

THE SEVEN CHURCHES

1. WHAT title is given the last book of the Bible?

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” **Revelation 1:1.**

2. To whom do those things which are revealed belong?

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but *those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.*”
Deuteronomy 29:29.

3. For what purpose was the Revelation given?

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.”
Revelation 1:1.

4. What great event, according to this book, is imminent?

“Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.” **Verse 7.**

NOTE — This book not only opens and closes with the subject of Christ’s second coming, but its eight lines of prophecy all reach down to this as the great culminating event to the church and the world.

5. What encouragement is given to study this book?

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” **Verse 3.**

6. To whom was the book dedicated?

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia.” **Verse 4.**

7. What were the names of these seven churches?

“What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto *Ephesus*, and unto *Smyrna*, and unto *Pergamos*, and unto *Thyatira*, and unto *Sardis*, and unto *Philadelphia*, and unto *Laodicea.*” **Verse 11.**

NOTE — These seven churches, and the messages addressed to them, apply to seven periods or states of the church reaching from the first to the second advent of Christ. “Under this

emblematical representation of the seven churches of Asia,” says Vitringa, in the “Comprehensive Commentary,” “the Holy Spirit has delineated seven different states of the Christian church, which would appear in succession, extending to the coming of our Lord and the consummation of all things.” Their good qualities and their defects are pointed out, with admonitions, exhortations, and warnings suitable for each, all of which are also applicable to individual Christian experience.

8. By what title is the first state of the church distinguished?

“Unto the angel of the church of *Ephesus* write.” **Revelation 2:1.**

NOTE.— The meaning of Ephesus is *desirable*, and fitly describes the character and condition of the church in its first state, when its members received the doctrine of Christ in its purity, and enjoyed the benefits and blessings of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This applies to the first century, or during the lifetime of the apostles. See dates in the accompanying diagram, showing the beginning and close of the seven periods.

AD 31	AD 100	AD 323	AD 538	AD 1798	AD 1633	AD 1844	THE END
Desirable Ephesus	Sweet-Smelling Smyrna	Elevation Pergamos	Conitron Thyatira	That which remains Sardis	Brotherly love Philadelphia	Judging the people Laodicea	

9. After commending this church for their good works, what charge did the Lord bring against them?

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because *thou hast left thy first love*. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and *repent, and do the first works.*” **Verses 4, 5.**

NOTE — The “first love” is the love of the truth, and the desire of making it known to others. The “first works” are the fruit of this love.

10. What name is given to the second state of the church?

“Unto the angel of the church in *Smyrna* write.” Verse 8.

NOTE — The meaning of Smyrna is *myrrh*, or *sweet-smelling savor*, and applies to the period of time when many of the saints of God suffered martyrdom under pagan Rome.

11. How is the closing period of tribulation of the church during this time referred to?

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, *the devil shall cast some of you into prison*, that ye may be tried; and *ye shall have tribulation ten days*: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” **Verse 10.**

NOTE — The most severe of what is commonly known as “the ten persecutions” under pagan Rome, began under the emperor Diocletian, and continued from 303 A.D. to 313 A.D., a period of ten prophetic days.

12. What name is given to the third state of the church?

“To the angel of the church in *Pergamos* write.” **Verse 12.**

NOTE — The meaning of Pergamos is *height*, or *elevation*, and fitly represents that period of the Christian church, beginning with the reign of the Emperor Constantine in 313 A.D., when the power which had put the Christians to death espoused the cause of the church, and by rewards, edicts, and promised promotions to office in the government, sought to induce the people to become Christians, thus bringing a flood of worldliness and corruption into the church. Many of the heathen rites and ceremonies previously introduced into the Christian religion, including the heathen festival, *Sunday* (sun’s day), were then established by law, resulting in the first day of the week taking the place of the Sabbath of the Bible.

13. How was the faithfulness of this church commended?

“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and *thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith*, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.” **Verse 13.**

NOTE — *Antipas* comes from two Latin words, *anti*, opposed to, and *papas*, father, or pope and denotes a class of people who were opposed to papal rule. Regarding *Pergamos*, see note in the study, “Fall of Modern Babylon, pg. 2-3.”

14. What title was given to the fourth state of the church?

“Unto the angel of the church in *Thyatira*, write.” **Verse 18.**

NOTE — Thyatira means *song of labor*, or *sacrifice of contrition*, and points out the condition of God's people during the long, dark period of 1260 years, beginning with the establishment of papal supremacy in 538 A.D., and closing with the downfall of that power in 1798. See notes on page 223. During that time, millions of the saints of God were put to death in the most cruel manner that wicked men and demons could invent. Christ referred to this time in His wonderful prophecy recorded in **Matthew 24**, in these words: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." The tribulation of the 1260 years was cut short through the influence of the Reformation.

15. What promise did God leave for these persecuted ones?

"But that which ye have already hold fast till, I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth My words unto the end, *to him will I give power over the nations*: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father." **Verses 25-27.**

16. By what name is the fifth state of the church addressed?

"Unto the angel of the church in *Sardis* write." **Revelation 3:1.**

NOTE — Sardis means *song of joy*, or *that which remains*. A cause for joy at that time was the fact that the great tribulation of the people of God was at an end. It was only as a result of the Reformation that any of God's people were left *remaining*. See **Matthew 24:21, 22**, and note under question 14. The Sardis church continued from the close of the papal power, 1798 A.D., until the beginning of the great advent movement in 1833, which was marked by the falling of the stars on November 13 of that year, as foretold by Christ in **Matthew 24:29**.

Publisher's Note: Sardis did not cease to exist in 1833. The beginning of the Philadelphia Church began in 1833, but there will be three churches to the end of time coexisting with one another on this planet: Sardis, the dead, fallen Protestant church which sets up the image of the beast; the Laodicean church of Seventh-day Adventists

lost in their conceits and thinking they have need of nothing; and Philadelphia, the only church that Jesus takes with Him when He comes.

17. What endearing title is given the sixth church?

“To the angel of the church in *Philadelphia* write.” **Revelation 3:7.**

NOTE — Philadelphia means *brotherly love*, and applies to the church under the judgment-hour message. See study on “The Judgment Hour Message.”

18. What words to this church show the second advent near?

“Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” **Verse 11.**

19. What is Christ’s message to the last church?

“Unto the angel of the church of the *Laodiceans* write; . . . I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. . . . Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; . . . I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed. . . . As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” **Verses 14–19.**

NOTE — Laodicea signifies *the judging of the people*, or, according to Cruden, *a just people*. This church exists in the time of the judgment and the proclamation of the final warning messages preceding Christ’s second coming. See **Revelation 14:6–16**, and study on “The Judgment Hour Message.” This is a time of great profession, with but little vital godliness and true piety.

20. What encouragement is given to heed this message?

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” **Verse 20.**

NOTE — The pointed, searching messages to the seven churches contain most important lessons of admonition, encouragement, and warning for all Christians in all ages. The seven promises to the overcomer found in this line of prophecy (**Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26–28; 3:5, 12, 21**), with the eighth or universal promise recorded in **Revelation 21:7**, form a galaxy of

promises as precious, as comforting, and as inspiring as any recorded in the Scriptures. See: studies on “Overcoming,” and “Promises to the Overcomer.”