

**6** **WHAT THE BIBLE IS ABOUT**

**Revelation**  
Part 2 – Chapters 1-3

A dark blue rectangular slide with a white border. On the left side, a large white number "6" is displayed. To its right, the text "WHAT THE BIBLE IS ABOUT" is written in a white, serif font. Below this, a white-bordered box contains the text "Revelation" in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, and "Part 2 – Chapters 1-3" in a smaller, white sans-serif font below it.

## KEY THEME

**‘Surely I come  
quickly.’ Amen.  
Even so, come,  
Lord Jesus!’**

Revelation 22:20b

## KEY VERSE

<sup>19</sup> “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;”

<sup>14</sup> “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.”

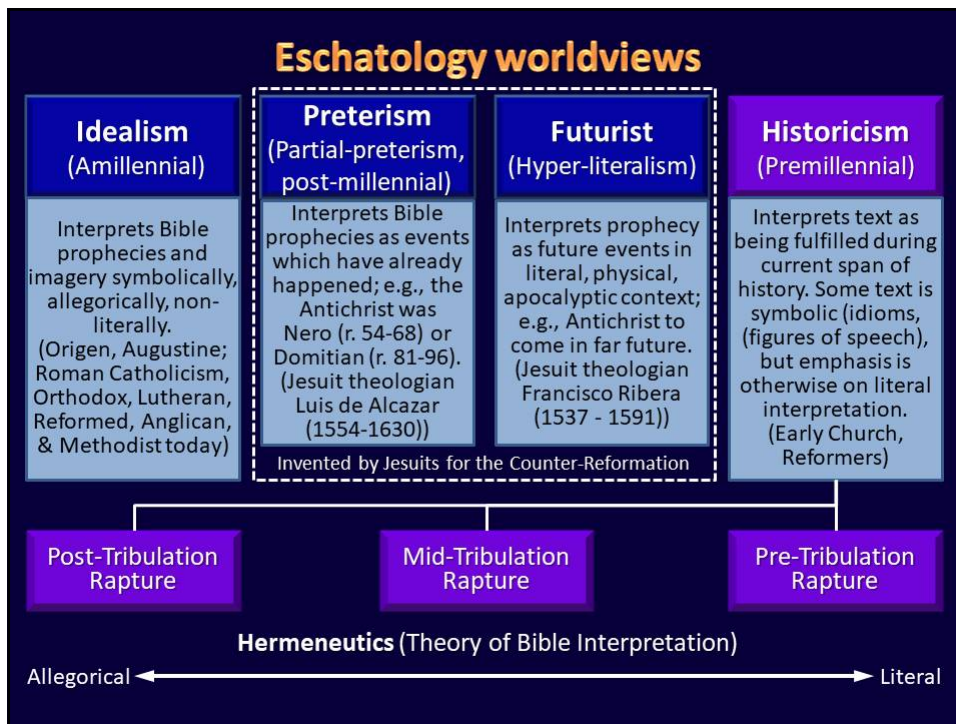
Revelation 1:19; 17:14

“ I miss more than one thing in this book [of Revelation], and this makes me hold it to be neither apostolic nor prophetic. ... There is one sufficient reason for me not to think highly of it - Christ is not taught or known in it. ... I stick to the books which give me Christ clearly and purely. ”

Martin Luther, preference to Revelation in his 1522 translation of the New Testament

“ Those who do not know suffering through oppression shall have great difficulty understanding this letter from Patmos. ”

Alan Boesak, "Comfort and Protest-The Apocalypse from a South African Perspective" (1987), 38.



### Some major differences

	Amillennial	Preterist/ Postmillennial	Futurist/ Dispensational	Premillennial
Hermeneutics of the book of Revelation	Progressive parallelism in Revelation (earth's history repeated 7 times). Context determines whether literal or figurative.	Interpret in terms of meaning to 1st century church—reassures Christ will prevail over Roman persecutors. Liberal hermeneutic.	Revelation 4-22 and parts of Daniel are future events in a literal, physical, global, apocalyptic context.	Read Revelation as written, literally where possible. Context determines whether literal or figurative.
The Millennium	Figurative (symbolic) only. Has to do with the "church age" between Christ's First and Second coming, in which Christ rules from heaven. We are in its last days.	Tribulation over. We are in a figurative "golden age" on earth where nations gradually adopt Christendom until the earth is filled with the glory of the Lord.	Whether literal or figurative, the tribulation will happen in the future under a future Jewish supernatural figure (not the pope).	A literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth as spoken of throughout the Bible, after the Tribulation (yet to occur) and before the End of All Things.
Israel and the "Church"	Old Testament Israel is the nation. New Testament Israel is the "Church"; Israel no longer has any spiritual significance.		Futurists exclude Jews from the New Covenant and remove salvation through faith from Jews. .	Israel and "Church" are separate entities with separate destinies in God's plan. Israel remains God's chosen.
Satan	Satan was bound at the Cross and is no longer able to deceive the nations.		---	Satan is real and rampant in the world.

	Amillennial	Preterist/ Postmillennial	Futurist/ Dispensational	Premillennial
The Kingdom	Spiritual. Came with Jesus' ministry on earth.	Spiritual. Came with Jesus' ministry on earth.	Spiritual. Came with Jesus' ministry on earth.	Literal. Two kingdoms: kingdom of God eternal; kingdom of Heaven is Christ's reign on earth.
Rapture	No. A crazy idea.	No.	Generally, yes.	Of course. Read your Bible.
First Coming	Real and physical.	Real and physical.	Real and physical.	Real and physical.
Second Coming	Once to judge the earth and establish new heavens and new earth	Once to judge the earth and establish new heavens and new earth	Once to judge the earth and establish new heavens and new earth	Twice: comes in clouds to rapture saints and 7+ years later to reign.
Judgments	One judgment (White Throne) at the end.	One judgment (White Throne) at the end.	One judgment (White Throne) at the end.	1. Raptured believers. 2. Sheep and Goat at start of Millennium. 3. White Throne at end of Millennium
History	Origen, later Augustine and embraced by Roman Catholic (Western) church by 400 AD. Mainstream Protestant churches.	Dominican Hentenius (1499-1566) hinted at preterism in 1547; Jesuit theologian Luis de Alcazar (1554-1630) revived it to counter Reformation premillennialism. Replacement theology.	Jesuit theologian Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) developed and Jesuit Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) refined it to counter Reformation premillennialism.	1. Earliest believers 1 <sup>st</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Centuries). 2. Isolated/persecuted remnants. 3. Reformers (including Reform, Anabaptist, Baptist, etc.

All four eschatological positions agree that:

1. Jesus Christ was crucified per Scriptures, buried, and rose again the 3<sup>rd</sup> day per the Scriptures (*see 1 Corinthians 15:3-4*),
2. The Bible is the word of God, fully inspired and authoritative (*see 2 Timothy 3:16*), and
3. There was a first advent and there will be a personal, visible, glorious, and objective second advent.

## Common mistakes in reading Revelation

1. Emphasizing almost exclusively the identification of every name, place, and person mentioned in the book and relating them to today's current events;
2. Assuming that we have the ability to clearly interpret allegory and imagery well and definitively;
3. Believing that historical settings are insignificant, and that everything pertains only to God's Kingdom today;
4. Believing that the historical settings can be skipped over in preference to modern day interpretations;
5. Ignoring the book entirely as "to-hard-to-explain" or as pertaining only to Christian character and Church life;
6. Interpreting Revelation on the basis of some external, philosophical system.

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Mark Brighton, *Revelation* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2012) p. 8.

## Use Scripture to interpret Scripture

Rather than trusting the church fathers and their writings, we should crawl under the wings of our mother hen, the Lord Christ, and look to him alone. The heavenly Father said, "*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.*" (Mat 17:5) <sup>1</sup>

We do not place our total reliance on the Church Fathers for doctrine as if they could articulate it more clearly than the Word of God Himself as found in the Scriptures. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, "Trusting Christ Instead of People", *Martin Luther, Faith Alone: A Daily Devotional*, James C. Galvin, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) October 14.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Enchiridion - The Lord's Supper, The Lord's Prayer, Chemnitz's Works* (Volume Five). Translated by Luther Poellot, J.A.O. Preus, and Georg Williams, trans. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2007) p. 149.

## Use church fathers to validate

1. Numerous Church Fathers taught that the John of Revelation was the apostle, the son of Zebedee. They placed John on the isle of Patmos, and later returning to Ephesus. E.g.:
  - Papias (c.60-130)
  - Justin Martyr (c.100-c.165)
  - Melito (ca. unknown -120)
  - Irenaeus (c.125-202)
  - Clement of Alexandria (c.150-c.215)
  - Tertullian (c.160 - c.225)
  - Hippolytus of Rome (c.170–c.235)
  - Origen (c.185–c.254)
  - Eusebius of Caesarea (c.265-c.340)
  
2. Church Fathers considered Revelation to be scriptural, citing and quoting from John to explain theological points. E.g.:
  - Justin Martyr (100-165 AD) explained the “thousand years” of Revelation 20:2-7.
  - Victorinus (ca. 270 - ca. 303) wrote a “Commentary on the Apocalypse”.
  - Augustine of Hippo (354-430) cited and quoted Revelation the City of God.

## WARNING

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

(Revelation 22:18-19/ESV)



# THE BOOK OF REVELATION

## Revelation 1. Introduction and Benediction

- <sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.
- <sup>3</sup> 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.

## Greeting the Seven Churches

- <sup>4</sup> 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, <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.  
To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, <sup>6</sup> and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- <sup>7</sup> Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.
- <sup>8</sup> “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”



## Vision of the Son of Man

- <sup>9</sup> I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.
- <sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> 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."
- <sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> 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.

- <sup>14</sup> His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup> His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; <sup>16</sup> 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.
- <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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.
- <sup>19</sup> Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.
- <sup>20</sup> 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.

**The Divine Outline of the book of Revelation**

<sup>19</sup>Write the things which thou hast seen,

and the things which are,

and the things which shall be hereafter,

(Revelation 1:19)

**The Divine Outline of the book of Revelation**

<sup>19</sup>Write the things which thou hast seen,

**The Vision of Christ** ..... Chapter 1

and the things which are,

**The Seven Churches** ..... Chapters 2,3

and the things which shall be hereafter,

**What follows after the Churches** .. Chapters 4-22

(Revelation 1:19)

### The book of Revelation

**THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN**  
(Chapter 1)

- John' vision of the exalted Christ, 1



**THINGS WHICH ARE**  
(Chapters 2-3)

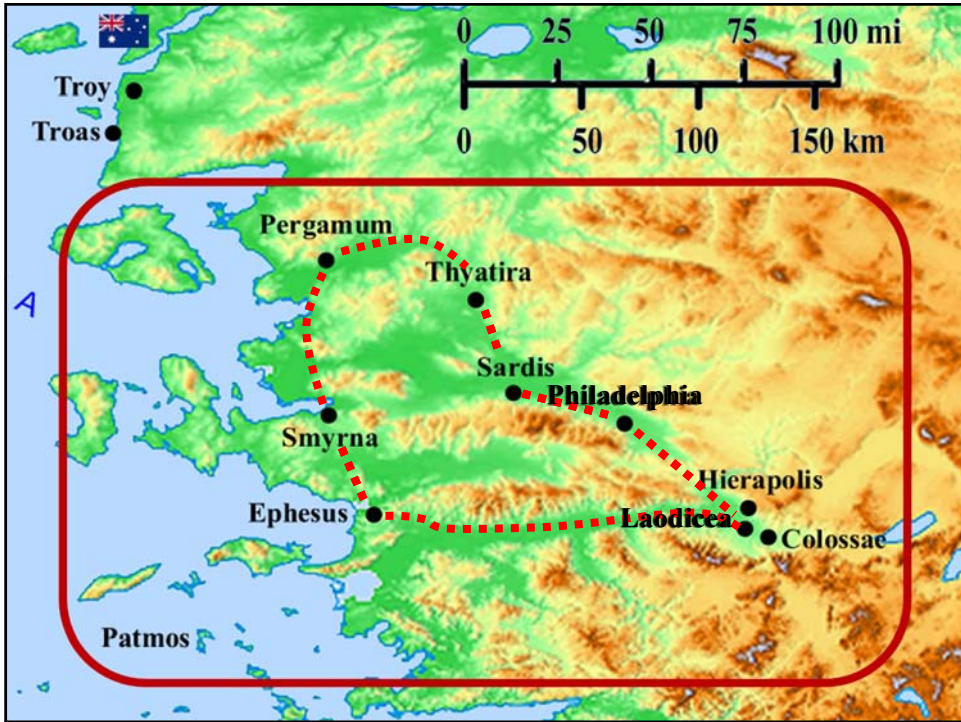
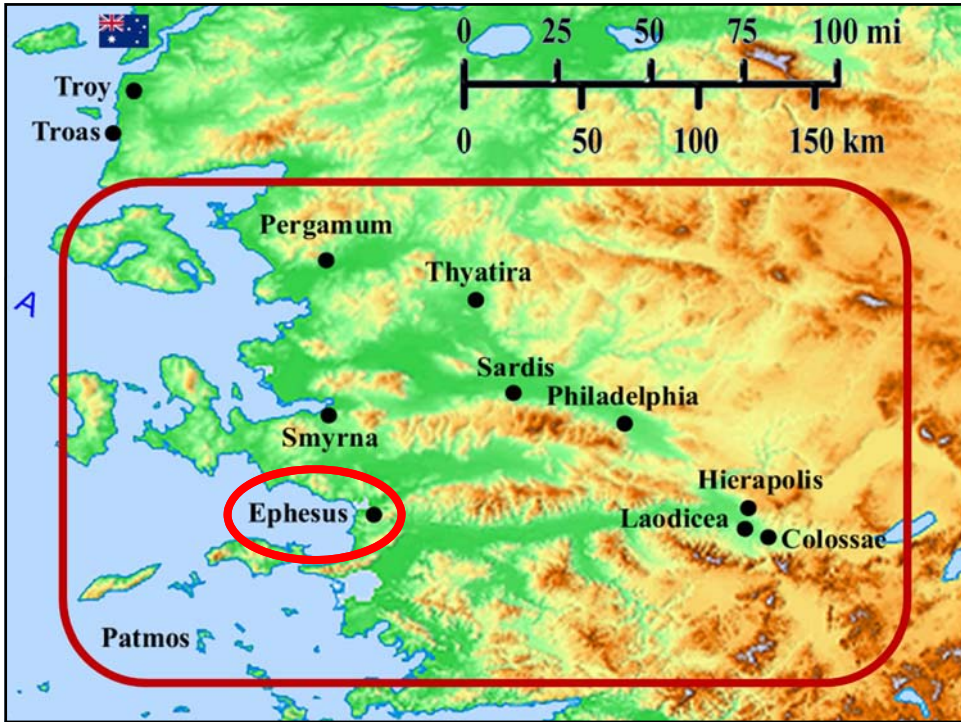
- The messages to the seven churches, 2-3



**THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER**  
(Chapters 4-22)

- Throne in heaven, 4-5
- Tribulation on earth, 6-19
- The Kingdom of Christ, 20
- The new heavens and earth





### The name of each church is relevant

Ephesus (“Desired One” or “Darling”)

Smyrna (“Myrrh”, “Suffering” or “Death”)

Pergamos (“Mixed marriage” or “Serpent”)

Thyatira (“Semiramis” or “Daughter”)

Sardis (“Red Stone” or “Remnant”)

Philadelphia (“Brotherly love”)

Laodicea (“Rule of the people”)

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#### Why these seven?

Why not Rome?

Jerusalem?

Lystra? Antioch?

Iconium? or

many others?

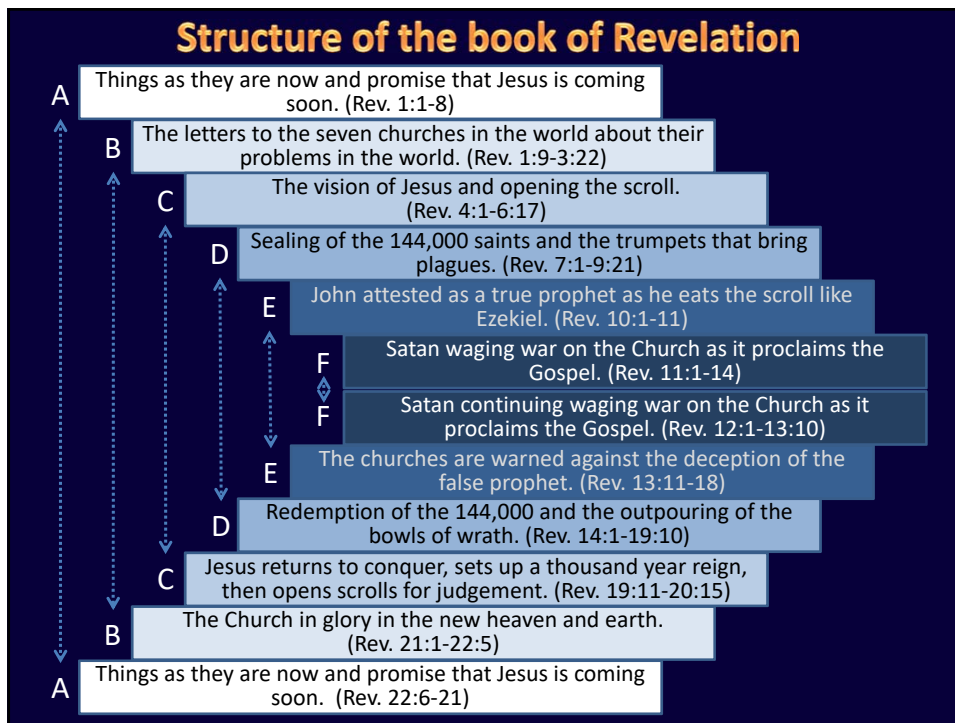
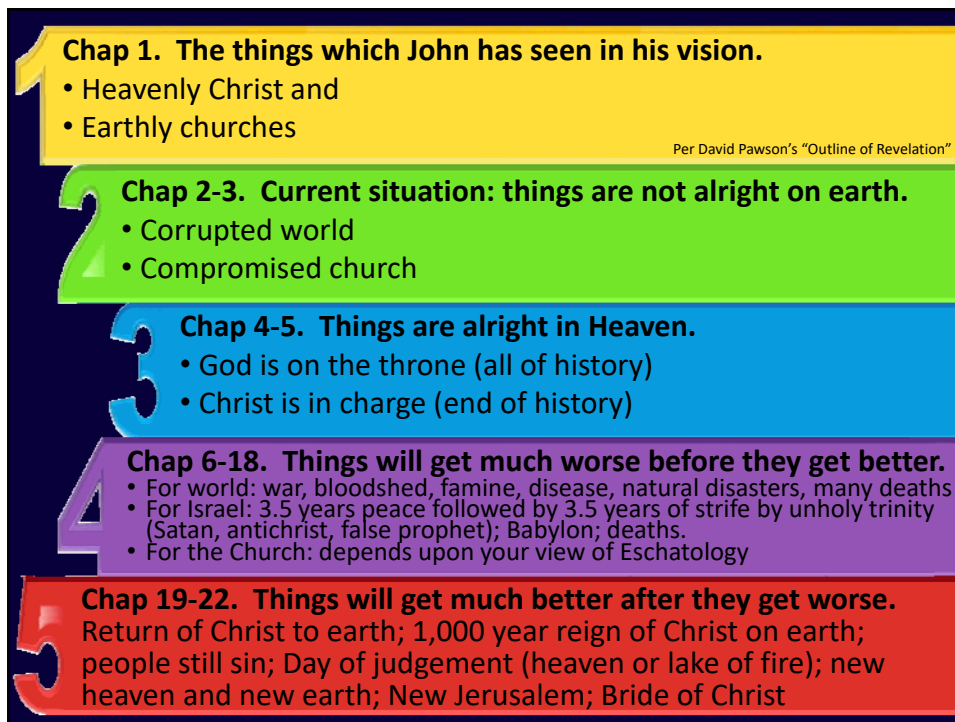
### Why these churches?

For whatever things  
were written before were  
**written for our learning,**  
**that we** through the patience  
and comfort of the Scriptures  
**might have hope.**

Romans 15:4

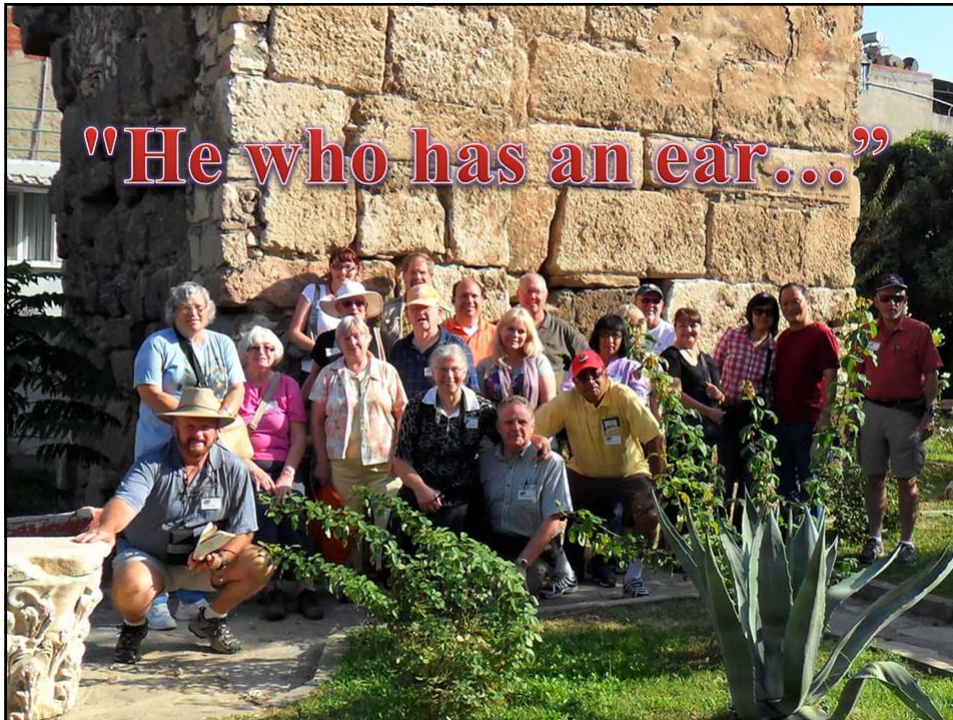
### The Seven Churches

1. **Literal:** each was written to an existing active church.
2. **Spiritual:** the seven churches each represented a differing spiritual condition, which any congregation may be in.
3. **Historical:** each letter alludes to relevant known past history of the church's city/region.
4. **Representative:** the seven churches in the order given represent seven successive eras in the history of the Christian Church.
5. **Prophetic:** each letter contains prophetic allusions to current events in the day, over-horizon events, and future events.
6. **Complete:** The seven represent all churches then and now.
7. **Personal:** lessons from the churches can be applied to and by individuals.



### Seven Parts of Each Letter

1. Name of church: "To the Angel in..."
2. Title of Christ: "These are the words of Him who..."
3. Commendation: "I know your deeds..."
4. Concern: "Yet I hold this against you..."
5. Exhortation: "... or I will come ..."
6. Appeal: "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."
7. Promise to the overcomer: "To him who overcomes I will ..."

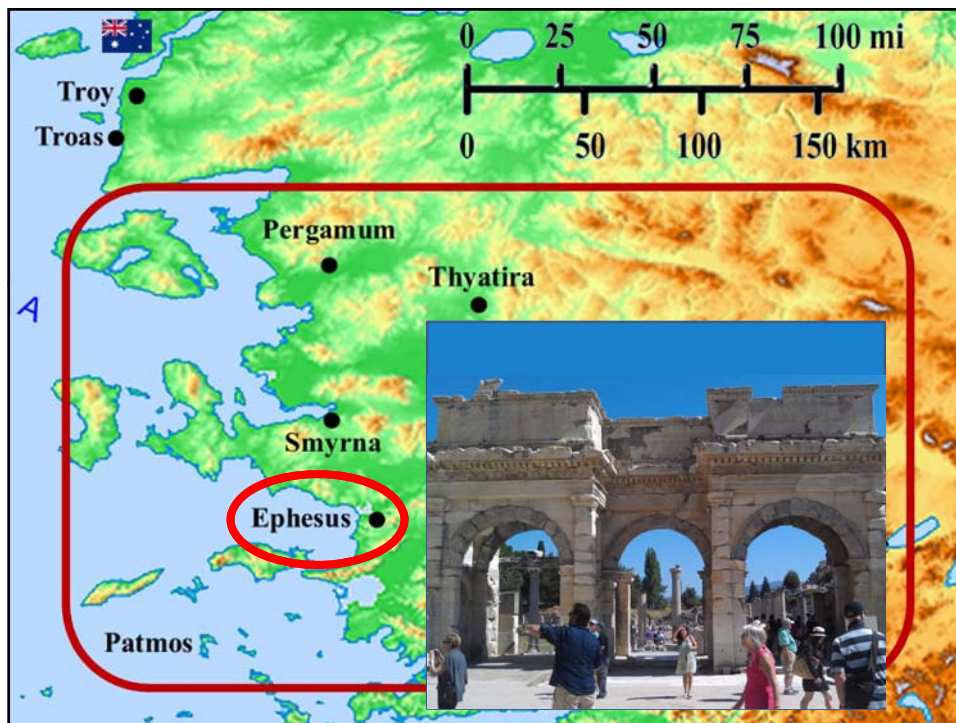




Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας  
To the angel of the church in

# EPHESUS

Revelation 2:1-7



## Ephesus, the loveless church

- <sup>1</sup> “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:  
<sup>2</sup> “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; <sup>3</sup> and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.  
<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.  
<sup>7</sup> “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.” ’

## Ephesus, the loveless church

Name	✓	<sup>1</sup> “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:
Title	✓	<sup>2</sup> “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; <sup>3</sup> and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.
Commendation	✓	<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless I have <i>this</i> against you, that you have left your first love.
Concern	✓	<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
Exhortation	✓	<sup>7</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
Promise	-	To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’
Appeal	✓	
Promise	✓	

### Overview of Design

	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamos	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
Name	✓						
Title	✓						
Commendation	✓						
Concern	✓						
Exhortation	✓						
Promise	-						
Appeal	"He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches"						
Promise	✓						