**The Book of Revelation:**

**“I will Build My Church”**

**Title of Chapter Two: 1,500 Years of Church**

**Introduction to the 7 Churches**

Revelation 1:9-20 (NKJV) –

9I, 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. 10I was **in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day**, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, 11saying, “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.”

12Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw **seven golden lampstands**, 13and 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. 14His **head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow**, and His **eyes like a flame of fire**; 15His **feet *were* like fine brass**, as if refined in a furnace, and His **voice as the sound of many waters**; 16He 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. 17And 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. 18I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. 19Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. 20The 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**.

**Patmos:** It's a small, rocky island about 10 miles long by six miles wide. It's located in the Aegean Sea southwest of Ephesus.

Why was John in exile? (Revelation 1:9)

* Early church fathers (such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius) said that John's exile occurred under the reign of Domitian.
* Historians have dated Domitian's death in the year AD 96.
* Revelation written around 95 AD.
* This is the last of the New Testament books to be written.

Angels (Rev. 1:20): ἄγγελος (**ang**·el·os) – an angel or a messenger (pastor) of 7 local churches.

Holding (Rev. 2:1): χρυσῶν (*kraton*) – hold with power or authority**.**

Matthew 16:18 (NKJV) – “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

**Chapters 2 and 3 are *prophetic* because the book is *prophetic*.**

Revelation 1:3 (NKJV) – 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.

Revelation 22:18 (NKJV) – For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book.

Revelation 1:19 (NKJV) – Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

**Why does Jesus address these 7 churches? (3 reasons)**

**1) Specific churches.** There are other churches in the region that are not addressed: Troas (Acts 20:5; 2 Cor. 2:12), Miletus (Acts 20:17), Hierapolis (Col. 4:13).

Each letter is addressed to a particular church. For example,

Revelation 2:1 (NKJV) – “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write.”

**2) Representative churches.** (Seven is the number of perfection.)

To all 7 churches Jesus will say what He says to the Ephesians.

Revelation 2:7 (NKJV) – He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Revelation 2:7 (NKJV) – To him who **overcomes** I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

**EACH LETTER INCLUDES:**

A) An appropriate description of Jesus.

**To the Church at Ephesus:** Revelation 2:5 (NKJV) – 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.

B) A **promise using the same formula**. Example: Revelation 2:7 (NKJV) – “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes….

Ephesus (Rev. 2:7); Smyrna (Rev. 2:11); Pergamum (Rev. 2:17); Thyatira (Rev. 2:26, 29); Sardis (Rev. 3:5-6); Philadelphia (Rev. 3:12-13); Laodicea (Rev. 3:21-22).

* Ephesus: Overcome by Loving Me above all things!
* Smyrna: Overcome by trusting Me in the face of death!
* Pergamum: Overcome by not compromising with the world!
* Thyatira: Overcome by not becoming religious!
* Sardis: Overcome by embracing My truth and My Spirit!
* Philadelphia: Overcome by spreading My Word!
* Laodicea: Overcome by being passionately hot and radically

committed to My Kingdom!

C) 5 of the 7 letters have a rebuke.

D) 6 of the 7 have praise in them.

**3) Prophetic churches.** The seven letters seem to speak prophetically about the general development of the church throughout the ages.

* Ephesus: the First Love of the Early Church 33 AD – 160 AD
* Smyrna: the Persecuted Church 160 AD – 312 AD
* Pergamum: the State Church 360 AD – 600 AD
* Thyatira: the Roman Church 600 AD – 1415 AD
* Sardis: the Reformed Church 1415 AD – 1680 AD
* Philadelphia: the Missionary Church 1680 AD – 1900 AD
* Laodicea: the Modern Church 1900 AD – 20?? AD

(Anno Domini is Medieval Latin, translated as In the year of the Lord)

**1. Letter to the Church in Ephesus.**

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

**The city of Ephesus**.

**Commendation to the church (Rev. 2:2-3).**

**Rebuke to the church (Rev. 2:4).**

Matthew 22:36-37 36 “Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?” 37Jesus said to him, ‘*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’* 38This is *the* first and great commandment.

**1. Not their first love? He is still on their “Love List.”**

**2. They hate what He hates (vs. 6).**

**A. Nicolaitans comes from two Greek words:**

* Nikao: to conquer. (The brand of sneakers: *Nike.*)
* Laos: the people.
* i.e., Conquering the people.

**B. Nicolaitans were also a sect which advocated complete and free love.**

**What happened to their love?**

**What were they called to do (Rev.2:5)?**

1. **Remember** the height from which they had fallen.

Remember, mnemoneuo, (mnay·mon·**yoo**·o) – “to call to mind."

2. **Repent** = metanoeo, (met-an-o-eh'-o) – "to change one's mind."

3. "Do the things you did at first." In other words, **repeat**.

**What if the Ephesians chose to not repent?**

**Promise to the church**

You'll get to eat from the tree of life. Life comes from loving Jesus.

**Prophetic Message?**

Time period: 1st century.