

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION

CHURCH	APPROXIMATE DATE	MEANING OF NAME	MAIN FEATURE OF TIME PERIOD	NAME GIVEN TO JESUS	COMMENDATION	REPROOF	COUNSEL	REWARD PROMISED OVERCOMER
EPHESUS	31 to about 100 AD	First or desirable	Era of waning love	He that hath the 7 stars in His right hand. He who walketh in the midst of 7 golden candle-sticks	Patient Hate deeds of false teachers Did not faint or give up	Left your first love	Repent – do again your 1st works	Eat of Tree of Life
SMYRNA	100 to about 325 AD	Myrrh or sweet fragrance	Persecution Suffering Martyrdom	The first & last. He who was dead but now lives	Rich in faith & good works in spite of tribulation & hypocrites	None	Be faithful unto death	Receive crown of life. Not be hurt of second death
PERGAMOS	325 to about 538	Height or power or elevation by marriage	State Religion Compromise	He which hath the sharp sword with two edges	Held firm to Jesus' name and have not denied the faith	Tolerance of Nicolaitanes Balaamism Compromise Idolatry & Immorality	Repent	Receive hidden manna White Stone New name
THYATIRA	538 to about 1500	Sweet savor of labor. Sacrifice of contrition	Dark Ages Apostasy	Son of God	For love, faith, patience & good works	Tolerance of Jezebel, idolatry, immorality	Hold fast what you already have	Power over nations Morning Star
SARDIS	1500 to about 1750	Those escaping or that which remains	Reform	He that hath the 7 Spirits of God & the 7 stars	A few are not defiled	Dead works	Watch, strengthen what remains. Hold fast & repent	White Raiment Keep name in Book of Life
PHILADELPHIA	1750 to about 1850	Brotherly love	Revival Gospel Spread	He that is holy & true that hath key of David that openeth & none shutteth that shutteth & none openeth	Kept the Word and not denied Jesus	None	Hold fast to the faith	Pillar in temple. Keep from hour of temptation. Have name of God
LAODICEA	1850 till Jesus' Coming	Judging the people or a just people	Modern christendom The church today	The Amen –The faithful & true witness, the beginning of the creation of God	None	Lukewarm Spiritually poor, blind & naked	Secure: gold tried in fire, white raiment, eyesalve. Be zealous & repent	Sit with Christ on His throne and eat with Him

SEVEN IGNORED MESSAGES

1. This passage indicates that everything in Revelation is important and absolutely nothing can be left out. Nor can anything added improve it. It was given by God and is perfect as is.
2. Though these seven letters were originally sent to seven churches in Asia, the messages apply to Christians today, as do all the other letters, or books of the Bible. II Timothy 3:16,17 (1750) makes this very clear. Further, these seven letters have additional application to God's church in seven eras, beginning with apostolic days and ending with the coming of Jesus.
3.
 - a. Jesus sees our works or conduct good or bad, and properly evaluates everything at all times. Keeping this in mind has a dramatic effect upon one's life-style. A good motto is "Thou, God, seest me", Genesis 16:13 (22).
 - b. Some teach that we do not have to do anything at all to enter the Kingdom but Jesus did not teach that. Repeatedly, He clearly states that "overcoming" is essential. However, overcoming is possible only through the blood of the Lamb, Revelation 12:11 (1813).
 - c. God's Holy Spirit convicts people of sin and leads them to repentance, John 16:8,13 (1579). Without the Holy Spirit, no one ever feels sorrow for sin or finds new truth. No wonder Jesus stressed so forcefully the importance of listening to His Spirit.
4. A zealous, on-fire, new Christian, who joyously shared his faith everywhere, was mentioned on a church board. An old-time member commented, "He will get over that". Yes, unfortunately, all too often, we do "get over that". We lose our first glowing love of Jesus and settle down to formalism. Jesus says that when this happens we have "fallen" and must "repent", Revelation 2:5 (1801). Loss of love is a fatal disease of the heart which destroys. If we lose love, we lose all.
5. They withstood them openly. Jesus commended them for this. The Nicolaitans, of verse 6, were false teachers who advocated compromise. They felt their spiritual liberty gave them freedom to practice idolatry and immorality. Jesus made it clear that He holds the church responsible to keep wolves out of the flock.
6. The "ten days" of verse 10 [using the prophetic principle of a prophetic day for a literal year, Ezekiel 4:6 (1213)], were probably the ten years of unparalleled bloody persecution under the Roman ruler Diocletian from 302 A.D. to 312 A.D.
7. All, except those translated, must die the first death, Hebrews 9:27 (1766), but there is a resurrection from the first death, I Corinthians 15:51-54 (1688). The second death is the one the lost die in the fire, Revelation 21:8 (1824). From this death there is no resurrection.

8. Balaam, according to the book of Numbers, chapter 22-24 (259), was a prophet of God who turned traitor to secure worldly gain and kingly favors. He symbolizes the spirit of the Pergamos period when believers compromised true Christianity to gain the favor of Roman officials. For "Nicolaitans" see NOTE under question 5.
9. Jezebel was the heathen wife of Ahab, one of the Old Testament kings of Israel. She was very wicked and very powerful, I Kings 16,18,19,20 (581); II Kings 9 (613). She hated and persecuted God's church and its prophets and endeavored to wipe them out. She imported 850 heathen priests or prophets and instituted an apostate system of religion. She then enforced it by state decree. In Revelation, Jezebel symbolizes the apostasy that began in the latter days of the apostles. II Thessalonians 2:3,7 (1739), and which grew to such proportions that under the Thyatira era the church and the world were led into the Dark Ages.
10. In Scripture, the relationship between Jesus and His church is represented by marriage. Jesus is the groom; His church, the bride. Any unfaithfulness to Jesus or His pure teachings is thus called adultery or fornication. The punishments threatened of sickness, tribulation and death are indeed real. Neither the church, the state, nor false teachers will escape God's punishment for spiritual unfaithfulness or adultery.
11. The last part of verse 19 indicates things would finally begin to change for the better. This, doubtless, refers to the powerful ministry of many great spiritual leaders whom God raised up to expose error and apostasy and lead His church back to Jesus and Bible truth. Their names are well known: Wycliff, Huss, Jerome, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, etc. Though many of these men served the Sardis era of the church, some had already begun work in the last part of this time period.
12. This solemn lesson is for us today. Keep pursuing truth and follow it as you find it and blessings will come. Refuse to do so and calamity comes. Jesus reveals light to me gradually as I can handle it, John 16:12 (1579). If I accept light as He gives it, I receive more till I have full light, Proverbs 4:18,19 (971). If I refuse light, it goes out and I stumble in darkness, John 12:35 (1573).
13. Jesus here points out that formal religion is worthless. Paul describes such religion as "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof", II Timothy 3:5 (1749).