

# THE SEVEN CHURCHES —EPHESUS AND SMYRNA

1. What are the names of the seven churches to whom this book of Revelation is dedicated? Rev. 1:11. Note 1.

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES

	EPHESUS	SMYRNA	PERGAMOS	THYATIRA	SARDIS	PHILADELPHIA	LAODICEA	
<b>SPEAKER</b>	JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF MAN THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD	THE FIRST AND THE LAST THE LIVING ONE	THE WARRIOR	THE JUDGE THE TRIED ONE	THE OMNISCIENT ONE	THE HOLY, THE TRUE, THE OMNIPOTENT ONE	THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE, THE JUDGE THE AMEN	
<b>APPROVAL</b>	PURITY LABOR PATIENCE	ENDURANCE RICHES	LOYALTY	LOVE, FAITH, PATIENCE, MINISTRY	PROFESSION A FEW PURE	PATIENCE LOYALTY	PROFESSION	
<b>REPROOF</b>	LOVE GROWN COLD	NONE	FALSE TEACHING	FALSE TEACHING	DYING, FALLEN	NONE	HOLLOW PRETENSIONS	
<b>EXHORTATION</b>	REPENT RETURN	FEAR NOT BE FAITHFUL	REPENT	HOLD FAST	WATCH ESTABLISH REPENT	HOLD FAST	BUY REPENT	
<b>WARNING</b>	REJECTION REMOVAL	TRIBULATION	CHRIST'S ANTAGONISM	REWARD OF DEEDS	FOUND WANTING	LOSS OF CROWN	REJECTION	
<b>CALL</b>	HEARKEN	HEARKEN	HEARKEN	RULING OVER NATIONS MORNING STAR	WHITE RAIMENT ACKNOWLEDGED	PILLARS ADOPTION	REIGNING WITH CHRIST	<b>PROMISE TO VICTOR</b>
<b>PROMISE TO VICTOR</b>	TREE OF LIFE	ETERNAL LIFE	HIDDEN MANNA, NEW NAME	HEARKEN	HEARKEN	HEARKEN	HEARKEN	<b>CALL</b>

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"It is impossible to mark by exact date the definite beginning and ending of each division or church. They blended into each other, telescoped each other so to speak, and the characteristics of each and all continue in some measure to the end. In general, it may be said that Ephesus included the closing part of the apostolic age; Smyrna, the time of the pagan persecutions; Pergamos, from the days of Constantine to the sixth century; Thyatira, the greater part of the long period of the Dark Ages; Sardis (beginning with Reformation times), Philadelphia (with Advent-message days, about 1840-44), Laodicea (especially after 1844), all represent last-day conditions, manifest even unto the very end. The varied shading in the diagram suggests the spiritual condition of the churches in the various periods."

# LESSON 02

January 3 – 9, 2021

2. What local church was named as representing the first period in this history of the entire church?

Rev. 2:1

3. What was there desirable at that period of the church? Note 2.

4. Who bears this message to the church of Ephesus?

Verse 1.

5. What assurance is there in the fact that He walks among the candlesticks? Rev. 1:20 (last part); Matt. 28:20.

6. For what is this church commended? Rev. 2:2,3.

7. What reproof is given? Verse 4. Note 3.

8. What exhortation? What warning? Verse 5.

9. Suggest some examples of "first works." See John 1:43-46; Luke 8:38-40; 2Peter 1:5-9. Note 4.

10. What commendation is given concerning their attitude toward apostasy? Rev. 2:6. Note 5.

11. What is the call, and what the promise of the Lord to the overcomer? Verse 7. Note 6.

## LESSON 02

January 3 – 9, 2021

12. What may we say of the time of this first period of the church? — It covers the early church to the time when its apostolic leaders had passed away, say to the closing of the first century and the early days of the second, the natural boundary of the first, or apostolic, era of the church, though no specific year may be given.

13. What church is named for the second period of the history? Verse 8. Note 7.

14. How is the speaker described? Verse 8. Note 8.

15. What comforting assurance is given? Verse 9.

16. What scenes of tribulation were they to pass through? Verse 10 (first part). Note 9.

17. What was the cheering promise? Verse 10 (last part), 11.

18. What special period of time is covered by this second stage of church history? — From early in the second century, through the days of pagan persecution, to the time of Constantine, whose professed conversion in A.D. 323 opened a distinctly third era in church history.

19. What picture does Inspiration set over against

# LESSON 02

January 3 – 9, 2021

these descriptions of times of trial? Rev. 7:13-17.

## NOTES

1. The number seven is used repeatedly throughout the book, evidently to denote fulness and completion. So just seven churches represent the complete history.

2. The word "Ephesus" means "desirable." The church in this period in the days of apostolic labor had enjoyed the doctrine of Christ in its purity; also the benefits and blessings of the Holy Spirit received.

3. The first love, the warmth of affection experienced when the Saviour was first received, and the hope of the message first dawned upon the mind had faded out somewhat in process of years, under cares and trials. "Lord, is it I?"

4. The first love must be renewed by coming to Jesus for the forgiveness of all sin, the full surrender of the heart, and then, constrained by the love of Jesus for others, the new convert, though perhaps old professor, will have a new experience to tell, a new song to sing, even praise unto God. Then missionary work of all kinds will be not a duty alone, but a joy;

## LESSON 02

January 3 – 9, 2021

yet still a duty to which the believer must sternly hold himself against all the tendency of the flesh to become careless. Just here was the failure of the early church.

5. The sect of Nicolaitans was one of the earliest of the parties that sprang up within the church, undermining the truth by mysticism and fanciful teaching. Under profession of a higher philosophy of God, and a more spiritual understanding of the doctrines of Christ, they brought heathen notions and moral corruptions into the church.

6. This and other references show plainly that the Eden that once was on earth has been transplanted to heaven.

7. "Smyrna" signifies 'myrrh,' fit appellation for the church of God while passing through the fiery furnace of persecution and proving herself a 'sweet-smelling savor' unto Him." — *Thoughts on Revelation*.

8. "Which was dead and is alive." This is an assurance that One who has gone down into Satan's prison-house, conquered death, and brought the key away with Him, was qualified to bear a message of hope and comfort to the church in that age when many were to seal their testimony with their blood.

## LESSON 02

*January 3 – 9, 2021*

9. In these times of pagan persecution, the issue was practically the same as we must again face — the Christian principle of religious liberty as opposed to the Roman principle of governmental regulation of religion. The Roman law was: "No man shall have for himself particular gods of his own; no man shall worship by himself any new or foreign gods, unless they are recognized by the public laws." The prophecy speaks of "ten days." The last and severest persecution of this period was a sustained effort to suppress Christianity, lasting ten years. Ten days, prophetic time — a day for a year — would be ten years, literal time. "It was not till A.D. 311," says Lecky, "ten years after the first measure against the Christians, that the Eastern persecution ceased. Galerius, the arch-enemy of the Christians, was struck down by a fearful disease." He suspended his edict and besought Christians to pray for his recovery.