

1004 Seven churches in Revelation and ears can hear
(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified.)

In the book of Revelation, all seven churches say that we should have ears which can hear. In this short article, we'll briefly discuss the pros and cons of the seven churches. In short, we'll try to see the overall theme of the passage instead of a detailed look at individual verses.

First, let us notice in Revelation 1:1, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John." The book of Revelation is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We can see what the seven churches are in Revelation 1:11: saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." The seven churches' geographic locations are in Asia clockwise from Ephesus to Laodicea. In these seven churches, there is one sentence in common, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Refers to Revelation 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22) Yes, we must have an ear which can hear. In the Old Testament, does it say the same? Among them are these two verses, "...He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple." (Isaiah 50:4) and "To whom shall I speak and give warning That they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed And they cannot listen..." (Jeremiah 6:10)

First, let us take a look at the church of Ephesus, there are two good points: "I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary." (Revelation 2:2-3) "Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." (Revelation 2:6) It apparently says about the cons, "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 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 will remove your lampstand out of its place-unless you repent." (Revelation 2:4-5) Yes, we have to repent. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) Among them, there are overcomers as the verse says: "...To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God." (Revelation 2:7)

Secondly, it mentioned the church of Smyrna, and its pro is "I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." (Revelation 2:9) No con is mentioned, but instead there was encouragement. "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast 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." (Revelation 2:10) And apparently there are overcomers, "...He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death." (Revelation 2:11)

Next is the church of Pergamum. Its pro is, "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast 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." (Revelation 2:13) From this verse, we can see that Satan has a dwelling place and is not omnipresent. Thus, he has to roam about on the earth and walk around on it as Job 1:7 says. It also says in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." Its con is, "But I have a few things against you, because you have there some 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 acts of immorality. So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth." (Revelation 2:14-16) The crown of overcomers is, "...To him who overcomes, to him 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 but he who receives it." (Revelation 2:17)

Fourthly, the pros for the church of Thyatira, "I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first." (Revelation 2:19) "and "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 fast until I come." (Revelation 2:24-25) Its con is that they, "...tolerate the woman Jezebel...teaches and leads My bond-servants astray...and she does not want to repent of her immorality. ...And I will kill her children with pestilence, 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." (Revelation 2:20-23) The crown of overcomers is, "He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star." (Revelation 2:26-28)

The fifth church mentioned is in Sardis. The con is pretty big and there were even warnings. "...I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; ...So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore, if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you." (Revelation 3:1-3) The pro is, "But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." (Revelation 3:4) The price won by overcomers is, "He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." (Revelation 3:5)

Then the church in Philadelphia, which should be the one everyone has hopes for since "I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut." (Revelation 3:8a) From "because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name." (Revelation 3:8b), we can deduct that God is full of grace and mercy. In this church, there is no con but an encouragement instead, "...Behold, I have put

before you an open door which no one can shut, ...Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan ...come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you. Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown." (Revelation 3:8-11) And the overcomers get their rewards, "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name." (Revelation 3:12)

The seventh church is in Laodicea which needs to open its door. There is only cons. "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth." (Revelation 3:15-16) From the aspect in human: ...you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," (Revelation 3:17a) But it is totally different in the aspect of God, "...and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me." (Revelation 3:17-20) Even though this way, it still mentioned what overcomers can get, "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." (Revelation 3:21)

From the seven churches, we can see what Lord emphasizes. Among them repentance is mentioned several times. Finally, we use the verses in Luke 8:5-8 as our ending: "The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. Other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great." As He said these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Jesus tells us that we must have an ear which can listen and the sown seeds definitely must not fall into places which are not good. At least, they should fall into good soil.