

**SERMON:**

**Revelation 2:1-11**

**The Letters to the Churches**

**Part 1**

# **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

**The Revelation of John is a Christocentric book that shows us the pattern of this world from Christ's first coming to His second coming.**

**John wants us to see the spiritual realities around us, to recognize the dangers that face us, and to know that God is going to win.**

**Revelation calls us, then, to wisdom, to perseverance, and to worship.**

## **REVELATION 2:1-11**

*<sup>1</sup>"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. <sup>2</sup>"I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. <sup>3</sup>I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup>But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.*

## **REVELATION 2:1-11**

*<sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. <sup>6</sup>Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. <sup>7</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'*

## **REVELATION 2:1-11**

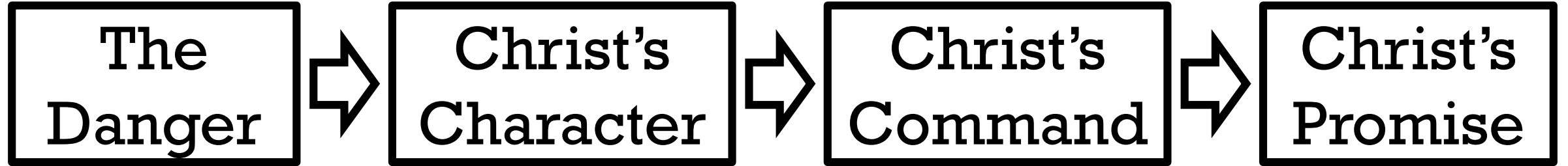
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**Proposition:** The letters to the seven churches call us to see the dangers in the world around us, to embrace Christ, and to follow His command, loving His promise.

# **THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS**

- **An introduction that highlights an aspect of Christ from chapter 1**
- **A warning about a danger that the church is going to face, something that could draw them away from Christ**
- **A command from Christ to resist the world's call**
- **A promise from Christ to those who overcome**

# THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS





**Proposition:** The letters to the seven churches call us to see the dangers in the world around us, to embrace Christ, and to follow His command, loving His promise.

- A. To the Church in Ephesus:  
the danger of loving doctrine
- B. To the Church in Smyrna:  
the danger of intense persecution
- C. To the Church at Gloria Deo:  
how do we face these dangers?

**TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS**

The Danger of Loving Doctrine

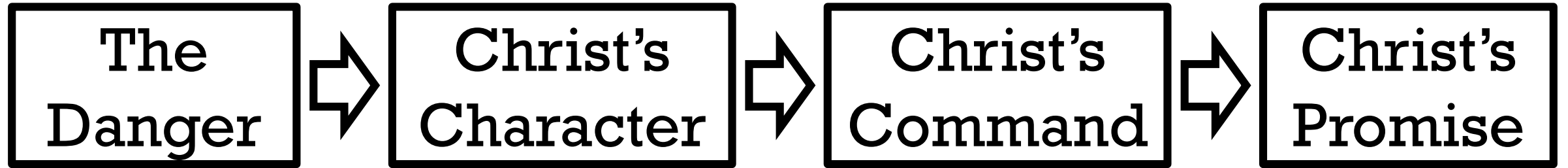
## **REVELATION 2:1-6**

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## **REVELATION 2:1-6**

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# **THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS**



**REVELATION 2:1-4** Danger: they stopped loving Christ + each other  
instead, they loved doctrine

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## **REVELATION 2:5-7**

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**REVELATION 2:1-4** How did they get here: they fought a long, hard battle with false, Christ-dishonoring doctrine

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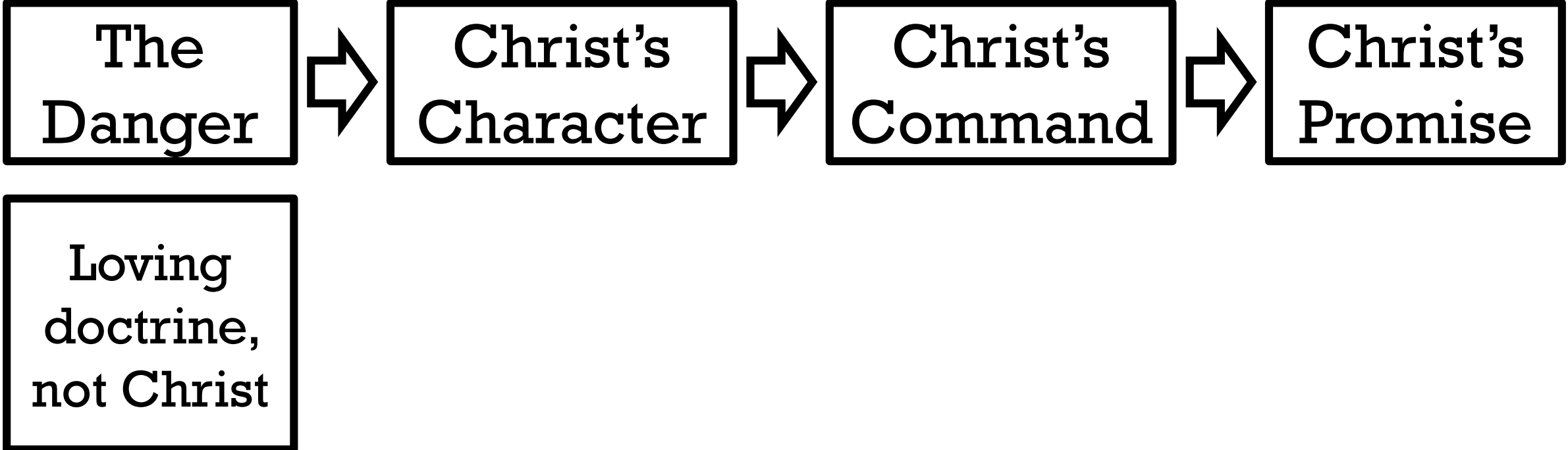
Holding right doctrine was good, BUT they came to love doctrine instead of loving Christ, they came to love being right instead of loving Christ



## **EPHESIANS 6:23-24**

*<sup>23</sup>Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.*

# THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS



# REVELATION 2:1

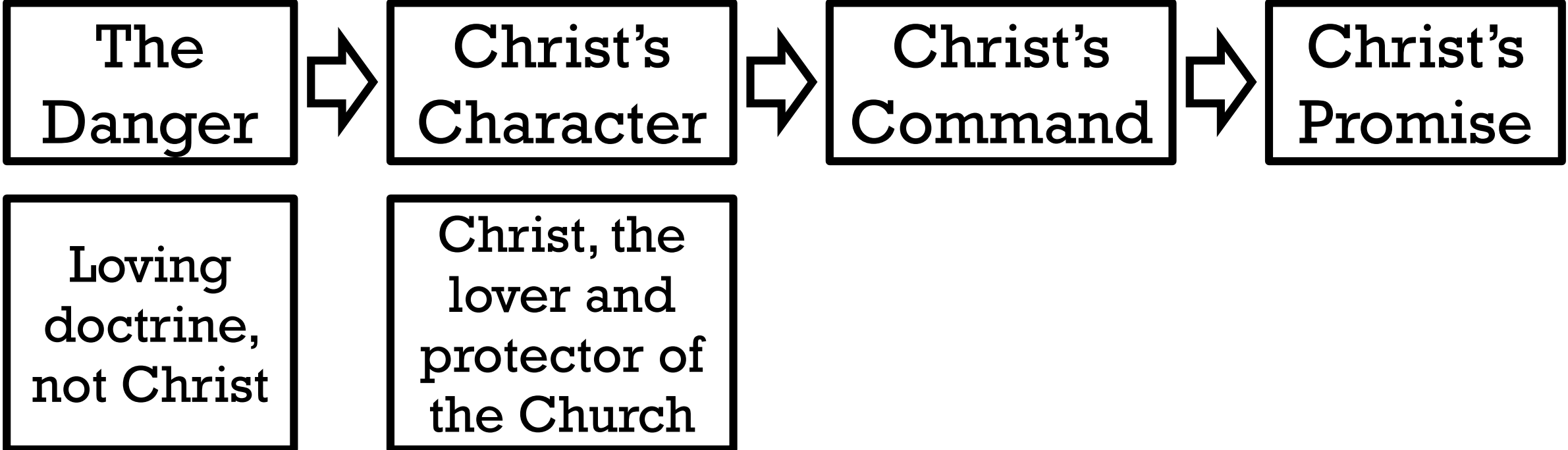
*1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.*

## The churches

- an intimate relationship – Christ the lover of the church
- a protecting relationship – Christ the guardian of the church

The church in Ephesus forgot that they weren't the protectors of the church – they got caught up in winning the battle over doctrine and made the battle supreme and forgot that doctrine was about loving Christ who loved them first

# THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS



## **REVELATION 2:5-7**

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# THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS

The  
Danger



Christ's  
Character



Christ's  
Command



Christ's  
Promise

Loving  
doctrine,  
not Christ

Christ, the  
lover and  
protector of  
the Church

Go back and  
remember  
Christ

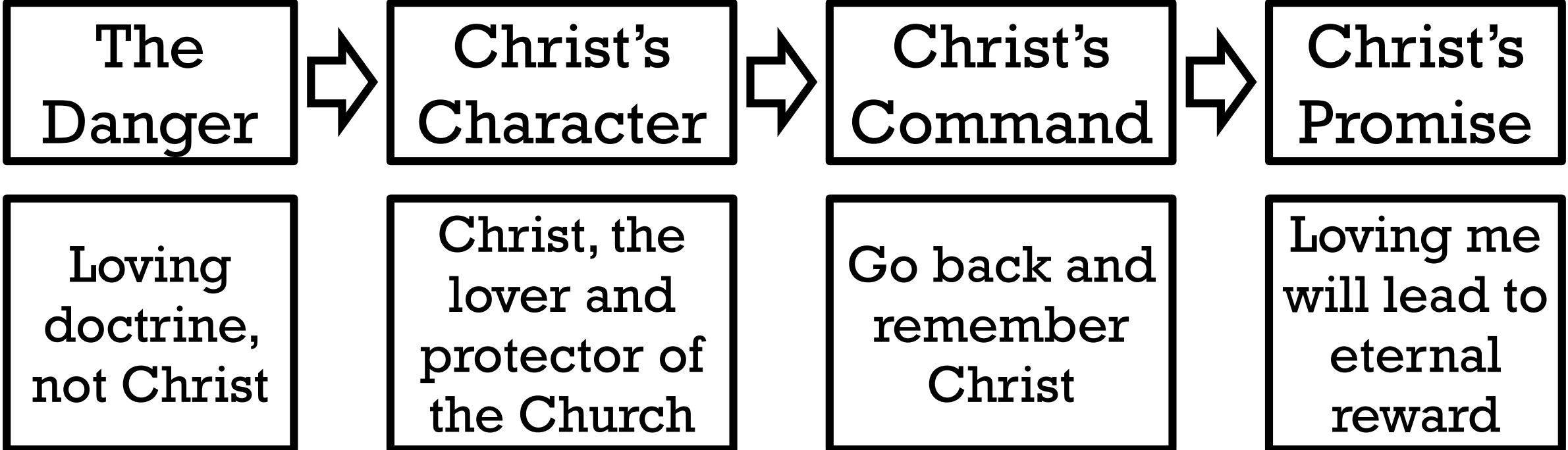
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**Real victory is loving Christ, not winning the war on doctrine**

**Real reward is joining Christ in paradise in eternity, not being right**

# THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS





**TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA**

The Danger of Intense Persecution

## **REVELATION 2:8-11**

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# THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS

The Danger



Christ's Character



Christ's Command



Christ's Promise

Ephesus

Loving doctrine,  
not Christ

Christ, the lover and protector of the Church

Go back and remember Christ

Loving me will lead to eternal reward

## **REVELATION 2:8-11**

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The Danger



Christ's Character



Christ's Command



Christ's Promise

Ephesus

Loving doctrine, not Christ

Christ, the lover and protector of the Church

Go back and remember Christ

Loving me will lead to eternal reward

Smyrna

Falling away during persecution

## **REVELATION 2:8-11**

the sovereign of life and death  
who has infinitely blessed you

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Christ's Character



Christ's Command



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Christ, sovereign over life and death

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The Danger



Christ's Character



Christ's Command



Christ's Promise

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Go back and remember Christ

Loving me will lead to eternal reward

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Falling away during persecution

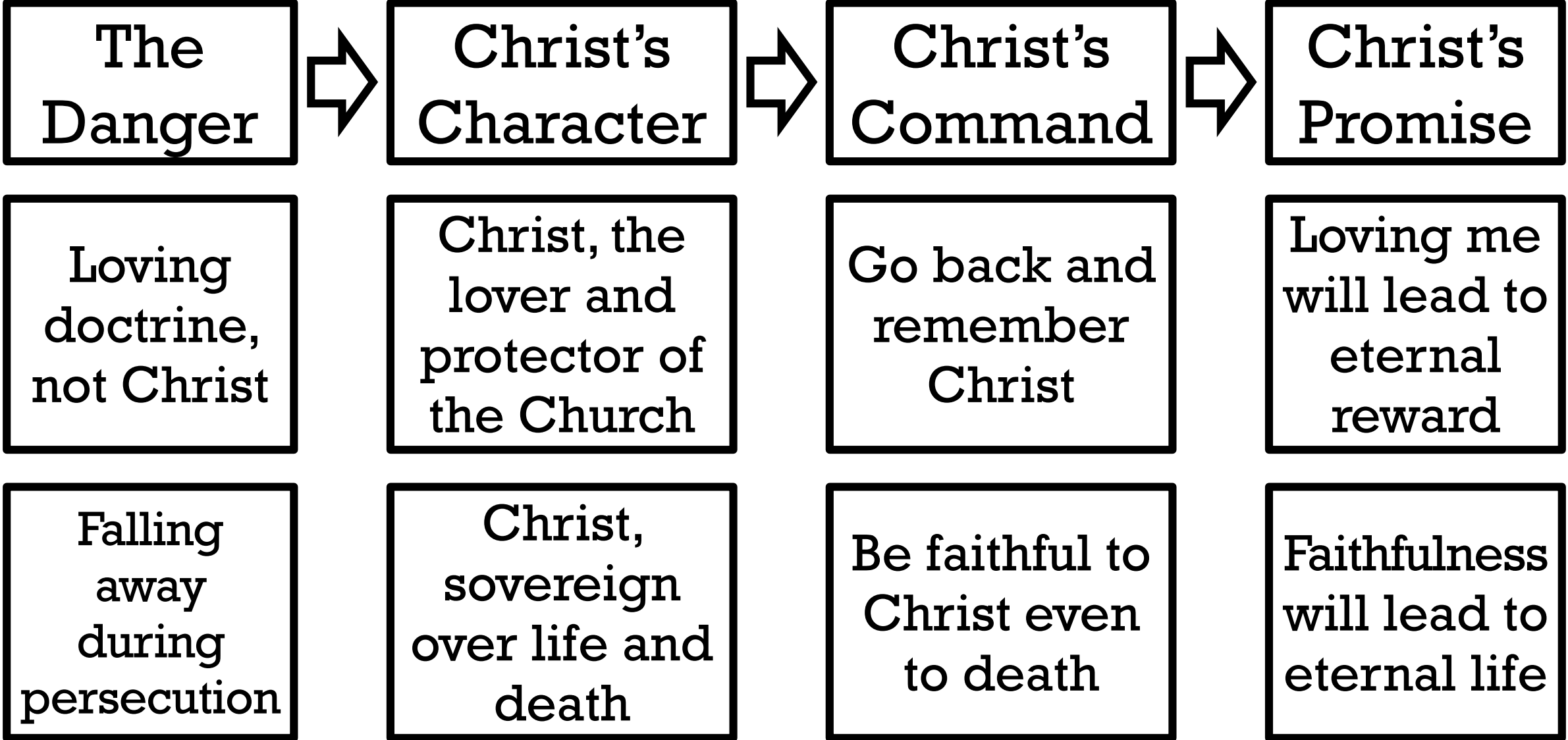
Christ, sovereign over life and death

Be faithful to Christ even to death

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# THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS



**TO THE CHURCH AT GLORIA DEO**

How do we face these dangers?

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# THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS

Heed

Embrace

Follow

Love

The Danger

Christ's Character

Christ's Command

Christ's Promise

Loving doctrine, not Christ

Christ, the lover and protector of the Church

Go back and remember Christ

Loving me will lead to eternal reward

Falling away during persecution

Christ, sovereign over life and death

Be faithful to Christ even to death

Faithfulness will lead to eternal life

Ephesus

Smyrna



# **LOVING DOCTRINE INSTEAD OF CHRIST**

- A danger that appears when we are faced with increasingly aggressive false doctrine around us
- A danger that could look like:
  - Loving the victory (“being right”), not loving those with whom we disagree
  - Growing increasingly defined by our pet doctrines
  - Looking down on others who don’t share all of our particular convictions
  - An unending search for “like-mindedness”
  - A heart increasingly focused on being proved right, and decreasingly focused on loving Christ and others



# **LOVING DOCTRINE INSTEAD OF CHRIST**

- How do we guard ourselves from this?
  - Remember and remind each other of Christ's love and protection – He is the victor, not us
  - Remember and remind each other that our goal is Christ, not victory in this world
  - Love doctrine for how it drives your love for Christ, not for how it proves you right
  - Expend more energy in loving others in Christ than proving yourself right about Christ

# **FALLING AWAY DUE TO PERSECUTION**

- A danger that appears when the world increasingly hates us and wants to remove or defang us
- A danger that could look like:
  - Loving something in this world (your family, your land, your house, ...) and being afraid/unwilling to lose it
  - A desire to hide your affiliation with Christ to make life easier
  - Being willing to compromise the truths of Scripture, the truths of Christ, to conform to the desires or decrees of this world

# **FALLING AWAY DUE TO PERSECUTION**

- How do we guard ourselves from this?
  - Remember and remind each other that Christ has won the final victory and nothing in this world can defeat us
  - Keep our eyes on the riches of Christ and set aside the “wealth” of this world
  - Challenge each other when love for the things of this world creeps in and support each other when living in Christ proves costly
  - Call each other to value the commands of Scripture more than the decrees of this world

# THE PATTERN OF THE SEVEN LETTERS

Heed

Embrace

Follow

Love

The Danger



Christ's Character



Christ's Command



Christ's Promise

Ephesus

Loving doctrine, not Christ

Christ, the lover and protector of the Church

Go back and remember Christ

Loving me will lead to eternal reward

Smyrna

Falling away during persecution

Christ, sovereign over life and death

Be faithful to Christ even to death

Faithfulness will lead to eternal life

**Proposition:** The letters to the seven churches call us to see the dangers in the world around us, to embrace Christ, and to follow His command, loving His promise.

- A. To the Church in Ephesus:  
the danger of loving doctrine
- B. To the Church in Smyrna:  
the danger of intense persecution
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how do we face these dangers?

KIDS' QUESTION:

## WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF REVELATION?

Revelation tells us that <sup>(1)</sup> the world is the enemy of God and <sup>(2)</sup> that God wins.

KIDS' QUESTION:

## WHAT IS THE CALL OF REVELATION?

Revelation call us to <sup>(1)</sup> keep following  
Christ and <sup>(2)</sup> to worship Him forever.

KIDS' QUESTION:

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF REVELATION?

To <sup>(1)</sup> show us the truth of Jesus, <sup>(2)</sup> call us to trust in Jesus' victory, and <sup>(3)</sup> call us to keep following Jesus.



KIDS' QUESTION:

# WHAT TRUTHS ARE CENTRAL TO REVELATION?

Revelation is based on <sup>(1)</sup> God's sovereignty, <sup>(2)</sup> God's gospel, <sup>(3)</sup> God's power, and <sup>(4)</sup> God's victory.

## KIDS' QUESTION:

**WHERE DO WE NEED TO KEEP OUR EYES  
WHEN WE HAVE TROUBLE IN THIS WORLD?**

We must keep our eyes on the glory  
and the authority of Jesus  
and know that He is going to win.

**KIDS' QUESTION:**

**HOW DO WE DEFEAT THE  
DANGERS OF THIS WORLD?**

By keeping our eyes on Christ, following  
His command, and loving His promise.