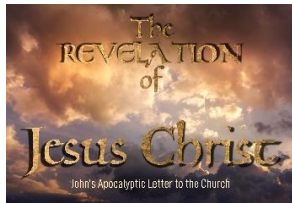


7 churches of Revelation

As compiled by Pastor Dave – 2-14-2026

A compliment to the teaching video on YouTube.

<https://youtu.be/2mpkW9b7Uk4>



My teaching style:

- **Shade-tree theologian – even with formal training - Grammatical-Historical Method:** I approach Scripture by examining the syntax, grammar, and historical context to understand the text's original meaning.

RECAP

A few things to remember...

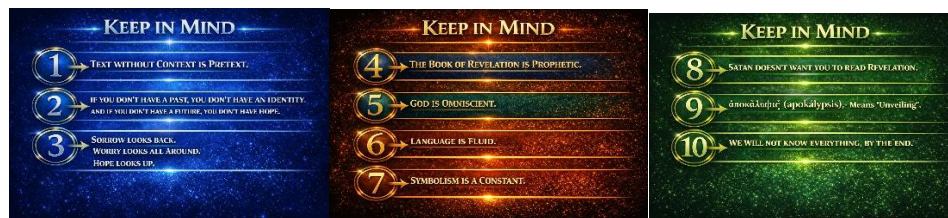
Revelation is prophecy:

Rev. 1:3

3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this **prophecy**, and blessed are those who hear and obey what is written in it, because the time is near.

It is not allegory, or fantasy, or a fable, or just a cool story that John put together - it is prophecy.

It's a prophecy that uses signs, symbols, or signals to tell the prophecy.



1. Text without Context is Pretext
2. If you don't have a past, you don't have an identity. And if you don't have a future, you don't have hope.- John Lennox
3. Sorrow looks back. Worry looks all around. Hope looks Up. – Pastor Skip Heitzig- Calvary Chapel -Albuquerque, NM.
4. The Book of Revelation is prophetic. Not allegory, or fantasy, or poetry, it is prophecy. 26% of the entire Bible is prophetic.
5. God is omniscient, He knows about the future. He is not taken off guard by the future of mankind.
6. Language is fluid (changes over time)

7. Symbolism is a constant. It is not weakened by time and they create strong mental images.
 - a. John could have said: “In the future a leader will step up to rule the world” but he didn’t, he said: “I see a beast rising out of the sea.”
 - b. That is strong imagery.
 - c. He could have also said, "There's coming a day when evil will be rampant against believers."But he didn't say that. He said, "I saw a woman drunk with the blood of the saints."
8. The devil wants you to shy away from the Book of Revelation because it tells you about his demise.
9. ἀποκάλυψις (apokálypsis),– Unveiling, uncovering, revealing, removing the sheet over the statue.
 - a. Not catastrophe, destruction, annihilation, obliteration, extinction, like movies and books have portrayed.
10. We will not know everything by the end of this study! But we will do our best TO KNOW MORE!

One interjection:

“On things that scripture whispers about, I don’t want to yell too loudly.” - Wes Huff- Christian apologist, speaker, and Vice President of Apologetics Canada

Okay, so we will keep those in mind...

The Number 7

In the Bible and Jewish realms, the number 7 is the number of perfection or completion.

54 times the number 7 is used in Book of Rev.

We will explore that in the weeks ahead.

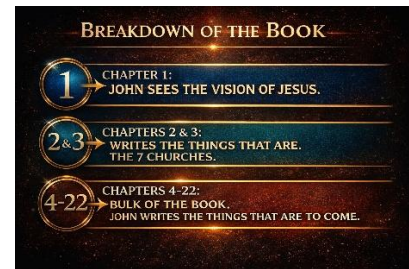
There are seven churches, lampstands, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, seven stars, horns, eyes, angels, trumpets, heads, crowns, seven thunders that give an utterance, plagues, kings, 7 year Tribulation - etc etc.

BREAKDOWN OF THE BOOK

And the Book of Revelation itself provides the outline to the Book of Revelation in chapter 1.

Vs. 19

1. Write the things you have seen.
2. Write the things that are.
3. Write the things that will take place after this. (which are to come)



So, how does that breakdown?

1. Chapter 1- John SEES the vision of Jesus. (talk about that in a minute)
2. Chapter 2 and 3. Writes the things that ARE. The 7 churches. (talk about that tonight)
3. Bulk of the book is Chapters 4-22. John writes the things that ARE TO COME. Keep in mind: “That are dictated by Jesus” the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

WHAT JESUS LOOKS LIKE

Do you realize in chapter 1 is the only time in scripture that we are given a picture of Jesus?

It had been 60 years, by now, since John had seen Jesus walking on the shores of Galilee.

Jesus was Jewish, he probably had dark hair and a dark beard.



However, Revelation 1,

12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Jesus says: DON'T BE AFRAID.

And we are not afraid to read this book.

This week – Jesus says: I know.

Chapters 2, 3- The Churches



Keep in mind, in chapters 2,3 – John is writing about THE THINGS THAT ARE.

They are actual churches but also can represent 7 different periods in history- from Apostolic to Apostate.

Also an timeless application to ALL churches throughout history.

The area of Asia minor came into the roman empire in 133 bc. The kings of the Pergamum empire ruled what is western Asia minor up until this period and the final king, Attalus iii, bequeathed his kingdom, then, to the romans. In 129 bc then brought Asia, minor, into the roman empire.

By the time you come to the end of the first century, the area up to the Euphrates in the east is by and large a part of the roman empire and Asia was an extremely significant province for the empire.it was one of the richest provinces. and so it's in this province, then, that these seven churches addressed in revelation 1 through 3 are found.

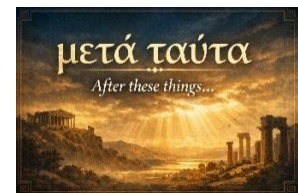
All of these cities had so a very a plethora of gods and goddesses.

A very polytheistic environment.

THE 7 CHURCHES OF REVELATION



1. In Revelation chapters 2–3, Jesus addresses seven historical churches in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).
2. The seven churches can also be seen as **seven periods of Church history**, from the **APOSTOLIC** era to the **APOSTATE** era in the last days, the falling away church.
3. It also has timeless application to churches of all ages. Every community has churches like these churches that are in Revelation 2 and 3. And every church has church members, like every one of these churches in Revelation 2 and 3.



Meta Taute

It is important to interject something here.

In the beginning of Chapter 4, there is a phrase in Greek: “Meta Tauta”

Jesus and John are making a distinction between
Chapters 2 and 3 and Chapter 4

Remember:

1. Chapter 1 = Vision of Jesus
2. Chapters 2,3 = “the things that ARE” – word to the churches.
3. Chapters 4-22 = “the things which are to come.”

Meta Tauta

John uses the term at the beginning and the end of Chapter
4: vs1

Meta Tauta = “After these things”

meta: with, after, among

Original Word: μετά

Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ

μετὰ ταῦτα.

After these things...

The Word- CHURCH

Chapter 3

Notice the last word in Chapter 3:

21 To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the **churches.**”

19 times the word CHURCH is mentioned in the Book of Revelation –

12 times in Chapters 1- 3

But, it is not mentioned again, until Rev. 22:16

16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you a this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

What does that mean?

There is a shift, after Chapter 3 and looking at the details of the churches. There is silence concerning THE CHURCH.

And this is totally unexpected and doesn't make sense, IF the CHURCH is going through the Tribulation, which I personally believe, it is not.

THE CHURCH is not mentioned anywhere during the Judgement period of Chapters 4-21, until we get to chapter 22:16.

An explanation- Revelation can be read in chronological prediction, straightforward.

Therefore, the chronology...

1. Church Age – Jesus superintending His church. (Now)
2. Rapture of the Church.
3. Tribulation Period.
4. Millennial Reign of Christ
5. Satan bound.
6. God's Kingdom (The way He intended from the beginning in the Garden of Eden. BTW – the Bible Begins in THE GARDEN and will end in THE GARDEN – both instances, walking with Jesus)

So, John writes about the vision of Jesus, then writes about the church, and then meta tauta “after this”.

Now here is an interesting thing...

RAPTURE

“Where is the Rapture in the Book of Revelation?”

Glad you asked!



A teaser: We will speak more about the Rapture later...

It is reasoned and believed, that the Rapture is in the “white space” between Chapters 3 and 4 –

Because Chapter 4 begins:

1 After this I looked and saw a door standing open in heaven.
And the voice I had previously heard speak to me like a

trumpet was saying, “Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after these things.”

1 Thessalonians 4

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

So John writes about the vision, writes about the church, and then **meta tauta** after this.

Now, after he writes about the church, he hears a voice.

The voice is like a trumpet, calling him upward.

It sounds very familiar to us. Look at Chapter 4, verse 1.

"After these things," **meta tauta**, "I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven."

We skip a bit of the verse, then. "...like a trumpet speaking with me and saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place **meta tauta**," after this.

"Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven..."

LAMPSTANDS AND STARS

Before we go into the churches, let's understand -



Revelation 1:19,20

19 Write the things which **you have seen**, and the things **which are**, and the things **which shall be hereafter**; 20

The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches (could be actual angels guarding the churches – more likely the 7 pastors/messengers or leaders of the churches-who history does not specifically name, other than Paul, Timothy and John for Ephesus. Some believe Polycarp was involved in the church at Smyrna though not necessarily during John’s writing): and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches.

Jesus walks among the lampstands (churches). He holds the 7 stars in His RIGHT hand (symbol of authority and power over the churches) don’t ever think that Jesus, to this day, doesn’t have a handle on what is going on in the churches. He is not caught off guard.

And He says: “I know” “I know your works” “I see what you have accomplished” “I see what you have done”.
He is with them.
He is with us.

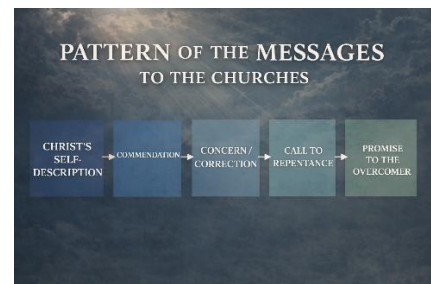
THE CHURCHES OF REVELATION 2,3

Pattern

Each message follows a pattern: **Christ's self-description** → **commendation** → **concern/correction** → **call to repentance** → **promise to the overcomer**.

Together, they form a timeless spiritual diagnostic for the Church.

REPENT: - Not only change your Mind, but change your Direction. Change Course.



The churches and the dispensations:

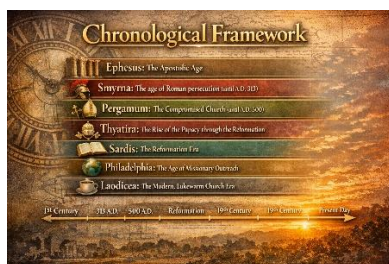
As we study these 7 churches, we've noticed that the message that Jesus gave to each Church bore an uncanny likeness to the characteristics of various time periods throughout church history and this method that we're talking about is referred to as The **Historical Prophetic** interpretation of the seven letters of the Book of Revelation.

And interestingly enough, they coincide exactly, in the order that Jesus addressed the churches, with the time periods down through history.

The 16th-century non-separatist Puritan theologian Thomas Brightman is generally credited with being the first to systematically propose the historicist interpretation of the Seven Churches of Revelation (Chapters 2–3). He interpreted the seven letters as prophetic descriptions of seven consecutive historical periods in the history of the Christian Church.

Key aspects of this interpretation include:

Methodology: Brightman outlined how the seven churches represent distinct, successive ages of the Church of Christ, beginning from the apostolic era and moving toward the Second Coming.



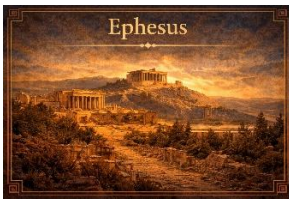
Chronological Framework:

1. Ephesus: The Apostolic Age.
2. Smyrna: The age of Roman persecution (until A.D. 313).
3. Pergamum: The compromised Church (until A.D. 500).

4. Thyatira: The rise of the papacy through the Reformation.
5. Sardis: The Reformation era.
6. Philadelphia: The age of missionary outreach.
7. Laodicea: The modern, lukewarm church era.

Significance: While other early commentators like Victorinus in the 3rd century noted the churches represented the church universal, it was Brightman who popularized the specific, sequential historical age interpretation.

1 EPHEBUS



Revelation 2

1 “To the angel of the church in **Ephesus** write:

These are the words of Him who holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.

2 I know your deeds, your labor, and your perseverance. **(no hint of compromise, we will see why)** I know that you cannot tolerate those who are evil, and you have tested and exposed as liars those who falsely claim to

be apostles. 3 Without growing weary, you have persevered and endured many things for the sake of My name.

4 But I have this against you: You have abandoned your first love. 5 Therefore, keep in mind how far you have fallen. Repent and perform the deeds you did at first. But if you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

6 But you have this to your credit: You hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. (Nicolaitans, were a sect of Greek philosophy and its Gnosticism - taught that the body was insignificant, that the only thing that was valuable was the soul.-whatever is done in the body or to the body is to no avail therefore you could eat meat offered to idols and participate in sexual immorality-whatever goes- “you live your life, I’ll live mine” or “You do your truth, I’ll do mine”

7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes, I will grant the right to eat from the tree of life in the Paradise of God.

1. Ephesus — *The Loveless Church*

a. Ephesus

b. Historical Prophetic: (Apostolic Church): Early church, pure but lost first love (c. 30-100 AD).

- i. Strengths:** Sound doctrine, discernment, perseverance.
- ii. Concern:** They abandoned their *first love*—devotion cooled into routine.
- iii. Call:** Remember, repent, and return to genuine love.
- iv. Promise:** Access to the tree of life.

John was the pastor of Ephesus.

Goddess – Artemis

Paul here – 2 ½ years

John – Pastor

Timothy was here.

Rampant with idol worship of Artemis, sexual immorality, sea port, trade, affluent, the agora was the marketplace—a mall on steroids!

Ceasar was god, here.

The entrance to the agora there was incense that you would use and offer to Ceasar as god.

Temple of Artemis-Artemis was the god of fertility, so hundreds of temple prostitutes both male and female involved in worship.

14 different temples to the gods existed in Ephesus.

It was also home to the temple to the Emperor Domitian (where have we heard of him? Boiled John in Oil, exiled him – because John was the pastor of the Christian Ephesian church)

The statue of Domitian was 50 feet tall with his arm outstretched in power. When you would enter the harbor of Ephesus, that stature is the first you would see.

Domitian, 2nd only to Nero in the way that he brutally persecuted the Early Church.

Once a year, everyone had to bow to Ceasar Domitian and worship him as god.

2 I know your deeds, your labor, and your perseverance. **(no hint of compromise, we will see why)** I know that you cannot tolerate those who are evil, and you have tested and exposed as liars those who falsely claim to be apostles.

This is the concept of judging the evil persons INSIDE the church, not the emperor, not Rome, not the world outside the church.

Paul writes:

1 Corinthians 5

12 What business of mine is it to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? 13 God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked man from among you.”

The world is going to be the world.

We know they are wicked.

I don't spend much time judging those outside the Body of Christ.

I really don't spend a lot of time judging those inside the Body of Christ unless they are given to me in relationship.

I need to pastor inside the flock.

What was the number one issue that they were dealing with in the Early Church, at this period in time?

False Apostles and False Teachers.

False Teachers

False apostles and teachers are heavily warned against throughout the New Testament, with mentions appearing in nearly every book except Philemon.

Specific, explicit mentions of "false teachers" (2 Pet 2:1) and "false apostles" (2 Cor 11:13) are complemented by warnings against false prophets, brothers, and teachers throughout the Epistles, Acts, and Gospels.

Specific Occurrences: While the exact phrase "false teachers" is explicitly mentioned in 2 Peter 2:1, the concept and direct warnings about them, false prophets, and false apostles are found throughout the New Testament, notably in 2 Corinthians, Timothy, and the Johannine epistles.

Key Warnings:

2 Corinthians 11:13-15: Paul explicitly warns of "false apostles" and "deceitful workers" masquerading as apostles of Christ.

2 Peter 2:1: Mentions that there will be "false teachers" among believers.

Matthew 7:15, 24:11, 24:24: Jesus warns of false prophets and false Christs.

1 Timothy 4:1-3: Paul warns of deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.

1 John 4:1: John tells believers to test the spirits because many "false prophets" have gone out into the world.

Context: These warnings were aimed at protecting the early church from deception and heresy, often calling out individuals like Hymenaeus, Alexander, Philetus, and others who distorted the faith.

1st Love

Ephesus had left their 1st Love.

What does that mean?

They were going through the motions. They were going to church, trying not to sin, giving in the offering, taking their kids to youth group, volunteering once in a while in children's church. Being "good Christians"

Transliteration: aphiémi

Pronunciation: ah-FEE-ay-mee

Aphiémi- ἀφίημι: To send away, to leave, to forgive, to permit, to abandon, to lay aside

You have "abandoned" your first Love.

The love of Christ and recognizing your mission in the world.

It's a Loveless labor.

It may have been they had lost their fervor for how they loved the Lord and how they loved one another:

Matt. 22

"What's the greatest commandment?"

37 Jesus declared, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

So, we have to get back to doing things for the Lord because we love Him.

Do your first works over.

Fall back in love with Him like you did at your first salvation experience.

7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes, I will grant the right to eat from the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God.

Tree of Life: Genesis 3

Remember: The tree of life was the tree that God WOULD NOT allow Adam and Eve to have access to after they had sinned and eaten from the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil.

Mankind was cast out and the cherubim with the flaming sword was put at the entrance.

In order to keep everyone out from Ever Getting near to the Tree of Life.

Why?

Why didn't God want Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of Life ever again?

If they eat from the Tree of Life, they would never die and live forever.

Issue: They were now sinners, separated from God, by their fallen state.

As sin set things in motion, in order to be redeemed, something had to die. And in order for Adam and Eve to be redeemed, death had to come.

Since God kept them away from the Tree of Life, at this period, was actually the grace and mercy of God coming into play.

If they ate, they would live forever IN THEIR SIN.

Without death, there is no life, spiritually.

And in their fallen state, they would have been eternally separated from God.

Jesus had to be sent from The Father to remove our separation.

Once Jesus has redeemed us, then are we able to once again, partake of the Tree of Life, as God intended from the beginning.

God never intended for mankind to die.

So, Revelation 2: 7 – to the Ephesian Church and to US.
“7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes, I will grant

the right to eat from the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God.”

Then we will see in Revelation 22

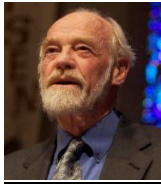
Revelation chapter 22 it says then the angel showed me the river of the Water of Life brightest Crystal flowing from the Throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city and on either side of the river the Tree of Life!

Restored!

We will talk about that when we get to Rev. 22

Exciting stuff!

CLOSING:



Eugene Peterson author of *Reversed Thunder*, viewed the Book of Revelation not as secret code for future events, but as a **pastoral vision of Christ-centered worship and reality**, urging believers to experience God's presence rather than just gather facts. He sees it as a Christ-focused call to worship and faithful living, using rich imagery to reveal God's enduring reality in all circumstances.

If you don't have a past, you don't have an identity. And if you don't have a future, you don't have hope.”- Dr. John Lennox

References:

Pastor Skip Heitzig- Calvary Chapel -Albuquerque, NM.

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier – Ontario, Oregon

Dr. Joe Stowell- President Cornerstone University –

Our Daily Bread Ministries

Dr Mark Wilson – Director Asia Minor Research Center,
Antalya, Turkey