

The Seven Churches of Revelation (and how they apply to your life)

Matt 16:15-19 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter (*petros- a piece of a rock larger than a stone*), and on this rock (*petra – a massive rock*) I will build **My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail (*overpower*) against it.

19 "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (NKJ)

This is the first introduction of the word, "church" to the disciples. The Greek word is: **ekklesia** (ek-klay-see'-ah)

1. *a calling out*, i.e.
2. a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation; Jewish synagogue, or *Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both*)

NOTE: Jesus established a new order, one that called people "out" of their old ways of thinking and doing religion to Himself as Savior of the world – the Christ.

"This is MY CHURCH" Called out:

1. **1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has *called you out* of darkness into his marvelous light:
2. **Mark 11:17** Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? ...
3. **Acts 6:7** And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.
4. **1Thes 2:12** That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Four types of people are found in the **ekklesia** (ek-klay-see'-ah), then and today. They are:

- **"saints"**: those who are dedicated Christ-followers **1 Cor. 1:2**
- **"great company"**: those who follow Christ, but usually only as long as He meets their needs and does what they want...usually don't continue following when it isn't convenient or when He seems to disappoint...
John 6:5

- **“tares”**: those who say they are Christ-followers, yet are rigid in their own ways and become unresponsive to the Truth. Tares are at odds with the work of the Holy Spirit and literally thwart His work by actively pursuing and pushing their agenda (offense, strife, rebellion) over His (love, forgiveness and the building of the **ekklesia** (ek-klay-see'-ah) **Matt. 13:25-43**
- **“wolves in sheep’s clothing”**: Those who look and talk like Christ-followers, but in reality come into a flock or church and begin to “prey upon” those who are the “great company or tares” in the flock. Their trademark is that they draw people to themselves, convincing the unwary that they (and not the pastors or spiritual leaders of the church) really know what is the right way for this church to be run) If not recognized and dealt with, they wreck havoc on that particular church. Many of these are spiritual predators, feeding their own religious spirit of control and manipulation. **Acts 20: 28-32; 2 Cor. 2:13-15; Matt. 7:15**

IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THE ABOVE, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SEE EACH OF THEM IN YOURSELF AT TIMES, OR IN THESE SEVEN CHURCHES WHEN JESUS IS DIRECTLY ADDRESSING THEM. STUDY THEM WELL.

1. **The promise: Rev. 1:3** Blessed, happy, to be envied, is the man who reads aloud (in the assemblies) the word of this prophesy; and blessed (happy, to be envied) are those who hear it read and who keep themselves true to the things which are written in it – heeding them and laying them to heart, for the time for them to be fulfilled is near. **Rev. 22: 7** “and behold I am coming speedily. Blessed, happy and to be envied is he how observes and lays to heart and keeps the truths of the prophecy (the predictions, consolation, and warnings) contained in this little Book.
2. **Why read “the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ?” Rev. 22:10:** and the further told me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book and make no secret of them, for the time when things are brought to a crisis and the period of their fulfillment is near”

Background of the Seven Churches of Revelation

- * These cities stood along one of the ancient postal Roman roads and would have been visited in the order in which they are named, beginning at Ephesus. The distance between them is about a full day's journey on foot.
- * These early Christian churches were located in Asia Minor during the era of the Roman Empire. The remains of each of them can still be seen in present day Turkey and were major cultural hubs.
- * In ancient times, names (of people, places, cities) were given to convey a message. One of the names given to Jesus, the Messiah, was Immanuel, conveying the message that God would live among us.
- * In the same way, the names of the seven cities convey a message about the state and nature of the Church from the time of John to the end of time.
- * The sequence of the churches and their names can accurately reflect the stages of our corporate growth in "the Church", in the local church, and in our personal growth and potential deterioration of our spiritual life if we don't heed Jesus warning.

The sequence is as follows:

1. Ephesus— first, desirable
2. Smyrna— bitter affliction (sweet smelling (myrrh))
3. Pergamum— earthly height (elevation or exalted)
4. Thyatira—sacrifice of labor (sacrifice or sweet savour of labour)
5. Sardis—Prince of joy (renewal)
6. Philadelphia—love of a brother (brotherly love)
7. Laodicea—notion of judgment (judging the people)

