

The background of the image is a deep blue sky. Large, bright white clouds are positioned at the top and bottom edges. A series of vertical light rays, appearing as thin white and light blue lines, descend from the cloud layer at the top towards the center of the image, creating a sense of divine light or revelation.

BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY!

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

write these things... (Rev. 1:19)

- things which you have seen (ch. 1)
- things which are (ch. 2-3)
- things which will take place after these things (ch. 4-22)

BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY!
THE BOOK OF REVELATION



7 stars = angels (messengers) of seven churches
7 lampstands = seven churches
(Rev. 1:20)

BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY!
THE BOOK OF REVELATION



Pergamum

Thyatira

Sardis

Philadelphia

Laodicea

Ephesus

Smyrna

Island of Patmos



0 KM 40
0 MILES 25

Map courtesy of Digital Globe / FreeBibleimages.org
Ancient roads added based on various sources



Pergamum

Thyatira

Sardis

Smyrna

Philadelphia

Ephesus

Laodicea

Ephesus

- The leading city and church in Asia Minor
 - Paul lived here two years
 - Timothy and John were church leaders here



Ephesus

- Idols and pagan temples
 - Recent temple to Emperor Domitian
 - City famous for temple to Diana/Artemis

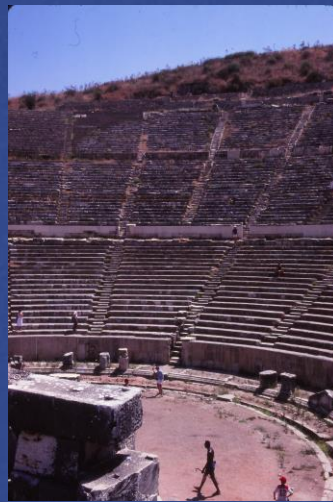


Model of temple to Artemis



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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-3)



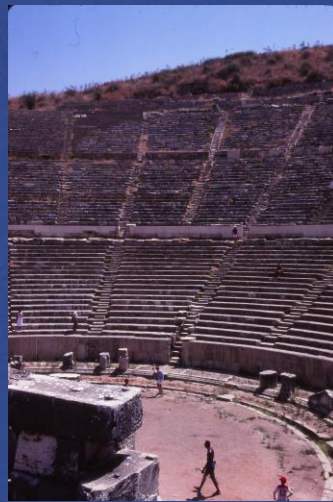
TO: “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

FROM: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

PRAISE: ‘I know your deeds and your labor and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people, and you have put those who call themselves apostles to the test, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured on account of My name, and have not become weary.

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-3)



TO: “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

FROM: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

PRAISE: ‘I know your **deeds** and your **labor** and **perseverance**, and that you **cannot tolerate** evil people, and you **have put those who call themselves apostles to the test**, and they are not, and you **found them to be false**; and you **have perseverance** and **have endured** on account of My name, and **have not become weary**.

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Ephesus (Rev. 2:4-7)



REBUKE: ‘But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

EXHORTATION: ‘Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ‘But you have this, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

CALL: ‘The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

PROMISE: To the one who overcomes, I will grant to eat from the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.’

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Love for God and Others Goes Together

- **1 Jn 4:20** Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. **21** And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Ephesus (Rev. 2:4-7)



REBUKE: ‘But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

EXHORTATION: ‘Therefore, **remember** from where you have fallen, and **repent**, and **do** the deeds you did at first; or else **I am coming** to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ‘But you have this, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Overcoming

- Same Greek word as “conquer” (*niko*)
- Jesus is presented as the ultimate conquerer/overcomer in Revelation
- How do we “overcome”? Through Jesus! (1 Jn 5:4-5)

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Truth and Love

- Both essential, but often tension between them
- Church character can change in a generation!
 - Previous Generation at Ephesus (35 years earlier)
 - Warned that false teachers would come (Acts 20:29)
 - Praised for their love of one another (Eph 1:15-16)
 - Current Generation at Ephesus (End of First Century)
 - Good at discernment of false teachers
 - Problems with love for one another
 - Next Generation at Ephesus (Second Century)
 - Church had regained love and retained discernment, per Ignatius

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION



Pergamum

Thyatira

Smyrna

Sardis

Philadelphia

Ephesus

Laodicea

Smyrna

- Smyrna had been destroyed (~600 BC) and rebuilt (~300 BC); likened to a Phoenix
- Crown/wreath associated with Smyrna
- Ruling class was Asian Greeks; tension with Jews

Smyrna known for
Myrrh
(perfume)



Pagos hill at Smyrna; known as "crown of Smyrna"



Coin from Smyrna with crown and wreath

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-9)

TO: “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

FROM: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:

PRAISE: ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the slander by those who say they are Jews, and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

REBUKE: <none>

Smyrna (Rev. 2:10-11)

EXHORTATION: 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.'

CALL: 'The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

PROMISE: 'The one who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Martyrdom in Smyrna

- Numerous martyrs in next decades
- Polycarp—church leader in 2nd century
 - Betrayed to Romans by Jews in Smyrna
 - Martyred ~150 AD
 - Said to be 12th martyr in Smyrna
 - “Martyrdom of Polycarp” written about event

BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY!
THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Persecution

- Christians are promised persecution
- Be ready to endure persecution, even to death!

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION



Pergamom

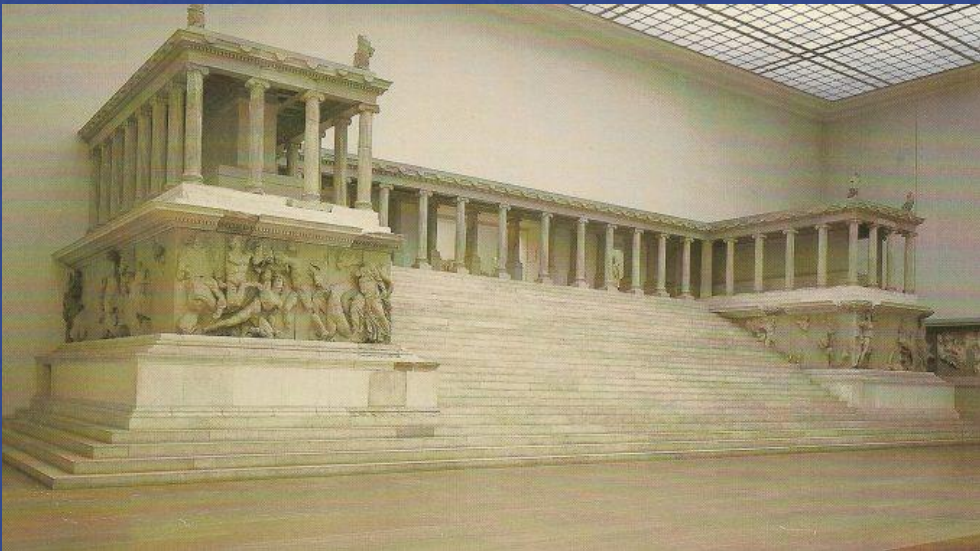
- Large library
 - Second only to Alexandria
- Parchment invented in Pergamom



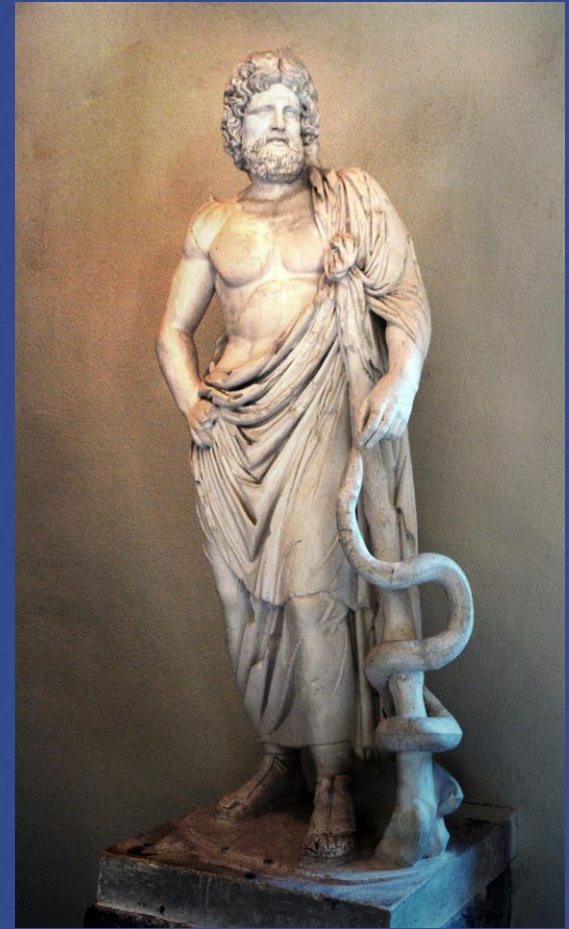
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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Pergamom Temples

- Temple to Augustus Caesar
 - First city in Asia Minor with temple to an emperor
- Temple to Asclepius (god of healing)
 - Health spa and pagan temple
- Throne-like altar of “Zeus the Savior”



Reconstructed altar of Zeus (Berlin)



Asclepius

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Pergamom (Rev. 2:12-13)

TO: “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

FROM: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

PRAISE: ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold firmly to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Pergamom (Rev. 2:12-13)

TO: “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

FROM: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

PRAISE: ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you **hold firmly** to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

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Pergamom (Rev. 2:14-15)

REBUKE: 'But I have a few things against you, because you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. 'So you too, have some who in the same way hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

Who was Balaam? (Num 22-25, 31)

- Balak—King of Moab
- Balaam—non-Israelite prophet
- Israel--in process of conquering the Land, including Moab
- King Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel. God would not let him do so.
- Failing this, Balaam and Balak enticed Israel into idolatry and immorality (Num 25:1-3; 31:16)
- Balaam was killed by the sword (Num 31:8; Josh 13:22)

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Who Are the Nicolaitans? Some Possibilities:

- Followers of Nicolas (an early deacon, Acts 6:5)?
 - Irenaeus (2nd century) claimed he had become apostate and taught that “anything goes” (early form of antinomian Gnosticism)
 - But Nicolas was a fairly common name
- Ones who “conquer the people”?
 - “niko”=conquer, overcome; “laos”=people
 - Held by many in our circles
- Heretics similar to the Baalamites?
- Something else?

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Pergamom (Rev. 2:16-17)

EXHORTATION: 'Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will wage war against them with the sword of My mouth.'

CALL: 'The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

PROMISE: 'To the one who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows except the one who receives it.'

BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY!
THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Pergamom (Rev. 2:16-17)

EXHORTATION: 'Therefore **repent**; or else **I am coming to you quickly**, and I will wage war against them with the **sword** of My mouth.

CALL: 'The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

PROMISE: To the one who overcomes, I will give some of the **hidden manna**, and I will give him a **white stone**, and a **new name** written on the stone which **no one knows** except the one who receives it.'

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Promises

- Hidden manna? (Jn 6)
- White stones?
- New unknown name? (Rev 19:12; 22:4)

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Lessons from Pergamom

- Hold firmly to Jesus!
- Avoid immorality and idolatry
- Broader lesson: Avoid compromise with a pagan world

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION



Pergamum

Thyatira

Sardis

Smyrna

Philadelphia

Ephesus

Laodicea

0 KM 40
0 MILES 25

Thyatira

- Known for powerful trade guilds
 - Woodworkers, linen-workers, garment-makers, dyers, leather-workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave-dealers, **bronze-smiths**, ...
 - Town famous for wool-dying (e.g. Lydia; Acts 16:14)
 - Trade guilds involved banquets with food offered to idols and sexual immorality
- Temples
 - Ancient temple to sun-god Tyrimnos; became identified with Apollo, son of Zeus

Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-19)

TO: “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

FROM: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like burnished bronze, says this:

PRAISE: ‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith, and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Thyatira (Rev. 2:20-23)

REBUKE: ‘But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. ‘I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality. ‘Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. ‘And I will kill her children with plague, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Thyatira (Rev. 2:24-29)

EXHORTATION: ‘But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. ‘Nevertheless what you have, hold firmly until I come.

PROMISE: ‘The one who overcomes, and the one who keeps My deeds until the end, I will give him authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are shattered, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.

CALL: ‘The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY!
THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Lessons from Thyatira

- Grow in good deeds, love, faith as they did
- Avoid compromise with world, even if it we suffer consequences

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

How Does Jesus Evaluate Us?

- Do we understand and hold fast to biblical truth?
- Do we have increasing love for God and others?
- Are we ready to suffer persecution for the Gospel?
- Do we avoid societal and economic pressures to compromise the Gospel?
- *“and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.” Rev 2:23*

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The background of the image is a deep blue sky. At the top and bottom, there are large, bright white clouds. A series of vertical light rays or beams of light descend from the top cloud layer, creating a sense of divine illumination. The text is centered in the middle of the image, overlaid on these rays.

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