

Apostolic Church History

*7 Churches Map

*7 Letter Chart

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CHURCH	DATE (APPROX.)	MEANING OF NAME	COMPLAINT	COMPLIMENT	PROMISED REWARD
EPHESUS	A.D. 31–100	Desirable, Lovely	Lost first love	Hate deeds of Nicolaitans	Tree of Life
SMYRNA	A.D. 100–313	Sweet fragrance, Myrrh	None	Rich in good works	Crown of Life, Escape second death
PERGAMOS	A.D. 313–538	Height, Elevation, “By marriage”	Tolerance of Baalism, idolatry, and immorality	Not denied Christ’s name or faith	Hidden manna, White stone, New name
THYATIRA	A.D. 538–1500s	Perfume of labor, Sweet savor of sacrifice	Tolerance of “Jezebel,” idolatry, and immorality	Good works, love faith, and patience	Power over the nations
SARDIS	A.D. 1500s–1790s	Those escaping or remaining	Dead works	A few are not defiled	White raiment, Book of Life
PHILADELPHIA	A.D. 1790s–1840s	Brotherly love	Little strength	Kept Christ’s Word; Not denied Him	Kept from the hour of trial, Pillar in temple, Name of God
LAODICEA	A.D. 1840s–Second Coming	Judging of the people or a just people	Lukewarm experience, Spiritually poor, blind, and naked	None	Sit with Christ on His throne, Sup with Christ

1st Century

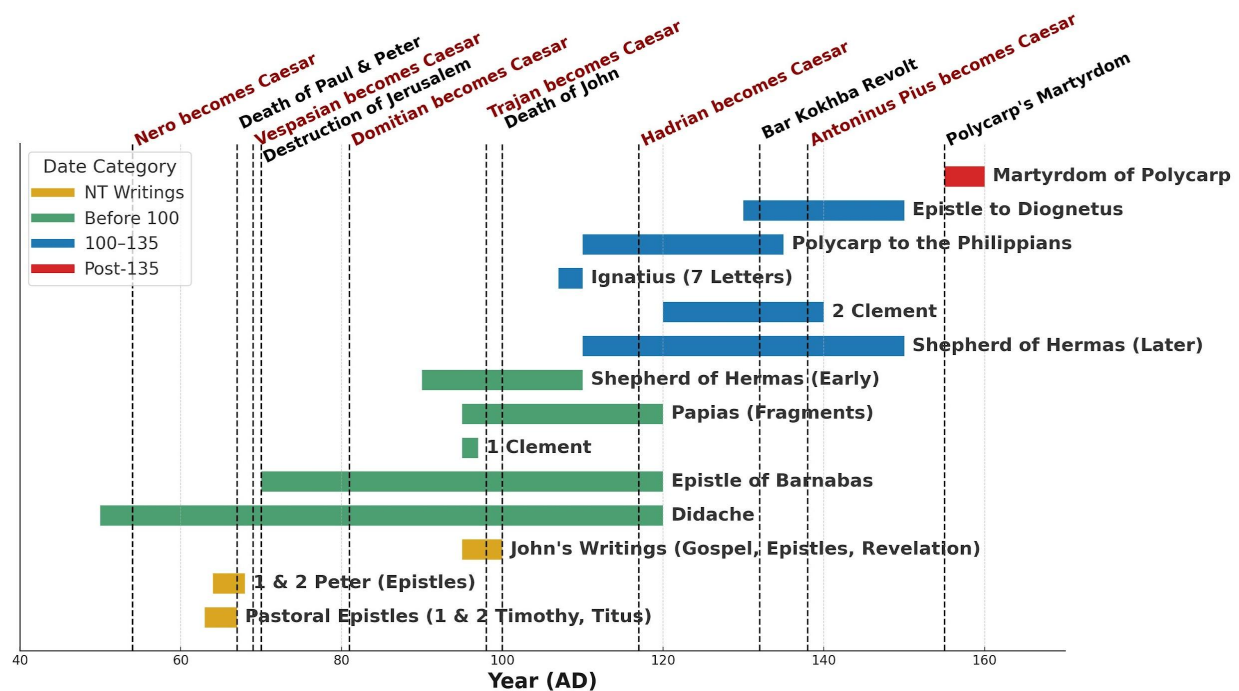
- The Didache — AD 45–120
- Nero becomes Caesar — AD 54
- Paul Meets Nero — AD 63–64
- Nero burns Rome, Christian persecution begins — AD 64
- 1 & 2 Peter & Pastoral Epistles — AD 64–68
- Death of Paul & Peter — AD 67
- Vespasian becomes Caesar — AD 69
- Destruction of Jerusalem — AD 70
- Epistle of Barnabas — AD 70–120
- Domitian becomes Caesar — AD 81
- 1 Clement — AD 95–97
- Papias (Fragments) — AD 95–120
- John’s Writings (Gospel, Epistles, Revelation) — AD 95–100
- Shepherd of Hermas (Early portion) — AD 90–110

2nd Century

- Trajan becomes Caesar — AD 98

- Death of John — AD 100
- Ignatius of Antioch (7 Letters) — AD 107–110
- Hadrian becomes Caesar — AD 117
- Polycarp to the Philippians — AD 110–135
- Shepherd of Hermas (Later portion) — AD 110–150
- 2 Clement — AD 120–140
- Epistle to Diognetus — AD 130–150
- Bar Kokhba Revolt — AD 132-135
- Antoninus Pius becomes Caesar — AD 138
- Martyrdom of Polycarp — AD 155

*Apostolic Timeline



“The church of Ephesus”

- Acts 18:24-28, Acts 19, Acts 20:17-38
- The book of Ephesians
- 1 & 2 Timothy
- Revelation 2:1-7

“He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands”

“I know your works, your labor, your patience,”

Labor = kopos(κόπος) intense labour united with trouble and toil, “to work to the point of perspiration”

patience = hypomonē(ὑπομονή) steadfastness, constancy, endurance

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“and that you cannot bear those who are evil”

Acts 19:19 — Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.

We could use a modern-day “book burning”. -Pornography, foul movies and music, idols...

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“And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars”

Acts 20:28-31 — “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. “Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. “Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Ephesians 1:15-16 — Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

Ephesians 3:14 & 17-19 — For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

1 Timothy 1:3 — As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

1 Timothy 6:20-21 — O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.

2 Timothy 4:1-5 — I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

This was a church to be proud of.

Modern day “Apostles”

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“and have not become weary.”

“They labored to the point of weariness, yet with no weariness setting in. Their loyalty to the Lord preempted weariness.”

*meme- Child: “Daddy, do your hands hurt?” Father: “Son, are you hungry?” Child: “No, sir.” Father: “Then no, son—my hands are fine.”

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“Remember”

-Present Active Imperative Verb

-"Keep on remembering"

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“or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.”

The lampstands represent the churches. (1:20)

It either means that:

-1) Their church will dissolve

-2) Their church will lose their witness

-3) Their church will no longer be “a church”

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“you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”

Who are the Nicolaitans?

-1) Indulgent followers of Nicolas (Acts 6:5)

-2) A play on words: Nikos/Nikao (To Conquer) + Laos (The People)

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“He who has an ear”

These teachings are directed to every individual.

“let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”

The Church is made up of many churches, which is made up of many individuals.

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“To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

Revelation 22:14 — Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

The love of God is a salvation issue.

-It is not HOW MUCH you love Him, but that you do indeed love Him.

Matthew 7:21-23 — “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

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EARLY CHURCH LEGALISM:

Acts 15 ≠ Legalism

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“See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop.

...It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to hold a love-feast; but whatever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid."

Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans 8.1–2

"It becomes both men and women who marry, to form their union with the approval of the bishop, that their marriage may be according to the Lord, and not according to lust."

Ignatius to Polycarp, 5.2

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Only 1 "major sin" can be forgiven after baptism/conversion.

"For those who have already believed, and have been baptized, and have received the seal, there is no repentance for their sins, but only for those who have not believed. For this cause it was said that there is one repentance."

Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate 4.3.6

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Mandatory Fasting

"But let not your fasts be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and the fifth day of the week; but do your fast on the fourth day, and on the preparation [Friday]."

Didache 8.1

"When you fast, you shall taste nothing but water; and reckon up the amount of the day's food, and give it to the widow, the orphan, or the poor."

Barnabas 3.10

Why Legalism?

Genesis 3:2-3 NKJV — And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

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A Response:

Galatians 3:3 — Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

What day should we worship?

-Romans 14:5 — One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

What can we eat?

Romans 14:14 — I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

Romans 14:19 & 21 — Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.... It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.