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Prologue	Church		World		Heaven	Epilogue
Jesus/John	Vision	Judgment	Vision	Judgment	Vision	Jesus/John
Revelation of J/Christ (1:1-8)	Vision of Son/Man (1:9-20)	Seven Letters (2-3)	Vision of Heaven (4-5)	Judgment Cycle (6-20)	Vision of Victory (21-22)	Revelation of J/Christ (22:6-21)
						

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	Ephesus    Smyrna    Pergamum    Thyatira    Sardis    Philadelphia    Laodicea						
	Rev. 2				Rev. 3		
1. Address	1	8	12	18	1	7	14
2. Identification	1	8	12	18	1	7	14
3. Account	2-3	9	13	19	1	8	15
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I. Address (3:1)

- A. City of faded glory
  - former Lydian dynasties ruled area
  - early commercial importance due to gold
  - large Jewish population
- B. Impregnable fortress twice taken by surprise
  - Lydians, Croesus vs. Persians, Cyrus (547 BC)
  - Seleucids, Antiochus III (214 BC)

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II. Identification (3:1)

- A. "seven spirits of God"
  - literary tie back to Prologue (1:4)
  - symbol for fullness of Holy Spirit
- B. "holds seven stars in his right hand"
  - literary tie back to Inaugural Vision (1:16)
  - similar to identification to Ephesus (2:1)
  - emphasizes sovereignty over churches

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III. Account (3:1)

- A. "I know your works" = judgment is now
- B. "alive . . . but dead" = precarious spiritual state

IV. Assessment (3:2)

- C. "be watchful"
  - allusion to city history (surprise capture)?
  - fighting church lethargy (cultural issues?)
- D. "strengthen what remains . . . works not perfect"
  - similar to Ephesus (cf. 2:2)
  - compromised witness: low profile, token faith
  - remedy: depend on Spirit (cf. "seven spirits")

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V. Exhortation (3:3–4)

- A. "remember . . . received, heard . . . hold fast"
  - appeal to received apostolic tradition
  - repent = change witness, reject compromise
- B. "come . . . as a thief"
  - echoes gospel Jesus tradition (Mt. 24:42–43)
  - likely second allusion to city history
  - "come": historical or eschatological?
  - literary link to Armageddon (Seven Bowls)
- C. "a few . . . not stained their garments"
  - metaphor for idolatry (cf. 14:4)
  - compare Isa. 65:4 (LXX)

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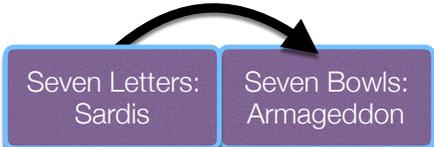
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Rev 3:3 (Sardis)  
 “Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.”

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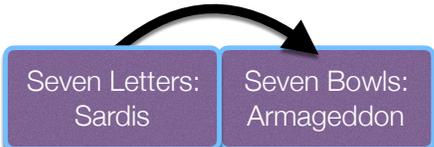
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Rev 15:15–16 (Thief Motif)  
 (“See, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and is clothed, not going about naked and exposed to shame.”) And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Harmagedon.

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V. Exhortation (3:3–4)  
 D. “shall walk with me in white”  
 Son of Man pattern

literary connections: white clothing

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VI. Promise (3:5)  
 A. “he who conquers”  
 eschatological theme  
 irony: witness is killed, yet “conquers”  
 B. “clothe himself in white” = faithful witness now is righteous glory with Christ in the future  
 C. “name . . . book of life”  
 possible use of Dan. 7:10–12; 12:1–2  
 contrasts books of judgment for unbelievers

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VI. Promise (3:5)

D. "I will confess his name"

- heavenly counterpart to present crisis
- allusion to Jesus tradition (Mt. 10:32)
- "name" theme prominent in this letter
- bearing Christian name as witness challenge

VII. Call (3:6)

E. Universalized in formulaic pattern

F. Actualized in book's visions

- "coming like a thief" at 16:15
- ties Bowl Judgments back to Seven Letters

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I. Address (3:7)

A. Small and unimportant

- destroyed by AD 17 earthquake
- rebuilt with emperor money

B. Ignatius of Antioch (d. 110) connection

- Ignatius passed through on way to martyrdom
- Ignatius wrote letter back to Philadelphians

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II. Identification (3:7)

A. "the Holy One and True"

- not derived from Inaugural Vision
- used as divine attribution in 6:10

true = true Messiah, not false Jewish pretender

B. "one who has the keys of David"

- similar to Inaugural Vision "key" imagery (1:18)
- allusion to David's palace steward, Eliakim
- synagogue polemic context?

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III. Account (3:8)

- A. "open door no one can shut"  
entry into house of David, city, temple (v. 12)  
local synagogue excommunication?
- B. "a little power . . . not denied my Name"  
small size but effective witness  
ties to Revelation's "faithful witness" theme

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IV. Assessment (3:9-10)

- A. "I will make . . . synagogue"  
Jewish claim denied ("are not . . . are lying")  
"synagogue of Satan" polemic again
  
- B. "bow down . . . your feet"  
allusions to Isa. 45:14; 49:23; Ps. 86:9  
Gentiles bow before Israel and Israel's God  
ironic reversal of Jewish eschatological imagery

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IV. Assessment (3:9-10)

- C. "will learn that I have loved you"  
God's covenant love (Isa. 43:4)  
ironic fulfillment in Gentile church
- D. "kept my word of patient endurance"  
faithful witness in persecution theme  
patterned on Son of Man of Inaugural Vision
- E. "because you have kept . . . I will keep"
- F. "hour of trial . . . whole world"  
"hour of trial": present or eschatological?  
"whole world": connection to Gog/Magog

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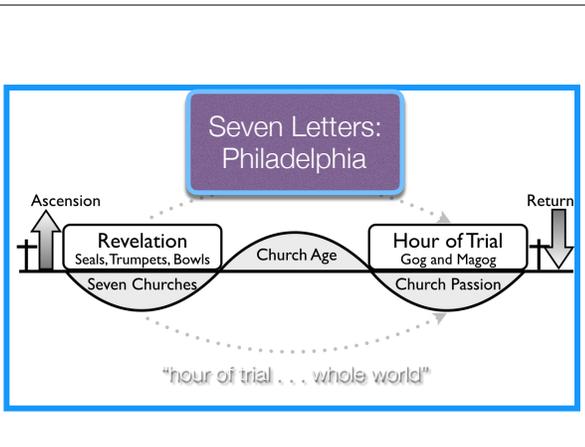
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V. Exhortation (3:11)

- A. "I am coming soon"
  - "hold fast" = testimony
  - "coming soon": present or eschatological?
- B. "no one may seize your crown"
  - believer's spiritual security
  - allusion to Shebna, Eliakim (Isa. 22:22)?

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VI. Promise (3:12)

- A. "make a pillar"
  - multiple images convey one basic thought
  - pillar, temple = honor, respect
- B. "write a name"
  - God's name, city of God's name, my new name
  - cf. Isa. 56:5; 62:2; 65:15 applied to foreigners
  - language repeated verbatim in 21:2
- C. "not go outside"
  - historical context of multiple earthquakes?
  - cf. idea of being cast outside temple in 11:2

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VII. Call (3:13)

- A. Formulaic
- B. Universalized

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- I. Address (3:14)
  - A. Tri-city complex of Lycus valley  
Paul's Ephesian ministry (Acts 19)

Early Christian centers

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- I. Address (3:14)
  - B. Banking center
    - commercial crossroads
    - Cicero cashed letters of credit
    - AD 60 earthquake: emperor's help unnecessary
  - C. Textile industry and medical center
    - famous black wool
    - famous eye salve

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- II. Identification (3:14)
  - A. "Amen, faithful and true witness"
    - variations on Prologue wording (cf. 1:5)
    - Amen: Isaianic divine title (Isa. 65:14)
  
  - B. "origin of God's creation"
    - original creation? (similar thought in Col. 1:18)
    - new creation? (in Christ = resurrection; cf. 1:5)

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- III. Account (3:15)
  - A. "neither cold nor hot . . . lukewarm"
    - key thought: usefulness for a purpose
    - comparing usefulness of water sources

- B. "spew you out"
  - compromise with idolatrous trade guides
  - successful commercially, ineffective spiritually
  - washed out witness, precarious spiritual state

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IV. Assessment (3:16–18)

A. “I am rich”

scriptural ambivalence about wealth

Rev: commercial wealth as compromise with ungodly system (6:15; 13:16; 18:3, 5, 19)

B. “your are wretched, miserable, poor”

metaphor for spiritual state

opposite of what they thought

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IV. Assessment (3:16–18)

C. “blind . . . naked”

blind: allusion to famous Laodicean eye salve

naked: allusion to famous Laodicean wool

D. “buy from me . . . gold refined”

do commerce with Christ, not Caesar

true wealth is purified business activity

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IV. Assessment (3:16–18)

E. “white garments”

similar to believers in Sardis (3:4–5)

counters current “naked” condition

ties later to judgment, shame of 16:15

F. “salve to anoint your eyes”

Laodicean salve no remedy for this condition

only Christ can cure this type of blindness

gold, garments, salve: historical, local links

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V. Exhortation (3:19–20)

A. “I reprove . . . whom I love . . . repent”

“lukewarm” condition not permanent

repentance sets stage for invitation of v. 20

B. “Behold, I stand at the door”

possible background: Cant. 5:2; Lk. 12:36–37

two major exegetical points

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V. Exhortation (3:19–20)

C. “I will come in”

coming: present or eschatological?

context: v.19 infers conditional for Laodiceans

D. “dine with you”

Eucharistic overtones: duality

anticipates marriage supper of Lamb (19:9)

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VI. Promise (3:21)

A. Conquering theme

present reality infers eschatological fulfillment

irony: witness is killed, but vindication to come

B. “a place with me on my throne”

Lukan parallel: kingdom, meal, throne (Lk. 22:29–30)

ties to visions of eschatological fulfillment

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VI. Promise (3:21)

C. “just as I myself conquered”

echoes backward

anticipates forward

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Rev. 12:11:

“They have conquered by the blood  
of the Lamb and by the word of their  
testimony for they did not cling to life  
...”

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