① PATTERN W/IN ALL THE LETTERS

1. A command to "write" to the ἄγγελος (messenger/angel) of the church
- Some believe the ἄγγελος is the pastor or church Eldership
- others believe ἄγγελος in this context is speaking of the spiritual Realm of church
ἄγγελος: messenger/envoy
-one who brings a message
-the church, as one, is to deliver God's message

★ men and spiritual Beings are called ἄγγελος
① angel visited Joseph regarding Mary "ἄγγελος" Matt. 1:20
② "Behold, I send My "messenger" (ἄγγελος... speaking of John the Baptist) Before Your face who will prepare Your way before You" Matt. 11:10

② A Description of Jesus directly from the vision in Rev. 1
★ Each church gets a specific part of the vision of the "Son of Man" vision
- It seems each church is given a specific aspect of the vision...
★ that is directly related to what they are Going through
- And Relates to the purpose of the letter

- since each church is given an aspect to focus on in the Son of Man vision...
★ It is clear that Ch. 1-3 is one section/vision
★ The next section/vision is Ch. 4-7 indicated by μετὰ ΤΟΥΤΑ
- which follows a similar pattern
  - a vision of the Son of Man (on the throne)
  - Then the 7 seals descriptions spiritual & heavenly Events
★ Some scholars believe ch. 2-3 are explained in ch. 4-22
- in other words, the visions of 4-22 are symbolic parables of what the churches are going through
★ SO, Ch. 2-3 set the tone and are played out through the apocalypse

③ Jesus' knowledge of what each church is doing well -commendation
④ Jesus' command to repent of things not being done well -condemnation (except Smyrna and Philadelphia)
⑤ Consequence of not repenting
⑥ a command to "hear" if you have an ear to what Jesus is saying (Is. 6 fulfillment and allusion)
⑦ A Beautiful promise of Life to those who are "conquerers" over their temptations

② TO THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS (INTRO & PRAISE)

v.1 TO the angel of the church in Ephesus write...
- no doubt this hit home to John as it was his prior residence
- Also a very busy city as it was a port city as well

v.1 The words of Him who holds the seven stars in His right hand and who walks among the seven golden Lampstands
- clearly points back to ch.1 Son of Man vision
- To this church, they are to focus on the fact that:
① Jesus has the 7 stars
② Jesus is walking among their Church, which is to be a Lampstand
- There is a reason Jesus reminded them of this aspect of the vision
★ Each church is commanded to focus one are aspect of the vision
★ IT Typically relates to where they need repent or where their spirituals eyes need to focus

v.2 I know your works, your toil, and your patient endurance,
- this church has a lot of commendations and praise
- This is just the beginning
- They are doing great in a very difficult city and time
  - a ton of Paganism...
  - Temple of Artemis (Diana) "The Great Goddess"
    - A Goddess w/ multiple breasts symbolizing great fertility & control of childbirth
    - The Temple was massive and extravagant one of the 7 wonders of the world
  - Common feasts and festivals in her name and honor
★ The church "worked" through all of this toil and endured well

v.2 They could not bear w/ those who are evil
κακὸς: evil, morally sick
- This church held tight to purity
  - in a very impure environment
  - They did not compromise (like the Nicolaitans & Pergamos)

v.2 You have tested those who call themselves apostles, but are not and found them to be false/fake
- The church was commended for "TESTING" others
- They would "examine" others
πειράζω: TEST, examine, prove peirazo
- Paul warned the Corinthians about false christians and to be aware
"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ." 2 COR. 11:13
- They couldn't fool the church in Ephesus though (As they did the church of Pergamos)
- They "TESTED" all things
"TEST all things, hold fast to what is good" 1 Thes. 5:21
"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but TEST the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world..." 1 John 4:1
- This church was on guard of false Doctrine and kept it out!

v.3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for My names' sake
- notice this is the 2nd mention in 2 verses of their endurance
- No Doubt they were getting tired of false christians & demonic doctrine
★ They were bearing, labouring, and enduring... Jesus said keep it up!

③ One problem & CONSEQUENCE if LEFT UNREPENTED

v.4 Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love
- Now, what was their "first love"?
- the scripture does NOT say...
- The reader has some options:
① Jesus is their first love
- although a common thought, is this a reasonable conclusion?
★ They held to Jesus' teachings extremely well
"If you love Me, you will keep/abide in My words" John 14:24
"If you love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:15
- very hard to believe they did NOT love Jesus
② They lost their love for each other and/or unbelievers
"All will know you are My disciples by your love one for another" John 13:35
- The church's love for each other and love for others was a "light" to draw them to Jesus
- Their "light" and love was to be a lampstand to the world
★ This church DID GREAT IN TESTING and Examining others
★ however, it seemed to have made them cynical, unloving,
- and NO longer the "Light of Love" as the Lampstand should represent

- It is NO surprise then, why Jesus tells them to focus on
① Jesus having the 7 spirits
② They are the Lampstand that He is walking in the midst of
- NO other church is reminded they are a Lampstand
- NO other church is told that Jesus will remove their lampstand (if they do NOT repent... because their love is to shine)
★ Their love is to be evangelistic OR a witness to the world
- Later on, in another vision, there are "two witnesses" who are the two olive trees and the two lampstands" 11:4

- This Lampstand and Olive TREE verbiage and symbolism comes from the prophecy of Zech. 4 (mentioned in Rev. 1, 2 and 11)
  - There is a lampstand
  - w/ 7 lights on it
  - supplied/powered by the oil from two olive TREES
  - ★ The Temple (now the Believer and church) will burn bright...

"NOT by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit" Zech. 4:6

- This church had forgotten their source and strength of LOVE for others makes them the True LAMPSTAND to all nations

v.5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen, Repent and do the first works or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent
- Those among God's people who do NOT shine their light will have their lamps removed/put out.
"Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear... take heed what you hear... for whoever has, to him more light/knowledge/grace will be given, but whoever does not have much even what he has will be taken away" Mark 4:21-25 Luke 8:16-18
- according to church history and the writings of Ignatius...
- the church of Ephesus did repent and "rekindled their love and are good imitators of God..." Ignatius' Epistle to the Ephesians 1:1

★ Interestingly, their approval is quickly followed by another praise / commendation:

v.6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
- Notice, both the church & Jesus "hate" their deeds...
- and are commended for it
μισέω: strong dislike & hostility that leads to separation
-antonym is ἀγαπάω (love)... Deeds that lead to unity/oneness

"The Father loves Jesus because "He loves righteousness and hates lawlessness/wickedness" Heb 1:9
- The Nicolaitans & their deeds are hard to pinpoint...
- But most likely, they are:
  - a heretical group who
  - sacrificed to idols (more on this later)
  - okay w/ sexual immorality (possibly connected to Balaam)
  - compromised w/ pagan society
★ ALL while proclaiming Christianity
-they were even allowed in the church of Philadelphia

④ REQUEST TO "HEAR" & A PROMISE to the CONQUERER

v.7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches
- okay, this is beautiful and comes straight from the prophets (and continued by Jesus in the Gospels)

★ This phraseology has a ton of meaning behind it.
- The phrase starts from Isaiah 6, then warned by Jeremiah (5:21) then reminded by Ezekiel (3:27, 12:2) and last by Jesus (Gospels, Rev.)
- The background is Is. 1-5
  - obstinate & recalcitrant Israel
  - will NOT repent nor take correction
★ In God's final verdict parable of the disappointing vineyard, He says: God expected Good grapes, But got wild grapes. I did all I could do... I will destroy this vineyard (Israel) Is. 5:1-7
★ then the "woes" start (just like Rev.)
★ The Nation continues in sin & its consequence is deafness/blindness
★ They must Repent individually in their ♡ to hear/see
- To the seeker/remnant the parables are refreshing and "eye" opening
- To the rebellious & unrepentant, the parables make no sense... they won't seek, so they won't find (Him)

- Even so, now, the seekers will "get it"... their ears/eyes will hear/see/understand
- Those who don't seek, won't
"If you seek me w/ your whole heart, you will find Me" Jer. 29:13
- If you don't seek God, But another "IDOL" (ft fame, riches, another person, materialism, etc)
-You will become like an idol
"Your idols of silver and Gold, they have mouths, but can't speak, they have ears but can't hear, they have eyes, but can't see... those who have them are like them" Ps. 115:4-8 Ps. 135:15-18

★ THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE JESUS HAVE NO LIFE IN HIM

v.7 To him who overcomes/conquers (Temptation), I will give to eat of the TREE of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God
- TREE of life is available NOW
- People can even become "TREES of Life" (Rev. 22:2)
- Believers must conquer their temptations to eat of the TREE
★ The TREE of Life is Jesus
- we can enter the "Garden" OR "Paradise" of God now (The life-giving presence of God)
"Behold, the Tabernacle of God is now with men and He will dwell w/ them..." Rev. 21:3

"If anyone loves Me and Keeps My word; My Father and I will love him and We will come to him and make Our home in him." John 14:22

The miracle is NOT just that we can go to heaven when we die
BUT ALSO
-That God and heaven (TREE of Life/Paradise) can come TO US... NOW