Name three things you can do to hold fast to what you have and keep your crown.

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2. Verse 10 says, “Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.” Is this a promise for us too? Has the Lord kept you from any trials? If so, what? If not, why not?

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Theater remains at Philadelphia. The theater's stage building foundations are all that remain.



Remains of the stadium built into the acropolis at Philadelphia.

## Cross References

Re. 3:7 - Is. 22:22

Re. 3:8 - Col. 4:3

Re. 3:9 - Is. 49:23

Re. 3:10 - Mt. 24:14

Re. 3:11 - 1 Co. 9:25

Re. 3:12 - Ga. 2:9

Re. 3:13 - Re. 3:6



“All whom the Lord has chosen and received into the society of his saints ought to prepare themselves for a life that is hard, difficult, laborious and full of countless griefs.”

- John Calvin

## God Speaks to Our Families

1. Every Christian parent wants their children to be faithful to Jesus. Name three things parents should do to help their children remain faithful to the Lord.

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2. Our text talks about Jews who were denying Jesus, and commends the church in Philadelphia for their faithfulness to the word of God. What means does the world use to influence our families and pull them away from their faithfulness to Jesus? How can we prepare our families to discern that which is in alignment with God's word from that which contradicts it?

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# God Speaks in Worship

1. How does worship help you remain faithful to the word of God?

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2. Many people call themselves Christians but will not come to church regularly. What are those who regularly miss worship missing? How important is weekly worship? Explain your answer.

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# The Gospel Call

1. Our text tells us that the Lord will spare the Philadelphian church from the hour of trial that is coming upon the whole world. Jesus also promised suffering and persecution for his followers (John 15:20). Are both of these promises true even though they seem to contradict one another?

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2. When you speak to someone about Jesus, when do you tell them that they will suffer for becoming a Christian? How can we “sell” Jesus if it means inviting them to suffer?

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“As we walk before the unbeliever then, the thing that makes us different is our submission to the Word of God. Our lives and thinking are founded on Scripture, while the essence of the unbeliever’s life is rejection of the revelation of God. Our presupposition of Scripture’s truth is at diametric odds with that of the world, and because we have been given the Word of God, the world hates us. From the outset, the focus of the world’s opposition to the faith is the Word of God itself.”

- Greg L. Bahnsen

