

REVELATION

The Seven Churches

Revelation 2:1-3:22



Intro to The Seven Churches: The Set Up

- The text that sets up the Chapter 2 and 3 is...
- I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹ 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." ¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ 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.

Revelation 1:10-13

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Intro to The Seven Churches: The Set Up

Sanctuary Connections

- In the sanctuary who walked among the lampstand?
 - The Priest
- In the sanctuary who tended to the lampstand?
 - The Priest
- In the sanctuary who supplied the oil for the lampstand?
 - The Priest

Revelation 1:10-13

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Intro to The Seven Churches: The Set Up

Our Compassionate High Priest

- Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

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Intro to The Seven Churches: The Scope

Literal

- The Seven Churches were seven literal churches in Asia Minor.
 - Literal churches with literal locations in modern day Turkey).
 - Knowledge about these locations during this time will help the reader better understand the messages
- The message was sent to all the churches. (Rev 1:11)



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Historical

- Though literal, the churches prophetically represent periods of time during the Christian age, both now and then.

Functional

- Though historical, these messages about the churches and their stated strengths and deficiencies symbolize all churches and are valuable warning and assessments to the church today.

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Intro to The Seven Churches: The Structure

Simplified	David Pawson	Kenneth Cox	
Address	Address	Greeting	Which Church Christ is Addressing
	Attribute	Identification	How Christ Reveals Himself
Assessment	Approval	Condition	How Christ Sees the Church
	Accusations	Problem	How Christ Sees the Church
Appeal	Advice	Counsel	How Christ Guides the Church
	Appeal	Closing	How Christ Petitions the Church
	Assurance	Promise	How Christ Covenants with the Church

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Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-7



Ephesus: Biblical Background

- Founded by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:18–19) and the young preacher Apollos (Acts 18:23–26).
- Paul worked in Ephesus for about three years (Acts 20:31).
- Paul wrote this church in the letter we know today as Ephesians.
- Timothy was the young pastor at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3)
- According to church tradition, John and Mary the mother of Jesus lived in Ephesus.



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Stefanovic, Ranko. Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation . Andrews University Press. Kindle Edition.

Ephesus: Historical Background

- Name Meaning: Desirable
- Largest (principal) city in Asia Minor
- Magnificent Temple of Diana
 - Important financial center for the world
 - Asylum for criminal
- Center for Religious and Pagan Ideals (Acts 19:19)



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Ephesus: Historical Background

- “so into Ephesus there poured a stream of criminals of every kind, fugitives from the law, escapers and avoiders of justice, and into Ephesus there flowed a torrent of credulous, superstitious people, for in a superstitious world Ephesus was well-nigh the most superstitious city in the world.”
- Additionally, John is writing this letter around 96 AD/CE. This would be six decades after the death of Christ. By this time, all the disciples accept John have died and now the second and third generations of Christians are on the rise.

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Ephesus: Greeting/Identification

“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

Revelation 2:1

- According to Revelation 1:12 what do the seven stars and the seven lampstands generally represent?
 - The seven churches
 - *Therefore, Christ portrayed as holding the seven stars and who walks in the midst of the seven lampstands reveals that Christ has complete control and knowledge of the entire church. His complete knowledge suggest that he understands the full extent of the churches condition and their truest needs.*

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Ephesus: Condition

- 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 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. ⁶ ...But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Revelation 2:2-3

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Endure, Maintain , Uphold

- Under the pressure of paganism they have endured in God's work.
- Under the plurality of doctrines they maintained sound doctrine.
- Under the relativistic culture they upheld absolute truth.

Ephesus: Problem

- Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

Revelation 2:4

What was the problem?

- Works – Love = Legalism
- Sound Doctrine – Love = Legalism
- Endurance – Love = Legalism
- Order – Love – Legalism

- Sound doctrine, hard work, and church order are undeniably important. However, no good qualities have value without love

(1 Cor. 13).

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Ephesus: Problem

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Revelation 2:4

What was the problem?

- If Love of God is $<$ Love of Self.
- Then Love of Self becomes $>$ Love for People.
- When the Love of self is greater than the love of God then it results in lack of love for one another. Lack of love for one another leads to having little to no care for citizens of the kingdom and little to no burden for inviting people into the kingdom.

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Ephesus: Counsel

- 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

Revelation 2:5

A Point to Remember

- Wake Up! (Self-Awareness)
- Repent! (Turn Around)

or be...

- Removed! (Light Gone Out)

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Ephesus: Closing/Promise

(Revelation 2:7)

- “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

The Eternal Advantage of Hearing

- The alarming rebuke is followed up with the most alluring of rewards. (Rev. 22:2) The Compassionate High Priest provides a chance for all to obtain what he had intended for them.

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Ephesus: Historical Application

AD 31-100

- Each church has a literal and prophetic meaning.

Prophetic

- In seeking to apply Jesus' message to the church in Ephesus to a particular period of the history of Christianity besides its local significance, one may observe that the situation and spiritual condition of that church characterized by faithfulness and good works coincided with the situation and spiritual condition of the Christian Church of the Apostolic Age (and some time after).

- Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

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