



Revelation

THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS

THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS





ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN

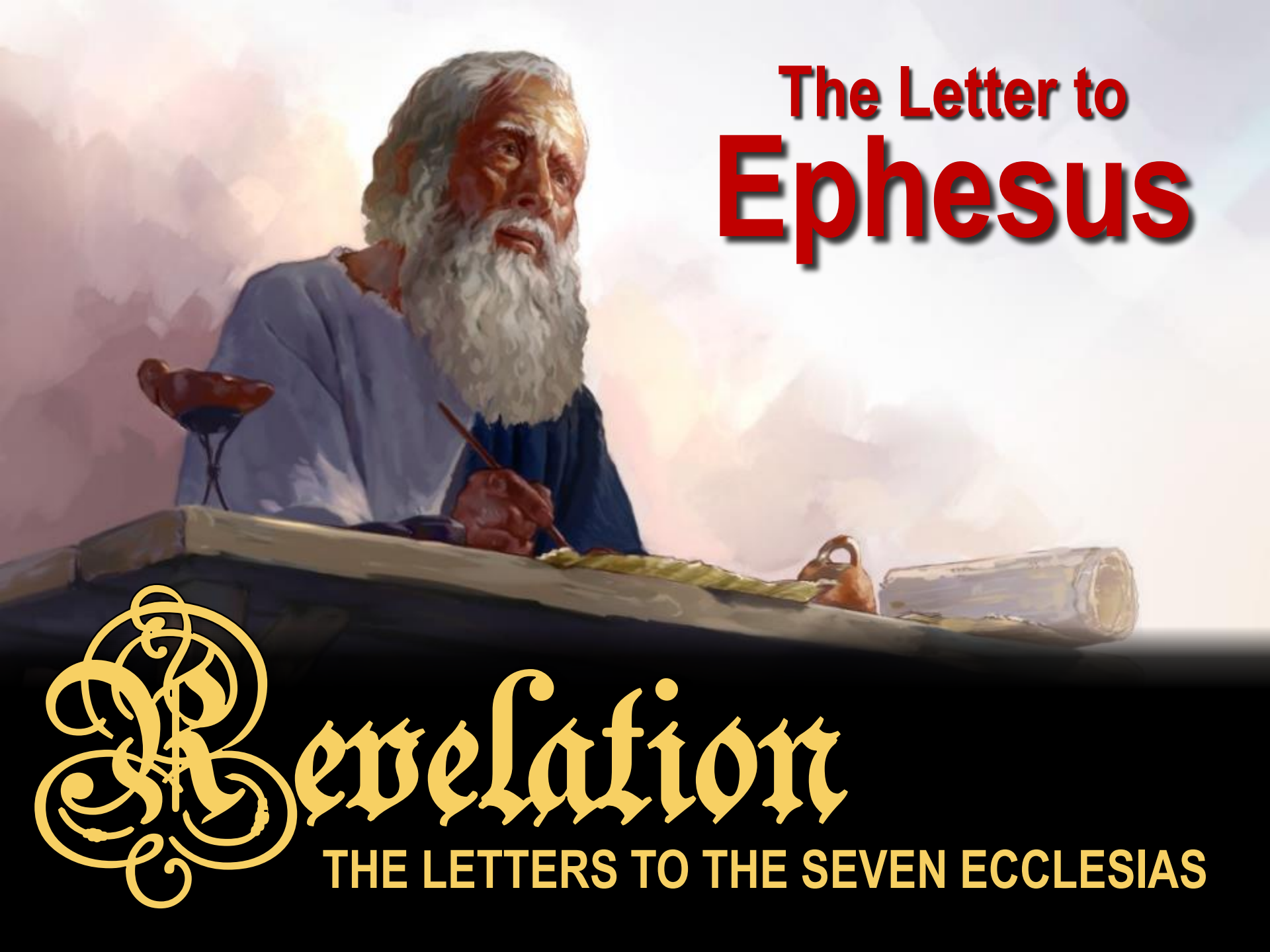


ECCLESIA CHARACTERISTIC

- Ephesus:** holding 7 stars, walking in midst of 7 lampstands **1:13,16**
- Smyrna:** the first and last, was dead and is alive **1:17-18**
- Pergamos:** hath the sharp sword with two edges **1:16**
- Thyatira:** hath eyes like a flame of fire and feet like fine brass **1:14-15**
- Sardis:** hath the 7 spirits (7-fold spirit) of God and the 7 stars **1:4, 16**
- Philadelphia:** hath the key of (the house of) David **1:18**
- Laodicea:** the faithful and true witness **1:5**

THE ECCLESIAL LANDSCAPE

- Ephesus:** The loveless ecclesia – doctrinally pure but lacking the love they had at first
- Smyrna:** The persecuted ecclesia – materially poor but rich in faith
- Pergamos:** The embattled ecclesia – internal conflict between truth and error
- Thyatira:** The compromising ecclesia – errorists had gained control of the ecclesia
- Sardis:** The dead ecclesia – large in number and in reputation, but without works
- Philadelphia:** The faithful ecclesia – small in number but vigorous in activity
- Laodicea:** The lukewarm ecclesia – self sufficient, self-righteous, but knowing nothing



The Letter to **Ephesus**

Revelation

THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS

STRUCTURE OF THE LETTERS

ECCLESIA	Title of Christ	Commendation	Condemnation	Warning	Promise
Ephesus	2:1	v2-3, 6	v4	v5	v7
Smyrna	2:8	v9	X	v10	v11
Pergamos	2:12	v13	v14-15	v16	v17
Thyatira	2:18	v19	v20	v21-25	v26-27
Sardis	3:1	v2, 4	v1,-2	v2-3	v5
Philadelphia	3:7	v8, 10	X	v11	v12
Laodicea	3:14	X	v15-17	v18-20	v21

THE LETTER TO EPHEBUS

¹ Unto the angel of the ecclesia of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands;

² I know thy works,
and thy labour,
and thy patience,

and how thou canst not bear them which are evil:
and thou hast tried them which say they are
apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

³ And hast borne,
and hast patience,
and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

⁴ Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. ⁵ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;
or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy lampstand out of his place, except thou repent. ⁶ (But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate).

⁷ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

STRUCTURE OF THE LETTERS

EPHESUS

Will
Remove the
Lampstand

SMYRNA

Persecution
by
Synagogue
but no
Condemnation

PERGAMOS

Contending
against
Apostasy
Some
Faithful

THYATIRA

Overcome
by
Apostasy

SARDIS

Contending
against
Complacency
Some
Faithful

**PHILA-
DELPHIA**

Persecution
by
Synagogue
but no
Condemnation

LAODICEA

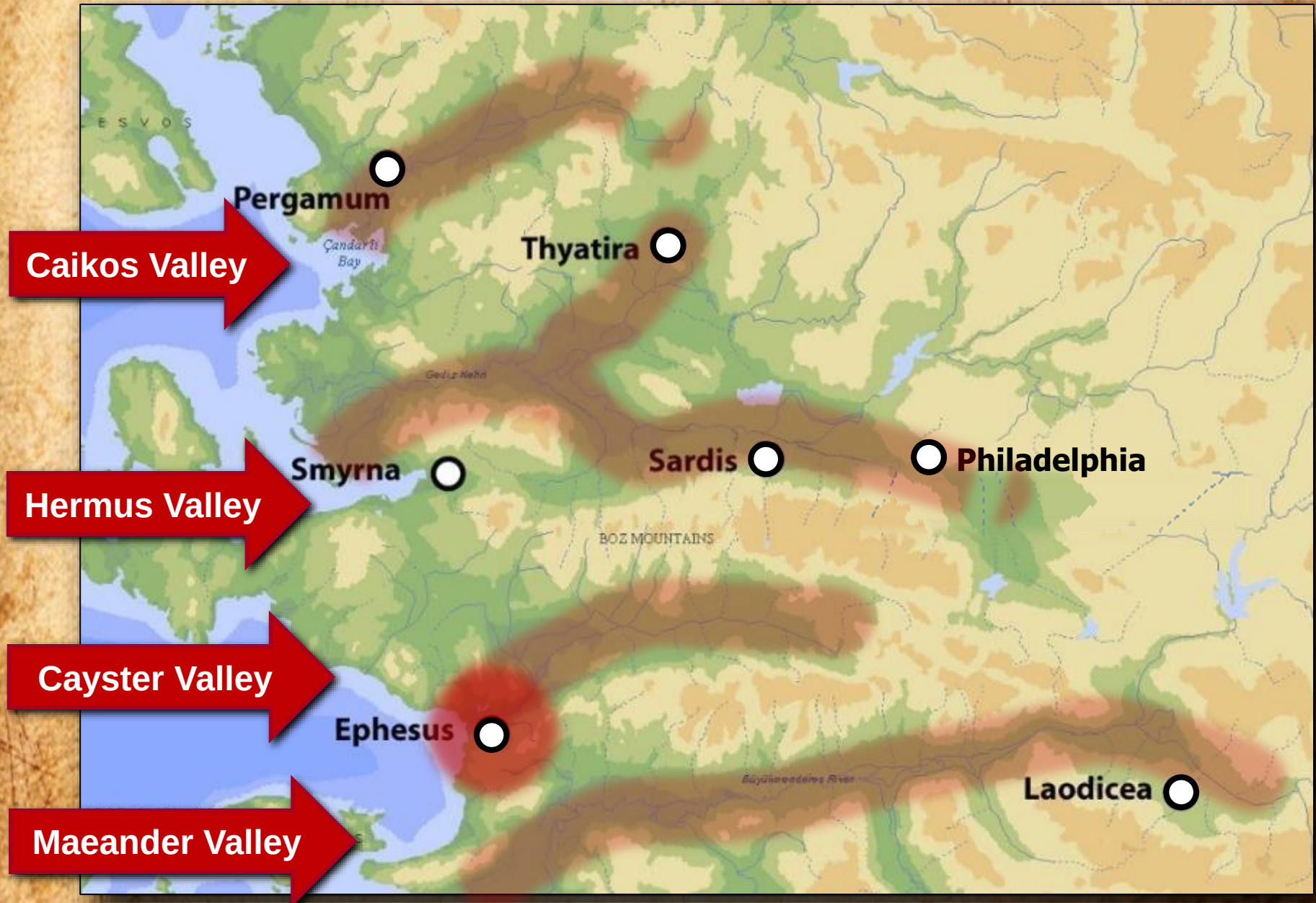
Will Spew
Out the
Lampstand

Middle Verse: And all the ecclesias shall know that I am he which searcheth the reigns and hearts **Rev 2:23**

THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS



THE MAJOR VALLEYS



EPHESUS



Ephesus, Western Turkey, The Curetes Street

EPHESUS



TEMPLE OF DIANA



THE TREE OF LIFE



The Amazons established the (first) sanctuary on their way to Athens to wage war against Theseus. In *The Hymn to Artemis*, Callimachus describes how the Amazons set up the image of Artemis, their mother goddess, in the shade of an oak by the sea.

In the 7th century BC, a flood destroyed the temple, depositing over half a metre of sand and silt over the original clay floor. Among the debris were the remains of a carved ivory plaque of a griffin and the Tree of Life...

Great Events in Religion:
An Encyclopedia of Pivotal Events in Religious History
Ed Florin Curta & Andrew Holt, p47-48

DOCTRINE IN EPHESUS

- ❑ Charge some that they teach no other doctrine 1:3
- ❑ If there be any other thing contrary to sound doctrine 1:10
- ❑ In the later times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to ... doctrines of devils 4:1
- ❑ Put the brethren in remembrance of ... good doctrine 4:6
- ❑ Give attendance to ... doctrine 4:13
- ❑ Take heed to thyself and unto the doctrine 4:16
- ❑ Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in ... doctrine 5:17
- ❑ That the ... doctrine be not blasphemed 6:1
- ❑ If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words ... and to the doctrine 6:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

- ❑ If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie **1:6**
- ❑ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar **1:10**
- ❑ He that saith I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar **2:4**
- ❑ No lie is of the truth **2:21**
- ❑ Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? **2:22**
- ❑ But the anointing ye have received ... teacheth you all things ... and is no lie **2:27**
- ❑ If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar **4:20**
- ❑ He that believeth not God hath made him a liar **5:10**

MARY IN EPHESUS



MARY IN EPHESUS



Ephesus Acts 19-20

Great is Diana of the Ephesians **19:28**

Whom the whole world worships **19:27**

The assembly was confused **19:32**

Commercial gain from false religion **19:22-27**

False apostles will come **20:29-30**

Diana is a mother goddess

Catholic Church Revelation 17-19

Great Babylon, that great city **17:5, 18**

Whole world worships **12:9, 13:3, 18:3, 23**

Mystery Babylon the Great **17:5**

Merchants **18:3**, merchandise **v11**, craftsmen **v22**

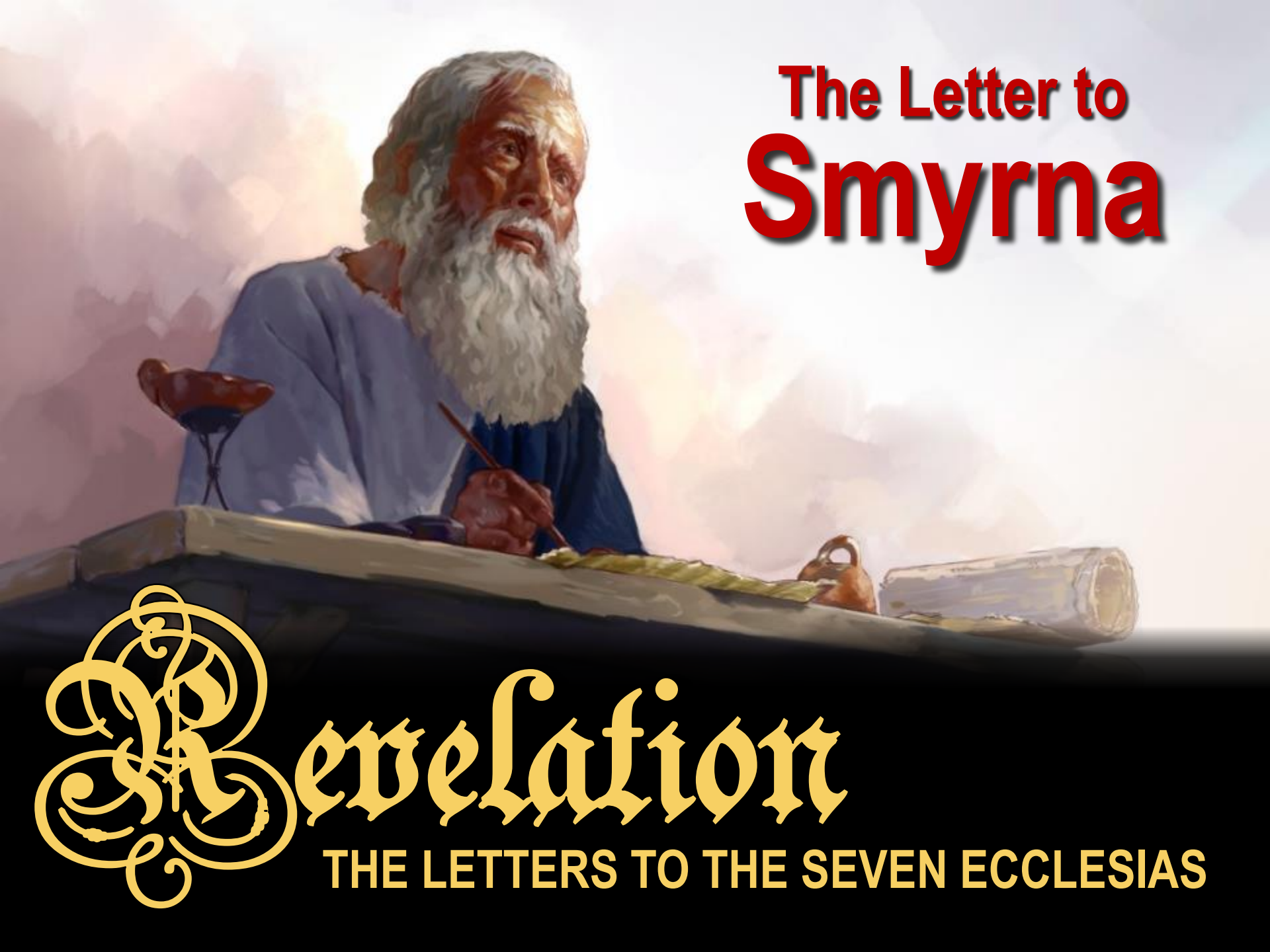
The pope is a false prophet **19:20**

Catholicism believes Mary is the mother of God

ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

1. **First Council of Nicaea (325)**
Declared that Christ is of the same substance with the Father, fixed the Easter date, repudiated Arianism
2. **First Council of Constantinople (381)**
Declared that Christ is born of the Father before all time, revised the Nicene Creed with regard to the Holy Spirit, repudiated Arianism.
3. **Council of Ephesus (431)**
Proclaimed the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God, repudiated Nestorianism
4. **Council of Chalcedon (451)**
5. **Second Council of Constantinople (553)**
6. **Third Council of Constantinople (680)**
7. **Second Council of Nicaea (787)**





The Letter to **Smyrna**

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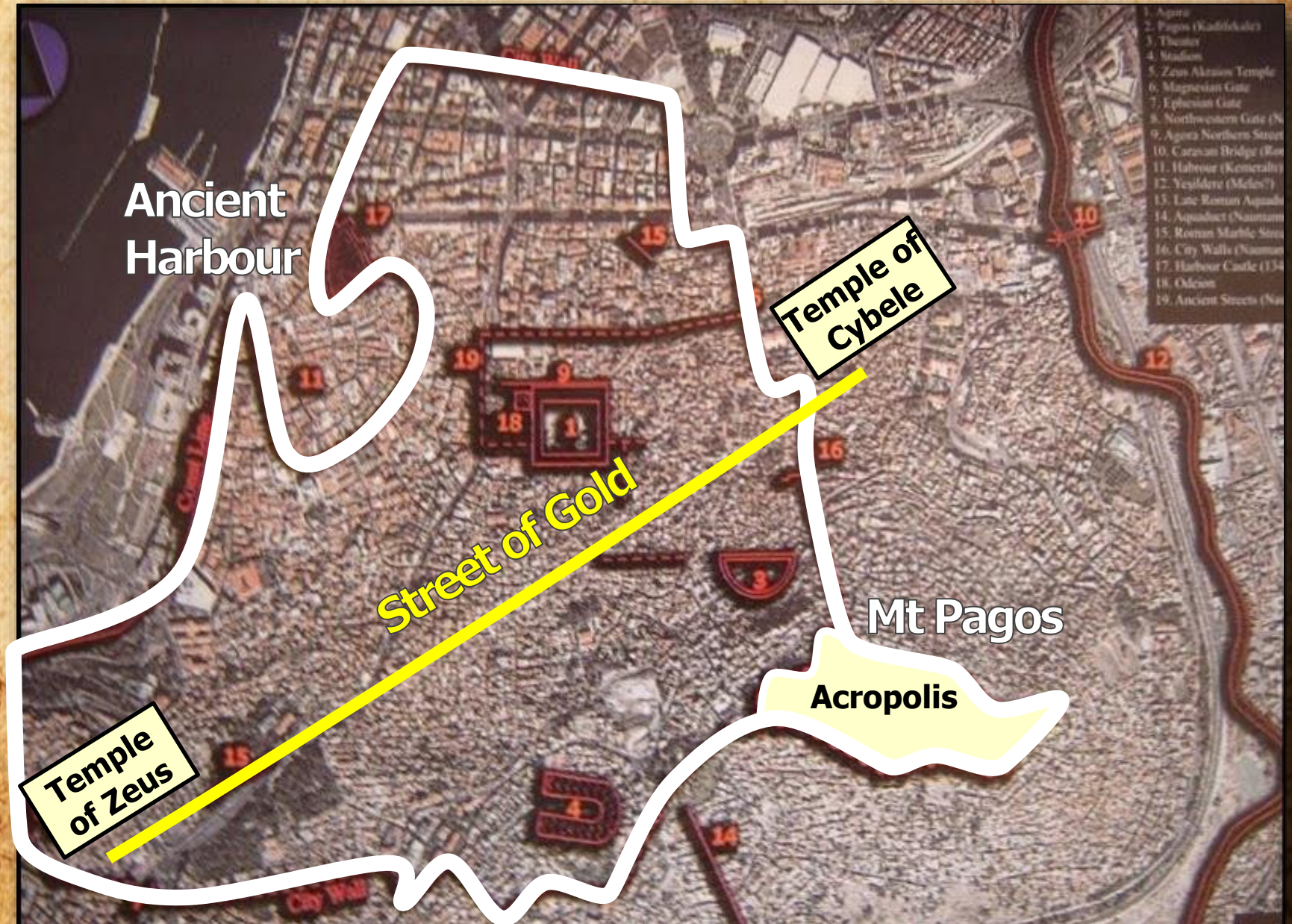
SMYRNA



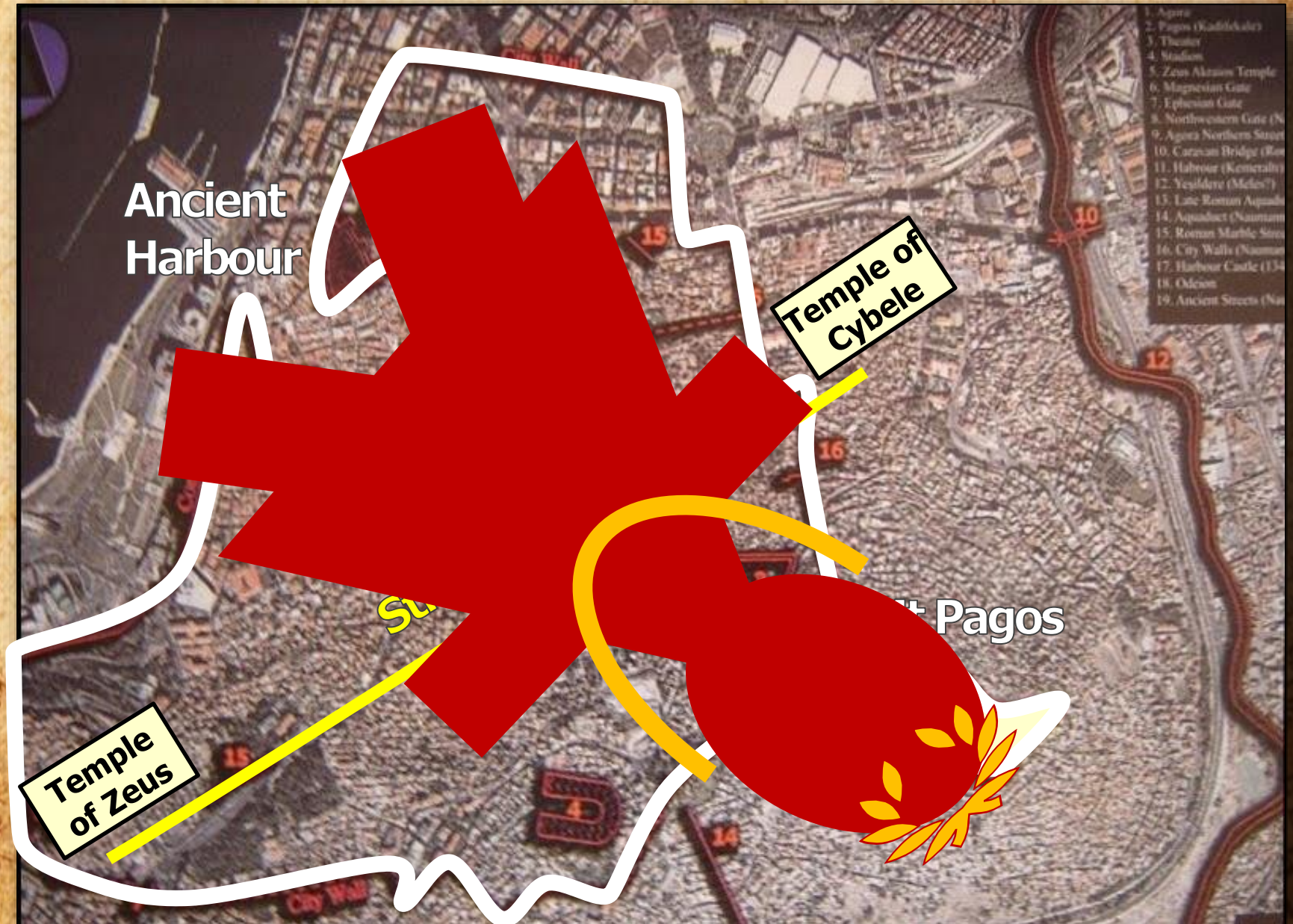
SMYRNA



THE STREET OF GOLD



THE STREET OF GOLD



THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS



Pergamos

Smyrna

Seleucid Empire

Ptolemaic Empire

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

Smyrna	The Life of Christ
Tribulation	I fill up ... the <u>afflictions</u> of Christ in my flesh Col 1:24
Poverty (but thou art rich)	Though he was <u>rich</u> , yet for your sakes he became <u>poor</u> 2Cor 8:9
Blasphemy	And many other things <u>blasphemously</u> spake they against him Lu 22:65
Suffer	Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's <u>sufferings</u> 1Pet 4:13
Prison	The captain and the officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him Jn 18:12
Tried	But was in all points <u>tempted</u> like as we are yet without sin Heb 4:15
Faithful unto death	He became obedient unto <u>death</u> , even the death of the cross Php 2:8
Not hurt of the second death	Christ being raised from the dead <u>dieth no more</u> ; death hath no more dominion over him Rom 6:9



THE TRUE RICHES

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him. **Ja 2:5**

Charge them that are rich in this world ... that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute ...

1Tim 6:17-18

Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou has provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. **Lu 12:21**



THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

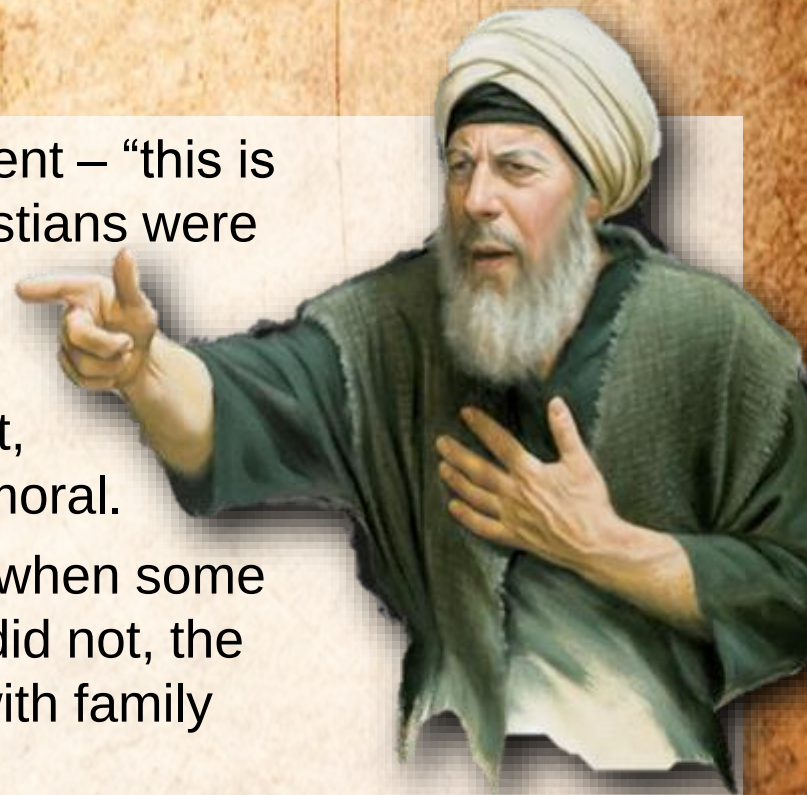
The Unbelieving Jews

1. A true Jew is one who is circumcised inwardly **Rom 2:28-29**, yet the unbelieving Jews said they were true Jews **Rom 2:17**.
2. The Gentiles provoked the Jews to jealousy **Rom 11:11** so the Jews forbade the apostles to preach to the gentiles **1Thess 2:16**.
3. The Jews “blasphemed” the work of the Truth **Ac 13:45, 18:6** and persecuted the ecclesias **Ac 13:50, 14:2, Gal 5:11-12**
4. They stirred up the authorities against the believers **Ac 13:50, 14:2, 19, 17:5, 13**.
5. In the OT, Israel was called “The congregation of Yahweh” **Num 20:4, 31:16**. In the Greek LXX this is “The synagogue of the Lord”. It was now “the assembly of the adversary” (Diaglott).



BLASPHEMY BY THE JEWS

1. On the basis of the words of the Sacrament – “this is my body, and this is my blood” - the Christians were said to be cannibals.
2. Because the Christians called their common meal the Agape, the Love Feast, it was said that their gatherings were immoral.
3. Because Christianity often split families, when some members became Christians and some did not, the Christians were accused of "tampering with family relationships".
4. The heathen accused the Christians of atheism because they could not understand a worship which had no images of the gods such as they themselves had.
5. The Christians were accused of treachery because they would not say: "Caesar is Lord."
6. The Christians were accused of being arsonists because they foretold the end of the world in flames.



William Barclay, Letter to Smyrna

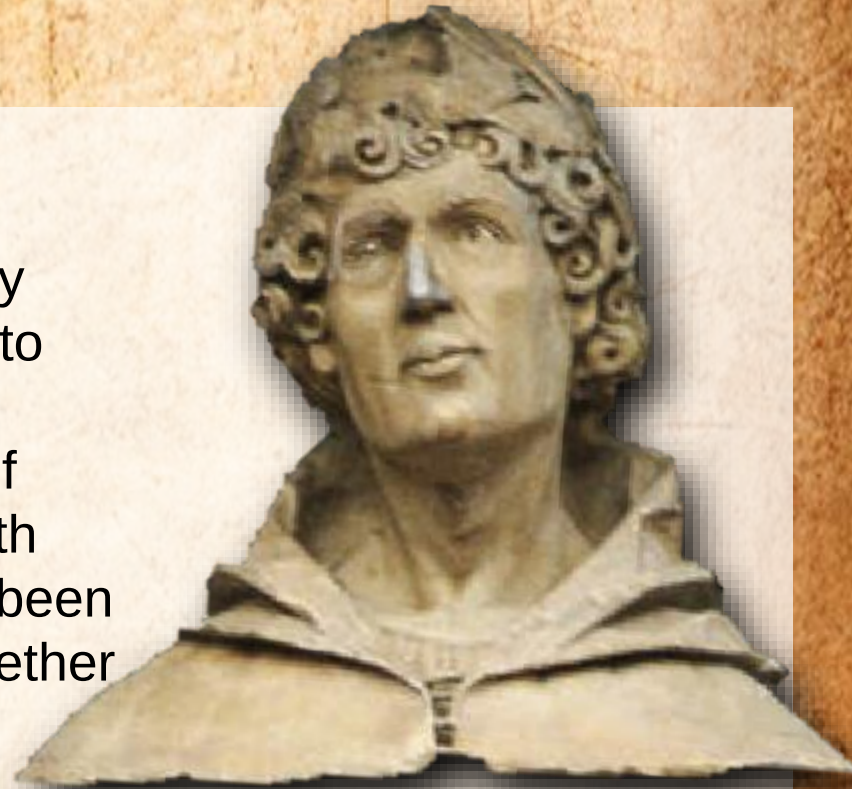
PLINY THE YOUNGER

Letter from Pliny to the Emperor Trajan

I never had the fortune to be present at any examination of Christians before I came into this province. I am therefore at a loss to determine what is the usual object either of inquiry or of punishment, and to what length either of them is to be carried. It has also been a question with me very problematical, whether any distinction should be made between the young and the old ...

In the meantime, this has been my method with respect to those who were brought before me as Christians. I asked them whether they were Christians: if they pleaded guilty, I interrogated them twice afresh, with a menace of capital punishment. In case of obstinate perseverance, I ordered them to be executed.

**Pliny, Governor of Bithynia, to Emperor Trajan, AD112
Eureka, v1, p254**

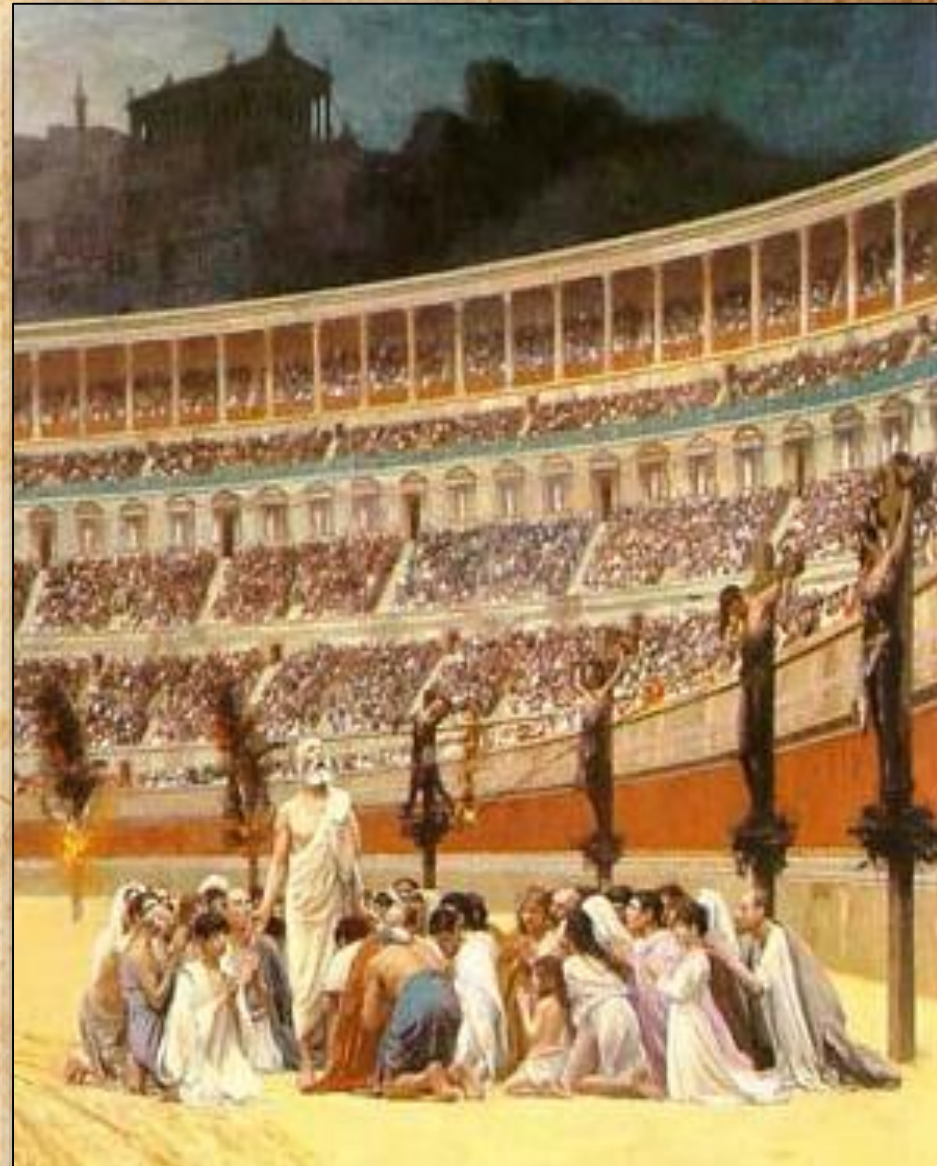


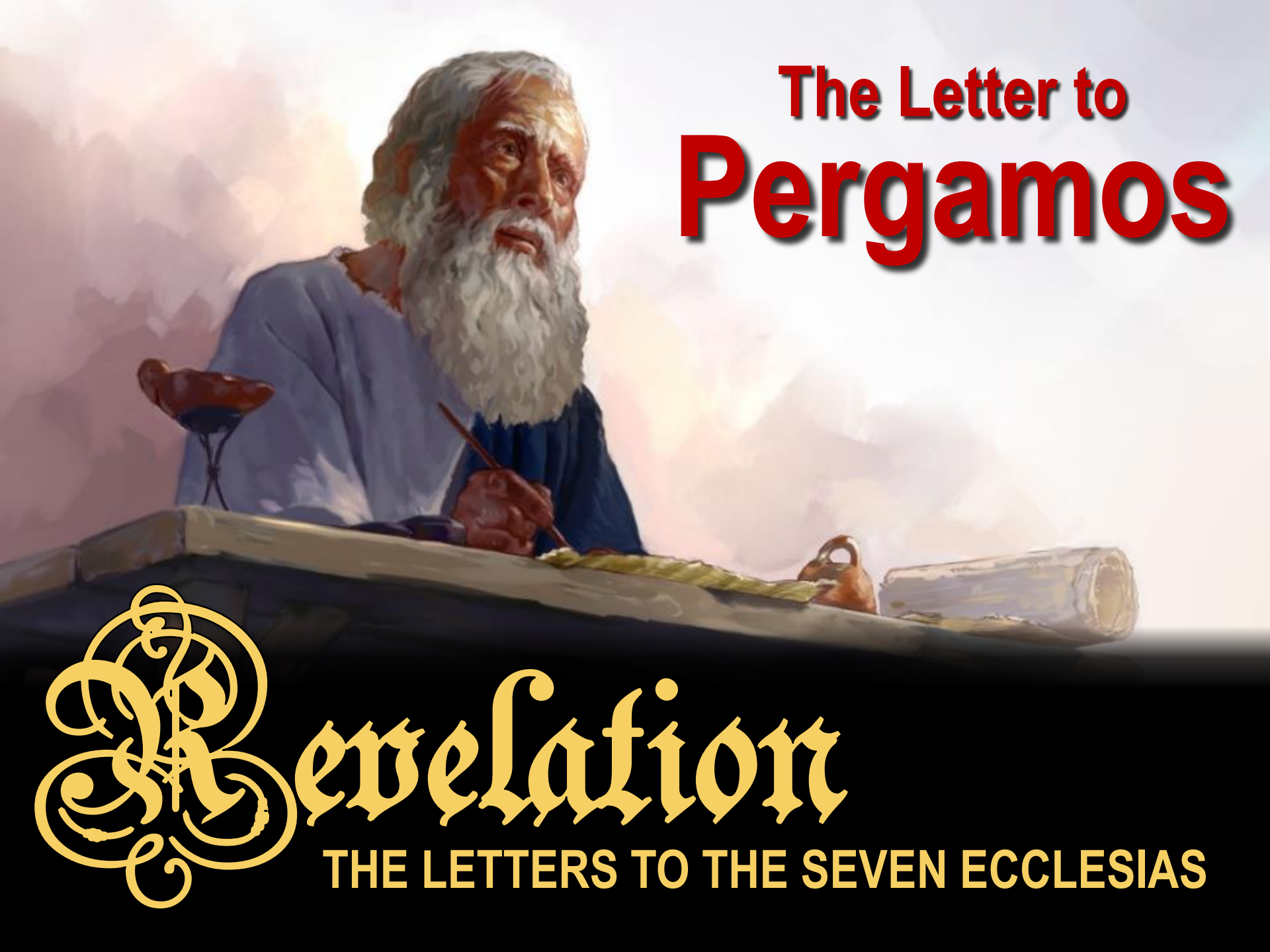
THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP

When brought before Statius Quadratus, the proconsul, he began to exhort him, saying, "Swear, and I will release thee -reproach Christ." Polycarp said, "Eighty and six years have I served him and he hath never wronged me, and how can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me?"

They now begged Philip, the Asiarch, to let out a lion against Polycarp. But he refused, observing, that the amphitheatrical spectacles of the wild beasts were finished. They then unanimously shouted, that he should be burnt alive.

**The death of Polycarp, AD167
Eureka, v1, p252**





The Letter to **Pergamos**

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THE GREEK EMPIRE



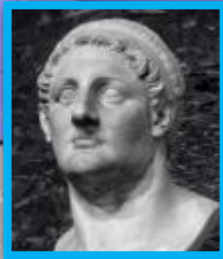
Cassander



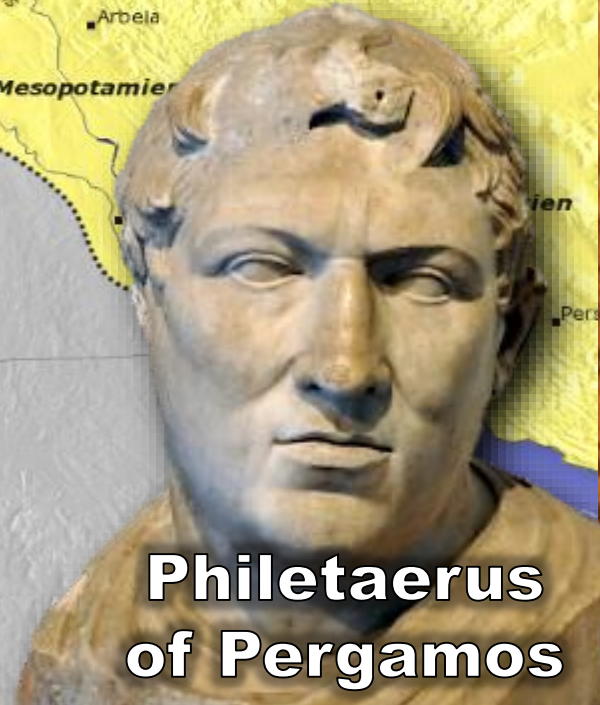
Lysimachus



Seleucus



Ptolemy



**Philetaerus
of Pergamos**

Pergamos

PERGAMOS



TEMPLE OF AESCLEPIUS



WHO Flag

TEMPLE OF ZEUS

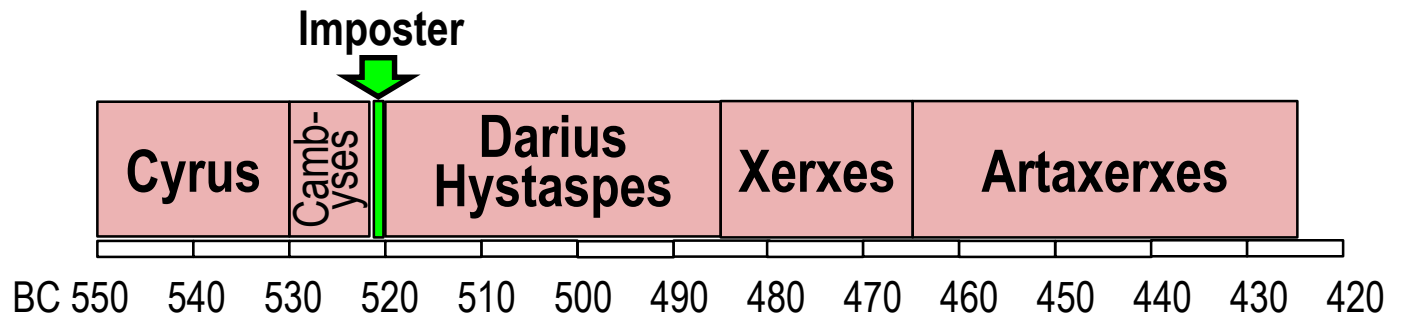


The Great Altar of Zeus, Pergamon

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE



Kings of
Persia

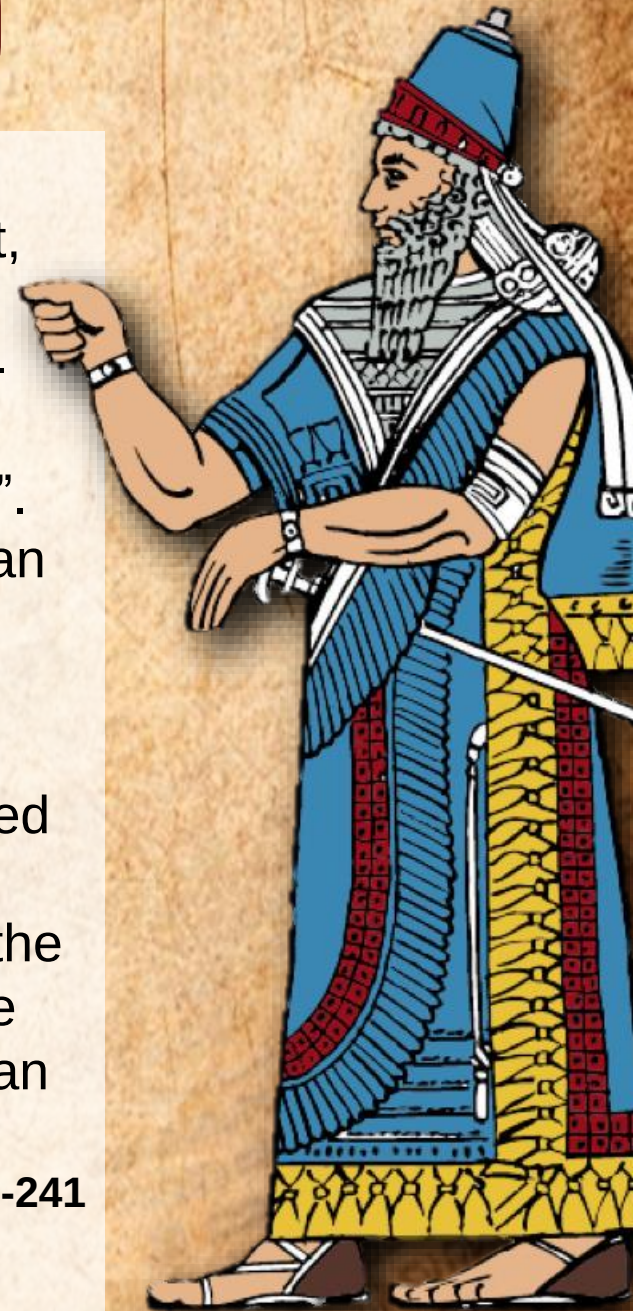


THE BABYLONIAN PRIESTHOOD

The true legitimate Babylonian Pontiff had his seat beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire. That seat, after the death of Belshazzar, and the expulsion of the Chaldean priesthood from Babylon by the Medo-Persian kings, was at Pergamos. There, in consequence, for many centuries, was “satan’s seat”. Pergamos itself became part and parcel of the Roman Empire, when Attalus III, the last of the kings, at his death, left by will all his dominions to the Roman people, BC 133.

When Julius Caesar, who had previously been elected Pontifex Maximus, became also, as Emperor, the supreme civil ruler of the Romans, then, as head of the Roman state, and head of the Roman religion, all the powers and functions of the true legitimate Babylonian Pontiff were supremely vested in him ...

Two Babylons, Alexander Hislop, p240-241



BALAAM

The WAY of Balaam **2Pet 2:15**

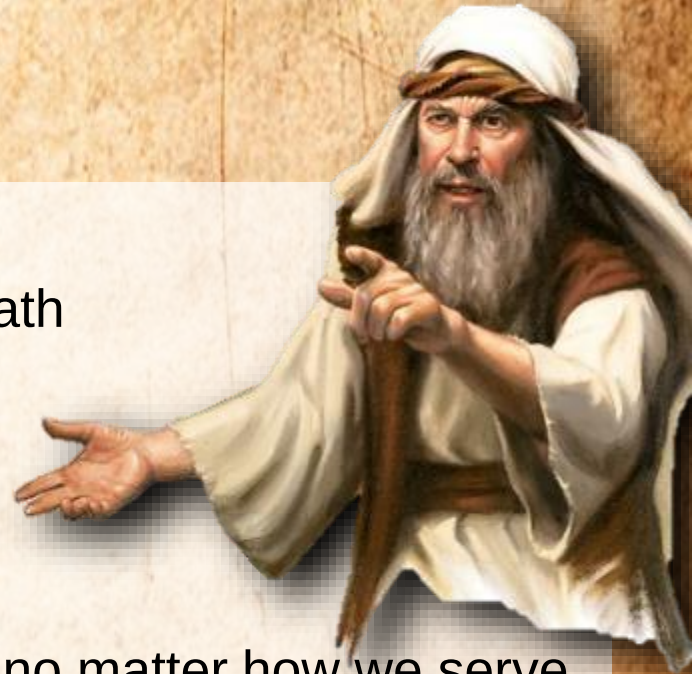
- The way of temporary gain in this life, the path of covetousness and selfishness, a love of popularity, prestige and power and of doing whatever it takes for worldly advantage.

The ERROR of Balaam **Jude 11**

- The mistaken belief that God will accept us no matter how we serve Him. Jude mentions Cain and Korah. Both of these men invented alternative forms of worship and expected God would accept them **Gen 4:5, Num 16:10, 24, 40**. Balaam repeatedly opposed the will of God **Num 22:13, 21, 32**, mixed truth with error **24:1**, eventually turning the grace of God into lasciviousness **Jude 4** but prayed that he might die the death of the righteous **23:10**. Deluded!

The DOCTRINE of Balaam **Rev 2:14**

- The doctrine of compromise, self-indulgence and permissiveness. He taught Israel to practice idolatry and commit fornication, thereby casting a stumbling block before them.



THE NICOLAITANES

The Nicolaitanes took their name from Nicolaus, one of the seven (Ac 6:5), and whose teaching they perverted. They taught that the body was of no importance and therefore regarded sensual sins with indifference because the spirit was uncontaminated by them. They were probably people who, using Paul's phrase, felt able to continue in sin that grace may abound but who in reality perverted the grace of God into licentiousness.

The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia
W. L. Bedwell



ANTIPAS

The righteous perisheth, and
no man layeth it to heart: and
merciful men are taken away,
none considering that the
righteous is taken away from
the evil to come

Isa 57:1.



THE WORD OF GOD

The Hidden Manna

And he humbled thee ... that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD.

Deut 8:3

The White Stone

Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice (lit stone) against them.

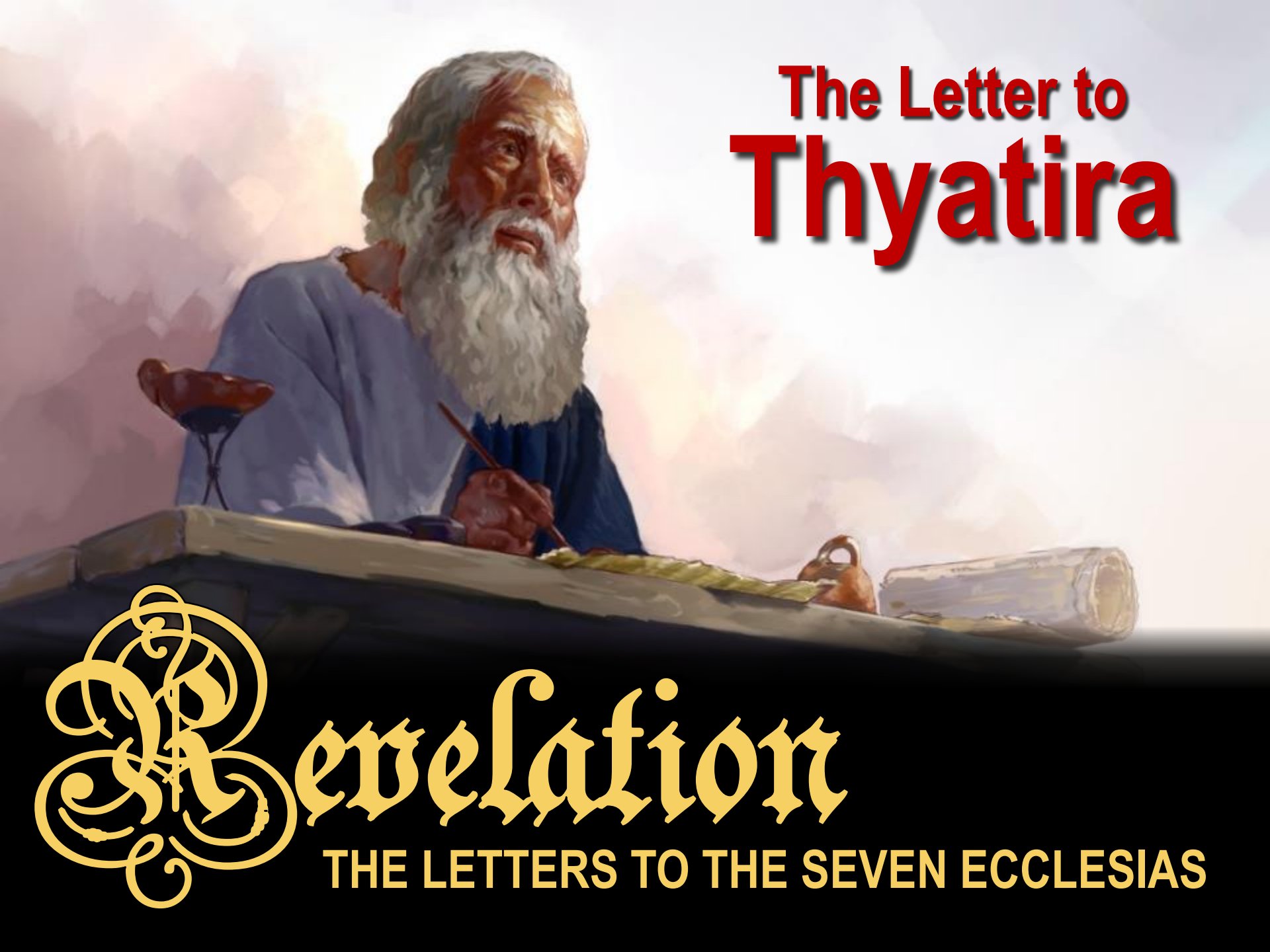
Ac 26:10



The New Name

And he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself ...
And his name is called the Word of God.

Rev 19:12-13



The Letter to **Thyatira**

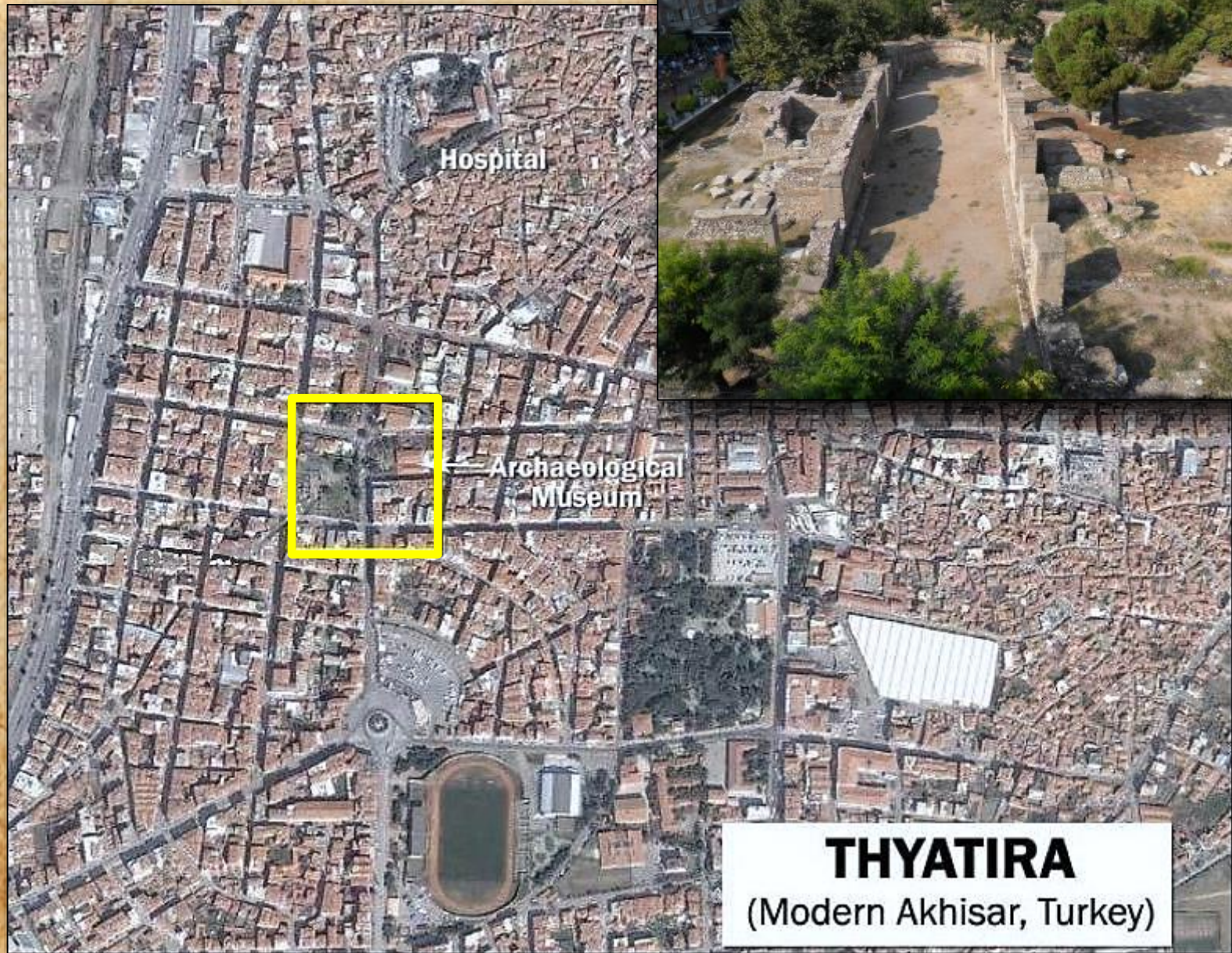
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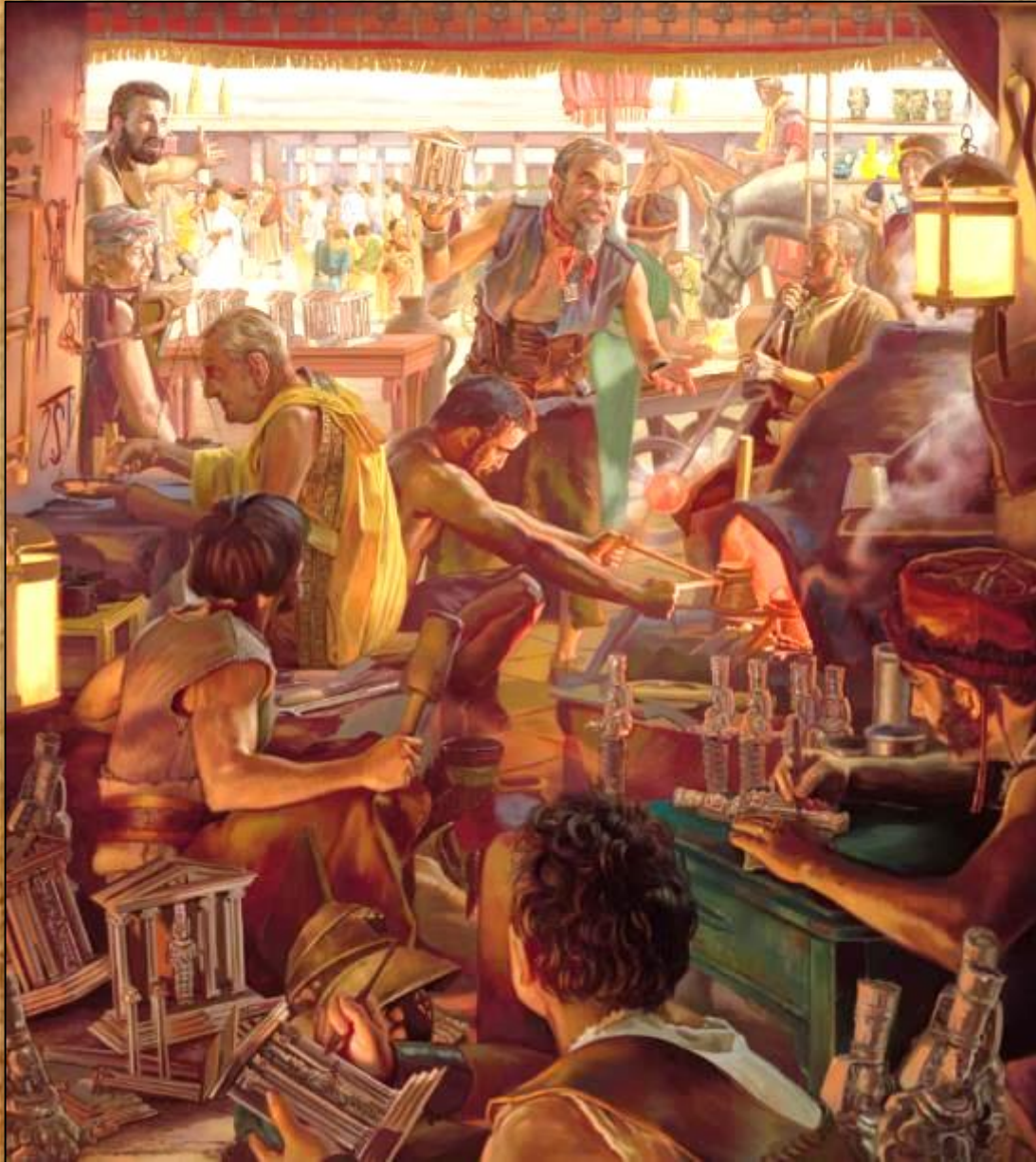
THYATIRA



THYATIRA



THE TRADE GUILDS



Trade Guilds

Wool-working

Linen-working

Makers of Outer-Garments

Dyeing

Tanning

Leather-working

Bronze-smiths

Slave-dealers

Potters

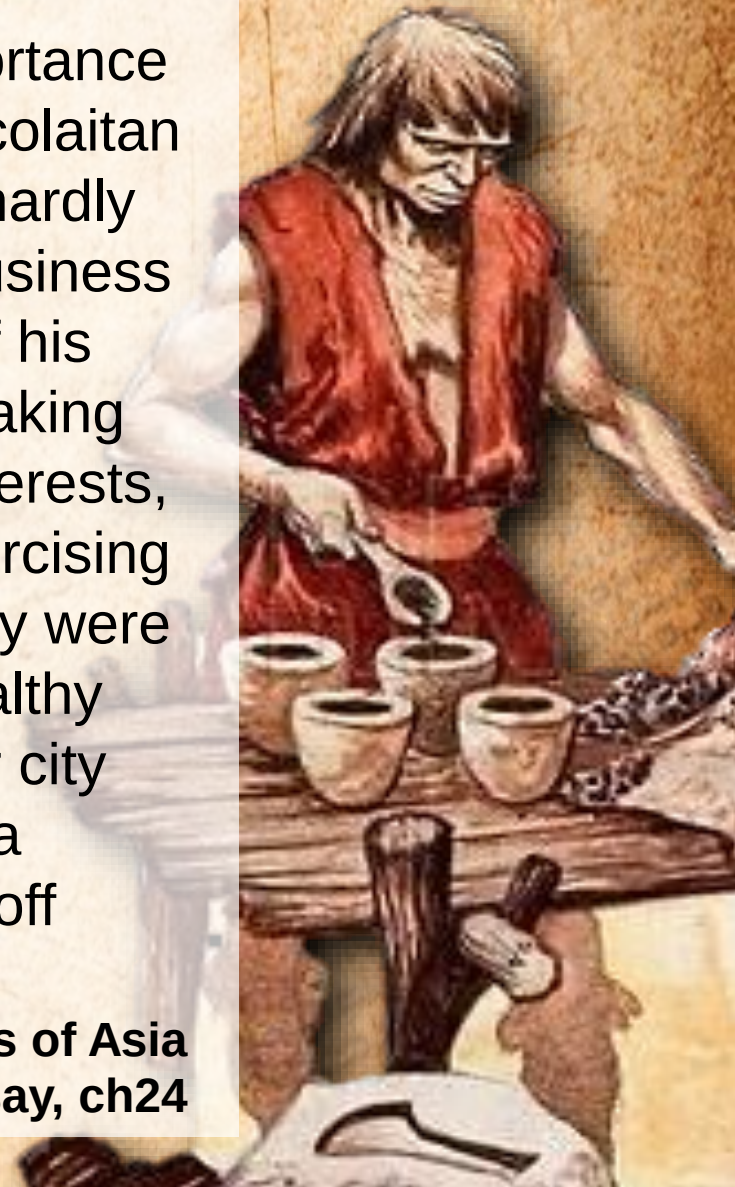
Bakers

The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia
W.M Ramsay, ch23

THE TRADE GUILDS

It may be regarded as certain that the importance of the trade-guilds in Thyatira made the Nicolaitan doctrine very popular there. It is certainly hardly possible for a tradesman to maintain his business in Thyatira without belonging to the guild of his trade. The guilds were corporate bodies, taking active measures to protect the common interests, owning property, passing decrees, and exercising considerable powers; they also undoubtedly were benefit societies, and in many respects healthy and praiseworthy associations. In no other city are they so conspicuous. It was therefore a serious thing for a Thyatiran to cut himself off from his guild.

The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia
W. M. Ramsay, ch24



PERGAMOS and THYATIRA

Characteristic	Pergamos	Thyatira
Idolatry and fornication present	v14	v20
Some are still faithful	v13	v24
Judgement by the word of God (Heb 4:12)	v12, 16 Sharp sword	v23 Discerns heart
Christ presents himself with weapons	v12 Sword	v27 Rod
A form of Satan	v13 Satan's seat	v24 Depths of satan
A command to Repent	v16 Repent or else	v21-22 Repented not
False Doctrine is being tolerated	v14-15 Balaam & Nicolaitanes	v20 Jezebel (in person)



LYDIA OF THYATIRA



Characteristic	Acts 16
Determined: given to prayer, despite a busy career	v13
Professional: a sales-woman, travelling internationally	v14
Faithful: responded to Paul's teaching with an open heart	v14
Responsive: was baptized immediately after instruction	v15
Influential: her whole household was baptized with her	v15
Hospitable: generously invited the brethren to her house	v15
Fearless: not afraid to be associated with 'prisoners'	v40

JEZEBEL OF THYATIRA



Characteristic	Reference
Determined: threatened Elijah with death	1Ki 19:2
Professional: wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them ...	1Ki 21:8
Unfaithful: practiced whoredom and witchcraft	2Ki 9:22
Unresponsive: refused to respond after 3½ years drought	1Ki 17:1
Influential: stirred up husband to work wickedness	1Ki 21:25
Hospitable: 400 prophets ate at her table	1Ki 18:19
Fearless: not afraid to persecute the prophets of God	1Ki 18:4

THE LETTER TO THYATIRA

¹⁸ And unto the angel of the ecclesia in Thyatira write;

These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

¹⁹ I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

²⁰ Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. ²¹ I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

²² Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. ²³ And I will kill her children with death;

and all the ecclesias shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts:

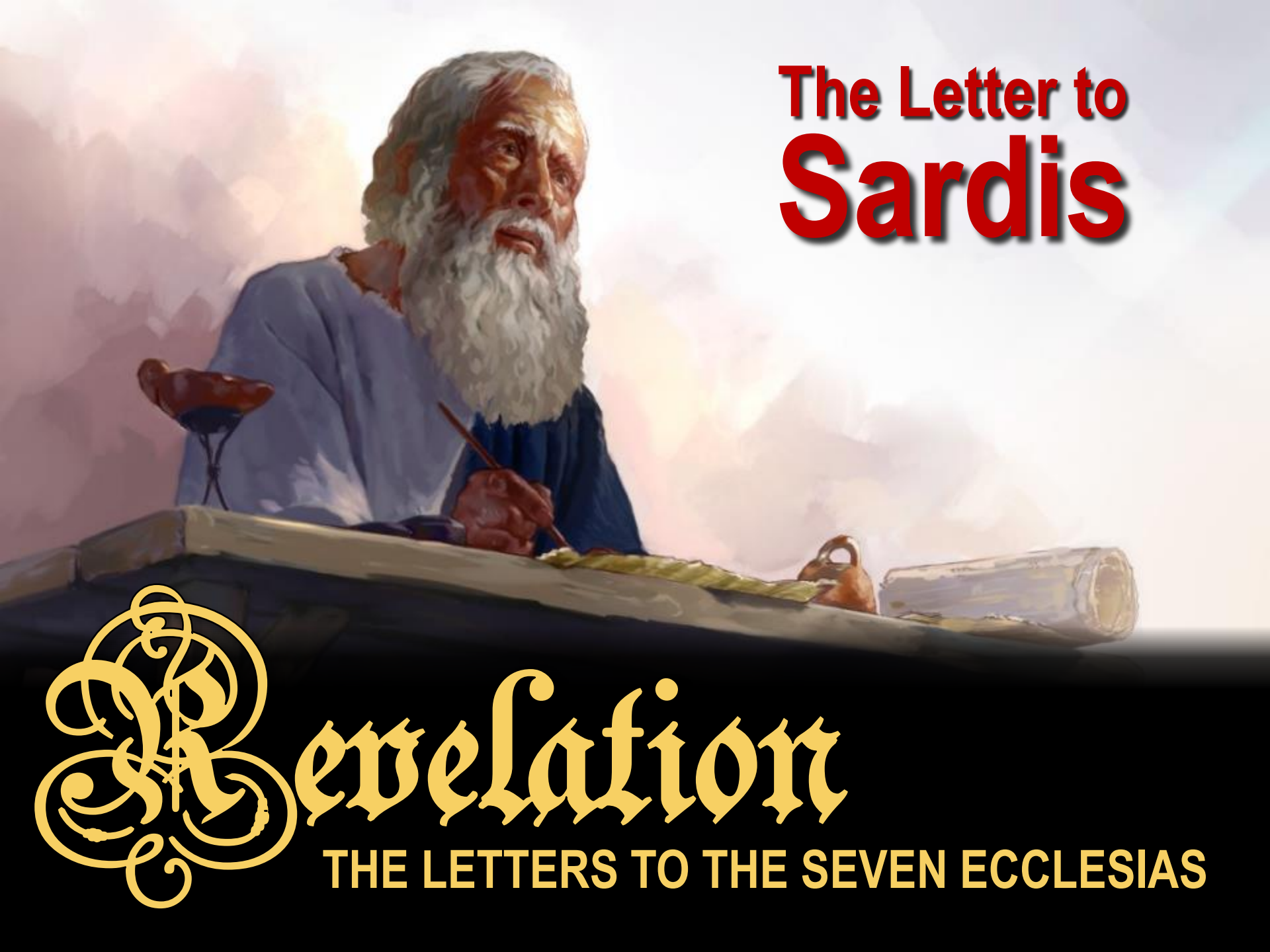
and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

²⁴ But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. ²⁵ But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

²⁶ And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: ²⁷ And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

²⁸ And I will give him the morning star

²⁹ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias.



The Letter to **Sardis**

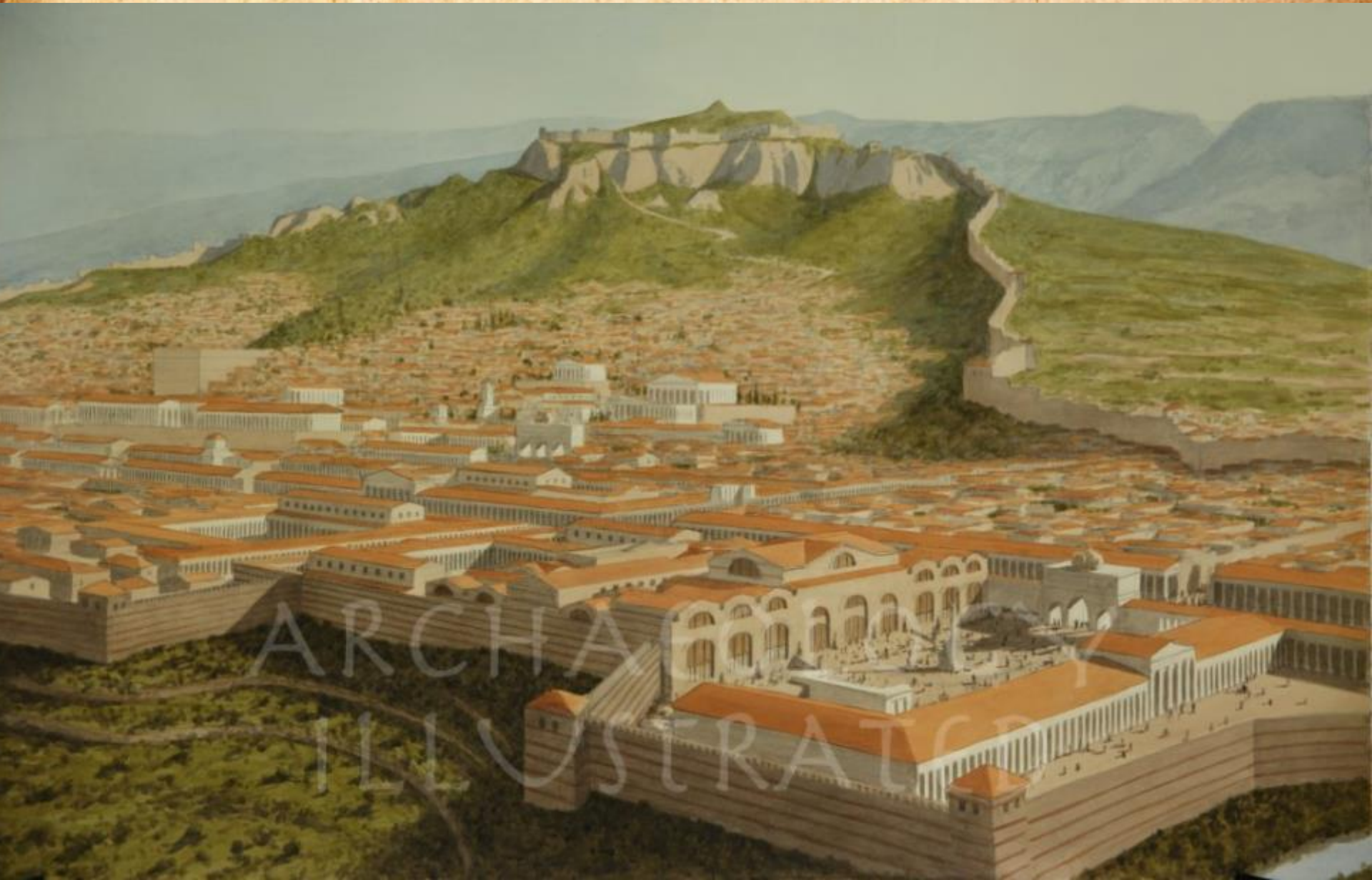
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SARDIS



SARDIS



KING MIDAS



Pactolus River



SARDIS



THE SARDINE STONE

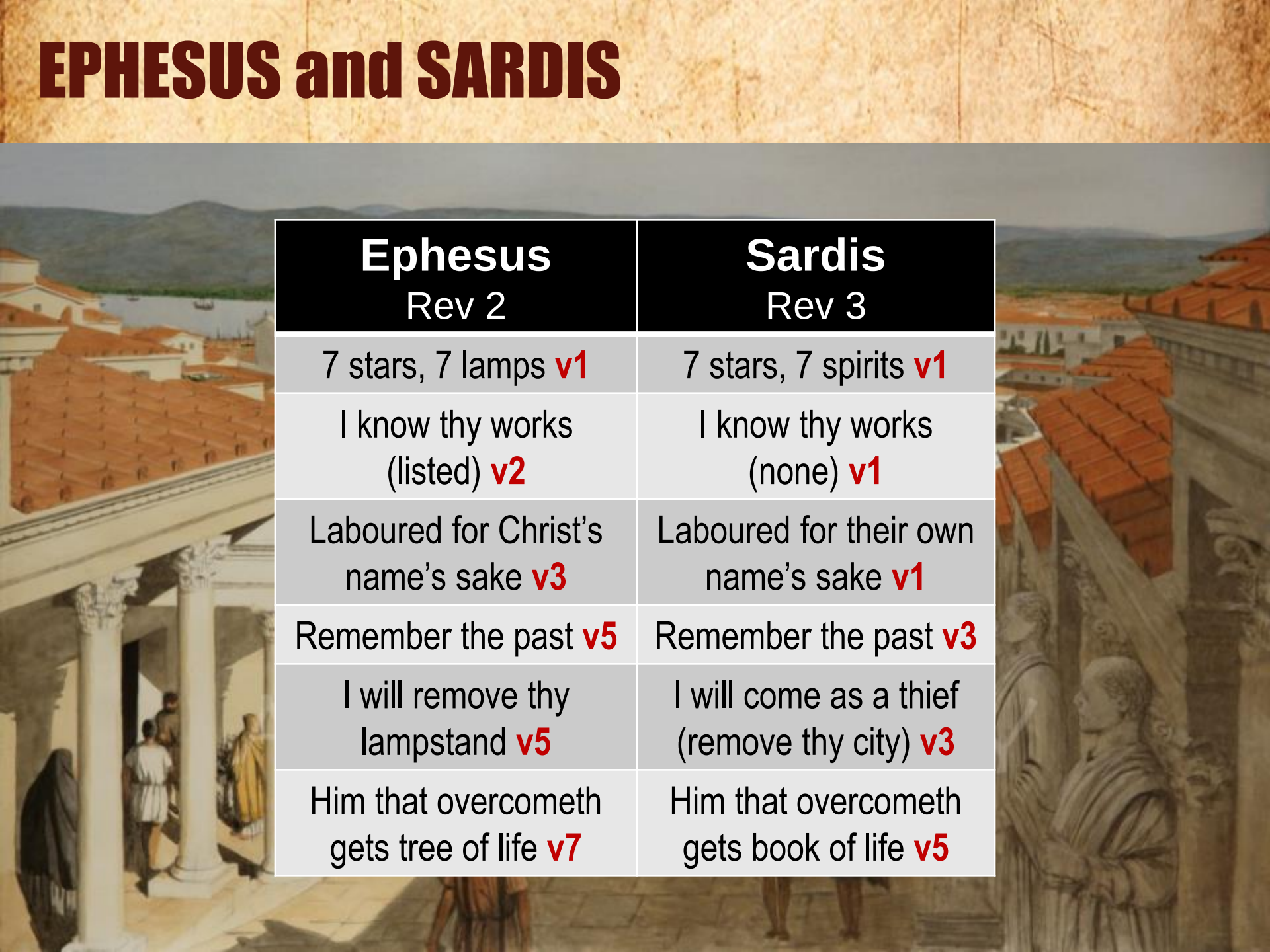


The sardine stone **Rev 4:3**

SARDIS



EPHESUS and SARDIS



Ephesus Rev 2	Sardis Rev 3
7 stars, 7 lamps v1	7 stars, 7 spirits v1
I know thy works (listed) v2	I know thy works (none) v1
Laboured for Christ's name's sake v3	Laboured for their own name's sake v1
Remember the past v5	Remember the past v3
I will remove thy lampstand v5	I will come as a thief (remove thy city) v3
Him that overcometh gets tree of life v7	Him that overcometh gets book of life v5

DEFILED GARMENTS

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do fade as a leaf ; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away

Isa 64:6



KEEPING OUR GARMENTS



OUTSIDE

How we appear to Others

Righteous

Unrighteous

Hypocrite

Unrighteous

Righteous

X

INSIDE

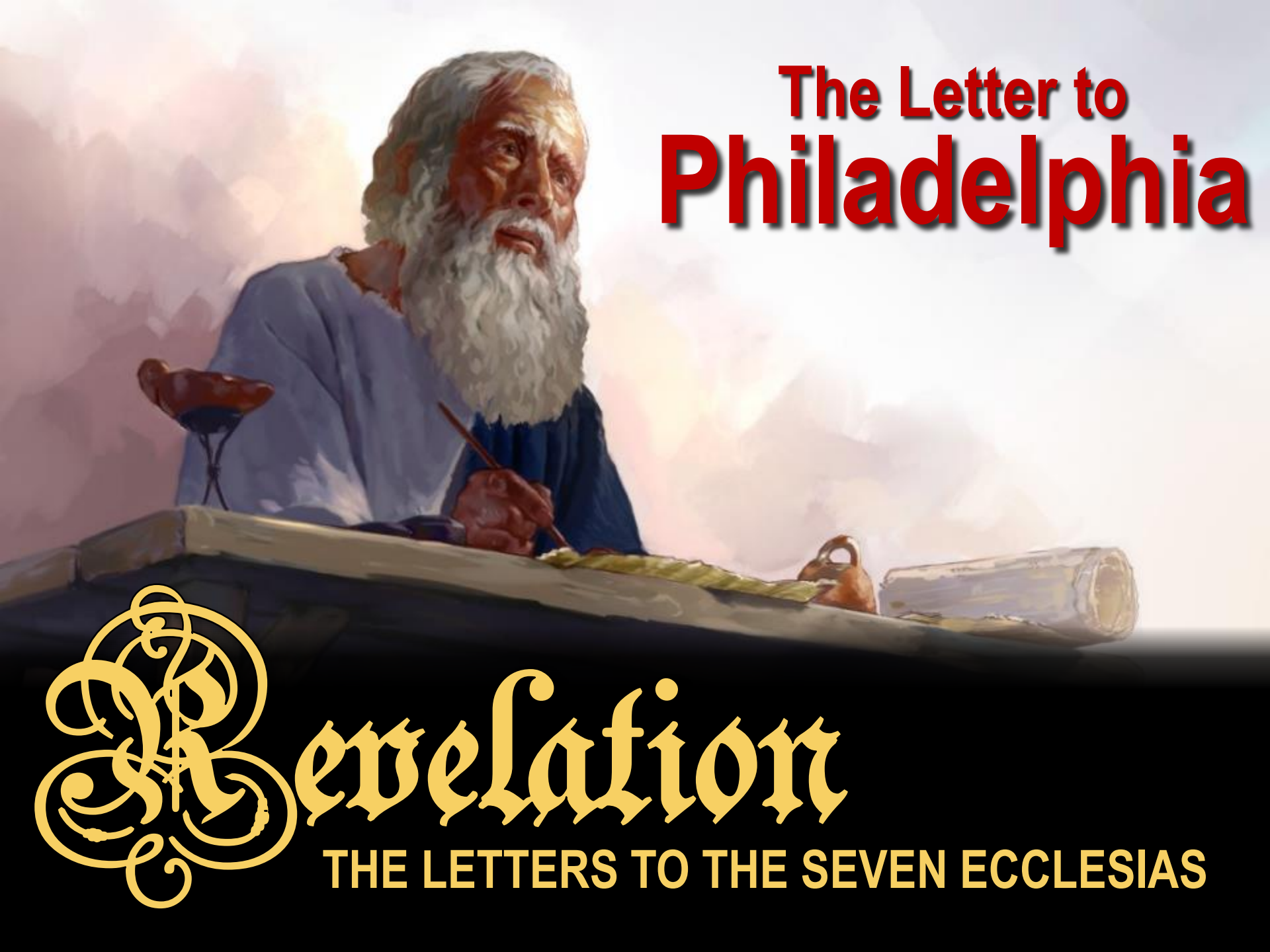
How we
appear
to God

Unrighteous

Righteous

THE LESSON OF SARDIS

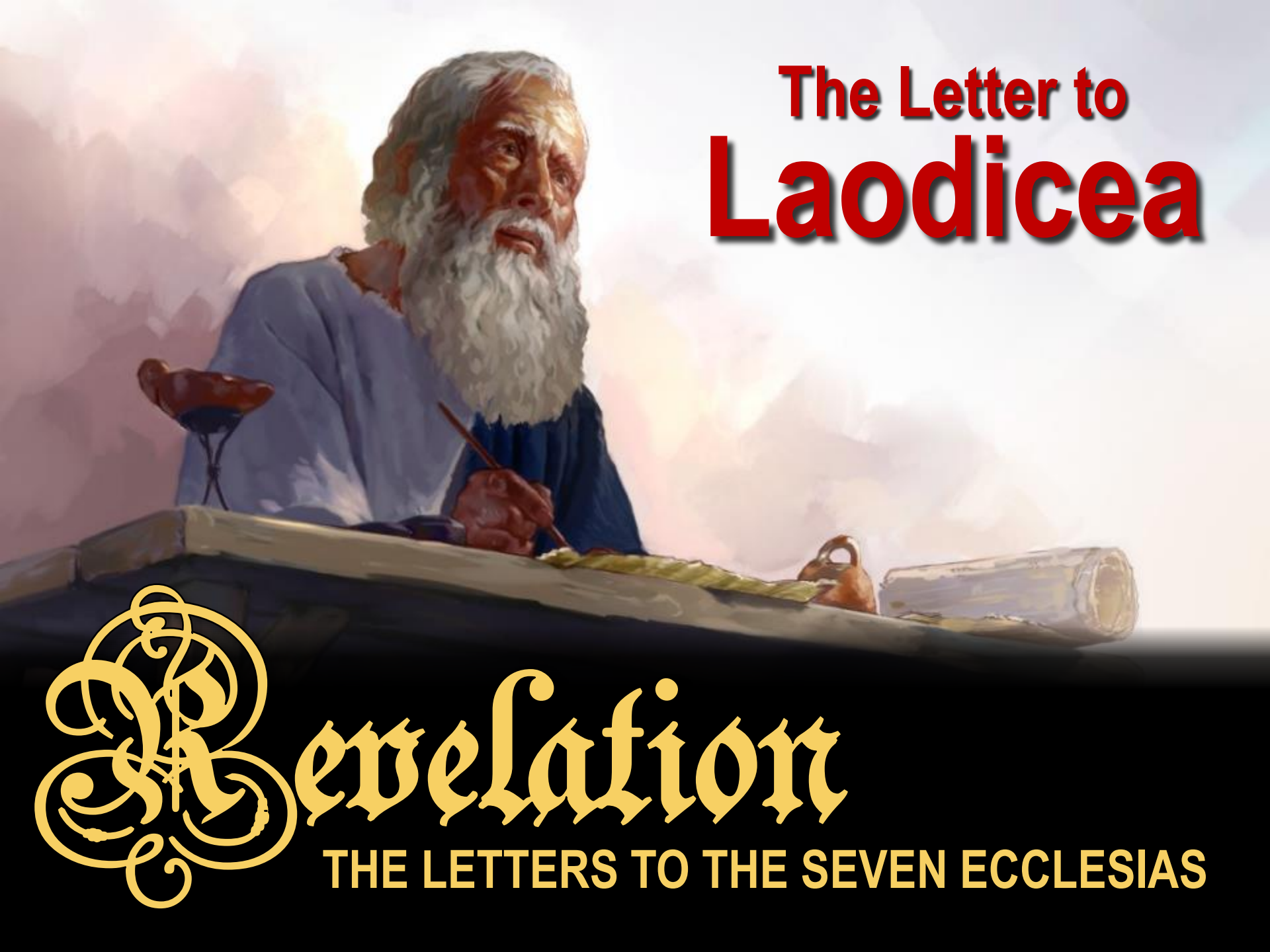
Sardis was the city of failure, the city whose history was marked by the ruin of great kings and the downfall of great military strength apparently in mid-career, when it seemed to be at its highest development. It was the city whose history conspicuously and pre-eminently blazoned forth the uncertainty of human fortunes, the weakness of human strength, and the shortness of the step that separates over-confident might from sudden and irreparable human disaster. It was the city whose name was almost synonymous with pretensions unjustified, promise unfulfilled, appearance without reality, confidence that heralded ruin. Reputed an impregnable fortress, it had repeatedly fallen short of its reputation, and ruined those who trusted in it.



The Letter to **Philadelphia**

Revelation

THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS



The Letter to **Laodicea**

Revelation

THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS

THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS



LAODICE

King of the North

Antiochus
Soter

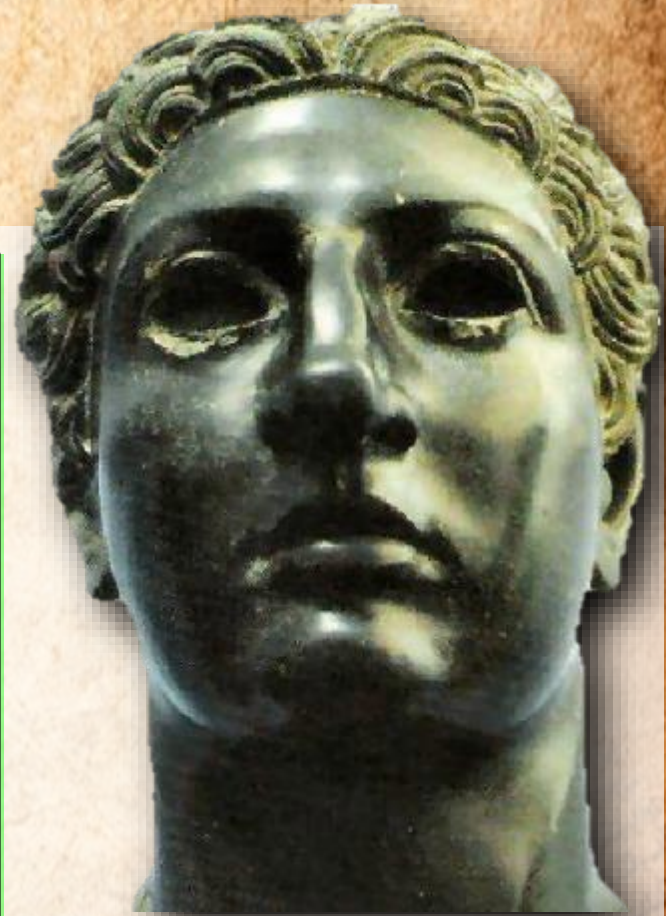
Laodice = Antiochus =
Theos

Callinicus (son)

King of the South

Ptolemy
Philadelphus

Berenice Ptolemy
Euergetes



For the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north (**husband of Laodice**) to make an agreement.

Dan 11:6

LAODICEA



LAODICEA



THE WARNING TO LAODICEA

Defile ye not yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you:

And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.

Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgements, and shall not commit any of these abominations: neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;)

That the land spue not out you also, when ye defile it as it spued out the nations that were before you.

Lev 18:24-28



LESSONS FROM COLOSSE

The Problem in Laodicea

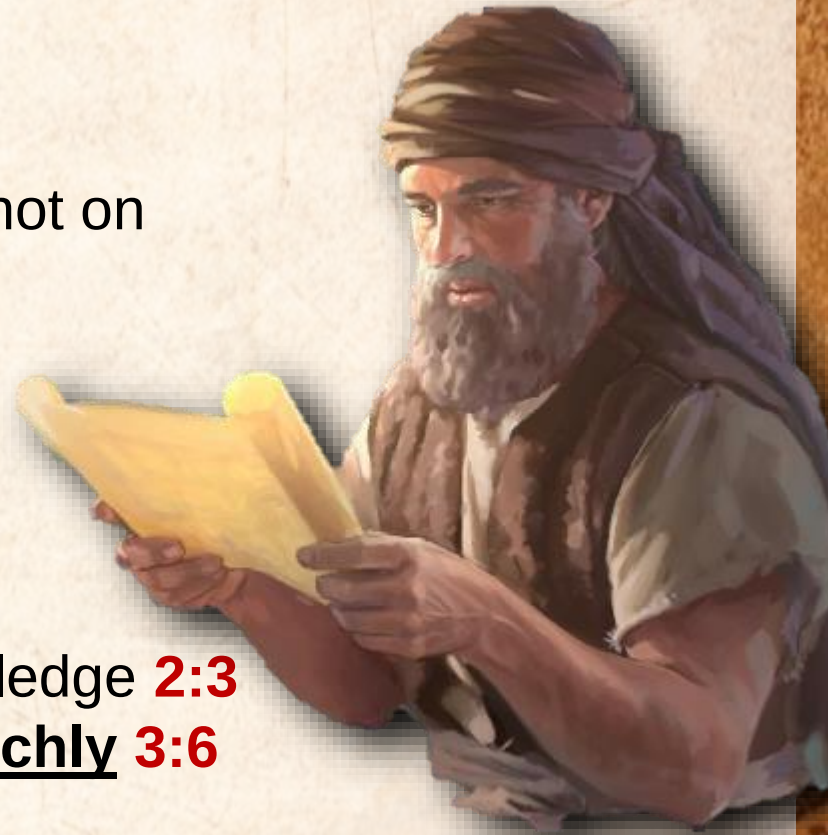
- Thou sayest “I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing” **Rev 3:17**

The Admonition in Colosse

- Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth **3:2**
- Covetousness is idolatry **3:5**

The Solution in Colosse

- The riches of his glory **1:27**
- The riches of ... understanding **2:2**
- The treasures of wisdom and knowledge **2:3**
- Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly **3:6**
- The reward of the inheritance **3:24**
- Beware lest any man spoil (plunder) you through philosophy or vain deceit **2:8**



AN OPEN DOOR



For where your **treasure** is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and **knocketh**, they may open unto him immediately.

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to **sit down to meat**, and will come forth and serve them.

Lu 12:34-37

