

Revelation

Chapter 2 – Jesus Letters to His churches

Revelation

The Chief-Shepherd who walks among the
lampstands can accurately judge the
thoughts and intents

Luke 18:8 – “. . . when the Son of Man
comes will He find faith on the Earth?”

Revelation

1 Pet 4:17 – Judgment has begun with the House of God (church compromises and closures – tear down to build up)

Revelation

Jesus is also refining His church - Ephesians 5.

“ . . . Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.



TURKEY

- PERGAMOS
- THYATIRE
- SARDIS
- PHILADELPHIA
- SMYRNA
- EPHESUS
- LAODICEA

- Edirne
- Istanbul
- Gebze
- Kocaeli (Izmit)
- Sakarya (Adapazarı)
- Bursa
- Ereğli
- Samsun
- Çorum
- Sivas
- Kayseri
- Konya
- Kahramanmaraş
- Adana
- İçel (Mersin)
- Gaziantep
- Malatya
- Elazığ
- Şanlıurfa
- Antioch
- Iskenderun

Mediterranean Sea

GREECE

GREECE

CYPRUS

The Seven Churches of Revelation



Four Levels of Application

1. Local: Actual churches in John's day with
The actual problems described
2. Universal (correction): “to the churches”
3. Personal (homiletic): 'he that hath an ear”
4. Prophetic: lays out church history

Seven Letters - Structure

1. Name of the church
2. Title Jesus Uses
3. Commendation – what’s good
4. Concern – what’s bad
5. Exhortation – what to do
6. Promise to the Overcomer - unique
7. “He that hath an ear, let him hear”

7 Churches

Why seven? Biblically speaking, seven represents fullness or completeness.

These seven churches, then, are representative of every church out there.

7 Churches

Why these **particular** seven cities?

Why not: **Antioch**, Paul's hometown

Alexandria: largest **library** of world

Jerusalem: birthplace of church?

Rome: largest collection of saints?

Name of Church	Title of Christ	Represents	Commendation (Good News)	Condemnation (Bad News)	Exhortation (what to correct)	Promise to the Overcomer	The Closing
Ephesus (Desired One)	Jesus as High-priest	Apostolic (Pentecost-100 AD)	Works, patience, righteousness	Left first love	Repent/turn from it	Eat from Tree of Life	“He who hath an ear”
Smyrna (myrrh-death)	The eternal one	Persecuted (100-313 AD)	I know your works, persecution, poverty	none	remain faithful	no second death	
Pergamos (mixed marriage)	Bringer of truth	Unequally yoked (314-590 AD)	Kept the faith	Doctrine of Balaam and Nicolaitans	Repent/turn from it	Eat hidden manna, white stone, new name	
Thyatira (Continual labor/sacrifice)	The Judge	Medieval Church (590-1517 AD)	Good works, love, service, faith, patience	will go into tribulation	Repent/turn from it	Power over nations, rule with Christ	
Sardis (remnant)	Omniscient One	Reformation Church (1517-1700)	None	You are dead	Be watchful, strengthen, repent	Name not blotted out, confess before my Father	
Philadelphia (Brotherly Love)	Holy and true One	Missionary Church (1700-1900 AD)	Openly confess the Word and the Incarnation	none	None/hold fast	pillar in temple, new name, kept from tribulation	
Laodoea (Rule of the People)	Faithful and true witness	End-times Church (1900-today)	None	Lukewarm, wretched, naked, poor, blind	Be zealous, repent	Sit with me on my throne	

Revelation 2:1

Unto the **angel** of the **church** 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 candlesticks**;

Ephesus

Ephesus: now called Kusadasi in modern day Turkey. It contains one of the great ruins anywhere on the planet.

Ephesus

World-famous as a religious, cultural, and economic center of the region. Ephesus had the notable temple of Diana, a fertility goddess worshiped with immoral sex.



Temple of Diana

Supported by 127 Ionic columns, each towering 60 feet tall, it covered an area 130 x 60 yards, making it four times larger than the Parthenon in Athens, Greece.

From a *religious* standpoint Ephesus was the center of the worship of Diana.

Diana was the most sacred goddess in the civilized ancient Greco-Roman world and the temple to Diana was one of the Seven Wonders. It was constructed of Persian marble – 425 feet long, 260 feet wide. Rested on 130 columns standing 60 feet high: 37 columns of which were embellished with gold and jewels.

Ephesus

“The Temple of Artemis was also a major treasury and **bank** of the ancient world, where merchants, kings, and even cities made deposits, and where their money could be kept safe under the protection of deity.”

Ephesus

Ephesus was known for its amphitheater, the largest in the world, designed to hold up to 50,000 spectators.

Ephesus

“Ephesus was a **stronghold of Satan**. Superstitions and satanic rites were practiced. Books containing formulas for sorcery and other ungodly and forbidden arts were plentiful in that city.”

Ephesus - Harbor

It had the greatest *harbor* in Asia Minor at the time but over the years was filled in by silt from the Cayster River.

Four great *highways* led into Ephesus: one from the north from Pergamos and Smyrna; one came from the northeast from Sardis, Galatia, and Phrygia; one came from the southeast from the Euphrates by Colossi and Laodicea; and one from the Meander Valley in the North. Everything converged in Ephesus. It was called the “Market to Asia.”

Ephesus

Politically, it was a free city which meant Rome gave Ephesus the right of self-governing. No Roman troops were stationed there, it had its own independence. (and a sanctuary for criminals)

Ephesus

Financially it also was the bank of the Mediterranean. The big business was selling idols. The worship in the Temple of Diana was a kind of hysteria: drunkenness, sexual deviation, thousands of temple prostitutes, self-mutilation.

Ephesus Timeline

32 A.D. – Church born on Pentecost

36 A.D. – Damascus Road Conversion

55 A.D. -- Paul plants church at Ephesus
on 2nd Missionary journey.

63 A.D. -- Paul writes to the Ephesians

Ephesus Timeline

64 A.D. – Paul writes to Timothy now
pastoring at Ephesus

95 A.D. – Jesus writes to Ephesus

431 A.D. – Council of Ephesus

Ephesus

The Council of Ephesus, held in AD 431, was the third of the Ecumenical Councils, after Nicea in 325 and Constantinople in 381. The Council of Ephesus was primarily concerned with the doctrine of **Nestorianism**, though it also denounced **Pelagianism** and re-affirmed the Nicene Creed.

Ephesus Timeline

Priscilla/Aquila discipled Apollos (Acts 18:24–26).

Timothy had his first pastorate (1 Timothy 1:3).

John 19:26–27 -- Jesus on the cross tasks John with caring for his mother **Mary**. John leaves Patmos and goes to Ephesus where he does indeed care for Mary until her death.

Ephesus

Acts 19:1-7 – Disciples of John the Baptist

Acts 19:8-12 – Great Miracles

Acts 19:13-16 – Sons of Sceva

Acts 19:17-22 – Mighty Growth

Acts 19:23-35 -- Idol-makers riot

Acts 20 – Paul's farewell to the Elders

Ephesus

When John was released from exile on Patmos he went to Ephesus, 60 miles from that prison Island. He's the last living apostle and the patriarch of the era in the church. Pergamos was the actual capital but Ephesus was the greatest city. It was called the "Light of Asia."

Paul's Epistle to Ephesus

chapter 1:15-23

chapter 3:14-21

prayers that God
would enable
believers to
understand their
resources in Christ.

Ephesians

4:1 – “walk” – worthy

4:17 – “walk” – no longer as Gentiles,
futile/mind

5:2 – “walk” – in love (self-sacrifice)

5:15 – “walk” – wise (souls), making the
most of your time

Ephesians – chaps 5-6

wives: subject to their husbands

husbands: love (self-sacrificially) your wives

children: obey your parents

fathers: don't provoke, raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord

employees: serve as unto Christ (Col. 3:17)

employers: don't threaten (abuse your authority)

Ephesians

Chapter 6

The Spiritual Warfare

Revelation 2:2

“I know your **deeds** and your **toil** (labor) and **perseverance** (patience), 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

“I know your **deeds** – ” **kopos** – labor “to the point of exhaustion. They weren’t lazy or indifferent; they were busy. They were giving everything they had – teaching, loving, giving, sharing, proclaiming the gospel, ministering to one another for the sake of Christ.

Revelation 2:2

perseverance (Gr. : hupomon), “to remain under.” Same as “abide” – hupo, under. This is courageous spiritual living which accepts hardship, suffering, persecution, loss. This is an attitude that will not be beaten down or extinguished: it endures. They were persistent; hard-working, relentless even in the midst of a godless culture.

Revelation 2:2

“You cannot tolerate evil men”. They were sensitive to the presence of evil and they took action against it. They recognized the damage that sin does to the fellowship and the testimony. They saw that sin in the church destroys both the unity and the testimony of the church. They knew that a little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Revelation 2:2

“You put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false.”

This is a church with discernment which came from the knowledge of the truth. You have to have the truth in order to see the error.

Ephesus

They were taught by Aquila and Priscilla.

They were taught by Apollos. They were taught by Timothy and Tychicus, Paul and John. They were a well-taught church. Their theology was so sound that they could literally measure anyone against the truth and expose error.

Acts 20:27

Paul to Ephesians: “for I did not shrink back from declaring unto you **the whole counsel** of God”.

Satan is always trying to infiltrate churches.

The Ephesian church took the warning seriously. Apostle Paul went on to say in

Acts 20:28-30,

“Pay careful attention to **yourselves** and to **all the flock**, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

Acts 20:28-30 - continued

“for I know that after my departure, grievous wolves **are going to** come in, not sparing the flock; and of your own selves, perverse men **are going to** rise up speaking twisted things in order to **draw away disciples for themselves.**”

Paul “committed them to the word of God, which is able to build you up.”

Revelation 2:3

“and you have **perseverance** and have **endured** for my names sake, and have **not grown weary**.

It was the zeal and steadfastness of the first century saints in Ephesus that caused the gospel to spread throughout the known world of that day.

Romans 1:8 – First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ [a]for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the world.

1 Thess. 1:8 – For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place the news of your faith toward God has gone out, so that we have no need to say anything.

Revelation 2:4

“BUT . . . I have this against you, that you left your first love.

The word order in the Greek text is emphatic,

“your first love you have left”

Ephesians 6:24

“Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with *incorruptible love*.

Gr. – aphtharsia: love toward Christ which is **sincere and undiminishing** (same used of our resurrection bodies elsewhere – never fading/corrupted)

Ephesus was a church of great “works” but sometimes a focus on working for Jesus becomes a substitute for abiding in Jesus (that love relationship with Him).

The Ephesian church was a doctrinally pure church but sometimes a focus on doctrinal purity will make a congregation cold and divorced from the grace of God. We must always remember that he who has been forgiven much – loves much.

The Ephesian Christians began well but many of them now were second-generation believers. When Paul wrote them 35 years prior to Revelation he began in chapter 1 verses 15-16 by stating the he “never stopped giving thanks for them because of their faith in Christ and love (agapen) for the saints. Thirty-five years later Jesus Himself is warning them they had lost that love and they were in danger. So Jesus commands them in verse 5 . . .

Ephesians

What plagued the Ephesus church in Rev. 2?
They had left their first love - no longer
absorbed with Christ, no longer preoccupied
with Christ.

Ephesians

Christian life is all about loving Christ, it's all about knowing Him deeply (Phil. 3:8) and tapping into the resources and when comprehend what He's fully done for you, you will possess an undeniable love response."

Ephesians

2 Cor. 3:18 - And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into *the same image* from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

“knowing” Christ results in “reflecting” Christ.

Lost There 'First Love" (Is that . . .)

1. love for God
2. **love for the brethren**
3. love for the lost?

The fact they still loved God is evidenced by
the "abundant works" done FOR God

John's follow-up epistles focus so much on
love for the brethren (particularly 1 John 4)

1 John 4:9-11; 4:16; 4:19-21

Col. 3:12-14; 1 Cor. 13:4-8

Galatians 5:22-23 – the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,
peace,

Revelation 2:5

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.

This falling from ones “first love ”was not only true of the first century church at *Ephesus* – it was equally true of *Old Testament Israel*.

Jer 2:2 “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the LORD, “I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.

1 John 4:7-16

“Love” is the very nature of God Himself. If we are united with God thru faith in Christ we then share His nature. Since God's nature is love, love is then the test of the reality of our spiritual life.

Deuteronomy 6:5

“and he said to him, “You shall **love** the Lord your God with **all** your heart and with **all** your soul and with **all** your mind.

John 4:24 states that God is “*Spirit*”,
in (1 John 1:5) God is “*light*”, and in

I John 4 God is “*love*”. God is so
vast and incomprehensible that love
alone does not define God, but

God certainly defines love.

Since God is love and since we claim to be in a personal relationship with Him then our lives must reflect His *character and nature* and that means loving God and loving others.

Revelation 2:6

“yet this you do have,
that you hate the deeds
of **the Nicolaitains**,
which I also hate.”



The name itself comes from the
Greek words

Nicao: Conquerors over,

Loas: the people (or the laity)

This statement seems to link to verse 2
regarding those claiming to be
Apostles but are not.


Those who “claimed” apostolic
supremacy and some type of unique
or special spiritual authority.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Jesus claimed to be the Chief-Shepherd and the One who walked among the lampstands but these men invaded first-century churches trying to usurp God's divine authority over His churches. They claimed divine powers and even false miracle-working.

This is nothing new. Satan is a counterfeiter. He worked through Pharoah's magicians to counterfeit some of Moses miracle and in the Tribulation it will happen again with lying signs and wonders.



Peter describes such Nicolaitanes as “false teachers” brings “destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. They claimed special spiritual insights into the things of God even to the degree that the people must follow them in order to get to God.

Revelation 2:7

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

Paradise of God

Genesis 3:24

Revelation 22:1-2

Paradise

A return to Eden and eternal life,
An important promise to a church
threatened with the removal of
Jesus' presence. It is also the effects
of the curse being rolled back in our
own lives.