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# THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION

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Skipwith UMC



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# **The Seven Churches of Revelation**

## **Purpose of this study**

This study is designed to help individuals understand the nature of the seven churches Jesus addressed in Revelation 2–3. Through this study, every Christian and every church may be renewed and experience spiritual renewal and revival.

## **Synopsis**

In the final book of The New Testament, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” Jesus addresses seven churches of the time in which the book was written: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. There were many problems in these churches, and much evil was being tolerated. Jesus noted the good and faithful servants in each church. All were encouraged, admonished, and warned of the consequences of not living in a way pleasing to the Lord. Through His holy and living Word, Jesus Christ is also speaking to the churches of today. Will we listen?

## **Overview of the Seven Churches**

<b>Church</b>	<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Nature of the church</b>
Church in Ephesus	Rev. 2:1–7	The loveless church
Church in Smyrna	Rev. 2:8–11	The persecuted church
Church in Pergamos	Rev. 2:12–17	The compromising church
Church in Thyatira	Rev. 2:18–29	The corrupt church
Church in Sardis	Rev. 3:1–6	The dead church
Church in Philadelphia	Rev. 3:7–13	The faithful church
Church in Laodicea	Rev. 3:14–22	The lukewarm church

## **Study Outline** *(for every church)*

### **1. Read the passage**

- Read the Scripture aloud (Revelation 2 or 3)
- Note repeated words or phrases

### **2. Identify Christ's self-description**

- How does Jesus describe Himself?
- Why is this description important for this church?

### **3. What does Jesus commend?**

- What is the church doing well?
- What strengths should be encouraged today?

### **4. What does Jesus confront or correct?**

- What is wrong or missing?
- Are there warnings we should take seriously?

### **5. Call to response**

- What command does Jesus give?
- Is the call to repent, remain faithful, or wake up?

### **6. Promise to the overcomer**

- What reward is promised?
- How does this promise encourage perseverance?

### **7. Personal and church application**

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to our church?

## **Study Schedule**

DAY 1: *Introduction*, Church in Ephesus

DAY 2: Church in Smyrna, Church in Pergamos (Pergamum)

DAY 3: Church in Thyatira, Church in Sardis

DAY 4: Church in Philadelphia, Church in Laodicea

DAY 5: *Application* of the churches of today & Summary

# Church in Ephesus

(Revelation 2:1–7)

*Theme: Loveless church (strong in truth, weak in love)*

1. How does Jesus describe Himself? (2:1). Why is this description important for this church?
2. What does Jesus commend? (2:2-3, 6). What is the church doing well?
3. What does Jesus confront or correct? (2:4) What is wrong or missing?
4. What command does Jesus give? (2:5)
5. What reward is promised? (2:7) How does this promise encourage perseverance?
6. What does “first love” mean in practical terms? What is your first love?
  - *Reflection:* Where might our service continue while our love grows cold?
7. **Personal and church applications:**
  - What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?
  - What is the Holy Spirit saying to our church?
  - *Pray* for each other and for the church.

# Church in Smyrna

(Revelation 2:8–11)

*Theme: Persecuted church (faithful in suffering)*

1. How does Jesus describe Himself? (2:8). Why is this description important for this church?
2. What does Jesus commend? (2:9). What is the church doing well?
3. What does Jesus confront or correct? What is wrong or missing?
4. What command does Jesus give? (2:10)
5. What reward is promised? (2:11) How does this promise encourage perseverance?
6. Why is there no rebuke? What does it mean to be “faithful until death”?
  - *Reflection:* How do we respond to hardship or opposition?
7. **Personal and church applications:**
  - What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?
  - What is the Holy Spirit saying to our church?
  - *Pray* for each other and for the church.

## **Church in Pergamos**

(Revelation 2:12–17)

*Theme: compromising church (compromise and spiritual danger)*

1. How does Jesus describe Himself? (2:12). Why is this description important for this church?
2. What does Jesus commend? (2:13). What is the church doing well?
3. What does Jesus confront or correct? (2:14-15) What is wrong or missing?
4. What command does Jesus give? (2:16)
5. What reward is promised? (2:17) How does this promise encourage perseverance?
6. Why is compromise so dangerous?
  - *Reflection:* Where might we be tempted to blend faith with culture?
7. **Personal and church applications:**
  - What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?
  - What is the Holy Spirit saying to our church?
  - *Pray* for each other and for the church.

## Church in Thyatira

(Revelation 2:18–29)

*Theme: corrupt church (love without discernment)*

1. How does Jesus describe Himself? (2:18). Why is this description important for this church?
2. What does Jesus commend? (2:19). What is the church doing well?
3. What does Jesus confront or correct? (2:20-23) What is wrong or missing?
4. What command does Jesus give? (2:24-25)
5. What reward is promised? (2:26-29) How does this promise encourage perseverance?
6. Why did tolerance become sin?
  - *Reflection:* How can love and truth be held together?
6. **Personal and church applications:**
  - What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?
  - What is the Holy Spirit saying to our church?
  - *Pray* for each other and for the church.

# Church in Sardis

(Revelation 3:1–6)

*Theme: dead church (reputation without life)*

1. How does Jesus describe Himself? (3:1a). Why is this description important for this church?
2. What does Jesus commend? (3:1b). What is the church doing well?
3. What does Jesus confront or correct? (3:2) What is wrong or missing?
4. What command does Jesus give? (3:3-4)
5. What reward is promised? (3:5-6) How does this promise encourage perseverance?
6. Why do people become obsessed with fame?
  - *Reflection:* Do we rely more on reputation than renewal?

## 6. Personal and church applications:

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to our church?
- *Pray* for each other and for the church.



## Church in Philadelphia

(Revelation 3:7–13)

*Theme: faithful church (faithfulness with little strength)*

1. How does Jesus describe Himself? (3:7). Why is this description important for this church?
2. What does Jesus commend? (3:8-10). What is the church doing well?
3. What does Jesus confront or correct? What is wrong or missing?
4. What command does Jesus give? (3:11)
5. What reward is promised? (3:12) How does this promise encourage perseverance?
6. Why is faithfulness valued over power?
  - *Reflection:* How can small churches be strong in obedience?

### 6. Personal and church applications:

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to our church?
- *Pray* for each other and for the church.

## **Church in Laodicea**

(Revelation 3:14–22)

*Theme: lukewarm church (lukewarm faith)*

1. How does Jesus describe Himself? (3:14). Why is this description important for this church?
2. What does Jesus commend? What is the church doing well?
3. What does Jesus confront or correct? (3:15-16) What is wrong or missing?
4. What command does Jesus give? (3:17-19)
5. What reward is promised? (2:20-22) How does this promise encourage perseverance?
6. Why is lukewarm faith offensive? What does Jesus' invitation reveal about His grace?
  - *Reflection:* Where do we need renewed passion for Christ?
6. **Personal and church applications:**
  - What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?
  - What is the Holy Spirit saying to our church?
  - *Pray* for each other and for the church.