



The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST

Chapter 2:1-7

“Church of Ephesus: The Apostolic Church (1st Century)”

Jesus said in Revelation 1:19-20 - *Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.*

- A “mystery” in Scripture is a previously hidden truth now divinely revealed. The number “seven” is a sacred number to the ancient Hebrew people. *Seven* is used often in the Bible to symbolize *perfection, fullness, abundance, rest, and completion*. This number was also considered holy or sacred by other cultures of the ancient world.

- C.I. Scofield yields thought provoking insight to this mystery, he writes, “The messages to the seven churches have a fourfold reference:

(1) LOCAL, to the churches actually addressed;

(2) ADMONITORY, to all churches in all time as tests by which they may discern their true spiritual state in the sight of God;

(3) PERSONAL, in the exhortations to him “who has an ear,” and in the promises “to him who overcomes;” and

(4) PROPHETIC, as disclosing in two areas the phases in the spiritual history of the church:

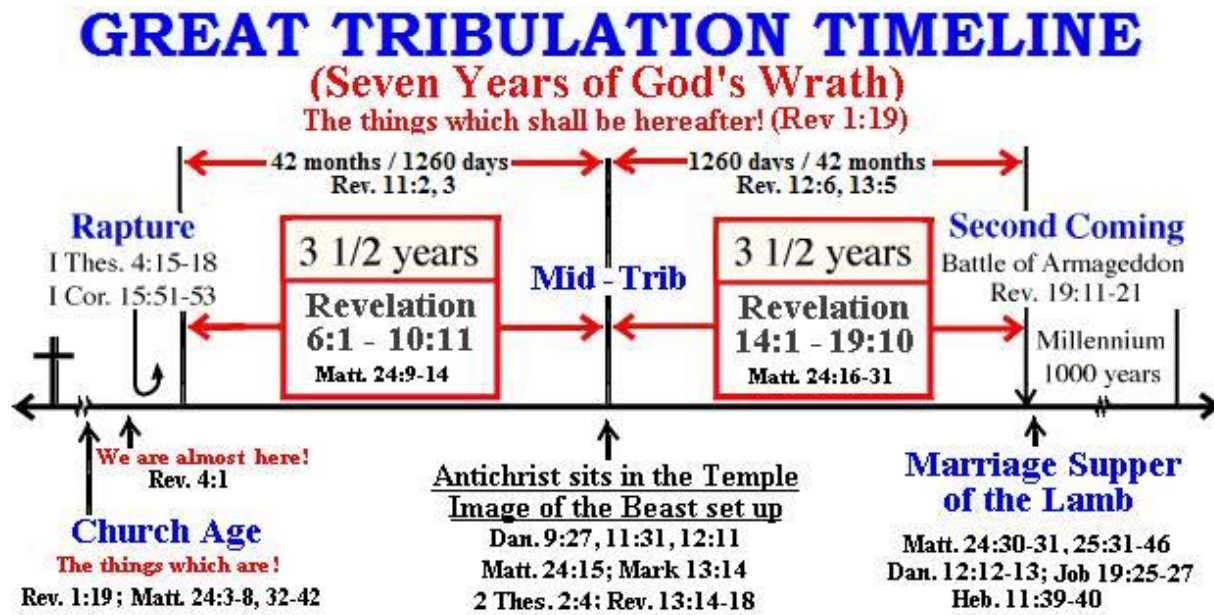
(a) a pattern that has been repeated again and again through the centuries; and

(b) the progress of its spiritual state until the end of the Church Age.”

- The “church” is mentioned nineteen times from chapters 1 through 3, in chapters 4 and 5 we find the church in heaven. We know this from chapter 4:1 where it says, “after these things” twice, after what things, after the things of the church age on earth, also in chapter 5:9-10 we find the church in heaven worshipping the Lamb of God, which is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

– Revelation 5:9-10 reads - *And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”*

- In Revelation chapters 6 through 19 we read about the seven years of Tribulation upon the earth. The church is raptured before this horrible time of judgment.



We, the body of Christ, the church, are comforted with the truth found in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 - For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 - For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

And to the church of Philadelphia according to Revelation 3:10 - Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

The verb “keep” is followed by a preposition whose normal meaning is “from” or “out of”—this phrase, “keep you from” supports the pretribulation rapture of the church (see notes on Jn 14:1-3; 1Co 15:51, 52; 1Th 4:13-17). This period is the same as Daniel’s 70th week (see notes on Da 9:24-27) and “a time of trouble for Jacob” (see notes on Jer 30:7).

- Each of these seven churches can be framed with HISTORICAL reference:
(2:1-7) Ephesus - The Apostolic Church (1st Century)

(2:8-11) Smyrna - The Martyr Church (A.D. 100 – A.D. 314)

(2:12-17) Pergamum - The Worldly Church (A.D. 314 – A.D. 590)

(2:18-29) Thyatira - Church of the Dark Ages, “Romanism” (A.D. 590 – A.D. 1000 - continues today)

(3:1-6) Sardis - The Protestant Church, “Reformation” (A.D. 1517 – A.D. 1800)

(3:7-13) Philadelphia - The Revived Church (A.D. 1800 to Rapture)

(3:14-22) Laodicea - The Apostate Church (Last Days & into the Great Tribulation)

- Let us begin to unfold the *mystery of seven stars and golden lampstands*:

Lampstands - These were portable gold lampstands that held small oil lamps. The seven lampstands representing seven churches (1:20), from which the light of life shone. Throughout Scripture, seven is the number of completeness, so these seven lampstands are representative of all the churches; past, present, and future.

- Before we read our passage let us discover the birth of the church at Ephesus. Ephesus was an inland city three miles from the sea, but the broad mouth of the Cayster River allowed access and provided the greatest harbor in Asia Minor. Four great trade roads went through Ephesus; therefore, it became known as the gateway to Asia. It was the center of the worship of Artemis (Greek), or Diana (Roman), whose temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Paul ministered there for three years (Ac 20:31) and later met with the Ephesian elders on his way to Jerusalem (Ac 20). Timothy, Tychicus, and the apostle John all served this church. John was in Ephesus when he was arrested by Domitian and exiled 50 mi. SW to Patmos.



- Ephesus video - Let us read Acts 18:18 – Ch. 19

> **THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS (Revelation Ch. 2:1-7)**

– **“The Apostolic Church” (1st Century)**

(v1-3) *the angel* - The word lit. means “*messenger*.” Although it can mean angel—and does throughout the book—it cannot refer to angels here because angels are never leaders in the church. Most likely, these messengers are the seven key elders representing each of those churches, to the *elder or pastor from the church*.

~ Here we find seven words of **COMMENDATION**:

(1) **“I know your works”**- The word *know* in Greek is “*oida*” and refers **to complete and full knowledge; of their works;**

(2) **“I know your labor”** – Speaks of a **continuous, exhaustive dedication;**

(3) **“I know your patience”** – A **perseverance in trying circumstances;** for over 40 years, since its founding, this church had remained faithful to the Word and the Lord.

(4) **“I know that you cannot bear with those who are evil”** – They practiced church discipline upon those who were evil.

(5) **“I know that you have tested and identified the false apostles”** - They were **dedicated to the truth, sound doctrine;** - Acts 20:26-31 - *Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. 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.*

(6) **“I know that you labored for My name’s sake”** – They sought to preach **Christ deity, crucifixion, and resurrection;**

(7) **“I know that you have not become weary”** – A **tireless church!**

(v4-5) **One statement of CONVICTION:** – **“You have left your first love”** – Notice they did not lose their first love; **they left their first love!**

- **The CAUSE:** Lack of priority, apathy, compromise, carelessness, indifference to others, cynical, judgmental, self-righteous, selfish, prideful, jealous, envy, immorality, love of the world, the eyes, and the flesh.

(Man-Movement-Machine-Monument)

- **The CURE: (3 steps)**

Step #1 - **REMEMBER** what we have lost and cultivate a desire to regain that close communion once again.

Step #2 - **REPENT**—change our hearts—our minds—our will—our actions through confession of sin (1 John 1:9,10; Psalm 51; Luke 15:11-31)

Step #3 - **REPEAT** the first works, which suggests restoring the original fellowship that was broken by our sin and neglect. **For the believer, this means prayer, Bible study, obedient service, worship, evangelism, making disciples.**

- Warren Wiersbe writes, “Labor is no substitute for love; neither is purity a substitute for passion. It is only as we love Christ fervently that we can serve him faithfully.”

(v6-7) **Two statements of CONSULTATION:**

- **Consultation 1 - “Hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans”** – John MacArthur writes, “A problem in Pergamos also (vv. 12–15), this heresy was similar to the teaching of Balaam (vv. 14,15). Nicolas means “one who conquers the people.” Irenaeus writes that Nicolas, who was made a deacon in Acts 6, was a false believer who later became apostate; but because of his credentials he was able to lead the church astray. And, like Balaam, he led the people into immorality and wickedness. The Nicolaitans, followers of Nicolas, were involved in immorality and assaulted the church with sensual temptations. Clement of Alexander says, “They abandoned themselves to pleasure like goats, leading a life of self-indulgence.” Their teaching perverted grace and replaced liberty with license.”

- **Consultation 2 - “To him who overcomes”** – **How to overcome? 1 John 5:3-5 - For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**

- **The “Tree of Life” is found in Revelation 22:1-5 - And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.**

> **Let us look at three people who come to a first love experience and became overcomers:**

- **First, a sinful woman is forgiven – Luke 7:36-50**

- **Second, a denier is forgiven - John 21:1-19**

- **Third, a wayward son is forgiven – Luke 15:11-24 (Video - When God Ran!)**