The Seven Churches

“What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia...” - Jesus

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants-- things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John.

Rev 1:3 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Rev 1:4-5 4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, A the faithful witness, the B firstborn from the dead, and the C ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

Rev 1:10-11 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

Rev 1:12-16 12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

Rev 1:17-18 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”

Rev 1:20 20 “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.”

Apokalupsis — ‘the laying bare’, or the ‘revealing’ or ‘disclosure’ of Jesus Christ.

The Father — is, was, to come
Holy Spirit — ‘seven Spirits’
Jesus Christ —

A Faithful witness
B Firstborn from the dead
C Ruler of the kings of earth

A vision of our Jesus Christ ministering as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.
Act 2:1-3 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

Act 2:32-33 “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”

Act 2:34-36 “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand,” Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

Act 2:38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Rev 1:12-13 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands one like the Son of Man

Mat 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

Joh 16:6-7 “But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”

Joh 14:15-16 “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--”

Joh 15:26-27 “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. “And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

Joh 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”

Act 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Jesus did not begin ministering among the seven lampstands until His inauguration on the day of Pentecost in 31 AD.

(Act 5:32 NKJ) “And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

(Joh 14:20 NKJ) “At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”
The seven churches represent God’s church through history.

1. The sanctuary imagery of Jesus among the candlesticks.

2. The churches are located in order along the Roman roads.

3. The nearness of Christ’s coming and His promises to each, draw closer and closer as you progress through the churches.

   - **Ephesus** — ‘I will come to you quickly…’
   - **Smyrna** — ‘I will give you the crown of life.’
   - **Pergamos** — ‘I will come to you quickly…’
   - **Thyatira** — ‘Hold fast what you have till I come.’
   - **Sardis** — ‘I will come upon you as a thief…’
   - **Philadelphia** — ‘Behold, I am coming quickly!’
   - **Laodicea** — ‘Behold, I stand at the door…’

To the first three churches, the promises appear after the statement ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches’, indicating the promises are further off, but to the last four churches, the promises are stated before this statement, showing their nearness.

4. The churches show a progression of apostasy from the beginning to end consistent with the New Testament witness.

   - **Ephesus** — ‘You have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars.’
     ‘You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans.’
   - **Smyrna** — ‘I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.’
   - **Pergamos** — ‘You have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam… You also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.’
   - **Thyatira** — ‘You allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess to teach and seduce My servants… As many of you as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan… I will put on you no other burden.’
   - **Sardis** — ‘You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments.’
   - **Philadelphia** — ‘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.’
   - **Laodicea** — ‘You say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy’ — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.’

The verses below show that both Christ and Paul foretold a coming apostasy before the second coming of Christ.

- Mt 24:24-25
- Acts 20:28-32
- 1 Tim 4:1-7
- 2 Tim 3:1-7
- 2 Tim 4:3-4
- 2 Th 2:3-4

(1Ti 4:1 NKJ) Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith.

(Act 20:29 NKJ) 29 “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.”
### The Seven Churches

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ephesus</strong></td>
<td>The Apostolic Church (31AD—100AD)</td>
<td>The only church in which 'apostles' are mentioned, connecting it with the church of the 1st century. They labored faithfully for Christ with patience, but lost their first love. Yet they hated 'the deeds of the Nicolaitans' and could not bear 'those who are evil.'</td>
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<td><strong>Smyrna</strong></td>
<td>The Persecuted Church (100AD—313AD)</td>
<td>Means 'myrrh' and is about to undergo a serious persecution. They are poor but spiritually rich. Jesus tells them do not fear, be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.</td>
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<td><strong>Pergamos</strong></td>
<td>The Compromising Church (313AD—538AD)</td>
<td>Meaning 'height or elevation', the church is enticed by friendship with the world and backslides from fidelity to Christ. She trusts to an adulterous connection with civil powers. Compromise results and impurity and idolatry rapidly enters the church. She is soon corrupted with the false doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans.</td>
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<td><strong>Thyatira</strong></td>
<td>The Dead Church (538AD—1798AD)</td>
<td>The church of the middle ages allowed the harlotries of Jezebel to teach and seduce God's people to continue in their spiritual adultery and to commit idolatry against God. God gave her time to repent, but she did not, so He 'cast her into a sickbed' (1798) and warns 'the kings of the earth' (Rev 17:1-2) that they will be cast into great tribulation unless they also repent. Her children (the churches who follow her example) will also be killed.</td>
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<td><strong>Sardis</strong></td>
<td>The 'Reformed' Churches (1798—1844AD)</td>
<td>The churches of the reformation separated from the 'Mother church', yet did not fully come out of her darkness and apostasy. Many retained corrupt teachings and only went as far as the reformers who established them, thus these churches held to a name, but were dead. Yet Jesus finds a few who are worthy.</td>
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<td><strong>Philadelphia</strong></td>
<td>Church of the Awakening (1844AD—1888AD)</td>
<td>Means 'brotherly love'. They are known for keeping God's word. Jesus sets an open door before them. They have little strength yet have persevered and will be kept from the trial that comes upon the whole world (time of trouble).</td>
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<td><strong>Laodicea</strong></td>
<td>The Lukewarm Church (1888AD—Present)</td>
<td>Means 'judging of the people'. They say 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing', and do not know their own spiritual poverty or nakedness before God. But Jesus is outside seeking entrance — to enrich them with faith, to clothe them with His righteousness and to anoint their eyes that they might see.</td>
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**Nicolaitan**

*To conquer or destroy the people*

From the Greek words:

- nike — conquer, victory
- laos — people, laity

**Balaam**

*To swallow or destroy the people*

From the Hebrew words:

- bala — destroy, consume
- am — nation, people

Means 'odour of affliction'

Means 'red ones'
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<tr>
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<th>Rebuke</th>
<th>Prescription</th>
<th>Promise</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ephesus</strong></td>
<td>He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, Who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.</td>
<td>Works, labor, patience, you cannot bear those who are evil. <strong>You have tested those who say they are Apostles yet lie.</strong> You have patiently labored for My name's sake tirelessly.</td>
<td>You have left your first love.</td>
<td>He who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.</td>
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<td><strong>Smyrna</strong></td>
<td>The First and the Last, He Who was dead and came to life.</td>
<td>Works, tribulation, poverty (yet you are rich). I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.</td>
<td>Do not fear what you will suffer. The Devil will imprison some and test you for 10 days. Be faithful to death, <strong>&quot;I will give you a crown of life.&quot;</strong></td>
<td>He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.</td>
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<td><strong>Pergamos</strong></td>
<td>He who has the sharp two-edged sword.</td>
<td>Works, that you dwell where Satan's throne is. You hold fast to My name and did not deny My faith, even in the face of martyrdom.</td>
<td>You have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. Idolatry, sexual immorality and wickedness.</td>
<td>To Him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna, a white stone and a new name.</td>
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<td><strong>Thyatira</strong></td>
<td>The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire… and His feet like fine brass.</td>
<td>Works, love, service, faith and patience. As for your works, the last are more than the first.</td>
<td>You allow Jezebel who says she is a prophetess, to teach immorality and idolatry. I gave her time to repent, but she did not. I will cast her into a sickbed and kill her children. Then all will know I am He who searches minds and hearts.</td>
<td>To you who don't hold this teaching and haven't known the depths of Satan, I put on you no other burden. <strong>&quot;Hold fast what you have till I come.&quot;</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sardis</strong></td>
<td>He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.</td>
<td>I know you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.</td>
<td>Be watchful, strengthen what remains. Remember how you have received and heard. Hold fast and repent. <strong>&quot;If you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know when I will come upon you.&quot;</strong> You have a few names worthy to walk in white in Sardis.</td>
<td>He who overcomes will be clothed in white garments and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life, but will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.</td>
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<td><strong>Philadelphia</strong></td>
<td>He who is holy and true, He who has the key of David, Who opens and no one shuts and shuts and no one opens.</td>
<td>I know your works. I have set before you an open door. You have kept My word. <strong>Those who say they are Jews and are not will know I have loved you.</strong> I will keep you from trial.</td>
<td><strong>&quot;Behold, I am coming quickly!&quot;</strong> Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.</td>
<td>He who overcomes will make him a pillar in the temple of God and write the name of God, His city, and My new name on him.</td>
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<td><strong>Laodicea</strong></td>
<td>The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.</td>
<td>You aren't cold nor hot, so I will vomit you out of My mouth. <strong>You say 'I am rich', but don't know you are poor, blind and naked.</strong></td>
<td>Buy from Me gold refined in the fire, white garments to clothe your nakedness and eye salve. Those I love I rebuke. <strong>&quot;Behold I stand at the door…&quot;</strong></td>
<td>He who overcomes will sit with Me on My throne, just as I sat down with My Father on His throne.</td>
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“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
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<td>(Rev 2:1 NKJ)</td>
<td>&quot;To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,</td>
<td>(Rev 2:2-3 NKJ) 2 &quot;I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 &quot;and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:4 NKJ) 4 &quot;Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:5-6 NKJ) 3 &quot;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. 6 &quot;But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:7 NKJ) 7 &quot;He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:7 NKJ) To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.&quot;</td>
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<td>(Rev 2:8 NKJ) 9 &quot;And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,</td>
<td>(Rev 2:9 NKJ) 9 &quot;I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:10 NKJ) 10 &quot;Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:11 NKJ) 11 &quot;He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:11 NKJ) He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.&quot;</td>
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<td>(Rev 2:12 NKJ) 12 &quot;And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,</td>
<td>(Rev 2:13 NKJ) 13 &quot;I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:14-15 NKJ) 14 &quot;But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 &quot;Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:16 NKJ) 16 &quot;Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:17 NKJ) 17 &quot;He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:17 NKJ) To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.&quot;</td>
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<td>(Rev 2:18 NKJ) 18 &quot;And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,</td>
<td>(Rev 2:18 NKJ) &quot;These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:</td>
<td>(Rev 2:19 NKJ) 19 &quot;I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:20 NKJ) 20 &quot;Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:24-25 NKJ) 24 &quot;Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. 25 &quot;But hold fast what you have till I come.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:26-28 NKJ) 26 &quot;And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- 27 &quot;He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels ' as I also have received from My Father; 28 &quot;and I will give him the morning star.</td>
<td>(Rev 2:29 NKJ) 29 &quot;He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.&quot;</td>
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<td>(Rev 3:1 NKJ) &quot;And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,</td>
<td>(Rev 3:1 NKJ) &quot;These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars:</td>
<td>(Rev 3:1 NKJ) &quot;I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive,</td>
<td>(Rev 3:2-4 NKJ) 2 &quot;Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 &quot;Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. 4 &quot;You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.</td>
<td>(Rev 3:5 NKJ) 5 &quot;He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.</td>
<td>(Rev 3:6 NKJ) 6 &quot;He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.&quot;</td>
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<td>(Rev 3:7 NKJ) 7 &quot;And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,</td>
<td>(Rev 3:7 NKJ) &quot;These things says He who is holy, He who is true, &quot;He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens&quot;:</td>
<td>(Rev 3:8-10 NKJ) &quot;I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. &quot;Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie-- indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. &quot;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.</td>
<td>(Rev 3:11 NKJ) 11 &quot;Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.</td>
<td>(Rev 3:12 NKJ) 12 &quot;He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.</td>
<td>(Rev 3:13 NKJ) 13 &quot;He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.&quot;</td>
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<td>(Rev 3:14 NKJ) 14 &quot;And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,</td>
<td>(Rev 3:14 NKJ) &quot;These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:</td>
<td>(Rev 3:15-17 NKJ) 15 &quot;I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 &quot;So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. &quot;Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’-- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--</td>
<td>(Rev 3:18-20 NKJ) 18 &quot;I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 &quot;As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 &quot;Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.</td>
<td>(Rev 3:21 NKJ) 21 &quot;To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.</td>
<td>(Rev 3:22 NKJ) 22 &quot;He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.&quot;</td>
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The Seven Churches of Revelation

1. 31 AD
2. 100 AD
3. 313 AD
4. 538 AD
5. 1798 AD
6. 1844 AD
7. 1888 AD
8. 2033 AD

“The Faithful Witness” Rev 1:5