

Parallels between the Letters to the Seven Churches and Paul's Church Epistles

Epistles of Jesus (Revelation Chs. 2 & 3) and the Epistles of Paul

Ephesus

The Epistle to the Ephesians

Paul's letter to the Ephesians, written from Rome four years after his farewell, in Acts 20: 16-38, is a letter full of Paul's love for the church there but also urging them to be fully instructed in the profound doctrines of the gospel...and it closes with a focus on the love relationship between Christ and His church.

Smyrna

The Epistle to the Philippians

Paul's letter to the Philippians, written when in prison (probably during his house arrest in Rome), is a letter focussed on joy...and particularly joy through suffering. In it Paul writes that, for him to live is Christ and to die is gain – a message that would be appropriate to a suffering church.

Pergamos

The Epistle to the Corinthians

Paul's letters to the Corinthians, both probably written from Ephesus, are letters to a church which had become worldly, riven with divisions and immorality and unbecoming worship. In them Paul gives warnings to flee from idolatry and not to be yoked with unbelievers – a message that would be appropriate to a church married to the world.

Thyatira

The Epistle to the Galatians

Paul's letter to the Galatians, probably written from Jerusalem sometime before the council meeting (Acts 15), is a call out of religious externalism emphasising justification by faith and walking in the Spirit. Paul says that ritual (circumcision) avails nothing, but only faith working through love – a message that would be appropriate to a corrupt (medieval) church not living or walking by the Spirit.

Sardis

The Epistle to the Romans

Paul's letter to the Romans, probably written from Corinth on his third missionary journey, is a letter which is a definitive statement of Christian doctrine and the gospel. In it Paul gives a treatise on Israel's place in God's prophetic purposes – a message that would be appropriate to a church which had a replacement theology, typified by the denominational church.

Philadelphia

The Epistle to the Thessalonians

Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, both probably written from Corinth around AD51, are letters to a church which specifically addresses questions on Christ's second coming and the rapture. In them Paul gives many commendations and urges them to stand fast – a message similar to that in the letter to Philadelphia.

Laodicea

The Epistle to the Colossians

Paul's letter to the Colossians, probably written when under house arrest in Rome, is a letter warning against philosophy and empty deceit and against legalism and carnality (worldliness). In it Paul instructs the Colossians to pass the letter on to the church at Laodicea.

These parallels are interesting because they highlight that the author of scripture is the Holy Spirit, not John or Paul.