



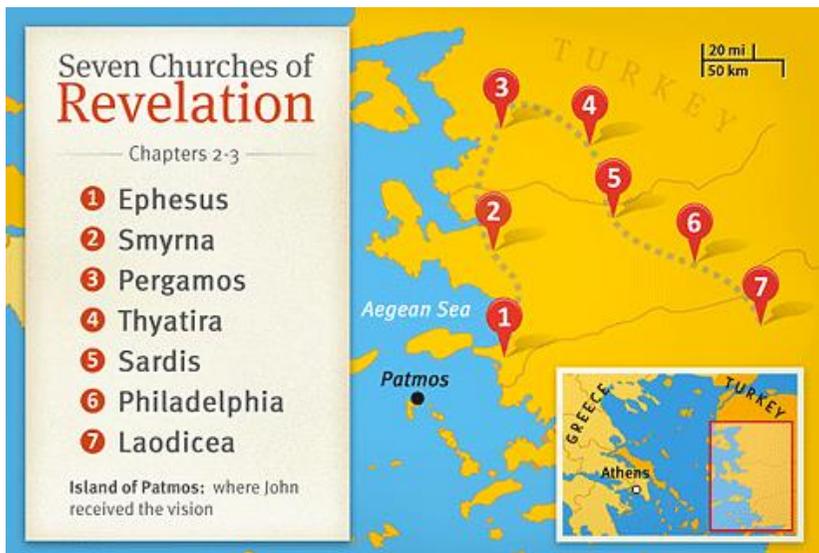
# World Christian Fellowship

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## Seven Churches Introduction

Christ spoke to His church. He spoke to seven churches, specific churches in specific cities in Asia Minor, which is modern Turkey.

They were actual churches with actual conditions that He addressed. The uniqueness of His letters to these churches is that they all include an assessment that leads either to a commendation or a threat.



## **Have you ever heard of a church that repented – ever - a church that repented?**

Not individuals, but collectively a church that came together and repented.

Have you ever known a pastor who led his church to repent for collective congregational transgressions and then threatened them with heavenly judgment if they refused to repent?

In England a group of preachers who were called Puritans. That was a label of mockery that identified them as those who were always trying to purify everything.

They were calling the churches of England to repent for their extensive doctrinal deviation, heresy, and their extensive sins and corruptions. They were essentially churches that were functioning in defiance of their confessed Lord and Saviour.

In 1662 there was day called Great Ejection. It is the official day when the Church of England threw out all the pastors who had been calling for repentance. They took away their churches and they took away their ordination. They marginalized them. They removed them from their congregations.

It was August 24, 1662, Saint Bartholomew's Day. Two-thousand faithful English Puritan pastors were permanently ejected from their churches by the corrupt clerics of the unrepentant Church of England. They did this under a law called

the Act of Uniformity. You either get in line with the Church of England or you are out.

The active uniformity led to the Great Ejection, which silenced most faithful preachers. This had not only a devastating effect on the church, which goes on even to this day, the Church of England, but a devastating effect on the nation.

The Great Ejection was in 1662. In 1665 there was a plague that came, transmitted through the bite of a rat flea, and it had left 100,000 Londoners dead, one-fourth of the population.

One year later a massive fire swept through London and incinerated 70,000 homes and people with them, as well as 90 churches.

Many historians, in history of the later Puritans, saw this as divine judgment over the Great Ejection.

The Puritans in their faithful effort to call churches to repent or else suffer judgement were following the lead of their Lord, because that's exactly what He did in the first century through the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation is the final book in the Bible, and it is the last book revealed.

**Revelation 1:7,**

**Revelation 1:11,**

The churches that are listed in chapters 2 and 3 that received letters from the Lord, were actual churches, actual towns on the postal route in Asia Minor.

Churches there existed. They were planted by the apostles. John is still alive. He is from that area, from Ephesus where he shepherded.

Ephesus was the mother church for those other churches. They are actual churches. They are also representative of churches in all periods of church history, so that what our Lord says to those churches extends to all churches.

### **John 15: 18 &20,**

Within 30 years after that upper-room discussion with the apostles, the persecution began.

There had been persecution before that. Wholesale persecution led by the dominant power of Rome began under Nero in 64 A.D. and lasted until about 68. During those years, there were thousands of Christians that were killed in all kinds of ways, including in that slaughter Peter and Paul.

The second great, official persecution of the church came under the Emperor Domitian, and it lasted longer. It lasted from 81 to 96 A.D.

John receives this Revelation while this persecution was going on. This is the reason why he is on the Isle of Patmos, because he has been sent there to a prison colony for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He is persecuted.

John was boiled in oil before he was sent to Patmos. Testimony to that fact and the fact of his boiling, not only in the book of Revelation, but given to us by Tertullian the early church father.

Island called Patmos, which is a rock that in the Mediterranean about ten miles long and five miles wide.

### **Revelation 1:19,**

The author of the book is not from John but from Jesus Christ.

### **Revelation 1:1,**

Two things that got him put in prison.

### **Revelation 1:9,**

John write that the revelation has comes from God.

### **Revelation 1:5-6,**

Revelation comes to John.

### **Revelation 1:12,**

**Revelation 1:20**

Says that the seven Golden Lampstands are seven churches.

**Revelation 1:13-16,**

So, it's terrifying thing.

**Revelation 1:17,**

Peter remembers this and he writes in his epistle.

**1 Peter 4:17,**

Twenty-five years earlier than this, the apostle Paul laid out in his epistle some warnings.

**2 Timothy 1:8,**

**2 Timothy 1:14,**

Pauls warns his beloved son in the gospel that you have got to exercise your gift. You have got to be willing to accept persecution and suffering. You have got to hold on to sound doctrine. You have to guard the treasure of divine revelation given to you.

Two out of the seven were faithful.

The five churches that are threatened had succumbed to the following list.

They had fallen to the assaults of Satan in numbers of forms.

They were engaged in,

- Sexual immorality,
- Idolatry,
- Paganism,
- Compromise,
- Tolerance of sin,
- Hypocrisy,
- False teaching,
- Seduction,
- Deception, and
- Preaching for money.

There were false apostles, false teachers, and false prophets and prophetesses.

To all those churches in which these transgressions exist, the Lord sounds an unmistakable call to repentance.

Here is the only, the only place in Scripture where you have a call from the head of the actual churches - that are dishonouring Him, and He repeats one word over and over again: "Repent!"

"Stop, confess your sin, turn around, and go back in the direction of holiness."

The prophet Ezekiel is prophesying during a time when the Babylonian Captivity is taking place, and he is given a vision of

the slaughter that is about to come on Israel. The vision comes to him from heaven.

**Ezekiel 9:1-7,**

I think Peter who knew the Old Testament he had taken from this when he said the judgement begins at the house of God.

### **What does the Lord want him to write?**

Primarily He wants John to write, "Repent."

To the five churches that needed to repent this is what our Lord writes to them.

**Revelation 2:5,**

**Revelation 2:16,**

**Revelation 2:21-23,**

**Revelation 3:3,**

**Revelation 3:16,**

### **Why repent?**

I have this against you

**Revelation 2:4,**

**Revelation 2:14,**

**Revelation 2:20,**

**Revelation 3:2,**

**Revelation 3:16,**

## **Conclusion:**

Of course, there are some believers in these churches at the start and like the angel with the writing tools marked out the believers in Ezekiel's vision.

God marks out those who are faithful, and they are identified all through these seven letters.

They are the ones who are dressed in white.

They are the ones who will receive the tree of life in the paradise of God.

They are the ones who will escape the second death.

These letters promise to the faithful hidden manna, a white stone, a new name, authority over the nations, white garments, becoming pillars in the temple of My God.

We want to be a church that is worthy of Your name, a church that walks worthy, that will one day, because we walk worthy, walk in white.

We want to be a true church.

The church is the assembly of Your redeemed people.

So, Lord, protect us from all kinds of sin.